

DIGITAL SELF VS. REAL SELF: EXPLORING THE INFLUENCE OF ONLINE PERSONA ON FOMO AND SOCIAL MEDIA FATIGUE

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Abstract

Purpose: The ubiquity of social media platforms (SMPs) has amplified the mental difficulties encountered by users, particularly the occurrences of Fear of Missing out (FOMO) and digital exhaustion. Although previous studies have examined these concepts in isolation, understanding how these two phenomena interact is still lacking, especially through the mediating roles of narcissistic traits and platform behaviours. This study investigates how FOMO, influenced by underlying stimuli such as time cost and anxiety, contributes to SMP fatigue through narcissistic admiration, rivalry, self-disclosure, and social comparison behaviours. Design/methodology/approach: 310 adult SMP users in India took part in a cross-sectional study that was administered using Prolific Academic. The interactions between factors, such as FOMO stimuli, narcissistic dimensions (respect and competition), and SMP behaviours including self-disclosure and social comparison, were examined using structural equation modeling (SEM). Findings: Research outcomes indicate that FOMO is significantly elicited by anxiety and time-related cost, which in turn, activates both narcissistic admiration and rivalry traits. These narcissistic dimensions influence SMP behaviours differently: social comparison was discovered to exert a significantly positive influence effect on digital exhaustion, whereas self-disclosure did not show a similar impact. The study offers announced comprehension of the ways in which behaviours and psychological characteristics interact in the digital world. Research limitations/ implications: Social desirability bias may have an impact on the cross-sectional, self-reported dataset utilised for the analysis. Additionally, the study's geographic focus limits generalizability beyond the Indian adult population. Practical implications: These results have significant impacts for mental health practitioners, educators, and platform designers. By identifying FOMO stimuli and the behavioural consequences of narcissistic traits, this study can help develop interventions and platform designs that reduce user fatigue and promote healthier engagement with social media. Originality/value: This research expands the current literature by offering a novel, integrative pathway that connects FOMO, narcissistic traits, SMP behaviours, and fatigue. It enhances theoretical understanding while offering actionable insights for balanced technology use strategies in the age of hyper connectivity.

Keywords: *Fear of Missing Out (FOMO), Social Media Fatigue, Narcissism, Social Comparison, Self-Disclosure, Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), Digital Well-being, Social Media Behaviour, Anxiety, Time Cost, Social Networking Sites (SNS)*

INTRODUCTION

Over the past few years, social media tiredness has detrimental effect of utilizing platforms for social media (SMPs)—has garnered a lot of attention because of its associations with promoting either short or long-term pauses or the discontinuation of using of social media (Tandon et al., 2021; Fan et al., 2020; He, 2021). Social media tiredness, also known as "fatigue," is a subjective sense of depletion and tiredness brought on by using SMPs (Ravin Dran, Yeow Kuan, & Hoe Lian, 2014). It has also been connected to limitations on consumers' mental processing skills, or, to put it another way, incapacity to handle the

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information and communications coming from SMPs. Although, little is known about the causes of weariness. (Islam, Laato, Talukder, & Sutinen, 2020; (Dhir, Kaur, Chen, & Pallesen, 2019); this restricts the preventative actions that may be created to prevent users from experiencing weariness, which constitutes a substantial gap in the research.

According to recent research, social media monitoring (Tandon et al., 2021) and Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) (Bright & Logan, 2018; Dhir et al., 2019; Tandon, Dhir, Talwar et al., 2021) may be linked to fatigue, a negative aspect of the DOSM phenomenon (Kaur et al., 2021). Under the auspices of DOSM, FO MO has been extensively studied and associated with several negative behaviours, such as phubbing Tandon et al., 2022, online social comparisons (Reer et al., 2019), and compulsive social media use (Dhir et al., 2018; Tandon et al., 2020).

Researchers have proposed that FOMO can cause individuals to express themselves online (Tandon et al., 2021; Tandon et al., 2022) and maintain constant connectivity to the SMP they utilize to avoid experiencing anxiousness or apprehension about lacking the opportunities that other individuals enjoy (Przybylski et al., 2013). Therefore, when FOMO strikes users might share details about Social Media Platforms (continuously, in an active or passive manner (Elhai et al., 2020; Tomczyk & Selmanagic-Lizde, 2018), even when they are supposed to be doing other things like taking care of their sleep (Tandon et al., 2020), pursuing their studies (Alt, 2017), or finishing work-related tasks (Appel et al., 2019; Tandon et al., 2022).

It makes sense that overly usage of social media motivated by FOMO could lead to users feeling exhausted. However, there has been conflicting previous studies on the relationship amongst weariness and FOMO. While certain scholars determine that there is not a noteworthy connection between both of them (Dhir et al., 2018; Malik et al., 2021), others discover a significant positive relationship (Tandon et al., 2021). The supplementary gap that has been identified because of the differences observed and emphasized the research that led to the current study since they gain attention to the necessity for added study on the association between FOMO and weariness.

An outlying gap in the DOSM study is the lack of knowledge of the origins and repercussions of utilization of the online platforms related factors, such as FOMO, that may lead to some of the inconsistencies in research on how these factors lead to fatigue (Elhai et al., 2020; Tandon et al., 2021). It's reasonable that associated variables concerning individual-specific differences, such as characteristics like narcissism, could link FOMO to fatigue. It is trusted that SMPs support the accurate setting for personality traits like narcissism to surface as well as affect Usage patterns.

The association between the various aspects of FOMO, narcissism, and the DoSM experiences experienced by users, such as exhaustion, is not well recognized, nevertheless. In fact, in the context of online media settings, various authors like (Błachnio & Przepiorka, 2018; Jordan et al., 2021; Miller et al., 2021; Scott et al., 2018) have highlighted the requirement for the behavioural and emotional attributes of narcissism that should be taken into consideration. It is being thought that narcissism-related behaviours, specifically the rivalry and admiration tactics individuals utilize to market themselves on SMPs (Back et al., 2013), influence how FOMO establishes as usage behaviours that leads to feel exhaustive feelings amongst the individuals.

Since few research have examined the antecedents of FOMO, we simultaneously look at why social media users might experience it (Tandon et al., 2021). According to earlier research, people who have lower psychological states—such as worry or worries about offering others

social support—may be more prone to suffer FOMO (Elhai et al., 2016; Sultan, 2021). However, there is a clear lack of study examining how these moods function as triggers for a person's feeling of being left out, which represents one more knowledge gap. Given that numerous studies show a connection between FOMO and SMP users' experiences of issues in both their personal and work-related lives, it is imperative that this issue be addressed. To close these lacunae, our work addresses the following research questions (RQs).

