

A study on internet addiction in relation to fear of missing out among teenagers

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Abstract

In the contemporary digital era, the question of internet use and its effects on teenagers is becoming more and more significant. This study investigates the association between internet addiction and FOMO (fear of missing out) in teenagers. An online poll with 145 respondents was used to gather data. The Internet Addiction Scale and the FoMO Scale were employed. The findings demonstrated that FoMO has a considerable impact on internet addiction. The study emphasizes how crucial it is to take both aspects into account when creating successful preventative and intervention plans.

Keywords: Internet addiction, FoMO, teenagers

Introduction

Social networking sites (SNSs) like Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, and TikTok have significantly changed interpersonal relationships during the last 20 years. An ambient infrastructure of continuous social awareness, where users are continuously exposed to carefully chosen glimpses of others' activities, accomplishments, and social gatherings, has developed from what started out as straightforward tools for preserving offline relationships (Kuss & Griffiths, 2011). The internet is a major part of our daily lives. While it helps us connect with the world, it has also created two big psychological challenges: Internet Addiction and FoMO (Fear of Missing Out). Internet addiction happens when a person loses control over their internet use, spending hours online while ignoring their real life, health, and studies (Beard, 2005).

A major reason behind this continuous internet use is FoMO. Fear of Missing Out (FoMO) is a unique type of social anxiety that has been hypothesized to be caused by this condition of continuous partial connection. It is characterized by a persistent desire to stay connected and a pervasive fear that others may be enjoying fulfilling experiences from which one is absent. FoMO is the constant worry or anxiety that other people are having fun, enjoying life, or doing exciting things without you (Przybylski *et al.*, 2013). Because of this fear, people feel a strong urge to check their smartphones and social media accounts every few minutes. They do this because they do not want to miss any update, news, or trend.

Recent studies show that FoMO and Internet Addiction are deeply connected to each other. When people feel lonely or anxious in real life, they use the internet as a tool to escape their problems. However, this creates a dangerous loop: higher FoMO leads to more internet use, and spending too much time online makes people feel more isolated and anxious (Alam *et al.*, 2026)^[2]. This habit slowly turns into an addiction, which harms a person's sleep, focus, and mental peace (Singh & Verma, 2026). Therefore, understanding how FoMO drives internet addiction is very important to help people balance their digital and real lives.

Objectives of the Study

- To investigate the relationship between ia and fomo.

Hypotheses of Present Study

- IA is positively associated with FoMO.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

To examine the association between Internet Addiction (IA) and Fear of Missing Out (FOMO), a correlational analysis was conducted. This section presents the statistical findings related to the stated hypothesis that IA is positively associated with FOMO. The analysis aims to determine the strength and direction of the relationship between the two variables. The following table and diagram provide a clear representation of the correlation outcomes.

Table 1: Correlation between Internet Addiction (IA) and Fear of Missing Out (FOMO)

Variables	Mean	SD	Correlation	Remark
Internet Addiction	44.91	6.99	0.428	significant
FoMO	30.05	3.083		

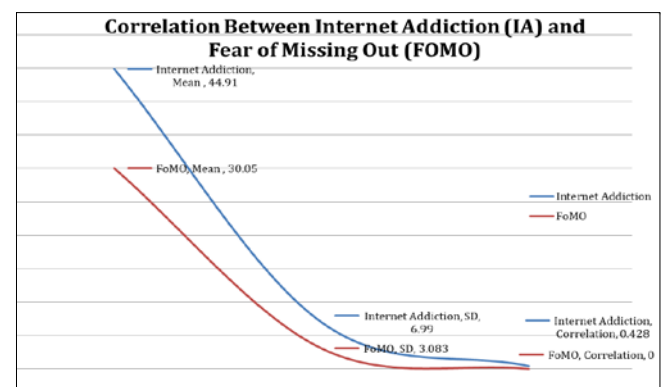


Fig 1: Correlation between Internet Addiction (IA) and Fear of Missing Out (FOMO)

Interpretation

Table shows that there is a positive correlation ($r = .428$) between Internet Addiction (IA) and Fear of Missing Out (FOMO). This indicates that as the level of internet addiction increases among students, their level of FOMO also tends to increase. The obtained correlation coefficient (.428) represents a moderate positive relationship, suggesting that both variables (IA and FOMO) are meaningfully associated with each other.

The mean score of Internet Addiction ($M = 44.91$, $SD = 6.99$) suggests that participants showed a moderately high

level of internet use. Similarly, the mean score of FOMO ($M = 30.05$, $SD = 3.08$) indicates that the participants experienced a moderate level of fear of missing out.

Conclusion

In conclusion, statistical analysis confirms a strong positive correlation between FoMO and internet addiction, proving that as the anxiety of missing out increases, problematic internet usage also rises. This relationship implies an urgent need for educational and psychological interventions, such as digital detox programs and cognitive behavioral counseling, to help users regulate their screen time. Additionally, promoting real-world social connections and offline hobbies can effectively reduce the internal anxiety of exclusion. Ultimately, addressing FoMO is a vital step toward preventing severe digital dependency and fostering long-term digital well-being.

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