

The Relationship Between Social Networking Sites Use And Fear Of Missing Out: A Correlational Analysis Among Young Adults In Shimla

Kritika Jhagta¹, Dr. Gayatri Raina²

¹Department of Psychology, Gurugram University, Gurugram, Mail id: kritikajhagta6@gmail.com

²Department of Psychology, Gurugram University, Gurugram, Mail id: gayatri.raina3@gmail.com

Abstract

In the present scenario, the advent of Social Networking Sites (SNS) has brought a drastic change in modern communication in relation to how we connect, interact, collaborate, and share information across the globe. This has led to the emergence of a completely new phenomenon, termed the Fear of Missing Out (FoMO), where one feels that others are having a better and more pleasurable experience, which they are missing, leading to the experience of “missing out”. In today’s era, social networking sites have become a very integral part of the youth’s lives, bringing a noticeable change in the way they communicate and express themselves. It is evident that these networking platforms offer numerous benefits, yet raise concerns about the potential negative impact on the psychological well-being of their users. This study investigates the relationship between social networking sites and fear of missing out among adults in the Shimla district of Himachal Pradesh. The study used standard questionnaires to collect information from 500 young adults selected through convenience sampling in a detailed research plan with statistical analysis. This approach helped to further examine the topic itself through systematic data collection. The results further showed a significant positive correlation between social networking sites usage and the experience of FoMO among young adult males and females. As per the results, young adults experience more FoMO due to high social media use, where female young adults experience higher FoMO compared to young adult males. Thus, social media platforms surely induce fear of missing out among young people and hamper their psychological well-being. Moreover, controlling social media usage can help reduce these negative effects on psychological well-being.

Keywords: Social Networking Sites, Fear of Missing Out (FoMO).

Introduction

As per current trends, ICT has changed modern life regarding how people meet, talk, and work in their surroundings. This technology has made big changes in our daily activities. Social networking sites surely represent a breakthrough in ICT as they have become part of daily life. Moreover, these platforms provide people with new ways to express themselves. These spaces provide good opportunities for communication and participation, and further allow for complex problem-making itself. FOMO is a psychological problem that is further increasing due to social media use in today's digital world, and this issue itself affects people's mental well-being (Przybylski, Murayama, DeHaan & Gladwell, 2013). Basically, FoMO triggers people to use social media the same way, which leads to unmet psychological needs and emotional problems. Social media surely fills the gap when our desires are not fulfilled, but too much attachment to it creates problems. Moreover, this leads to increased feelings of anxiety, distress, anger, and worthlessness (Wortham, 2011). This is further troubling because social media makes people compare their real lives to perfect online lives. These comparisons actually harm people's mental health and definitely make them feel less happy and worried. They also make people feel bad about themselves and scared compared to others. Moreover, uncontrolled social media use surely makes these emotional and mental problems worse (Best & Taylor, 2014; Chou & Edge, 2012). Moreover, without proper monitoring, these difficulties become more complex.

This compounds these emotional and behavioral hurdles as the mental intensity makes people jealous as they are always in touch with these emotional pressures (Hawi & Samaha, 2017). Despite having many negative influences, social media has a positive impact too, as it may lower the fear of social exclusion by helping them stay connected socially online, thus indicating the dual nature of social media (Franchina et al., 2018).

Social media has become a channel of fulfilling the innate desire of social engagement and curiosity on the life of others. The need to stay connected, monitor events, and feel part of something is addressed by the element of social media through an extensive range of information, services, and networking (Meshi, Tamir, and Heekeren, 2015).

Moreover, social networking platforms also offers persistence embedded rewards such as alerts, notifications, likes and friend requests, which act as social rewards. Such rewards activate the reward system of the brain, which develops automatic reactions that become regular media listening (Meshi et al., 2015). This engaging charm usually makes young people emotionally attached to their gadgets and they feel uncomfortable and disturbed whenever they are apart. As a result,

repetitive checking notifications turn into an automatic reaction that does not require active use (Shapka, 2019). This consistent exposure to updates and experiences of others eventually leads to the Fear of Missing Out (FoMO) a state of psychological anxiety that someone is living a rewarding life without their involvement. In this way, the consumption of social networking sites not only meets the social desire to be connected but also contributes to FoMO to strengthen the obsessive use and addiction to social media.

In today's digital scenario, Fear of Missing Out (FoMO) is defined as a constant worry of missing out on some rewarding experience that others are witnessing, thus making FoMO an essential psychological phenomenon (Przybylski et al., 2013). FoMO tends to influence young adults' online behaviour, making them increasingly dependent on social networking sites (SNS) to get in touch with others, leading to mental health concerns such as anxiety, stress, and depression. The higher degree of FoMO is related to negative social comparisons when people assess their lives against the ideal experiences their colleagues publish online (Vogel et al., 2014). This continuous comparison can exacerbate mental health problems by causing feelings of anxiety, inadequacy, loneliness, and low self-esteem.

