

## Determinants of Fomo Among Genz and Its Coping Strategies

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### ABSTRACT

The Fear of Missing Out (FoMO) has emerged as a significant psychological phenomenon exacerbated by the pervasive use of social media among Generation Z (GenZ). This study explores the contributing factors to FoMO development and its coping strategies for GenZ. A mixed-method approach combined primary data collection through a validated questionnaire with secondary data from relevant literature. Statistical analyses, including factor analysis and reliability tests, were conducted on responses from 380 participants to identify key factors influencing FoMO. Results revealed five primary factors: Psychological Pressure, Social Self-Efficacy, Mediocre Emotions, Social Media Fatigue, and Social Media Usage, each contributing differently to the manifestation of FoMO among GenZ. The study suggests several coping mechanisms, including growing in self-awareness, reducing social media use, cultivating meaningful relationships, practicing appreciation, and accepting the joy of missing out (JOMO). By balancing online and physical encounters, these tactics seek to encourage a more positive digital lifestyle for Gen Z wellbeing.

**Keywords:** FoMO, GenZ, Social Media, Internet, Network.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Social media and online information services provide real-time access to conversations, events, and activities across multiple networks. Because of the rising Internet usage, researchers face challenges in assessing the association between electronic media and mental health. Previous reports have not shown unambiguous results in this regard. According to Amichai, Hamburger & Hayat (2011), the Internet can improve users' mental health by allowing them to connect with friends and increase their social networks. Research suggests that excessive Internet use leads to social isolation, negatively impacting psychological well-being (Gross, 2004). Previous studies (Selfhout et al., 2009) have found that irregularities in Internet usage are mostly due to the variety and frequency of user activities. Studies on Internet addicts have shown a detrimental association between social media usage and mental well-being (Turkle, 2017). According to this opinion, excessive social media usage can cause social and emotional distress. Recent research has highlighted the indirect impact of fear of missing out (FoMO) on the relationship between mental well-being and media activity, owing to the abundance of information available online. FoMO refers to anxiety caused by being unable to participate in social events, typically through electronic communication (Hetz et al., 2015). According to Przybylski et al. (2013a), social media users have a constant desire to interact with others, exchange information about their activities, and stay informed about the behaviors of others. "A pervasive apprehension that others might be having rewarding experiences from which one is absent" is the conventional definition of FoMO. At first, there was no connection between the occurrence and electronic communication. Dan Herman, a researcher and marketing strategist, created the initial definition of it in the middle of the 1990s (Wortham, 2011). The authors defined FoMO as "a fearful attitude towards the possibility of failing to exhaust available opportunities and missing the expected joy associated with succeeding in doing so". "A pervasive apprehension that others might be having rewarding experiences from which one is absent" is the conventional definition of FOMO.

Roughly 16% of all Internet users, both men and women, but mostly teenagers and young adults, are thought to suffer from a high degree of FoMO (Jupowicz-Ginalska et al., 2018). Among those in the 15–30 age range, one in five show signs of severe FoMO. According to research thus far, the main causes of FoMO are the fear of social exclusion and the inability to satisfy the psychological desire for belonging (Przybylski et al., 2013a). However, excessive use of electronic media might cause people to miss out on crucial social interactions in real life, creating a vicious cycle (Turkle, 2017).



Researchers have found that low life satisfaction, despair, and bad moods may all be linked to FoMO (Ellison et al., 2007). Additionally, it's thought that FoMO acts as a mediating element between the psychological factors already discussed and the use of social media, including Facebook addiction (Przybylski et al., 2013a). Stated differently, social media use and psychological need shortages can coexist in FoMO.

The present study aims to look into the contributing factors that induce the development of FoMO among GenZ, along with this the paper will also suggest various coping strategies to reduce social media usage.

## 2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The Fear of Missing Out (FoMO) has become a ubiquitous issue in the age of social media, especially among students. This literature review investigates the notion of FoMO, social media use, and its consequences, followed by an examination of the influence of social media-induced FoMO on students. FoMO stands for "Fear of Missing Out." It is a psychological phenomenon in which people feel concerned that others are having pleasant experiences while they are missing out. This worry can cause anxiety, feelings of inadequacy, and an obsessive desire to be constantly connected to what others are doing (Przybylski et al., 2013). According to Hayran and Anik (2021), social media helps users stay up to speed on the activities of their friends through notifications.

