

## Fear Of Missing Out (FOMO) As A Predictor Of Smartphone Addiction Among School Students

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### Abstract

*The excessive use of smartphones among adolescents has transmuted patterns of communication, learning, and social interaction. While smartphones provide numerous advantages, excessive usage has led to behavioural concerns such as smartphone addiction. One psychological factor that has gained attention in recent years is the Fear of Missing Out (FOMO), defined as a pervasive anxiety that others may be experiencing rewarding events without one's participation. Adolescents, who are particularly sensitive to peer interaction and social belonging, may frequently engage with smartphones to remain updated with social activities. The present study investigates whether FOMO predicts smartphone addiction among school students. A quantitative research design was adopted using a structured questionnaire administered to secondary school students. Standardized scales measuring FOMO and smartphone addiction were used for data collection. Statistical techniques such as descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and regression analysis were applied to examine the relationship between the variables.*

*The findings indicate a significant positive relationship between FOMO and smartphone addiction. Students with higher levels of FOMO tend to demonstrate stronger tendencies toward compulsive smartphone usage. The study highlights the importance of understanding psychological motivations behind excessive smartphone engagement and suggests that educational interventions focusing on digital well-being may help reduce problematic technology use among adolescents.*

**Keywords:** Fear of Missing Out, Smartphone Addiction, Adolescents, Social Media Behavior, Digital Psychology

### Introduction

The rapid expansion of digital technology has significantly reshaped everyday life, particularly among adolescents. Smartphones have become an essential tool for communication, entertainment, and information access. Students rely on smartphones not only for academic purposes but also for maintaining social relationships through social networking platforms such as WhatsApp, Instagram, and Snapchat. Despite the benefits associated with smartphone technology, concerns have emerged regarding excessive usage among young individuals. Smartphone addiction refers to a behavioral pattern characterized by excessive dependence on mobile devices, difficulty controlling usage, and negative consequences affecting daily functioning. Adolescents often check their phones repeatedly, sometimes even during academic activities or late at night. A major psychological factor contributing to this behavior is Fear of Missing Out (FOMO). FOMO is a form of social anxiety arising from the perception that others are participating in rewarding experiences while one is absent. This feeling can lead individuals to continuously monitor social media updates to remain connected with their peers.

School students are particularly vulnerable to FOMO because adolescence is a developmental stage characterized by increased sensitivity to peer influence and social acceptance. Consequently, many students develop habitual smartphone checking behavior in order to stay updated with social interactions. Understanding the relationship between FOMO and smartphone addiction is therefore essential in order to develop effective strategies for managing digital behaviors among adolescents. The present study aims to explore this relationship among school students and determine whether FOMO significantly predicts smartphone addiction.

### Review of Literature

#### Fear of Missing Out (FOMO)

FOMO was first conceptualized in psychological research as a motivational factor associated with social connectivity. Individuals experiencing FOMO often feel compelled to remain continuously informed about the activities of their peers. Social networking sites amplify this phenomenon by providing constant updates regarding social events and interactions. Previous studies have shown that

individuals with high FOMO levels tend to engage more frequently with social media platforms and display increased online engagement.

**Smartphone Addiction Among Adolescents**

Smartphone addiction is considered a form of behavioral addiction similar to internet addiction. Excessive smartphone use has been linked with several negative outcomes including:

- Reduced academic performance
- Sleep disturbances
- Decreased attention span
- Increased anxiety and stress

Adolescents are particularly at risk due to the availability of mobile technology and the strong influence of social networks.

**Relationship Between FOMO and Smartphone Use**

Several studies have reported that FOMO is closely associated with compulsive smartphone checking behavior. Adolescents who experience higher levels of FOMO often feel the need to remain constantly connected with social networks.

Research findings suggest that:

- FOMO increases time spent on smartphones
- Social media notifications reinforce compulsive checking behavior
- Psychological dependence develops gradually over time

However, limited studies have examined this relationship specifically among school students in developing countries, highlighting the need for further investigation.

