FOMO and Peer Pressure in College

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Abstract: *Fear of missing out (FOMO) and peer pressure are growing concerns among college students significantly influenced by social media, this research investigates their impact on student's mental health, decision-making and social behavior*

A Google Forms Survey was conducted among college students , the data reveals that a majority of students experience FOMO especially due to social media exposure.

The finding reveals that many students have experienced peer pressure primarily in social life 80%, fashion lifestyle 73%, and academics 66.7% .

Social media plays a crucial role as most of the students compare themselves with others online, additionally 86.7% reported experiencing stress due to FOMO , and 20% admitted attending events just because others posted about them.

Despite these challenges, students adopt different coping strategies – 53.3% make independent decisions, 26.7% ignore peer pressure, while 20% follow the crowd.

These finding highlights the psychological effects of FOMO and peer pressure, emphasizing the need of self- awareness and mental support in colleges.

Keywords: *Fear of missing out*

I. INTRODUCTION

Fear of missing out (FOMO) is a feeling or condition when someone feels fear or anxiety that others are having rewarding experiences but he or she isn't there to participate. Seeing pictures on social media enjoying parties, travelling or other activities increases the severity of this feeling or fear of missing out.

FOMO can cause individuals to constantly check social media, make impulsive decisions and feel dissatisfied with their own lives.

Peer pressure refers to the influence by friend's, classmates or people around the same age, on an individual's decision, behavior or lifestyle.

Sometimes peer pressure can be good, for example it can motivate a person to do well in college or lead a healthy lifestyle, but sometimes peer pressure can lead to more troublesome actions. For example, classmates might pressure to skip classes, spend too much money or any alcoholic addictions.

Students becomes victims of peer pressure as they want to fit in with others in the college.

This research is important because FOMO and peer pressure significantly effects the mental health, academic performance and other decisions of the students.

Due to greater use of social media FOMO has grown significantly in students, this influence students to engage in activities that they truly don't enjoy but make decisions due to influence of others rather than self value.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Research links FOMO and peer pressure to social media usage and mental well- being of the students. Mr.Bruijn 2021 conducted research on 338 Dutch students and found out that many students with high FOMO use social media excessively and feeling pressure to keep up with their friends.

The study also finds that peer pressure is the worse or negative impact of the FOMO, leading to more stress and change in behavior. Similarly research also finds that peer pressure has an impact on academics, finance and social behavior of the students who have love self confidence .

Social media plays an important role in increasing FOMO by showing idealized lifestyles. Student who often access their social media accounts experiences a high level of stress and anxiety found by Brujin in 2021.

Peer pressure affects students choices, feelings and actions. Some students benefits from people pressuring them positively. Students who are sensitive to peer pressure experiences a higher FOMO and social media addiction which makes them more stressed.

While existing research shows and studies FOMO, peer pressure and social media on students separately , this study is important as it examines the combined influence of FOMO and peer pressure on the mental health, behavior and decision making ability of college students.

Additionally it uses the primary data collected from the college students to shed fresh insights on the issue.

Further the study aims to identify the coping strategies or suggestions that can help the students manage such issues of FOMO which is created and increased by social media usage and peer pressure influenced by friends, classmates or peers.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research follows quantitative research technique, the primary data is collected to check the impact of FOMO and peer pressure on the college students through survey.

Data Collection method: The data is collected using Google forms distributed to the college students .

The questionnaire included multiple choice questions and long answer questions covering:

1. Use of social media and its effects on FOMO.
2. Peer pressure experiences in different areas of students life.
3. Mechanisms of coping adopted by the students.

Total respondents were small group of 15 college students of age group 17-22 years who voluntarily participated.

IV. DATA ANAYLYSIS AND FINDINGS:

The data consists of 15 responses from college students. It includes variables such as age, gender, year of study, social media usage, FOMO (fear of missing out), peer pressure, stress level and coping mechanisms.

KEY FINDINGS:

1. Social media usage and FOMO:

1.1 46.7% that is 6 students use social media for 1-3 hours daily.

1.2 40 that is 5 students spend more than 3 hours per day on the social media

1.3 13.3% that is 4 students use social media for less than a hour daily

 The data suggests a high engagement with social media, which is the a significant factor in experiencing FOMO (fear of missing out).
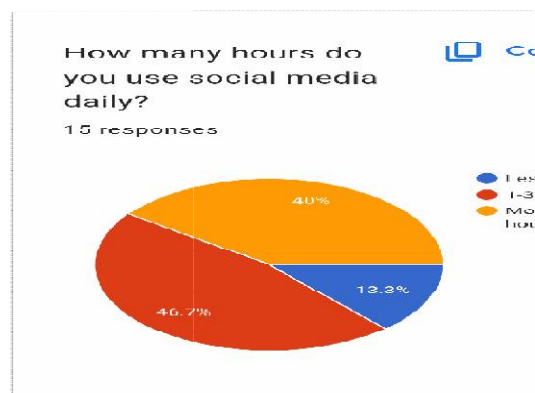
2. FOMO impact from social media:

2.1 66.7% that is total 10 students experience FOMO when they see their friends attending event which they have missed out.

2.2 33.3% that is 5 students do not experience significant FOMO from social media.

