

# THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE, FEAR OF MISSING OUT AND EMOTIONAL DYSREGULATION AMONG YOUNG ADULTS

*Original Article*

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## ABSTRACT

**Background:** In an era where digital connectivity dominates daily life, social media has become an integral component of communication and identity formation, particularly among young adults. However, excessive engagement is increasingly associated with adverse psychological outcomes, including emotional instability. Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) has emerged as a central mechanism linking social media involvement with emotional disturbances, highlighting the need to explore its mediating role in this relationship.

**Objective:** This study aimed to investigate the relationships among social media use, FOMO, and emotional dysregulation in young adults, and to examine whether FOMO mediates the link between social media use and emotional dysregulation while accounting for demographic factors.

**Methods:** A quantitative, cross-sectional design was applied among 322 young adults aged 18–25 years (44.7% males, 55.3% females). Participants completed standardized instruments: the Social Media Use Scale (SMUS;  $\alpha = .922$ ), the Fear of Missing Out Scale (FOMOS;  $\alpha = .826$ ), and the Difficulties in Emotion Regulation Scale—Short Form (DERS-16;  $\alpha = .920$ ). Data were analyzed using Pearson correlation, simple linear regression, hierarchical multiple regression, and mediation analysis through Hayes' PROCESS macro (Model 4) with 5,000 bootstrapped samples.

**Results:** Social media usage significantly predicted emotional dysregulation ( $B = 0.29$ ,  $SE = 0.03$ ,  $\beta = .51$ ,  $p < .001$ ), explaining 26% of its variance. FOMO was positively correlated with both social media use ( $r = .52$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and emotional dysregulation ( $r = .58$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and partially mediated their relationship (indirect effect  $B = 0.13$ , 95% CI [0.09, 0.18]). Age showed a weak negative effect ( $B = -0.043$ ,  $p = .040$ ), whereas gender, education, and socioeconomic status were non-significant predictors.

**Conclusion:** The findings demonstrate that FOMO significantly mediates the association between social media use and emotional dysregulation among young adults, emphasizing that psychological mechanisms outweigh demographic predictors. These results suggest that interventions promoting emotional regulation and mindful social media use could mitigate digital-era emotional vulnerabilities.

**Keywords:** Adolescent psychology, Emotional dysregulation, Fear of missing out, Mental health, Social media, Stress, Young adults.

## INTRODUCTION

In the contemporary digital era, social networking platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, Snapchat, and Facebook have become deeply integrated into daily life, particularly among adolescents and young adults. These platforms have evolved into vital spaces for self-expression, identity formation, and social interaction. Despite offering opportunities for creativity and communication, they also expose users to significant psychological and emotional challenges. The continuous flow of curated and comparative content on social media fosters emotional exhaustion and excessive self-evaluation (1). Among the most widely discussed phenomena linked with social media use is the Fear of Missing Out (FOMO), which reflects a persistent concern that others are engaging in rewarding experiences from which one is absent (2). This anxiety drives individuals to remain constantly connected to digital networks, paradoxically increasing feelings of inadequacy and dissatisfaction despite perceived social inclusion (3,4). FOMO has been identified as a psychological mechanism contributing to compulsive digital behaviors and heightened distress (5). Emotional dysregulation, defined as the inability to modulate emotions according to situational demands, has emerged as another critical outcome of excessive social media engagement. Adolescents who frequently compare themselves with peers online and possess limited emotional control display heightened emotional reactivity and slower recovery from negative experiences (6). These individuals often experience increased vulnerability to negative online feedback, cyberbullying, and distressing content exposure, leading to elevated stress levels (7,8). Emotional dysregulation has further been associated with anxiety, depression, and maladaptive coping strategies, indicating that individuals with weaker emotional regulation capacities are more susceptible to social media-induced psychological strain (9,10). Social networking sites inherently promote comparison and impression management, processes that heighten emotional sensitivity. Adolescents often use these platforms to seek validation and feedback, which can intensify symptoms of depression and loneliness when emotional regulation is poor (11). The portrayal of idealized lives on social media platforms amplifies this effect, particularly among individuals who lack adaptive emotional strategies, leading to increased emotional instability and compulsive content checking (12).

