

FOMO in Modern Societies: Digital Addiction and Its Psychological-Sociological Effects



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ABSTRACT: In today's world, where digitalization is transforming social structures, there is an increasing effort to be constantly online and present on social media. In this case, individuals are experiencing the FOMO (Fear of Missing Out) phenomenon. With the rise of digitalization and social media in modern societies, this phenomenon has become widespread and its impact on individuals and therefore on societies has become more apparent.

FOMO by fostering the perpetual cycle feature, which in turn creates negative psychological effects such as anxiety, stress, burnout and low self-esteem in individuals. Digital change triggers the experience of always being up to date in the social environment and making comparisons with other individuals, which negatively affects overall life satisfaction. It is argued that simple methods such as digital detox, temporary interventions at home and restructuring digital media use can be effective in coping with FOMO. In this context, individuals' better management of their digital lives plays an important role in reducing the negative effects of FOMO.

At the same time, our study will discuss how social media is redefining relationships between individuals, how it is changing perceptions of status and social acceptance today, and how FOMO is shaping both mental health and social roles.

KEYWORDS: FOMO, Digital Dependency Psychological Effects Social Media Addiction Technology Addiction.

INTRODUCTION

In today's rapidly digitizing world, the desire to be online all the time is increasing and this situation is called "FOMO" (Fear of Missing). Out), also known as the "fear of missing out". FOMO is defined as the fear that individuals will not be involved in events in their social environment, and this fear encourages the behavior of being constantly online (Przybylski et al., 2013). This phenomenon has become more evident, especially with the spread of social media platforms and the increase in social disapproval and status anxiety among individuals (Tüfekci, 2014). This phenomenon has a significant impact not only on the psychological states experienced by individuals, but also on social norms, products and social expectations.

Studies show that FOMO triggers the constant spending of time on social media, which leads to disorders such as anxiety disorders, low self-esteem and apathy towards life (Huang, 2018). The constant monitoring of social media content creates a feeling of 'not being able to keep up' in individuals, and this feeling can lead to long-term psychological burnout (Elhai et al., 2017). At the same time, digital addiction creates significant pressure not only at the individual level, but also on social norms and expectations, and manifests itself by keeping individuals in constant competition (Walsh et al., 2015).

This study discusses the relationship of FOMO to the digital world and the implications of this attachment on the health of individuals in psychological and sociological dimensions. The relationship between FOMO and the perception of status, the search for social acceptance and the construction of identity through our research was conducted by the Behavior Analyst team under the presidency of Prof. Dr. Derya Berrak and Prof. Dr. Kürşat Şahin Yıldırım on behalf of the Ambulatory Health Education Consultancy Services Co. Ltd. and consists of a comprehensive survey study conducted as a result of interviews with 1019 people in Istanbul, Ankara and Izmir for one year. In this way, the effects of social media use and the FOMO phenomenon on psychological indicators such as self-esteem, anxiety level and life comfort were analyzed. In addition, how digital attachment shapes individuals' daily life balance and adaptation processes to social norms were evaluated.

Research results show that FOMO not only affects their mental health, but also their social roles, cooperation and social development. From a sociological perspective, FOMO increases the perception of social competition in individuals and creates constant pressure for success and visibility. In this case, it forces individuals to constantly perform in social environments and leads to a feeling of exhaustion at the individual level and an artificial competitive environment at the social level.

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In this context, the article examines the individual and social effects of FOMO and the socio-psychological disruptions that digitalization has created on modern societies. In this context, the data obtained from the survey study and current findings in the literature will be discussed, as well as the long-term consequences of FOMO on individuals and societies.

LITERATURE REVIEW

FOMO (Fear of Missing Out) is defined as the fear of avoiding events occurring in social environments and the need for constant connection triggered by this fear (Przybylski et al., 2013). It is stated that FOMO has gained momentum with digitalization and has become a phenomenon based especially on social media use (Tandon et al., 2021).

Digital addiction can be defined as the production of constant access and use of the online world and social media platforms. FOMO, that is, the fear of avoiding something, has been called the anxiety of falling behind in the experiences you can have. According to the studies of Przybylski and his colleagues (2013), in this case, the need to be constantly connected to the social circles that can be done is triggered and the center of digital areas such as social media becomes more prominent. Individuals live especially social activities, events, achievements or daily life moments in this area, not staying online can cause them to feel deprived of these experiences. In this context, FOMO is considered as a phenomenon that can be reached with modern digital culture.