RQ1. As stimuli, are worried and FOMO and time cost have a positive correlation?
RQ2. How do social comparison and self-disclosure behaviours linked with SMP use relate to the associations between FOMO and narcissism (admiration and rivalry)?
RQ3. Is there a positive correlation between exhaustion and self-disclosure and social comparison?

Thus, this work explores a novel pathway and examines the ways in which SMP sensations of weariness and FOMO are influenced by situational inputs (like the expense of time and anguish) and individual differences (such as narcissistic adoration and rivalry). Based on the stimulus-organization-behaviour-consequence (SOBC) framework, we gathered data from 310 SMP users in India and used SEM to check the proposed correlations. The findings significantly advance our understanding of FOMO and tiredness in particular and, more generally, the body of research on the DoSM. Furthermore, by concentrating on the less studied facets of admiration and rivalry tactics that people use to counteract narcissistic inclinations, we add to the small collection of studies looking into the impact of narcissism in the setting of SMPs. By concentrating on a novel mechanism linking fatigue and FOMO, our results contribute to the theoretical understanding of DoSM. We also highlight the need for SMP operators to have policies in place that encourage the best possible use of SMP in order to prevent negative user effects and safeguard a useful route for marketing-related customer communications from other businesses.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Numerous variables of a situation (S) can influence an participant's (or organism's, O) internal processes and condition, as the SOBC framework (Davis & Luthans, 1980) makes obvious. These inner conditions (O) may then influence the person's behaviour (B) and consequence in specific results (C). As it realizes the complexities of the human mind and the procedures that distinguish between events and consequences at the personal level, this structure is applicable for our study. This assists as a growth of the stimulus-organization-response (S-O-R) model that has been broadly active in prior studies to understand how appropriate and personal factors influence Social Media Platform utilization behaviour and its adverse effects (Jabeen et al., 2023; Luqman et al., 2017; Whelan et al., 2020). In extra, the model assists us to investigate several visible (e.g., time cost) and unseen (e.g., narcissism) components while explaining DoSM and other SMP behaviour

We indicate to Whelan et al. (2020) and Jabeen et al. (2023) as "conversant" (Huff, 1998) and build on their research by taking into account new elements (stimuli and organisms) that might account for users' experiences of FOMO manifesting as weariness. We use both situational time cost and individual anxiety, conceptualized as stimuli (S), for FOMO in our paradigm (see Fig. 1). FOMO and two more recent ideas related to narcissism (respect and competition), are taken into consideration in terms of the organismic state (O). These are different processes that people can engage in when reacting to internal feelings or external stimuli that jeopardize their perceived status in society and approval. Additionally, this research focus on investigating the ways in which these narcissistic processes impact SMP user behaviours (B) in relation to self-disclosure and online social comparison (henceforth

referred to as social comparison). Finally, we think of exhaustion as the result of the behaviours mentioned. The next sections provide a detailed discussion of the ideas and our justifications for the anticipated relationships.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND HYPOTHESIZED RELATIONSHIPS

The Organism-stimulus FOMO (Time cost)

Numerous research has examined the relationships between users' negative cognitive outcomes, including anxiety (Park, 2022) and everyday strain (Brailovskaia & Rohmann, 2021), and the extent of use and time spent on SMPs. However, because such usage frequently depends on users' demands and intentions, previous research findings have been inconsistent and varied (Park, 2022). This suggests that "pattern-of-usage" in place of "absolute-use" factors, such as the length of a use session, impact problematic SMP usage and the consequences that follow (Smith, 2022). To examine one attribute of such custom behaviours, we center on clarifying the impact of time cost as a triggering factor in developing individuals sense of FOMO.

According to our conceptualization, time cost is the amount of energy users anticipate using to gather, process, and react to SMP communication and information. The idea of subjective social support norms, as defined by Maier et al. (2015) refers to users' beliefs of what they expect in response to the information that others have shared. Although previous research has examined the effect of perceived norms regarding reciprocity and social support in fostering SMP addiction (Brailovskaia et al., 2019; Sultan, 2021) little attention has been paid to examining how these norms affect other SMP-driven phenomena like fatigue or FOMO. We contend that users may suffer from anxiety, or the fear of overlooking crucial information, as a result of their expectations that they will dedicate considerable resources, in terms of time and effort to respond to the messages generated in their SMP groups.

Since FOMO has been linked to SMP use and intensity in the past, previous research provides some support for the relationship, even if our argument is largely intuitive, and there isn't any proof that such time costs and FOMO are directly related. For example, (Franchina & Abeeel, 2018) showed a comparable relationship between FOMO and the depth of SMP utilization, whereas (Roberts & David, 2020) identified a favorable relationship between social media engagement and FOMO. We add to the array of research by investigating if time cost, which is a measure of users' anticipated amount of SMP involvement, affects FOMO as these studies show a correlation between FOMO and the user's extent of participation with SMPs. We believe that users who persistently utilize SMPs intensively and strive for strong social ties on these stages are probably to feel high levels of FOMO (Sultan, 2021), consistent with the principles of self-determination theory (Orosz, Toth-Kiraly, & Bother, 2016). Users who anticipate investing a lot of time and effort in digesting SMP-related data may therefore also suffer from greater FOMO as a result of their efforts to seize every chance that would reaffirm their relatedness demands. Therefore, we hypothesize,

H1. There is a positive correlation between time cost and FOMO.

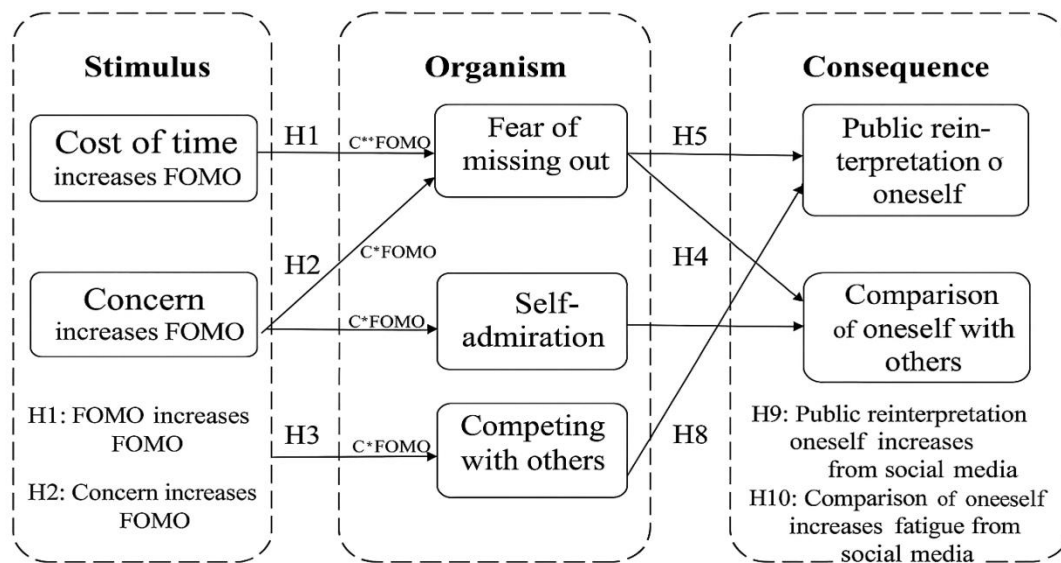


Figure 1: Proposed Conceptual Model (Source: Developed by Authors)