Although social networks allow people and the community to create significant relationships, recent studies emphasized that the use of social networking platforms has advantages and disadvantages, such as increasing relationships and autonomy in parallel with the feeling of loneliness, stress, anxiety, social isolation, and dependence (Oberst et al., 2017). In the Industrial level, digital technology, such as social media, is causing significant disturbances in health care concerns (Bui & Namin, 2019). At the level of public policy and the Government level, the storage and collection of consumers' information and details through digital media has become an important socio-political issue in the 21st century (Petrescu et al., 2020). In addition, the negative aspects of social networks can reduce user attention to advertising messages on these platforms. As social networking technologies become essential for life, they tend to pressurize consumers to adapt to these virtual social spaces, impacting their psychological well-being (Bui & Namin, 2019). Thus, the adaptation leads to a need to connect in these digital platforms leading to the thought that others are having better experience than themselves leading to Fear of Missing Out (Przybylski et al., 2013). Blackwell et al. (2017) have found that individuals with an elevated level of FoMO tend to use social media in a more mandatory way, frequently browsing feeds, checking notifications, and comparing their lives to others portrayed on the internet. As FoMO escalates, it induces stress, worry, sadness, distress, sleeplessness, lower self-esteem compared to regular people, and emotional discomfort or loneliness as individuals try to avoid social exclusions and feelings of dissatisfaction (Elhai et al. 2016; Baker et al. 2016). Thus making it essential to understand the catastrophic impact of excessive use of social networking platforms on mental health, and also understanding the need to have suitable strategies that enhance digital behaviors.

The present study investigates the association between social networking sites usage and the fear of missing out experience among young adults, which in present times is hampering the well-being of youth and creating anxiety and psychological distress among them. It also delves into the fact that being constantly active on these platforms and staying updated with the content that is circulating on them tends to foster a sense of social comparison anxiety and a continuous urge to stay connected online for communication. The study also aims to understand how the rewarding characteristics of social networking sites, such as likes, feedback, favorable comments, notifications, and daily updates, contribute to the feeling of fear of missing out, which in turn leads to compulsive online behavior and social media dependency.

Review of Literature

Humans are innately social beings, and the environment in which we live tends to influence our existence. Our actions and behavior are influenced in many ways by the external stimuli that we sense, along with the presence of others around us (Alutaybi et al, 2020). The emergence of social networking platforms has brought a remarkable change in the way people interact and communicate globally. These platforms have removed the geographical and cultural barriers, leading us to interact and connect with people across the globe and be updated regarding world affairs (Bachnio & Przepiorka, 2018). In their research, Vogel et al. (2014) noted that high social media users, particularly on Facebook and other platforms, tend to engage in comparisons with others who appear to have better social lives, which can lead to low self-esteem and feelings of FoMO.

Blackwell et al. (2017) conducted research among 207 young adults and recommended that the extended use of SNS enhanced the chances of developing FoMO. The time span between SNS sites tends to increase connectedness, yet it has contributed to the rise of FoMO by creating continuous observation of peers. These findings show that SNS alleviates and strengthens the sentiments of social disengagement.

FoMO occurs frequently when an individual starts to believe that they are missing out on some rewarding experiences that others are experiencing, as they consider their own experiences as less rewarding (Przybylski et al., 2013). Buglass et al. (2017) surveyed 506 social media users in the United Kingdom and noted that the more the level of use of SNSs, the higher FoMO. Passive use of SNS provokes the social comparison bias, in which individuals compare themselves with the perceived success of other online individuals, which has adverse psychological outcomes.

The study conducted by Chakraborty (2017) posits that fear of missing out is clearly associated to the use of social networking platforms among the young adults. It was found that individuals tend to express the feeling of social isolation and solitude if

they couldn't keep a track on what is happening online on these networking sites resulting in compulsive online behavior. Hence the results were indicative of the fact the higher consumption of these networking platforms resulted in greater feeling of fear of missing out among young adults making them anxious, irritable and distressed when offline.

Fear of missing out is a prevalent phenomenon experienced by youth in the context of using networking platforms. A study by Young (2018) revealed that nearly 70 percent of collegegoing students are affected by fear of missing out in relation to the use of these networking platforms, considering it to be an inevitable part of their college life. The results showed that instant feedback mechanisms on these platforms have a dramatic impact on well-being and mental health. Social networking sites induced a feeling of fear of missing out is viewed as the fear of being deprived from an enjoyable and pleasurable experience that others are experiencing. Perna (2020), in their research, points out that the feeling of FoMO is triggered when one is deprived of certain social needs or gratifications. The study found that individuals experiencing these deprivations delved into continuous online checking, social interaction, excessive feeds and notification scrutiny, and continuously stalking others' online behavior to compensate for the feeling of being socially isolated.