In other words, FoMO, or the Fear of Missing Out, is defined as a widespread concern that others may be having valuable experiences from which one is excluded. This psychological issue has been exacerbated by the rise of social media, where users are continually exposed to the carefully managed lives of others. According to research, FoMO stems from basic psychological demands such as a desire to belong and a sense of self-esteem. Individuals with high FoMO tend to have lower life satisfaction and higher levels of social media participation (Alt, 2015). A study discovered that FoMO and excessive social media use are consistently related, leading to problematic social media use (PSMU) and substantial mental health difficulties (Li et al., 2022; Wang et al., 2023). Another study found that students with high levels of FOMO reported higher levels of anxiety and despair, which contributed to a drop in their general well-being (Scheinfeld and Voorhees, 2022). Students frequently utilize social media platforms including Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, and Twitter. These platforms allow users to communicate their personal experiences, accomplishments, and social events, which frequently leads to a comparison culture (Vogel et al., 2014). Constant exposure to others' seemingly ideal lives might hurt their emotions and psychology. According to research, excessive social media use among students is associated with higher levels of anxiety, depression, and stress (Kross et al., 2013).

Social media may appeal to people with poor psychological health because of their fear of missing out (FoMO). Elhai et al. (2021b) claim that social media use may make FoMO symptoms worse, which would lower psychological well-being and enjoyment.

For many people, social media sites like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Snapchat, and TikTok have become essential components of everyday life. These platforms are utilized for the following purposes: Communication: Maintaining relationships with loved ones (Kuss & Griffiths, 2011). Entertainment: Multimedia content consumption and sharing. Information: Getting current events and news. Networking: Establishing business ties. Self-expression: Talking about ideas, viewpoints, and individual experiences. Marketing: Companies utilize social media for promotion and branding.

Social media offers a lot of advantages, but it also has several drawbacks, such as:

1. Mental Health Problems: Research has connected increased social media use to loneliness, depression, and anxiety (Pantic, 2014).
2. Addiction: Kuss and Griffiths (2011) claim that an obsession with checking social media can lead to addiction, which can impair productivity and interpersonal relationships.
3. Cyberbullying: Kowalski et al. (2014) claim that harassment and bullying can occur on social media platforms.
4. Sleep problems: Excessive social media use, especially shortly before bed, may lead to sleep problems, as claimed by Levenson et al. (2016).
5. Body Image Issues: Exposure to unrealistic body ideals can lead to eating disorders and body dissatisfaction (Perloff, 2014).

Social media use and FoMO have been shown to negatively impact students' academic performance and engagement. Students' urge to be connected can cause them to get disengaged from their studies, which can result in tardiness and poorer grades (Rosen et al., 2013). Social media can help people connect, but it can also cause feelings of isolation and loneliness. Despite always being linked online, students who experience high levels of FOMO frequently feel cut off from their peers (Oberst et al., 2017). The effects of FOMO on mental health are profound. Higher levels of FOMO have been linked to worse overall life satisfaction and an increase in anxiety and depressive symptoms (Baker et al., 2016). The urge to use social media continually can make pre-existing mental health conditions worse. The connection between FOMO and social media can be established as:

- Constant Comparing: Social media frequently draws attention to the positive aspects of other people's life, which



promotes incessant comparison and feelings of inferiority (Vogel et al., 2014).

- Anxiety and Stress: Because FOMO makes people feel as though they must keep up with others, it can lead to anxiety and stress (Baker et al., 2016).
- Negative Self-Esteem: Self-esteem can be lowered by comparing one's life to the meticulously planned lives of others (Vogel et al., 2014).
- Impulsive Behaviour: To fit in or avoid feeling left out, FOMO can cause impulsive actions to be made, such as attending events, making purchases, or participating in activities (Herman et al., 2018).
- Abuse of Social Media: People may abuse social media to combat FOMO, which might worsen the previously listed negative side effects (Baker et al., 2016).

Furthermore, there is a connection between students' low sleep quality and FOMO. According to Woods and Scott (2016), the urge to stay up to date on social media might result in late-night usage, which throws off sleep cycles and makes people feel exhausted during the day. Social media sites frequently feature attention-grabbing notification systems, which might divert students' attention and lead to a disorganized study environment (Rosen et al., 2013). Moreover, social overload—a condition in which students experience an overwhelming amount of information and social interactions—can result from FOMO, further impairing their mental health (Dhir et al., 2018).

### 3. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY:

The present study has two main objectives, i.e.

