

Social Media, Self Worth and Fear of Missing Out

by

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Chapter 1

1.1 ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We express our sincere gratitude to Professor Rajbala Singh for her invaluable guidance, unwavering support, and thoughtful feedback throughout our BTech project on "Social Media, Self-Worth, and Fear of Missing Out." Her expertise, encouragement, and commitment have played a pivotal role in shaping our research into a meaningful and comprehensive study. Professor Rajbala's constructive suggestions and consistent motivation inspired us to aim for excellence and delve deeper into this intriguing field. We are profoundly thankful for her generosity in sharing her knowledge, insights, and resources, which greatly enriched this project and deepened our understanding of the subject. Her dedication and encouragement have been instrumental in our academic growth and the successful completion of this research.

1.2 Abstract

This research investigates the complex relationship between social media addiction, Fear of Missing Out (FOMO), and self-esteem among college students. In this era, social networking sites have become an important part of students' daily lives, offering opportunities for connection but also fostering overdependence, comparison, and validation-seeking behaviors. The study explores how excessive usage of social media contributes to heightened FOMO, which, in turn, affects students' emotional well-being and self-esteem. By analyzing patterns of social media use and their psychological consequences, the research aims to shed light on the detrimental effects of social media addiction on college students. The findings emphasize the importance of promoting balanced digital habits and creating awareness about the mental health challenges posed by unregulated social media use.

1.3 Motivation

1. **Increasing Social Media Usage:** Observing the rapid rise in social media usage among college students and its influence on their daily lives raised concerns about its psychological impact.
2. **Emotional Challenges:** Many students report feelings of stress, anxiety, and dissatisfaction due to social media, which prompted the need to study its deeper effects on self-esteem and emotional well-being.
3. **Impact of FOMO:** The growing prevalence of Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) among students, driven by the constant exposure to curated and idealized online lives, highlighted the need to understand its role in mental health.
4. **Lack of Awareness:** Despite widespread use, many students are unaware of how social media overdependence affects their behavior, relationships, and self-esteem, making this study essential for raising awareness.
5. **Mental Health Concerns:** With increasing rates of mental health issues like anxiety and low self-worth in college students, this study aims to uncover potential links with social media addiction.

1.4 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Social media has become an inseparable part of college students' lives, often dictating their social interactions and emotional well-being. While platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and Snapchat offer ways to stay connected, they also create a constant cycle of comparison and validation. Many students feel compelled to stay updated with their peers' activities to avoid missing out, leading to Fear of Missing Out (FOMO). This can result in anxiety, overcommitment to social media, and neglect of real-life responsibilities.

Excessive time spent on social media can also lead to addiction, where students prioritize online interactions over face-to-face connections. This reliance fosters unrealistic standards of beauty, success, and happiness, which can erode self-esteem when students perceive themselves as falling short. Furthermore, the lack of genuine interpersonal communication can increase feelings of isolation, further damaging their sense of self-worth. By addressing these interconnected issues, the study highlights the urgent need to promote healthier habits around social media use and raise awareness about its impact on mental health among college students.

1.5 INTRODUCTION

Variables

Our Hypothesis is between 3 variables:

1. **Social Media Addiction:** Social media addiction refers to an excessive and compulsive use of social media platforms that interferes with daily life, relationships, and overall well-being. It is characterized by a strong urge to stay connected online, spending excessive amounts of time browsing, posting, or engaging with content, often at the expense of personal responsibilities or offline activities. This behavior can lead to negative consequences such as reduced productivity, emotional distress, and withdrawal symptoms when access to social media is restricted. Previous research has shown that problematic social media use is associated with dissatisfaction and difficulties in interpersonal relationships [5]
2. **Fear Of Missing Out:** FOMO is a pervasive apprehension that others are having rewarding experiences from which one is absent. It is often driven by the constant exposure to curated content on social media, showcasing others' achievements, events, and social lives. This fear leads to feelings of inadequacy, anxiety, and a compulsion to stay constantly updated, often resulting in excessive social media engagement to avoid being "left out."
3. **Self-Esteem:** Self-esteem refers to an individual's overall sense of self-worth or value. It is influenced by how people perceive themselves in comparison to others. On social media, the exposure to idealized portrayals of success, beauty, and happiness can lead to unhealthy comparisons, causing individuals to feel inadequate or dissatisfied with themselves.

