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Organizational commitment and ethical environment: Reducing nomophobia in the workplace

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Abstract: Nomophobia, the anxiety experienced when individuals are separated from their mobile phones, is becoming increasingly prevalent in modern workplaces. This study investigates the role of organizational commitment in mitigating nomophobia, with a focus on the mediating influence of the ethical environment. Data were collected from 600 participants and analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). The findings show that a strong sense of organizational commitment significantly reduces nomophobia among employees. Additionally, an ethical environment within organizations further mitigates this anxiety by fostering a workplace culture that encourages psychological well-being. This research provides practical insights for organizations looking to reduce the psychological strain associated with digital dependency, emphasizing the importance of both commitment and a strong ethical climate.

Keywords: nomophobia; organizational commitment; ethical environment; workplace anxiety; employee well-being

1. Introduction

In the current era of digital ubiquity, nomophobia—the anxiety associated with being without a mobile phone—emerges as a critical factor influencing organizational behavior, impacting job satisfaction and employee performance significantly (Hessari et al., 2024b). This phenomenon underscores the intricate link between technological dependency and workplace dynamics, especially as organizations increasingly rely on technology (Kaviani et al., 2020). The psychological ramifications of this dependency, such as anxiety and distraction, manifest prominently, affecting both employee well-being and the broader organizational culture. Considering that the global footprint of smartphones has increased dramatically predictions show that their use will increase from 7.1 billion to 7.7 billion by 2028 (Press, 2024). Understanding this phenomenon is necessary in organizational culture Because the ubiquity and technological evolution of this device have made them enter the dynamics of environments, human behavior, and social cohesion (Ling, 2008).

A pivotal element in mitigating nomophobia's effects is organizational commitment, which encompasses an employee's psychological bond with their workplace. This research draws on the three-component model of commitment— affective, continuance, and normative, as proposed by Allen and Meyer (1991), to explore how these dimensions can attenuate the adverse effects of nomophobia. A robust organizational commitment might buffer employees against the stressors of

disconnection (Sonnentag, 2018) reducing anxiety levels when apart from their digital devices. Further integral to this discourse is the role of the ethical environment within organizations. A constructive ethical climate is instrumental in diminishing job-related anxieties and bolstering job satisfaction (Schwepker, 2023). The work of Bai et al. (2024a, 2024b, 2024c) highlights the critical influence of ethical environments on employee well-being and satisfaction, thereby fostering a supportive workplace that mitigates technological stress.

This research stands at the confluence of several pivotal organizational challenges: the need to leverage technology for enhanced business outcomes while safeguarding employee well-being in an era of continuous connectivity (Hessari et al., 2024d). As reliance on digital tools escalates, so do the implications for productivity, cybersecurity, and work-life balance (Gupta et al., 2021). The topic of digital leadership has evolved as a critical component of organizational success in the changing digital landscape (Balcioglu and Artar, 2024). This study aims to delve into organizational commitment's impact on nomophobia and assess how the ethical environment serves as a mediating factor in this relationship.

By integrating insights from organizational behavior, information systems, and ethics, this study offers a comprehensive perspective on how contemporary technology influences employee commitment and organizational dynamics. It builds on recent findings, such as those by Hessari et al. (2022) And Murugan and Srivastava (2024), which emphasize the crucial role of leadership and co-worker support in reducing the effects of nomophobia. Additionally, Hessari and Nategh (2022) explore the dual consequences of smartphone addiction on job performance, focusing on the mediatory roles of life invasion and techno-exhaustion. These insights reveal technology's nuanced and extensive impact on the workforce, underscoring the imperative for organizations to navigate both the benefits and challenges posed by an increasingly digital workplace environment.

1.1. Theoretical development

1.1.1. Nomophobia

Modern organizations extensively utilize digital technologies such as internet connectivity, computers, and smartphones to facilitate essential functions like online scheduling, operations management, and communications (Esamah et al., 2023; Hessari et al., 2024c; Murugan and Srivastava, 2024). While these tools are vital for business operations, they also introduce significant challenges such as bandwidth constraints, internet misuse, and adverse behaviors like unauthorized downloading, posing potential financial risks (Brown and Ryan, 2023; Brunner et al., 2021). The reliance on digital tools has engendered both personal and professional challenges. Employees increasingly face higher levels of distraction, reduced productivity, and concerns over privacy and technology addiction. The lack of access to mobile devices or the internet triggers symptoms like anxiety and frustration, which are recognized manifestations of nomophobia (Bhattacharya, 2019; Duke and Montag, 2017; Lin et al., 2015; Lupo et al., 2020). This condition impairs concentration and undermines effective performance (Alavi et al., 2020; Bian and Leung, 2015).

