

THE LIMINAL MIND

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HEARTIAN RESEARCH CONGRESS 2026

The Heartian Research Congress 2026, organized by Sacred Heart College, Thevara, was successfully held on January 14, 2026, at Fr. Malesius Hall. The congress served as an international academic forum aimed at promoting research excellence, innovation, and interdisciplinary collaboration among scholars, academicians, and emerging researchers. It sought to strengthen scholarly dialogue, support the dissemination of quality research, enhance collaboration between academia and industry, and provide a global platform for presenting original work. The event also encouraged cross-disciplinary partnerships, stimulated scientific inquiry, facilitated professional networking, and recognized outstanding research through awards and publication opportunities.

Conducted as a one-day academic conclave, the congress saw active participation from researchers across diverse disciplines. The programme featured engaging paper presentations, insightful discussions, and productive knowledge-sharing sessions that enriched the academic atmosphere. Presentations were organized under multiple streams, including Physics and Material Science, Life Sciences, Language, Literature, Media and Cinema, Sociology, Social Work, Education and Psychology, Mathematics, Statistics and Computer Science, and Economics, Management and Commerce. This multidisciplinary approach fostered intellectual engagement, encouraged cross-disciplinary dialogue, and promoted meaningful academic learning.

Key highlights of the congress included publication opportunities with Springer Nature and Palgrave Macmillan, a cash prize pool totaling ₹2 lakh, interactive networking sessions, industry panel discussions, and exposure to emerging global research trends. Awards were presented across all streams to recognize excellence in research and presentation ensuring fair acknowledgment of scholarly contributions.

The event was efficiently organized by the Heartian Research Committee, with strong academic leadership, administrative guidance, and logistical support from faculty and staff. It resulted in several positive outcomes, including the strengthening of research culture, expanded international publication and presentation opportunities, and increased interdisciplinary collaboration and networking. The congress also enhanced the academic reputation and research profile of Sacred Heart College, reaffirming its commitment to scholarly excellence.

Participant feedback indicated high satisfaction with the quality of presentations, organization of the event, academic rigor, and professional development opportunities. Overall, the Heartian Research Congress 2026 successfully advanced innovation, research excellence, and interdisciplinary engagement, making a meaningful contribution to the academic community while setting a strong benchmark for future academic congresses at Sacred Heart College, Thevara.

Safiya Majeed
I MSc Psychology

INTERACTIVE SEMINAR ON CRIME AND CONSEQUENCE: A REAL-WORLD PERSPECTIVE

The Post Graduate Department of Psychology successfully organized an enriching seminar titled "Crime and Consequence: Understanding Punishments for Offenses" on 22 January 2026 at Fr Aggaeus Hall. The session was led by Mr. Akhil M Sisupal, Assistant Prison Officer, Kerala Prisons and Correctional Service, whose practical insights and real-life experiences offered students a rare and meaningful glimpse into the functioning of the criminal justice and correctional systems.

The seminar was well attended by undergraduate students, postgraduate students and faculty members, who gathered with keen interest to understand how crime, punishment, and rehabilitation operate beyond theoretical frameworks. From the very beginning, Mr. Sisupal established a warm and approachable tone, encouraging students to engage openly and ask questions. This created a highly interactive learning environment where students felt comfortable expressing their thoughts, doubts, and curiosities.

Mr. Sisupal began by explaining the structure of the prison system in Kerala and the legal processes involved in handling offenders. He emphasized that punishment in the correctional system is not solely about confinement but also about reform, rehabilitation, and reintegration into society. Drawing from his professional experience, he shared several real-life case examples that illustrated how personal backgrounds, social environments, and psychological factors influence criminal behavior. These narratives helped students connect classroom concepts with real-world situations, making the session both informative and impactful.



A major highlight of the seminar was the discussion on life inside correctional institutions. The speaker described daily routines, challenges faced by prison officials, and the emotional and psychological experiences of inmates. He shed light on rehabilitation programs such as counseling, vocational training, and educational initiatives that aim to support personal growth and reduce recidivism. These insights deepened students' understanding and emphasized the importance of human and ethical approaches to punishment.

The session also witnessed enthusiastic student participation. Learners asked thoughtful questions about juvenile offenders, prison overcrowding, mental health concerns among inmates, and the effectiveness of reformative versus punitive approaches. Mr. Sisupal patiently addressed each query, often supporting his responses with real-life incidents and professional observations. His candid sharing of experiences made the session lively, relatable, and highly engaging.

