Self-Esteem, Parenting Styles and FOMO – A Pilot Study

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Abstract:
Studies have previously shown that 75% of adolescents and young adults experience FOMO regularly. It has also been related with problematic smartphone usage and social media usage. There is an evident lack of discourse pertaining to the psychological aspects of FOMO. This study investigates the relationship between Parenting Styles, Self-esteem and the levels of the fear of missing out experienced by adolescents and young adults. Data was collected from 159 participants, aged 13 - 25 years, originating from Indian urban settings, through an online questionnaire. The questionnaire included the General Health Questionnaire 28, Rosenberg Self-esteem Scale, Parenting Style Inventory II and the Fear of Missing out Scale. Results show high correlation between parenting styles and self-esteem. It was found that there is an effective and statistically significant relationship between parenting styles, self-esteem and the levels of FOMO experienced by adolescents and young adults.

Key words: Parenting styles; Self-esteem; Fear of Missing Out; Adolescents; Young Adult

Introduction:

The fear of missing out, is a feeling of poverty, of the need to belong and the lack of that belongingness. There has been a recent surge of research surrounding FOMO that has investigated and emphasized the bidirectional relationship between FOMO and Problematic Smartphone Usage (PSU). Studies have shown that FOMO is not only related to problematic smartphone usage but also to the severity and frequency of it.

This Research paper is on **'Self Esteem and Fear of Missing Out'** *and has been authored by* **Anil Thomas**

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The relationship between FOMO and PSU, the severity and frequency of it is mediated by negative affectivity constructs such as anxiety, depression, stress, rumination and proneness to boredom. (Elhai, et al., 2018). The fear of missing out comes from an anxiety within, that others around one, are experiencing things that they are not a part of. This fear is often ridden with a sense of being left out, not belonging, lacking something that others possess, which in turn makes one feel restless to follow up on their peers, or social circles. The resulting effect is the constant need to keep up.

Adolescents and young adults have been found to experience the highest amount of FOMO. Although the FOMO has been related to PSU, addiction to mobile phones and Social Media Abuse through multiple studies across the globe in various cultural settings, there is a dearth of research exploring the psychological antecedents (Parenting styles, Anxiety, Self-esteem , etc.) of FOMO.

The fear of missing out is birthed from a feeling of not being enough. The question "Am i enough?" Is first answered for a child by their parents or caregivers. According to Attachment Theory by Bowlby (1969) primary attachment bonds are created during infancy with parents or caregivers, and continue to be representations of close relationships and influence social connections further in one's life.

Responsive relationships with attachment figures promote a sense of secure attachment which in turn could reduce the need for validation and social acceptance from peers due to attachment insecurity.

Lack of responsiveness, overprotectiveness, neglecting behaviour from the caregiver or parent towards the child leads to the child forming a core belief that are not enough, leading them to seek out ways to prove to themselves and others around them that they are in fact enough. Creating a safe environment for children, providing emotional support, communicating in a positive and effective manner, making an effort to understand what a child is feeling and thinking, and listening actively to the child can reduce the experiences of FOMO amongst adolescents.(Alt & Boniel-Nissim, 2018). Parents act as pillars of support and security during adolescence. (Moretti & Peled, 2004; Yang, Fu, Liao, & Li, 2020; Parent, et.al, 2021). Anxiety about being excluded stems from neglect from attachment figures (caregivers and parents). Parenting styles are an amalgamation of attitudes towards the child displayed by the parent, creating an emotional climate, in which the parent interacts with the child. (Darling & Steinberg, 1993). FOMO has been found to be significantly positively related to neglectful parenting styles as compared to permissive, authoritarian, and authoritative parenting styles (Ritcher, 2018).

It has also been observed that parents who grant children autonomy, behave in a supportive, warm and accepting manner with their children foster high self-esteem (Scholte, et.al. 2001; Zakeri & Karimpor, 2011). Multiple studies have established a relationship between Parenting styles and self-esteem.
According to Rosenberg (1965) self-esteem is the favourable or unfavorable attitude one shows towards themselves. It is the evaluation made by one about their value, importance and worth. (Myers & Myers, 1992) Thus we can say that it is how we view ourselves in various contexts (such as social, interpersonal, personal, occupational.) Pinquart and Gerke (2019) found positive correlation between, permissive parenting styles (low control, high warmth) and Self-esteem , although self-esteem cannot be said to be only influenced by parenting styles, parental control and responsiveness do have a significant role in the development of self-esteem in a child and adolescent. Children of parents displaying authoritative parenting style (responsive, supportive, firm and strict, considerate) have been found to have higher levels of self-esteem. (Martinez & Garcia, 2008; Garcia & Garcia, 2009; Martinez, Garcia & Yubero, 2007; Lee, 2011). Children with authoritarian (low responsiveness, high expectations, extremely strict) parents have lower self-esteem than children with Permissive (autonomy granting) parents. (Driscoll, 2013)

Low self-esteem and loneliness are significantly related to FOMO. (Barry & Wong, 2020; Uram and Skalski, 2020). People with high self-esteem tend to display healthy coping behaviours, and use social media and technology in a balanced manner. (Servidio, Gentile & Boca, 2018). Balanced social media usage indicates lower levels of FOMO as compared to PSU, and higher levels of social media abuse. People with low levels of self-esteem have been empirically found to be related with social media abuse, and internet addiction. (Andreassen, Pallesen, & Griffiths, 2017; Servidio, 2017).