1.6 OBJECTIVE

- **To study the impact of Social media addiction on FOMO.**

Experiencing FOMO could undermine any psychological advantages gained from social networking sites.[7]

- **To study the impact of FOMO on Self-Esteem.** FOMO may bring about a comparison of self with others. This may be detrimental to the self's Self-Esteem.
- **To study the impact of Social Media Addiction on Self-Esteem.** Social Media Addiction develops a link of Self-Esteem with self's presence on social media in the form of likes and mentions.
- **To Study the impact of the mediating effect of FOMO on Social Media addiction and Self-Esteem.** There may be a relationship between Self-Esteem and social media addiction through FOMO. Social Media Addiction may affect FOMO and FOMO may affect Self-Esteem.

Based on these observations We Have Hypothesized the following :-

- **H1:** Social Media addiction will influence FOMO.

- **H2:** Social Media addiction will influence Self-Esteem.
- **H3:** FoMO will influence Self-Esteem.
- **H4:** Social Media addiction will influence FOMO which in turn will affect Self-Esteem.[6]

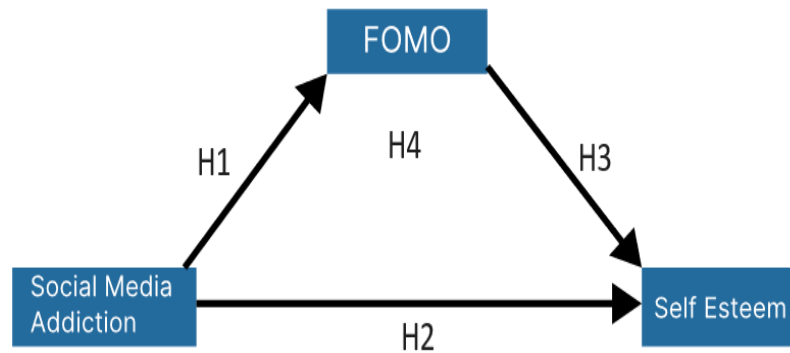


Figure 1.1

1.7 METHODOLOGY

1. **Participants and Procedure:** The sample contained 221 college students, and the data of 215 college students was usable. Mean Age: 18.96 years. Median Age: 19 years.

Participants were sent an online form by sharing a link to it, hosted on Google Forms. Prior to data collection, participants were informed about the study's general purpose and provided their consent. The data were collected anonymously, ensuring participants' privacy was protected.[3]

Charecteristics Table

| Charecteristics | Composition |
|----------------------------|---|
| Gender | (a) Male - 78%(168) (b) Female - 21% (46) (c) Other(s) - 1% (1) |
| Time Spent on Social Media | (a) 1-3 hours - 56.2%(121) (b) 3-5 hours - 32.0%(69) (c) 5-7 hours - 9.3%(20) (d) 7-9 hours - 0.93%(2) (e) 9+ hours - 1.3%(3) |
| Apps Used | (a) Instagram - 90.9% (b) Whatsapp - 90.5% (c) Snapchat - 30.9% (d) X - 17.7% |

1.7.1 MEASURES

- Bergen Social Media Addiction Scale (BSMAS):** The BSMAS is a six-item self-assessment tool designed to measure problematic social media use by examining key addiction components such as salience, mood modification, tolerance, withdrawal, conflict, and relapse. Responses are recorded on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 ("very rarely") to 5 ("very often").
- Fear of Missing Out Scale (FoMOS):** The FoMOS is a 10-item self-report measure aimed at evaluating the fear of missing out. Participants rate each item on a five-point Likert scale, with options ranging from 1 ("Not at all true") to 5 ("Extremely true").
- Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES)** The RSES is a 10-item self-report questionnaire used to measure overall self-esteem. Responses are scored on a four-point Likert scale, ranging from 0 ("strongly agree") to 5 ("strongly disagree").[8]

1.7.2 Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using SPSS, and we used the Hayes extension for mediation analysis.

