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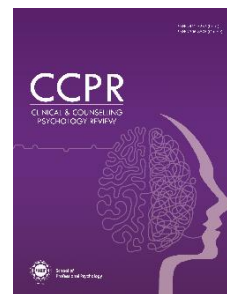|	
Title:	**Personality Traits and Fear of Missing Out as Predictors of Self-Esteem in TikTok Users**
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Personality Traits and Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) as Predictors of Self-Esteem in TikTok Users

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Abstract

The current study examined the correlations among personality traits, fear of missing out (FOMO), and self-esteem in TikTok users based on a correlational research design. Purposive sampling method was used to select the enrolled university students who actively used TikTok. The sample consisted of 161 students ($n = 70$ males; $n = 91$ females) aged between 18 to 26 years. Data collection included the General Factor Personality Questionnaire (GFPQ), the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES), and the Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) Scale. The findings revealed a positive association between extraversion and the FOMO, whereas introversion was correlated with self-esteem but didn't emerge as a significant predictor. Regression analysis indicated that FOMO was the only predictor of self-esteem significantly. Gender differences were observed in extraversion and FOMO, but no significant differences were found across self-esteem. The results of the study are discussed in terms of its implications and cultural relevance.

Keywords: extroversion, introversion, fear of missing out, self-esteem, TikTok

Introduction

Social media sites have immensely revolutionized the internet world and the modes of communication. The life of people is profoundly impacted by the videos shared and the experience exchanged within the community. Such sites have become essential for individuals throughout history, as they provide a convenient way to navigate the world. Their popularity continues to grow rapidly, with the number of users increasing every day. A large number of the existing generation are rapidly abandoning traditional media utilities like television, radio and shifting to mobile social media platforms

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like YouTube, Instagram, Twitter, Tik Tok, Snapchat, Facebook and LinkedIn. Such a change influences all the age groups; with TikTok becoming one of the most persuasive ones. It has revolutionized the way digital content is consumed by combining short form videos with a highly engaging algorithm (Al-Maroof et al., 2021). The intuitive interface that allows users to create content and customized suggestions have made TikTok a powerful contender in the social media market, especially among the youth (Anderson, 2020). Despite facing competition from services like YouTube Shorts and Instagram Reels (Jain et al., 2025), TikTok has been enjoying a more significant engagement rate, where every post gets twice as many comments, which increases the likelihood of virality. Such a high volume of content generation enhances the algorithm's learning process, creating a positive feedback loop (Petrillo, 2021). Consequently, there is a greater likelihood that users will be presented with videos that they find enjoyable, leading to an increase in time spent on TikTok. As such, a user now spends twice as much time on the platform on an average of 58.4 minutes in 2024 as compared to the 27.4 minutes in 2019 (Oberlo, 2024).

Different people, groups and generations interact with social media in unique ways, influenced by their personality traits. For example, extroverts tend to use social media to interact with other people and produce content, whereas more neurotic users seek validation through online activity (Marengo et al., 2020). These differences can shape online identities that reflect personal characteristics, particularly in pursuit of social acceptance (O'Day & Heimberg, 2021).

The Big Five model categorizes personality into five dimensions: neuroticism, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness and openness to experience (Kordzadeh & Bozan, 2024). Extraversion is characterized by sociability, assertiveness and high energy, whereas neuroticism is characterized by emotional instability and propensity of negative emotions. Openness denotes intellectual curiosity and a willingness to embrace new ideas, whereas agreeableness includes attributes such as trust, altruism, and sensitivity in interpersonal relations. Conscientiousness is associated with self-discipline, thorough planning, and behaviours directed toward achieving goals (Wu et al., 2024). These characteristics are viewed as relatively stable over time and are crucial in fostering consistent patterns of thought, emotion, and behavior (Joshanloo, 2023).

