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ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY OF MADINAH

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البحوث المنشورة في المجلة
تعبر عن آراء الباحثين ولا تعبر
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**Pathological fear of losing a mobile phone
(nomophobia) and its relationship to
academic and social integration among King
Khalid's university students**

**الخوف المرضي من فقدان الهاتف المحمول
وعلاقته بالتكامل الأكاديمي والاجتماعي لدى
طلبة جامعة الملك خالد**

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Abstract

The current study investigates the relationship between Mobile Phone Loss Anxiety (nomophobia) and Academic and social integration among the students of King Khalid University in Saudi Arabia- Abha, the descriptive approach was used as a methodology in this study, where 200 undergraduates from theoretical programs were chosen randomly from among the theoretical majors studying in the several College of Education departments and were administered the Nomophobia (NMP-Q) scale prepared by Yildirim et al. (2016) and Academic and social integration Scale (ASI-Q) Prepared by Pfordresher (2016). The results of the study showed that there were correlation coefficients between the Nomophobia Scale (NMP-Q) total score and the Academic and Social Integration Scale (ASI-Q), all of which are significant at the level (0.01). There were no Significant differences in the results of the study that could be attributable to the gender variable. The study concluded that the fear of losing a mobile phone has effect on academic or social life at university. The study recommends universities to spread awareness among their students on the effects of excessive use of smartphones and the effects of nomophobia. It is recommended to explore other dimensions of nomophobia and its impact on students' academic performance and social lives.

Keywords: mobile phone loss anxiety (nomophobia), Academic and Social Integration, University students.

المستخلص

هدفت هذه الدراسة إلى تقصي العلاقة بين القلق من فقدان الهاتف المحمول (نوموفوبيا) والتكامل الأكاديمي والاجتماعي بين طلاب جامعة الملك خالد في المملكة العربية السعودية في مدينة أبها. وقد تم استخدام المنهج الوصفي كمنهج في هذه الدراسة، حيث تم اختيار ٢٠٠ طالب في المرحلة الجامعية بشكل عشوائي من بين التخصصات النظرية التي تدرس في أقسام كلية التربية وتم تطبيق مقياس (النوموفوبيا) (NMP-Q) الذي أعده يلدريم وآخرون (٢٠١٦) ومقياس التكامل الأكاديمي والاجتماعي (ASI-Q) من إعداد فوردريشر (٢٠١٦). أوضحت نتائج الدراسة وجود معاملات ارتباط بين مقياس (النوموفوبيا) ومقياس التكامل الأكاديمي والاجتماعي، وكلها ذات دلالة إحصائية. وبينت نتائج الدراسة عدم وجود فروق تعزى إلى متغير الجنس. وخلصت الدراسة إلى أن الخوف من فقدان الهاتف المحمول ليس له أي تأثير على الحياة الأكاديمية أو الاجتماعية في الجامعة. كما أوصت الدراسة الجامعات بنشر الوعي بين طلابها حول آثار الاستخدام المفرط للهواتف الذكية وتأثيرات رهاب النوم. يوصى باستكشاف أبعاد أخرى من الخوف من فقدان الهاتف وتأثيره على الأداء الأكاديمي للطلاب والحياة الاجتماعية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: القلق من فقدان الهاتف المحمول (نوموفوبيا)، التكامل الأكاديمي والاجتماعي، طلاب الجامعة.

1. Introduction.

The widespread availability of smartphones and the powerful technologies they include have resulted in several social changes around the world, such as relationships between friends, neighbors and relatives. In 2023, the current number of smartphone users in the world today is 6.92 billion, meaning 86.11% of the world's population owns a smartphone. Communication technology has made it easier to perform daily tasks and get aid when it is needed by centralizing previously dispersed functions onto a single device (Duke & Montag, 2017). According to Yildirim & Correia (2015), people live in a technological age characterized by the widespread adoption of smartphones and the constant refinement of their associated technologies and applications. The social networking feature, in particular, has attracted a lot of attention from smartphone owners, a variety of users of Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, Telegram, Tiktok and others. The Internet and social media are widely believed to play a significant role in the overuse of these devices, as evidenced by the fact that some social networking applications, like WhatsApp, have (1.3) billion daily users (Duke & Montag, 2017; Hamutoglu et al., 2020; Statista, 2017).