- To study the contributing factors towards the development of FoMO among Gen Z.
- To study the coping strategies available to reduce social media usage among GenZ.

### 4. METHODOLOGY:

The study utilized both primary and secondary data sources. For primary data, questionnaires were distributed to Gen Z members. A structured and validated questionnaire was designed to gauge the factors contributing to the development of FoMO among Gen Z. The questionnaire consisted of two sections: demographic details and contributing factors, containing 36 questions. The questions, comprising 29 contributing factors and 7 demographic variables, were rated on a 5-point Likert scale. A total of 406 responses were collected, out of which 380 were used for further analysis. A content validity test was administered to 33 statements, resulting in the elimination of four statements. The remaining 29 statements underwent a reliability test, which yielded a Cronbach alpha test value of 0.927, exceeding the minimum accepted level, confirming them as the final list for further analyses.

#### 4.1 Analysis of contributing factors towards the development of FoMO among Gen Z.

The literature suggested that it is necessary to understand different dimensions that influence GenZ towards developing FoMO among them. Therefore, factorization of the 29 variables using the Rotated Component Matrix was used to determine the contributing factors that influence the GenZ towards developing FoMO. The details of factor analysis are provided in Tables 1,2 and 3.

#### 4.2 Test of sample adequacy

The study also conducted a test for sample adequacy using KMO and Bartlett's test. The KMO value was found to be 0.816, which is considered suitable as it exceeds the threshold of 0.50. The Chi-Square value and Bartlett's test revealed statistically significant results, indicating the suitability of the sample for conducting the factor analysis.

**Table No.1: Test of sample adequacy and homogeneity through KMO and Bartlett's Test**

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.816
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	5639.353
	Df	406
	Sig.	.000

#### 4.3 Test of commonalities

Before conducting the factor analysis, it was made sure to check the communalities. Communality shows how much an item is related to all the other items in the group. Principal Component Analysis with the Extraction Method was used to check the communalities. It was found that the variance of the 29 variables influencing social media users in the GenZ category



ranges between 0.472 and 0.885. This means that the factors influencing GenZ individuals towards developing FoMO range from 47% to 88%.

#### 4.4 Rotated Component Matrix

Again, factorization of the 29 variables has been done through the Rotated Component Matrix as displayed in Table No.2. It indicates that in the case of contributing factors, the matrix consists of five components out of which the first factor comprises seven variables. Similarly, the second factor includes seven variables. Likewise, the third factor consists of six variables influencing customers' perception, the fourth factor consists of five variables and the fifth factor consists of four variables.

**Table No.2: Rotated Component Matrix**

		Rotated Component Matrix <sup>a</sup>				
Statements	Attributes	Component				
		1	2	3	4	5
How often do you feel lonely or isolated despite being connected on social media?	PSYCHOLOGICAL PRESSURE	.747				
How often do you feel depressed after scrolling through social media feeds?		.746				
Do you feel a sense of validation or self-worth based on the number of likes, comments, or shares your posts receive?		.670				
How often do you experience Fear of Missing Out (FoMO) when you see others' social media posts?		.662				
How often does FoMO affect your mood and emotions?		.650				
Do you seek social support or talk to friends/family when you experience negative emotions related to social media use?		.643				
Do you practice mindfulness or engage in offline activities to reduce social media usage?		.542				
How often do you find the importance of social media in shaping your self-image and identity?	SOCIAL SELF-EFFICACY		.784			
Do you believe that social media portrays an accurate representation of people's lives?			.716			
Do you feel pressured to conform to societal standards and trends promoted on social media?			.687			
To what extent do you edit your social media photos/videos before posting			.684			
Do the 'LIKES', 'COMMENTS', & 'SUBSCRIBE' have an important bearing on your outlook toward social media			.628			
Do you observe the lives of these influencers/celebrities?			.618			



How often do you feel pressured to maintain a certain image or lifestyle on social media?			.585			
Do you ever feel the need to delete or edit posts that haven't received many likes or comments?	MEDIocre EMOTIONS			.819		
How often do you engage in online arguments or disagreements on social media?				.710		
Have you ever deactivated or deleted a social media account due to negative experiences?				.647		
How often do you compare the number of followers you have with others?				.610		
How often do you experience feelings of jealousy towards others' social media posts?				.569		
Have you ever taken a break from social media to alleviate feelings of FoMO or stress?				.548		
How often do you feel anxious or stressed when you are not actively using social media?	SOCIAL MEDIA FATIGUE				.665	
How often do you experience sleep disturbances due to excessive use of social media?					.643	
How often do you feel a sense of urgency to respond to notifications and messages on social media?					.580	
How often do you feel stressed regarding social media?					.567	
How often social media impact your generation's mental health and well-being?					.467	
How often do you check your social media accounts?	SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE					.509
How often do you feel pressured to maintain an active presence on social media?						.452
How often do you compare your life to the lives of others on social media?						.407
How often do you post updates or content on your social media platforms?						.365
	Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization. <sup>a</sup>					
	a. Rotation converged in 10 iterations.					