Considering the scarcity of studies investigating the relationship between Parenting Styles, Self-esteem and FOMO, not much is known about parenting styles and self-esteem as mediators of the experience of FOMO. This study aims to add to the literature pertinent to the discourse.

Objective:
The objective of this Research is to investigate the Relationship between Parenting Styles, Self-Esteem and the Representation of Fear of Missing Out on one's Experiences.

Research Method:
Sample
The sample for this study was selected using random sampling method. The total sample consisted of 158 participants, out of which 105 (66.45%) were female, 50 (31.64%) were male and 3 (1.89%) were non-binary. The participants included in this study were adolescents and young adults aged 13 - 17 years and 18 - 25 years respectively, who scored average on the General Health Questionnaire 28 (GHQ -28) which is measures an individual's general physical and mental wellbeing on 4 subscales, somatic symptoms, anxiety/ insomnia, social dysfunction, and severe depression.

Tools
The participants were informed of the aim and the purpose of the research through the form and consent

was taken. The participants were also assured that the data collected would only be used for research purposes and complete confidentiality would be maintained. Personal information about the participants were collected through the personal schedule in the form according to the requirements of the research.

- Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale -

It is a self-report inventory made by Rosenberg in 1965 that measures an individual's personal self-esteem. A likert scale of 1-4 from strongly agree to strongly disagree, was used for scoring each item. The scale has a total of 10 items.

- Parenting Styles Inventory Ii -

Parenting style inventory II was developed by Lefebevre in 2004. It measures the construct of parenting styles in 3 dimensions, namely, demandingness, supportiveness and psychological autonomy granting. There were a total of 15 items in the scale, that were scored with a likert scale of 1-5, ranging from completely disagree to completely agree. 6 items are reverse scored as well.

- Fear Of Missing Out Scale -

It is a unidimensional scale developed by Przybylski and colleagues in 2013 to measure the degree to which an individual fears missing out on what their friends are doing, social gatherings, and on social media. It consists of 10 items and uses a 5 point likert scale, ranging from "Not at all true of me "To" Extremely True of me"

Procedure

An online questionnaire was created using Google Forms. Google Forms is a website where one can design and create surveys and questionnaires for online administration. The participants were informed about the aim and purpose of the study, and asked for consent to go ahead with the form.

The participant had to provide personal information such as their name/ initials, age, gender, place of residence, in the first segment of the form. In the next segment they had to fill up the GHQ-28 questionnaire, so that their scores could be assessed for inclusion in the study. In the next segment the participants had to fill up the Rosenberg Self-esteem self-report inventory. The same method of administration was followed for the third and fourth segment which consisted of the Parenting Style Inventory II and Fear of Missing Out Scale, respectively. The approximate time required to complete the entire form was 10 minutes.

After collection of data was completed, the responses received from the participants were scored and scrutinized according to the inclusion criteria of the study. The calculation of scores for the respective tools was done manually according to the available manuals of the respective tools.

On completion of the scoring process, the scores were statistically treated using IBM SPSS software.

Results:

The scores calculated from the responses received from the participants on the 3 scales, Rosenberg Self-esteem scale, Parenting Style Inventory II, and Fear of Missing Out scale were statistically analysed.

The mean, median and mode for self-esteem scores was found to be 24.9367, 24.5000 and 23 respectively. For Parenting Styles the mean, median and mode values were 50.2722, 51.5000 and 52.00 respectively. The mean, median and modal scores for fear of missing out were found to be 30.8165, 30.5000 and 30.00 respectively... The standard deviation shows that the scores for parenting style (SD = 9.87737) displays the highest dispersion in comparison to self-esteem (SD = 7.51702) and FOMO (SD = 8.55022) scores. As the skewness for self-esteem (-0.56) and FOMO (-0.084) is between -0.5 and 0.5 we can say that the data is fairly symmetrical. The scores for parenting styles are moderately skewed (-.0.657) as the skewness lies between -1 and -0.5

Table 1
Showing the Mean, Median, Mode, Standard Deviation, Skewness, and Standard Error of Skewness in the scores for the variables of Self-esteem, Parenting style, and Fear of Missing Out.

	Self Esteem	Parenting Style	Fear of Missing Out
n	158	158	158
Mean	24.9367	50.2722	30.8165
Median	24.5000	51.5000	30.5000
Mode	23.00	52.00*	30.00
St.deviation	7.51702	9.87737	8.55022
Skewness	-.056	-.657	-.084
Std. Error of Skewness	.193	.193	.193

*Multiple modes were found. The lowest value has been considered.