Another key takeaway from the seminar was the importance of empathy and professionalism in correctional work. Mr. Sisupal stressed that prison officers play a vital role not only in maintaining discipline and security but also in supporting inmates' psychological well-being, highlighting the growing need for trained mental health professionals in these areas.

Overall, the seminar was an engaging and valuable learning experience for students. The interactive session and the speaker's real-life stories helped connect classroom knowledge with real-world situations. It improved students' understanding of crime, punishment, and rehabilitation, and encouraged them to think deeply about justice, responsibility, and social change.

The Post Graduate Department of Psychology expresses sincere gratitude to Mr. Akhil MSisupal for sharing his valuable time and experiences, and for making the session both informative and inspiring. The seminar stands as a significant academic initiative that successfully enriched students' understanding of the correctional system and its psychological dimensions.

Varsha Hari Ashwathi.E
I MSc Psychology

SPECIAL TRAINING PROGRAM ON STATISTICAL TOOL SPSS

Department of Psychology, Sacred Heart College (Autonomous), Thevara organized a special training program on the statistical tool, SPSS, for their undergraduate and postgraduate students. Ms. Parvathy P. S., Asst. Professor (SF), Department of Commerce facilitated the program.

The training session was organized to make the students familiarized with the basic functionalities and practical applications of SPSS, which is one of the widely used statistical software packages in the field of psychology research. The training was conducted with a focus on enhancing students' skills to apply statistical concepts they learned in their respective subjects with practical implications with the software.

During the session, the resource person introduced the SPSS software interface, the functionalities of its major parts such as data view and variable view.



Students were guided through various processes like entering the data, defining the variables and managing the dataset, conducting descriptive statistics, frequency distribution. Every concept was demonstrated to students so that they can do it on their respective computers.

The session was practical and demonstrative in approach where students were asked to do certain functions on sample data under the guidance of the resource person. Any kind of doubt was cleared instantly thereby helping the students gain confidence on using SPSS all by themselves.

The UG and PG students from the Psychology department attended the session with great zeal and interest. The session was beneficial to both of them, especially to those who are about to do their project works and analyze the data statistically. The students were found to be highly motivated and stated that this training has definitely helped them a lot.

The Department of Psychology extends its thanks to Ms. Parvathy P. S. For making it a very resourceful and a great learning session for the students.

ISSAC JOSEPH
III BSc Psychology

TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

1. What focuses on the important roles of mental processes in how people process and remember information?
2. What is a systematic observation and recording of behaviors as they occur in their natural setting- naturalistic observation
3. What are objects that are selected randomly from a larger group such that every group member has an equal chance of being included in the study?
4. Who was associated with the psychoanalysis theory and form of psychotherapy that emphasize the role of unconscious factors in personality and behavior?
5. Who studied learning and the effect of reinforcement?
6. What is the numerical indicator of the strength of the relationship between factors?
7. What are factors that are observed and measured for change in an experiment?
8. What is an intensive, in-depth investigation of an individual or a small group of individuals?
9. What is the research method to demonstrate a cause-and-effect relationship between changes in one variable and the effect that is produced on another variable?
10. What is a segment that very closely parallels the larger population being studied on relevant characteristics?

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THE RISK WE'RE BUILT FOR

They warn us that letting someone become our everything is reckless, that deep attachment sets us up for devastation when people inevitably leave. But this advice misunderstands something fundamental about how we're wired.

We're not built for emotional independence. Our brains literally develop through connection, organize themselves around relationships, and treat social loss like physical injury. When someone we love disappears from our life, the same neural regions that process physical pain light up. This is millions of years of evolution insisting that losing our people is dangerous. Missing someone hurts because we're shaped for connection.

We build internal maps of the people closest to us, detailed blueprints of who they are, how they'll respond, what they mean to us. These maps become woven into how we see ourselves. When someone consistently shows up for us, we don't just learn they're reliable. We learn we're worth showing up for.

Certain people don't just add to our lives, they expand them. We literally absorb aspects of others into our sense of self. Their perspectives shift how we think, their presence steadies our nervous system. Brain scans show that when we think about someone we're deeply bonded to, the same regions activate as when we think about ourselves. This is why losing someone feels like losing part of yourself. The fear of this vulnerable system learning to calm down in their presence, the parts of your identity that grew in relation to them, these don't vanish when the person does.