Reliability

We have estimated the reliability using cronbach's alpha which is a way of calculating reliability by comparing the shared variance, or covariance, between the items in an instrument with the total variance.

The reliability of each measure is given as follows:-

| Variables | Reliability |
|------------------------|-------------|
| Social Media Addiction | 0.6 |
| FOMO | 0.79 |
| Self-Esteem | 0.76 |

Cronbach's alpha ranges from 0 to 1.

- A correlation of zero indicates that the items are entirely unrelated and independent of one another. This means that knowing the answer to one question does not provide any information about the answers to the other questions.
- A value of one signifies perfect correlation, meaning that knowing the value of one response provides complete knowledge about the others.

Analysts often consider 0.7 as a standard benchmark for Cronbach's alpha. At this threshold or higher, the items demonstrate sufficient consistency to indicate reliability. While values close to 0.7 are generally acceptable, they are not considered optimal.

In some industries the value may differ. Some of them may prefer 0.9 or greater but the general norm is 0.7.

Bergen Social Media Addiction Scale (=0.6)

- A Cronbach's alpha of 0.6 is generally considered below the acceptable threshold for reliability.
- This indicates that the items on the Bergen Social Media Addiction Scale may not be measuring the same underlying construct consistently.

Fear of Missing Out Scale (=0.79)

- With a Cronbach's alpha of 0.79, the reliability of this scale is acceptable.

- This reliability level suggests that the Fear of Missing Out (FoMO) Scale can be trusted to provide consistent results.

Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (=0.76)

- A Cronbach's alpha of 0.76 is within the acceptable range for reliability.
- The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale has a well-established reputation, and this result aligns with its common use as a reliable measure of self-esteem.
- There may still be opportunities to optimize the reliability further, such as by reviewing item wording or ensuring the sample aligns well with the target population.

1.7.3 Correlation

| Variables | Reliability |
|--|--------------------|
| FOMO and Self-Esteem | -0.225 |
| Social Media Addiction and Self-Esteem | -0.268 |
| Social Media Addiction and FOMO | 0.342 |

Any value above 0.1 shows a significant correlation between the variables.

Self-Esteem and FOMO

- **Correlation Value: -0.225**
- The correlation is negative and significant. A negative correlation indicates that as FOMO increases, Self-Esteem tends to decrease.
- FOMO can contribute to self-doubt and feelings of inadequacy, though other factors likely play a larger role in determining self-esteem.

Social Media Addiction and Self-Esteem

- **Correlation Value: -0.268**
- The correlation is negative and significant. A negative correlation suggests that as Social Media Addiction increases, Self-Esteem tends to decrease.
- This highlights that individuals with higher levels of social media addiction are likely to have lower self-esteem.

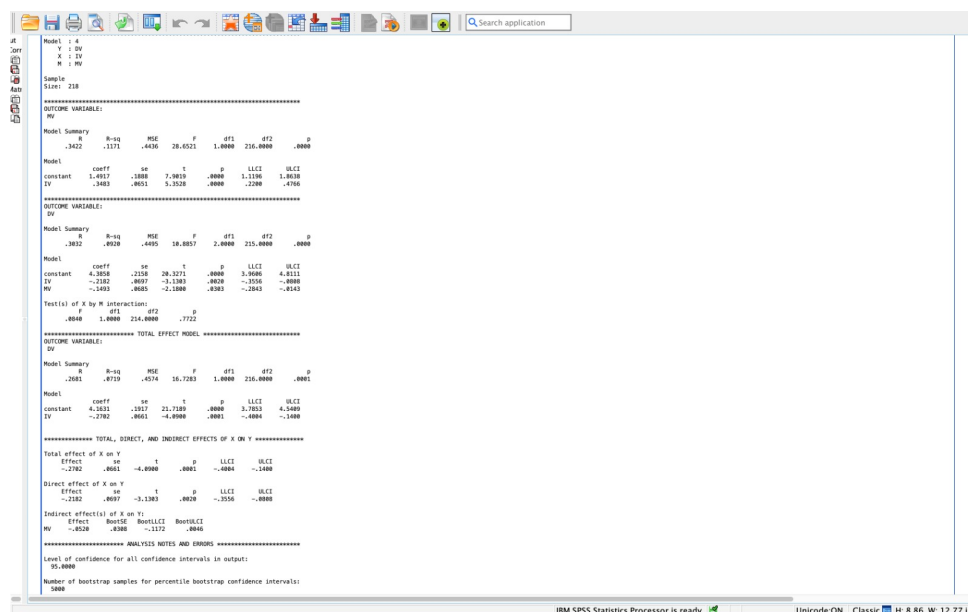
- This may be due to excessive social media use leading to negative comparisons, validation-seeking behaviors, and time displacement, which can undermine self-worth.

