A Study On Scrolling And Suffering
The Role of social media in FOMO (Fear of Missing Out) Among Young Adults.

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Abstract
In recent years, the influence of social media on daily life has dramatically transformed how individuals interact with the world around them. One of the most significant emotional challenges arising from this digital connectivity is FOMO (Fear of Missing Out), which is characterized by anxiety or insecurity about missing out on rewarding experiences. This study examines the impact of social media on the experience of FOMO (Fear of Missing Out) among young adults. FOMO, characterized by anxiety or insecurity about missing out on rewarding experiences, has become more pronounced in the age of constant digital connectivity. Social media platforms, through curated posts and real-time updates, often amplify these feelings by encouraging comparisons with others. This research explores how social media use affects the mood, mental health, and social behaviours of young adults, particularly how they navigate feelings of isolation and connection. By providing insight into the relationship between social media consumption and emotional well-being, the study offers recommendations for healthier engagement with digital platforms to mitigate the negative effects of FOMO.

Keywords:
FOMO, social media, young adults, anxiety, mental health, comparison, emotional well-being.

Introduction
In today's digital age, social media has become an integral part of daily life, particularly for young adults. With platforms like Instagram, Facebook, Snapchat and Twitter, dominating the way people interact and share experiences, individuals are constantly exposed to a curated version of others' lives. While social media facilitates connection and communication, it has also given rise to new psychological phenomena, one of the most notable being Fear of Missing Out (FOMO). FOMO refers to the anxiety or insecurity that individuals experience when they perceive that others are having more enjoyable or fulfilling experiences, leading them to feel left out or disconnected.

Young adults, often in the stage of establishing their identities and navigating social landscapes, are particularly vulnerable to the effects of FOMO. The constant stream of updates and images on social media often creates a sense of comparison, where users measure their own experiences against the highlight reels of other's lives. This comparison culture can lead to feelings of inadequacy, anxiety, and depression, influencing not only their emotional well-being but also their social interactions and life choices.

This study aims to fill this gap by examining the relationship between social media usage and the prevalence of FOMO, with a focus on understanding how young adults react to the digital world, how these reactions affect their emotional states, and the broader implications on their social lives. Through a mixed-methods approach, this research seeks to provide a deeper understanding of the impact of social media on the psychological health of young adults and offer recommendations for promoting healthier digital habits.

Review Of Literature:

1. Veena Prasad Vemur (2024) The Impact of Social Media on the Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) among Teenagers Aged between 18 and 25 in Mumbai. The study examines the impact of social media on the Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) among teenagers and young adults aged 18 to 25 in Mumbai. The research found that frequent exposure to curated social media content leads to increased FOMO, as users compare their lives to those of others. The study highlighted the role of social influences, self-esteem, and psychological factors in shaping these feelings. It emphasizes the need for awareness of the mental health effects of social media and suggests strategies to manage FOMO, such as balanced media consumption.

2. Arjun Sekhar (2024) conducted a study on Fear of Missing Out, Social Media Addiction and Phubbing Behavior among Young Adults in Bengaluru city. The research highlights how FOMO drives social media addiction, leading to compulsive usage and neglect of face-to-face interactions, a behavior known as phubbing. Previous studies suggest that these phenomena are linked to increased anxiety, depression, and social isolation. Sekhar's findings emphasize the negative impact of these behaviors on mental health and relationships, underscoring the need for healthier social media habits to mitigate these effects.

3. Saher Parveiz, et. al. (2023) conducted a study on Fear of Missing Out (FOMO), Social Comparison and Social Media Addiction among Young Adults in Lahore. The research found that FOMO was strongly linked to social media addiction, as young adults frequently compared themselves to others online. This social comparison led to negative emotional outcomes, including anxiety and dissatisfaction with their own lives. The study highlights how these factors contribute to unhealthy social media usage patterns, suggesting the need for interventions to promote more balanced and mindful engagement with social media.

4. Anviksha Bisen, et. al. (2023) conducted a study on the impact of fear of missing out (FOMO) on social networking usage and life satisfaction among young adulthood in Jaipur city. The study aimed to highlights that FOMO is a significant factor influencing excessive social media use, leading individuals to engage in constant online activity to stay updated. Previous studies suggest that high levels of FOMO can negatively affect life satisfaction, as individuals feel inadequate or disconnected when comparing their lives to others online. The study underscores the importance of balancing social media use to enhance overall well-being and life satisfaction among young adults.

