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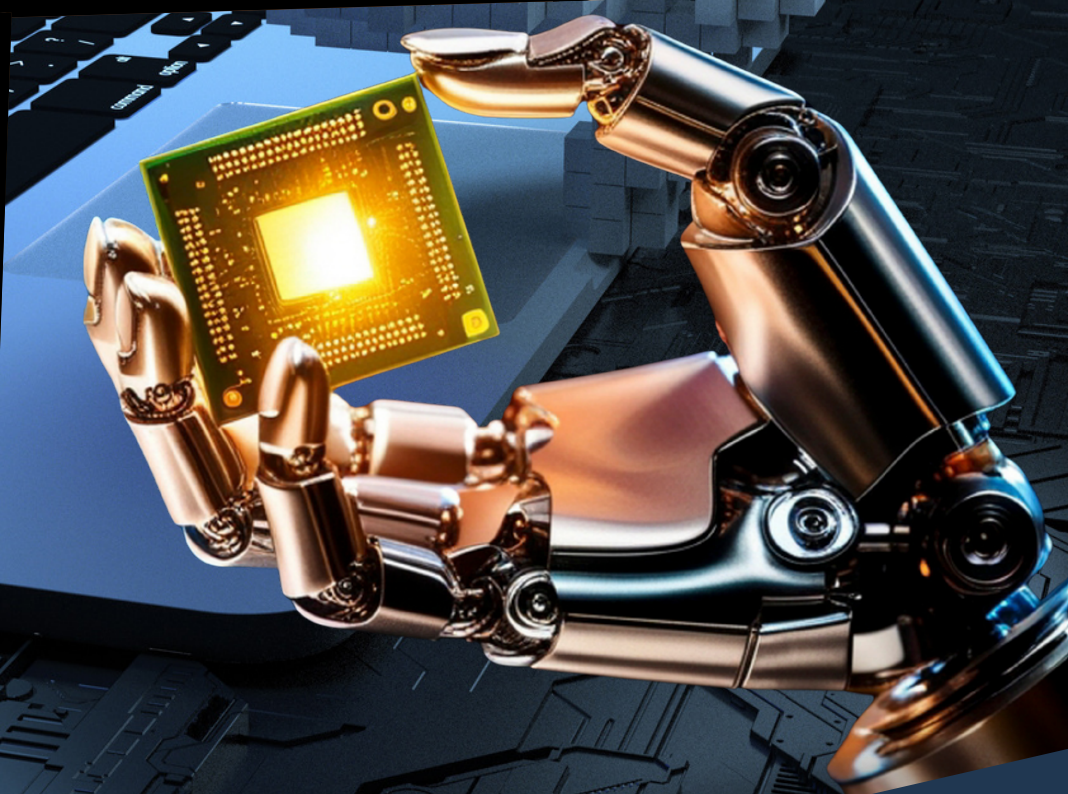


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PSYCHOLOGICAL ORIENTATIONS OF FOMO AND JOMO IN THE DIGITAL AGE

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INTRODUCTION

Digital technologies and social media have become an essential part of everyday life, providing people with an easy way to connect, obtain information, and interact with others at all times. Despite its great advantages, social media also creates psychological issues such as constant social comparison and feeling pressure from looking at others' social lives (Talwar et al., 2023). In this context, one of the most talked about phenomena is FOMO, or fear of missing out, which is anxiety resulting from the perception that others are enjoying fulfilling experiences without one's involvement (Hafizh et al., 2024). FOMO is now a significant area of psychological research, and it has become particularly evident as more and more people use social media. More recently, as a counterpoint to FOMO, another new concept called JOMO or joy of missing out was introduced and popularized by tech entrepreneur Anil Dash on his personal blog. JOMO is a positive emotional state that arises when an individual intentionally chooses not to participate in social or digital activities (Kaya et al., 2026). JOMO highlights mindfulness and autonomy, alongside positive feelings of happiness, underscoring an overall healthier relationship with technology (Zhang, 2025). People who feel or experience JOMO live their lives according to their own personal values, prioritizing their personal happiness and well-being over any type of external validation (Pabon et al., 2025). Therefore, JOMO is regarded as a protective psychological capacity that can help to protect people from the negative impacts of digital overload. However, few studies have examined FOMO and JOMO together to compare and contrast the two constructs and assess how they interact and influence well-being and performance (Eitan & Naor, 2025). Therefore, the aim of this paper is to provide a basic understanding of how FOMO and JOMO operate as opposing psychological orientations in the digital environment.

