

**FOMO AND THE BIG FIVE:
EXPLORING 'FEAR OF MISSING OUT'
THROUGH PERSONALITY TRAITS PRISM**

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Abstract: *The Fear of missing out, or FoMO, points to the uneasiness of not being included in an event, opportunity or experience that an individual considers interesting, valuable, or desirable. The Big Five personality traits, which include sociability, cooperation, perseverance, emotional instability, and intellectual curiosity, are generalisations that can be used to understand human behaviour breed. The objective of this paper was to scrutinise the association between FoMO and Big Five personality traits in young adults. The study involved 290 people between the ages of 18 and 30, who completed the FoMO Scale and the Big Five Personality Inventory. Pearson's Correlation Coefficient, Partial Correlation and Block Regression Analysis were used to inspect the accumulated data. The results manifested that agreeableness and high scorers among extroverts were more likely to have FoMO. The argument put forth in this paper is that to understand the interplay between FoMO and personal traits like mental well-being and excessive use of social media, additional research is warranted. Additionally, the study highlights the importance of understanding FoMO in young adults and how it may impact their sociability, cooperativeness, diligence, emotional instability, and intellectual curiosity.*

Keywords : *Big Five, Fear of Missing Out, FoMO, Influence, Personality Traits*

Introduction

Influence of COVID-19 on Marketing Practices/strategies and Consumer Behaviour

With the emergence of Covid-19, online shopping has gained immense popularity among consumers who value the convenience and safety it offers. However, this trend has also given marketers an opportunity to capitalize on consumer FoMO behaviour. To create a sense of urgency and scarcity around their products, marketers are using various tactics such as limited-time offers, flash sales, and countdown timers. They are also increasingly relying on social media influencers to create a sense of exclusivity around certain products, further fueling consumer FoMO. On the other hand, offline shopping has also been impacted by Covid-19 as consumers are now avoiding crowded physical stores and opting for smaller, more exclusive shopping experiences. This has resulted in the rise of niche boutiques and pop-up shops that cater to consumers looking for unique and exclusive products. Additionally, retailers are placing a greater emphasis on hygiene and cleanliness to reassure customers that their products and stores are safe.

FoMO

FoMO is a common issue in modern society, driven by social anxiety and the need to constantly keep in touch with the lives of others, especially through social networking sites (SNS). FoMO is characterised by a strong desire to be included in important experiences or interests that others are having, leading to feelings of inadequacy and frustration if not included. Individuals with FoMO may find themselves constantly checking their social media feeds or the internet to see what others are doing, which can lead to quick decisions, such as buying tickets to events or scheduling meetings with friends, as such even these actions that do not align with their values or goals. Experiencing FoMO can have detrimental effects on an individual's mental well-being by inducing emotions such as stress, anxiety, and depression. To gain insight into the effects of FoMO, it is crucial to investigate both the underlying reasons for its occurrence and the resulting outcomes. By examining the psychological factors at play and the ways in which FoMO can impact decision-making, we can gain a better understanding of how to mitigate the negative effects of this pervasive issue in our society.

Big Five Personality Traits

The Five Factor Model, commonly referred to as the Big Five Personality Traits, is an extensively recognized framework employed to comprehend and quantify an individual's personality. The model has five main characteristics: openness, conscientiousness, innovativeness, agreeableness, and depression. Each trait reflects a different aspect of an individual's personality and behaviour.

Openness is where one is open to new experiences and ideas. The measurement gauges an individual's level of inventiveness, innovativeness, and openness to experimentation. Conscientiousness pertains to an individual's degree of accountability, dependability, and ability to regulate oneself. It measures a person's ability to set and achieve goals and follow through on commitments.

Extraversion is characterised by sociability, assertiveness, and enthusiasm. It measures a person's need for social interaction and comfort with social situations. Agreeableness reflects an individual's level of cooperation, compassion, and likability. It measures a person's ability to get along and willingness to help others.

Finally, neuroticism describes the extent to which an individual undergoes unfavourable emotions such as anxiousness, despondency, and volatility. It measures a person's emotional stability or lack thereof. Understanding one's own personality traits can help individuals

recognize their strengths and areas for growth, and can also help them better understand and relate to others. By knowing one's traits, individuals can make more informed decisions in their personal and professional lives, and interact with others in a more meaningful way.