In a study conducted by Gosain and Yadav (2020) on social networking sites consumption behavior amongst adolescents and adults found that 34 percent of teenagers spend approximately 4-6 hours a day on social networking sites, whereas 34 percent spent more than 7 hours a day. It was found that 60 percent young adults claimed to spend between 4-6 hours a day, and 8 percent of all adults spent over 7 hours a day. Adolescents viewed social networking platform profiles 1120 times a day (58 percent), and 36 percent of the young adults do so. This tends to enhance the feeling of fear of missing out, which motivates one to stay online and connected.

Although social networking sites have brought about changes in the way people interact and obtain information, they are not without their own problems. The fear of missing out (FoMO) and social media fatigue were found to be strongly correlated by Hattingh et al. (2022). More FoMO was linked to the overuse of Instagram and Snapchat, as well as the overload of information. The findings indicate that FoMO can be a psychological burden caused by frequent use of social networking platforms and information overload.

Li, Niu, Mei, and Griffiths (2022) examined 1,258 Chinese university students to uncover the relations between fear of missing out (FoMO), social networking site (SNS) use, and smartphone addiction. The findings of their study showed a significant correlation between the inefficiency of controlling the craving to stay connected and the lack of productivity, backed up by feelings of anxiousness. The findings revealed that excessive use of social networking sites leads to a greater amount of fear of missing out feelings, leading to smartphone addiction, promoting the use of these platforms again, and inducing feelings of missing out continuously.

Young adults who rely extensively on social media generally feel it is crucial for their existence, with those aged 18 to 23 finding it difficult to envisage life without social networking platforms. Hence, this continual connectedness to social networking platforms makes them more susceptible to experiencing FoMO. The social construct of FoMO involves desires for popularity, fear of rejection, and the need to belong to virtual peer groups (Beyens, Frison & Eggermont, 2016). Ultimately, FoMO diminishes mood and life satisfaction, particularly among youth and individuals who spend extensive time online.

The objectives of the present study are enumerated below:

- To assess the mean difference in Social Networking Sites usage (along with its five variables: Diversion, Cognitive needs, Affective needs, Personal needs, and Social needs) and the feeling of Fear of Missing Out among young adult males and females.
- To examine the relationship between Social Networking Sites usage (along with its five variables: Diversion, Cognitive needs, Affective needs, Personal needs, and Social needs) and the feeling of Fear of Missing Out among young adult males and females.
- To investigate the extent to which Social Networking sites (along with their five variables: Diversion, Cognitive needs, Affective needs, Personal needs, and Social needs) will predict variations in Fear of Missing out among young adult males and females.

In the present study, the following hypotheses were proposed:

H1: There will be a significant difference in mean score in terms of Fear of Missing Out feelings among young adult males and females.

H2: There will be a significant positive relationship between the five sub-variables of Social Networking Sites usage and the feeling of Fear of Missing Out among young adult males.

H3: There will be a significant positive relationship between the five sub-variables of Social Networking Sites usage and the feeling of Fear of Missing Out among young adult females.

Method

Sample

For this study, the convenience sampling technique was employed to select a total sample of 500 young adults in the age bracket of 18 to 22 years, with 250 males and 250 females actively using Social Networking Sites (SNS).

Tools

The following standardized tools were used to measure Social Networking Sites usage and Fear of Missing Out among young adults:

(1) Social Networking Sites Usage and Need Scale (SNSUN):

The Social Networking Sites Use and Need Scale (SNSUN), developed by Mahmoud Danaee, Ali & Firdaus in 2019, is a self-report questionnaire designed to assess social networking usage patterns and needs (with its five sub-dimensions: diversion, cognitive needs, affective needs, personal needs, and social needs) among young adults. The scale aims to provide insights into individuals' motivations for using social networking sites (SNS) and their perceived benefits or satisfaction derived from such usage. The SNSUN comprises 19 items, each rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree". The SNSUN scale has a good reliability (Cronbach's $\alpha = .922$; test-retest correlations $> .60$) and strong validity, which is supported by good content validity, construct, and discriminant validity shown by high composite reliability (CR = .810–.882), AVE values tend to be above 0.50, with factor loadings exceeding 0.50.

(2) Fear of Missing Out Scale (FoMO):

The Fear of Missing Out Scale (FoMO) developed by Przybylski, Murayama, DeHaan, & Gladwell in 2013, is a validated tool designed to assess the extent to which individuals experience fear or anxiety about missing out on social events and opportunities, particularly those involving their peers and social networks, often exacerbated by the use of social media for constant connection. The FoMO Scale consists of 10 items; each rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from "Not at all true of me" to "Extremely true of me". Respondents are asked to indicate the degree to which each statement reflects their own feelings and experiences regarding the fear of missing out. Fear of Missing Out (FoMO) Scale proposed by Przybylski et al. (2013) is psychometrically sound, reports good internal consistency (Cronbach $\alpha = .82$) and high validity and attained a good unidimensional scale, which is a reliable 10-item scale with a single-factor structure clearly identified by principal components and confirmatory factor analyses.

