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## Exploring the Relationship between FoMO and Big Five Personality Traits among Emerging Adults

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### ABSTRACT

Fear of Missing Out (FoMO), often known as the worry of missing out on exciting or fascinating events, has garnered a lot of attention recently, but little study has been done on its relationship to personality in the Indian context. The term "Fear of Missing Out" (FoMO) was used to characterise a trend observed on social networking sites. The purpose of this study is to look into the relationship between the Big-Five Personality Traits and FoMO. The questionnaire was administered to 248 emerging adults who were selected using convenience sampling technique. The collected data was analyzed using correlational research method. The tools used for this study were the Fear of Missing Out (FoMO) scale and the Ten-Item Personality Inventory (TIPI). The findings of this study reveals that all Big-Five Personality Traits had an impact on FoMO. FoMO and all Big-Five Personality Traits show a positive and significant relationship. Limitations and directions for further research were discussed.

**Keywords:-** Fear of missing out, Big-Five Personality Traits, Social Media

### 1. Introduction

Social media and the internet greatly influence the world in which we live. While it offers chances for social interaction, it also gives a glimpse into a never-ending list of pursuits that a person is not active in. The phrase "Fear of Missing Out" (FoMO) was first used to describe a phenomenon seen on social networking platforms in 2004. The Fear of Missing Out on information, events, experiences, or decisions that could improve one's life is known as FoMO. FoMO is a new type of addiction that makes people spend significantly more time on social media (Buglass et al., 2017; Oberst et al., 2017; Przybylski et al., 2013). The description of the Fear of Missing Out (FoMO) is "a constant worry that others might be enjoying valuable events while one is not present." (Przybylski et al., 2013, p. 1841). Consumer psychology is beginning to address the concept of FoMO. However, the theoretical foundations of FoMO are not understood fully, and the existing FoMO scales only apply to the setting of social media. FoMO consists of two processes, first, the feeling that one is missing out, and second, an obsession with keeping up these social relationships.

One of the most often used conceptual frameworks in personality study is the Big Five approach. D. W. Fiske developed the "big five personality traits" idea, which was later developed by others, including Norman (1967), Smith (1967), Goldberg (1981), and McCrae & Costa (1987). The big-five personality traits include extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, and neuroticism. Extraverted people refer to those outgoing and dominant; agreeable people are the ones who are sympathetic and warm, conscientious individuals are efficient and ordered; neurotic individuals are nervous and moody while individuals with high openness to experience are imaginative, creative, and non-conventional (Funder, 2013).

The present study aims to investigate the relationship between FoMO and the Big-Five Personality Traits. Finding out how personality factors affect FoMO is believed to have significant educational, social, and academic outcomes. Previous studies have revealed that students who are having higher levels of FoMO

possess lower intrinsic motivation to learn (Alt, 2015). Additionally, it has been suggested that FoMO influences young people's use of social media (Alt, 2015; Przybylski et al., 2013). Besides FoMO, personality traits can also exert an influence on the use of social media among emerging adults (Hamutoglu et al., 2020). The main objective of this study is to investigate the relationship between Big-Five Personality Traits and Fear of Missing Out (FoMO) which will provide us with a better understanding of the relation between personality and social media addiction.

### **1.1 Hypotheses**

1. There will be a significant relationship between Extraversion and Fear of Missing Out among emerging adults
2. There will be a significant relationship between Agreeableness and Fear of Missing Out among emerging adults
3. There will be a significant relationship between Conscientiousness and Fear of Missing Out among emerging adults
4. There will be a significant relationship between Emotional Stability and Fear of Missing Out among emerging adults
5. There will be a significant relationship between Openness to experience and Fear of Missing Out among emerging adults

## **2. Methodology**

### **2.1 Participants**

Using the convenience sampling technique a sample of 248 from the emerging adulthood population was selected from different colleges in Kerala state. The age of participants ranged from 18-25. The questionnaire "Fear of Missing Out and Personality" was conducted through online mode using Google forms. The consent was taken from the participants before administering the questionnaire. They were given guidelines on how to respond to each assertion. The collected data was analysed using SPSS - 28.0.1.1(14). Pearson bivariate correlation was the statistical analysis method used to determine the relationship between the two variables.

### **2.2 Measures**

#### **2.2.1 Fear of Missing Out Scale: FoMOs**

Przybylski et.al., (2013) developed the Fear of missing out scale which is a 10-item inventory to measure the FoMO of the subjects. Responses of the participants were recorded on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1(Not at all true of me) to 5 (Extremely true of me). The overall score on the scale varies from 10 to 50, with the highest values indicating a greater degree of alarm about missing out. This tool had a Cronbach alpha of 0.89 and the validity was established for this scale.

#### **2.2.2 Ten-Item Personality Inventory**

Ten-Item Personality Inventory (TIPI) designed by Gosling et al. (2003), was used to evaluate the big-five dimensions (openness, emotional stability, extraversion, agreeableness, and conscientiousness). There were two statements for each of these personality traits, one of which was a positive statement and the other a negative one, and each statement had two descriptors. Its test-retest reliability over six weeks was 0.72 and validity was established. A seven-point Likert scale was used to measure the participant's degree of agreement with each statement from strongly agree to disagree strongly.

