

Relationship Between Self Esteem and Fear of Missing Out

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I. INTRODUCTION

In the contemporary digital era, the fabric of human interaction has been fundamentally altered by the proliferation of social media, profoundly shaping how individuals communicate, form relationships, construct identities, and evaluate self-worth. Among the various population groups, college and university students represent the most engaged demographic in online spaces, making them particularly vulnerable to the psychosocial impacts of constant connectivity and digital comparison (Smith & Duggan, 2013). One of the most notable psychological consequences of this transformation is the way individuals perceive themselves and others, particularly in terms of self-esteem and Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) — two constructs that are gaining increased attention in psychological literature due to their influence on well-being, interpersonal functioning, and academic outcomes. According to Rosenberg (1965), self-esteem is conceptualized as a person's global evaluation of their worthiness, incorporating both feelings of self-love and beliefs in personal competence. It is not merely a static trait but a dynamic and socially-influenced psychological construct shaped by external validation, interpersonal feedback, and comparative experiences (Mruk, 2006; Crocker & Park, 2004).

Concurrently, the term FOMO, developed by Przybylski et al. (2013), is a "widespread fear that other people are having enjoyable experiences from which one is being deprived," leading to compulsive checking behaviour and continuous use of social media sites. It has been termed a modern type of social anxiety fuelled by the perception of being excluded from society, emotionally isolated, and disconnected in the digital world. The dynamic between self-esteem and FOMO is especially relevant to the lives of college students, who are going through those key transitions of identity formation,

autonomy, and intimacy while being deeply immersed in social media culture (Arnett, 2000; Barry et al., 2017).

Although social media provides various advantages, such as greater connectivity, identity exploration, and informational support (Nadkarni & Hofmann, 2012), it has also brought with it considerable psychological costs. Specifically, social comparison processes—whereby users compare their lives with others' idealized, showcase-style representations of life—have been linked as significant determinants of low self-esteem and increased FOMO (Vogel et al., 2014; Chou & Edge, 2012).

The asynchronous and visually oriented format of sites like Instagram, TikTok, and Facebook facilitates passive, ongoing exposure to others' seemingly ideal lives, subsequently evoking envy, discontentment, and self-doubt (Appel, Gerlach & Crusius, 2016).

II. CONCEPT OF SELF-ESTEEM

Self-esteem is an elementary concept in psychological science that describes a person's subjective rating of their own value. It includes both cognitive judgments—beliefs regarding oneself—and affective states—emotions associated with those beliefs. Based on earlier theoretical conceptions and expanded by many years of empirical work, self-esteem has repeatedly been found to be a key determinant of psychological well-being. As first defined by Rosenberg (1965), self-esteem is the positive or negative feeling that people have towards themselves as a whole. It incorporates an internal judgment and validation of the self, as it appears in how people assess their worth and importance in the world. These self-evaluations shape all facets of an individual's life, ranging from emotional and psychological well-being to motivation, decision-making, academic achievement, and social interaction (Orth and Robins,

2014). High self-esteem individuals generally demonstrate higher confidence, resilience, and an active response to adversity. They are more apt to set goals, have healthy interpersonal relationships, and manage emotions well. High self-esteem is a psychological buffer that enables a person to handle stress, accept criticism positively, and demonstrate resilience with regard to failure.

In contrast, low self-esteem is marked by chronic self-doubt, lowered sense of self-worth, and hypersensitivity to external scrutiny. It correlates with a heightened vulnerability to mental health problems like depression, anxiety, and loneliness (Trzesniewski, Moffitt, Poulton, Donnellan, Robins, Howerter, and Caspi, 2006). Low self-esteem individuals might feel that they are not deserving of being loved, being successful, or being happy, thus stopping their drive and limiting interactions with others. These persons would shy away from risk-taking or seeking new experiences because of an overriding fear of failure or rejection.

III. CONCEPT OF FEAR OF MISSING (FOMO)

The Fear of Missing Out, or FOMO, is the widespread psychological experience in which one has a worrying feeling that others are having enjoyable or enriching experiences when not present. Originally first formally articulated by Przybylski, Murayama, DeHaan, and Gladwell (2013), FOMO is a person's urge to always stay in contact with what everyone else is doing, fuelled by the fear that they might miss out on meaningful or pleasurable social experiences. This sense is all the more exacerbated by social media, which provides an ever-flowing supply of live updates showing the lives of equals, frequently edited to show their most prosperous, thrilling, or emotionally satisfying moments. For emerging adults—especially those between the ages of 18 and 25, who are undergoing important developmental transitions like identity formation, autonomy, and social integration—FOMO can be both psychologically and behaviourally significant (Arnett, 2000).

FOMO is not merely a fleeting mood; it is a subtle and complex psychological phenomenon with both cognitive and affective facets. The emotional aspect of FOMO is characterized by emotional responses of anxiety, envy, melancholy, isolation, and social inadequacy. These

feelings arise when people feel they are being deprived of the experiences enjoyed by others—be it social events, academic success, or lifestyle achievements. These feelings are exacerbated by seeing others' success or relationships through idealized social media updates, which trigger inner comparisons and negative self-thoughts. The cognitive aspect, then, entails recurring thought processes that center on the feeling of not being part of precious social experiences. People who have high FOMO tend to have obsessive thinking, compulsive monitoring of social media, and a constant preoccupation with remaining current about other people's lives even at the expense of their own welfare (Przybylski et al., 2013). These cognitive distortions often result in a greater level of dissatisfaction with one's life, as the perceived disparity between reality and the fantasies of other people increases.

The present study aims to explore the intricate dynamics between self-esteem and FOMO during college life. By focusing on individuals aged 18 to 25—a critical developmental stage—this research aims to provide empirical evidence regarding how these constructs interact, particularly within the digital environment. The goal is not only to deepen academic understanding of FOMO and self-esteem, but also to inform evidence-based strategies that empower young adults to cultivate psychological resilience, manage social media use, and foster a stronger and more stable sense of self-worth. These findings inform planning future college counselling programs, digital well-being education, and student mental health campaigns.

IV. NEED FOR THE STUDY

The transition from young adulthood to early adulthood is a phase characterized by identity exploration, emotional changes, and a sharp need for social acceptance. For young adults, particularly those in the age 18 to 25 years, the phase is characterized by academic pressures, peer influences, and the inescapable struggle of juggling personal expectations with societal norms. In the present-day digital age, when social media is such a pervasive aspect of everyday life, young adults are exposed more and more to filtered images of others' success, ways of life, and accomplishments. Such constant exposure tends to trigger the so-called Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) — a chronic concern that others may be experiencing fulfilling events without them.

Understanding this relationship is important because both self-esteem and FOMO are known to affect students' academic performance, social relationships, and mental health. The student with extreme FOMO may spend too much time online, procrastinate, or feel inferior to peers — which can have a direct effect on their academic performance and mental stability. However, students with good self-esteem are usually more capable of dealing with social media influences and peer pressures without it affecting their self-worth.

V. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A review of literature is a comprehensive but brief summary of their search that has been done on a particular topic that emphasizes on integration and interpretation of primary research articles done by different researchers. The following are a few of the articles and research works that helped in understanding more about the concept of self-esteem and fear of missing out (FOMO), their importance, different variables studied in conjunction with them, and their influence on college students. The review of literature helped in getting an idea about the methodology that was followed by studies exploring these two variables.