FOMO is one of the most important factors in social media. Platforms such as Instagram, TikTok and Facebook in particular allow users to observe the lives of other users from a distance (Dossey, 2014). This situation causes individuals to increase their social comparisons and triggers the thoughts of "if others are doing it, I should do it too". Changing social media causes individuals to experience FOMO more intensely. Roberts and David (2020) state that with the increase in social media, social comparison and anxiety levels in individuals increase, which negatively affects life satisfaction.

Anxiety and depression are the most common results of these effects. The study by Firinci et al. (2016) shows that constant exposure to enrichment, happiness and success on social media causes people to feel inadequate. In addition, social media use until late at night disrupts sleep patterns and reduces the positive effects of sleep (Adams et al., 2017). This situation directly threatens the physical and psychological health of individuals. Constant comparison causes low self-esteem in individuals.

FOMO has a particularly strong effect on young individuals. Weinstein (2018) stated that people are more prone to FOMO during adolescence due to fear of social exclusion and the desire to be popular on social media platforms. The effects seen in these age ranges are not only psychological, but also lead to negativities in academic performance and face-to-face social relationships. Consumer culture is also an important part of FOMO. According to Zhang and Leung's (2019) studies, content created by influencers and brands on social media encourages people to adopt certain lifestyles and turn to new products. This creates economic and cultural pressures on individuals and leads to a consumption-oriented cycle. Thus, FOMO is considered not only an individual phenomenon but also a phenomenon with societal effects.

To cope with FOMO, it is important to regulate social media and develop a conscious digital behavior. In the study by Rozgonjuk et al. (2021), it was emphasized that mindfulness techniques helped to start with FOMO-related stress and anxiety. In addition, digital detox applications stand out as an effective method to eliminate social media pollution and alleviate the negativities of FOMO. Moving away from social comparison behaviors and focusing on the individual's own life values is also stated as an important strategy.

FOMO has become an increasingly widespread problem in modern societies due to digitalization. Studies in the literature show that FOMO increases stress and negatively affects the quality of life of individuals. Therefore, in the fight against FOMO, awareness programs for social media use need to be developed on an individual scale and effective policies need to be supported at a societal level.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

The impact of FOMO on social media use, psychological states and social norms in modern societies is a phenomenon that needs to be addressed in various dimensions. Key details of the research:

1. How does FOMO affect social media usage time and achievements on these platforms?
2. What is the relationship between social anxiety, self-esteem and life satisfaction in individuals with high FOMO levels?
3. How does FOMO shape processes of compliance with social norms through digital relationships?
4. What are the problems that are being experienced and will be experienced when considering the effects of FOMO on health?
5. How does FOMO affect social perceptions of competition and efforts to be visible on social media?
6. To what extent do digital detox apps mitigate the negative effects of FOMO on individuals and society?

Hypotheses

H1: Individuals with high FOMO levels spend more time on social media and are more prone to social media pollution.

H2: Social anxiety indicators are more common in individuals with high FOMO levels.

H3: Self-esteem is lower in individuals with high FOMO levels, and living conditions are negatively affected.

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H4: FOMO changes the processes of adapting to social norms by increasing digital struggle, while increasing psychological pressure in this process.

H5: FOMO increases individuals' perception of competition on social media and triggers their efforts to be seen.

H6: Digital detox can reduce the level of FOMO in individuals and increase their comfort of life.

Aim

The main purpose of this study is to examine the effects of digitalization on individuals in modern societies, especially the FOMO phenomenon. How FOMO affects individuals' social media usage competencies, digital resilience levels and psychological health is included in the scope of the research.

On the other hand, while the research focuses on the objectives of analyzing the effect of FOMO on psychological indicators such as anxiety, self-esteem and life satisfaction in individuals, it also focuses on the social dimensions of this phenomenon. In this way, it will be evaluated how FOMO affects interpersonal relationships, social norms and the perception of competition on social media platforms.

The article will also examine how the diversity and social harmony between digital connectedness and FOMO are reflected, and the effects of FOMO coping methods (e.g. digital detox) on quality of life will be discussed.

In this context, it is aimed to present a comprehensive perspective on the individual and social effects of digitalization. The study aims to understand the role of FOMO not only in individual lives but also in social dynamics. In this context, it is aimed to emerge a perspective on the effects of digitalization on modern society.