Emerging evidence suggests a triangular relationship among social media use, FOMO, and emotional dysregulation. FOMO appears to mediate the relationship between problematic social networking and emotional instability, acting as a catalyst that transforms excessive engagement into emotional vulnerability (13). Rather than being a mere by-product of digital use, FOMO functions as a psychological mediator reinforcing compulsive behavioral patterns and distress (5). While existing literature has examined the individual associations between these variables, limited empirical evidence explores FOMO's mediating role between social media use and emotional dysregulation. Understanding this mediational pathway is essential, as it sheds light on the psychological mechanisms underpinning maladaptive digital behavior and emotional dysfunction (14). Investigating these processes can guide the development of effective interventions targeting emotional well-being in the digital context. Therefore, the present study seeks to explore the mediating role of Fear of Missing Out in the association between social media usage and emotional dysregulation among young adults. By elucidating this pathway, the research aims to provide a deeper understanding of how social media behavior influences emotional health and to inform strategies for mental health practitioners, educators, and policymakers to mitigate the psychological risks associated with excessive social media use. The specific objectives of the study are to (1) investigate the relationship between social media usage, FOMO, and emotional dysregulation; (2) assess the impact of varying levels of social media engagement on emotional regulation; (3) examine FOMO's mediating role between these variables; and (4) explore how demographic characteristics may influence these relationships. These objectives collectively aim to advance knowledge on the psychological underpinnings of digital media behavior and its emotional consequences.

## METHODS

This study employed a quantitative, cross-sectional, correlational research design to examine the association between social media use and emotional dysregulation, with Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) evaluated as a potential mediating variable. This design was chosen because it allowed observation of existing relationships among psychological constructs within a natural setting, without manipulation of variables, thereby providing a snapshot of behavioral and emotional patterns among young adults. The study population comprised young adults aged 18 to 25 years from diverse educational and socioeconomic backgrounds. A total of 322 participants took part, including 144 males (44.7%) and 178 females (55.3%). The sample size was determined through power analysis following recommendations for mediation models to ensure sufficient statistical power for detecting indirect effects. Participants were recruited through purposive sampling to ensure variability in demographics such as education and geographical representation. Inclusion criteria required participants to be active users of at least one social media platform and to use social media daily. Participants were also required

to possess a functional understanding of the English language to complete the self-administered questionnaires accurately. Individuals who reported a history of diagnosed mental health disorders or were currently undergoing psychiatric or psychological treatment were excluded, as these conditions could confound responses related to emotional regulation and digital behavior. Data collection was conducted using a hybrid approach, incorporating both online and in-person methods to maximize accessibility and participation. Participants completed the survey either via a secure online platform or through printed paper-based forms administered in person at educational or community institutions. This mixed approach minimized sampling bias and improved representativeness across different social groups. The data collection process spanned approximately one month. All responses were recorded anonymously to protect confidentiality, and participants were encouraged to complete the survey in private, distraction-free settings to maintain accuracy of self-reported data. Informed consent was obtained from all participants before data collection, ensuring voluntary participation. The study protocol was reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of the relevant institute, confirming compliance with ethical standards for human research in accordance with the Declaration of Helsinki.

The research employed three validated psychometric instruments alongside a demographic questionnaire. Social media usage was measured using the Social Media Use Scale (SMUS), which assessed frequency, duration, and engagement type across platforms, capturing both active (posting, commenting) and passive (browsing, viewing) behaviors. The SMUS demonstrated strong internal consistency (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .922$ ), indicating high reliability. Fear of Missing Out was assessed using the Fear of Missing Out Scale (FOMOS), consisting of 10 items rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 ("not at all true of me") to 5 ("extremely true of me"), with strong internal consistency ( $\alpha = .826$ ). Emotional dysregulation was evaluated using the Difficulties in Emotion Regulation Scale (DERS), comprising 16 items rated on a 5-point Likert scale (13-15). The DERS measured six dimensions: nonacceptance of emotional responses, difficulties in goal-directed behavior, impulse control problems, lack of emotional awareness, limited emotion regulation strategies, and lack of emotional clarity, with excellent reliability (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .920$ ). A brief demographic form collected essential participant information including age, gender, educational level, and socioeconomic status.

