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Examining the Predictive Influence of Joy of Missing Out (JOMO) on Self-Esteem and Stress Appraisal

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Abstract

Objectives: *The present research focuses on the relationship among the Joy of Missing Out (JOMO), self-esteem and perceived stress among adults and predictive role of JOMO for self-esteem and perceived stress.* ***Method:*** *The sample consisted of 104 participants aged 18–30 years. Standardized tools were used, including the Joy of Missing Out Scale (JOMOS) developed by Barry et al. (2023), the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES) developed by Morris Rosenberg in 1965, and the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS-10) constructed by Sheldon Cohen et al. (1983). The study used a correlational research design, and linear regression analysis was applied to examine the predictive role of JOMO for self-esteem and perceived stress.* ***Results:*** *Findings presents a positive correlation (r=.17, p<.05) between JOMO and self-esteem. The regression analysis revealed that JOMO did not significantly predict self-esteem (B=.144, 't'=1.715,p >.05), indicating no meaningful predictor. However, JOMO and perceived stress has been found significantly correlated (r=.27, p<.01). JOMO significantly predict perceived stress (B=.31, 't'=2.79, p < .01) among adults. Findings are suggesting that higher levels of JOMO is associated with higher levels of perceived stress.* ***Conclusions:*** *The findings suggest that while JOMO may not be a strong factor in boosting self-esteem, it is significantly associated with perceived stress. These results highlight the complex psychological role of JOMO among adults' mental well-being.*

Keywords: *Joy of Missing Out, Self-Esteem, Perceived Stress, Mental Health, Young Adults.*

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Introduction:

In today's connected world, people are constantly bombarded with updates, notifications, and virtual interactions, which has led to the rise of the fear of missing out (FOMO). FOMO is the anxiety that others are having rewarding experiences while one is left out, and it has been linked to negative emotional outcomes like increased stress, social anxiety (Baker et al.,2016), and lower self-esteem. In contrast, a newer concept called the joy of missing out (JOMO) is gaining attention. JOMO reflects the satisfaction and peace that individuals experience when they intentionally disconnect from social events or digital engagements. It emphasizes the value of freedom to choose not to participate in activities that feel socially pressured. FOMO has been studied well while JOMO is still underexplored.

The concept of JOMO (Joy of Missing Out), coined by Dash in 2012, highlights the positive emotions and well-being that arise from intentionally disengaging from social obligations and digital distractions. JOMO emphasizes contentment in separateness, suggesting that individuals can find joy in stepping away from social engagements, fostering personal time, and pursuing activities that promote mental peace and reflection.

Research shows that JOMO is both a psychological state and a behavioral tendency. It reflects a mindset where people feel at peace with their decisions to opt out of certain activities, embracing the present moment and prioritizing what truly matters to them. This approach involves setting boundaries, practicing self-care, and making authentic choices that align with personal values and happiness. JOMO is associated with increased life satisfaction (Ryff, 1989), reduced stress, and greater mindfulness, and it highlights the importance of autonomy-a significant psychological benefit that allows individuals to feel in control of their time and decisions, ultimately promoting a healthier and more mindful existence (Barry et al., 2023; Brinkmann, 2019; Rautela & Sharma, 2022). Eitan and Gazit (2024).

Active and Passive JOMO

JOMO can be experienced in both active and passive forms. Active JOMO involves consciously choosing to disconnect from others, whether by engaging in solitary activities like reading, exercising, or spending time in nature. This active form of JOMO is linked to the deliberate decision to take a break from the constant social demands, prioritizing personal time to restore mental energy. In contrast, passive JOMO occurs when disconnection is not intentional but is instead a result of external circumstances. For example, moments of solitude may arise from unexpected events, such as personal downtime or periods where social activities are unavailable. In such cases, individuals may unexpectedly find contentment in the

absence of external social stimuli, which can lead to similar feelings of joy and relaxation.

JOMO represents a positive shift in how individuals approach their relationship with social engagement and personal time. By choosing to disconnect, individuals can cultivate greater self-esteem, reduce stress, and promote overall well-being.