Method

A mixed method will be used in the research. A general survey will be applied to measure FOMO levels. This survey will allow the evaluation of the relationships between social anxiety, self-esteem and life comfort and FOMO through analysis; participants will be asked to share their experiences within the scope of digital relationships and compliance with social norms, and content analyses will be conducted. In addition, a controlled experiment will be designed to evaluate digital detox applications, and in this experiment, the change in FOMO levels will be examined in a cross-sectional structure. It is thought that the experiment, which will be conducted over a certain period of time, will enable us to understand social media usage competencies, FOMO levels and the individual and social effects of this phenomenon.

The research was conducted under the presidency of Prof. Dr. Kürşat Şahin Yıldırım and Prof. Dr. Derya Berrak Yentür, between NOVEMBER 2023 and NOVEMBER 2024, for a total of 1 year on behalf of the Outpatient Health Education and Consultancy Ltd. Co. Data were obtained from participants through face-to-face interviews and online surveys in Ankara, Istanbul and Izmir. The interviews and surveys were administered to the participants in a period of 15 to 25 minutes.

General Research Calendar

History	Research Activity
November 2023 - December 2023	Designing the questionnaire, sample selection and pre-testing studies.
January 2024 - July 2024	The process of conducting a survey and collecting and analyzing data.
June 2024	Selection and modification options for experiments.
July 2024 - September 2024	3-month digital detox trial period.
October 2024	Termination of the experiment, preservation of final data and analysis process.
November 2024	Combining survey and experimental data, analyzing them and preparing final reports.

The sample of the study was selected based on voluntary participation. There were no demographic or socioeconomic restrictions in the selection of participants, and individuals aged 18 and over from different age groups, genders and socioeconomic backgrounds were included in the study. A total of 1019 participants were included, 105 of whom participated in the experimental group. Demographic information of the participants included variables such as age, gender, and educational status.

Digital Detox Experiment Process Table

Week	Process Step	Group 1 (Full Detox)	Group 2 (Restricted Use)	Group 3 (Control Group)
Week 1	Performance of startup surveys and FOMO level performance.	35 people	35 people	35 people
Week 2-4	Digital detox: Completely removing social media.	Active	Limited	Normal operation
Week 5	Interim evaluation survey: Evaluation of the first month results.	Intermediate measurement was made	Intermediate measurement was made	Intermediate measurement was made

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Week 6-8	Continuing the digital detox: usage restrictions are maintained.	Active	Limited	Normal operation
Week 9	Interim evaluation survey: Coverage of second month results.	Intermediate measurement was made	Intermediate measurement was made	Intermediate measurement was made
Week 10-12	Final stage: Ending digital detox programs.	Active	Limited	Normal operation
Week 12	Results of the last survey and the final one was selected from all groups.	Data face	Data face	Data face

The experiment was conducted with 105 files. Participants were divided into three separate groups of 35 people each, namely the Full Detox Group, the Restricted Use Group and the Control Group.

1. The Complete Detox Group completely stopped talking on social media for the duration of the experiment. They did not log in to social media platforms or engage with any social media content.
2. The Restricted Usage Group set social media usage to a maximum of 30 minutes per day. Participants were informed not to exceed this time and used specific tools and techniques to control their usage time. The following methods and tools were used to limit social media usage to a maximum of 30 minutes per day for the Restricted Usage Group:
 - Participants were offered time-limiting apps that they could install on their phones and other devices. These apps include Forest , StayFocused , Digital There are tools like Wellbeing (Android) and Screentime (iOS). These apps measure the time users spend on social media apps and restrict usage when a certain time limit is reached.
 - Participants were instructed to disable notifications from social media platforms. This helped to minimize distractions and prevent unnecessary use.
 - Participants were asked to determine their daily social media usage time and to use it only when needed. For example, instead of using 30 minutes at a time, they were told that they could divide their subscriptions into three 10-minute periods during the day.
 - Participants were offered a digital diary in which they would record their daily social media usage time and what effect they were able to have on the time they were stored on social media.
 - It was checked whether the usage limit was met. Participants were encouraged to share their own successes or those of people they encountered throughout the experiment.
 - Participants were given brief training on how to execute recommended practices for monitoring and limiting social media use.

The effectiveness of the tools and techniques has been continuously evaluated through feedback.