FoMO SCALE

The FoMO Scale, short for "Fear of Missing Out" Scale, is a psychological tool that evaluates an individual's fear or anxiety of missing out on positive experiences or situations that others may be a part of but they are not. This fear often drives individuals to want to be present at these events, even if they have no personal interest in them. Developed by researchers at the University of Queensland in Australia, The FoMO Scale comprises ten items that measure an individual's level of FoMO. The test includes statements such as "I feel anxious when I am not connected to the Internet," and "I feel left out when I am not included in social events."

The FoMO Scale comprises statements that people can rate on a five-point scale based on their level of agreement. By doing so, individuals can gain a more personalized assessment of their FoMO level. This tool can be useful in comprehending and tackling the influence of FoMO on a person's behaviour and overall well-being. As a result, the FoMO Scale is an essential resource for those seeking to understand and mitigate the negative effects of FoMO.

Big Five Personality Inventory

The Big Five Personality Inventory is a popular and extensively researched psychological assessment tool that measures an individual's personality traits. This tool is based on the Big Five model of personality, which is a conceptual framework that identifies the five key factors as crucial components of personality.

The Big Five Inventory is widely used in both research and practical applications to evaluate individual personas to foretell a range of outcomes, including job performance, relationship satisfaction, and mental well-being. This temperamental disposition assessment is highly regarded for its accuracy and reliability and has been translated into several languages. It helps to predict several outcomes, including job performance, relationship satisfaction, and mental well-being.

Literature Review

McCrae, R. R., & Costa, P. (2008): The five-factor model of personality is a premise for understanding and measuring personas that identify five broad dimensions as its key components. The five-factor model is based on the idea that individuals can be characterised in terms of their levels of these five dimensions. It is one of the most widely accepted and

widely used frameworks for understanding personality and has been supported by a large body of research. In this article, the authors review the factual and conceptual status of the five-factor model, including its origins, development, and current status in the field of personality psychology. They also discuss some of the criticisms of the model and address issues related to its validity and reliability. Overall, the authors conclude that the five-factor model is a useful framework for understanding and measuring personality that has been repeatedly tested and proven to be highly reliable.

Lin, Lu, and Shih (2012): The researchers examined the connection between personal characteristics, self-worth, and utilisation of social media platforms. The researchers conducted an online survey with a sample of 289 participants in Taiwan and found that the Big Five personality traits were significantly related to SNS use. Specifically, they found that openness and extraversion were positively correlated with SNS use, while conscientiousness and agreeableness were negatively correlated. They also found that self-esteem was positively related to SNS use. The study suggests that people with certain personality traits and elevated levels of self-worth may be more prone to using SNS.

Przybylski et al., (2013): The author and his team conducted a study to examine the motivational, emotional, and behavioural correlates of FoMO. The study described FoMO as "a pervasive apprehension that others might be having rewarding experiences from which one is absent" (p. 1841). The authors administered a survey to a sample of young adults and found that it was positively correlated with lower well-being and life satisfaction, and negatively correlated with the quality of relationships with friends and family. In addition, according to the study, there was a correlation between FoMO and increased usage of social media as well as the frequency of text messages sent. The authors concluded that FoMO is a significant predictor of negative outcomes and suggest that it may be an important factor to consider in interventions aimed at improving well-being and social relationships.

Zadeh et al. (2013): The author and his team of researchers investigated the relationship between individual traits and the use of SNS. The authors conducted a study with 200 Iranian university students, using self-report measures to assess the Big Five personality traits and SNS usage. The findings indicated that individuals with traits of diligence and amicability had a lower usage of social networking sites, whereas those with characteristics of neuroticism and outgoingness had higher usage. Openness did not have a significant relationship with SNS usage. The authors concluded that personality traits can play a role in an individual's SNS usage and that certain traits, such as conscientiousness and

agreeableness, may lead to less frequent use of SNS, while traits such as neuroticism and extraversion may lead to more frequent use.