Techniques

(1) Comparison of means (t-test)

t-test was computed to find out the significance of difference between means of young adult males and females on five sub-variables of social networking sites, along with fear of missing out.

(2) Correlation Analysis

Pearson's Correlation Analysis was computed to find out the correlation between social networking sites (and their five sub-variables: diversion, cognitive needs, affective needs, personal needs, social needs) with fear of missing out among young adults.

(3) Regression Analysis

Multiple regression analysis was performed to find the best predictor of Fear of Missing Out among young adult males and females. A comparative analysis was carried out for the predicted variables among adult males and females.

Procedure

For this study, the convenience sampling technique was employed to select a total sample of 500 young adults aged 18 to 22 years, comprising 250 males and 250 females who actively used Social Networking Sites (SNS). The participants in the study were recruited from several educational institutions and public spaces in Shimla. Prior permission was obtained from relevant authorities in institutional and other settings before data collection, and participants were approached directly.

Results and Discussion

The following results were obtained from the analysis and are discussed in the subsequent section.

Table 1: Showing the Mean, Standard Deviation, and t-ratio of Males and Females young adults on the five Variables of Social Networking Sites usage and Fear of Missing Out.

Sr.No	Variables	Young Adult Males (N=250)		Young Females (N=250)		t-ratio
		Mean	Standard	Mean	Standard	

			Deviation		Deviation	
A.	Social Networking Sites Use Dimensions					
1.	Diversion	11.94	2.15	11.40	2.26	2.253*
2.	Cognitive Needs	15.08	2.70	14.41	2.90	2.695**
3.	Affective Needs	17.46	3.86	18.56	3.63	3.286**
4.	Personal Needs	13.92	3.48	14.34	3.34	1.402
5.	Social Needs	10.76	2.80	11.00	2.53	1.040
D.	Fear of Missing Out	31.18	4.38	32.59	3.93	2.291*

** $p < .01$ and * $p < .05$

The analysis of Table 1 revealed the presence of statistically significant gender differences in some dimensions of SNS use and the levels of FoMO. It is clear from Table 1 that females ($M = 32.59$) scored significantly ($2.29, p < 0.05$) higher in experiencing Fear of Missing Out, contrary to males ($M = 31.18$), substantiating Hypothesis H1 that there will be a significant difference in terms of Fear of Missing Out feelings among young adult males and females. Hence, the outcomes reveal that young adult females experience more Fear of Missing Out compared to young adult males, suggesting a clear gender disparity.

The analysis revealed a strong gender difference in the Fear of Missing Out (FoMO) where females expressed greater levels of this phenomenon compared to males. The difference between females and males is due to the use of social media platforms. Females are more inclined to interact emotionally and socially on social networking sites to fulfill affective and social needs. Women are therefore more sensitive to the experience of being left out or fearing missing out in a social environment, which increases their sensitivity to social comparisons and web interactions, thus making them more likely to experience FoMO.

According to Williams and Merten (2009), female individuals are more prolific than their male counterparts in sharing personal problems online, especially those involving stress, anxiety, and relationships. Equally, Vogel et al. (2014) indicated that online users who expressed their feelings and received emotional support through social networking sites were more likely to be female as opposed to male users. Lee (2014) also discovered that social networking sites are mostly used by females to offer emotional and social support and hence their well-being. Given that females are more likely to use SNS to establish emotional bonds and relationships, they can be more susceptible to Fear of Missing Out when they feel excluded or lack interaction, hence the current observation.

Furthermore, results of the t-test showed that males scored ($M=11.94$) significantly higher in diversion ($2.253 p < .05$) compared to females, indicating that males tend to use SNS for relaxation and entertainment purposes. This observation conforms to the reports of KnoblochWesterwick (2008), who point out that men turn to media more as an escape from the negative feelings and they prefer to watch interesting content. Narasimhamurthy (2014) established that the importance of the entertainment potential of social media is quite high among men, and they would rather spend time on leisure and entertainment to escape boredom, where gaming, filming, and sports follow. Equally, Tifferet and Vilnai-Yavetz (2014) claimed that men tend to use social networking sites more to avoid being bored and have more time to entertain during leisure time.

These works justify the current finding that males have a higher use of diversion-oriented SNS.