1. Fanaj, N., J. Melonashi, E. 214 44
A systematic literature review on self-esteem and psychological well-being. Kosovo. Rezonanca Journal of Medical Sciences, JJ The present study aimed to analyse research on self-esteem in Kosovo and discuss findings relating self-esteem to psychological well-being. Eight full papers and five abstracts were identified. Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965) was used as a measuring instrument in all cases. Apart from three studies where participants were Serbian, the rest were Kosovo-Albanians. The samples varied from 60 to 34684 participants. The internal consistency of the questionnaire has shown acceptable values (alpha between .70 - .83). The mean values of self-esteem in these studies ranged from 22.1 to 37.65. These values are comparable to other countries such as Bosnia, Greece, Italy, Serbia, etc. As regards the relationships between self-esteem and psychological well-being, the study found significant correlations with suicidal ideation, emotional difficulties and behavioural problems. Also, significant correlations have been reported between self-esteem and anxiety, shyness, depression, impulsive behaviour, eating disorders, etc. Conversely, self-esteem correlates positively with hope and life satisfaction.

2. C.D. 21544 T @effects of social media on self-esteem and fear of missing out (FOMO) and delinquent behaviour (Master's thesis, Western Kentucky University) The purpose of this research was to examine the effects of social media and self-esteem on the fear of missing out (FOMO) and delinquent behaviour. The researcher predicted that participants who reported higher levels of social media usage would also report higher levels of FOMO and delinquent behaviour, while individuals with higher self-esteem would report lower levels of FOMO and delinquent behaviour. Participants consisted of 171 college students who completed a survey that assessed their self-esteem, social media use, FOMO, and engagement in delinquent behaviour. Results indicated that higher levels of social media usage were positively correlated with FOMO and delinquent behaviour. Additionally, self-esteem was negatively correlated with FOMO and delinquent behaviour. Regression analyses demonstrated that self-esteem and social media use were significant predictors of FOMO, while FOMO was a significant predictor of delinquent behaviour.

3. Kacker, P, J Saurav, (2020). 44 Correlation of missing out fear (FOMO) and aggression among young adults. International Journal of Research in Psychology, 59(12/52499) This study explored the relationship between Fear of Missing out (FOMO), social media addiction, anxiety, and aggression among young adults. A large sample of 600 participants was surveyed, and an in-depth EEG brainwave study was also conducted on 60 individuals divided into high and neutral FOMO groups. Standardized tools such as the FOMO and Social Media Addiction Questionnaire, Buss and Perry Aggression Scale, Zung Anxiety Scale, and a Personal Relationship Questionnaire were used. The findings showed a significant positive correlation between FOMO, social media addiction, and psychological issues such as anxiety and aggression. The study emphasizes how excessive social media use can lead to emotional and behavioural challenges in today's youth.

4. Gupta, J Sharma, A. 221 @f of missing out; A review of the origin, theoretical underpinnings and relationship with mental health. Asian Journal of Psychiatry, JJ We have provided a general review of the literature and have summarized the findings about mental health, social functioning, sleep, academic

performance and productivity, Neurodevelopmental disorders, and physical well-being. New findings on FOMO must be communicated to the clinical community, as it has diagnostic implications and could be a confounding variable in those who do not respond to treatment as usual.

5. George, J, JThomas,R, Jate@w,P.22144 PassiveInstagramUS Can) emerging Indianfemaleadultwell-being: Amediationanalysisof socialcomparison an F during V[D1JournalO Cyberpsychology,15 9/1199 The study explores how passive Instagram use affects well-being among emerging Indian female adults (aged 18–25) during the COVID-19 pandemic. Using Social Comparison Theory (Festinger, 1954) and Symbolic Interactionism, the study found that increased social comparison and FOMO significantly mediated the link between Instagram use and psychological distress. A sample of 302 college-going females showed that frequent passive browsing led to higher FOMO and lower self-esteem. These results highlight the growing impact of social media on mental health in young Indian women during times of crisis.

6. L.J Bianchi, F.,221. 44 OmissingOutaNnsself-esteemaS mediatorsOt @C relationship betweenmaximizationalN problematicssmartphone US@.CurrentPsychology,412 99 Drawing on the Interaction Person-Affect-Cognition-Execution (I-PACE) model, the current study aimed to investigate the association between PSU and maximization, with the assumption that fear of missing out (FOMO) and self-esteem could mediate this relationship. Empirical data were gathered from 277 Italian university students who completed an online survey. Correlation analysis and structural equation modelling (SEM) were used to investigate the relationships among the variables. The results showed that PSU, maximization, and FOMO were positively correlated; whereas maximization and self-esteem were negatively correlated.

7.4:221.4f of missingOutF mediatesrelations between social self-efficacy @N@C satisfaction.Current Psychology, 41299 The purpose of this study was to examine whether fear of missing out (FOMO) mediates relations between social self-efficacy and life satisfaction among undergraduates. The participants involved 323 undergraduates (female, 66.3%; male, 33.7%). The age of participants ranged between 18 and

32 years ($M = 21.52$, $SD = 2.69$). The study data were gathered using the Fear of Missing out Scale, the Social Efficacy and Social Outcome Expectation Scale and the Satisfaction with Life Scale. The research data were analysed using the structural equation model and the bootstrapping method. As a result of the structural equation model, FOMO mediates the relationship between social self-efficacy and life satisfaction. As a result of the bootstrapping analysis, it was seen that all direct and indirect effects are significant. The results, recommendations, and limitations of the study were discussed.

8.Brailovskaya, J, J Stirnberg, J, J Rozgonjuk, D, J Margraf, J.22144 FroOw S@nNnSCof contro!])to problematicsartphoneseverity duringf@V/DT outbreak: [@mediatingfOCO Caf of missingQutant@ moderating fOeCO repetitive negative thinking.Computers [f} Human Behaviour,2171 9g The present study aimed to investigate potential correlates of problematic smartphone use (PSU) severity and the mechanisms underlying its development. Data of 516 smartphone users from Germany (M age = 31.91, SD age = 12.96) were assessed via online surveys in April and May 2021. PSU severity was significantly negatively associated with sense of control. In contrast, it was significantly positively linked to fear of missing out (FOMO), repetitive negative thinking (RNT), and daily time spent on smartphone use. In a moderated mediation analysis, the negative relationship between sense of control and PSU severity was significantly mediated by FOMO. RNT significantly moderated the positive association between FOMO and PSU severity. Specifically, the higher the RNT, the stronger the relationship between FOMO and PSU. The present findings disclose potential mechanisms that could contribute to PSU. Potential ways to reduce PSU severity are discussed.

9. Bain, JMakas, J@ JE. J Bicener,E.22144 Examinationof individuals' evedoeal OV/IDTanruminativethoughtt S@/nternational JournalO Social, PoliticalaNEconomicResearch,] JJ In the current study, it was aimed to examine the relationships between individuals' fear of COVID-19, fear of missing out (FOMO), and ruminative thought style levels. The participants consisted of 408 individuals aged between 17-68, of which 110 were male and 298 were female. In this study, the Fear of COVID-

19 Scale, Fear of Missing Out Scale, and Ruminative Thought Style Questionnaire were used to collect data. The relational survey method was used in the research. In the mediation analysis, it was observed that the ruminative thought style has a mediator role in the relationship between FOMO and fear of COVID-19. According to the findings, women have a higher fear of COVID-19 and ruminative thought style levels than men. Besides that, married individuals' fear of COVID-19 is higher than single individuals, but FOMO and ruminative thought levels are lower.

