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RESEARCH ARTICLE

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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN INTERPERSONAL DEPENDENCY AND FEAR OF MISSING OUT AMONG MEDICAL STUDENTS (MBBS)

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ABSTRACT

Achieving a place in medical school across India means facing steep competition - few openings meet intense scholarly demands, which sometimes weighs heavily on learners' minds. This strain can chip away at belief in personal ability, pushing some toward friends for comfort. Meanwhile, being online more frequently, through apps and connected devices, ties into feelings described as FOMO: uneasy thoughts about missing out when others seem engaged in satisfying moments elsewhere. The present study aimed to examine the relationship between interpersonal dependency and FOMO among MBBS students. A quantitative, non-experimental correlational research design was used. The sample consisted of 200 medical students aged 17–25 years selected through purposive sampling. Data were collected using the Interpersonal Dependency Inventory (IDI-48) and the Fear of Missing Out Scale. Statistical analysis using SPSS revealed a significant positive relationship between interpersonal dependency and FOMO, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis and highlighting the influence of interpersonal tendencies on students' social and emotional experiences.

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INTRODUCTION

One reason medical training feels so tough is that, in India, too many want in, but spots are few. Pressure builds when grades matter more than almost anything else at home. Expectations weigh heavy, especially where doing well means honor for the family. Kumar and George found stress climbs alongside exam loads. When demands grow, nerves tighten and Confidence drops. Some start looking outward for reassurance. Feelings shift - unease spreads quietly through classrooms. Performance worries feed inner doubt. Emotional strain shows up early, even before clinical years begin. In During modern times, student habits link tightly to digital tools. Because social networks now shape everyday experiences, they affect both study duties and private conversations. Seeing friends' online moments repeatedly can spark unease, worry grows about being left out of meaningful happenings which is refers to "Fear of Missing Out" (Przybylski et al., 2013). Driven by such tension, people revisit these platforms again and again, pulled by the need to stay aware of shifting news and group dynamics. Heavy moments often push youth toward friends, seeking steadier ground emotionally. With school demands growing, these connections become quiet anchors - especially through tough phases (Bornstein, 2011). A slight lean into working together may boost group effort along with shared understanding; yet when dependence grows, outcomes grow harder to

foresee, feeding greater uncertainty in one's own judgment (Santor & Zuroff, 2018). When facing heavy workloads, medical trainees frequently turn to classmates yet that closeness, paired with dread of being left out, could worsen inner strain (Rahman & Alhassan). This idea finds its roots in how people rely on one another termed interpersonal dependency a pattern marked by deep cravings for approval, help, and direction from those around them (Bornstein, 2011). First described by Bornstein (1992), dependence isn't just one thing; instead, it blends drives, thoughts, emotions, actions, and situational factors into a complex whole. Though normal attachment lets someone lean on others without losing self-direction, trouble often begins when that leaning turns into overwhelming passivity, constant doubt, or dread of being pushed away (Bornstein, 1993). One way to understand close personal ties begins with childhood bonds shaping adult patterns - this idea lies at the heart of Attachment Theory (Bowlby, 1969; Ainsworth, 1979), where early interactions with caregivers affect how people approach intimacy later on. Because some form emotional connections marked by worry about being left alone, they turn frequently to others for comfort, a sign of anxious attachment styles emerging from those early years. Another lens comes through Object Relations Theory: past relationship dynamics become mental templates guiding future ones (Fairbairn, 1952; Klein, 1957). Though older, Freud's framework still plays a role - dependency might stem from unmet demands during infancy's oral phase, influencing long-term behavior tendencies (Freud, 1923).