It is hard to find a university student these days who is not immersed in some form of digital media, whether at home or on campus. The rapid development of technology and daily interaction in the lives of individuals using computers, the Internet, social networks, and mobile phones has led to enormous changes in their lives, social habits, and behaviours (Gökçearsan et al., 2023). According to Park & Kaye (2019), people's identities have been moulded in part by how technology has become an extension of their bodies. The smartphone is the vanguard of these developments. As a result of its useful features, it has become an indispensable tool for modern society (Kneidinger-Müller, 2019). Researchers extrapolated literature from many past studies such as Aktay and Kuscu (2019), and Qutishat et al. (2020). They determined that social media lets people create a virtual world beyond space. Where the individual can interact through it with others who share his interests and derive social support from each other, strengthening the bonds and social and dialogue interactions between members of virtual groups (Hetz et al., 2015; Schwaiger & Tahir, 2022).

Most people have at least one social network app on their smartphones. This is because of the convenience and speed afforded by the advanced

features of smartphone technology (Zheng & Lee, 2016). This behaviour is a direct result of the numerous advantages enjoyed by users of these apps, as evidenced by their use for sharing media such as videos and photos, reading the news and other articles, interacting with others, making new connections, reconnecting with loved ones, enjoying some downtime, and talking platforms (Hamutoglu et al., 2020).

Several studies have shown that there are negative consequences to using these apps excessively. including anxiety and depression (Elhai et al., 2016; Wolniewicz et al., 2018), insomnia (Yogesh et al., 2014), and poor academic performance (Duke & Montag, 2017; Samaha & Hawi, 2016). More recently, researchers and educators are focused on academic integration to solve several issues, including dropout rates, low academic attainment, student boredom, and student alienation (Schwaiger & Tahir, 2022). Academic and social integration matters. which involves immersing students in various activities and bringing them to a state of integration. Some of these factors are related to the student, such as his motives, goals, inclinations, and abilities, and some are related to the educational environment and what it provides to reach this state (Gökçearsan et al., 2023).

Academic integration is crucial to schooling because it shows pupils' success and predicts crucial outcomes like academic growth (Ladd & Dinella, 2009) According to Betts (2012), academic integration improves students' academic achievement and helps them solve various challenges Academically engaged students focus on learning, perform better on tests, follow rules, perform tasks with enthusiasm, perseverance, and diligence, pursue public and voluntary activities, and are curious and always seeking knowledge and learning (Fan & Williams, 2010; Wang & Eccles, 2013). Moreover, "academic integration into good educational practices is one of the best predictors of learning and personal and professional growth, so integrating students into meaningful educational activities during and after university increases their chances of working later" (Luthans, 2016, p.1099).

Mobile phone loss anxiety (nomophobia) is a modern condition that affects smartphone users, or as it is called "No mobile phobia," the anxiety of losing a phone (Gezgin et al., 2016). This phobia manifests as people bringing their phones everywhere, even the restroom, and not leaving the

house without them (Pellowe et al., 2015), as they feel concerned about not having their phones.

1.1. Problem statement.

The topic of this study was part of the researchers' interactions with students in lectures, field training, and other academic activities. Students never left their phones and just used social media apps. They claim to use their phones for communication with friends and family. Since students use these apps extensively on their smartphones, they are constantly connected to the virtual world by using apps such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Snapchat, which allow students to follow the activities of friends, relatives, and celebrities. This causes students to check their phones frequently to react to friend messages or to check their apps' alerts to the point of addiction (Oberst et al., 2017).

The International Telecommunications Union (2017) [ITU] reported that mobile Internet subscribers grew by 20% in the previous five years to 4.3 billion. Subscription, as 91% of Americans own smartphones and use them frequently (Smith & Page, 2015), and 2.48 billion people worldwide own phones. Yildiz Durak (2019) stated that the growing possession of mobile phones worldwide has become a part of the individual's life, and this growth is accompanied by several behavioural indicators, such as checking the phone frequently, spending a long time with it, and avoiding prohibited places. They include using the phone, owning multiple phones, carrying a charger or power bank, and checking the phone when waking up. Many studies have found that these behaviours indicate nomophobia (Akilli & Gezgin, 2016; Bragazzi & Del Puente, 2014). World statistics support this. Nomophobia affects 53% of UK mobile phone users, with males at 58% and females at 48% (Mail, 2015). 95% of American adolescents have this disease. Therefore, this study focuses on the impact of nomophobia on the academic achievement of university students.