10. Gong, Z., LV, Y., Jia, X., ILYU, J. (2024). The relationship between COVID-19-related restrictions and Fear of Missing Out, problematic smartphone use, and mental health in college students: A moderated mediation model. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 15, 122244. This study investigates the impact of COVID-19-related restrictions on college students' problematic smartphone use and mental health from two perspectives, students' factors and external environmental factors, and specifically explores the role of fear of missing out (FOMO), resilience and social support in this context. The study found that when college students felt more stressed due to COVID-19 restrictions, they also experienced higher levels of FOMO, used their smartphones more problematically, and had more mental health issues like depression, anxiety, and stress. FOMO partly explained how COVID-19 restrictions led to problematic smartphone use, and fully explained how these restrictions led to mental health problems. Additionally, resilience and social support helped weaken the connection between FOMO and both problematic smartphone use and mental health problems. In other words, students who were more resilient and had stronger social support were less affected by FOMO.

11. Jaiswal, J., Dangwal, P. (2024). Fear of Missing Out (FOMO), self-esteem, and life satisfaction among college students. *At Institute of Behavioural and Allied Sciences, At University, | UC NOW, Pradesh, India*. This study explores the relationship between Fear of Missing out (FOMO), self-esteem, and life satisfaction among college students aged 18 to 25. FOMO is a common experience in today's socially connected environment and is known to impact young adults emotionally and psychologically. The study aimed to understand how FOMO affects self-esteem and overall life satisfaction.

Data were collected from 80 college students using standardized tools, including the Fear of Missing out Scale, the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, and the Life Satisfaction Scale. The results highlight that high levels of FOMO are associated with lower self-esteem and reduced life satisfaction, emphasizing the need for awareness and psychological intervention in college settings.

12. Thomas, R. J. George, A. (2025). Fear of Missing Out (FOMO), emotional distress, and problematic social media use (PSMU) among university students. *International Journal of Psychosocial Well-Being*, 7(1). This study explores the relationship between Fear of Missing out (FOMO), emotional distress, and problematic social media use (PSMU) among university students. Conducted among 100 students from Mahatma Gandhi University, the research used standardized tools such as the FOMO Scale, DASS-21, and Bergen Social Media Addiction Scale. Results revealed that higher FOMO levels were significantly linked to greater emotional distress and increased social media addiction. Gender differences were also observed, with female students showing higher anxiety levels. The findings emphasize the need for mental health interventions like mindfulness and digital wellness programs to reduce the negative psychological impact of FOMO and excessive social media use.

VI. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study is significant as it explores the relationship between self-esteem and Fear of Missing Out (FOMO), two important psychological factors that strongly influence individuals' emotional well-being and social behaviour, particularly among adolescents and young adults. In today's digital era, increased use of social media has amplified feelings of comparison, social pressure, and anxiety, making FOMO a growing mental health concern.

By examining how self-esteem relates to FOMO, this research helps in understanding whether individuals with low self-esteem are more vulnerable to experiencing higher levels of FOMO. The findings can contribute to psychological theory by clarifying the role of self-perception in shaping online behaviours and emotional responses.

Practically, the study can benefit:

- Students and young adults, by promoting awareness about healthy selfimage and social media habits.
- Educators and parents, by helping them design strategies to support emotional resilience.
- Counsellors and mental health professionals, by guiding interventions
- aimed at improving self-esteem to reduce anxiety and compulsive social media use.
- Researchers, by providing a foundation for future studies on digital

well-being and mental health. Overall, this study contributes to developing preventive measures and psychological programs that foster positive self-esteem and reduce the negative impact of FOMO, thereby improving overall mental health and quality of life.

VII. PROBLEM STATEMENT

In recent years, the rapid growth of social media and digital communication has significantly influenced individuals' social interactions, emotional wellbeing, and self-perception. While once platforms offer opportunities for connection and information sharing, they have also increased social comparison, peer pressure, and the Fear of Missing Out (FOMO). FOMO has been associated with anxiety, dissatisfaction, compulsive social media use, and poor mental health outcomes, particularly among adolescents and young adults.

At the same time, self-esteem plays a crucial role in shaping how individuals perceive themselves and cope with social and emotional challenges. Individuals with low self-esteem may be more sensitive to social comparison and external validation, potentially making them more vulnerable to experiencing higher levels of FOMO. However, despite the growing prevalence of both low self-esteem and FOMO, limited research has clearly examined the relationship between these two variables and how they influence each other.

Therefore, there is a need to investigate the association between self-esteem and FOMO to better understand whether variations in self-esteem contribute to differences in FOMO experiences. Understanding this relationship can help in developing effective

psychological interventions and strategies to promote emotional well-being and healthier social media usage among individuals.

VIII. OBJECTIVES

- To assess the level of self-esteem among college students.
- To assess the levels of FOMO among college students.
- To assess the relationship between self-esteem and fear of missing Out (FOMO) among college students.
- To assess the gender differences in levels of self-esteem.
- To assess the gender differences in levels of FOMO.

IX. HYPOTHESIS

- College students have significant levels of self-esteem.
- College students exhibit significant variations in fear of missing out (FOMO) levels.
- There is a significant relationship between self-esteem and Fear of missing out (FOMO) among college students.
- There is a significant difference in the levels of self-esteem between male and female college students.
- There are no significant gender differences in levels of fear of missing out (FOMO) among college students.

X. RESEARCH VARIABLES

Predictor variable: Self-esteem

Criterion variable: Fear of missing out (FOMO)

XI. RESEARCH DESIGN

The present study adopts a quantitative, descriptive, and correlational research design to examine the relationship between self-esteem and Fear of Missing Out (FOMO). This design is appropriate as it allows the researcher to measure and analyse the degree of association between the two psychological variables without manipulating them.

XII. RESEARCH SETTING

The study will be conducted in an educational setting, specifically among students from colleges/universities. The participants will be approached within their

academic environment, where they regularly engage in social interactions and frequent use of digital devices and social media platforms, making it an appropriate setting to study self-esteem and Fear of Missing Out (FOMO).

XIII. SAMPLING REQUIREMENT

The sample consisted of 200 college students from various in Bangalore of which are 100 males and 100 females. Stratified random sampling method was used to select the participants from all over different colleges in Bangalore urban area. The data was collected through offline as well as online platforms using Google forms and self-administered questionnaires.

XIV. METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION

The data collection process will involve two main tools: a Self-Esteem Scale and a FOMO Scale, along with a brief demographic information sheet to gather details such as age, gender, and educational background. Participants will be asked to respond to the items honestly based on their personal experiences.

XV. INCLUSION AND EXCLUSION CRITERIA

Inclusion criteria:

- Students currently enrolled in graduate programs.
- Students currently enrolled in postgraduate programs.
- Students between the ages of 18 to 25.
- Students who use social media.
- Students providing informed consent.
- Participants who can read and understand the language of the survey (e. g., English or local language).
- Students who have regular access to smartphones and social media.