The term **"self-esteem"** was popularized by the American psychologist Morris Rosenberg in the 1960s. It refers to an individual's overall sense of personal value or self-worth, encompassing how much they appreciate themselves and their abilities. Self-esteem is a key psychological concept that influences one's mental health and emotional well-being. People with high self-esteem typically have a positive self-image, are confident in their abilities, and approach challenges with resilience. On the other hand, those with low self-esteem often struggle with self-doubt, insecurity, and negative self-perception, which can impact their social interactions and mental health. Self-esteem is shaped by a combination of internal factors, such as personal achievements and self-reflection, as well as external influences, like social interactions and societal expectations.

The term **"perceived stress**" was coined by Cohen, Kamarck and Mermelstein (1983) in the early 1980s. It refers to the degree to which individuals perceive their life situations as stressful, focusing on how unpredictable, uncontrollable, or overwhelming they feel rather than on actual external stressors. Perceived stress is subjective and varies from person to person based on individual appraisal and coping abilities. Unlike objective stress, which relates to actual stress-inducing events, perceived stress emphasizes the mental and emotional interpretation of these events. Individuals who experience high levels of perceived stress may feel overwhelmed by their daily responsibilities, which can lead to negative health outcomes like anxiety, depression, and even physical ailments such as cardiovascular problems.

Despite growing interest in digital well-being, research on the effect of JOMO (Joy of Missing Out) on self-esteem and perceived stress remains limited and presents several important gaps. While preliminary studies suggest that individuals who experience higher levels of JOMO tend to report better self-esteem and lower perceived stress-primarily because they feel empowered to choose solitude and self-care over constant social participation (Kim & Lee, 2023; Chen et al., 2021), there are significant ambiguities in how JOMO is defined and measured. Current measurement tools, such as scales assessing the joy of independence or disconnection, capture only a portion of the JOMO experience, highlighting the need for more robust and comprehensive instruments (Kim & Lee, 2023).

Additionally, much of the existing research is cross-sectional and focused predominantly on young adults, particularly college students, leaving the long-term effects of JOMO and its impact on other age groups and cultural contexts largely unexplored (Gupta & Patel, 2022; Müller et al., 2023). Another critical gap is the underlying motivation for JOMO, it is not yet clear whether it arises from genuine contentment and mindful living or from avoidance behaviors linked to social anxiety or loneliness (Smith & Lee, 2024; Martinez et al., 2024). Some evidence even suggests that high JOMO, especially when coupled with frequent social media use, may be associated with increased social anxiety, indicating a complex relationship that warrants further investigation (Johnson & Brown, 2020).

The significance of studying JOMO's effects on self-esteem and perceived stress is multifaceted. In an era marked by pervasive social media and digital connectivity, FOMO (Fear of Missing Out) has been widely recognized as a source of psychological distress, contributing to low self-worth, anxiety, and burnout (Przybylski et al., 2013; Abel, Buff, & Burr, 2016). By contrast, understanding JOMO offers a potentially transformative approach to digital well-being, emphasizing intentional living, self-acceptance, and resilience against social pressures (Kuss et al., 2021, Kim & Lee, 2023). Clarifying the mechanisms and outcomes of JOMO is crucial not only for advancing psychological theory but also for informing practical interventions, such as digital detox programs and mental health strategies that promote healthy technology use (Roberts & David, 2020, Smith & Lee, 2024). Furthermore, as society grapples with the mental health consequences of hyper connectivity, research in this area can guide policymakers, educators, and clinicians in fostering environments that support both social engagement and the joy of missing out, ultimately contributing to improved quality of life and holistic well-being (Müller et al., 2023; Martinez et al., 2024).

Methodology:

Objectives:

1. To study the relationship between JOMO and self-esteem.
2. To study the relationship between JOMO and perceived stress.
3. To study the role of JOMO for predicting self-esteem.
4. To study the role of JOMO for predicting perceived stress.

Hypotheses:

1. There will be a significant relationship between JOMO and self-esteem.
2. There will be a significant relationship between JOMO and perceived stress.
3. JOMO will significantly predicts self-esteem.

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4. JOMO will significantly predicts perceived stress.

Variables:

Independent variables:

One independent variable that has been taken is JOMO (Joy of missing out).

Dependent variable:

Two dependent variables have been taken first self-esteem and second perceived stress.

Tools:

Study consisted of two sections. In the first section, demographic and personal information of the participants were obtained. The second section consisted of three standardized psychological scales relevant to the objectives of the study.

Demographical Assessment: The survey consisted of some preliminary questions regarding name, age, and gender.