1.2. Questions of the study.

The purpose of this research is to provide answers to the following questions:

1. How does King Khalid University students' academic and social integration relate to their mobile phone loss anxiety (nomophobia)?
2. What are the gender differences in nomophobia (the fear of losing a mobile phone) ?
3. What are the gender differences in students' capacity for academic and social integration?

1.3. The significance of the study.

This research is significant because it investigates the impact of nomophobia (the anxiety of losing a mobile phone) on students' ability to participate fully in campus life and develop meaningful relationships with their peers at King Khalid University. Despite the importance of examining the elements that impact students' academic and social integration, the researchers were unable to locate any studies that dealt with the variable, at least to the extent that the researchers' understanding allowed.

2. Theoretical Framework.

2.1. Mobile phone loss anxiety (nomophobia):

King et al (2010) used nomophobia in a psychological report on a panic disorder case, calling it a 21st-century condition and characterizing it as restlessness and anxiety when a person is away from his cell phone. They defined it as a set of behaviours and symptoms related to excessive use of the mobile phone. Yildirim (2014) defined it as the fear of not being able to use the mobile phone or the services it provides, represented by the inability to communicate with others, the inability to access information, and the inability to give up the convenience of smart devices. Pavithra et al (2015) defined it as the discomfort of not being able to connect and the fear of losing contact or knowledge. On the other hand, Aktay & Kuscu (2019) defined it

as the irrational fear of not having a mobile phone or being unable to use it, while Yavuz et al. (2019) focused on the severe discomfort caused by not being connected to a smartphone, which makes it hard to contact family and friends and use their services.

From the previous definitions, nomophobia is an unjustified and irrational phobia that results from moving away from the mobile phone and is often caused by excessive use of social networking apps on the phone. It causes anxiety, excessive checking of notifications, and distraction. Nomophobia has been compared to other mental illnesses by analyzing the similarities and differences between the diagnostic criteria. This is because nomophobia shares symptoms with several other disorders and is not classified as a specific phobia in the DSM-5 published by the American Psychiatric Association (APA, 2013). Nomophobia has been the subject of some research because of its similarities to separation anxiety. The American Psychiatric Association acknowledged that removing a person from his or her mobile phone might increase separation anxiety because of the perceived importance of the phone and its applications, particularly social networking apps. (Han et al., 2017).

Despite the American Psychiatric Association's classification of nomophobia as a disorder (Bragazzi & Del-Puenete, 2014), the DSM-5 (APA, 2013) did not include diagnostic criteria for it. In light of theoretical frameworks, several studies suggest the diagnostic criteria having many phones, using them often, carrying a charger, feeling nervous and uncomfortable while thinking about losing the mobile phone or when it is not nearby, out of place, or cannot be used due to lack of internet service, low battery, or credit, and avoiding situations where mobile usage is restricted, and constantly checking the phone for texts, calls, and notifications. Other symptoms include leaving the phone on for 24 hours next to the bed, lack of face-to-face social connections with humans may cause worry and tension, a predilection for contemporary technology, running up big mobile phone bill, and the sense of the phone ringing in an imaginative fashion, fake ringtones, or mistaking phone ringing noises with comparable sounds (Bekaroğlu & Yılmaz, 2020; Bragazzi & Del Puente, 2014; Mangot, et al., 2018).

2.2. Academic and Social Integration:

There has been a significant amount of research conducted on the topic of student retention or persistence in higher education. The interaction student attrition model that was developed by Tinto (1975, 1998) takes into account the fact that students come into higher education with a wide range of educational experiences, competencies, abilities, and beliefs, in addition to their family and community backgrounds. As a consequence of this, the individual and social characteristics of the student will each play a role in determining how successfully they integrate into higher education. According to Tinto (1975, 1998), for students to graduate, they not only need to maintain their academic performance (referred to as academic integration) but they also need to engage in the student culture, both within and outside of the immediate context of the learning environment (referred to as social integration).