Anxiety – FOMO

As per Clark and Beck (2010), anxiety is a prevalent human spectacle which is intensified by adverse adjacent stimuli like offenses, violent incidents, or natural disasters. On the contrary, the tension, masses, and stresses of ordinary life are also often correlated with anxiety (Clark & Beck, 2010). According to Barlow (2002), nervousness establishes a particular emotional reaction associated with worry, fear, panic, and anxiety. According to revolutionary research, anxiety is an emotional result brought on by dismay that concludes in an objectionable sensation (Beck et al., 2005). Furthermore, anxiety confirms itself on an intellectual well as functional level, is informed to predict various effects (Clark & Beck, 2010).

A lot of people have explored the concerns rising from the crossing of anxiety and technology use. As per research by Lepp et al. (2014) those exhibiting compulsive smartphone use were more prone to anxiety. This conclusion was also supported by Elhai et al. (2016), who discovered a substantial correlation between anxiety and FOMO and problematic smartphone use. “Researchers have suggested that individuals experiencing worry may maintain multiple social media accounts (Primack et al., 2017; Vannucci et al., 2017). Earlier researches have demonstrated a high relationship between anxiety and FOMO, despite the majority of the studies establishing an indirect or mediating relationship between the two (e.g., Holte & Ferraro, 2020; Tandon et al., 2021). By investigating anxiety as a precursor to- FOMO, we contribute to the body of knowledge and anticipate a favorable correlation in keeping with previous findings. Thus, we postulate that,

H2. Anxiety and FOMO are positively correlated.

Organism – Behaviour

FOMO-Narcissism (Rivalry & Admiration)

Narcissism is one personality characteristic that has attracted significant scholarly interest lately in relation to the use of SMP (Carusi, 2020; Casale & Fioravanti, 2018; Zhang & Rau,

2020). According to scholars, narcissists can best satisfy their requirements in SMP situations, such as adoration (Casale & Banchi, 2020). According to Andreassen et al. (2017), for example, SMPs enable narcissists to showcase their accomplishments as well as receive societal acknowledgment from their online social groups in the form of likes and encouraging remarks. Similar to this, (Casale & Fioravanti, 2018) hypothesized that narcissists may utilize SMPs to satisfy their demands for social recognition as well as belonging. There is now more research aimed at figuring out how narcissism influences different facets of SMP use, including problematic usage patterns (Hawk et al., 2019) and DoSM phenomena, like social media addiction (Brailovskaia et al., 2019; Casale & Banchi, 2020), as a result of such conjecture (Błachnio & Przepiorka, 2018). Both grandiose and vulnerable forms, corresponding to overt and covert manifestations, of narcissism have been the subject of studies to ascertain that they produce distinct social patterns as well as display marginally different characteristics (Casale & Fioravanti, 2018; Ozimek et al., 2018).

We concentrate on explaining the function of grandiose narcissism because recent meta-analyses (Gnambs & Appel, 2018; McCain & Campbell, 2018) have indicated that it may be more prominently associated with SMP usage than vulnerable narcissism (Casale & Banchi, 2020). Grandiose narcissism, however, has also been proposed by several academics as not being a single concept (Back et al., 2013; Mota et al., 2022). Rather, it consists of antagonistic as well as agentic approaches, or rivalry and narcissistic admiration, which represent two distinct methods or approaches by which narcissists satisfy their demands. Narcissists might exhibit appeal, poise, and other traits those highlight their individuality as well as inspire social admiration as part of a self-promotional strategy (Kirk, Peck, Hart, & Sedikides, 2022). On the other hand, individuals who demonstrate narcissistic rivalry take a self-defensive posture, making others feel more lower or degraded by their actions, which show resentment and a longing for power (Kirk et al., 2022; Mota et al., 2022).

The use of all the above-mentioned processes by a narcissist looks to be compressed by a range of sentiments (Lange, Crusius, & Hagemeyer, 2016) also status-related self-perceptions (Mota et al., 2022). This stimulus would denote significant interactive modifications in the recall of the processes and, thus, in the reactions (Jordan et al., 2021). As these stages create a variety of situational variables that may impact a particular usage pattern among narcissistic operators of either process, it is critical to understand the intricacies of narcissistic respect and modest processes in SMP surroundings (Back et al., 2013).

The researcher asserted that FOMO may be a circumstantial attribute of SMP that influences a contributor's narcissistic processes and, thus, their implementation or employment. Extremely less is identified about the connection between FOMO and narcissism, yet the two have been related (Elhai et al., 2020) and researched in relationship with various personality traits, such the Big Five (Tandon, et al., 2021). For instance, Servidio et al. (2021) found that FOMO has a significant correlation with narcissism as well as modulates its link characterized by problematic smartphone use.

Though the earlier study (Elhai et al., 2020; Servidio et al., 2021) has demonstrated that narcissism may lead to FOMO, we suggest that FOMO itself could influence the response from the people with narcissistic traits and how they interact with SMP-related communication and information. The study explores that narcissists (in contrast to others) may experience required to show off their pomposity, that may direct them to educate every portion of information on SMPs and experience the FOMO in an endeavor to provide evidence of their authority. This FOMO possibly will appear from their calculation that not delivery any crucial facts or SMP updates could restrict their capacity to use SMP activities

to more strengthen their status and, henceforward, extant a "threat" to the result they consider they have.

While narcissists recognize Fear of missing out as a danger, they might either become more self-promotional (esteem) or take a protected position by pretending more adamantly on SMPs (opposition), such as displaying more repeatedly. Their measures and SMP use would be significantly compressed by either response. We assume researching the association between competition, narcissistic adoration, and FOMO may grant central new beliefs of the emotional systems behind SMP use and DoSM phenomena. Therefore, centered on the above explanation, we hypothesize a significant relationship between FOMO and these two features of grandiose narcissism, even though there is, as far as we are aware, no prior evidence of these correlations.