As the workplace evolves with technological advancements, it presents a dual-

edged sword of opportunities and challenges for both employees and employers (Hessari et al., 2024a; Hessari et al., 2024d). Businesses must equip their workforce with the necessary skills and tools to navigate this landscape, while employees must adapt to maintain competitiveness in the evolving job market (Arlitt et al., 2023; Hakkak et al., 2016; Rotatori et al., 2021). Consequently, research is increasingly directed towards understanding these shifts, particularly with the proliferation of digital devices like smartphones (Colbert et al., 2016).

Nomophobia not only poses personal challenges but also catalyzes disruptions in the workplace. It is critical to explore its impact on employment and develop strategies to mitigate its effects. Nomophobia can be dissected into four dimensions: the inability to communicate, loss of connectedness, lack of access to information, and forfeiture of convenience, each underscoring the anxiety associated with digital disconnection (Yildirim and Correia, 2015). The escalating integration of digital devices amplifies concerns about nomophobia, which can diminish individual productivity and induce broader organizational issues like internet misuse and financial challenges (Tuco et al., 2023). As organizations navigate this digital transformation, there is a pressing need to balance the benefits of technology with its potential downsides. The current body of literature underscores the importance of conducting comprehensive research to delve into the causes, consequences, and possible interventions for nomophobia, aiming to cultivate a healthier work environment tailored for the digital age.

1.1.2. Ethical environment

The ethical environment within an organization defines the atmosphere surrounding ethical work behavior. It shapes perceptions of what is deemed “right” or ethical professionally, significantly influencing employees’ decision-making and actions (Ravesangar and Narayanan, 2024; Victor and Cullen, 1988). The perceived ethical climate guides identify and address ethical issues, helping individuals evaluate and respond appropriately (Barnett and Vaicys, 2000; Slavin, 2024). This climate reflects and shapes the organization’s procedures, policies, and performance, intertwining with elements such as the cultural and social environment, organizational norms, ethical codes, management practices, and communication methods (Naiyananont and Smuthranond, 2017). As an integral component of the broader organizational climate, it reflects the organization’s ethos and plays a crucial role in fostering ethical behavior and curtailing unethical practices (Cai et al., 2024; Hakkak et al., 2023).

Research indicates that ethical decision-making within an organization is influenced by both individual traits and organizational factors, such as reward systems, norms, and operational procedures (Barnett and Vaicys, 2000). The ethical climate is foundational in examining and addressing unethical behaviors within organizations. Leadership behavior and established ethical practices shape organizational ethics (Ivcevic et al., 2020; Nanjundeswaraswamy et al., 2024). While personal financial needs may exert a lesser impact on ethical behavior than leadership and peer influences, they still play a role in ethical decision-making (Jahanshahi et al., 2020; Shayari, 2005). The influence of peers and superiors profoundly shapes the organizational ethical climate and, by extension, managerial and employee conduct (Brown and Treviño, 2006; Jones and George, 1998). The extent to which the

organizational climate impacts ethical behavior can vary across different contexts, requiring a nuanced understanding (Trevino et al., 2014; Vermeer et al., 2019).

Navigating the complexities of organizational ethics demands that managers consider a variety of factors, including leadership behavior, peer dynamics, industry standards, formal policies, and personal values (Campbell et al., 2021; Drescher et al., 2023; Greve and Palmer, 2022). A comprehensive and nuanced approach to ethical decision-making is essential, recognizing the interplay between these diverse elements to cultivate a robust ethical environment (Trevino et al., 2018). The ethical climate is pivotal in guiding individual and collective behavior toward ethical conduct, fostering a shared understanding of ethical norms, and assisting employees in navigating complex ethical dilemmas (Deng et al., 2023). Moreover, cultivating a positive ethical climate is paramount in promoting ethical behavior and enhancing overall organizational performance across various sectors, including business and healthcare (Essex et al., 2023; Swalhi et al., 2023). Based on the reviewed literature, we propose the following hypotheses:

H1: An ethical environment negatively impacts nomophobia.