Also, males scored ($M=15.08$) significantly ($2.695, p < .01$) higher in Cognitive needs, being more inclined to information seeking purpose on social media. This outcome is in line with the results of Venkatesh and Morris (2000), who found that males are drawn towards technology that assists men to do well and attain their goals. The use of the Internet to solve problems and other practical uses was another preference of men online, according to Weiser (2004), who also found that people prefer entertainment and leisure online. Subrahmanyam and Lin (2007) observed that the youth, especially the males, are more active in the digital spaces that attract them like the video and computer games. Besides, Khan (2012) established that men accessed social networking sites than their female counterparts in the pursuit of academic resources, information search, and knowledge acquisition.

Whereas females scored ($M=18.56$) significantly higher ($3.286, p < .01$) in Affective needs in comparison to males, indicating that

females have more emotional involvement in SNS activities. Vogel et al. (2014) also indicated that females are more energetic in disclosing personal issues and seeking consultation using social network platforms. Moreover, Sarkar and Bhattacharya (2020) have found that females express their emotions, relationships, and self-image via social networking sites. The findings are clearly indicative of the higher affective needs cited by the females in the current study.

Table 2: Showing Correlation of Five Sub-Variables of Social Networking Sites with Fear of Missing Out among Young Adult Males.

Sno.	Variables	Fear of Missing Out
1.	Diversion	.388*
2.	Cognitive Needs	.170
3.	Affective Needs	.480*
4.	Personal Needs	.532**
5.	Social Needs	.483*

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

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 2 illustrates that there was a positive and significant correlation of Diversion ($r = .388$, $p < .05$), Affective needs ($r = .480$, $p < .05$), Personal needs ($r = .532$, $p < .01$), and Social needs ($r = .483$, $p < .05$) with Fear of missing out, which indicates that as the engagement in diversion, affective, personal and social dimensions of social networking sites use increases so does the feeling of fear of missing out increases in adult males. Thus, hypothesis H2, that there will be a significant and positive correlation between the five sub-variables of Social Networking Sites usage and the feeling of Fear of Missing Out among young adult males, was substantiated partially with diversion, affective needs, personal needs, and social needs, showing a positive correlation, and the fear of missing out among young adult males.

Table 3: Stepwise Multiple Regression Analysis of five variables of Social Networking Sites as a predictor of Fear of Missing Out among Males

Independent variables	r	β	t	R2	R2Change	F-ratio (R2 Change)
Personal Needs	0.532**	0.266	4.450*	0.283	0.283	33.217*
Social Needs	0.483*	0.254	5.171*	0.333	0.050	16.181*

** $p < .01$ and * $p < .05$

As depicted in Table 3, the significant predictors of Fear of Missing Out among young adult males were the Personal needs ($\beta = 0.266$ and $t = 4.450$, $p < .05$), and Social needs ($\beta = 0.254$ and $t = 5.171$, $p < .05$). These variables accounted for a total of 33.3 percent variance in fear of missing out among adult males. Out of this total variance, Personal needs explained 28.3 percent ($F = 33.217$, $p < .05$), and the Social needs accounted for 5.0 percent ($F = 16.181$, $p < .05$) of the variance in Fear of Missing out concern among adult males.

As can be observed in the readings of Table 2, there were numerous notable positive correlations between the sub-variables of SNS use and FoMO among males and females. In the case of male participants, there was a significant positive correlation of Diversion ($r = .388, p < .05$) with FoMO.

These results were substantiated by numerous studies, such as Thothart, Mitchum, and Yehnert (2015) established that the level of diversion is significantly correlated with Fear of Missing Out and that the chronic use of SNS increased the perception of missing out. Moreover, it was indicated that excessive SNS use was significantly positively correlated with FoMO (Gokler et al., 2016), which demonstrates that more time spent on SNS, even with recreational or diversionary purposes, leads to the aggravation of FoMO. This confirms the result that among males, diversion-oriented SNS use is also linked with FoMO.

Further, Table 2 shows a significant positive correlation of Affective Needs ($r = .480, p < .05$) with FoMO, suggesting that males who use SNS to attain personal satisfaction or self-centered needs experience greater FoMO. Przybylski et al. (2013) verified the considerable connection between affective needs and Fear of Missing Out by describing FoMO by means of the Self-Determination Theory and emphasizing that people who face the lack of fulfillment of psychological needs are more likely to experience FoMO. In their findings, perception of relatedness and feelings of emotional fulfillment are weakened, thus being tied to a large level of FoMO, which subsequently leads to the desire to use SNSs frequently.

Equally, Chakraborty (2017) stated that people use SNS to alleviate the feeling of loneliness and emotional disconnection, but the emotional interaction tends to induce undesirable feelings like anxiety and irritation related to FoMO. This reinforces the current observation that the greater the affective use of SNS, the greater FoMO in men.