Exclusion criteria:

- Individuals who are not currently pursuing any course in degree or masters.
- Individuals below 18 or above 25 years of age.
- Students who do not use social media regularly.
- Individuals with clinically diagnosed anxiety, depression, or other psychological conditions (to avoid confounding variables).

- Participants who do not complete the survey or provide inconsistent responses.

XVI. PROCEDURE

This study is conducted to “Examine Relationships between Self-esteem and fear of missing out (FOMO)”. The data collection was held from 16/5/2025 to 1/7/2025. Before administering the questionnaire, participants were made clear about the purpose of collecting the data and about the confidentiality of the results, so that they could respond to the questionnaire items without any hesitation. The research tools used were: State self-esteem scale was developed by Heatherton T. F and Polivy. J. and Fear of missing out Scale [FOMO]: It was developed by Prsybylski, Murayama, De Hann and Gladwell (2013).

XVII. TOOLS OF DATA COLLECTION

- The State self-esteem scale was developed by Heatherton T. F and Polivy. J. (1991) it is a five-point Likert scale. It can be administered individually or in a small group. It takes around 10 mins to answer all the items on the scale and has 20 items in it.
- Fear of missing out Scale [FOMO]: It was developed by Prsybylski, Murayama, DeHann and Gladwell (2013). It is a five-point Likert scale, it can be administered individually or in group, it takes around 10 mins to answer all the items on scale and has 10 items in it.

XVIII. RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY

Reliability

Reliability refers to the consistency and stability of a measuring instrument. The State Self-Esteem Scale (Heatherton & Policy, 1991) has demonstrated high internal consistency, with Cronbach’s alpha coefficients typically ranging from 0.86 to 0.92, indicating good reliability. The scale has also shown satisfactory test–retest reliability across different samples. The Fear of Missing Out Scale (Przybylski et al., 2013) has reported good internal consistency, with a Cronbach’s alpha of approximately 0.87, suggesting that the items consistently measure the construct of FOMO.

Validity

Validity refers to the extent to which an instrument measures what it is intended to measure. The State Self-Esteem Scale possesses strong content and construct validity, as it effectively assesses situational or momentary self-esteem across performance, social, and appearance domains. It has been widely validated and used in psychological research. The FOMO Scale demonstrates good construct and criterion validity, with significant associations found between FOMO, social media use, emotional well-being, and life satisfaction in previous studies, confirming that the scale accurately measures the concept of fear of missing out.

2 DATA ANALYSIS METHOD

The purpose of the present study was to “Examine the relationship between self-esteem and fear of missing out (FOMO)” of Bangalore city in the age range of 18 - 25 years. This chapter explains the statistical tools and techniques applied by the researcher to answer the research hypothesis as validly and adequately as possible. The statistical techniques used in this study helped to analyse the relationship between self-esteem and Fear of Missing out (FOMO) among college students. To begin with, the normality of the data was checked using the Shapiro–Wilk. These tests helped decide whether to use parametric or non-parametric methods for further analysis. Descriptive statistics such as frequencies, means, and standard deviations were used to understand the basic features of the data, including demographic details like age, gender, and qualification, as well as overall levels of self-esteem and FOMO. For inferential analysis, several tests were used. Frequency and descriptive test was used to see whether students had significantly high, moderate or low levels of self-esteem and FOMO compared to the midpoint of the scale, Mann–Whitney U test was used to compare self-esteem and FOMO scores between male and female students, Spearman’s correlation was done to check the relationship between self-esteem and FOMO, All statistical analysis was done using SPSS version 20, and the level of significant.

XIX. DISCUSSION

The present study aimed to examine the relationship between self-esteem and Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) among students. The findings of the study indicate that there is a significant relationship between the two variables. The results suggest that self-esteem plays an important role in influencing individuals’ experiences of FOMO.

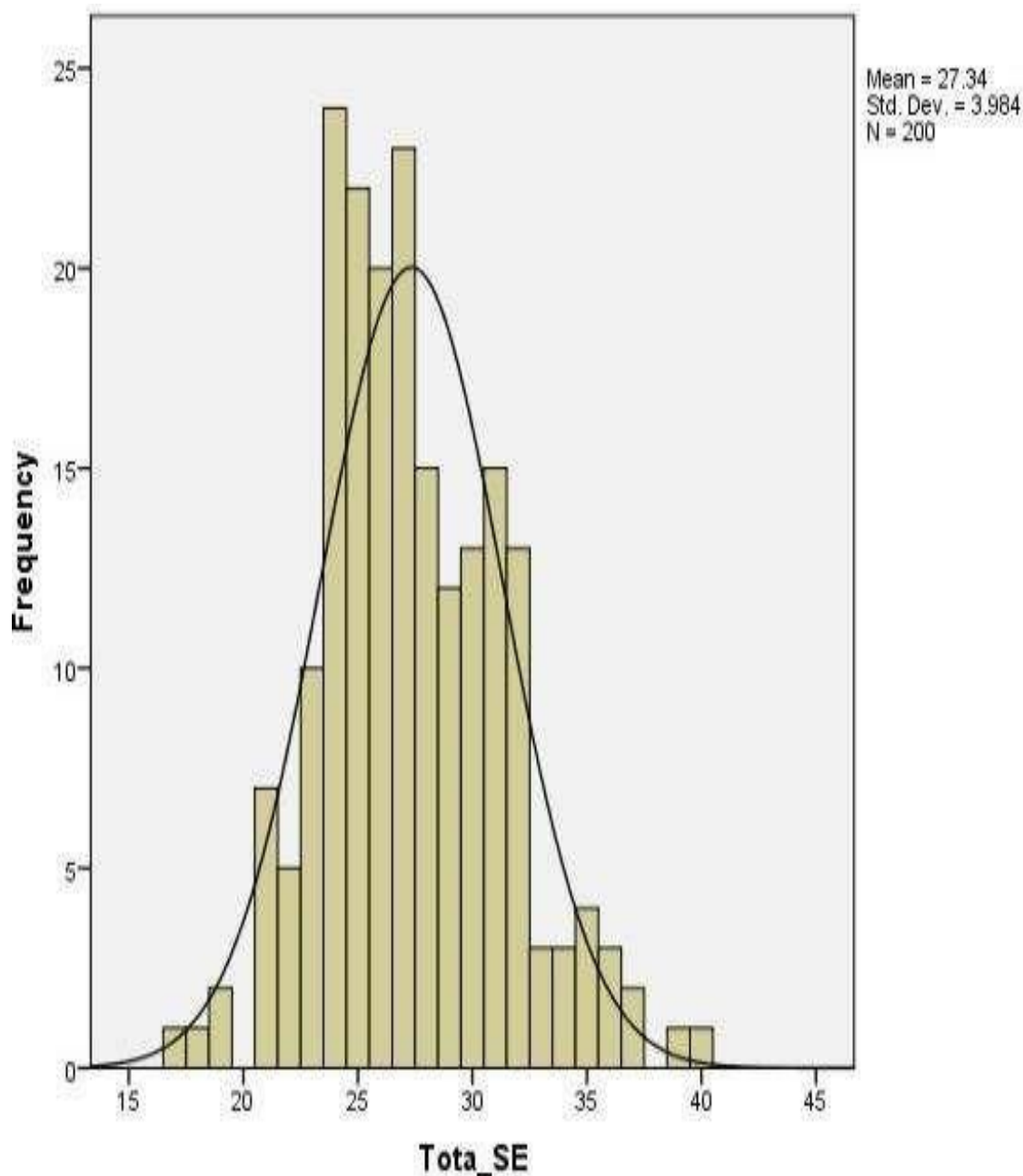
The analysis revealed that individuals with lower levels of self-esteem tend to experience higher levels of FOMO. This may be because people with low self-esteem often engage in greater social comparison, seek external validation, and feel insecure about their social acceptance. As a result, they may frequently worry about missing social events, updates, or rewarding experiences shared by others, particularly through social media platforms. In contrast, individuals with higher self-esteem appear to be more confident, emotionally secure, and less dependent on external approval, which reduces their susceptibility to FOMO.