This study focuses on Extraversion and Introversion within the Big Five personality traits due to their relevance to social interaction, particularly on TikTok. Extraversion and Introversion reflect individual social energy and responsiveness to external stimuli, influencing their motivations for social media use and emotional reactions to online feedback. Research indicates that extraverts may experience fear of missing out (FOMO) in relation to social interactions, while introverts may feel FOMO stemming from social disconnection (Lee et al., 2016; Przybylski et al., 2013). These dynamics are heightened on TikTok, where curated content fosters comparison and engagement pressure. Thus, investigating Extraversion and Introversion can provide valuable insight into the relationship between personality traits FOMO, and online self-perception on this social media platform (Akhtar et al., 2024; Marengo et al., 2020).

Recent studies have highlighted that personality traits significantly influence social media usage patterns. Extraverted individuals often engage with social media to enhance their social connections and status whereas, introverts may use these platforms as social compensation, seeking interactions that they find challenging offline (Kircaburun et al., 2020). Notably, individuals exhibiting higher levels of neuroticism and introversion are among the most frequent social networking site (SNS) users, potentially due to their preference for virtual interactions over face-to-face communication (Marino et al., 2022).

Neuroticism has subsequently been determined as a significant antecedent to problematic SNS usage whilst FOMO act as a crucial mediator in this relationship. Individuals with higher levels of neuroticism are likely to experience FOMO, which leads them to spend more time on social media platforms in a problematic way (Gugushvili et al., 2022). This behaviour aligns with the Interaction of Person-Affect-Cognition-Execution (I-PACE) model (Brand et al., 2016), according to which the problematic use is influenced by predisposing factors, such as neuroticism, and is mediated by an affective and cognitive response, such as FOMO (Stanciu & Calugar, 2022)

Moreover, in the current era of social media that promotes a continuous social comparison, may lead young adults to experience negative impact on their self-esteem. Researchers have discovered that high social media usage is associated with low scores on self-esteem irrespective of gender (Tewari, 2024). This decline in self-esteem is commonly attributed to individuals

perceiving their own lives as less entertaining as compared to other people (Ruiz et al., 2022). In an attempt to deal with such feelings, individuals with low-self-esteem may create their online personas to project a more favorable image, seeking validation and acceptance in the digital realm (Gugushvili et al., 2022).

According to the literature review, previous studies have primarily focused on the individual relationships between personality traits, FOMO, and self-esteem. Most of these studies have concentrated on Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp (Kothambikar, 2023) often overlooking TikTok which has been becoming increasingly popular among university students (Barry et al., 2024). This study aims at filling this gap as it will provide insight into the use of TikTok among university students and how personality traits determine self-esteem and its relationship with FOMO.

Hypotheses

- There is likely to be a negative association between Introversion and FOMO.

- There is likely to be a positive association between Extraversion and FOMO.

- Extraversion, introversion, and FOMO will be significant predictors of self-esteem in university students.

- There will be gender differences in terms of extroversion, introversion, FOMO, and self-esteem.

Method

Research Design

A correlational study with a quantitative approach was carried out. The data was collected from Rawalpindi & Islamabad, and then its associations and impact were explored using statistical analysis.

Sample

The sample was calculated through the G*Power. The total sample consisted of 161 university students, selected through purposive sampling. Participants were selected based on their active content creation on TikTok which was confirmed through self-report and visual verification of public or private TikTok accounts. Only those with regular posting activity (at least

once a week) were included in the study. Participants were aged between 18 and 26 years and were enrolled in renowned public and private universities in the cities of Rawalpindi and Islamabad, Pakistan.