FOMO AND JOMO

Fear of Missing Out (FOMO)

FOMO is often characterized by feelings of anxiety or worry that others are experiencing rewarding or fulfilling activities while one is not partaking in them, along with a drive to be continuously up to date and connected. Over the years, many people feel a sense of FOMO mainly due to the ever-growing use of social media and other digital channels (Gopal et al., 2024). Social media sites offer users the ability to stay up to date on what others are doing through tools such as instant notifications, live updates, and algorithmically constructed content feeds designed to showcase curated versions of other people's experiences and personal accomplishments (Whiting & Williams, 2021). This phenomenon has led to social comparison and perceived exclusion among many social media users (Dhir et al., 2020). People who feel FOMO because of their social media use tend to regularly compare their lives to those featured on social media. FOMO has been shown in several studies to lead to negative mental health consequences, including increased stress, anxiety, emotional exhaustion, and lower overall life satisfaction, particularly among young adults and college students who frequently use social media (Hafizh et al., 2024; Kaur et al., 2021; Talwar et al., 2023). In addition, a high level of FOMO may result in increased digital engagement, decreased ability to concentrate, and lower ability to fulfill daily obligations (Zhao et al., 2023).

Joy of Missing Out (JOMO)

JOMO describes an individual's sense of satisfaction and fulfillment by intentionally opting out of certain social or digital experiences to concentrate on themselves, their priorities, and living in the present. While FOMO results from fear and anxiety about missing out or not being included, JOMO is a response to the societal demands of being constantly connected in today's digital world. In contrast to FOMO, which is based on fear of missing out, JOMO emphasizes intentional and conscious engagement, along with self-regulation in one's social and digital interactions (Pang & Ruan, 2023). Those experiencing the benefits of JOMO proactively limit their exposure to social media, notifications, and social obligations in order to reclaim control over their time and attention (Zhang, 2025). Recent studies have found a correlation between the experience of JOMO and mindfulness, emotional autonomy, and intrinsic motivation through those who embrace the philosophy of JOMO, making their mind, body, and mental state the priority instead of others' opinions about them either socially or digitally (Talwar et al., 2023). There is evidence that people who practice JOMO see significant benefits like less stress, more positive emotions, greater happiness, and increased abilities to concentrate in school, work, and everyday life (Kaur et al., 2021; Zhang, 2025). As the body of knowledge surrounding JOMO continues to grow, it has so far only demonstrated that JOMO serves as a protective barrier for people against the overwhelming amounts of digital stimulation, preventing them from experiencing the detrimental effects of excessive use of social media (Talwar et al., 2023).

FOMO VERSUS JOMO

The concepts of FOMO and JOMO represent two different psychological reactions to social interactions and digital connection. FOMO is primarily an external reaction based on the desire for social approval; people with FOMO feel they must remain continuously aware of everything going on around them and stay visible online to avoid becoming socially isolated. Continued exposure to this type of pressure can lead to negative mental health effects such as

increased anxiety, stress, and emotional fatigue (Talwar et al., 2023). On the other hand, JOMO is driven internally, and it is associated with self-control and intrinsic enjoyment. People who experience a large amount of JOMO prioritize factors like personal values and well-being over social pressure. Thus, they have the ability to stop participating in certain social or digital events without feeling guilty or anxious (Zhang, 2025). Recent studies suggest that JOMO might act as a buffer against the impact of FOMO by helping to create greater emotional satisfaction and mitigating negative emotional impacts through mindfulness. Nevertheless, there is less research on JOMO compared to FOMO, underscoring the need to conduct a comprehensive analysis of both concepts using one conceptual framework (Talwar et al., 2023; Zhang, 2025).

CONCLUSION

The concepts of FOMO and JOMO represent two opposing yet related responses to being socially active and digitally connected. Although both areas are being subjected to a significant amount of research, studies on JOMO are still not as well developed as those on FOMO, highlighting a major gap in the existing literature around JOMO. To better understand how individuals cope with the fast pace of change associated with digital technologies in today's globalized world, researchers need to combine the current body of knowledge on FOMO and JOMO to create a single framework that will allow for an integrated view of these two phenomena and how they interact with each other. Overall, the interaction between FOMO and JOMO highlights the importance of balancing social connectedness with mindful disengagement to achieve optimal mental health, well-being, performance, and life satisfaction in today's digitally-driven society.

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