• Test of Normality

The study began with evaluating the normality of the data using the Shapiro–Wilk test. According to table 4.1 the significance value obtained from the Shapiro–Wilk tests was 0.979 in Self-esteem and 0.980 in FOMO. Since this value is greater than the alpha level of 0.05, the null hypothesis that the data is normally distributed is accepted. Ta@5.1OWS ShapiroW results accessing datanormalcy

Shap iro-W ilk		
Statistic	df	Sig.
T otal_SE .979	200	.004
T otal_F M .980	200	.006

The histogram below also shows the data is normally distributed. The mean was found to be 50.35 with a SD of 10.3. As the data was found to be normally distributed hence, non-parametric statistics were used as statistical tools for data analysis. Graph5.1a S OWS histogramOf normalcy Ot @data



- Distribution of the socio-demographic variables age, gender, course level, course type

Ta@5.2.7Showingfrequency distributionOf SC OQ-demographicvariable

e

AGE

Frequency Percent Valid

Cumulative

			Percent	P ercent
18-20	7	3 .5	3.5	3.5
21-22	92	45.8	46 .0	49 .5

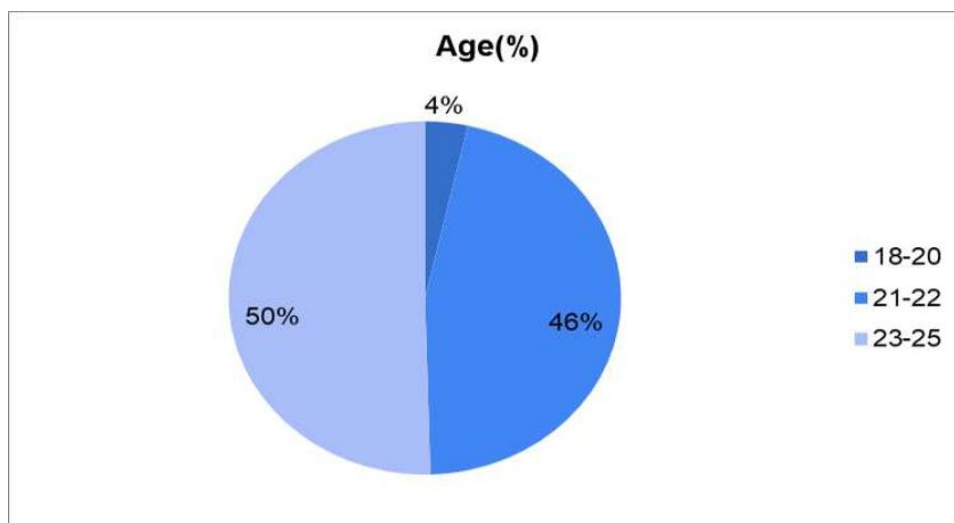
50.5 100.0

100.0

Total 201 100.0

Table 5.2.1 shows the frequency distribution for the socio-demographic variable of age. 200 was the total sample size selected for the study out of which 7 (3.5% of the total sample) students were of ages 18-20 years,

92 (45.8%) were of ages 21-22 years, 101 (50.2%) were of the ages 23-25 years, Graph 4.2.1 shows the visual representation of the percentage distribution of sociodemographic



Graph 5.2.1 @ Percentage distribution of socio-demographic variable age

Table 5.2.2 Showing frequency distribution of SOC O-demographic variable gender

GENDER	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
male	104	51.7	52.0	52.0
female	96	47.8	48.0	100.0
Total	200	99.5	100.0	
Total	201	100.0		

Table 5.2.2 shows the frequency distribution for the socio-demographic variable gender in the current sample. Looking at the table, it can be seen that out of the total 200 college students, 104 (51.7%) were males and 96 (47.8%) were females. Graph 5.2.2 is showing the visual representation of the percentage distribution of socio-demographic variable gender. Graph 5.2.2(a) Showing @ percentage distribution of socio-demographic variable gender

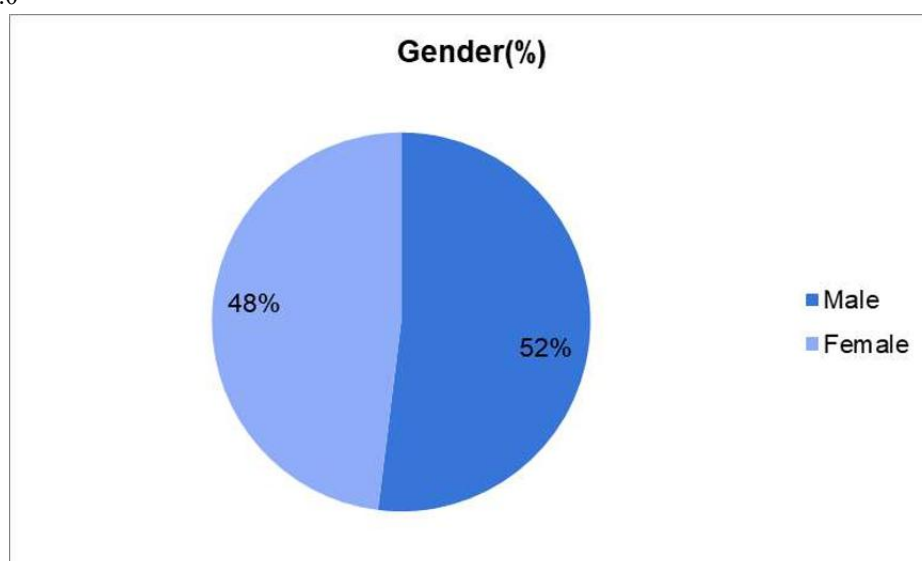


Table 5.2. Showing frequency distribution of socio-demographic variable education

QUALIFICATION

Frequency Percent Valid Percent Cumulative Percent

degree	153	76.1	76.5	83.5
masters	47	23.5	23.5	100.0
Total	200	99.5	100.0	

Total 200 100.0 % Table 5.2.3 shows the frequency distribution for the socio-demographic variable qualification level in the current sample. Looking at the table it can be seen that out of the total 200 students 153 (76.1%) were from degree and 47 (23.5%) were from masters. Graph 5.2.2 is showing the visual representation of the percentage distribution of socio-demographic variable qualification level. Graph 5.2.2 showing the percentage distribution of socio-demographic variable qualification



To assess the levels of self-esteem among college students.

H₀ : College students do not exhibit significant variations in self-esteem levels.