H3. There is a favorable correlation between narcissistic adoration and FOMO.

H4. Narcissistic rivalry and FOMO have a positive correlation.

Social comparison, self-disclosure, and narcissism (admiration and rivalry) Previous research on narcissism has shown that those who exhibit significant narcissistic tendencies are more likely to provide personal information about themselves. Menon (2022), for example, discovered a high positive association between narcissism across several SMPs and sharing story updates. In a similar vein, Scott et al. (2018) found that narcissism had a substantial influence on how frequently people posted photos on Facebook. In line with these academics, we argue that narcissistic competitiveness and appreciation would both encourage SMP users to reveal more details regarding their internet activity to denigrate others or flaunt personal accomplishments. People could satisfy their narcissistic demand for peer recognition (admiration) as well as prevent any perceived social setback (rivalry) by engaging in such conduct (see Back et al., 2013).

Likewise, researchers contend that people with narcissistic tendencies need to manage their image and social comparisons (Bogart et al., 2016; Wang, 2019; Benotsch & Pavlovic, 2004). Although there is little study on the association between narcissism and social comparison in SMP settings, the literature suggests that there is a substantial one (Burnell et al., 2020). For example, Lange et al. (2016) discovered that people who are susceptible to narcissistic behaviour—be it via rivalry tactics or else admiration—tend to compare themselves to others and feel envious. Burnell et al. (2020) also demonstrated that envy contributes to various aspects of narcissism and that this relationship may lead to social comparison. While in the context of cell phones, a different current study by Konget al. (2020) discovered that narcissism was linked to evaluating oneself against others and compulsive use.

According to these findings, narcissistic people frequently usage comparisons to validate the sense of recognition and self-worth. We think that a perceived failure in this area would encourage these groups to relate themselves to others in order to find ways to enhance their image and self-promotion. As far as we are aware, no investigation has looked at the association between relative self-assessment and narcissistic rivalry as well as admiration. However, researcher practice anything is present recognized to recommend that these factors would certainly be absolutely connected since expending also plan—reverence or rivalry—would strength individuals to reexamine the SMP information that has been formerly jointly collected by others formerly crafting SMP uprights that focus their own authority.

In deduction, we antedate that narcissism, social comparison, and self-disclosure will all have promising associations since together affordability and admiration tactics would involve amplified self-promotion and SMP practice, but perhaps with diverse consequences (as

proposed by earlier researchers; Kirk et al., 2022). We expect that the intensity to which the interchange of appreciation and conflict with social comparison and self-disclosure are correlated will correspond to the effect difference in our study. Additionally, we expect a greater relationship between esteem and self-disclosure than with social comparison as investigator consider that narcissistic respect is more analytical of "complexity and organization" (Leniarska & Zajenkowski, 2022). Nevertheless, competitiveness requires an extra skeptical posture, it is anticipated that narcissistic rivalry would be more carefully connected with social comparison- individuals who employ this policy may need to comparison themselves further to make sure that their spot (on SMPs, for example) is suitable for defensive against a universal deterioration in social admiration and impact.

Hence, by considering the examination above, the researcher put forth

H5, which states that self-disclosure and narcissistic admiration are progressively bonded.

H6. There is a significant correlation between social comparison and narcissistic admiration.

H7. Self-disclosure has a promising association with narcissistic rivalry.

H8. There is a reasonable association between social comparison and narcissistic rivalry.

Social Media Weariness and Self-disclosure

Amongst the main inspiration for making use of social networking sites is self-disclosure (Ellison et al., 2007). Nguyen, Bin, and Campbell (2012) discovered that online self-disclosure was not repeatedly higher than offline self-disclosure. Nevertheless, some studies have uncovered that respondents were more prone to share personal information online than in person (Bargh et al., 2002; Bruss & Hill, 2010; Ellison et al., 2007). Happier relationships (Chen, 2017; Rains et al., 2016; Wang et al., 2016) and higher levels of "online social capital bonding, online social capital bridging, and more social support in off-line contexts" (Trepte et al., 2013) are just a few benefits of self-disclosure. As per Ma, Hancock, and Naaman (2016), it can perform as a liberation, especially when it comes to decreasing guilt (Levontin & Yom-Tov, 2017).

All these benefits may lead social media operators to constantly divulge themselves online, increasing their SMP activity, that is shown to be a strong pointer of exhaustion (Cao & Sun, 2018; Dhir et al., 2019). Fatigue has also been proven to be forecasted by increased extent of social overload, involving continual appeals for sustenance, on social media platforms (Cao & Sun, 2018; Maier et al., 2015). Given the discussion above, it has been hypothesized by the researcher that:

H9. There is a constructive association between social media fatigue and self-disclosure.

Social Media Weariness and Self-disclosure

Social differences are connected to several harmful effects. As per White et al., 2006, social differences on a constant basis can lead to defensiveness, sorrow, regret, and envy. Lee (2014) disclosed that social comparisons may harmfully influence an individual's well-being, which validated these findings. Either upwards or downwards comparison may outcome in these negative sentiments (Vogel, Rose, Roberts, & Eckles, 2014). As per Lup et al. (2015), on Instagram use, social comparison was a subsidiary forecaster of depression indicators. Moreover, the associations between Instagram use and social comparison were significantly reduced by the number of strangers followed. As per Weinstein (2017), individuals who adversely equated themselves to their peers experienced an evidently lesser level of

emotional well-being because they were more liable to activate negative emotions. But, by claiming that individuals with lower self-esteem contributed to social comparison further regularly, Cramer et al. (2016) countered the prior results of White et al. (2006).

Some scholars claim that users who engaged in social comparisons experienced weariness (Cramer et al., 2016; Kaur et al., 2021). This social comparison fatigue may stem from a variety of objectives, including self-destruction, self-improvement, and self-enhancement (Cramer et al., 2016). Furthermore, according to Thelwall and Vis (2017) people regularly removed themselves based on social media posts depicting them in an unattractive light, with an undesirable social group or doing an activity that others might disapprove of." They also examine how persistent affects about possibly harmful or disparaging social media posts might lead to tiredness. Moreover, other fatigue-related feelings including tiredness, annoyance, anger, apathy, or a diminished desire or drive to utilize social media platforms and social networks may be brought on by the negative emotions caused by social comparison (Ravindran et al., 2014). As per Kaur et al. (2021), social comparison may therefore be a factor in SMP users' increased levels of fatigue. Given the discussion above, we hypothesized the following:

H10. Social media weariness has a favorable correlation with social comparison.