#### 4.5 Test of variances

A test of variances of all the variables has also been undertaken, with the result displayed in Table No.3.

Thus, Table No.3 shows that five factors have been identified through the variance in the case of contributing factors. These five factors are the same which the factor analysis has found to be prominent. Further, as seen from the table, the cumulative percentage of the extracted sum of squared loadings with these five factors has been 54.943%.



Table No.3: Total Variance Explained

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	9.220	31.794	31.794	9.220	31.794	31.794	4.261	14.692	14.692
2	2.045	7.051	38.846	2.045	7.051	38.846	3.958	13.650	28.342
3	1.863	6.423	45.269	1.863	6.423	45.269	3.429	11.823	40.165
4	1.497	5.164	50.432	1.497	5.164	50.432	2.819	9.720	49.885
5	1.308	4.511	54.943	1.308	4.511	54.943	1.467	5.058	54.943
6	1.274	4.392	59.335						
7	1.187	4.093	63.428						
8	1.017	3.507	66.935						
9	.945	3.260	70.195						
10	.820	2.828	73.023						
11	.764	2.634	75.657						
12	.746	2.573	78.230						
13	.688	2.371	80.601						
14	.665	2.292	82.893						
15	.624	2.151	85.045						
16	.541	1.865	86.910						
17	.511	1.762	88.672						
18	.461	1.589	90.261						
19	.435	1.501	91.762						
20	.390	1.346	93.108						
21	.373	1.285	94.393						
22	.294	1.015	95.408						
23	.284	.978	96.386						
24	.230	.792	97.178						
25	.203	.698	97.876						
26	.179	.616	98.493						
27	.164	.565	99.058						
28	.151	.519	99.577						





29	.123	.423	100.000						
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Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

From the above analysis, it is found that GenZ is influenced by five major factors that contribute to the development of FoMO. They are (i) Psychological Pressure (ii) Social Self-efficacy (iii) Mediocre Emotions, (iv) Social Media Fatigue, and (v) Social Media Usage.

The first factor, *Psychological Pressure* with its seven statements shows the psychological impact of being constantly compared with the social media feed. It also shows the mood and emotion that GenZ exhibits due to the influence of social media usage. The first factor is a very important criterion in developing FoMO among GenZ.

The second factor, *Social Self-Efficacy*, with its seven statements, shows the relation between self-efficacy, loneliness, and internet addiction among GenZ. Social Self-Efficacy can be defined as one's ability to initiate social interaction and build relationships. However, a high level of Social Self-Efficacy among GenZ due to increased use of social media, makes them vulnerable towards living to the standards manifested in social feeds. Hence acts as a contributing factor to the development of FoMO among GenZ.

The third factor, *Mediocre Emotions*, with its six statements shows the frequent use of social media may lead to depression, anxiety, and post-social feed trauma stress. Moreover, negative experiences through social media usage give rise to insecurity, comparison, and self-doubt which again leads to the development of FoMO among GenZ.

The fourth and fifth factor, *Social Media Fatigue and Social Media Usage*, with their five and four statements respectively shows the fatigue experienced by GenZ while not using social media or the amount of time spent on different online platforms. This also acts as a contributing factor in developing FoMO among GenZ.