H2: An ethical environment mediates the relationship between organizational commitment and nomophobia.

1.1.3. Organizational commitment

Organizational commitment is defined as the psychological state that characterizes an employee's relationship with their organization, significantly influencing their decision to continue employment (Meyer and Allen, 1990). From Mayer and Allen's perspective, affective commitment implies emotional attachment, identification, and participation in the organization, continuance commitment represents the perceived costs associated with leaving the organization, and normative commitment represents the perceived commitment to remain in the organization (Meyer et al., 2002).

The three-dimensional model of organizational commitment, proposed by Allen and Meyer (1990), is esteemed for its comprehensiveness and empirical validity, offering a nuanced view of how emotional bonds, perceived costs, and moral obligations collectively influence employee commitment (Frank et al., 2009). This model serves as the theoretical backbone for our study, enabling an exploration of the intricate interactions among organizational commitment, nomophobia, and the ethical environment. While other frameworks focusing solely on one aspect, such as affective commitment, were considered, they were deemed inadequate for capturing the full spectrum of employee commitment necessary for this research. Each type of commitment has distinct implications for employee behavior and organizational outcomes. Affective commitment is often the most sought-after form, as it fosters high job performance, organizational citizenship behaviors, and low absenteeism (Allen and Meyer, 1990). Normative commitment contributes to organizational stability by promoting a sense of duty among employees (Meyer and Morin, 2017). However, continuance commitment can have ambiguous effects; while it aids in retention by reducing turnover, it may not always enhance engagement or discretionary effort. Employees who stay primarily due to the perceived costs of leaving might not be as motivated to contribute to the organization's long-term success (Allen and Meyer,

1990; Umezulike et al., 2024; Wang et al., 2022).

Therefore, organizations should strategically cultivate affective, normative, and continuance commitments to boost performance and employee well-being. Understanding the varied types of commitment and their impacts allows managers to develop targeted strategies that enhance job satisfaction, performance, and retention. The comprehensive framework provided by Allen and Meyer continues to shed light on the complex dynamics between employees and their organizations, especially critical in an era marked by rapid digitalization and significant workforce transformations.

Organizational commitment has been widely recognized for its profound impact on an array of work behaviors, including job satisfaction, turnover, attendance, and overall performance. Employees with high levels of commitment are typically more aligned with organizational goals and demonstrate a greater willingness to exert effort, which translates into positive work outcomes (Al Balushi et al., 2022; Bateman and Strasser, 1984; Meyer et al., 1993). In contrast, employees exhibiting lower levels of commitment tend to show higher turnover intentions, increased absenteeism, and diminished performance (Mowday et al., 1982). Beyond its influence on retention, organizational commitment significantly shapes daily employee engagement. Studies indicate that employees with strong commitment levels often experience heightened job satisfaction and involvement, driven by their emotional connection to the organization. This connection enhances their sense of purpose and overall job fulfillment (Allen and Meyer, 1990; Nguyen et al., 2020). Such dynamics underscore the strategic importance of nurturing organizational commitment to boost productivity and reduce costs associated with turnover.

The determinants of organizational commitment are diverse, encompassing various demographic and personal factors such as age, education, gender, and marital status. Older employees, for instance, typically display higher commitment levels, likely due to their longer tenure and greater investment in the organization, coupled with fewer external job opportunities (Allen and Meyer, 1990). Higher-ranking individuals or those with significant decision-making autonomy also tend to show stronger commitment, deriving a sense of security and empowerment from their roles (Mowday et al., 1982). Conversely, highly educated employees often exhibit lower commitment levels, possibly due to elevated expectations and more opportunities outside the organization (Iaffaldano and Muchinsky, 1984). These factors collectively influence organizational dynamics to shape an employee's commitment level. In organizational psychology, commitment is acknowledged as one of the three essential job-related attitudes, alongside job satisfaction and job involvement (Spector, 1997). Notably, affective commitment is strongly linked to job satisfaction, which correlates with enhanced job performance, reduced turnover, and improved punctuality (Bateman and Strasser, 1984; Chordiya et al., 2017). Employees deeply attached to their organization are more inclined to engage in discretionary behaviors that significantly contribute to organizational success (Meyer et al., 1993).