METHODOLOGY

Measures and Data Collection

Research used the cross-sectional survey method to test our conceptual model. Prolific Academic, which has been widely used by previous researchers, was used to gather data from SMP users living in India. The substantial number of active SMP users in the market (Statista, 2024) and current publications acknowledging the growing prevalence of DoSM phenomena and the negative impacts of SMP use among users in India led us to select the country as a suitable environment.

Table 1 demonstrates the demographic and personal attributes of the participants. Most respondents were aged between 25–30 years (31.6%), with a nearly balanced gender distribution favoring males (56.8%). Most participants held a bachelor's degree or were pursuing one (52.3%), followed by those with a high school education (20.0%) and master's level qualifications (16.8%). Over half (51.3%) reported spending 1 to 3 hours per day, while smaller proportions used it for shorter or longer durations. This profile provides a diverse yet predominantly young, educated sample actively engaged with social media. As suggested by Xu and Luo (2020), to verify the surveys in relation to non-response bias, we also compared the demographic differences between the first and last 25% of responses as well as the variations between included and discarded responses. The t-test outcomes, which shown no substantial variations, demonstrated that non-response bias was not an issue for this inquiry.

To guarantee content validity, we used validated scales that had earlier been used to measure the research components in the survey (see Table 2), which was based on a five-point Likert-type scale. Researcher consulted two experts from academics in the fields of information sciences and psychology to guarantee the goods were suitable. The experts suggested slight modification to the language of the 3 items, and their recommendations were applied. Subsequently, a pilot test was conducted using Prolific so as to verify the face validity of the survey tool (n = 24, 50% female, based in the India States). After the pilot test it got confirmed that the items as well as questionnaire were comprehensible to the participants, the final questionnaire was used in the study.

Analytical Approach

Following Anderson and Gerbing's (1988) suggested two-step procedure of confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) followed by structural path analysis in SPSS AMOS, we employed SEM to test the suggested theoretical framework. The decision to employ SEM as the analytical technique was supported by earlier studies that thoroughly examined DoSM and SMP behaviour using this technique (Kaur et al., 2021).

RESULTS

Typical Technique Bias

We were cautious and checked for the common method bias (CMB), which can be dangerous in self-reported surveys like the one used because the facts for antecedents and results were gathered from similar participants. CMB was tested using the Harman single-factor test, which was suggested by (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003). 31.73% was the extracted CMB value. It was established that CMB posed no significant threat in the current investigation as no individual factor explained a substantial proportion of the variance in the items.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of Participants

Socio-demographic Profile	Description	Frequency	Percentage
Age	25–30 years	98	31.6%
	31–35 years	70	22.6%
	36–40 years	60	19.4%
	41–45 years	44	14.2%
	46–50 years	30	9.7%
	51–55 years	8	2.6%
Gender	Male	176	56.8%
	Female	134	43.2%
Educational qualification	High School Graduate	62	20.0%
	Completed or Currently Enrolled in a Professional/Vocational Program	21	6.8%
	Bachelor's Degree: Completed / Currently Enrolled	162	52.3%
	Master's Degree – Completed or Ongoing	52	16.8%
	Doctoral Degree: Completed / Currently Enrolled	13	4.2%

Table 2: Survey Constructs, Indicators, and Factor Loadings

Construct	Measurement items	N = 310	
		CFA	SEM
Time Cost (TC) (Zhang, He, & Peng, 2022)	TC1. I frequently spend considerable time browsing my friends' social media updates.	0.90	0.90
	TC2. Interpreting the content shared by friends on social media drains my energy.	0.95	0.93
	TC3. Staying emotionally invested in my social media friends is exhausting.	0.80	0.80
	TC4. Sorting through the content I see on social media takes considerable energy.	0.76	0.76
Anxiety (ANX) (Dhir et al., 2018)	ANX1. I often feel anxious about others' judgments of me.	0.91	0.9
	ANX2. I fear that people might dislike me.	0.95	0.92
	ANX3. I feel tensed that I might not be accepted by others.	0.94	0.94
	ANX4. I feel anxious about others' opinions of me.	0.92	0.92
	ANX5. I sometimes feel mocked or ridiculed by others.	0.81	0.81
Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) (Tandon et al., 2021; 2022)	FOMO2. I'm concerned that other people are using social media more effectively than I am.	0.64	0.62
	FOMO3. Seeing my friends enjoy themselves online without me makes me uneasy.	0.92	0.92
	FOMO4. I feel anxious when I am unaware of my friends' online activities.	0.89	0.89
	FOMO5. I get upset when I miss opportunities to communicate with pals on online media.	0.78	0.77
	FOMO6. I feel uncomfortable when I'm not up to date with trending topics online.	0.77	0.76
Narcissistic Admiration (NA) (Back et al., 2013; Seidman et al., 2019)	NA1. I believe I should be admired as a remarkable person.	0.73	0.78
	NA2. I like to demonstrate my uniqueness to others.	0.82	0.86
	NA4. My uniqueness is a source of strength for me.	0.77	0.79
	NA5. I usually succeed in getting people to notice me.	0.77	0.67
	NA6. I often find myself as the in the spotlight.	0.82	0.71

Construct	Measurement items	N = 310	
		CFA	SEM
Narcissistic Rivalry (NR) (Back et al., 2013; Seidman et al., 2019)	NR1. I quietly enjoy it when my competitors fail.	0.88	0.88
	NR2. I often wish for others to be unsuccessful.	0.9	0.9
	NR3. I gain gratification from feeling superior to others.	0.83	0.83
Social Comparison (SC) (Tandon et al., 2021)	SC1. When I use digital media, I frequently compare myself to other individuals.	0.93	0.9
	SC2. I constantly evaluate how I perform compared to others online.	0.87	0.87
	SC3. I frequently assess my social standing relative to others.	0.88	0.88
	SC4. I use digital platforms to compare my accomplishments to those of others.	0.95	0.95
	SC5. I compare how people deal with problems similar to mine.	0.75	0.77
	SC6. I reflect on my life in relation to others' lives on social media.	0.97	0.97
Self-Disclosure (SD) (Dhir et al., 2021)	SD1. A lot about my personality may be found on my social media page.	0.87	0.87
	SD2. I openly share details about myself on digital platforms.	0.88	0.89
	SD3. I'm comfortable sharing personal details on social media.	0.84	0.84
	SD4. My social media profile contains comprehensive personal information.	0.85	0.85
Social Media Fatigue (SMF) (Kaur et al., 2021)	SMF1. The abundance of content on social media makes me feel stressed.	0.69	0.68
	SMF2. Using social media mentally wears me out.	0.92	0.89
	SMF3. I feel truly drained after browsing social media.	0.93	0.89
	SMF4. Prolonged social media use makes it hard for me to unwind.	0.90	0.90
	SMF5. Social media use leaves me feeling fatigued.	0.95	0.92