Participants were recruited through both digital and physical channels, such as social media advertisements, email invitations, and university-based outreach. After consent was secured, they received either a secure survey link or a printed questionnaire depending on preference and accessibility. Survey completion took approximately 15–20 minutes. Research assistants supervised in-person data collection to clarify queries and ensure procedural uniformity, while online participation remained self-guided under privacy assurance. Data were analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics (Version 27) and the PROCESS macro (v4.2). Descriptive statistics, including means, standard deviations, and frequency distributions, were computed to summarize demographic characteristics and primary study variables. Pearson's correlation analysis was used to explore bivariate relationships among social media usage, FOMO, and emotional dysregulation. Simple linear regression tested the predictive power of social media use on emotional dysregulation. To assess mediation, Model 4 of the PROCESS macro was applied, examining whether FOMO mediated the relationship between social media usage and emotional dysregulation. The indirect effects were tested using a nonparametric bootstrapping method with 5000 resamples to establish 95% confidence intervals. Statistical significance was considered at  $p < .05$ . Additionally, hierarchical multiple regression analyses were performed to determine whether demographic factors such as age, gender, education level, and socioeconomic status significantly predicted emotional dysregulation. All study procedures adhered to ethical research standards, ensuring anonymity, confidentiality, and the right to withdraw without penalty. No identifying information was collected, and data were stored securely with restricted access to maintain participant privacy.

## RESULTS

The study included 322 young adults aged between 18 and 25 years, of whom 144 (44.7%) were males and 178 (55.3%) were females. Most participants (60.9%) were aged between 18 and 21 years, while 39.1% were aged 22 to 25 years. The majority (79.8%) were pursuing or had completed undergraduate education, followed by 15.2% with postgraduate degrees and 5% with intermediate qualifications. Socioeconomic distribution showed that 68.3% of the participants identified as middle class, 25.5% as upper class, and 6.2% as lower class, suggesting a diverse yet predominantly middle-class sample representation. Descriptive statistics for the study variables revealed that the mean score for social media use was 3.11 (SD = 1.48), with strong internal reliability ( $\alpha = .922$ ). The mean FOMO score was 2.42 (SD = 0.78) with good reliability ( $\alpha = .826$ ), while the mean emotional dysregulation score was 2.58 (SD = 0.86) with excellent reliability ( $\alpha = .920$ ). These reliability coefficients confirmed the internal consistency of all scales used in the analysis. Correlation analyses showed significant and positive associations among all primary variables ( $p < .001$ ). Social media use demonstrated a moderate positive correlation with FOMO ( $r = .52$ ,  $p < .001$ ), indicating that greater engagement with social media was linked to

higher levels of fear of missing out. Similarly, social media use was positively correlated with emotional dysregulation ( $r = .51, p < .001$ ), suggesting that individuals with more frequent social media usage experienced greater difficulty in regulating emotions. FOMO also showed a strong positive correlation with emotional dysregulation ( $r = .58, p < .001$ ), implying that higher levels of FOMO were associated with poorer emotional regulation. Simple linear regression analysis revealed that social media usage significantly predicted emotional dysregulation ( $B = 0.29, SE = 0.03, \beta = .51, t = 10.56, p < .001$ ), accounting for 26% of the variance in emotional dysregulation ( $R^2 = .26, \text{Adjusted } R^2 = .26, F(1,320) = 111.55, p < .001$ ). The positive regression coefficient confirmed that as social media use increased, emotional dysregulation also rose.