Employee participation in decision-making processes crucially influences organizational commitment. When employees are actively involved, especially in decisions that impact their roles and the broader organizational direction, their sense of ownership and loyalty intensifies. This involvement nurtures affective commitment

by validating the value of their contributions and their direct impact on organizational success (Lawler, 1992; Kanter, 1983; Ullrich et al., 2023). Supporting research suggests that greater participation in organizational planning and goal setting aligns employees' personal goals with organizational objectives, thereby solidifying their commitment (Ouchi, 1981; Charles et al., 2021). Managers have a pivotal role in fostering an environment conducive to open communication and active employee involvement, which recognizes and rewards individual contributions (Stephens, 2001). Drawing on the literature, we propose the following hypotheses:

H3: Organizational commitment negatively impacts nomophobia.

H4: Organizational commitment positively impacts the ethical environment.

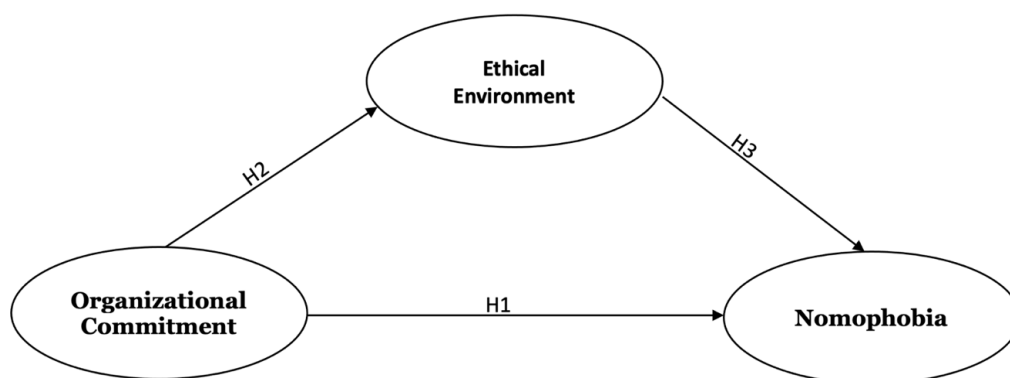


Figure 1. Conceptual framework.

2. Methodology

This study is underpinned by a meticulously crafted conceptual framework that integrates extensive literature reviews and theoretical insights (Figure 1). This framework serves as the cornerstone of our research, guiding our inquiry and forming the basis for our hypotheses' development and rigorous testing. To uphold the research's legitimacy and ethical standards, several prestigious Iranian business and entrepreneurship organizations composed and approved a formal letter detailing the study's objectives. A key focus was maintaining strict anonymity and confidentiality, ensuring that individual data remained private.

Addressing nonresponse bias is critical in research, as disparities between survey participants and non-respondents can distort results, leading to inaccuracies due to differing respondent characteristics (Halbesleben and Whitman, 2013). To mitigate nonresponse bias and ensure accuracy, strategies such as follow-up reminders, incentives, and careful sampling were employed (Armstrong and Overton, 1977; Halbesleben and Whitman, 2013). The research sample included 700 participants from various industries, selected to ensure sufficient statistical power for structural equation modeling (SEM) and to enhance the generalizability of our findings across different organizational settings. The sample size was determined based on a power analysis, accounting for the complexity of the SEM and variability in the population. We secured institutional approval from multiple reputable organizations, ensuring ethical standards were met. Of the 700 participants, 650 responded, with 600 completed surveys included in the analysis, resulting in an 85% response rate.

The analysis was conducted using Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) to

meticulously assess the dimensions of our study scales. We employed descriptive statistics and a correlation matrix to confirm the reliability and validity of our data. Furthermore, Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was chosen as the primary analytical method due to its ability to simultaneously analyze complex relationships between multiple variables (Kline, 2023). This technique is ideal for exploring both direct and indirect relationships within our study, allowing us to investigate the direct impact of organizational commitment on nomophobia and the mediating role of the ethical environment. SEM's ability to model latent variables such as organizational commitment, ethical environment, and nomophobia—while accounting for measurement errors—enhances the reliability of our results. Additionally, using SEM facilitates the validation of the measurement model through CFA, ensuring that the constructs are measured accurately and consistently (Brown and Moore, 2012). The advantages of SEM make it an optimal choice for this research, enabling us to rigorously test the hypothesized relationships and deliver robust and reliable findings.