Evaluation of the Model of Measurement

We examined output pertaining to the measurement model to evaluate the discriminant, convergent, and reliability of the 8 latent variables. Most of the factor loadings (Table 2)

were sufficient and within the suggested ranges (Hair et al., 2006). Convergent validity was confirmed by two factors: first, all item loadings near the respective measures were greater than 0.50 (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988) (Table 2), and second, all constructs' CR values were greater than 0.70. In the third instance, the average variance extracted (AVE) value exceeded 0.50 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981) (Table 3). First, the correlation value for the measure pairs was less than the square root of the matching AVE (Fornell & Larcker, 1981) (Table 3); second, the correlation between the measures was less than 0.80 (Campbell & Fiske, 1959). The discriminant validity was confirmed by these results. Furthermore, the model fit indices ($\chi^2/df = 2.05$, CFI = 0.94, TLI = 0.93, RMSEA = 0.06) matched the suggested values.

The measuring model showed strong psychometric qualities. All constructs demonstrated adequate levels of internal consistency, as seen in Table 3, with Composite Reliability (CR) values beyond the recommended criterion of 0.70, ranging from 0.87 (Narcissistic Admiration) to 0.95 (Social Comparison and Anxiety). All constructs had Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values over 0.50, ranging from 0.58 (Narcissistic Admiration) to 0.81 (Anxiety), showing acceptable convergent validity.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics, Convergent Validity, and Discriminant Validity (N = 310)

Construct	Mean	Std. D.	CR	AVE	MSV	ASV	SC	TC	ANX	FOMO	NA	NR	SD	SMF
SC	2.68	1.17	0.95	0.78	0.49	0.18	0.88							
TC	2.25	1.09	0.91	0.71	0.45	0.12	0.13	0.84						
ANX	2.5	1.22	0.95	0.81	0.47	0.14	0.69	0.22	0.9					
FOMO	2	0.93	0.88	0.59	0.39	0.17	0.61	0.34	0.58	0.77				
NA	2.63	0.92	0.88	0.58	0.07	0.03	0.07	0.06	0.1	0.14	0.76			
NR	1.85	1.03	0.91	0.75	0.1	0.04	0.25	0.11	0.21	0.27	0.10	0.87		
SD	2.22	0.94	0.91	0.7	0.09	0.03	0.26	0.67	0.11	0.16	0.24	0.03	0.84	
SMF	2.28	1.08	0.93	0.76	0.46	0.13	0.33	0.68	0.31	0.45	0.08	0.14	0.04	0.87

Note: SC = Social Comparison; TC = Time Cost; ANX = Anxiety; FOMO = Fear of Missing Out; NA = Narcissistic Admiration; NR = Narcissistic Rivalry; SD = Self-Disclosure; SMF = Social Media Fatigue; CR = Composite Reliability; AVE = Average Variance Extracted; MSV = Maximum Shared Variance; ASV = Average Squared Shared Variance. Diagonal values (bold in formatted documents) represent $\sqrt{\text{AVE}}$ to assess discriminant validity.

The mean values of the constructs indicated that Social Comparison (M = 2.68) and narcissistic admiration (M = 2.63) were more prevalent behaviour among participants, while Narcissistic Rivalry (M = 1.85) and Fear of Missing Out (M = 2.00) were reported at relatively lower levels.

The Fornell-Larcker criterion was used to evaluate discriminant validity. Each construct is empirically different from the others since the square root of the AVE for each construct (seen diagonally in the matrix) was greater than the inter-construct correlations. In contrast to its connection with Time Cost (0.13), Anxiety (0.69), and other variables, the square root of AVE for Social Comparison was 0.88. Together, these findings indicate that the evaluation model is both reliable as well as valid, justifying its application in subsequent structural analysis.

Structural Path Analysis

Numerous important connections between the model's main features were validated by the structural path analysis (Table 4). Time Cost ($\beta = 0.25$, $p < 0.001$) has a significant impact on Fear of Missing Out (FOMO), according to H1. In a similar vein, anxiety was found to be a substantial predictor of FOMO (H2: $\beta = 0.57$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that people with higher anxiety levels are more likely to have FOMO. Narcissistic Admiration (H3: $\beta = 0.18$, $p < 0.05$) and Narcissistic Rivalry (H4: $\beta = 0.27$, $p < 0.001$) were both significantly predicted by FOMO, which supports the idea that people who fear missing out may acquire self-centred qualities as compensatory actions. According to H5 and H6, Narcissistic Admiration was a positive predictor of Social Comparison ($\beta = 0.14$, $p < 0.01$) and Self-Disclosure ($\beta = 0.22$, $p < 0.001$). On the other hand, narcissistic rivalry had a substantial effect on social comparison (H8: $\beta = 0.16$, $p < 0.01$) but not on self-disclosure (H7: $\beta = 0.05$, $p > 0.05$). Self-Disclosure did not substantially predict Social Media Fatigue (H9: $\beta = 0.03$, $p > 0.05$), while Social Comparison did (H10: $\beta = 0.31$, $p < 0.001$). These findings highlight how narcissistic behaviour are shaped by emotional triggers like worry and FOMO. These behaviour then impact user habits like comparison and disclosure, which in turn affect social media weariness.

Table: 4-Results of Hypothesis Testing (N = 310)

Hypothesis	Path	β	p-value	Accepted
H1	TC $\rightarrow$ FOMO	0.25	<0.001	Yes
H2	ANX $\rightarrow$ FOMO	0.57	<0.001	Yes
H3	FOMO $\rightarrow$ NA	0.18	<0.05	Yes
H4	FOMO $\rightarrow$ NR	0.27	<0.001	Yes
H5	NA $\rightarrow$ SD	0.22	<0.001	Yes
H6	NA $\rightarrow$ SC	0.14	<0.01	Yes
H7	NR $\rightarrow$ SD	0.05	>0.05	No
H8	NR $\rightarrow$ SC	0.16	<0.01	Yes
H9	SD $\rightarrow$ SMF	0.03	>0.05	No
H10	SC $\rightarrow$ SMF	0.31	<0.001	Yes