Social Media Addiction and FOMO

- **Correlation Value: 0.342**
- The correlation is positive. A positive correlation indicates that as FOMO increases, Social Media Addiction also tends to increase.
- This reflects that individuals who experience higher FOMO are more likely to become addicted to social media.

1.7.4 Mediation

The mediation analysis is done using the Hayes extension. Mediation is done to calculate the impact of Social Media Addiction on Self-Esteem through FOMO.



- **Confidence Interval:** 95% Confidence Interval (CI) indicates the range of values within which we can be 95% confident that the true effect (e.g., direct effect, indirect effect, or total effect) lies. It is used to assess the statistical significance and reliability of the estimated effects.
- **Boot LLCI:** The lower boundary of the confidence interval for the indirect effect (mediation effect). It also indicates the smallest likely value of the mediation effect based on the bootstrapped sample.
- **Boot ULCI:** The upper boundary of the confidence interval for the indirect effect. It also indicates the largest likely value of the mediation effect based on the bootstrapped sample.

How are the results recorded?

- If 0 comes in between the the boot ULCI and boot LLCI the mediation becomes insignificant.

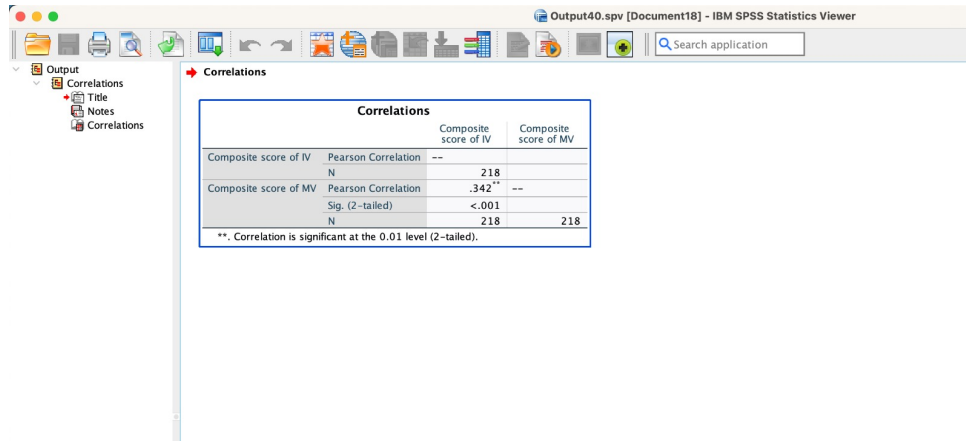
Mediation result

- Since 0 comes in between the the boot ULCI and boot LLCI the **mediation becomes insignificant.**

1.8 Results and Discussion

After analyzing all the data with statistics and tools and examining the results . We conclude the hypothesis as follows:

1. H1 : Social Media addiction will influence FOMO:



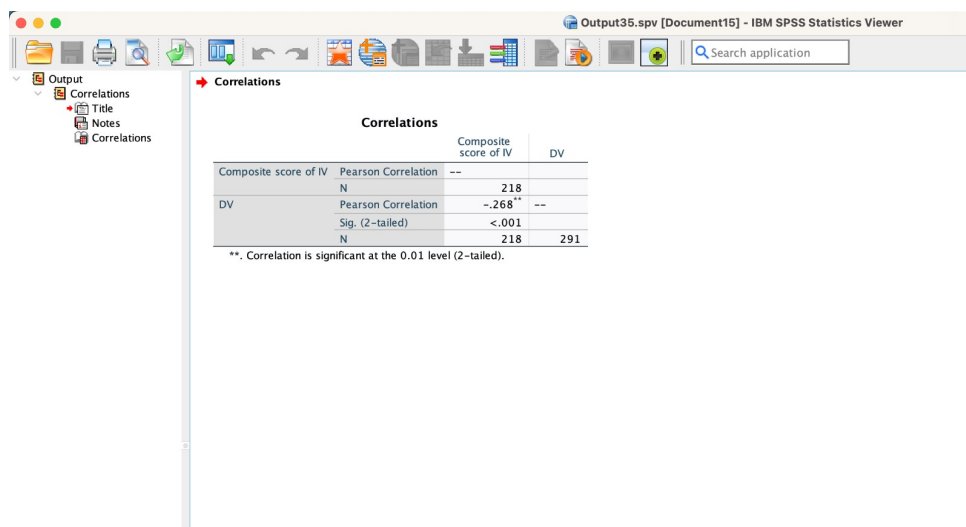
Correlations

| | | Composite score of IV | Composite score of MV |
|-----------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Composite score of IV | Pearson Correlation | 1 | -.342** |
| | N | 218 | |
| Composite score of MV | Pearson Correlation | -.342** | 1 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | <.001 | |
| | N | 218 | 218 |

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

- Social Media Addiction is positively Correlated with FOMO.
- Social media creates more awareness of what goes around in one others' lives. This creates more curiosity about these events and posts which increases the fear of being excluded.[1]
- Much of the FOMO is due to social media overuse and the rest of it is due to the person's negative perceptions about themselves along with social upward comparisons.[2]

2. H2 : Social Media addiction will influence Self-Esteem:



Correlations

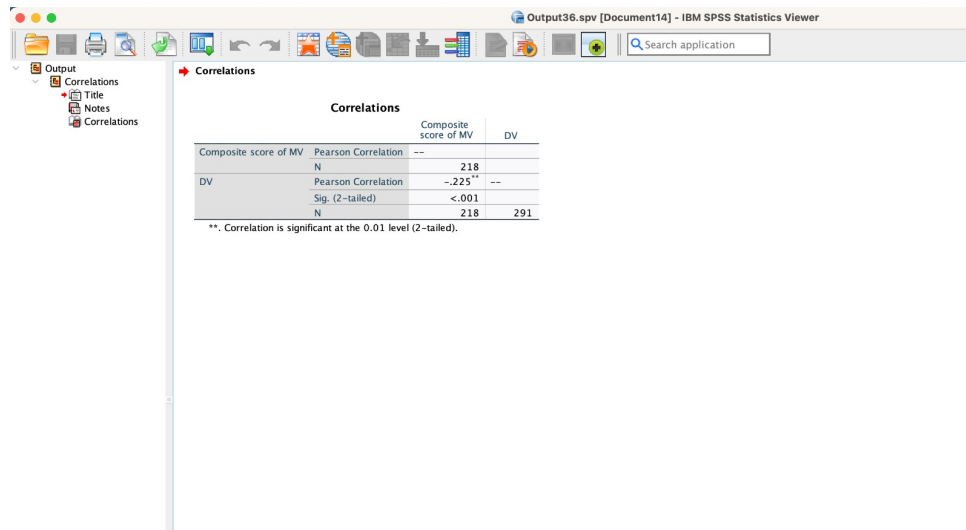
| | | Composite score of IV | DV |
|-----------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|---------|
| Composite score of IV | Pearson Correlation | 1 | -.268** |
| | N | 218 | |
| DV | Pearson Correlation | -.268** | 1 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | <.001 | |
| | N | 218 | 291 |

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

- Social Media Addiction is negatively Correlated with FOMO.