According to Severiens and Wolff (2018), students who have a sense of belonging at school, who have strong relationships with both their classmates and their professors, and who are actively involved in extracurricular activities have a greater chance of completing their education. Additionally, Wilcox et al. (2017) discovered that social support from family and friends (i.e., the social networks of students) had a favourable impact on the academic achievement of first-year students. A beneficial impact on a person's ability to socially integrate includes having a network of friends, living with other students, and developing (informal) relationships with members of the university staff. When Tinto's constructions were applied to several different institutions or institutional initiatives, the results were mixed (Mannan 2016; Zepke & Leach 2017). Although Tinto's constructs had been confirmed by empirical study, For instance, Mannan (2016) discovered that students majoring in different disciplines had varying degrees of academic and social integration. This was determined by comparing students majoring in five distinct study programs between their junior and senior years. According to Tinto's interaction model, Baker and Siryk (2014) discovered that academic and social integration affected a student's level of academic achievement.

In the field of academic integration, Baker and Siryk (2014) differentiated between four distinct concepts: academic, social, personal, and emotional adjustment and attachment. The term "academic adjustment"

refers to the degree to which a student is successful in coping with a variety of educational demands, including motivation, application, performance, and overall contentment with the academic environment. The term "social adjustment" refers to how effectively students can deal with the interpersonal and societal demands of their studies, such as the ability to work in groups, make friends, and participate in social events. The personal and emotional adjustment scale is a tool that measures a person's level of psychological and physical suffering as they transition to the academic culture of their new environment. Lastly, attachment is a reflection of the degree of dedication to the objectives of the educational institution. According to a significant amount of research conducted in American institutions, the four ideas of academic adjustment have been found to have a favourable relationship with both academic progress and academic success (Baker & Siryk 2014).

2.3. Previous studies.

Ayar et al (2018) investigated the impact of problematic use of the Internet, anxiety concerning the social appearance, and consumption of social media on the levels of nomophobia among nursing students. The study covered 755 undergraduates who were pursuing a degree in nursing. The sociodemographic data were analyzed utilizing statistical measures of percentages and means. As determined through regression analysis, it can be asserted that there exists a robust, optimistic, and noteworthy correlation between levels of nomophobia and the variables of problematic Internet usage, social appearance anxiety, and social media dependence. The results revealed a modestly positive relationship between the levels of nomophobia and the problematic use of the Internet. The results also revealed a similar positive correlation between the levels of nomophobia and the students' social appearance anxiety.

Qutishat et al (2020) explored the prevalence of nomophobia, analyzed the demographic factors that contribute to nomophobia behaviours, and explored the potential correlation between this phenomenon and the academic performance of university students in Oman. The study utilized the descriptive correlational design was selected to ascertain the frequency of nomophobia among students of Sultan Qaboos University. The sample included 735 students who met the pre-established criteria for inclusion. The results indicated that the incidence of nomophobia amongst students was reported to be 99.33%, with a majority of the participants demonstrating a

moderate degree of nomophobia. The scholastic performance of students affected by severe nomophobia was found to be lacking; however, this observation did not bear statistical significance.

Mir and Akhtar (2020) examined the influence of time-restricted mobile phone utilization on the anxiety levels of undergraduate students who experience moderate levels of nomophobia. The investigation utilized a quasi-experimental design with a non-equivalent control group, whereby participants were not allocated to groups through random assignment. The study comprised a sample of 64 undergraduate students who were sampled from a higher education institution situated in Islamabad. The study's multivariate analysis yielded results that indicate a significant increase in state anxiety over time among participants who exhibit moderate nomophobia and who do not establish contact with their mobile phones, as proposed by the hypothesis. The research findings indicated that the levels of anxiety experienced by students in academic settings are significantly influenced by both the passage of time and the presence of nomophobia, which refers to anxiety related to the separation from one's mobile phone.