Mediation analysis using the PROCESS macro (Model 4) demonstrated that FOMO partially mediated the relationship between social media use and emotional dysregulation. The total effect of social media use on emotional dysregulation was significant ( $B = 0.29, SE = 0.03, t = 10.56, p < .001, 95\% \text{ CI } [0.24, 0.35]$ ). Social media use significantly predicted FOMO ( $B = 0.27, SE = 0.03, t = 10.90, p < .001, 95\% \text{ CI } [0.22, 0.32]$ ), and FOMO, in turn, significantly predicted emotional dysregulation ( $B = 0.48, SE = 0.06, t = 8.48, p < .001, 95\% \text{ CI } [0.37, 0.59]$ ). The direct effect of social media use on emotional dysregulation remained significant but reduced ( $B = 0.16, SE = 0.03, t = 5.56, p < .001, 95\% \text{ CI } [0.11, 0.22]$ ). The indirect effect via FOMO ( $B = 0.13, \text{BootSE} = 0.02, 95\% \text{ CI } [0.09, 0.18]$ ) did not include zero, confirming partial mediation. Thus, increased social media engagement led to greater emotional dysregulation both directly and indirectly through elevated FOMO levels. A hierarchical multiple regression model was further conducted to explore the role of demographic variables alongside social media use and FOMO in predicting emotional dysregulation. In the first step, age ( $B = -0.043, p = .040$ ) was the only significant demographic predictor, indicating that younger participants reported greater emotional dysregulation. Gender ( $B = 0.166, p = .085$ ), education ( $B = 0.080, p = .523$ ), and socioeconomic status ( $B = 0.043, p = .641$ ) were not significant predictors. In the second step, when social media usage and FOMO were added, both emerged as strong predictors of emotional dysregulation—social media use ( $B = 0.169, \beta = 0.293, p < .001$ ) and FOMO ( $B = 0.462, \beta = 0.418, p < .001$ ). After their inclusion, age was no longer a significant predictor ( $p = .066$ ). These findings revealed that FOMO and social media engagement exerted a far stronger influence on emotional dysregulation than demographic factors. Overall, the findings confirmed that higher social media use was associated with increased emotional dysregulation and that this relationship was partially mediated by FOMO. Younger participants showed slightly higher emotional instability, but other demographic variables showed no meaningful predictive role.

**Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of Demographic Characteristics of Study Sample (N=322).**

| Variables            | f   | %    |
|----------------------|-----|------|
| Gender               |     |      |
| Male                 | 144 | 44.7 |
| Female               | 178 | 55.3 |
| Age                  |     |      |
| 18-21                | 196 | 60.9 |
| 22-25                | 126 | 39.1 |
| Education            |     |      |
| Intermediate         | 16  | 5    |
| Undergraduate        | 257 | 79.8 |
| Post graduate        | 49  | 15.2 |
| Socioeconomic Status |     |      |
| Lower class          | 20  | 6.2  |
| Middle class         | 220 | 68.3 |
| Upper class          | 82  | 25.5 |

**Table 2: Descriptive Statistics and Reliability Coefficient of Assessment Measures (N=322).**

| Variable | M     | SD    | K  | Ranges | Cronbach's $\alpha$ |
|----------|-------|-------|----|--------|---------------------|
| SMUS     | 3.106 | 1.481 | 17 | 1-9    | 0.922               |
| FOMO     | 2.424 | 0.775 | 10 | 1-5    | 0.826               |
| DERS-16  | 2.58  | 0.857 | 16 | 1-5    | 0.920               |

Note: M=Mean, SD= Standard Deviation

**Table 3: Pearson Correlation for Study Variables (N=322).**

| Variables | M    | SD   | 1 | 2      | 3      |
|-----------|------|------|---|--------|--------|
| SMUS      | 3.11 | 1.48 | - | .52*** | .51*** |
| FOMO      | 2.42 | 0.78 |   | -      | .58*** |
| DERS-16   | 2.58 | 0.86 |   |        | -      |

Note: N = 322. \*\*\*p < .001.

**Table 4: Simple Linear Regression Predicting Emotional Dysregulation from Social Media Usage (N=322).**

| Predictor          | B    | SE B | $\beta$ | t     | P      | 95% CI for B |
|--------------------|------|------|---------|-------|--------|--------------|
| (Constant)         | 1.67 | 0.10 | —       | 17.43 | < .001 | [1.48, 1.86] |
| Social Media Usage | 0.29 | 0.03 | .51     | 10.56 | < .001 | [0.24, 0.35] |

Note. R = .51, R<sup>2</sup> = .26, Adjusted R<sup>2</sup> = .26, F(1, 320) = 111.55, p < .001.