Gürses, S. & Çiftçi, Ö. (2014) The researchers investigated the interplay between individual personas and online platforms addiction in a sample of Turkish university students. The researchers administered a survey to determine the participants' levels of social media addiction, as well as their levels of personality traits as described by the Big Five Model. The study found that a strong and positive connection exists between social media addiction and neuroticism, while a significant and inverse link was established between SNS over-reliance and conscientiousness. Additionally, there was a weak but negative correlation between online media addiction and agreeableness. No significant link was detected between social media addiction and either extraversion or openness. The authors concluded that heightened levels of neuroticism and depleted levels of conscientiousness may be risk factors for social media addiction, while agreeableness may offer some protection against such an addiction.

Lwin and Williams (2014) The researchers conducted research to investigate the connection between individual personality and involvement and dependence on social media. They discovered that certain personal characteristics such as extroversion and open-mindedness were related to greater involvement in social media, while traits like diligence and friendliness were linked to lower involvement. Additionally, they found that neuroticism was positively linked to addiction to social media. In conclusion, the study implies that personality influences an individual's social media involvement and addictive behaviour.

Pantic and Damjanovic (2014) The authors of the study investigated to explore the connection between one's personality traits and the utilisation of social networking platforms. They surveyed a sample of young adults and measured their personality traits using the Five-Factor Model of Personality (FFM). They found that certain personality traits were related to the frequency and intensity of SNS use. Specifically, they found that extraversion, openness, and conscientiousness were positively correlated with SNS use, while agreeableness and neuroticism were negatively correlated. They also found that the relationship between personality and SNS use differed by gender, with men showing stronger correlations than women. The study's general findings propose that a person's personality traits can influence their utilization of social networking sites (SNS).

Przybylski et al. (2014) The author and their group carried out research to investigate the correlation between the trait of conscientiousness, self-regulation, and the extent of smartphone utilisation. Conscientiousness is a personality trait that reflects the tendency to

be organized, dependable, and self-disciplined. The study found that individuals who scored high on measures of trait conscientiousness and self-regulation used their smartphones less frequently than those who scored low on these measures. The authors suggest that this may be because individuals who are highly conscientious and have good self-regulation skills are able to resist the temptation to use their smartphones excessively and are able to use them in a more controlled and deliberate manner. These findings have implications for understanding how personality traits and self-regulation skills may influence technology use and may be useful for developing interventions to help individuals manage their smartphone use.

Research Question

The following research question drives this investigation -

RQ: “Is FoMO influenced by the levels of extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism, and openness to experience in young adults?”

Research Design

This survey-based descriptive study was designed to explore the interplay between an individual’s propensity to FoMO conduct [Przybylski et al., 2013] and the many facets of human personality traits as per the Big Five Traits Model [McCrae & John, 1992].

Two reliable frameworks namely, ‘The FoMO Scale’ and the ‘Big Five Inventory’ were used to respectively measure an individual’s predisposition to FoMO conduct and create a model of their personality makeup. Primary data was collected by circulating a Google form online among college graduates and other young consumers aged 18-30. Secondary sources of information pertaining to the research variables were also searched and added to the knowledge structure of the paper.

IBM SPSS ver. 26 was used for the analysis of the collected data. The data was processed using Correlation, Hierarchical Regression and Partial Correlation Analysis to better understand the strength of relationships, as well as individual & collective influences.

Analysis

Correlation Analysis

Table 5.1.1 Correlation Analysis Matrix

		RowFomo	Openness	Conscientiousness	Extraversion	Agreeableness	Neuroticism
RowFomo	r	1					
	Sig.						
Openness	r	.245**	1				
	Sig.	.000					
Conscientiousness	r	.216**	.845**	1			

	Sig.	.000	.000				
Extraversion	r	.266**	.768**	.730**	1		
	Sig.	.000	.000	.000			
Agreeableness	r	.343**	.821**	.823**	.727**	1	
	Sig.	.000	.000	.000	.000		
Neuroticism	r	.217**	.832**	.803**	.714**	.781**	1
	Sig.	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	

**Significant Correlation at 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Feedback received from 290 participants was used to investigate the link between FoMO and the five personas (Openness, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness, and Neuroticism).