The people who become essential to us serve real psychological functions. They help regulate our emotions, often calming the part of our brain that processes threats. Over time, our bodies can attune to theirs through a process called physiological synchrony. We become emotionally entangled with the people who matter most. The fear of this vulnerability makes sense. When people prove unreliable or hurtful, we develop defenses, pulling back from needing anyone, or clinging harder to avoid abandonment.

But avoiding deep bonds altogether often means missing the very things that make us feel most alive. People who wall themselves off from attachment may avoid certain pain, but research suggests they also lose access to profound sources of emotional regulation, meaning, and growth. The person who insists they need no one has often simply learned that needing hurts.

The ability to miss someone deeply actually reflects psychological development. The fact that you carry someone with you when they're gone means your mind has achieved object permanence, the capacity to hold onto people internally even when they're not physically there. The people who feel like "coming home" send safety signals to your nervous system based on thousands of small interactions that built trust over time.

When we lose these relationships, we experience a fundamental disruption of the patterns that organized our emotional life. Yet people who've loved deeply and lost often develop greater emotional range and empathy than those who avoided such risks. The pain of loss doesn't erase what connection gave you. The defensive strategy of avoiding attachment works short-term but fails over time, creating exactly the isolation it tried to prevent.

What looks like bravery, choosing connection despite vulnerability—is actually in alignment with nature. We need other people to help regulate our emotions, to develop our sense of self, to give our lives meaning. We are built to be homes for each other. The only choice that remains is whether we'll accept that loving someone means handing them the power to break us, and reach for them anyway, not out of recklessness, but because the alternative isn't really living at all.

Meenakshi Shanavaz
III BSc Psychology

WHEN LOVE HAS NO NAME

Somewhere between "just friends" and "almost something," college invented a new kind of relationship. No labels. No clarity. You might relate to what I've written down below, for I'm not talking about a person or a personal experience, it's a canon event that every one of us probably goes through at times in life, until we learn something of it. And if currently you're going through it, just know that you're not alone in this, and it can be fixed. I'm referring to that particular someone with whom you've had your late-night conversations, shared playlists, inside jokes, and feelings that quietly grow deeper than anyone admits. We call it a talking stage. A situationship. An "it's complicated."

But in reality, it's a space where hearts often walk without protection. In college, love rarely arrives with certainty. It arrives through signals, sometimes as a long reply that means interest, a short reply that means doubt, a "seen" that suddenly feels louder than words. We analyse emojis, overthink tone, and reread messages, find signals through gazes, searching for meaning where clarity never really existed.

And slowly, attachment forms. The strange part is how normal this has become. Two people share emotional closeness, support each other through stress, jealousy quietly appears, expectations grow, yet no one asks the simple question: "What are we?"

Because asking feels risky.

Because labels feel heavy.

Because vulnerability feels dangerous. Sometimes, the words "I love you" enter this space with no name. And for one person, it feels natural. Easy. Safe. A feeling, not a promise. But for the other, it feels like morphine, craving for more but never getting enough. Because love without a name can feel like love without security. Like offering your heart to someone who may never hold it properly. Like hearing the deepest words in the language, but never knowing what they truly mean. One person enjoys the freedom. The other carries the uncertainty. And the hardest part is that no one is completely wrong. Some avoid labels because they are afraid of commitment, of getting hurt, of choosing the wrong person too soon. Some stay because they hope things will change. Some say nothing because silence feels safer than rejection. But silence has its own way of hurting.

Ghosting. Late replies. Suddenly changing energy. Not enough to end things, but just enough to confuse you. In these unnamed relationships, the mind works overtime. Am I important to them? Why do they care but not commit? Am I asking for too much, or



settling for too little? And often we don't lose the person, we lose ourselves. We begin to shrink expectations, ignore discomfort, accept half-answers, all in the hope that one day this "almost" will become something real.

Rarely it does. Often, it doesn't.

But maybe what this phase teaches us is something important. That love deserves clarity. That affection deserves honesty. That hearts deserve safety. And that if love has no name for too long, it may also have no future. Still, these experiences shape us. They teach us boundaries, self-respect, patience, and courage. They show us what we want, and what we should never accept again. Because one day, you will find a love that does not hesitate. A love that does not hide behind confusion. A love that chooses you clearly, loudly, and without fear. And when that happens, you won't have to ask what you are. You'll simply know.