**Table 5: Mediation analysis: fear of missing out (FOMO) as a mediator between social media usage (SMU) and emotional dysregulation (ED) among young adults (N=322).**

| Path                     | B    | SE   | t     | p      | 95% CI (LL, UL) |
|--------------------------|------|------|-------|--------|-----------------|
| SMU → ED (total effect)  | 0.29 | 0.03 | 10.56 | < .001 | [0.24, 0.35]    |
| SMU → FOMO (a path)      | 0.27 | 0.03 | 10.90 | < .001 | [0.22, 0.32]    |
| FOMO → ED (b path)       | 0.48 | 0.06 | 8.48  | < .001 | [0.37, 0.59]    |
| SMU → ED (direct effect) | 0.16 | 0.03 | 5.56  | < .001 | [0.11, 0.22]    |
| Indirect effect via FOMO | 0.13 | 0.03 | —     | —      | [0.09, 0.18]    |

Note. N = 322. B = unstandardized coefficient; CI = confidence interval. Indirect effect based on 5,000 bootstrapped samples.

**Table 6: Hierarchical Regression Predicting Emotional Dysregulation from Demographic Variables, Social Media Usage, and Fear of Missing Out (N=322)**

| Predictor                     | B     | SE B | $\beta$ | t     | p    |
|-------------------------------|-------|------|---------|-------|------|
| <b>Step 1</b>                 |       |      |         |       |      |
| Age                           | -.043 | .021 | -.136   | -2.06 | .040 |
| Gender (0 = Male, 1 = Female) | .166  | .096 | .096    | 1.73  | .085 |
| Education Level               | .080  | .126 | .041    | 0.64  | .523 |

| Predictor            | B     | SE B | $\beta$ | t     | p      |
|----------------------|-------|------|---------|-------|--------|
| Socioeconomic Status | .043  | .093 | .027    | 0.47  | .641   |
| <b>Step 2</b>        |       |      |         |       |        |
| Age                  | -.030 | .016 | -.095   | -1.85 | .066   |
| Gender               | .116  | .075 | .067    | 1.54  | .125   |
| Education Level      | -.008 | .098 | -.004   | -0.08 | .935   |
| Socioeconomic Status | .016  | .073 | .010    | 0.22  | .824   |
| Social Media Usage   | .169  | .030 | .293    | 5.70  | < .001 |
| Fear of Missing Out  | .462  | .057 | .418    | 8.12  | < .001 |

Note. N = 322. B = unstandardized coefficient; SE B = standard error;  $\beta$  = standardized beta coefficient.