5. K. Mohamed Aadil, et. al. (2020) conducted a study exploring the effect of Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) on loneliness and life satisfaction among young adults in Bengaluru. The literature reviewed in their study suggests that FOMO is closely related to feelings of loneliness, as individuals who experience FOMO often feel disconnected from social groups. Previous research indicates that heightened FOMO can lead to lower life satisfaction, as individuals constantly compare their lives to others, leading to dissatisfaction. The study emphasizes the

need to address these emotional impacts by promoting healthier social media habits and fostering real-life social connections.

Methodology:
Significance of the study:
•   The study highlights the psychological impact of social media on young adults, focusing on FOMO and its emotional consequences.
•   It offers insights into how social media platforms contribute to feelings of inadequacy and anxiety in young adults.
•   It identifies the potential long-term effects of FOMO and social media addiction on mental health and well-being.
•   The research provides a better understanding of the connection between social comparison and increased social media usage.
•   The study emphasizes the need for interventions to promote healthier social media habits and reduce negative emotional impacts.

Objectives of the study:
1.   To explore how Fear of Missing Out (FOMO), social comparison, and social media addiction are interconnected among young adults.

2.   To examine how exposure to idealized social media content, such as influencer lifestyles, intensifies FOMO and social comparison, potentially leading to social media addiction among young adults.

Data source:
Primary data: Information obtained from the original source by research is called primary data. They offer much greater accuracy and reliability. The data was collected from the respondents through the questionnaire. The present research was conducted using primary data collected directly from original sources.

Secondary data: It means that data are already available. It refers to the data that are collected and analysed by someone else. The data was collected from the websites and journals.
The sampling technique adopted for the study is Convenience Sampling and the sample size is92.

Limitations of the study:
•   **Sample Size**: The study may have a limited sample size, which may not fully represent the broader population of young adults.
•   **Platform Specificity:** The study may focus on specific social media platforms, ignoring the impact of other emerging platforms or technologies.
•   **Influence of Moderating Factors:** The role of moderating factors like self-esteem, peer pressure, or offline relationships may not be fully explored, limiting a complete understanding of the problem.

Results and Discussion
Age

AGE	RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
18–21	28	30.4%
22–25	26	28.3%
26–29	38	41.3%

Interpretation: The age distribution of the respondents reveals that the majority fall within the 26-29 age group, with 38 respondents, representing 41.3% of the total sample. This is followed closely by the 18-21 age group, which consists of 28 respondents, accounting for 30.4% of the sample. The 22-25 age group also includes 26 respondents, making up 28.3% of the total participants. These findings suggest that while there is significant representation across all age groups, the 26-29 age group has the highest percentage of respondents.

Gender

Gender	Respondents	Percentage
Male	52	56.5%
Female	40	43.5%

Interpretation:
The above graph represents the gender distribution of the respondents, showing that 52 individuals identify as male, accounting for 56.5% of the total sample, while 40 respondents identify as female, making up 43.5% of the sample. This indicates that most respondents are male, with females comprising a slightly smaller proportion of the sample.

Occupation

Occupation	Respondents	Percentage
Student	14	58.3%
Employed	4	35%
Business	6	16.7%

Interpretation:
The occupation distribution of the respondents shows that the majority, 14 individuals (58.3%), are students. This is followed by 6 respondents (25%) engaged in business and 4 respondents (16.7%) who are employed. This indicates that students make up the largest portion of the sample, while employed individuals represent the smallest group.

Most Frequently Used Social Media Platforms

Social media platform	Respondents	Percentage

Instagram	42	45.7%
Snapchat	32	34.8%
Facebook	15	16.3%
YouTube	15	16.3%
Others	5	5.4%

Interpretation:
The distribution of social media platform usage among respondents reveals that Instagram is the most popular platform, with 42 respondents (45.7%) using it. Snapchat follows, being used by 32 respondents (34.8%). Facebook and YouTube share the same level of usage, each with 15 respondents (16.3%). Lastly, 5 respondents (5.4%) reported using other social media platforms. This indicates that Instagram is the dominant platform among respondents, while other platforms have varying but lower levels of engagement.