Data collection and instrumentation

In this study, we employed a series of carefully designed questionnaires to capture valuable insights and ensure a thorough exploration of the research variables. A 6-item questionnaire based on Deshpande's Ethical Environment framework (1996) was meticulously administered to probe the ethical dimensions within the organizations. This tool effectively illuminated the complex interplay of values and principles within the context of the study, providing deep insights into the ethical landscape of the participating organizations. Additionally, the study extensively examined organizational commitment using the comprehensive questionnaire developed by Allen and Meyer (1990). This instrument includes eight questions, each designed to assess one of three facets of commitment: affective, normative, and continuance. This methodical assessment helped gauge participants' levels of dedication to their organizations, contributing to a nuanced understanding of the various dimensions of organizational commitment. To measure participants' nomophobia—the fear of disconnection from smartphones and the internet—a robust 20-item questionnaire developed by Yildirim and Correia (2015), known as the NMP-Q, was utilized. This sophisticated tool allowed for an in-depth exploration of the different aspects of nomophobia, ensuring that the study comprehensively covered this modern psychological condition.

All responses were collected through a refined data-gathering process, where participants expressed their views on a precise 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). This meticulous approach ensured that the data captured were both nuanced and accurate, reflecting the participants' true perspectives and allowing for a comprehensive analysis of the gathered information. By employing these diverse questionnaires and scales, the study was able to paint a detailed and multifaceted portrait of participants' ethics, nomophobia, and job-related commitment.

3. Results

Our analytical process incorporated a structured approach using Confirmatory

Factor Analysis (CFA) to examine the structure of our observed variables. Given the presence of significant multicollinearity among constructs, CFA was chosen as it is particularly suitable for Covariance-based Structural Equation Modeling (CB-SEM), following the recommendations of Hair et al. (2021). For this analysis, the reflective constructs were examined using the lavaan package in R Studio, as endorsed by Rosseel (2012). Additional aspects of our analysis utilized SPSS to ensure a thorough and rigorous evaluation of our data.

3.1. Reliability and validity

Our evaluation of the research instruments demonstrated high reliability. The internal consistency of the items was confirmed using both Cronbach's alpha (CA) and composite reliability (CR), with both metrics exceeding the accepted benchmark of 0.7. This level of scrutiny guarantees that the items within each construct are reliable measures of the intended theoretical concepts, laying a robust foundation for further analysis and interpretation. Our commitment to methodological rigor also extended to assessing convergent validity. A detailed examination showed that all factor loadings surpassed the 0.70 threshold, verifying that the constructs adequately capture the dimensions they are intended to measure. Moreover, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values exceeded 0.50, as shown in **Table 1**, reinforcing the convergent validity of the constructs. This rigorous validation process ensures that the measurement items cohesively measure the same construct, thereby confirming the accuracy and consistency of the research findings. These analytical steps underscore the reliability and validity of our measurement model, affirming the integrity of our research methodology. The combination of CFA with R Studio's lavaan package and SPSS provided a comprehensive framework for data analysis, enabling us to confirm our study's theoretical underpinnings and empirical soundness.

Table 1. Reliability.

Constructs	CR	AVE	Cronbach's alpha	Mean	SD
Organizational commitment	0.87	0.79	0.92	2.79	0.96
Ethical environment	0.78	0.68	0.89	2.84	1.10
Nomophobia	0.81	0.72	0.91	2.85	1.16

3.2. Common method bias (CMB)

We implemented several procedural safeguards to mitigate potential common method bias (CMB) inherent in our cross-sectional and self-report study design. Ensuring the anonymity and confidentiality of all participants and randomizing the order of survey questions helped reduce evaluation apprehension and prevented participants from predicting the relationships between variables. Additionally, we conducted Harman's single factor test post hoc to assess common method variance statistically. The findings, which were 41%, indicated that no single factor explained more than 50% of the total variance, which suggests that common method bias was not a significant issue in our data. Furthermore, we employed Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) to affirm the distinctiveness of the study's constructs, offering further evidence that common method variance did not significantly impact our results.