Rodríguez-García et al (2020) reviewed the literature on nomophobia, encompassing its key research objectives, methodological design, primary variables investigated, details of sampled populations, and the employed methods for measurement. The data sources employed for the review comprised the Scopus and Web of Science databases. The preceding data set was comprised of 142 articles, of which 42 fulfilled the prespecified criteria for inclusion and were subjected to in-depth analysis. The Nomophobia Questionnaire (NMP-Q), as presented by Yildirim and Correia, is a frequently utilized measurement tool in research. Furthermore, the body of research indicates that nomophobia exerts a detrimental impact on an individual's personality, self-esteem, anxiety levels, stress levels, academic attainment, and various other physical and psychological health concerns.

3. Methodology.

3.1. Research design:

Using a descriptive (correlational, and comparative) methodology, the current study aimed to describe the nature of the relationship between nomophobia and the academic achievement of university students and their social and academic integration.

3.2. Study sample:

The study's base sample included 200 undergraduates from theoretical programs at King Khalid University-Abha, including 72 male students (36% of the total) and 128 female students (64% of the total). They are seniors at King Khalid University in Abha, Saudi Arabia, and were chosen by simple random technique from among the theoretical majors studying in the several College of Education departments. The survey was sent as an electronic form. The characteristics of the core study sample are summarized in Table(1).

Table 1 Demographic characteristics of the survey sample

Gender	N	%	age	
			Mean	Std
Female	128	36	22.58	0.481
Male	72	64	22.12	0.432

3.3. Measurement.

Instrument Validity.

The study instrument was reviewed and deemed legitimate by a panel of ten Saudi psychology professionals who are recognized authorities on the formulation of language, scientific validity, and clarity. According to the reports, everything is acceptable save for some small wording adjustments.

Instrument Reliability.

First: Nomophobia Scale (NMP-Q): Yildirim and Correia (2015) and Yildirim et al. (2016). The researcher Aranzed it so that it could be used in Arabic. It was a four-point Likert scale with (20) items and four sub-dimensions, such as giving up convenience (GUC), losing connectedness

(LC), not being able to access information (NAI), and not being able to speak (NC). The original scale had Cronbach's alpha reliability ratings of (0.95) overall and (0.81), (0.87), (0.94), and (0.83) for each sub-dimension. On the other hand, the sub-dimension reliability values for the Arabic version were, (0.92), (0.91), (0.74), (0.90), and (0.94), respectively. The reliability of the study, as measured by the Cronbach alpha internal consistency coefficient, was 0.89, and the reliability coefficients for these four subdimensions were (0.77), (0.89), (0.78), and (0.89), respectively. After securing the appropriate permissions, the survey was delivered using Google Forms; students were given the choice of responding to the scale question.

Second: The Academic and social integration Scale (ASI-Q) was set up by Garrison, (1997); Quigley, (1997) and improved by Pfordresher (2016). The researcher changed it so that it could be used in Arabic. It was a four-point Likert scale, the academic integration (AI) (8 items) and social integration (SI) (9 items) measured the frequency of the engagement or activities in respective contexts. The Cronbach Alpha for the adapted academic integration and social integration items were (0.82) and (0.81) respectively. The reliability of the study, as measured by the Cronbach alpha internal consistency coefficient, was (0.81), and the reliability coefficients for academic integration were (0.82) and social integration were (0.81). After securing the appropriate permissions, the survey was delivered using Google Forms; students were given the choice of responding to the scale question.

4. Results

4.1. The first question: How do King Khalid University students' academic and social integration relate to their mobile phone loss anxiety (nomophobia)?

To answer this issue, correlation coefficients were determined between the research sample's scores on the Nomophobia Scale (NMP-Q) and their scores on the Academic and Social Integration Scale (ASI-Q). The findings are shown in Table (2):

Table 2 Correlation coefficients (Pearson Correlation Bivariate) between (NMP-Q) & (ASI-Q) for the study sample (N = 200)

variables		Nomophobia Scale (NMP-Q)				
		GUC	LC	NAI	NC	Total
(ASI-Q)	AI	0.464**	0.302**	0.285**	0.220**	0.414**
	SI	0.414**	0.378**	0.385**	0.192**	0.351**
	Total	0.506**	0.419**	0.405**	0.299**	0.604**

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The results in Table (2) show that all of the correlation coefficients between the Nomophobia Scale (NMP-Q) total score and sub-dimensions, The Academic, and Social Integration Scale (ASI-Q) (total score and sub-dimensions) for a sample of The study are positive and statistically significant, all of which are significant at the level (0.01).