H₁ : College students exhibit significant variations in self-esteem levels. Table 5.3 showing the frequency distribution of self-esteem among college students

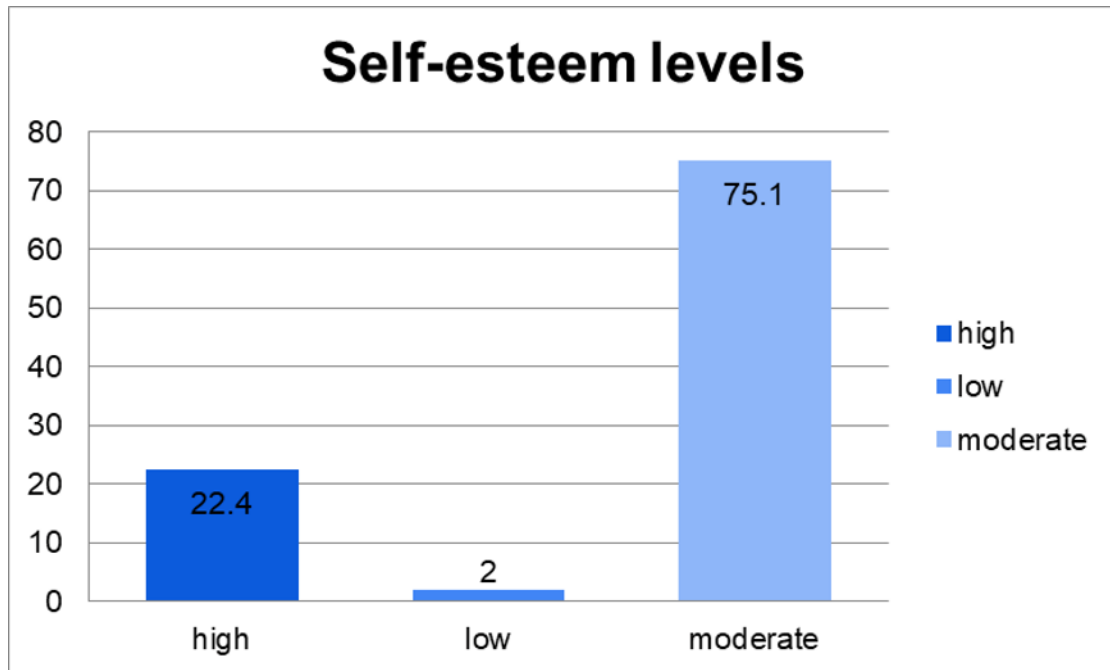
SEM INTERPRETATION

Percent

Frequency Valid

Percent Cumulative Percent high 45 22.4 22.4 22.9 low 4 2.0 2.0 24.9 moderate 151 75.1 75.1 100.0 Total 201 100.0 100.0

The first objective of the study was to assess the levels of self-esteem among college students, that is to determine their extent of self-esteem. The survey of feedback from 200 respondents indicated that a vast majority, 75.1%, belong to the Moderate-high self-esteem group. Mean while, 22.4% of the students indicated low self-esteem, while a small group (2%) indicated self-esteem. Graph 5.3 showing the frequency distribution of self-esteem



Graph 5.3 (a) gives a pictorial description of the level of self-esteem in the sample. It shows the frequency and percentage distribution in the sample with regard to the variable levels of Self-esteem. On looking at the graph, it can be seen that out of 200 individuals 22.4% of the sample reported high self-esteem, 2.0% of the sample reported low self-esteem and 75.1% of the sample reported a moderate level of self-esteem.

This distribution means that the majority of college students in the sample possess a relatively balanced sense of self. They are not too self-critical and also not too self-assured, which is a good indication. Moderate self-esteem usually means that students are generally able to deal with life challenges but at times might also feel doubtful or insecure — something which is not uncommon for young adulthood. According to Rosenberg (1965), self-esteem refers to a person's overall evaluation of their worth — a positive or negative attitude toward oneself. From the results it is observed that there are students who experience low self-esteem; this indicates that there might be students who struggle with self-worth, perhaps feeling inadequate or doubting their abilities. This matters since low self-esteem can influence a student's motivation, social confidence, emotional wellbeing, and academic achievement.

This trend is in line with theories in developmental psychology, particularly those by Erik Erikson (1968),

who stressed that late adolescence and early adulthood are the critical stages of identity formation. It is in this period that people start to think more introspectively about what they are, what they believe in, and where they fit in society — all of which have a direct bearing on their self-esteem. In today's digital era, when students are continuously surrounded by social comparison from the social media sphere, possessing a moderate level of self-esteem might indeed serve as a protective shield against the ill effects of comparison, like feelings of inadequacy or exclusion. In conclusion, these results corroborate with alternative hypothesis (H_1), College students show considerable differences in self-esteem levels. Therefore, we reject the null hypothesis (H_0) that no difference exists since most students are managing well on an emotional scale, but others need to be attended to for perhaps maintaining a silent struggle. Healthy environments conducive to positive self-concept, awareness of personal strength, and emotional support structures would go a long way to help students build and maintain healthy levels of self-esteem.

To assess the level of FOMO among college students.
 H_0 : College students have no significant levels of Fear of Missing out (FOMO). H_1 : College students have significant levels of Fear of Missing out (FOMO).
 Ta@5.1Ta@Showingt@e@VeOF among collegestudents.

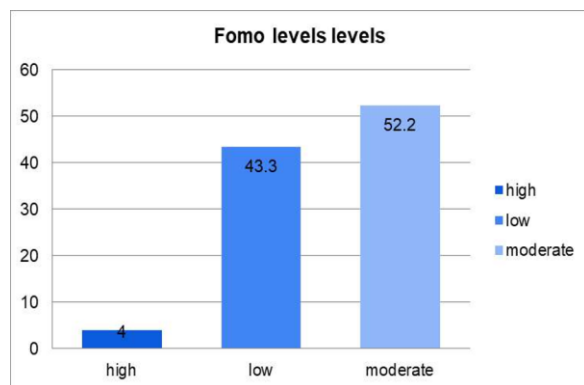
FOMO INTERPRETATION

Frequency Percent Valid Cumulative

			percen t		Percen t	
high	8	4.0		4.0		4.5
low	87	43.3		43.3		47.8
moderate	105	52.2		52.2		100.0
Total	201	100.0		100.0		

The second objective of the study was to assess the occurrence and severity of Fear of Missing Out (FOMO), across college students. The survey of feedback from 200 respondents indicated that the vast majority, 52.2% of the students had moderate levels of FOMO, 43.3% had low levels, and just 4.0% of the students had high FOMO. These results suggest that although few students are significantly affected by FOMO, over half of the participants continue to feel it to some degree, indicating that FOMO is widespread but intensity varies.

5.1graphshowing@V@ Sof Fearof missingOUTF



Graph 5.3.1 (a) gives a pictorial description of the level of fear of missing out in the sample. It shows the frequency and percentage distribution in the sample with regard to the variable levels of Fear of missing out. On looking at the graph, it can be seen that out of 200 individuals 4.0% of the sample reported a high level of fear of missing out self-esteem, 43.3% of the sample reported a low level of fear of missing out and 52.2% of the sample reported a moderate level of fear of missing out. As a psychological concern firmly linked with

emotional health and social media usage in today's student's life, FOMO is being presently identified more and more. As per Przybylski et al. (2013), FOMO combines both emotional distress such as worries or jealousy and intrusive thoughts regarding missing valuable experiences that other people are partaking in.