Usage of social media platforms (e.g., Instagram, Facebook, Youtube)

Usage	Respondents	Percentage
Less than 1 hour per day	19	20.9%
1-2 hours per day	31	34.1%
3-4 hours per day	21	23.1%
5+ hours per day	20	22%

Interpretation:
The distribution of social media usage among respondents shows that the largest group, **31 respondents (34.1%),** use social media for **1-2 hours per day**. This is followed by 21 respondents (23.1%) who spend 3-4 hours per day on social media, and 20 respondents (22%) who use it for 5 or more hours daily. Meanwhile, 19 respondents (20.9%) spend less than an hour per day on social media. This suggests that the majority of respondents engage with social media for at least an hour daily, with a significant portion spending extended periods online.

Frequency of FOMO Experiences Triggered by Social Media Content

Feeling of FOMO	Respondents	Percentage
Always	18	19.6%
Often	23	25%
Sometimes	28	30.4%

Rarely	12	13%
Never	11	12%

Interpretation:
The distribution of respondents' experiences with the feeling of FOMO (Fear of Missing Out) shows that the most common response is "Sometimes," reported by 28 respondents (30.4%). This is followed by "Often," with 23 respondents (25%), and "Always," with 18 respondents (19.6%) experiencing FOMO frequently. Meanwhile, 12 respondents (13%) reported feeling FOMO "Rarely," and 11 respondents (12%) stated they "Never" experience it. This suggests that FOMO is a prevalent feeling among respondents, with a majority experiencing it at least occasionally.

Extent of Agreement: Social Media as a Trigger for FOMO

Feeling of FOMO	Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Disagree	40	43.5%
Disagree	18	19.6%
Neutral	15	16.3%
Agree	17	18.5%
Strongly Agree	02	2.2%

Interpretation:
The distribution of respondents' feelings about FOMO (Fear of Missing Out) indicates that the majority, 40 respondents (43.5%), strongly disagree with experiencing FOMO, while 18 respondents (19.6%) disagree. Meanwhile, 15 respondents (16.3%) hold a neutral stance. On the other hand, 17 respondents (18.5%) agree that they experience FOMO, and a small proportion, 2 respondents (2.2%), strongly agree. This suggests that while some respondents experience FOMO, a significant portion does not perceive it as a major concern.

Comparison of Self with Others on Social Media

Social Comparison	Respondents	Percentage
Never	22	23.9%
Occasionally	26	28.3%
Sometimes	25	27.2%
Often	13	14.1%
Always	06	6.5%

Interpretation:
The distribution of respondents' experiences with social comparison shows that the largest group, 26 respondents (28.3%), engage in social comparison occasionally. This is followed closely by 25 respondents (27.2%) who experience it sometimes. Meanwhile, 22 respondents (23.9%) report that they never compare themselves to others on social media. A smaller proportion, 13 respondents (14.1%), experience social comparison often, while 6 respondents (6.5%) do so always. This suggests that while social comparison is common among respondents, the frequency varies, with most experiencing it occasionally or sometimes.

Types of Trending Posts Linked to FoMO

Trend posts	Respondents	Percentage
Travel or vacations	24	26.7%
Parties or social events	22	24.4%
Achievements (e.g., academic, career-related)	32	25.6%
All of the above	12	13.3%

Interpretation:
The distribution of trend posts shared by respondents indicates that the most common type of content is achievements (e.g., academic or career-related), with 32 respondents (35.6%) posting about them. This is followed by travel or vacation posts, shared by 24 respondents (26.7%), and parties or social events, posted by 22 respondents (24.4%). Additionally, 12 respondents (13.3%) share all of these types of content. This suggests that while travel, social events, and achievements are all popular topics, personal and professional accomplishments are the most frequently shared.

Conforming to Influencer-Promoted Lifestyles

social pressure	Respondents	Percentage
Yes	44	47.8%
No	20	21.7%
May be	28	30.4%

Interpretation:
The distribution of responses regarding social pressure on social media shows that 44 respondents (47.8%) feel pressured, while 20 respondents (21.7%) do not experience any social pressure. Additionally, 28 respondents (30.4%) are uncertain, indicating they "may be" affected by social pressure. This suggests that nearly half of the respondents feel some level of social pressure, while a significant portion remains unsure about its impact.