3. The Control Group did not make any changes to social media and continued with their normal usage pattern.

The experimental process lasted a total of 12 weeks. For all three groups, variables such as FOMO level, social anxiety, self-esteem and life atmosphere were measured by applying questionnaires at the beginning, middle (4th and 8th weeks) and end (12th week) of the experiment. During this process, regular feedback and a control structure were prepared to ensure compliance with the experimental instructions and to make the experimental periods reliable.

At the end of the experiment, the data obtained from all groups were checked and the effects of digital detox on FOMO were analyzed. This experiment was carried out to determine whether different digital solutions were effective in combating FOMO and to develop solution suggestions to control digital addictions.

The measurement tools used in the study are:

- FOMO Scale (Przybylski et al., 2013)
This scale has been adapted for use in order to use levels of FOMO (fear of being cut off from their development). Designed in a 7-point Likert- type format, the scale assesses fears of falling behind socially and the impact of these fears on their daily lives. It was stated that the scale has a high system and Cronbach's Alpha was reported as 0.80.

Widely used standard psychometric scales were used to assess the psychological health status of the participants:

- Beck Anxiety Inventory: It is a valid and reliable tool used to measure participants' anxiety levels.
- Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale: This scale, generally used for self-esteem assessments, is an important tool in measuring psychological health indicators.
- Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS): This scale, which is widely used to determine the general life satisfaction levels of participants, is a reliable life comfort measurement tool.
- Social Media Usage Survey

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The questions in the survey focus on the following topics:

Daily social media usage conditions,

Preferred platforms (e.g. Instagram, TikTok, Facebook),

Usage motivations (entertainment, information sharing, social interaction),

Emotional effects of social media (happiness, separation, loneliness).

- Mood Scale (Positive and Negative Emotion Schedule - PANAS)

This scale, which is used to evaluate positive and negative emotional states, helps understand the emotional state of social media on individuals.

Digital usage tracking tools are used to objectively use the time participants spend on social media and other digital platforms. These tools include:

- Digital Health (Android)
- Screen Time (iOS)
- Third party applications have been used to properly utilize the time kept on in-loop platforms.
- Scale of Conformity to Social Norms

This scale is designed to measure the levels of compliance with social norms and to ensure that digital platforms are kept on top of this process. The extent of FOMO and the continuation of compliance with social norms has been analyzed in such detail.

Data analysis was performed using descriptive statistics, correlation analyses, regression analyses and structural equation modeling (SEM).

- Descriptive Statistics: Used to determine the demographic characteristics of the sample and the distribution of the main variables.
- Correlation Analyses: The relationships between sexual satisfaction, stress, gender roles and psychological well-being were examined.
- Regression Analyses: The effects of sexual satisfaction and stress on psychological well-being were evaluated.
- Structural Equation Modeling (SEM): The complex relationships among sexual satisfaction, stress, gender roles and psychological well-being were analyzed.

Findings

The reliability of all measurement tools used in the study was evaluated with Cronbach's Alpha values and the results showed high internal performance levels. The reliability of the measurements, the accuracy of the data obtained and the general performance are theoretically supported.

A Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.86. This scale stands out as an effective tool in assessing fears of being left behind in social environments and the daily lives of these fears. Similarly, the Beck Anxiety Inventory applied to manage anxiety levels has shown an extraordinary internal protection with a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.91. This result shows that life, anxiety, and accurate measurements are made.

The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, used to assess the participants' self-esteem levels, was released to the market with a high Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.88. It was used as an important measurement tool, especially in analyzing the relationship between self-esteem and FOMO. Similarly, the Life Satisfaction Scale (SWLS), applied to provide general life satisfaction, exhibited a strong performance level with a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.85.

The Mood Scale (Positive and Negative Emotion Table - PANAS) used to assess negative emotional states in the study provided an effective measurement with positive and negative emotion subscales. Cronbach's Alpha values of 0.89 and 0.87 were calculated for the positive emotion sub-performance and the negative emotion sub-performance, respectively. These results reveal that this performance is a reliable tool in the process of assessing positive and negative emotional experiences.

To determine the criteria for social media use, the Social Media Usage Survey was launched at a sufficient level with a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.80. It was an effective tool to view the participants' daily social media use, their preferred platforms, and their emotional experiences related to social media. In addition, the Social Norm Conformity Scale used for the values of the level of conformity to social norms showed a high performance with a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.84.

The Social Comparison Scale has proven to be a reliable measurement tool with a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.82. This scale has provided an important data source for understanding the structure of social media rates on FOMO.