The high to moderate levels of FOMO could be a result of the distinct pressures of this generation. College students are in a stage of development where identity formation, social connection, and peer approval are central. The endless flow of updates on social network sites can heighten comparison and foster a sense of exclusion, particularly when students notice peers attending events, traveling, or reaching milestones that are beyond themselves Przybylski et al. (2013). In addition, as Przybylski et al. (2013) explained, FOMO is both emotional and cognitive. Not only do students feel excluded (emotionally), but they also ruminate (cognitively) on what they could be missing (repeatedly). This can lead to compulsive actions such as compulsive checking on social media or difficulty being present in real-life moments.

Although the minority (4%) of students indicated high FOMO, this group could be more vulnerable to poor mental health consequences like anxiety, loneliness, academic distraction, and lower self-esteem. Conversely, the 43.3% with low FOMO could have healthier tech boundaries and greater self-esteem. This validates the alternative hypothesis (H_1) that college students do demonstrate significant degrees of FOMO, thus necessitating the rejection of the null hypothesis (H_0). That is to say, the research affirms that FOMO is prevalent in college students to a certain extent. The conclusion indicates that FOMO is a valid and present issue for university students, although there are individual differences in the extent. This result warrants more vigilance and the creation of resilience measures like online wellbeing interventions, peer group support, or counselling interventions to assist students in regulating their social media use and minimizing the emotional impact of FOMO.

To assess the relationship between self-esteem and fear of missing out (FOMO) among college students.

H_0 : There is no significant relationship between self-esteem and Fear of Missing out (FOMO) among college students.

H₁ : There is a significant relationship between self-esteem and fear of missing out (FOMO) among college students.

Figure 5.4 shows the results of Pearson Correlation of relationship between self-esteem and fear of missing out among college students.

Pearson Correlations

Total_SE

Pearson 1

Correlation

Total_FM -

-.196 ** Total _ Sig. (2-tailed) N .005 200 200

Pearson -

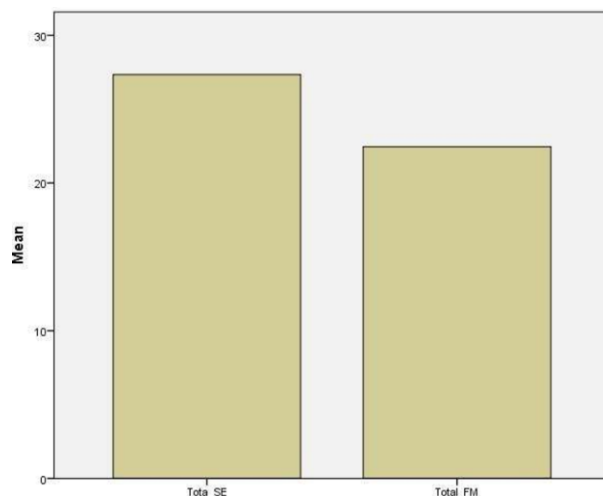
Correlation .196 ** 1 Total _ Sig. (2-tailed) F .005

N

200 200 **. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The third objective of the study was to assess the relationship between self-esteem and fear of missing out (FOMO) among college students. Who are especially susceptible to the psychological impacts of perpetual digital exposure and social comparison. To assess this, a Pearson correlation was conducted on total self-esteem (Total_SE) and FOMO (Total_FM) scores gathered from 200 respondents. The results revealed a negative and statistically significant correlation ($r = -.196$, $p = .005$) between self-esteem and FOMO. This means that as self-esteem decreases, levels of FOMO increase, and vice versa. Although the correlation is modest, it is meaningful enough to reject the null hypothesis (H_0) and accept the alternative hypothesis (H_1), confirming that a significant relationship exists between the two variables.

Figure 5.4 shows the results of Pearson Correlation of relationship between self-esteem and fear of missing out among college students.



Graph 5.4 (a) gives a pictorial description of the levels of self-esteem and fear of missing out which mirrors the increasing body of evidence that indicates lower self-esteem tends to be associated with higher vulnerability to FOMO. As noted in the introduction, people with low self-esteem will increasingly depend on external means of validation, particularly via social networking sites (Przybylski et al., 2013). This can activate feelings of exclusion or inadequacy if they feel others are getting more rewarding experiences.

This connection is especially significant in the context of emerging adulthood, a phase of life in which young people are developing their identities and searching for belonging (Erikson, 1968; Arnett, 2000). Social media maximizes the likelihood for social comparison, which can diminish one's sense of self and drive FOMO. When students see idealized, staged representations of the experiences of their peers, they will feel excluded, engage in negative self-judgments, and be anxious about missing out on those social experiences—furthering the FOMO experience.

On the other hand, self-esteem individuals tend to be more confident in their worth and less externally validated. These individuals use social media more thoughtfully and are less likely to react negatively when they observe others being active online as a challenge to their own value or social position. The research identified a strong negative correlation between self-esteem and FOMO in college students. These findings emphasize the need for promoting healthy self-esteem to minimize susceptibility to FOMO and its concomitant emotional issues. In this era of hyper-sociality in the digital age, preparing students with strategies for developing inner confidence and coping with social comparison is critical for sustaining mental health.

- To assess the gender differences in levels of self-esteem among college students. H₀ : There are no significant gender differences in levels of self-esteem among college students. H₁ : There is a significant gender difference in levels of self-esteem among college students. Figure 5.5 shows the results of gender differences in self-esteem among college students using an ANOVA.

Self-esteem gender Ranks

GENDER N Mean Rank Sum of Ranks Total_ SE male
female 104 96 110.53 11495.00 89.64 8605.00

Total 200

Total_ SE Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) .010 a. Grouping Variable: GENDER The fourth objective of the study was to assess whether there exist significant differences in gender concerning self-esteem among college students. This analysis was also performed by the hypothesis, H_0 : There exist no significant gender differences in self-esteem levels among college students. H_1 : There exists a significant gender difference in self-esteem levels among college students.

In order to assess this, the Mann–Whitney U test, as a non-parametric equivalent to the independent samples t-test, was used due to the fact that the self-esteem scores were not normally distributed. The test assessed the difference between male and female students' self-esteem scores. The findings showed a statistically significant disparity in self-esteem scores between genders (Mann–Whitney U = 3949.000, $Z = -2.560$, $p = .010$). Male students had a mean rank of 110.53 compared to the female students' 89.64, showing that male students had significantly higher self-esteem compared to their female peers.

These results compel us to reject the null hypothesis (H_0) and accept the alternative hypothesis (H_1) there is a notable gender difference in levels of self-esteem for college students. This result is consistent with earlier psychological studies and the theoretical context presented in the introduction. As noted, self-esteem is developed through various personal and social factors, such as one's perceived worth, confidence, and social acceptance (Rosenberg, 1965). Societal expectations and gender roles can affect how self-worth is assessed among young adults. Students who are male might be socially conditioned to project confidence and autonomy, and this may correspond to higher scores on self-esteem. Female students might be more likely to doubt themselves or compare themselves to others, especially in the current social media era, where heavily edited images of looks and achievements are commonplace (Reyes, 2023; Fuster et al., 2017). Based on Orth and Robins (2014), male tend to report greater self-esteem throughout adolescence and young adulthood, possibly because society rewards confidence, autonomy, and assertiveness more for them. Females, by contrast, tend

to receive more social evaluation, especially in terms of appearance, peer popularity, and social success, all of which can deflate selfview. Gilligan (1982) in her book on gender and identity pointed out that girls tend to be socialized to pay greater attention to relationships and other people's opinions, which might predispose them to more self-esteem fluctuation. Harter (1993) also observed that girls would be more prone to experiencing a drop in self-worth throughout adolescence and early adulthood as there would be more social comparison.