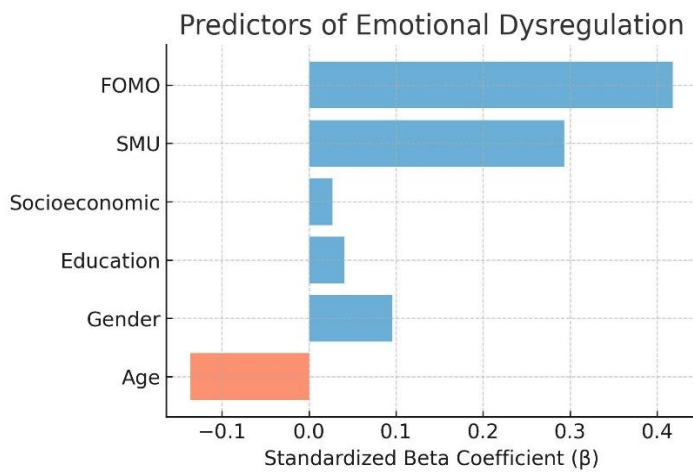


Figure 2 Predictors of Emotional Dysregulation

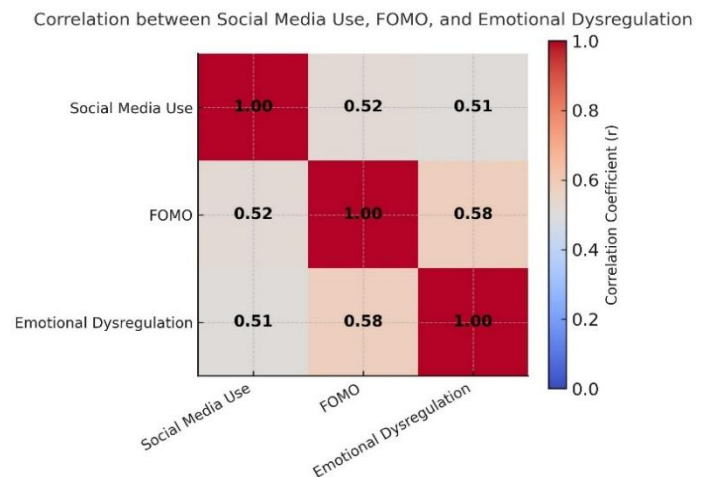


Figure 2 Correlation Between Social Media use, FOMO, Emotional Dysregulation

## DISCUSSION

The findings indicated that social media use, fear of missing out (FOMO), and emotional dysregulation were interrelated in young adults, with FOMO partially explaining the pathway from greater digital engagement to difficulties regulating emotions. The observed correlations and regression coefficients were consistent with earlier evidence that heavier platform use is accompanied by elevated FOMO and that both relate to poorer emotion regulation (8-11). The mediation results further aligned with prior reports proposing FOMO as a psychological conduit between social networking intensity and emotional instability, indicating that users who are more plugged into comparative and curated feeds tend to experience stronger anticipatory concerns about exclusion, which in turn coincide with higher dysregulation (12,13). Effect sizes were moderate, and the direct path from social media use to emotional dysregulation remained significant after accounting for FOMO, suggesting that additional mechanisms—such as impulsivity, low self-esteem, rumination, rejection sensitivity, or maladaptive coping—likely co-occur with FOMO to shape emotional outcomes (14,15). The pattern of results fit plausibly within established theoretical frames. From a self-determination perspective, unmet needs for relatedness in online environments may heighten FOMO and erode emotional balance when connection feels contingent or uncertain (16). In parallel, social comparison processes appear salient: repeated exposure to idealized peer portrayals and visible social metrics may intensify upward comparisons, amplifying envy, perceived exclusion, and subsequent dysregulation among comparison-susceptible individuals (17). These frameworks together provide a coherent account of why FOMO functions as a bridge between engagement and dysregulation, while leaving room for other person-level factors to modulate vulnerability. Cultural context may strengthen these links; in more

collectivistic settings, where group belonging and social approval carry heightened value, FOMO may be especially pronounced and emotionally consequential, compounding stress in academically and socially demanding youth milieus (18).

Demographic analyses suggested that younger age related to greater dysregulation in the baseline model, yet this association attenuated after introducing social media use and FOMO, implying that age differences may be partly explained by differences in engagement intensity and FOMO proneness. Gender, education, and socioeconomic status showed no meaningful associations with dysregulation once psychological predictors were considered, underscoring that proximal cognitive-emotional drivers outweighed broad demographic characteristics in this dataset. The amount of variance explained by the models indicated practically relevant, though not exhaustive, predictive power; the residual variance pointed to unmeasured influences that future work should address. This study offered several strengths. It used *a priori* power considerations, enrolled a sizeable sample of young adults, and applied psychometrically robust measures with high internal consistency, thereby supporting measurement reliability. The analytic strategy progressed from descriptive to correlational and multivariable models and employed nonparametric bootstrapping for the mediation test, which provided distribution-free confidence intervals for indirect effects and reduced reliance on normality assumptions (19,20). The hybrid data-collection approach broadened access and likely improved participation from varied educational and socioeconomic backgrounds, enhancing ecological capture of routine digital behavior. Limitations warranted careful interpretation. The cross-sectional design precluded causal inference, and the possibility that emotion dysregulation increases reliance on social media, thereby elevating FOMO, remained viable. Exclusive reliance on self-report introduced shared-method variance and social desirability bias; objective usage logs, passive sensing, or informant ratings would strengthen validity. Sampling emphasized active social media users aged 18–25 within a specific sociocultural setting, which constrained generalizability to other age groups, non-users, or different cultural contexts. The mediation model did not test moderation by demographic or dispositional traits, leaving open whether age, gender, personality, or mindfulness alter the strength of the indirect pathway. In addition, while a 16-item form of the DERS was used with excellent internal consistency, explicit labeling as a short form and reporting of its subscale behavior would add clarity for replication and comparability across studies (21,22). Finally, model-level indices such as  $\Delta R^2$  for hierarchical steps and collinearity diagnostics were not reported, which would have further contextualized effect magnitudes and precision.