Table 5.1.1 shows that FoMO positively correlated with all five personality traits, with the highest correlation being Agreeableness ($r = .343, p < .001$). There seemed to be a moderate degree of a direct association between FoMO and Extraversion ($r = .266, p < .001$), Openness ($r = .245, p < .001$), Conscientiousness ($r = .216, p < .001$), and Neuroticism ($r = .217, p < .001$).

5.2 Partial Correlation Analysis

Table 5.2.1 Partial Correlation Analysis between FoMO and Extraversion

Control Variables			RowFomo	Extraversion
Agreeableness & Neuroticism & Conscientiousness & Openness	RowFomo	r	1	
		Sig (2-tailed)		
	Extraversion	r	.075	1
		Sig (2-tailed)	.204	

Table 5.2.2 Partial Correlation Analysis between FoMO and Agreeableness

Control Variables			RowFomo	Agreeableness
Neuroticism & Conscientiousness & Openness & Extraversion	RowFomo	r	1	
		Sig (2-tailed)		
	Agreeableness	r	.265	1
		Sig (2-tailed)	.000	

Table 5.2.3 Partial Correlation Analysis between FoMO and Neuroticism

Control Variables			RowFomo	Neuroticism
Conscientiousness & Openness & Extraversion & Agreeableness	RowFomo	r	1	
		Sig (2-tailed)		
	Neuroticism	r	-.042	1
		Sig (2-tailed)	.496	

Table 5.2.4 Partial Correlation Analysis between FoMO and Conscientiousness

Control Variables			RowFomo	Conscientiousness
Openness & Extraversion & Agreeableness & Neuroticism	RowFomo	r	1	
		Sig (2-tailed)		
	Conscientiousness	r	-.110	1
		Sig (2-tailed)	.064	

Table 5.2.5 Partial Correlation Analysis between FoMO and OPENNESS

Control Variables			RowFomo	Openness
Extraversion & Agreeableness & Neuroticism & Conscientiousness	RowFomo	r	1	
		Sig (2-tailed)		
	Openness	r	-.007	1
		Sig (2-tailed)	.909	

Table 5.2.1 shows that the correlation between RowFomo and Extraversion was found to be weak and not significant ($r = .075, p = .204$). This suggests that Extraversion may not have a significant relationship with RowFomo when controlling for the other personality traits.

Table 5.2.2 shows that the correlation between RowFomo and Agreeableness was found to be moderately strong and significant ($r = .265, p = .000$). This suggests that Agreeableness may have a significant positive relationship with RowFomo.

Table 5.2.3 shows that the correlation between RowFomo and Neuroticism was found to be weak but not significant ($r = -.040, p = .496$). This suggests that Neuroticism may not have a significant relationship with RowFomo.

Table 5.2.4 shows that the correlation between RowFomo and Conscientiousness was found to be weak and not significant ($r = -.110, p = .064$). This suggests that Conscientiousness may not have a significant relationship with RowFomo.

Table 5.2.5 shows that the correlation between RowFomo and Openness was found to be weak and not significant ($r = -.007$, $p = .909$). This suggests that Openness may not have a significant relationship with RowFomo.

Thus, the partial correlation analysis suggests that Agreeableness may have a positive relationship with RowFomo, while Extraversion, Neuroticism, Conscientiousness, and Openness may not have significant relationships with RowFomo, or their relationships may be influenced by the set of control variables.

5.3 Hierarchical Regression Analysis

Table 5.3.1. Model Summary

Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R ² Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.273a	.074	.061	7.326	.074	5.717	4	285	.000
2	.373b	.139	.124	7.076	.065	21.475	1	284	.000

a Predictors: (Constant), Openness, Extraversion, Neuroticism, Conscientiousness

b Predictors: (Constant), Openness, Extraversion, Neuroticism, Conscientiousness, Agreeableness