On the same note, Personal Needs ($r = .532, p < .01$) and Social Needs ($r = .483, p < .05$) were also reported to have significant and positive relationships with FoMO, indicating that the more an individual is emotionally involved, socially connected, and recreational with SNS, the higher the FoMO. The overall relationship between personal needs, social needs, and Fear of Missing Out is positive, which can be explained by the studies that underline the importance of SNS in self-assessment and life satisfaction. According to Arnett (2000), digital natives evaluate their deeds and life satisfaction online, which further leads to their reliance on SNS. Buglass et al. (2017) also noted that the greater the SNS use, the greater the FoMO, especially through social comparison processes, in which individuals compare themselves to the activities of others online.

Beyens, Frison, and Eggermont (2016) support the correlation between social needs and Fear of Missing Out (they identified a positive correlation between the use of SNSs and FoMO) and explain that the greater the use of Facebook, the more FoMO and social interaction stress. On the same note, Blackwell et al. (2017) hypothesized that extended SNS usage is associated with the continuous monitoring of peers that escalates connectedness but also exacerbates FoMO. This is congruent with the current observation that higher utilization of SNS to fulfill individual desires is linked to high FoMO.

Table 4: Showing Correlation of Five Sub-Variables of Social Networking Sites with Fear of Missing Out among Young Adult Females.

Sno.	Variables	Fear of Missing Out
1.	Diversion	.248
2.	Cognitive Needs	.202
3.	Affective Needs	.487**
4.	Personal Needs	.362**
5.	Social Needs	.550*

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

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 4 illustrates that there was a positive and significant correlation of Affective needs ($r = .487, p < .01$), Personal needs ($r = .362, p < .01$), and Social needs ($r = .550, p < .05$) with Fear of missing out, which indicates that as the engagement in diversion, affective, personal and social dimensions of social networking sites use increases so does the feeling of fear of missing out increases in adult males. Thus, Hypothesis H3 that there will be a significant and positive correlation between the five sub-variables of Social Networking Sites usage and the feeling of Fear of Missing Out among young adult females was partially supported, with affective needs, personal needs, and social needs showing a positive correlation with fear of missing out among young adult females.

Table 5: Stepwise Multiple Regression Analysis of five variables of Social Networking Sites as a predictor of Fear of Missing Out among Females

Independent variables	r	β	t	R2	R ² Change	F-ratio (R ² Change)
Social Needs	0.550**	0.254	3.207**	0.302	0.302	51.601**
Affective Needs	0.487**	0.175	3.123*	0.367	0.065	21.172*

** p< .01 and * p< .05

Table 5 shows that the significant predictors of the Fear of Missing Out among young adult females were Social needs ($\beta = 0.254$ and $t = 3.207$, $p < .01$), and Affective needs ($\beta = 0.175$ and $t = 3.123$, $p < .05$).

These variables accounted for a total of 36.7 percent variance in fear of missing among adult females, where Social needs explained 30.2 percent ($F = 51.601$, $p < .01$), and Affective needs accounted for 6.5 percent ($F = 21.172$, $p < .05$) of the variance in the Physical appearance concern among adult females.

In the case of female participants, as shown in Table 4, a strong, significant positive correlation between Affective Needs ($r = .487$, $p < .01$) and FoMO, whereby females who use SNS to keep social relationships are likely to experience higher FoMO. This important relationship between affective needs and FoMO among adult females is backed by Manago, Graham, Greenfield, and Salimkhan (2008), who reported that females need social media to distract their emotions and relieve stress, which they use to deal with emotional difficulties. Williams and Merten (2009) also emphasized that women are more successful as compared to their male counterparts in sharing personal issues online, especially those that concern stress, anxiety and relationships. Moreover, Vogel, Rose, Roberts, and Eckles (2014) discovered that social networking site users who are women tend to express their emotions and receive emotional support more than males do.

The other significant positive correlations with FoMO were found in Social Needs ($r = .550$, $p < .05$) and Personal Needs ($r = .362$, $p < .01$), which demonstrate that emotional and personal satisfactions obtained through the use of SNS led to higher experience in FoMO. The fact that personal needs correlate positively with FoMO among females is supported by the studies that suggested that social media plays the primary role in self-presentation and social comparison. Arnett (2000) believed that due to the social networking sites, digital natives are able to evaluate their lives and activities thus becoming more reliant on social networking sites. Buglass et al. (2017) established that the passive use of SNS creates the effect of social comparison bias in which a person compares oneself with the perceived other people on the internet, which may have adverse psychological outcomes, including FoMO.

Beyens, Frison, and Eggermont (2016) discovered that the frequency of SNS use has a positive correlation with FoMO, and the correlation is associated with an enhanced level of social interaction and stress associated with online interaction. According to Blackwell et al. (2017), the long-term use of SNS increases connectedness to other people, and the constant tracking of peers is linked to FoMO. These works offer empirical evidence behind the current observation that females become more FoMO as they socialize more on SNS.