As of now, you may simply have to go on, keeping in mind that it may always hurt more for the ones who love anxiously, than for the ones who avoid. In hopes, that summer will turn into fall, your autumn will arrive with so much growth and clarity,

And no one will have to beg for certainty again.

Karthik Salim Nair
III BSc Psychology

THE INVISIBLE TETHER: UNDERSTANDING NOMOPHOBIA AND DIGITAL DEPENDENCY IN THE MODERN ADOLESCENT MIND

The smartphone, a device designed to liberate us from geographic constraints, has paradoxically become a source of profound anxiety for millions. Picture this: You reach for your phone and realize it's not in your pocket. That immediate surge of panic, the compulsive urge to locate it, the discomfort at the thought of being unreachable... This experience is far from unique. What was once dismissed as a quirky modern habit has now earned a clinical designation: 'Nomophobia', a portmanteau of 'no-mobile-phone' phobia. Nomophobia represents more than casual device attachment; it is an emerging psychological phenomenon characterized by genuine anxiety and distress when separated from one's smartphone. As undergraduate psychology students navigating a world inseparable from digital connectivity, understanding this condition offers insight into the psychological mechanisms underlying our relationship with technology and the mental health consequences that follow.

WHAT IS NOMOPHOBIA?

Nomophobia, formally defined as the fear or anxiety stemming from the inability to use one's smartphone or access its services, extends beyond simple fear. Research identifies its three core dimensions:

- 1) fear of losing connectivity and communication capability,
- 2) anxiety about being unable to access information, and
- 3) distress at relinquishing the convenience that smartphones provide.

Critically, nomophobia is not merely a personal preference for technology, it involves measurable physiological and psychological responses. When individuals experience nomophobia, they exhibit symptoms including restlessness, irritability, trembling, and elevated levels of cortisol (termed as 'stress hormone') when separated from their devices. These responses activate the same neural pathways implicated in behavioral addictions, placing nomophobia within a spectrum of technology-related mental health concerns rather than treating it as an isolated phenomenon.

THE NEUROBIOLOGICAL BASIS: WHY OUR BRAINS ARE VULNERABLE

Understanding nomophobia requires examining how smartphones interact with the brain's reward circuitry. Every notification, like, message, or social media engagement triggers a release of dopamine, a neurotransmitter associated with pleasure, motivation, and reinforcement. This creates a powerful feedback loop: *smartphone use* → *dopamine release* → *perceived pleasure and emotional regulation* → *increased desire to repeat behavior*.

The problem intensifies because app developers intentionally exploit this neurological vulnerability. Features such as **infinite scrolling**, **variable reward schedules (unpredictable notifications)**, and **algorithmic content feeds** are engineered to maximize engagement and compulsive use. This deliberate design strategy essentially conditions our brains to crave digital stimulation, making it increasingly difficult to tolerate periods without device access. Neuroimaging studies reveal that excessive smartphone use leads to structural and functional changes in the brain, particularly in areas governing impulse control, attention regulation, and emotional processing. Young adults whose prefrontal cortex (responsible for impulse control and decision-making) is still developing are especially vulnerable to these neurobiological effects.

NOMOPHOBIA IN THE INDIAN CONTEXT

For psychology students in India, understanding nomophobia carries particular relevance. India's rapid smartphone penetration combined with cultural contexts where family connectivity is highly valued creates unique conditions for nomophobia development. Recent research on Indian medical students found that 70.7% exhibited moderate nomophobia, while 19% showed severe symptoms. These students reported strong psychological attachment to smartphones for information access, convenience, and maintaining connectivity reflecting the role smartphones play in managing educational demands within competitive institutional environments. The prevalence of nomophobia among Indian health professional students highlights how digital dependency can undermine academic performance, concentration, and mental well-being during critical developmental and professional training periods.

MANIFESTATIONS OF DIGITAL DEPENDENCY BEYOND NOMOPHOBIA

While nomophobia specifically captures phone-related anxiety, digital dependency extends to broader problematic technology use patterns. Research identifies several concerning manifestations:

Cyberbullying and Online Harassment: Digital platforms enable bullying that follows individuals' home, operates 24/7, and may involve anonymity intensifying psychological harm compared to traditional bullying.