3.3. Discriminant validity

To ensure discriminant validity among the latent variables, we conducted a detailed analysis where variables with factor loadings exceeding 0.50 were closely examined to establish their distinctiveness from other variables (refer to **Table 2**). This rigorous scrutiny was crucial to confirm that each variable was unique and contributed independently to the research model. Such meticulous attention to discriminant validity strengthens the robustness of the study, ensuring that the constructs are reliable, well-differentiated, and contribute uniquely to the research, thereby enhancing the overall quality and credibility of our findings.

Table 2. Discriminant validity.

	Organizational commitment	Ethical environment	Nomophobia
Organizational commitment			
Ethical environment	0.617		
Nomophobia	0.314	0.340	

3.4. Measurement model analysis

We conducted confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) using R Studio software, a method widely recognized in social research and Information Systems (Kline, 2023). The validation of our model adhered to established criteria, achieving fit indices that reflect a strong model fit. Specifically, the Comparative Fit Index (CFI), Normed Fit Index (NFI), and Non-Normed Fit Index (NNFI) all exceeded 0.9, while the Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) and the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) were maintained below 0.08, aligning with the standards set by Hair et al. (2017). Notably, the RMSEA value was exceptionally low at 0.033, and the SRMR at 0.031, further affirming the robustness and adequacy of our hypothesized model.

3.5. Structural equation modeling results

Using the lavaan package in R Studio, we meticulously tested the structural equations of our model, integrating control variables to ensure comprehensive analysis. The model fit indices evaluated included the Comparative-Fit Index (CFI), Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI), Normed Fit Index (NFI), and Non-Normed Fit Index (NNFI), which yielded satisfactory values of 0.904, 0.893, 0.915, and 0.939, respectively. Additionally, the SRMR and RMSEA values registered at 0.031 and 0.032, meeting the rigorous criteria established in the literature (Hair et al., 2017). The Relative Chi-Square value stood at an excellent 1.3, indicating a good fit according to standards recommended by Kline (2023). These results demonstrate that our model not only meets but exceeds the benchmarks for a good fit, indicating that the theoretical framework and the hypothesized relationships within the model are well-supported by the data. This high level of model fit is visually represented in **Figure 2**, showcasing the SEM outcomes derived from our analysis in R Studio software.

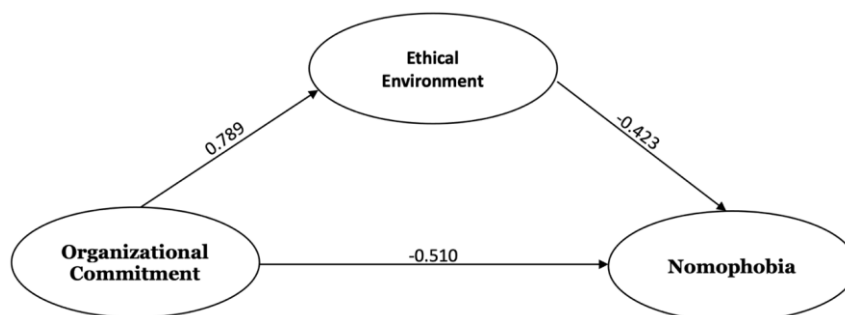


Figure 2. Structural models with standardized estimates.

As detailed in **Table 3**, our findings provide strong empirical support for the hypothesis, revealing a significant negative influence of organizational commitment on nomophobia ($p < 0.000$). This evidence highlights the powerful role that organizational commitment plays in mitigating nomophobia among employees, affirming the protective effects of a strong commitment to the organization. Similarly, the next hypothesis regarding the relationship between the ethical environment and nomophobia was substantiated ($p < 0.000$). This result emphasizes the critical function of the ethical climate in reducing nomophobia across the organization. The ethical environment contributes to lowering nomophobia and enhances the overall workplace atmosphere, making it more conducive to employee well-being. Additionally, our analysis robustly supported the notion that organizational commitment positively influences the ethical environment ($p < 0.000$). This finding suggests that heightened levels of organizational commitment are associated with significant improvements in an organization's ethical climate. Such enhancements to the ethical environment can lead to broader organizational benefits, reinforcing the importance of cultivating strong organizational ties.