In general, Cronbach Alpha values of all scales used in the study were calculated above 0.80. This shows that the measurement tools are highly reliable and the mathematical results are based on a solid foundation. The scales provided a strong basis in both psychological and operational analysis at this level.

Package) which is widely used in social sciences. for the Social Sciences 23.0) software. SPSS is a comprehensive tool that allows the application of various statistical methods such as descriptive statistics of demographic data, reliability analyses, correlation and regression analyses, and factor analyses. The user-friendly interface of the software facilitated data management and analysis processes, while the wide range of statistical methods allowed the testing of research questions and hypotheses. SPSS also

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allowed important analyses such as Cronbach's Alpha, which evaluates the reliability of scales, and factor analyses for construct validity. The graphical presentation of analysis results made the data more understandable and supported the findings visually.

SPSS has become an important tool in research in descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation, frequency distributions) and advanced follow-up methods such as distribution analysis, ANOVA and regression analysis. Thanks to its user-friendly interface, data sets are easier to analyze and the results obtained from the data are visualized with tables and sections.

NVivo program was used to analyze the data. Content analysis was conducted to explain the answers obtained from the questions and the basic experiences obtained from the open documents in more detail. NVivo played an active role in the details of the data, which was separated according to the details, accessed by themes and frequently used data.

R programming language was used to structure the results with more advanced and improved models. Especially the detailed analysis of regression models and the validation of inferential statistics sections benefited from the flexible and extensive storage tools provided by R.

Firstly, the distribution of demographic variables (such as age, gender, education level, marital status, social media usage time) was analyzed. These analyses were carried out in order to determine their general profiles and summarize the costs of social media usage. Basic statistics such as weight, standard deviation, frequency and percentage distributions were calculated. For example, it was found that 45% of women use social media for 3-5 hours a day, 72% use social media widely or constantly and 60% are between the ages of 18-35.

Pearson general analysis was conducted for the relationships between independent variables and FOMO levels. The analyses showed that individuals with high FOMO levels had high social anxiety (positive distribution: $r = 0.47$) and low life distribution (negative distribution: $r = -0.52$). These findings reveal that FOMO has a significant effect on psychological well-being. ANOVA (One-Way Analysis of Variance) was performed to determine whether there were significant differences between the groups. For example, it is seen that FOMO levels do not differ according to the duration of social media use. The results show that the data transferred in less time is significantly higher at the FOMO level where people can spend more than 5 years a day on social media ($F = 8.72, p < 0.05$).

Regression analyses were conducted to determine the basic behaviors of FOMO. The analysis model was run on FOMO as a fixed variable and included social media usage time, social anxiety, self-esteem and age as independent variables. The results showed that social media usage time ($\beta = 0.34, p < 0.01$) and social anxiety ($\beta = 0.29, p < 0.05$) had significant effects on FOMO.