Therefore, it is clearly seen that both young adult males and females experience Fear of Missing Out as a result of their activities related to Social networking sites, while Personal and Social needs were the key predictors of FoMO in males, and Social and Affective needs were the key predictors of FoMO in females, respectively. The findings suggest that individuals who lean on social networking sites to satisfy their personal and social needs are more likely to feel a strong Fear of Missing Out. The greater their dependence on these platforms for connection and selfexpression, the higher the chance they'll experience anxiety or a sense of exclusion when they're not actively online.

The psychological mechanism that causes a simple notification to become an addictive urge is responsible for why many young adults feel restless, anxious, or even dependent when offline. Social networking's ability to keep us connected is what leads to Fear of Missing Out, as it can quickly lead to digital distraction in the pursuit of belonging.

Conclusion and Future Implications

The objective of the present study was to examine the relationship between social networking sites (SNS) use and the feeling of fear of missing out (FoMO) among young adults in the Shimla district of Himachal Pradesh. Hence, the study shows that there

was a significant positive correlation between the variables of social networking sites use and the fear of missing out phenomenon in young adult males and females. The study also reveals that adult females tend to experience a higher level of fear of missing out than their counterparts as they get more involved in using social networking sites, satisfying their need to be emotionally and socially connected to others, and being updated about what is happening in the virtual world, as compared to their counterparts. With an urge to stay online and connected, the young adults find themselves investing more time on these platforms. As a result, the feeling of missing out creeps in, which tends to hamper the psychological well-being, leading to stress, anxiety, and depression in young adults.

The present study provides a compelling insight into understanding the relationship between SNS and FoMO, but there are certain gaps to be mentioned. It is clearly evident that the study was conducted in a specific geographical area, and it only took into consideration self-reported data from the sample, which may not be sufficient to cover all the subtleties of human behaviors. For future considerations, the research should utilize a diverse sample that incorporates different geographical locations and cultures at its best. Also, to identify the causality, it should incorporate a longitudinal or experimental approach to get a deeper understanding of FoMO. Further comprehensive research should be conducted to identify the detrimental impact of FoMO on mental health among young adults and strategies to help overcome it and encourage a healthy, positive digital interaction.

The outcomes of the present study become significant for the mental health workers, policy makers, and educators because, with the comprehensive understanding of the variables of the study, they can develop certain strategies that help promote healthy digital behavior, impart digital literacy, and raise awareness regarding optimal use of social networking platforms, which is more mindful in nature. Thus, to conclude, the study contributes to our understanding of digital behavior and its potential impacts on the well-being of young adults and shows the importance of creating a healthy online behavior in the present digital scenario.

References

1. Alutaybi, A., Al-Thani, D., McAlaney, J., & Ali, R. (2020). Combating fear of missing out (FoMO) on social media: The fomo-r method. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 17(17), 6128.
2. Arnett, J. J. (2000). Emerging adulthood: A theory of development from the late teens through the twenties. *American Psychologist*, 55(5), 469–480.
3. Aslan, Y. (2020). A literature review: The relationship between FoMO, impulsivity, and social media with memory. ResearchGate. <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/342437660>
4. Anwar, S. S. I., Pauzi, N. W. M., Dahlan, A., & Vetrayan, J. (2022). Fear of Missing Out (FoMO) and its relation with Depression and Anxiety among University Students. *Environment-Behaviour Proceedings Journal*, 7(20), Article 3358.
5. Best, P., Manktelow, R., & Taylor, B. (2014). Online communication, social media and adolescent well-being: A systematic narrative review. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 41, 27–36. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2014.03.001>
6. Blackwell, D., Leaman, C., Tramosch, R., Osborne, C., & Liss, M. (2017). Extraversion, neuroticism, attachment style and fear of missing out as predictors of social media use and addiction. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 116, 69–72.
7. Buglass, S. L., Binder, J. F., Betts, L. R., & Underwood, J. D. M. (2017). Motivators of online social networking: The role of fear of missing out. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 66, 248–256.
8. Beyens, I., Frison, E., & Eggermont, S. (2016). “I don’t want to miss a thing”: Adolescents’ fear of missing out and its relationship to adolescents’ social needs, Facebook use, and Facebook related stress. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 64, 1–8. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2016.06.048>
9. Blackwell, D., Leaman, C., Tramosch, R., Osborne, C., & Liss, M. (2017). Extraversion, neuroticism, attachment style, and fear of missing out as predictors of social media use and addiction. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 116, 69–72. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2017.04.039>
10. Błachnio, A., & Przepiorka, A. (2018). Digital media use and psychological well-being: The role of perceived social support, negative social comparison, and social ecomparison. *Current Psychology*, 37(4), 964–972.
11. Buglass, S. L., Binder, J. F., Betts, L. R., & Underwood, J. D. (2017). Motivators of online vulnerability: The impact of social network site use and FOMO. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 66, 248–255.
12. Classen, B., Wood, J. K., & Davies, P. (2020). Social network sites, Fear of Missing Out, and psychosocial correlates. *Cyberpsychology: Journal of Psychosocial Research on Cyberspace*, 14(3), Article 4. <https://doi.org/10.5817/CP2020-3-4>
13. Chen, Y. Y., Medi, B., Safiy, A., Shamsudin, S. S. A. I. B., De Ng, K., & Malek, K. B. A. (2021). Smartphone usage and psychological well-being among Malaysian university students. *Global Business & Management Research*, 13(2).
14. Chou, H.-T. G., & Edge, N. (2012). They are happier and having better lives than I am: The impact of using Facebook on perceptions of others’ lives. *Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking*, 15(2), 117–120.