Table 3. Hypothesis testing.

Path	Standardized coefficient	P-value	Result
Organizational commitment → Nomophobia	-0.510	0.000	Supported
Ethical environment → Nomophobia	-0.423	0.000	Supported
Organizational commitment → ethical environment	0.789	0.000	Supported

Our research further explored the nuanced interactions within organizational dynamics by investigating the mediating role of the ethical environment. As detailed in **Table 4**, the analysis robustly supports the fourth hypothesis, confirming that the ethical environment partially mediates the relationship between organizational commitment and nomophobia ($p < 0.000$). This finding enriches our understanding of how organizational commitment influences nomophobia indirectly through its impact on the ethical environment. The analysis reveals that a strong organizational commitment enhances the ethical climate, reducing nomophobia among employees. This mediation underscores the complex interplay between these elements and highlights the pivotal role of an ethical workplace in moderating the effects of digital disconnection anxiety.

Table 4. Mediating hypothesis testing.

Path	Mediating	Direct	Indirect	Total	Result
Organizational commitment → Nomophobia	Ethical Environment	-0.510	-0.218	-0.728	Supported

4. Discussion

This paper investigates the complex interplay between organizational commitment and nomophobia, framed within the context of an ethical environment that serves as a mediating factor. Drawing upon the foundational three-component commitment model by Meyer and Allen, this study offers a detailed examination of how deep-seated organizational ties can alleviate the psychological strains associated with nomophobia—the anxiety linked to technological disconnection. Our findings highlight the particularly strong protective effects of affective and normative commitment components, illustrating that these bonds significantly shield employees from the stress of digital disengagement (Erdurmazlı et al., 2022).

Further exploration reveals the mediating role of work-family conflict in the dynamics between nomophobia and organizational identification, suggesting broader implications for how personal and professional spheres interact to influence employee experiences of technology-related anxiety (Erdurmazlı, 2022). This insight prompts consideration of additional mediating factors that could significantly shape these relationships. The study distinctly points to the ethical environment within organizations as a crucial mediator, asserting that a positive ethical climate fosters ethical behavior and acts as a buffer against the pressures of constant digital connectivity (Kim and Vandenberghe, 2021). This dual role of the ethical environment emphasizes the importance of nurturing a workplace that upholds strong moral principles and supports employee mental health in the face of growing technological demands. The implications of our findings extend to the broader organizational strategy, particularly in how technology is integrated into workplace practices. The ubiquitous presence of digital tools in professional settings brings with it a host of psychological challenges, including nomophobia and related issues like social media (Bai et al., 2024c) addiction. These conditions necessitate a balanced approach that leverages technology's benefits while safeguarding employee well-being (Kaviani et al., 2020; León-Mejía et al., 2021).

Our research underscores the necessity for organizations to navigate these complexities thoughtfully. Developing robust strategies to enhance organizational commitment and cultivating a supportive ethical environment are critical. These strategies address the direct impacts of technology and foster an organizational culture that supports employees in managing the psychological impacts of digital dependency. The urgency of addressing these issues is further underscored by findings from Tams et al. (2018), which highlight the significant stress associated with smartphone withdrawal, reinforcing the need for strategic interventions that bolster commitment and ethical practices within organizations.

4.1. Contribution to the literature

This study significantly advances the field of organizational behavior by providing empirical insights into the complex relationship between organizational

commitment and nomophobia, an area that has not been extensively explored in existing research. By applying Meyer and Allen's renowned three-component commitment model, this research reaffirms the model's applicability in contemporary digital contexts and extends its theoretical scope to encompass the challenges posed by technological stressors. This nuanced exploration sheds light on how various dimensions of commitment—*affective, normative, and continuance*—interact distinctly with the anxiety associated with digital disconnection. Moreover, introducing the ethical environment as a mediating factor in this relationship is a pioneering approach that bridges two critical areas of organizational study: ethics and technology. By demonstrating how ethical climates can buffer the negative effects of digital dependence, the study enriches existing theories and invites further investigation into how organizational ethics influence technological impacts on employee behavior. This aspect of the research highlights the mediating role of ethical environments, underscoring their importance in fostering ethical conduct and enhancing employee resilience against technological stress.