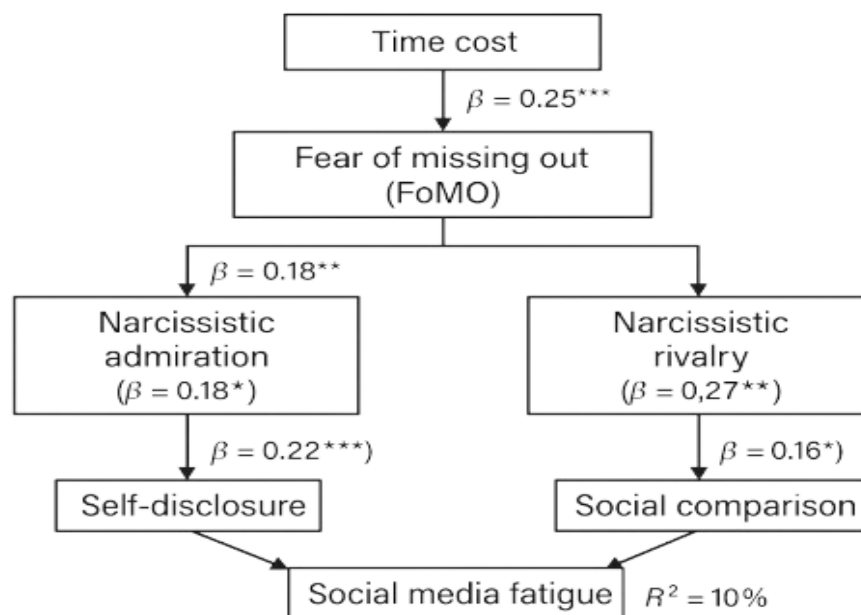


Figure 2: Results of structural model

DISCUSSION

Eight out of the ten hypotheses that were presented were reinforced by the study, contributing captivating new data related to machines that connect ecological stimuli to an individual's inner (organismic) circumstances over time resulting in SMP behaviours that have harmful effects, such as weariness in the setting of this research.

We revealed that unease (H2) and time cost (H1) were both certainly correlated with FOMO, giving new evidence on the situational and single causes of the events. Our results warrant prior study that uncovered that anxiety, both personal and irrelevant to SMP, is the key cause of FOMO (e.g., Holte & Ferraro, 2020; Oberst et al., 2017). Nevertheless, participants apprehension concerning the time as well as force needed to process SMP interactions to cause them to feel more worried. The statistics demonstrate that the cost of involving in SMP endeavors & helping people on these programs has developed a key concern for SMP users. It indicates that these doubts could be worsened and fortified when they collaborate with personal concern, emphasizing the forms of concerns that herald FOMO as a favorable focus for additional study.

Since selfish admiration and competition were positively linked with FOMO, investigators also uncovered cooperation for H3 and H4. This is an important finding because, regardless of investigators' claims of a possible link amongst the two, the connection amongst FOMO and egotism has stayed amazingly under-examined in earlier work (Elhai et al., 2020; Servidio et al., 2021). Discoveries indicate that by taking a self-self-protective or self-advertising position, FOMO may cause selfishness and persuade SMP consumers near an idealized self. The social consequences of the study's location, India, where individuality is a central social specific, may perhaps have roughly to do with this finding.

The plaintiffs may be more probable to let their SMP-linked unease (also known as FOMO) to influence their selfish drives as they are seeking to reserve their distinctive conditions. That is why these people might make every effort to underline their achievements on SMPs to advertise themselves, at times at the cost of other people feeling underestimated. This could account for the association between the conduct detected in conclusions and the natural condition of self-centeredness. However, in the scarcity of prior data, significantly further research is essential before reaching any inferences. It's fascinating to record that though competition was only considerably related to social contrast (H8), egotistic admiration was promisingly linked with both self-disclosure (H5) and social evaluation (H6).

Additionally, it has been discovered that SMP users who embrace self-love and In reaction to FOMO, promotional activity might exhibit a significant propensity to participate in social comparison and self-disclosure in sync with the scant previous studies. The level of SMP behaviour research that is currently available (Menon, 2022; Scott et al., 2018) shows that narcissism, specifically the need for approval and attention from others, is a major factor influencing users' frequency. The outcomes for egotism's links contribute considerably to the body of present DoSM works on how personal conditions and stimuli for self-improvement and elevation may lead to disagreeable and emotionally detrimental experiences by emphasizing a crucial link between FOMO, SMP behaviour, and exhaustion. Prior study (Miller et al., 2021) recommends that impressive and susceptible egoists share alike attributes and may react to recognized dangers to their self-image, specifically those that are known to people (Ferriday et al., 2011; Hawk et al., 2019). This discovery offers some assistance to these results. This apparent danger in our case is connected to FOMO.

The outcomes are to some extent intensified by the compensatory cyberspace use principle (Kardefelt-Winther, 2014), that preserves if individuals use SMPs to decrease any hostile

emotions or psychological states. FOMO-driven competition and admiration foster societal comparison and, to some extent, self-disclosure on SMPs. This can be described by exhibiting FOMO as a threat and a detrimental emotional state that provokes individuals' selfish actions. On the contrary, the ineffective link between competition and self-disclosure (H7) was an astonishing but intriguing finding. It suggests that those who hire this method may feel susceptible and, in a shot to safeguard their sense of self and prevent any observed societal failure, they may constrain their self-disclosures on SMPs.

Finally, it has been discovered that societal evaluation was the lone factor that triggered SMP users to undergo exhaustion (H10), while self-disclosure was an unrelated predecessor of exhaustion (H9). It is not surprising that societal evaluation was found to influence SMP users' exhaustion, as alike connections have been confirmed in modern research (Kaur et al., 2021; Malik et al., 2021). The research agrees with the results of Kaur et al. (2021) and highlight that because social comparison needs continuous examining and administering of SMP content, users may become cognitively and possibly even passionately loaded with information and communication, as recommended by the limited capacity model (Lang, 2000).

The results for H10 conflict with most previous research, which found a substantial correlation between weariness and self-disclosure on SMPs (Cao & Sun, 2018; Dhir et al., 2019). Despite being unexpected, our findings are somewhat supported by Kaur et al. (2021), who similarly discovered a negligible correlation between self-disclosure and weariness, suggesting that disclosure has evolved into a fundamental component of SMP use that users now take for granted. This could explain the weak correlation and raise the possibility that it's time to examine the causes of exhaustion in relation to SMP activities and resources in a more modern manner.

CONCLUSION

Because SMPs are widely used by people all over the world and have become ingrained in users' lives, it is crucial that researchers look into how, why, and how much these platforms are able to either enhance or impair users' mental health. The importance of conducting such studies is highlighted by estimates that there are 491 million active social media users in 2025 users in the India alone (Statista, 2025). The findings and treatments created could help millions of people who suffer from the adverse consequences of SMP use, or the DoSM phenomenon.