The social media influence has also made this dynamic more complicated. Buglass et al. (2017) and Fox & Moreland (2015) research demonstrated that young women are more likely to participate in upward social comparisons on social media such as Instagram and Snapchat, and this brings about feelings of inadequacy and lower self-esteem.

Additionally, we know that college life is one of identity exploration, and social pressure might work differently on men and women. Social media comparisons, exclusion anxiety, and the pressure to garner peer approval can have a disproportionate effect on female students' self-concept, producing higher fluctuations or lower means.

The research did identify considerable gender variation in college students' self-esteem, with males scoring higher. The results highlight the necessity for gender-responsive mental health initiatives on campus addressing the specific issues of both male and female college students. Facilitating healthy self-conception in young adults, particularly in women, is crucial in order to enhance emotional health and academic assertiveness in the formative years of college life. This discovery is consonant with earlier research and psychological theory. Morris Rosenberg (1965), the creator of the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, stressed that self-esteem is an individual's general emotional assessment of his or her worth, defined by social roles and comparisons.

XX. FUTURE RESEARCH

Though this research illuminated the inverse relationship between self-esteem and Fear of Missing out (FOMO) in Bangalore college students between 18–25 years old, it barely scratches the surface. The psychology and online world of young adults change every day, and this leaves

many significant gaps for future research. These recommendations are based not only on areas left untouched by present research but on actual student experiences in today's virtual reality.

Greater Geographic Representation

The sample at hand was only from Bangalore, a high-internet-penetration urban center with high social media usage. But India is very diverse.

Rural or semi-urban students might have varying levels of internet access, cultural norms, and social pressures, all potentially impacting their FOMO levels and self-esteem differently.

Future direction: Conducting the research on students from urban areas such as Lucknow, Chennai, or even rural locations in North-East India would perhaps provide more comprehensive results. Comparatives may be conducted to determine region-specific issues.

Longitudinal Studies

This research took a snapshot at a single point in time, but human psychology is dynamic.

Self-esteem and FOMO may fluctuate with life events such as exam grades, social group changes, hiring season for first jobs, breakups, or even a pandemic.

Future direction: A longitudinal study — one examining the same group of students over months or years — might allow us to follow what happens to digital behaviour and psychological well-being over important life transitions.

Inclusion of Other Mental Health Variables

Self-esteem and FOMO are just two components of the puzzle.

Anxiety, depression, peer pressure, academic stress, or issues with body image may interact with FOMO and self-esteem, either exacerbating or reducing their effect.

Future direction: Future studies might take a larger mental health context, examining how FOMO and self-esteem correlate with emotional well-being, resilience, self-compassion, or mindfulness.

Platform-Specific Effects

All social media are not created equal — their form and purpose shape how people feel.

Instagram's photo-centric design may exacerbate comparison and FOMO, whereas LinkedIn's formal tone

may impact university self-esteem in a different way. Future direction: Researchers can examine the effects of various platforms (Instagram, WhatsApp, Snapchat, Facebook, LinkedIn, YouTube, etc.) on levels of self-esteem and FOMO. This can result in more personalized suggestions for healthy digital behaviour.

Qualitative Exploration

Numbers and statistics can be strong, but they don't always paint the whole picture.

A student may have low self-esteem and score high on FOMO on a survey, but without understanding, the information is incomplete.

Future direction: The inclusion of interviews, focus groups, or open-ended responses could add emotional richness to the study. Knowing individual stories can unlock how students perceive their online life and what they really think about it.

Diversified Educational Backgrounds

The research in this case could have contained mostly degree and master's stream students.

A student pursuing engineering with a high level of academic pressure might perceive FOMO differently than an arts student who is part of creative pursuits.

Future direction: Separate streams such as engineering, medicine, humanities, law, or commerce can be studied in the future to identify how academic pressure or peer contexts influence such psychological constructs.

Experimental or Interventional Studies

Up to this point, we've had primarily observational studies — including this one. Finding a correlation isn't sufficient; we have to take action on it. Future direction: Future research can create and test intervention programs that:

- Improve self-esteem via workshops or peer support
- Support students with digital detoxes
- Educate on emotional regulation strategies
- Implement journaling or mindfulness to consider social media use

Examining the effectiveness of such interventions would take psychology from the theoretical to the practical.

Use Behavioural Data

Self-reporting can be restricted because of bias or social desirability. Participants may under-report the frequency of social media checking or overestimate themselves.

Future direction: If ethical and possible, future studies can monitor screen time, notification frequency, or app usage patterns to provide objective measures of FOMO-related activity and contrast with self-reports.

Cross-Cultural and Global Comparisons

Most of the current FOMO research is Western-based. India's collectivistic culture, family setup, and academic setting are considerably different from the West. Future direction: Cross-cultural studies — i.e., comparing Indian students with students in the U.S., Europe, or other Asian nations — can serve to identify universal trends versus culturally specific influences on self-esteem and FOMO.

10. Online Identity and Digital Persona Study

Today's students have two identities — offline and online.

Why it matters: The stress of keeping up a staging-sponsored online existence can significantly impact self-esteem and contribute to FOMO. Future direction: Future research can investigate how the disconnect between actual life and online presentation influences psychological health, particularly during the Instagram and influencer era.

Final Thought:

By building on this research with new perspectives — whether it's longer timeframes, richer emotional depth, or broader groups — researchers can assist colleges, teachers, and even social media engineers with designing safer, more compassionate online environments. It's not about vilifying technology but making a more informed understanding of its impact on how we become who we are — particularly when we're still trying to figure that out ourselves.

XXI. LIMITATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Limited Geographic Scope: The research only focused on Bangalore city. Rural or semi-urban students might have varied Experiences with social media, self-esteem, and FOMO. Unequal Group Representation: The sample had limited degree and master's students, but the group

sizes were uneven, so comparisons are less credible. Cross-Sectional Design: Data was gathered at a single time point, so we can't know if self-esteem or FOMO measures were Changing over time or because of life events. Self-Report Bias: The data was gathered via questionnaires only. Students can have replied either socially desirable or misunderstood certain questions. Response Fatigue: Very lengthy questionnaires could have resulted in hasty or less cautious responses, particularly towards the end. Cultural Context Overlooked: Indian societal values such as family expectations and collectivism, which could influence self-esteem or FOMO, were not explored in great detail. Mental Health Factors Not Controlled: Factors such as depression or anxiety, which may affect both FOMO and self-esteem, were not assessed or excluded. Platform-Specific Effect Overlooked: Various social media sites (Instagram vs. LinkedIn, etc.) have different effects on users, but this was not Investigated. Simplistic Age Grouping: Clumping together 18–25-year-olds ignores significant differences in development between a teenager and A postgraduate adult. Binary Gender Grouping: Only male and female genders were examined, not accounting for non-binary or gender-diverse Participants.

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