## 5. COPING STRATEGIES FOR FOMO:

In recent years, social media has transformed human communication. On the one hand, it has provided new avenues for forming relationships and maintaining social connections, and it has made it possible for people to engage with each other more frequently and reciprocally, regardless of time or location. However, this novel approach to social communication has resulted in several unanticipated negative outcomes, such as people perceiving a new set of interaction rules and virtual groups operating in ways different from conventional communication. One such negative emotion is the fear of missing out (FoMO). Usually, this is used to describe social media users' fixation with lost opportunities while they are not online or with their incapacity or unwillingness to interact and contact people to the fullest extent possible. Researchers are currently looking at the negative impacts of FoMO that people who utilize social media feel. FoMO is one of the primary types of problematic social media attachment, and it has been associated with a variety of negative life events and feelings, such as anxiety, restless nights, decreased life competence, emotional stress, and negative effects on one's physical health. Bergen Counselling Centre ("7 Strategies to Stop FoMO and Live in the Moment," n.d.) offers the following coping mechanisms:

### 1. Developing Self-Awareness

To begin managing FOMO, one has to first develop self-awareness. When jealousy, inadequacy, or restlessness creeps in, one notices it and accepts it without passing judgment. One has to recognize that these feelings are normal reactions to erroneous expectations and perceived social demands.

### 2. Minimizing Your Exposure to Social Media

Overuse of social media is making FOMO worse, even while it is also leading to beneficial contacts and amusement. People are establishing limits on the time they are devoting to social media by planning "screen-free" periods or restricting their use to specific times. Instead of encouraging comparison, one has to curate their social media feeds so that posts that inspire, inform, or uplift them are featured first. After a demanding workweek, if one is choosing to take time for themselves and remain in on Friday night, one shouldn't waste it by browsing through their social media accounts.

### 3. Showing Appreciation

One has to develop an attitude of thankfulness for the present moment and all the positive aspects of their life to combat FOMO. One has to keep a gratitude journal to record their daily blessings, whether they are small pleasures, encouraging connections, or accomplishments in their life. By changing their attention from what they lack to what they have, one is feeling more fulfilled and pleased.

### 4. Accepting the Joy of Missing Out or JOMO

One has to take advantage of JOMO, or the joy of missing out, rather than giving in to FOMO. One has to realize that it is acceptable to prioritize self-care, time alone, and pursuits of true happiness—even if they are going against popular culture or fashion. One has to develop self-reliance and self-assurance in their decisions because they are taking care of their requirements.



### 5. *Encouraging Deeply Meaningful Bonds*

Regarding social connections, one has to find that quality is more important than quantity. One has to make an effort to cultivate sincere connections with loved ones, friends, and groups that encourage and uplift them. One has to take part in heartfelt conversations, share life stories, and engage in acts of kindness that promote a feeling of connection and belonging.

### 6. *Incorporating Mindfulness*

One has to incorporate mindfulness practices such as deep breathing, body scans, and meditation to become more grounded in the present moment and lessen FOMO. By practicing non-judgmental awareness of their thoughts, feelings, and physical experiences, one is developing a stronger sense of peace, clarity, and acceptance.

### 7. *Making Sensible Objectives*

One has to focus on creating attainable, significant goals that are consistent with their beliefs and values, as opposed to pursuing flimsy desires or evaluating oneself against others. One has to break apart larger goals into smaller, manageable steps to achieve a sense of accomplishment.

## 6. CONCLUSION:

The current study investigated the complex phenomena of Generation Z's Fear of Missing Out (FoMO), looking at possible coping mechanisms and contributing factors. The research, which combined primary and secondary data sources, found five major dimensions—psychological pressure, social self-efficacy, mediocre emotions, social media exhaustion, and social media usage—that had a substantial impact on the development of FOMO. These components highlight the close relationship between Gen Z's psychological health and social media use, highlighting how persistent exposure to skilfully crafted online personas and cultural pressures can exacerbate feelings of depression, anxiety, and inadequacy. The findings show that while social media is a vital tool for connecting and expressing oneself, using it excessively or inappropriately can have detrimental impacts on mental health. Statistical investigations, including factor analysis and reliability tests, validated the robustness of these findings and offered a comprehensive understanding of the factors driving fear of missing out (FoMO) in young social media users. To tackle these issues, deliberate measures must be taken to lessen the negative impact of social media on mental health. The study offers several coping mechanisms, including growing self-awareness, reducing social media use, cultivating meaningful relationships, practicing gratitude, and accepting the joy of missing out (JOMO). These tactics highlight the significance of striking a balance between online and offline contacts to foster a positive engagement with digital platforms. Self-care and thoughtful involvement are important, and they can help people feel better overall and lessen the negative effects of FOMO. To ensure a wider application of the results, the study also recommends more research to examine the efficacy of these coping mechanisms across a variety of demographic groups and cultural contexts. In the end, this study advances our knowledge of FOMO and offers helpful advice for helping Generation Z lead a more contented and balanced online existence.

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