Cultural factors likewise affect dependency patterns. Support from family and community typically carries positive importance in nations like India, where interdependence is perceived as a strength instead of a flaw (Chadda & Deb, 2013). The concept of FOMO further explains students' engagement with digital environments. FOMO can be a stable characteristic known as Trait FOMO or a reaction to specific circumstances that renders it temporary, referred to as State FOMO (Przybylski et al., 2013; Bright & Logan, 2018). It can also manifest socially—through concerns about missing social interactions—or informationally, through anxiety about missing important updates (Hetz et al., 2015). One idea about FOMO comes from a framework stating that missing out on belonging, skill, or independence might push people toward digital spaces. Because they crave contact, users sometimes scroll feeds when those inner drives go unanswered. Another perspective traces unease back to comparing oneself with others - especially seeing polished snapshots online. When highlights dominate screens, personal doubts often grow stronger. Along similar lines, some researchers argue technology becomes a tool for filling emotional gaps. People turn devices on not just by habit, but seeking comfort, identity, or moments of shared experience. Although moderate FOMO may encourage social engagement and academic participation, excessive levels are associated with anxiety, sleep disturbance, reduced concentration, and problematic smartphone use (Alt, 2018; Elhai et al., 2020). Research also suggests a close relationship between interpersonal dependency and FOMO. Individuals who strongly rely on external validation may frequently monitor others' activities to maintain a sense of belonging (Bornstein, 2011; Przybylski et al., 2013). Especially in Indian medical training, such dynamics take on added significance. Where high-pressure study settings exist, social comparison often grows stronger - shaped by near-constant online access. These conditions can feed reliance patterns alongside fear of missing out. due to which scholars might struggle more with concentration, mood balance, and psychological resilience. The weight of expectations quietly accumulates beneath the surface.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Bornstein R. F (2011) introduced a fresh perspective on how we understand close relationships. Rather than seeing reliance as simply good or bad, it was framed through multiple layers. One key layer involved needing others emotionally. Another showed links to confidence levels. A strong wish for approval also played a central role. This approach aimed to separate unhealthy attachment patterns from supportive ones. To explore these ideas, data came from 325 adults. They completed the Interpersonal Dependency Inventory. That tool helped measure different aspects of connection styles. When too strong, reliance on others links to lower independence and confidence - shown through statistical patterns and structure analysis - yet ties closely to higher worry and sadness. What emerged suggests such dependence may open doors to connection while also increasing risk under certain conditions. FOMO, a term coined to describe anxiety about being left out, caught the attention of Przybylski and colleagues who explored what sparks it, how it feels, because emotional responses often link to behavior. To collect insights, researchers turned to surveys such as the Basic Psychological Needs Scale - paired with the Fear of Missing Out Scale (FOMOS) - as these instruments measure inner needs while capturing unease tied to social exclusion. From a group of 1013 learners, insights emerged about inner needs falling short. When freedom or connection lacked, higher levels of FOMO appeared. This sense then linked to emotional strain plus frequent checking of online platforms. Findings came from numerical analysis exploring links between factors, (Przybylski, A. K., Murayama, K., DeHaan, C. R., & Gladwell, V. (2013)). Social Media Use, Fear of Missing Out, and Emotional Exhaustion Among Medical Students": Looking at how med students interact online, Majeed and Sadiq (2022) explored links between their social media habits, fear of missing out, and feelings of being emotionally drained. Rather than blending into one method, data came through three separate tools - one started things off with the FOMO Scale. Next appeared the Social Media Usage Questionnaire, adding another

layer. The last piece arrived via the Emotional Exhaustion Inventory. Each instrument revealed something different, building understanding step by step. A sample of 350 medical students from Lahore, Pakistan, was examined. The results of a cross-sectional correlational study indicated that high levels of FOMO were significantly linked to emotional exhaustion ($r = 0.58$, $p < 0.01$) and diminished academic engagement (Majeed, F., & Sadiq, A. (2022)).

METHODOLOGY

Research statement: The study was attempted to find the relationship between Interpersonal Dependency and Fear of Missing Out among medical Students.

Aim: A study to examine the relationship between Interpersonal dependency and FOMO among medical students (MBBS).

Objectives

- To assess the interpersonal dependency among medical students using Interpersonal dependency Inventory.
- To measure the FOMO among medical students.
- To examine the relationship between interpersonal dependency and FOMO among medical students.

Hypothesis

H₀: There is no significant relationship between Interpersonal dependency and Fear of Missing Out among medical students.

Research Design: The study employed in a quantitative, non-experimental correlational research design to explore how Interpersonal Dependency and FOMO are related among Medical students.

Samples and Sampling Technique: Samples were selected from a group of both male and female students studying MBBS using Purposive sampling method. This selection included 200 people who were between 17-25 years old. Students took part in this study out of their own willingness. Each person understood the study before agreeing to it.

Tools Used and Description

Interpersonal Dependency Inventory (IDI-48): IDI-48 (R. M. Hirschfeld et al. (1977) uses 48 questions to measure interpersonal dependency traits with the reliability of 0.72- 0.87.