From table 2 we can understand that after correlating the scores of the sample on the Rosenberg Self-esteem Inventory and Parenting Style Inventory II, the

measure of correlation was found to be 0.505. We can say that Self-esteem and Parenting styles display high correlation.

Table 2

Showing the correlation between self-esteem and parenting style.

		Self Esteem	Parenting Styles
	Person Correlation	1	.505**
Self Esteem	Sig. (2-tailed) N	158	<.001 158
	Pearson Correlation	.505**	1
Parenting Style	Sig. (2-tailed) N	<.001 158	158

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2 - tailed)

Table 3

Model Summary reporting strength of the relationship between the model and the dependent variable (FOMO)

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. error of the estimate
1	.325a	.106	.094	8.13678

a. Predictors: (constant), Parenting style, self esteem
Predictors: (constant), Parenting style, self-esteem

Table 4

Anova of dependent variable FOMO

Model		Sum of squares	Df	Mean square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1215.559	2	607.779	9.180	<.001 b
	Residual	10262.119	155	66.207		
	Total	11477.677	157			

a. Dependent variable: FOMO
b. Predictors: (constant) parenting style, self-esteem

From table 3 we can understand that there is an effective relationship between the dependent variable, fear of missing out and the independent variables, self-esteem and parenting style. The f ratio has been found to be 9.180 as shown in table 4, which indicates large variation. The P value or significance which must be less than 0.05 has been found to be 0.001, thus we can deduce that the relationship between self-esteem, parenting styles and fear of missing out is significant.

After analysing the data we can establish that there is a highly statistically significant and effective relationship between FOMO and self-esteem and parenting styles. Parenting styles and self-esteem have also been found to have high correlation.

Discussion:

The intense need to belong, stemming from the pain of feeling like one is not enough, and one is incomplete, are often unhealed wounds from one's childhood. Children tend to seek out experiences that would make them feel stimulated and prove that they are in fact enough. This battle takes place in the absence of parental love, responsiveness, support, and trust.

This also has a significant effect on a child's self-esteem, which although dynamic through developmental stages, often has a lot to do with how one's parents have responded to their needs. We have found that parenting styles employed by parents are highly correlated with self-esteem of the adolescent or young adult. Previous studies were also found to support that the self-esteem of a person has a significant relationship with parental behaviour and responsiveness. (Gecas & Schwalbe, 1989; Barber, Chadwick & Oerter, 1992)

Through statistical analysis of collected data, we found that parenting styles and self-esteem are significantly and effectively related to the fear of missing out. These findings are relevant to adolescents and young adults, age groups 13-17 years and 18-25 years respectively. It is important to take into consideration how a person's self-esteem and how they have been parented affects their relative experience of the fear of missing out, especially in this age group as adolescents and young adults are commonly found to display high levels of FOMO. Adolescents and young adults are constantly doing things to 'fit in'. Social media provides for a warped sense of reality, where everybody seems to be living their best life, creating an unnecessary and harmful pressure on people to always be on their toes, doing what they see their peers or even strangers on social media doing. The fear of missing out is rampant, because there is also a fear of not being accepted by the people around you, if you have missed out. This study contributes to the basis of FOMO. Or in other words we can say that this is an investigation and exploration of two main factors (parenting styles, self-esteem) that have a significant relationship with FOMO.

Possible reason for this could be - Lower parental responsiveness, higher control, and lack of authority granting in parental behaviour, causes a child of have lower self-esteem, and regard themselves as inadequate, or "Not enough", and in an effort to feel like they are adequate they might try to constantly keep up with their peers and social circles. They might lack the ability to be at peace with themselves, or what we could call an opposite phenomenon of FOMO, that is JOMO (the joy of missing out). The anxiety created due to the impending fear of not experiencing enough, or missing out on experiences other people might be having, can often be crippling for the adolescent or young adult. It can also lead to high levels of dissatisfaction with life, depressive symptoms, mood swings and feelings of inferiority. (Birla, 2018)

On the other hand parental responsiveness, in having open conversations with the child, encouraging them to express their emotions freely, participating in activities together, building trust through granting autonomy, creating a safe space for the child, can contribute greatly to the development of healthy self-esteem and social behaviour. It encourages the child to look within for acceptance and love. Such factors could facilitate low levels of FOMO.

This study attempts to tap into variables that have not been previously researched about. Since it is a pilot study, we have found that a significant relationship exists between parenting styles, self-esteem and FOMO. But we cannot necessarily say that FOMO is caused due to those variables. There is a lack of literature and quantitative data regarding the effect of parenting styles and self-esteem on the experience of FOMO. There is immense scope for further research in this field. Some other limitations of this research include the online collection of data and the homogeneity of samples. Since the study was conducted through a form circulated online, there can be certain concerns regarding the authentic understanding of items by participants. The sample was also collected from the mostly Indian urban population. There was also lack of previous research to back the findings of the study as there is scarcity of studies in the relevant area.

Conclusion:
Findings establish a significant and effective relationship between Self-esteem, Parenting Styles and the relative experience of FOMO in adolescents and young adults. There is an acute requirement for more qualitative and quantitative research regarding the causal factors of this relationship.

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