FOMO (Fear of Missing Out): Constant awareness of others' activities creates persistent anxiety about being excluded or missing significant events, driving compulsive checking behaviors.

Sleep Disorders: Approximately 25.5% of teenagers exceed recommended screen time limits, with associated sleep disturbances preceding or exacerbating depression and anxiety.

Reduced Academic Performance: Students spending 7 hours daily on screens show twice the likelihood of procrastination and difficulty in emotional regulation compared to those spending 1 hour. Screen time directly competes with attention-demanding academic work.

PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS AND INTERVENTIONS

For students, research suggests several evidence-based approaches to digital wellness:

Boundary Setting and 'Digital Sabbaths': Establishing phone-free times and spaces particularly before bedtime and during meals protects sleep quality and facilitates offline social connection. Research supports scheduled "unplugging" as protective against accumulating screen time effects.

Mindfulness and Acceptance-Based Approaches: Mindfulness-based stress reduction and acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT) demonstrate efficacy in reducing problematic phone use and nomophobia-related anxiety by teaching individuals to observe urges without automatically acting on them.

Cognitive Restructuring: Challenging cognitive distortions underlying FOMO and social comparison anxiety such as "I must constantly know what others are doing", or "My social value depends on online validation", reduces phone-checking compulsions and associated anxiety.

Offline Enrichment: Deliberately scheduling activities that naturally buffer mental health exercise, face-to-face socializing, creative pursuits, time in nature, provide healthier sources of dopamine and emotional regulation than screen-based activities.

Institutional Support: Schools and colleges implementing digital wellness curricula, limiting screen time in educational settings, and teaching digital literacy appear effective at population level. Peer support programs addressing nomophobia normalize help-seeking and reduce shame around technology struggles.

The evidence is unequivocal: excessive screen time correlates with depression, anxiety, sleep disturbance, and reduced academic performance, yet the solution is not categorical rejection of technology. Smartphones do provide genuine benefits for communication, information access, and emergency connectivity. Rather, the path forward requires intentional relationships with technology, supported by digital literacy, social connection, adequate sleep, and practices that restore our capacity for attention, presence, and genuine human connection. Understanding nomophobia and digital dependency is not merely an academic exercise, it is preparation for a professional role in which you will help individuals navigate the psychological challenges of technological modernity.

Our own digital habits, chosen consciously and with awareness of their psychological consequences, become a model for the therapeutic relationships we will eventually establish. The invisible tether connecting us to our phones need not bind us indefinitely. With psychological understanding, intention, and community support, that tether can be transformed from a constraint into a choice.

Rashiq
I BSc Psychology

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☆ AQUILAE ACHIEVEMENTS ☆



DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY BAGGED OVERALL 3RD PLACE IN THE AQUILAE 2025-2026

★ STUDENTS ACHIEVEMENTS ★



3rd year BSc Psychology student Shaun Antony has been successfully placed at ICICI, securing the highest UG salary package of ₹6.89 LPA in the current academic year.

Two other third-year BSc Psychology students, Joanne Tresa Jose and Aryananda Pramod, also reached the final stage of the selection process, marking a commendable achievement for the department.

Congratulations to all!



Students of the SH Department of Psychology, have secured the 1st First Prize in the Short Film Contest conducted as part of Psyfer – Psychology Fest, organised by Loyola College.

The team members are Krithik Krishnan, Hridhya Krishnan, Ananya S, Sreelekshmi S, Arjun D, Neha Mary Mathew, Atharva Biju, Archana TM, Koottala Ananya Iyer, Saveri S Pillai, Lena Biju, Megha Milton and Ann Maria.

Congratulations to the team members!

Answers to Test your Knowledge

1. Cognitive perspective
2. Naturalistic observation
3. Random selection
4. Sigmund Freud
5. B.F. Skinner
6. Correlation coefficient
7. Dependent variables
8. Case study
9. Experimental method
10. Representative sample



Sacred Heart College, Thevara, emerged as the champions of "Amuse" Season 2, a state-level inter-collegiate music band competition at St. Aloysius College, Elthuruth. The team delivered an earned the top position and a cash prize of ₹50,000.

Aman Anil, 3rd year BSc Psychology student was a key member of the band.

Congratulations Aman!