Instruments

General Factor of Personality Questionnaire (GFPQ)

Amigó et al. (2010) developed the General Factor of Personality Questionnaire (GFPQ) which is a 20-item Likert-type questionnaire designed to assess a specific personality trait. It consists of two subscales: the Extraversion Scale (ES) and the Introversion Scale (IS), each consisting of 10 items. The questionnaire employs a five points Likert Scale, ranging from "*Strongly Disagree* (1) to *Strongly Agree* (5)". The internal consistency of the GFPQ was reported to be high (α=.74) with the two distinct scales having greater reliability (α =.78 in both ES and IS)

Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) Scale

The Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) Scale consists of 10 items (Przybylski et al., 2013). Each item is rated on a 1 to 5-point Likert scale where 1 means "*not at all true*" and 5 means "*absolutely true*". A higher total score on the scale indicates a higher level of FOMO. The maximum possible score on the scale is 50, while the minimum score is 10. The alpha reliability values of the scale are reported to range between .87 to .90.

Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES)

The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES) is a widely used tool to measure self-esteem developed by Rosenberg (1979). It consists of 10 questions that are rated on a four-point Likert scale that extends on the continuum of disagreeing or agreeing that is measured in the scale of strongly disagree and strongly agree. The whole rating on the RSES is 0 to 30. A score of less than 15 indicates poor self-esteem as well as a score between 15 and 25 shows that a person has normal values. The RSES is a common instrument that is employed in measuring self-esteem. Self-esteem is a domain that is multidimensional in nature; therefore, the RSES assesses self-esteem in two separate 5-item scales, self-competence and self-liking. The Cronbach alpha of RSES has been reported as .92.

Procedure

After getting the ethical approval of the university ethics committee, participants were then approached to have their data collected by the survey method by using structured questionnaires. Prior to participation, individuals were briefed about the purpose of the study and the importance of their contribution. Informed consent was obtained, and participants were assured of the confidentiality of their responses and their right to withdraw at any time. Upon completion of data collection, the data was analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 25. At the initial stage of data analysis, the dataset was screened for missing values and assessed for normality, linearity, and multicollinearity to ensure that the assumptions for regression and correlation analyses were met.

Results

The study data was analyzed using quantitative techniques. The demographic variables including age, gender and family structure were presented through the descriptive statistics which incorporated frequencies, percentage, means and standard deviations. The alpha reliability values were estimated to make sure the psychometrics features of the instruments by performing reliability testing of items and subscale of scales. Pearson correlation test was used to determine the relationship between the personality traits and FOMO. The outcomes of interest in terms of extraversion, introversion, and FOMO on self-esteem were predicted by regression analysis. The t-test was used to check gender differences among the variables of the research. Outputs for the above-mentioned analyses have been tabulated in the following section.

Table 1

Demographic Characteristics of the Sample (N=161)

Variables	*N*	*%*	*M*	*SD*
Age			21.96	1.97
18-21	67	42		
22-26	94	58		
Gender				
Male	70	44		
Female	91	56		
Family Structure				
Nuclear	82	51		

Variables	N	%	M	SD
Joint	79	49		

Table 1 shows the demographic characteristics of the participants. The data obtained from demographics showed that the average age of the sample population was 21.96 years. Based on the gender, females outnumbered males. With respect to family structure, most of the participants were living in a nuclear family system.

Table 2

Psychometric Properties of Scales and Subscales

Scales/Subscales	M	SD	Range	α
EGFPQ	29.75	6.53	5-25	.72
IGFPQ	29.93	8.23	5-25	.69
FOMO	26.23	6.84	5_25	.73
RSES	29.93	8.23	0-12	.66

Note. EGFPQ=Extroversion General Factor Personality Questionnaire, IGFPQ= Introversion General Factor Personality Questionnaire, RSES= Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, FOMO=Fear of Missing Out Scale.

Table 2 presents the mean, standard deviation and score ranges for the assessment measures used in the present study. It also shows the Cronbach's Alpha values calculated by reliability testing to check the scales and subscales' reliability. The Alpha coefficient values for the GFPQ and FOMO Scale remain good, while for the RSES, it was moderate.