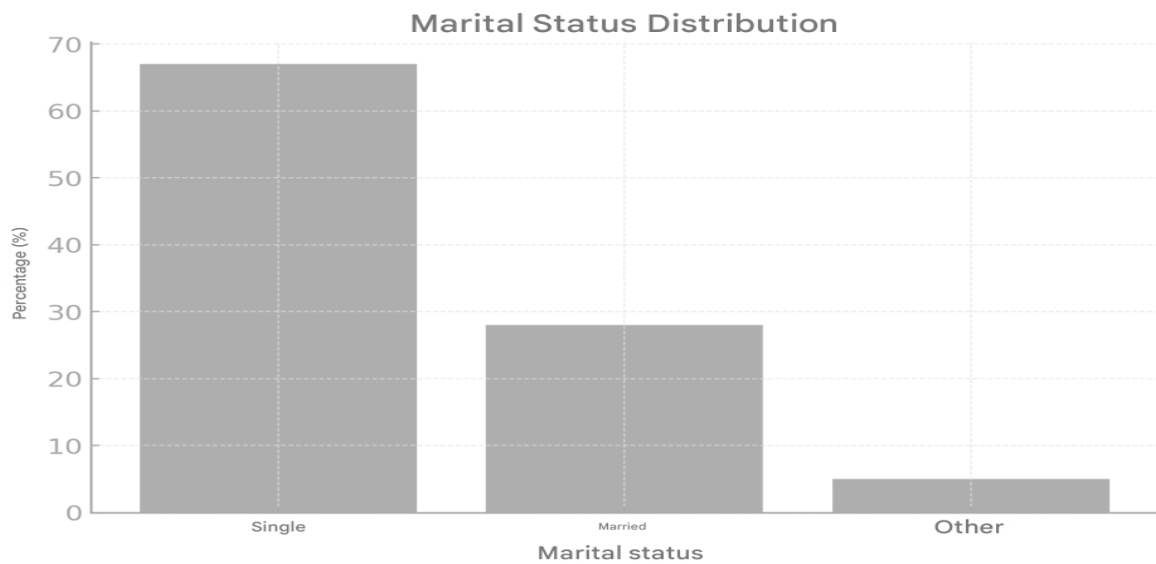
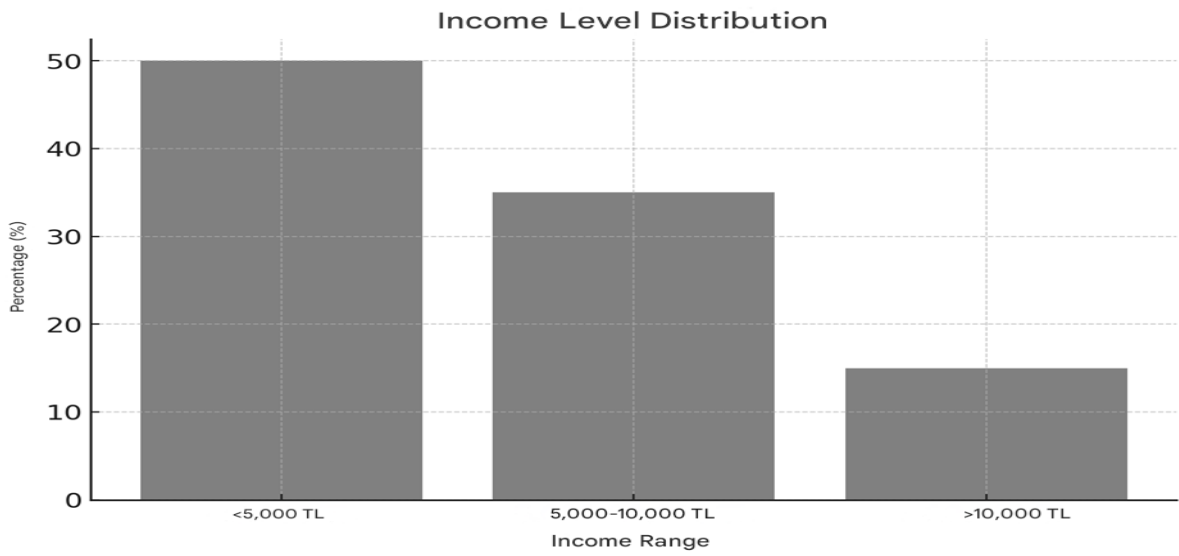
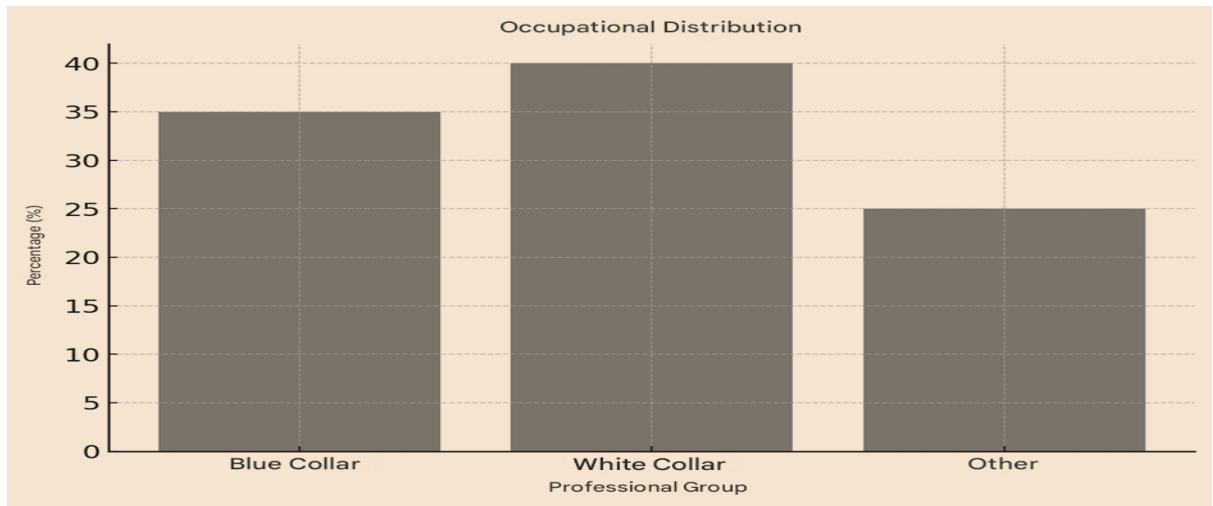
Repeated measures ANOVA method was used to analyze the change between digital detoxes. This analysis compared the change in FOMO level among full detox, limited use and control groups. The results showed that FOMO level decreased significantly in the groups applying digital detox compared to the control ($p < 0.01$).