The implications span theory, practice, and education. The results reinforced a process-oriented account of problematic social media involvement by positioning FOMO as a key mediator that coexists with other cognitive-emotional risks (23). Clinically, routine assessment of FOMO and comparison-driven appraisals could complement screening for anxiety, depression, and dysregulated affect; targeted interventions may include mindfulness-based strategies, cognitive restructuring of comparative interpretations, and skills training in emotion regulation and digital coping. Educationally, digital-literacy initiatives may benefit from moving beyond time-restriction advice toward teaching recognition of comparison triggers, algorithmic reinforcement, and cue-driven checking, coupled with practices that diversify feeds and schedule intentional disengagement. Design-level considerations—such as obscuring vanity metrics, batching notifications, and promoting content that normalizes ordinary experiences—may also reduce comparison pressure and anticipatory exclusion. Future research would profit from longitudinal or experimental designs to establish temporal precedence; ecological momentary assessment and passive telemetry to capture within-day dynamics of use, FOMO, and affect; and preregistered, adequately powered tests of moderated mediation incorporating traits such as neuroticism, impulsivity, rejection sensitivity, or mindfulness. Cross-cultural investigations and clinical subgroup analyses could clarify boundary conditions and inform context-specific guidance. Trials evaluating multi-component interventions that jointly address FOMO, comparison cognitions, and emotion-regulation competence would provide the strongest evidence for translation into prevention and care. In sum, the study added to converging evidence that heavier social media engagement related to greater FOMO and that FOMO, in turn, partially accounted for higher emotional dysregulation in young adults, with psychological processes exerting greater influence than demographic factors in this cohort. The results supported an integrative framework in which relatedness needs and comparison dynamics shape digital vulnerability, while underscoring the need for rigorous longitudinal and mechanistic work to guide targeted, person-centered interventions (10-14).

## CONCLUSION

This study demonstrated that fear of missing out (FOMO) acts as a crucial psychological mechanism linking social media use to emotional dysregulation among young adults. The findings confirmed that higher engagement with social media intensifies FOMO, which in turn contributes to greater emotional instability, while social media usage also directly influences difficulties in emotion regulation. These relationships persisted independently of most demographic factors, suggesting that psychological processes such as FOMO have stronger effects on emotional outcomes than socio-cultural variables. The study thus advances understanding of how digital

connectivity shapes emotional health, highlighting FOMO as both a behavioral and emotional pathway through which excessive online involvement undermines well-being. The results underscore the need for preventive and therapeutic strategies that focus not only on reducing screen time but also on addressing the emotional motivations driving online engagement, promoting healthier digital behaviors, and fostering emotional resilience in the hyperconnected era.

## AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION

| Author                          | Contribution                                                                                                                                                                          |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Danial Akram*                   | Substantial Contribution to study design, analysis, acquisition of Data<br>Manuscript Writing<br>Has given Final Approval of the version to be published                              |
| Minahil Arshad                  | Substantial Contribution to study design, acquisition and interpretation of Data<br>Critical Review and Manuscript Writing<br>Has given Final Approval of the version to be published |
| Sayed Shabab Hussain            | Substantial Contribution to acquisition and interpretation of Data<br>Has given Final Approval of the version to be published                                                         |
| Syed Muhammad Mohsin ul Saqlain | Contributed to Data Collection and Analysis<br>Has given Final Approval of the version to be published                                                                                |

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