Table 3

Correlation between Study Variables (N= 161)

Variables	M	SD	1	2	3	4
EGFPQ	29.75	6.53	-	.21**	.06	.37**
IGFPQ	29.93	8.23	-	-	.20*	.30**
RSES	29.93	8.23	-	-	-	.25**
FOMO	26.23	6.84	-	-	-	-

Note. EGFPQ=Extroversion General Factor Personality Questionnaire, IGFPQ= Introversion General Factor Personality Questionnaire, SES=Self Esteem Scale, FOMO=Fear of Missing Out Scale, *p<.05, **p<.01.

Table 3 presents the results of the Pearson correlation analysis, which was used to examine the relationship among the study variables. It was found that extroversion has a significant positive correlation with

introversion and FOMO, whereas introversion showed a significant positive correlation with both self-esteem and FOMO. In addition, self-esteem has a significant positive correlation with FOMO.

Table 4

Linear Regression Results for Study Variables

Variable	*B*	*SEB*	β	*t*	*p*	95% *CI*
Constant	.78	1.83	_	4.27	.001	(4.194,11.426)
EGFPQ	-.04	.05	-.06	-0.69	.487	(-.143, .069)
IGFPQ	.07	.04	.13	1.58	.123	(-0.17, .148)
TFOMO	.14	.05	.23	2.71	.012	(.038, .245)

Note. EGFPQ= Extroversion General Factor Personality Questionnaire, IGFPQ= Introversion General Factor Personality Questionnaire, RSES=Self- Esteem Scale, FOMO=Fear of Missing Out Scale.

Table 4 presents the linear regression analysis for predicting the effect of personality traits and FOMO on self-esteem. The R^2 value of .079 showed the predictor explains 7.9% of the variance in the outcome variable with F=4.42, $p < .05$. It was also found that only FOMO is positively and significantly predicting self-esteem $(p < .05)$.

Table 5

Gender Differences in Study Variables

Variables	Males		Females		*t*	*p*	Cohen's d
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*			
EGFPQ	32.47	5.46	27.62	6.52	4.992	.00	0.81
IGFPQ	29.51	8.72	30.25	7.85	-0.563	.574	-
RSES	12.39	3.80	12.38	4.49	0.002	.999	-
FOMO	28.50	5.83	24.48	7.07	3.848	.000	0.62

Note. Males $n = 70$, Females $n = 91$, EGFPQ = Extraversion General Factor Personality Questionnaire, IGFPQ = Introversion General Factor Personality Questionnaire, RSES = Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, FOMO = Fear of Missing Out Scale.

Table 5 shows a large gender difference in extraversion, with males scoring higher. A medium effect was observed for FOMO scores, which also remained higher among males. No meaningful gender disparity was observed in the scores for introversion and self-esteem.

Discussion

The current study aimed to examine how personality traits and FOMO influence self-esteem among university students who actively create content on TikTok. Along with the growing popularity of TikTok, the study tried to find out whether extroversion and introversion influence self-esteem in different ways and how FOMO play a role in shaping self-perception. A sample of 161 university students aged between 18 and 26 was selected using a purposive sampling technique; ensuring participants were active TikTok creators. The study employed standardized questionnaires, namely, the GFPQ, the RSES, and the FOMO Scale to measure personality traits, FOMO, and self-esteem.

The initial hypothesis proposed a significant association between extroversion and FOMO, and the results supported this hypothesis. The findings revealed a positive relationship indicating extroverts have more tendencies to develop the FOMO due to their higher level of social engagement. This aligns with earlier studies, such as those by Przybylski et al. (2013) who reported that extroverted individuals tend to use social media to expand their social networks.

The second hypothesis proposed a negative association between introversion and FOMO, based on the assumption that individuals who are more introverted would be less concerned with social inclusion and, therefore, less likely to experience FOMO. However, the findings indicated that there was a strong positive correlation between introversion and FOMO, which implies that introverted persons may become more prone to FOMO.