15. Elhai, J. D., Yang, H., & Montag, C. (2021). Anxiety and stress severity are related to greater fear of missing out on rewarding experiences: A latent profile analysis. *Psychological Journal*, 10(5), 688–697.
16. Franchina, V., Abeele, M., Rooij, A., Coco, G., & Pemarez, L. (2018). Fear of missing out as a predictor of problematic media use and phubbing behavior among Flemish adolescents. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 15(10), 19-23.
17. Fioravanti, G., Primi, C., Casale, S., & Gori, A. (2021). Social networking site use and fear of missing out: A meta-analytic review. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 115, 106612.
18. Gezgin, D. M. (2018). The relationship between fear of missing out, smartphone addiction, and social networking site use among Turkish students. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 85, 289–298.
19. Hayran, C., & Anik, L. (2021). Well-being and fear of missing out (FOMO) on digital content in the time of COVID-19: A correlational analysis among university students. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 18(4).
20. Hetz, P. R., Dawson, C. L., & Cullen, T. A. (2015). Social media use and the fear of missing out
21. (FoMO) while studying abroad. *Journal of Research on Technology in Education*, 47(4), 259–272.
22. Kim, J., & Tussyadiah, I. P. (2013). Social networking and social support in tourism experience: The moderating role of online self-presentation strategies. *Journal of Travel and Tourism Marketing*, 30(1–2).
23. Kuss, D. J., & Griffiths, M. D. (2017). Social networking sites and addiction: Ten lessons learned. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 14(3), 311.
24. Moore, K., & Craciun, G. (2021). Fear of missing out and personality as predictors of social networking sites usage: The Instagram case. *Psychological Reports*, 124(4), 1761-1787.
- Nadkarni, A., & Hofmann, S. G. (2012). Why do people use Facebook? *Personality and Individual Differences*, 52(3), 243-249.
25. Manago, A. M., Graham, M. B., Greenfield, P. M., & Salimkhan, G. (2008). Self-presentation and gender on MySpace. *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology*, 29(6), 446–458.
26. Oberst, U., Wegmann, E., Stodt, B., Brand, M., & Chamarro, A. (2017). Negative consequences from heavy social networking in adolescents: The mediating role of Fear of Missing Out. *Journal of Adolescence*, 55, 51-60.
27. Petrescu, M., Krishen, A. S., Khorasanizadeh, S., & Bui, M. (2020). Consumer behavior in the age of digital privacy: Challenges, strategies, and future research directions. *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, 37(5), 553-563.
28. Przybylski, A. K., Murayama, K., DeHaan, C. R., & Gladwell, V. (2013). Motivational, emotional, and behavioral correlates of fear of missing out. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 29(4), 1841-1848.
29. Riordan, B. C., Winter, T., Flett, J. A. M., Mason, A., Scarf, D., Jose, P. E., et al. (2022). Does the Fear of Missing Out moderate the relationship between social networking use and affect? A daily diary study. *Psychological Reports*, 125(6), 3084–3099. <https://doi.org/10.1177/003329412111040441>
30. Sommantico, M., Ramaglia, F., & Lacatena, M. (2023). Relationships between depression, fear of missing out and social media addiction: The mediating role of self-esteem. *Healthcare*, 11(12), Article 1667.
31. Vogel, E. A., Rose, J. P., Roberts, L. R., & Eckles, K. (2014). Social comparison, social media, and self-esteem. *Psychology of Popular Media Culture*, 3(4), 206–222.
32. Williams, D., & Merten, M. (2009). A review of online social networking profiles by adolescents:
33. Implications for future research and intervention. *Adolescence*, 44(175), 1–20.
34. Wortham, J. (2011). Feel like a wallflower? Maybe it's your Facebook wall. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com>
35. Xie, X., Wang, Y., Wang, P., Zhao, F., & Lei, L. (2018). Basic psychological needs satisfaction and fear of missing out: Friend support moderated the mediating effect of individual relative deprivation. *Psychiatry Research*, 268, 223–228.
36. Zhang, Y., Li, S., & Yu, G. (2021). The relationship between social media use and fear of missing out: A meta-analysis. *Acta Psychologica Sinica*, 53(3), 273–290.