By posing as well as responding to three research questions and revealing a novel mechanism by which specific stimuli translate into SMP users' experiences of weariness, we contribute to our understanding of DoSM, specifically with relation to the phenomena of fatigue and FOMO. We found that (i) anxiety and time cost are stimuli that endorse FOMO, (ii) FOMO is a leads to narcissism, leading individuals to adopt rivalry & admiration as tactics or procedures that differentially determined their SMP usage behaviour, and (iii) social comparison is a crucial factor (use behaviour) that causes individuals to feel exhausted by analysing data from 310 SMP users in the India who took part in a cross-sectional survey on Prolific. Our results provide new perspectives that can improve theory and practice.

Theoretical Implications

The observations of this examination have three major consequences for uplifting theoretical expertise of DoSM experience and SMP user well-being. First, to the best of the investigator learning, this is the first investigation to study the association between competition, egotistic admiration, and FOMO, uncovering latest ways that SMP use effects consumers' psychological procedures. This crucial involvement highlights the requirement for more

detailed research on other mental factors that can be influenced by DoSM events and SMP use, which could decrease personal welfare. For example, forthcoming research may analyse how SMP users' light trio of character works together with FOMO and individual responses to influence their DoSM encounters and use repetitions (Kaufman, Yaden, Hyde, & Tsukayama, 2019).

Second, by recognizing the reasons and outcomes of both spectacles and revealing a new trail that simplifies how such DoSM events display a firm effect, where a curiosity inspires the look of the other, we add to the figure of information previously existing on FOMO and fatigue. We answer to numerous investigators' needs to examine DoSM and the harmful effect SMP use may have on a person's mind and total health (Anaraky et al., 2019; Jabeen et al., 2023; Sands et al., 2020; Sheldon et al., 2019).

Third, the outcomes indicate the necessity for more investigations on the genesis of tiredness and FOMO. Given the promptly climbing discernment of DoSM as a event of concentration amongst intellectuals, it is a must to carry out added investigation in this sphere by involving central concepts and point of views from the disciplines of psychology and sociology. Executing perspectives from Heidegger's "shared world" may supply a more careful and detailed knowing of how SMPs influence societal and person demeanours (Qi, Monod, Fang, & Deng, 2018). The investigator calls researchers to do phenomenological and qualitative study to provide more modern perspectives on SMP usage and DoSM.

Practical Implications

It can also degrade bad findings, which can lead to fatigue. Preceding examinations have confirmed that fatigue may trigger individuals to stop the use of SMPs (Cao & Sun, 2018; Luqman et al., 2017; Zhang et al., 2016). Additionally, to SMP operatives, other corporations who count on these programs as a crucial means of interaction with both present and prospective customers may suffer as a conclusion of this stoppage. The findings of this analysis emphasize worries for SMP users, businesses, and sponsors who base their social media strategies on meeting users' FOMO. This is being done without interpretation that this tactic can backfire in the medium-term by causing fatigue and a successive stop in or termination of use.

Second, the present study highlights the impact of FOMO and how it can outcome in increased egotism, harmful feelings from social comparison, & unconsciously revealing too much individual info. All of these influence to exhaustion, though they do so via various means and techniques. SMP operatives must get involved to disrupt this vicious cycle of SMP usage to convince use and prevent break. The consequence has amplified considerably with the use of smart gadgets, such as wearables, tablets, and virtual assistants (Dogan, 2019; Tandon et al., 2022). Hence, the researcher directs the SMP operatives to devise a systematic proposal to direct clients on how to develop SMPs reasonably and with caution. This could be achieved, for example, by suggesting screen-time alerts, communications that highlight health (for instance, by undergoing breaks from unnecessary coverage), and features for nighttime use.

Third, the findings offer aware evidence for clinical involvements and treatment targeted at steer clear of or controlling DoSM and concerned bad effects of using SMP. The investigator inspires counsellors and psychological health specialists to give sustenance to individuals who are using official networks to deal with the undesirable consequences of SMP use by combining DoSM spectacles like tiredness and FOMO with real-life worries of time charge and unease. Counselors must design efficient involvements and tactics to relief affected users; as such use has also been linked to SMP obsession and reduced life contentment.

Moreover, the conclusions indicate the requirement of counselors determinedly partaking in communal communication to update and alert the public about the significant damage that free and constant SMP usage may do to persons. Counsellors could do this by joining forces with SMP users and the media to introduce protective awareness drives, give knowledge about possible solutions, and supply corrective rehabilitation that can support users in effectively self-controlling their use of SMP.

LIMITATIONS AND FURTHER RESEARCH

Even though we made every single endeavor to execute a absolute analysis, the person who reads should take into consideration some restrictions when understanding our conclusions. First, we assessed social media as an all-extensive expression and didn't contemplate on a single SMP program. Forthcoming investigators could stretch our research by examining specific programs like Instagram, X, and Snapchat. As unique SMPs present diverse affordances and content, consumers' needs and pleasures.

Second, our example involved mature SMP users whose mental conditions would be distinct from those of teenagers (Beyens et al., 2016) and aged SMP users (Pera, Quinton, & Baima, 2020). Additionally, we contemplated collecting a broad grip of the examined connections instead of particularly regulating our research to involve people who had been clinically identified as egotistic, which could have influenced our results. To reach more largely appropriate inferences, we advise that upcoming investigations collect information from the numerous SMP user levels.

Third, we surveyed the recommended version's lead links between the related structures. Assessing the indirect pathways, such as the mediation function of self-disclosure in the relationship between narcissistic rivalry & adoration and exhaustion, could enhance our contribution in future studies. Additionally, as moderating variables, socio-demographic characteristics including income level, ethnicity, educational background, and social standing could be modeled.

Fourth, this research is restricted to a specific cultural and geographical context (India); further cross-cultural and multi-national surveys may be carried out to obtain a more thorough knowledge of the relationships. In these studies, cultural variables might potentially be a helpful moderator. In order to overcome the boundaries resulting from use of a single wave, cross-sectional survey, future research could also employ (i) experiment-based studies to test the behavioural manifestations of SMP users, (ii) pre and post-intervention researches to check the effectiveness of the planned interventions to temper the DoSM and deviant SMP usage behaviour, and (iii) comparative and replication studies to confirm the robustness of our proposed model. Lastly, forthcoming research may examine the relationship between FOMO and things like product or service sales, promotions, creating professional or social networks, getting reports about shared information, & sharing news online. Researchers might be able to better grasp how commonplace FOMO is in individual's daily lives with the usage of these kinds of investigations. Future research may look at further reasons of FOMO.

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