
Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) and Social Isolation: Exploring Association and Directionality of Influence

Research question:

Choice one: What is the nature of the correlation between Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) and social isolation, and how do these phenomena influence each other?

Choice 2: How are Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) and social isolation correlated, and what is the reciprocal influence between these phenomena?

Hypothesis:

There is a significant correlation between Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) and social isolation, suggesting a reciprocal influence between these phenomena.

Alternate hypothesis

There is no significant correlation between Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) and social isolation, indicating that these phenomena do not influence each other.

Tools required to assess Fomo and Social Isolation:

Demographic details:

- a) Name initials
- b) Age/Developmental stage
- c) Gender
- d) Country (India or Bangladesh)
- e) Occupation (Student, Employed, Unemployed, Other)

Questionnaires:

Fear of Missing Out (Fomo) Scale by Przybylski, Murayama, DeHann & Gladwell 2013 and The UCLA Loneliness Scale Version 3 (UCLA-LS3) by Russell.D 1996

Mapping point (The Directionality of Influence Question)

Which of the following statements do you feel describes your experience more accurately?

- A) I often feel socially isolated, and this leads to my fear of missing out on social events and interactions.

Example: "I've been feeling lonely lately because I don't have many friends to hang out with. Due to this, it makes me more aware of the events and things I'm missing out on, and it makes me feel even more left out."

B) I often fear missing out on social events and interactions, and this leads to my social isolation.

Example: "I often decline invitations to social events because I worry about not enjoying myself or not being included in conversations. This fear of missing out on good experiences and memories has led me to stay home more often, increasing my social isolation."

Independent and Dependent Variables:

In this study, we are exploring the relationship between two variables: Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) and social isolation. Unlike traditional experimental designs where one variable is manipulated as the independent variable and the other is observed as the dependent variable, our research aims to understand the dynamic interaction between FOMO and social isolation. Instead of categorizing them into a strict independent and dependent variable framework, our focus is on investigating the mutual influence between these variables. Through our analysis, we aim to understand the ways in which FOMO and social isolation impact each other, without imposing a predefined hierarchy of independence and dependence.

Potential confounding variables could include:

1. **Social Media Usage:** The frequency and intensity of social media usage might influence both FOMO and social isolation. People who use social media excessively may experience heightened FOMO, leading to increased social isolation.
2. **Personality Traits:** Certain personality traits, such as introversion or social anxiety, could impact both FOMO and social isolation. For instance, individuals with high social anxiety might experience both increased FOMO and social isolation.
3. **Coping Mechanisms:** How individuals cope with feelings of social isolation or FOMO can be a confounding factor. Some individuals might engage in activities to alleviate these feelings, while others may withdraw further, intensifying both FOMO and social isolation.
4. **Self-Esteem:** Self-esteem levels can influence how individuals perceive social interactions and cope with the fear of missing out. Low self-esteem might exacerbate both FOMO and social isolation.
5. **Online Social Support:** The presence or absence of supportive social connections online could affect how individuals experience FOMO and social isolation. Positive online interactions might mitigate these feelings, while lack of support could intensify them.
6. **Cultural Differences:** Cultural norms and expectations regarding social interactions and online behaviors can significantly impact how FOMO and social isolation are perceived and experienced.
7. **Age and Generation:** Different age groups and generations might have varying attitudes and behaviors related to social interactions and technology use, influencing the experience of FOMO and social isolation.
8. **Life Events:** Significant life events such as loss, trauma, or major transitions can affect social behaviors and emotional well-being, potentially confounding the relationship between FOMO and social isolation.

In this study, due to constraints, not all confounding variables can be explored. We choose to examine Age as a confounding factor, acknowledging that other variables remain unexplored. These unexamined factors present avenues for future research, offering opportunities for scholars to delve deeper into their influence on the relationship between Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) and social isolation.

Moderating Variables:

The present research could identify certain moderating variables (such as age, gender, personality traits, or coping mechanisms) that influence the relationship between FOMO and social isolation. For instance, younger individuals might experience a stronger correlation between FOMO and social isolation compared to older adults.

Categorical variables:

1. Responses to Mapping Point Question:

Categories:

Option A, Option B

Rationale: Indicates the participants' self-perceived relationship between FOMO and social isolation.

2. Age Group/Developmental stage:

Categories:

Adolescents (12 to 22)

Young Adulthood (22 to 40)

Rationale: Segments participants based on age for comparative analysis.

Statistical Analysis

1) Descriptive Statistics:

- Mean, Median, and Standard Deviation: To describe the central tendency and variability of FOMO and social isolation scores.
- Frequency Distributions: To understand the distribution of responses for different variables.

2) Correlation Analysis:

- Pearson Correlation Coefficient: To measure the strength and direction of the linear relationship between FOMO and social isolation.
- Spearman Rank Correlation: If the relationship is not linear, this non-parametric test can be used to assess the monotonic relationship.

3) Regression Analysis:

- **Multiple Regression:** With multiple predictor variables (such as age, gender, etc.), multiple regression can help analyze their combined effect on FOMO and social isolation.
- **Mediation Analysis:** If there's a theoretical reason to believe that a third variable (mediator: age or gender) influences the relationship between FOMO and social isolation, mediation analysis can be employed to explore this relationship.

3A) Moderation Analysis:

- **Moderated Regression Analysis:** To understand whether the relationship between FOMO and social isolation is influenced by moderating variables like age or personality traits.

4) Network Analysis:

- **Network analysis** can be applied to understand the interconnections between specific FOMO and social isolation items. It visualizes the relationships between individual items, shedding light on which aspects of FOMO are more strongly linked to social isolation.

Potential Hypothetical Findings:

- **Positive Correlation:** The study might find a significant positive correlation between FOMO and social isolation, indicating that individuals experiencing high levels of FOMO also tend to report higher levels of social isolation. This could suggest that FOMO contributes to social isolation.
- **Negative Correlation:** Alternatively, the research might reveal a significant negative correlation between FOMO and social isolation. In this scenario, individuals experiencing high levels of FOMO might actually report lower levels of social isolation, indicating that the fear of missing out prompts more social engagement and interaction.
- **Bidirectional Relationship:** The study could uncover a bidirectional relationship, indicating that FOMO and social isolation mutually influence each other. This finding would imply a complex interplay where FOMO exacerbates social isolation, and, conversely, social isolation intensifies FOMO.
- **No Significant Correlation:** The study might find no significant correlation between FOMO and social isolation. This result could suggest that these two phenomena, at least in the studied population, are not strongly linked and might be influenced by other factors not considered in the study.