This research also broadens the academic discourse by illustrating the interplay between organizational commitment and technological stress within the ethical context of the workplace. It suggests that the ethical environment can serve as a protective layer that mitigates the psychological impacts of nomophobia, thus contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of how organizations can manage employee well-being in the face of increasing digital demands (Nawaz, 2024). Furthermore, by integrating insights from the fields of organizational behavior, ethics, and information systems, this study offers a dynamic perspective on the challenges of digital dependence in the workplace. It calls attention to the need for organizations to adopt holistic strategies that address both the benefits and challenges of digital tools, ensuring that technological advancements do not overshadow employee well-being.

In sum, this study fills a significant gap in the organizational behavior literature and sets the stage for future research to explore additional mediating factors and the broader implications of digital technologies on organizational dynamics. It paves the way for more detailed investigations into how organizations can effectively balance technological integration with maintaining a healthy, ethical, and committed workforce.

4.2. Contribution to practice

This research provides crucial practical insights for organizational leaders. It highlights strategies to mitigate the adverse effects of nomophobia by nurturing organizational commitment and establishing a robust ethical environment. The findings emphasize the importance of these factors in supporting employee well-being within a digitally connected workplace.

Organizations looking to combat nomophobia should focus on enhancing various dimensions of organizational commitment—*affective, normative, and continuance*. Initiatives that promote employee engagement and foster a sense of belonging can significantly strengthen affective commitment. These could include team-building activities, company-wide events, or internal campaigns celebrating collective achievements, reinforcing emotional bonds between employees and the organization.

Involving employees in decision-making processes, particularly those directly impacting their roles and future within the company, can boost their normative commitment by aligning their personal goals with organizational objectives. This involvement can be facilitated through regular feedback sessions, inclusion in strategic meetings, or transparent communication about company policies and goals. Further, enhancing continuance commitment involves providing clear career progression paths and developmental opportunities, emphasizing the long-term benefits of staying with the organization. Training programs, mentorship, and succession planning are crucial in showing employees the tangible advantages of their continued employment.

Leaders play a critical role in cultivating an ethical environment. By demonstrating ethical behavior and advocating for fairness in performance evaluations and reward systems, leaders can instill a strong sense of moral obligation among employees. Leaders must also remain accessible and open to discussions about ethical concerns, setting a standard for integrity and open communication throughout the organization. Reducing workplace anxiety, including nomophobia, requires a supportive ethical environment where clear policies are well-communicated and consistently enforced. Organizations should ensure that all employees understand the expected ethical standards and have access to training that reinforces these expectations. Mechanisms for reporting and addressing ethical violations should be transparent and effective, fostering a culture of accountability and respect.

To help employees manage digital stress, organizations should advocate for a healthy work-life balance by implementing policies that limit the need for constant connectivity. Suggestions include designated 'unplugged' periods, wellness programs that address digital habits, and creating spaces or opportunities for employees to engage in non-digital activities during breaks. While digital tools are indispensable in the modern workplace, their use should be balanced thoughtfully with the need for employee well-being. This could involve training programs that teach efficient digital practices, promoting digital mindfulness, and providing support systems for employees to discuss their challenges with technology.

By focusing on these areas, organizations can foster a more supportive workplace that enhances employee commitment and ethical behavior and addresses the unique challenges posed by the digital age. This strategic approach helps create a resilient and productive workforce better equipped to manage the complexities of digital dependency.

5. Conclusion

Nomophobia, the fear and anxiety of being separated from one's mobile phone, has become a critical issue in today's digital workplace, significantly impacting employee well-being and productivity. This study demonstrates that organizational commitment plays a crucial role in reducing the effects of nomophobia on employees. The presence of a positive ethical environment further strengthens this impact, alleviating the anxiety associated with being disconnected from smartphones in the workplace. Organizations aiming to address the challenges of digital dependency should focus on enhancing commitment and fostering ethical environments that prioritize employee well-being. These strategies not only reduce nomophobia but also

contribute to a healthier and more productive workplace. Future research should explore other interventions to further reduce nomophobia.

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