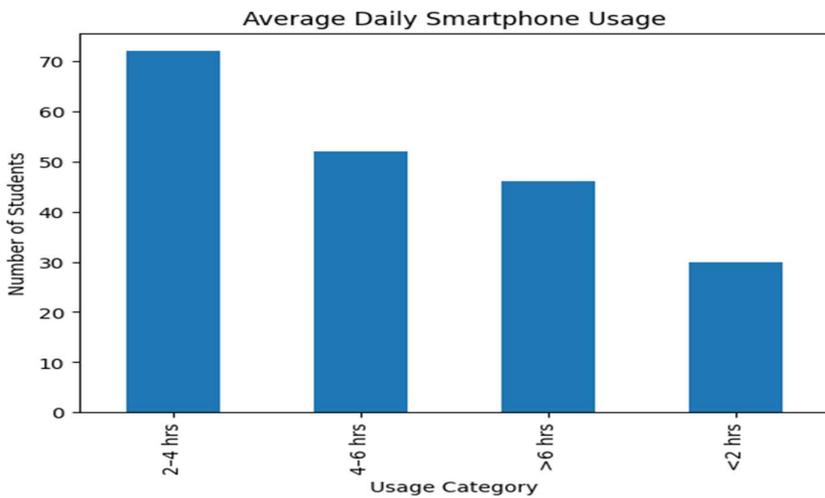
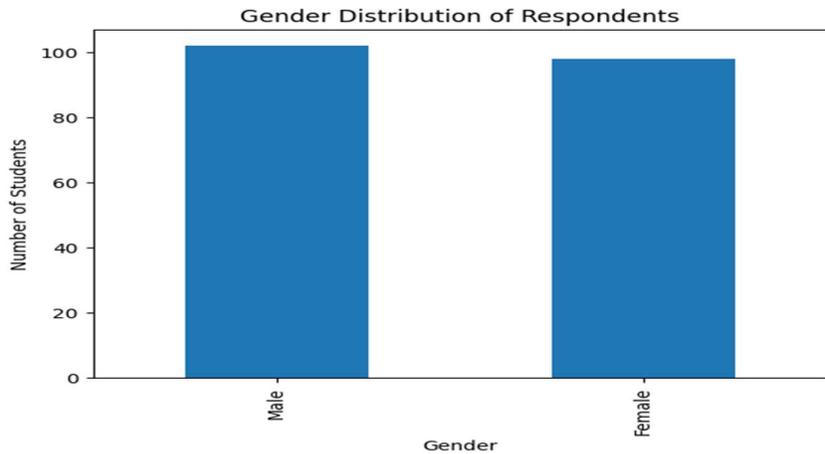
**Objectives of the Study**

1. To measure the level of Fear of Missing Out among school students.
2. To measure the level of smartphone addiction among school students.
3. To examine the relationship between FOMO and smartphone addiction.
4. To determine whether FOMO significantly predicts smartphone addiction.

**Hypotheses**

H1: Fear of Missing Out is positively correlated with smartphone addiction among school students.

H2: Fear of Missing Out significantly predicts smartphone addiction among school students



**Research Methodology**

**Research Design**

The study adopted a quantitative descriptive research design.

**Sample**

Participants consisted of 200 secondary school students aged between 13 and 18 years.

**Sampling Technique**

Convenience sampling method was used to select the respondents.

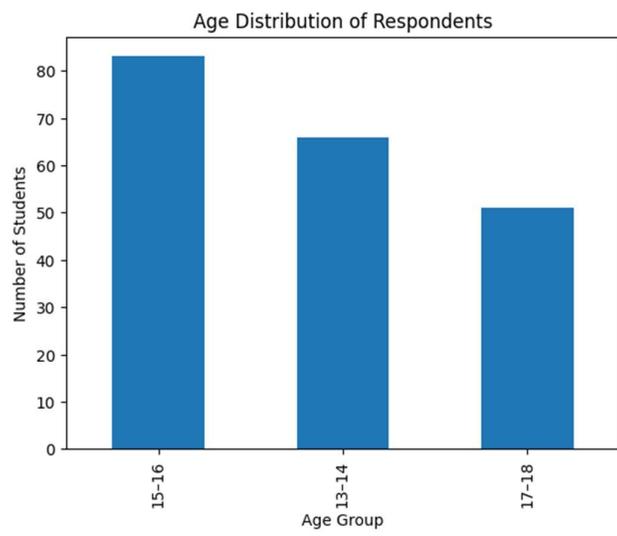
**Instruments**

Two standardized scales were used:

1. Fear of Missing Out Scale
  2. Smartphone Addiction Scale
- Both scales used a 5-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

**Data Analysis Techniques**

- Descriptive statistics
  - Pearson correlation analysis
  - Regression analysis
- Statistical analysis was conducted using SPSS software.