The Joy of Missing Out Scale (JOMOS): The scale was used to assess the participants' level of JOMO, which refers to the enjoyment of being disconnected from others or social demands. The questionnaire was developed by Barry et al. (2023). It consisted of 13 items, each rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from "Not at all true of me" to "Extremely true of me." Some items were positively scored (1 to 5) and others were reversely scored on a scale (5to 1). The highest possible score is 65. The internal consistency of JOMOS total scores was r = .85.

The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES): The scale was used to measure the overall self-esteem of participants. This scale was developed by Morris Rosenberg in 1965 and has been widely used in psychological research. The questionnaire consists of 10 items, with responses recorded on a 4-point Likert scale ranging from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree." The scale includes both positively and negatively worded items, and reverse scoring was applied where necessary. Each item is scored from 1 to 4, making the maximum possible score 40. Higher scores indicate greater self-esteem. The internal consistency of the RSES is typically high, and in most studies, it exceeds r = .80.

The Perceived Stress Scale (PSS-10): The scale was used to assess how participants appraise situations in their lives as stressful, developed by Cohen et al. (1983), contains 10 items. Responses were recorded on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from "Never" to "Very often." The scale includes both positive and negatively phrased items, and reverse scoring was applied where required. Each item is scored from 0 to 4, with a maximum possible score of 40. Higher scores reflect higher levels of perceived stress. The internal consistency of the PSS-10 is considered good, with Cronbach's alpha, r = .84.

Sample:

A total of 104 participants within the age range of 18–25 years participated in this study. A majority (53.8%) of participants identified as male, and 46.2% identified as female.

Procedure:

Questionnaires were circulated through a Google Form among the age-criterion population. A total of 104 participants completed the questionnaire. The scoring of the obtained data was done for age ranges (18–25) using Excel sheets. The total score was also obtained for all items in each scale. Data have been analyzed with correlation and regression.

Results:

This investigation aimed to study the impact of the Joy of Missing Out (JOMO) on self-esteem and perceived stress. Table 1 shows the descriptive values for JOMO (mean=39.64, SD=4.84), self-esteem (mean=21.91, SD=4.15) and perceived stress (mean=19.96, SD=5.64). Table 2 shows correlation between JOMO and self-esteem ($r=.17$, $p<.05$), presenting very minor relationship. H1 "There will be a significant relationship between JOMO and self-esteem" is accepted.

Table-1: ***Showing the descriptive statistics of all variables.***

Variables	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
JOMO	39.64	4.84	104
Self-esteem	21.91	4.15	104
Perceived Stress	19.96	5.64	104

Table-2: ***Showing Correlation between JOMO and Self-esteem***

Variables		JOMO	Self esteem
JOMO	Pearson Correlation	1	.17*

****significant at .05 level***

Table-3: ***Model Summaryb***

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	F, (df-1,102)
1	.17a	.028	.018	4.11	2.940

a. Predictor: (constant), JOMO

b. Dependent Variable: Self esteem

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Table-4: ***Linear regression analysis for JOMO as a predictor of self-esteem.***

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	16.218	3.346		4.847	.000
	JOMO	.144	.084	.167	1.715	.089

Table-3, the model summary, expressing F, (df-1,102) =2.940, p>.05, with 2.8% variance in self-esteem because of JOMO, which is not significant. So, H3 "JOMO will significantly predicts self-esteem" is rejected. Regression analysis (Table-4) for JOMO as a predictor of self-esteem (B=.144,'t'=1.715, p>.05) has not been found significant. Table-4 shows the regression analysis for JOMO as a predictor of self-esteem. The 'a' coefficient is 16.218, which implies that when predictor (JOMO) is kept at zero, then the value of self-esteem becomes 16.218.