- Social media addiction leads to more comparison of the self with others having rewarding experiences. It also brings forth negative body image which decreases self-esteem.
- People with low self-esteem often struggle with feelings of helplessness, heightened social anxiety, isolation, and a fear of exclusion. This aligns with the principles of the Compensatory Internet Use Theory.[4]

3. H3 : FoMO will influence Self-Esteem.:



The image shows a screenshot of the IBM SPSS Statistics Viewer window. The title bar reads 'Output36.spv [Document14] - IBM SPSS Statistics Viewer'. The left sidebar shows a tree view with 'Output' expanded, containing 'Correlations', 'Title', 'Notes', and 'Correlations'. The main content area displays a table titled 'Correlations'.

| | | Composite score of MV | DV |
|-----------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|-----|
| Composite score of MV | Pearson Correlation | -- | |
| | N | 218 | |
| DV | Pearson Correlation | -.225** | -- |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | <.001 | |
| | N | 218 | 291 |

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

- FOMO is positively correlated with Self-Esteem .
- Spending excessive time in the virtual world can lead to feelings of isolation from real-life relationships. This lack of human interaction can negatively impact self-esteem, as individuals may begin to compare themselves to the virtual self.

4. H4 : Social Media addiction will influence FOMO which in turn will affect Self-Esteem:

- There is no mediation in the hypothesis . It is insignificant.
- There is no effect of social media addiction on self esteem through the fear of missing out.
- FOMO and Social Media Addiction affects Self-Esteem directly but not with a mediating impact.
- **This Hypothesis is proved wrong according to the findings.**

1.9 Implications

The results can be used for various practical implications in the betterment of mental issues

- The obtained results can be used for counselling students since college is an unsupervised environment. Social Media addiction can be really be adopted very easily abandoning real connections.

- It can be used as a basis for developing the theoretical understanding of the model for a mental tracker examining FOMO and Self-Esteem. We can quantify these feelings in a person and have a more refined system for solving these issues.
- This study can be helpful in practicing mindful social media use and how to develop various coping mechanisms to help fight FOMO and social-comparison because social media. Because social media can't be deleted from one's life, one should know how to use it in a useful manner and giving it the appropriate importance.
- We can employ our study with college counselling programmes and create a space to for encouraging more real-time relationships and connections which are taken for granted with the increasing popularity of virtual connections.

1.10 Limitations

- The current sample could have had more number of students for having a more general outcome .
- The current sample also could have incorporated responses from other institutes to have more diversity in terms of region and ethnicity.
- A personalized data collection in the form of interviews and conversation could have brought forth a more comfortable and supportive environment for the candidates and therefore getting better results.

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1.11 Appendix

Questionnaire of FOMO

Items

1. I fear others have more rewarding experiences than me.
2. I fear my friends have more rewarding experiences than me.
3. I get worried when I find out my friends are having fun without me.
4. I get anxious when I don't know what my friends are up to.
5. It is important that I understand my friends "in jokes."
6. Sometimes, I wonder if I spend too much time keeping up with what is going on.
7. It bothers me when I miss an opportunity to meet up with friends.
8. When I have a good time it is important for me to share the details online (e.g. updating status).
9. When I miss out on a planned get-together it bothers me.
10. When I go on vacation, I continue to keep tabs on what my friends are doing.

Questionnaire of Social Media Addiction

1. You spend a lot of time thinking about social media or planning how to use it.
2. You feel an urge to use social media more and more.
3. You use social media in order to forget about personal problems.
4. You have tried to cut down on the use of social media without success.
5. You become restless or troubled if you are prohibited from using social media.
6. You use social media so much that it has had a negative impact on your job/studies.

Questionnaire of Self-Esteem

1. On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.
2. At times, I think I am no good at all.
3. I feel that I have a number of good qualities.
4. I am able to do things as well as most other people.
5. I feel I do not have much to be proud of.
6. I certainly feel useless at times.
7. I feel that I'm a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others.
8. I wish I could have more respect for myself.
9. All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure.
10. I take a positive attitude toward myself.