It shows that the majority of the students compare their lives with others at some extent, which shows a psychological impact of social media on students.
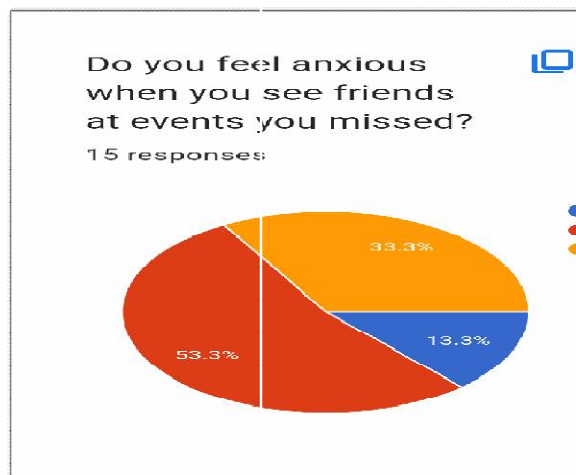

3. Peer pressure impact:

Areas where students feel peer pressure:

3.1 Academics 66.7% feel pressure to perform well by seeing others

3.2 80% that is 12 students feel pressured to fit in with friends.

3.3 73.3% that is 11 students feel pressured to have better fashion and lifestyle influenced by peer pressure

3.4 Other 60% that is 9 students have mentioned feeling pressured in other aspects of their life.
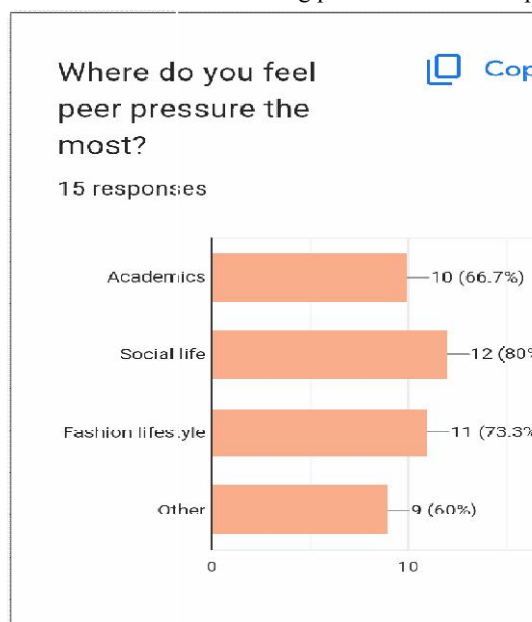
4. Emotional and Mental Effects:

4.1 86.7% of students (13 out of 15) reported that FOMO sometimes makes them feel stressed.

4.2 13.3% (2 out of 15) stated that FOMO makes them feel very stressed.

4.3 None of the students selected "Not at all," indicating that FOMO affects all respondents to some degree.

It shows that FOMO is the Significant source of stress for College Students .

These Findings indicates that social media and peer pressure Contributes the emotional pressure on the Students.

Among them 80% Students engaged on social media Compare their lives with others , either on regular basis or occasionally . This habit contributes FOMO, stress influencing self esteem and overall being.
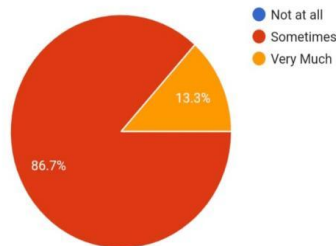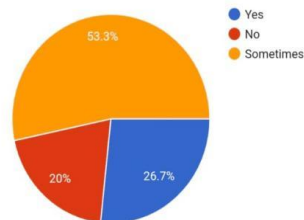
5. Coping Mechanisms:

5.1 53.3% that is 8 Students prefer to make independent decisions, showing a strong sense of personal values and confidence.

5.2 26.7% that is 4 Students out of 15 choose to ignore peer pressure.

5.3 20% that is 3 students admit to following the crowd, suggesting they might be influenced by their peers or the social media .

More than the half of the Students prefer making independent decision which shows their self awareness. However notable portion still are influenced by their social environment.

KEY REFLECTIONS

Based on the findings of the study, social media plays a major role in increasing FOMO among the college students. Maximum students have reported that they have suffered stress due to FOMO, which is the result of constant exposure to other people's activities. This survey also reveals that maximum of them face peer pressure in their social life which hinders their decision making ability and they adjust their decisions to fit in with their peers, whether in terms of social activities or academics.

This shows psychologies behavior of the students falling prey to FOMO and peer pressure, urging the need for mental awareness, self-confidence building and responsible social media use among the students.

The next sections highlights the recommendations / suggestions that how students can reduce these negative effects.

RECOMMENDATIONS / SUGGESTIONS:

1. Limit the use of social media each day to avoid spending too much time comparing themselves to others.
2. Students should learn to handle the Peer Pressure by learning how to say "NO" when needed.
3. Students should set personal goal instead of comparing or following others.
4. Practice mindfulness to reduce stress caused by FOMO.
5. Make smart financial and academic decisions.
6. Focus on own strengths and interest instead of trying to fit in with others.

V. CONCLUSION

Research shows that the increasing influence of social media has considerably affected college students due to FOMO and peer pressure. A lot of students feel stressed and anxious. Compare themselves with others creates self-doubt. In the data, it shows that 86.7% of the students feel stressful due to FOMO. Whereas 80% pressure social life. Thus, this indicates external influence power impacts the emotions of the audience for ease in decision making. Some students can take a decision independently (53.3%). On the other hand, others fail to resist peer influence. The research outlines the need for self-awareness, confidence, and mental health among students to help them cope. Educational institutions should take proactive steps by organizing awareness programs, promoting responsible social media use, and providing emotional support through counseling services. Though the findings provide useful insights, the limited sample size of only 15 Students, means that further research is needed to better understand how FOMO and peer pressure affect a broader range of students. Future studies could explore long-term psychological effects and effective coping mechanisms on a larger scale. Above all, they study urges students to cultivate health social conduct while prudently becoming choosier and seeking help when necessary. By encouraging a healthy attitude towards social media and peer pressure, students can enhance their overall well-being and self-confidence.

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