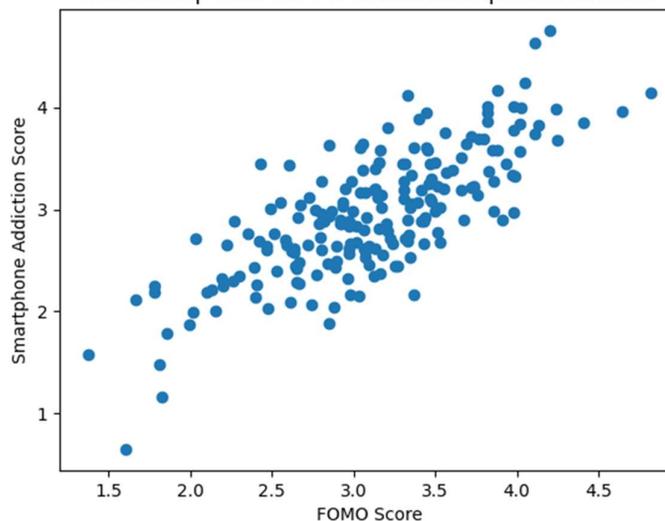


**Correlation Analysis**

The correlation results revealed a positive relationship between FOMO and smartphone

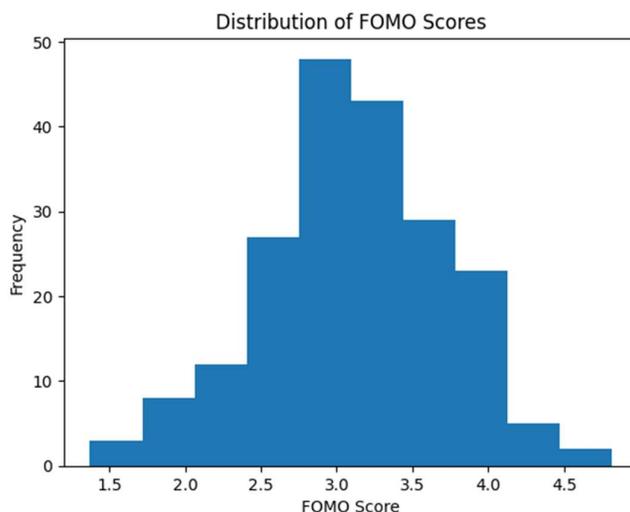
addiction. Students with higher FOMO scores were more likely to demonstrate addictive smartphone usage patterns.

**Relationship Between FOMO and Smartphone Addiction**



**Regression Analysis**

Regression analysis confirmed that FOMO significantly predicts smartphone addiction among school students.



### Discussion

The findings of the present study indicate that Fear of Missing Out plays a significant role in shaping smartphone usage behavior among adolescents. Students who experience a strong desire to remain socially connected tend to check their smartphones frequently, which may gradually lead to compulsive usage patterns. The results support previous research suggesting that social media environments intensify feelings of social comparison and peer pressure. Adolescents who fear being excluded from social interactions may develop habitual smartphone checking behaviors. Furthermore, excessive smartphone use may interfere with academic concentration, sleep quality, and emotional well-being. Therefore, educational institutions should promote awareness regarding responsible technology use and encourage students to develop healthy digital habits.

### Conclusion

The present study concludes that Fear of Missing Out is a significant predictor of smartphone addiction among school students. The findings highlight the psychological factors underlying excessive smartphone engagement and emphasize the need for digital well-being initiatives within educational settings. Schools and parents should encourage balanced technology usage and help adolescents develop self-regulation strategies to manage their online activities effectively.

### Limitations

1. The study was limited to a specific group of students.
2. Self-reported responses may contain bias.
3. Other psychological factors such as self-esteem and loneliness were not included.

### Recommendations

Future research may include additional psychological variables such as:

Self-esteem  
Social anxiety  
Academic performance  
Sleep quality

Longitudinal studies could provide deeper insights into the long-term effects of smartphone addiction.

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