4.2. The second question: what are the Gender differences in nomophobia (the fear of losing a mobile phone)?

To answer this question, a "t" test was calculated for the differences between the mean scores of males and females on the Nomophobia Scale (NMP-Q) (total score and its sub-dimensions); the findings are shown in Table (3):

Table 3 "t" test and its level of significance for the differences between the mean scores of males and females in Nomophobia Scale (NMP-Q)- (N = 200)

Variables	females (N=128)		Males(N=72)		T	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Std	Mean	Std	Mean		
Giving up convenience (GUC)	5.01	15.23	4.90	15.44	0.425	Non
Losing connectedness (LC)	4.82	16.21	5.07	16.31	-0.165	Non
Not being able to access information (NAI)	4.02	16.11	3.77	15.22	1.684	Non
Not being able to speak (NC)	5.89	12.66	6.21	13.25	0.751	Non
(NMP-Q)	11.01	61.89	10.77	62.30	0.352	Non

The "t" test values for the differences between the mean scores of males and females in the Nomophobia Scale (NMP-Q) (total score and its sub-dimensions) are not statistically significant, indicating that there are no statistically significant differences in the Nomophobia Scale (NMP-Q) according to the Gender, as shown in Table 3.

4.3. The Third question: what are the Gender differences in their capacity for academic and social integration?

To answer this question, a "t" test was calculated for the differences between the mean scores of males and females on The Academic and social integration Scale (ASI-Q) (total score and its sub-dimensions); the findings are shown in Table (4):

Table 4 "t" test and its level of significance for the differences between the mean scores of males and females in The Academic and social integration Scale (ASI-Q) - (N = 200)

Variables	Females (N=128)		Males (N=72)		T	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Std	Mean	Std	Mean		
Social integration (SI)	4.234	31.298	4.534	31.682	0.564	Non
Academic Integration (AI)	4.558	24.149	3.779	24.515	0.588	Non

The "t" test values for the differences between the mean scores of males and females in the Academic and social integration Scale (ASI-Q) are not statistically significant, indicating that there are no statistically significant differences in Academic and social integration Scale (ASI-Q) according to the Gender, as shown in (5).

5. Discussion:

We observe university students' use of cell phones consistently, and their concern about the possibility of losing them. As a result of the fact that they use the mobile phone in all activities within the university, from lectures to dealing with electronic tests, in addition to social communication between them, and the use of social networking sites in general, it is also possible to say that he is a part of them. This is because dealing with mobile phones and attachment are related to the use of social networking sites in general. In addition, the anxiety of losing it is due to the fear of losing communication with peers regarding academic or social life inside the university or perhaps outside it as well. And through the researchers'

interactions with students and the constant preoccupation with mobile phones, it was noticed that this did not hinder them from academic duties and interests or participation in social life inside the University, as if the mobile phone facilitated communication and dealing with tense situations. In addition, through the researchers' interactions with students and the constant preoccupation with mobile phones, it was noticed that this did not hinder students from using their smartphones consistently and focusing on their studies at the same time. The gender variable played no role in the the relationship between mobile phone loss anxiety (nomophobia) and Academic and social integration among King Khalid University students. The finidngs indicated that both malesand females reacted similarly to the situation of mobile phone loss anxiety, which could be because both genders live in the same society and share common thoughts and ideas regarding the use of their smartphones and the anxiety of losing smartphones.

6. conclusion.

This research examined the relationship between mobile phone loss anxiety (nomophobia) and Academic and social integration among King Khalid University students. Fear of losing a mobile phone has no effect on academic or social life at university as determined by using two scales that were prepared for this purpose and were Arabized to suit the nature of the sample, verifying the reliability of the scales on the sample, and processing the data statistically. After administering the survey to the sampe, the study concluded that despite the great influence of using mobile phones on students, the participants of this study showed some resilience in their social and academic interactions.

7. Recommendations.

The study recommends conducting more research into the topic of nomophobia among different samples and among different genders. The study also recommends universities to spread awareness among their students on the effects of exessive use of smartphones and the effects of nomophobia. It is recommended to explore other dimensions of nomophobia and its impact on students' academic performance and social lives.

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