Recent research supported these findings. Sharma et al. (2023) discovered that less extraverted individuals who are generally more introverted spend more time on social networking sites thus exposing them to more social comparison and social exclusion. In line with this, Zahoor (2022) observed that FOMO is a significant predictor of social media addiction among young adults in Pakistan suggesting that heightened FOMO drives compulsive online engagement. For introverts, who may avoid face-to-face interaction but rely on digital platforms to stay socially connected, this online engagement may paradoxically increase their susceptibility to FOMO.

The third hypothesis proposed that extroversion, introversion, and FOMO would predict self-esteem. However, the regression model revealed that only FOMO significantly predicted self-esteem, while extroversion and introversion didn't predict the outcome variable. Recent studies, such as those by Uram and Skalski (2022) and Gori et al. (2023), indicate a more nuanced relationship. These studies suggest that moderate levels of FOMO can keep individuals socially engaged and potentially enhance their self-esteem. In contexts like TikTok, where content creation boosts perceived social value, individuals may experience FOMO without a decrease in self-esteem, explaining the positive correlation found in this study

The fourth hypothesis, which examined gender differences, was partially supported. There were significant differences found in Extraversion and FOMO, with male scoring higher in both. However, no significant differences were observed in self-esteem or introversion, indicating that self-perception can be affected more by the individual characteristic rather than by gender. Recent studies present mixed evidences regarding gender differences in FOMO. Some studies report no significant differences between men and women (Rozgonjuk et al., 2021), while others suggest that males may experience higher levels of FOMO (Brailovskaia et al., 2023), underscoring the need for further research into gender-based social media behavior.

Collectively these findings indicate that while personality traits contribute to shaping individual patterns of social media engagement, it is the experience of FOMO, particularly within the context of TikTok, that exerts a more direct and substantial influence on users' self-esteem.

Conclusion

This study investigated the influence of personality traits (extraversion and introversion) and FOMO on self-esteem among university students who actively create TikTok content. The findings revealed that while both extraversion and introversion were significantly correlated with FOMO, neither trait significantly predicted self-esteem in the regression analysis. In contrast, FOMO emerged as the only significant predictor of self-esteem, indicating that individuals who experienced higher FOMO may perceive themselves more positively, possibly due to increased social engagement. Gender differences were observed in extraversion and FOMO, with males scoring higher, but no significant gender difference was found in self-

esteem. These results suggest that FOMO plays a more direct role in shaping self-perception than personality traits in the context of TikTok use.

Limitations and Future Recommendations

A number of limitations can be identified in this study. First, the sample consisted of a relatively low number of respondents and the geographic target was on university students, which limits the generalizability of the results. Future research should aim to include a more diverse and representative sample. Second, the reliance on self-reporting may introduce respondent bias, as participants might provide socially acceptable responses. More definitive and causal relationships may be found in experimental design or longitudinal design.

Additionally, this paper focused mainly on extroversion and introversion, other personality traits like neuroticism, agreeableness, and conscientiousness should be studied in future studies to explore their role in relation to social media behaviour. Considering other issues, such as the social validation, digital addiction, and social anxiety, may also allow understanding the effect of FOMO and self-esteem among TikTok users better.

Implications

This work has several practical implications. Understanding correlations between the personality features and FOMO may assist educators, psychologists, and social media influencers in designing the mechanisms of helping young adults to obtain healthier relationships with digital media. Since FOMO plays a significant role in determining the behaviour on social media it is possible to develop awareness campaigns that will inform the users about the right ways to consume content on social media and to minimize the phenomenon of social comparison. Moreover, these insights can help mental health professionals develop the interventions that will allow them to improve self-esteem and address the anxiety caused by FOMO in hyperactive social media users. Finally, the research outlines the importance of social media to implement features that foster a positive self-image focusing on content presentation that promotes self-acceptance rather than encouraging comparison with others.

Conflict of Interest

The authors of the manuscript have no financial or non-financial conflict of interest in the subject matter or materials discussed in this manuscript.

Data Availability Statement

The data associated with this study will be provided by the corresponding author upon request.

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