Table-5: ***Showing Correlation between JOMO and Perceived stress***

Variables		JOMO	***Perceived stress***
JOMO	Pearson Correlation	1	.27**

*****significant at .01 level***

Table-6: ***Model Summaryb***

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	F (df-1,102)
1	.266a	.071	.062	5.46	7.77**

a. Predictor: (constant), JOMO

b. Dependent Variable: Perceived stress

*****significant at .01 level***

Table-7: ***Linear regression analysis for JOMO as a predictor of perceived stress.***

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	7.68	4.44		1.731	.086
	JOMO	.310	.111	.266	2.787	.006

Table-5 shows the correlation between JOMO and perceived stress (.27,p<.01), found significant. Table-6 showing the model summary (F,df-1,102=7.77, p<.01) is significant, expressing JOMO has been found an influencing factor for perceived stress. Table-7 presents the regression analysis for JOMO as a predictor for perceived

stress (B=.310,'t'=2.787,p<.01). Results expressing JOMO as a significant predictor for perceived stress among adults. So, H2 "There will be a significant relationship between JOMO and perceived stress" and H4 "JOMO will significantly predicts perceived stress" are accepted. For predictor Joy of missing out (JOMO), the standardized partial regression coefficient was .266, which implies that for every SD unit increase in JOMO, the perceived stress increases by .266 units.

Discussion:

The study examined whether JOMO (Joy of Missing Out) predicts self-esteem and perceived stress. It was hypothesized first that there would be a significant relationship between JOMO and self-esteem, JOMO would significantly predict self-esteem. Second there will be significant relationship between JOMO and perceived stress, JOMO will predict perceived stress significantly. These hypotheses were based on earlier research, such as the study by Barry et al. (2023), which showed that people who experienced higher JOMO also reported better mental health and lower psychological distress.

The present study aimed to investigate the effect of the Joy of Missing out (JOMO) on self-esteem and perceived stress among a sample of 104 participants. The results provide valuable understandings into the complex role of JOMO plays in psychological well-being, while also highlighting important hints and unexpected findings.

Contrary to some expectations and prior research suggesting that JOMO may enhance self-esteem by fostering autonomy and self-acceptance (Abel et al., 2016; Milyavskaya et al., 2018), the current study found that JOMO was not a significant predictor of self-esteem. The regression analysis revealed a small, non-significant positive association between JOMO and self-esteem (B=.144,'t'=1.715, p>.05), with JOMO explaining only a minimal portion of the variance in self-esteem scores (2.8%). This result suggests that, at least in this sample, experiencing joy from opting out of social events or digital engagement does not translate into higher self-worth.

There are several possible explanations for this finding. First, the operationalization of JOMO may not have captured the full complexity of the construction, potentially conflating genuine contentment with avoidance or social withdrawal. Second, it is possible that other factors, such as social connectedness, personality traits, or the presence of social anxiety, play a more decisive role in determining self-esteem than JOMO alone. Finally, the sample's demographic characteristics (e.g., age, cultural background) might moderate the relationship, as younger adults may still derive much of their self-esteem from social validation and peer comparison.

In contrast to its non-significant effect on self-esteem, JOMO was found to be a significant positive predictor of perceived stress (B=.310,'t'=2.787,p<.01), accounting for approximately 7.1% of the variance in perceived stress scores. This finding is somewhat counterintuitive, as JOMO is often conceptualized as a protective factor against stress, encouraging individuals to embrace solitude and reduce the pressure of constant connectivity (Przybylski et al., 2013). However, the positive association observed here suggests that individuals who report higher levels of JOMO may also experience greater perceived stress.

One possible explanation is that, for some individuals, JOMO may be less about intentional, mindful disengagement and more about coping with overwhelming social demands or digital overload. In such cases, the JOMO could reflect a defensive response to stress rather than a proactive pursuit of well-being. Alternatively, those with higher stress levels may be more likely to withdraw from social situations and subsequently rationalize this withdrawal as JOMO. This interpretation aligns with recent research indicating that JOMO can sometimes mask underlying social anxiety or feelings of exclusion (Elhai et al., 2020).

These findings have important implications for both research and practice. They suggest that JOMO is a multifaceted construct whose effects on well-being are not universally positive and may depend on individual motivations and contexts. Interventions aimed at promoting digital well-being should carefully distinguish between healthy, intentional disengagement and withdrawal driven by stress or anxiety. Additionally, the results highlight the need for more nuanced measurement tools and longitudinal research to better understand the causal relationships between JOMO, self-esteem, and perceived stress.

Conclusion:

In summary, while JOMO is often promoted as a path to greater well-being in the digital age, this study suggests its relationship with self-esteem is limited and JOMO has not been found a significant predictor for self-esteem. While it's positive association with perceived stress may be more complex than previously thought and predicting perceived stress significantly. Understanding the motivations behind JOMO and its psychological consequences remains an important area for future research and mental health practice.

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