Social Media-Induced Self-Doubt Related to Peer Success

Feeling of FOMO	Respondents	Percentage
Strongly agree	26	28.6%
Agree	23	25.3%
Neutral	22	24.2%
Disagree	11	12.1%
Strongly Disagree	09	9.9%

Interpretation:

The data indicates that a significant portion of respondents experience feelings of inadequacy when they see others' achievements on social media. More than half of the respondents (53.9%) either agree or strongly agree with this statement, suggesting that social media comparisons can negatively impact self-perception. Meanwhile, 24.2% remain neutral, indicating uncertainty or mixed feelings on the matter. In contrast, 22% of respondents disagree or strongly disagree, suggesting that they are less affected by such comparisons. Overall, the findings highlight that social media can contribute to feelings of inadequacy for a substantial number of individuals.

Unrealistic Standards and Expectations Driven by Social Media

Unrealistic Expectations	Respondents	Percentage
Never	29	31.5%
Rarely	28	30.5%
Sometimes	22	23.9%
Often	10	10.9%
Always	03	3.3%

Interpretation:

The data suggests that the majority of respondents do not frequently feel that social media content leads to unrealistic expectations or pressures. A combined 62% of respondents (31.5% "Never" and 30.5% "Rarely") indicate that they are minimally affected by such influences. However, 23.9% of respondents believe this happens "Sometimes," while a smaller percentage (10.9% "Often" and 3.3% "Always") feel that social media frequently creates unrealistic expectations. These findings suggest that while a portion of respondents recognize the potential pressures created by social media, a significant number do not perceive it as a major concern in their lives.

Social Media Avoidance as a Coping Mechanism

Avoid checking social media	Respondents	Percentage
Yes	65	70.6%
No	27	29.3%

Interpretation:
The data shows that 70.6% of respondents intentionally avoid checking social media to prevent FOMO or anxiety, while 29.3% do not. This suggests that social media can be a significant source of stress for many users. However, a notable portion does not feel the need to avoid it, indicating varied experiences with social media's impact on well-being.

Perceived Negative Impacts of Social-Media on Well-Being

Negative effects	Respondents	Percentage
Anxiety and stress	24	26.4%
Comparison with others	21	22%
FOMO (Fear of Missing Out)	23	25.3%
Decreased self-esteem	15	15.4%
Addiction to social media	08	8.8%

Interpretation:
The data highlights the negative effects of social media on well-being, with anxiety and stress (26.4%) being the most reported concern, followed closely by FOMO (25.3%) and comparison with others (22%). Additionally, 15.4% of respondents feel that social media decreases their self-esteem, while 8.8% report experiencing social media addiction. These findings suggest that social media can contribute to mental health challenges, particularly by increasing stress, comparison, and fear of missing out.

Enhancing Digital Well-Being: Addressing FOMO in Young Users

Suggestions	Respondents	Percentage
Limit time spent on social media	50	55.5%
Introduce more positive content or support	25	27.8%

Encourage transparency about real life vs. curated content	15	16.7%

Interpretation:
The data suggests that the most preferred solution to mitigate the negative effects of social media is to limit time spent on social media (55.5% of respondents). Additionally, 27.8% believe that introducing more positive content or support can help, while 16.7% emphasize the importance of encouraging transparency about real life vs. curated content. These findings highlight the need for mindful social media usage and the promotion of authentic, supportive online environments to improve well-being.

Conclusion and Scope for further research
Overall, the research finds that social media has a negative influence on the well-being of users with many experiencing FOMO, self-comparison and feeling inadequate. Today's social platforms help us stay connected and express ourselves, but those positives come at a considerable cost: they can make us feel anxious and inadequate. These side effects are known to many users, who undertake tactics to cope with them, such as reducing digital screen exposure or trying to consume more uplifting content. It speaks to the power of conscientious social media use.

Subsequent studies may wish to more thoroughly examine the longitudinal psychological consequences of social media.

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