## **3. Results and Discussion**

The collected data was analysed based on the formulated objective and hypothesis. The scores of FoMO and Big-Five Personality (see table 1).

**Table 1** Bivariate correlations among the analyzed variables

	FoMO
Extraversion	0.193**
Agreeableness	0.206**
Conscientiousness	0.328**
Emotional Stability	0.166**
Openness to experience	0.200**

$N = 248$

\*  $p < .05$ .

\*\*  $p < .01$ .

Fear of Missing Out was found to be significantly and positively correlated with Extraversion ( $r=.193^{**}$ ). Therefore the alternative hypothesis which states that "There will be a significant relationship between extraversion and Fear of Missing Out" is accepted. It was discovered that agreeableness and FoMO had a positive and significant correlation ( $r=.206^{**}$ ). Thus the alternative hypothesis which states that "There will be a significant relationship between agreeableness and Fear of Missing Out" is accepted. Conscientiousness was also found to be positively and significantly associated with FoMO ( $r=.328^{**}$ ). So that the alternative hypothesis which states that "There will be a significant relation between conscientiousness and Fear of Missing Out" is accepted. As emotional stability was having a positive significant correlation with FoMO ( $r=.186^{**}$ ), the alternative hypothesis which states that "There will be a significant relationship between emotional stability and Fear of Missing Out" is accepted. FoMO also has a significant relationship with the Openness to experience trait of personality ( $r=.200^{**}$ ). Thus, the hypothesis that states "There will be a significant relationship between openness to experience and Fear of Missing Out" is accepted.

The present study aims to assess the relationship between FoMO and big-five personality traits. Extraverted individuals tend to be outgoing and ready to make friends and establish social relationships (Lounsbury and Gibson, 2009). Highly extraverted individuals typically prefer the excitement, stimulation, and social interaction (Costa & McCrae, 1992).

In the present study, the findings states that Extraversion had a positive association with FoMO. In conclusion, highly Extraverted individuals are concerned that they might miss an opportunity for social interaction, a new experience, or an important event. Young people's use of social media has been shown to rise due to FoMO (Przybylski et al., 2013; Alt, 2015; Vaidya et al., 2016). A significant study by the authors of the FoMO scale, Przybylski et al. (2013), found frequent social media usage among people with high levels of FoMO. According to research conducted by Correa et al. (2010), as social media has transformed from anonymity to "onymity", extraverts were more involved in social media than introverts. Thus from the above-mentioned studies, it's obvious that Extraversion and FoMO are related.

According to a study conducted by Hamutoglu et al., (2020), individuals who score well on agreeableness had a remarkable association with Fear of Missing Out. This is in line with what our study's findings showed. Agreeable people who are more generous, sympathetic, cooperative, and not aggressive were found to be positively associated with Fear of Missing Out. Conscientious people are structured, methodical, accountable, and possess strong self-control (Barrick, & Mount, 1991). Our findings suggest that Conscientiousness is positively correlated to FoMO. In contrast, Stead and Bibby (2017) reported a negative association between FoMO and the Conscientiousness trait of personality.

Since FoMO is social anxiety (Davis 2012), it makes sense to assume that anxiety-related personality factors will predict higher levels of FoMO. Neuroticism (Emotional Instability) is one such personality trait. On the contrary, our findings showed that emotional stability is positively associated with FoMO,

that is neuroticism is negatively related to FoMO. Neurotics frequently engage in pervasive avoidance behaviors, such as avoiding social interactions because they may be perceived as threatening. From this perspective, we might argue that our outcome is rational. Neurotic individuals try to avoid social interactions. Hence they will not experience a feeling of Missing out if they miss any social events or experiences. So the feeling of being left out cannot be explained by neuroticism alone.

In addition to Extraversion, Correa et al., (2010) found a positive relationship between openness to experience and social media use. Besides, FoMO is positively related to social media use (Przybylski et al, 2013; Alt, 2015; Vaidya et al, 2016). Supporting the above studies we found that openness to experience had a notable connection with FoMO. That is imaginative, curious, and open-minded individuals have a positive and significant association with FoMO. The results of this study are consistent with existing research which shows a significant relationship between personality traits and FoMO (Przybylski et al, 2013).

While interpreting the findings, it is important to keep in mind that this study had a few limitations. A potential drawback of the current study is the use of self-report and that may not always be accurate. The second major limitation is that we conducted our study only on the emerging population. It is unknown whether younger and older people share the same association between FoMO and the Big-Five personality traits. Therefore further research covering a diverse population is essential. Finally, only 248 subjects participated in this survey, therefore more studies have to be conducted including larger sample size. Further studies need to be conducted exclusively for finding the relation between personality and FoMO as most of the previous studies given less focus on relating Personality Traits with FoMO.

#### **4. Conclusion**

The current study paints a very useful picture of how personality traits are linked with Fear of Missing Out. The analysis of the relationship between Personality and FoMO indicates that all Big-Five Personality Traits (Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Emotional Stability, and Openness to experience) have a positive and significant effect on Fear of Missing Out.

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