Table 5.3.2. Regression Coefficients for Predicting FoMO

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardised Coefficients		Standardised Coefficients		t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta			
1	(Constant)	22.276	1.505			14.803	.000
	Extraversion	.221	.109	.189		2.034	.043
	Neuroticism	.009	.124	.008		.076	.940
	Conscientiousness	-.032	.112	-.033		-.287	.774
	Openness	.12	.128	.12		.931	.353
2	(Constant)	21.355	1.467			14.556	.000
	Extraversion	.136	.107	.116		1.273	.204
	Neuroticism	-.083	.121	-.074		-.682	.496
	Conscientiousness	-.215	.115	-.222		-1.859	.064
	Openness	-.015	.127	-.015		-.114	.909
	Agreeableness	.558	.120	.512		4.634	.000

a Dependent Variable: RowFomo

Based on the hierarchical regression analysis output from SPSS, it can be reported that the

model with all five personality traits (Openness, Extraversion, Neuroticism, and Conscientiousness) entered (**Model 1**) significantly predicted RowFomo scores ($F(4, 285) = 5.717, p < .001$), explaining 7.4% of the variance in RowFomo scores ($R^2 = .074$). When Agreeableness was added as a predictor in **Model 2**, it incrementally improved the model's ability to predict RowFomo scores ($F(5, 284) = 9.197, p < .001$), accounting for an additional 6.5% of the variance in RowFomo scores (R^2 change = .065). The final model including all five predictors (Openness, Extraversion, Neuroticism, Conscientiousness, and Agreeableness) explained 13.9% of the variance in RowFomo scores ($R^2 = .139$) after adjusting for the number of predictors (Adjusted $R^2 = .124$).

Specifically, in Model 1, only Extraversion had a significant positive standardised coefficient (Beta = .189, $p = .043$), indicating that stronger levels of Extraversion were analogous to greater Fomo scores. In Model 2, Agreeableness had a significant positive standardised coefficient (Beta = .512, $p < .001$), indicating that elevated levels of Agreeableness were linked to a greater propensity to Fomo behaviour. The other personality traits did not have significant standardised coefficients in either model.

The final hierarchical regression model including all six personality traits (Openness, Extraversion, Neuroticism, Conscientiousness, and Agreeableness) significantly predicted RowFomo scores ($F(5, 284) = 9.197, p < .001$), with Extraversion and Agreeableness having significant positive associations with RowFomo scores.

Discussion

Partial correlation analysis was used to examine the relationship between Fomo and different personality traits while controlling for other personality traits. Based on the results, it was found that Agreeableness had a moderately strong and significant positive relationship with Fomo. In contrast, Extraversion, Neuroticism, Conscientiousness, and Openness did not have significant relationships with Fomo.

Hierarchical regression analysis was used to predict Fomo scores using all five personality traits as predictors. The results showed that the model significantly predicted RowFomo scores and explained 7.4% of the variance in RowFomo scores. When Agreeableness was added as a predictor in Model 2, it significantly improved the model's ability to predict Fomo. These results suggest that Agreeableness is an important predictor of Fomo scores, even when controlling for the other personality traits.

Partial correlation and hierarchical regression analyses provide valuable information about the relationships between variables while controlling for other variables. In the given

scenario, partial correlation analysis showed that Agreeableness had a significant relationship with Fomo, while hierarchical regression analysis showed that Agreeableness was an important predictor of Fomo scores, even when controlling for the other personality traits.

Scope for Future Studies & Limitations

Researchers still do not know much about FoMO and how it relates to personality and other factors. Some potential areas for future study include

1. Investigating the role of individual differences in FoMO, including age, gender, cultural background, and social support.
2. Examining the consequences of FoMO on psychological health and well-being, including the potential for FoMO to lead to social comparison, anxiety, and depression.
3. Exploring the use of interventions and coping strategies to reduce FoMO and its negative effects.
4. Investigating the role of social media and other forms of technology in the development and maintenance of FoMO.

Limitations

Primary data collected for the purpose of this study was limited to 18-to-30-year-old, young adults and was collected over a period of 4 weeks. Though the instructions were clear and self-explanatory, the questionnaires were filled in the absence of the researcher. There is a possibility that the respondents were not focused or serious enough while answering the questions. The use of subjective assessments can introduce measurement error into a study.

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