Fear of Missing Out Scale(FOMO): Fear of missing out scale was developed by Andrew K. Przybylski et al. (2013) is a 10 item self reporting measure assessing the tendency to fear missing rewarding experiences of other with a reliability of .87.

Procedure: To begin, each participant learned the study's aim prior to giving written agreement. Those involved chose freely, all being currently enrolled in medical training. Information came through use of the IDI-48, the FOMO questionnaire, plus straightforward background questions. While responding, individuals focused on truthful answers - privacy remained protected throughout. Once gathered, responses underwent review for missing parts, then marked with codes before moving into SPSS. Analysis followed only after entries were fully prepared within the system.

Statistical Analysis

Data collected from participants was analyzed with SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences). Variables description was described by Descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation). Pearson's correlation was equipped to assess the relationship between Interpersonal Dependency and FOMO. A p-value ($P < 0.01$) was used for determining statistical significance. The analysis focused on

determining the associations between the variables while not making any inference towards causation.

FINDINGS & ANALYSIS

The research finds that interpersonal dependency is associated with FOMO in students pursuing MBBS. The average score on the IDI-48 was 122.96 with a standard deviation of 9.399; Average score on the FOMO scale was 26.13 and a standard deviation of 8.056 (There were 200 people with both IDI-48 and FOMO scores). A Pearson r analysis showed a weak relationship between Interpersonal Dependency and FOMO given by r value of .282 ($P < 0.01$): Although the correlation remains positive and rejects null hypothesis, the low r value indicates, many other factors play a large role in relationship between Interpersonal dependency and FOMO among MBBS students, including academic stress, social media usage, social comparison, loneliness and other cultural and environmental factors, yet these could still impact the association between Interpersonal Dependency and FOMO.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics showing the mean and standard deviation of relationship between Interpersonal dependency and Fear of Missing out among medical students

Variables	Mean	Standard Deviation	N
Interpersonal Dependency	122.96	9.399	200
Fear of Missing Out	26.13	8.056	200

The descriptive table shows the mean and standard deviation for the variables. Interpersonal dependency scale (IDI) has a sample $N = 200$, mean = 122.96 and standard deviation = 9.399. Fear of missing out scale has a sample $N = 200$, mean = 26.13 and standard deviation = 8.056.

Table 2. Correlational analysis showing the relationship between Interpersonal dependency and Fear of missing out among medical students

Variables	Pearson's correlation	r value	Decision
Interpersonal dependency	1	.282*	Rejected(H_0)
Fear of missing out			

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

Table 2 shows the values of Pearson's correlation among the two variables. There appears to be a positive correlation of 1 between relationship between Interpersonal Dependency and Fear of missing out. ($r = 0.282$, $p < 0.01$). This suggests that higher level of Interpersonal Dependency, the higher will be the Fear of missing out among medical students. As a significant relationship is noticed between the two variables, there is a relationship between Interpersonal dependency and Fear of missing out among medical students. Thus, the null hypothesis (H_0 : There is no Significant relationship between interpersonal dependency and fear of missing out among medical students.) The null hypothesis is rejected as the scores are statistically significant at 0.01. This study examined the relationship between Interpersonal dependency and Fear of missing out among medical students.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this research demonstrate that there is a positive correlation between Interpersonal Dependency and FOMO. The null hypothesis (the hypothesis that no significant relationship exists between the two variables), was rejected at the level of statistical significance of 0.01.

In other words, the data indicate that higher the Interpersonal dependency, the higher is the FOMO. Even though the strength is weak, the correlation that exists for medical students (MBBS) is still significant, nonetheless.

Recommendations and Limitations

One limitation stands out clearly: participants were exclusively MBBS students, so results might not apply elsewhere. Because data came from a single time point, drawing cause-and-effect conclusions about dependency and fear of missing out becomes difficult. Self-reported answers could skew the picture - people sometimes see themselves differently than they are. Above all, honesty can clash with how someone wishes to be seen, pushing responses toward what seems fitting instead of what feels true. Though the study offered useful insights, personal differences - such as character, online activity levels, or confidence were left out. Such aspects might shape results more than expected. Their role should not be ignored. For future research studies, finding broader patterns might come from looking at groups wider than just medical undergraduates. A bigger pool of participants could make outcomes more dependable. To see how reliance on others links to anxiety about being left out, watching people over time may help. Other factors - like how someone handles emotions or uses online platforms might add useful context if included later. Seeing differences across populations, plus personal stories, could uncover layers missed by numbers alone.

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