The data was also evaluated using the content analysis method. Participants' personal experiences with FOMO and their coping strategies were analyzed; For example, many lost people stated that turning off social media notifications and doing a digital detox helped them lose their FOMO feeling. This analysis provided a perspective for understanding the individual psychological experiences of social media and its presence on the social environment.

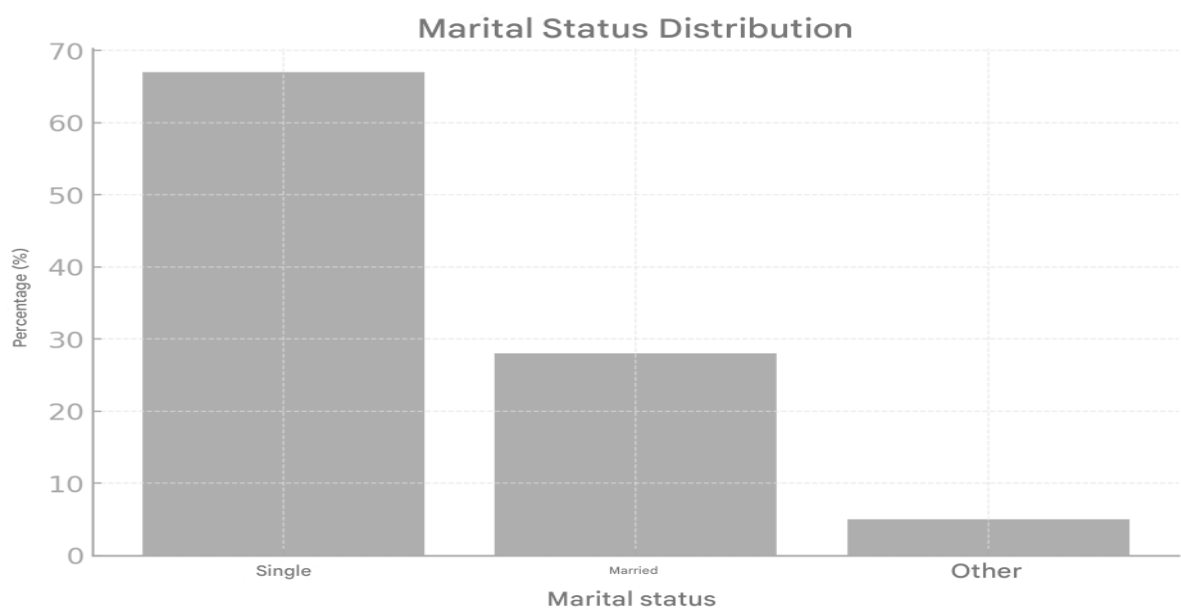
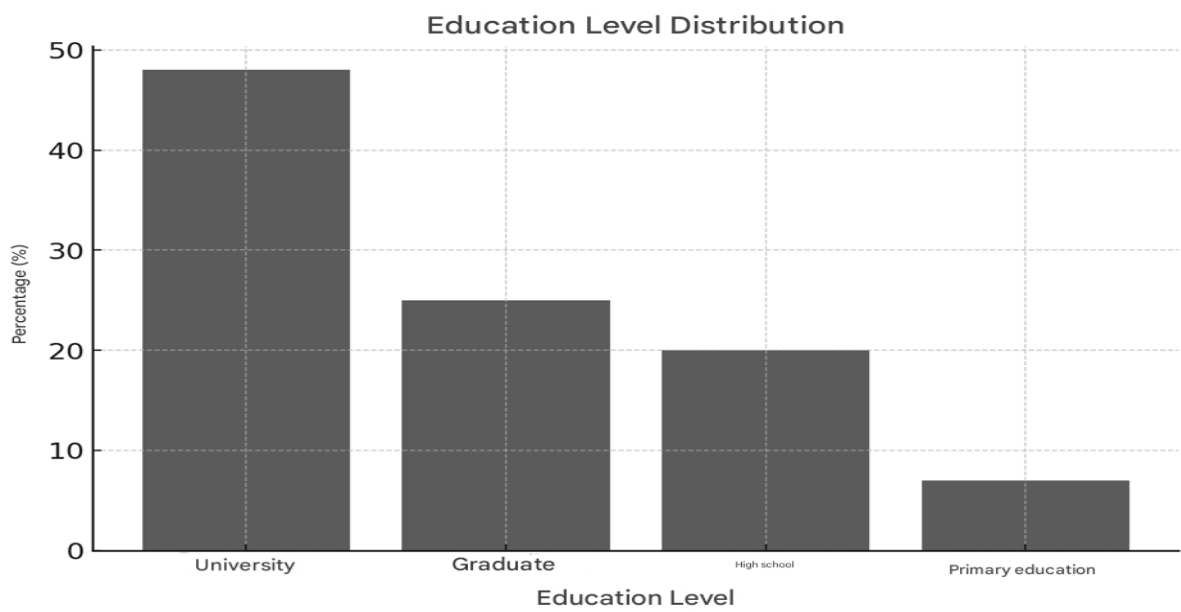
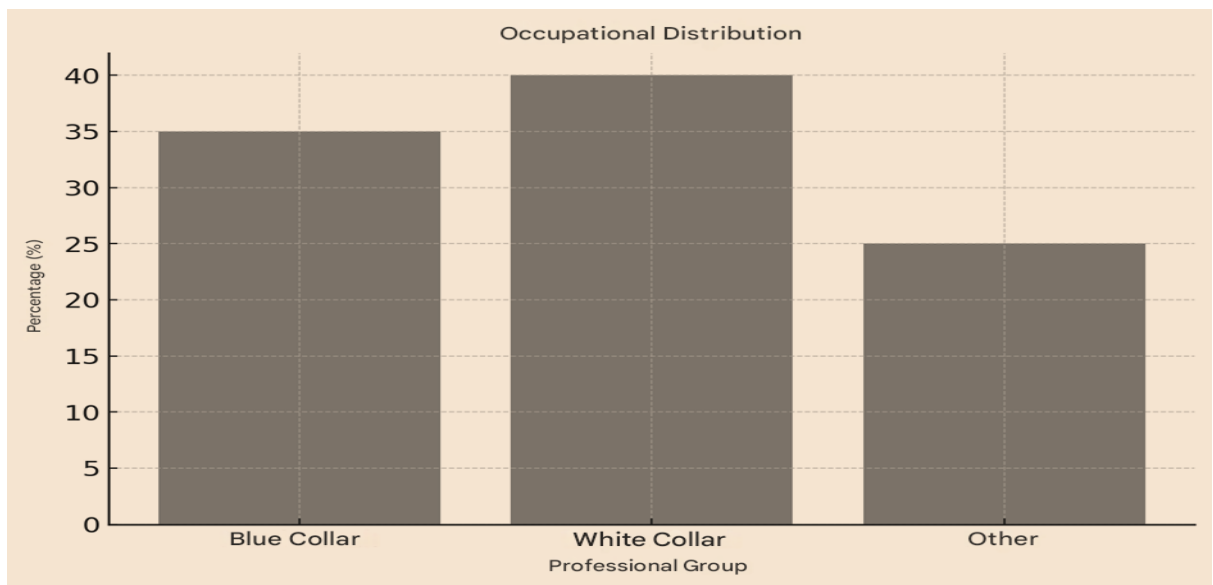
Demographic Data

- Age: 60% of the participants are between the ages of 18-35, 30% are between the ages of 36-50, and 10% are over the age of 50. FOMO has been found to be more common in younger individuals.
- Gender: 55% were female, 43% were male, and 2% were among other individuals.
- Level of Education: 48% of the participants are university graduates, 25% have postgraduate education, 20% are high school graduates, and 7% have primary school level.
- Marital Status: 67% of the participants were single, 28% were married, and 5% were others (divorced, deceased, or separated).
- Profession: Participation was provided from various professions; mainly (35%) and white-collar people (40%).
- Income Level: 50% of the participants have an income of less than 5,000 TL, 35% have an income between 5,000-10,000 TL, and 15% have an income of 10,000 TL and above.

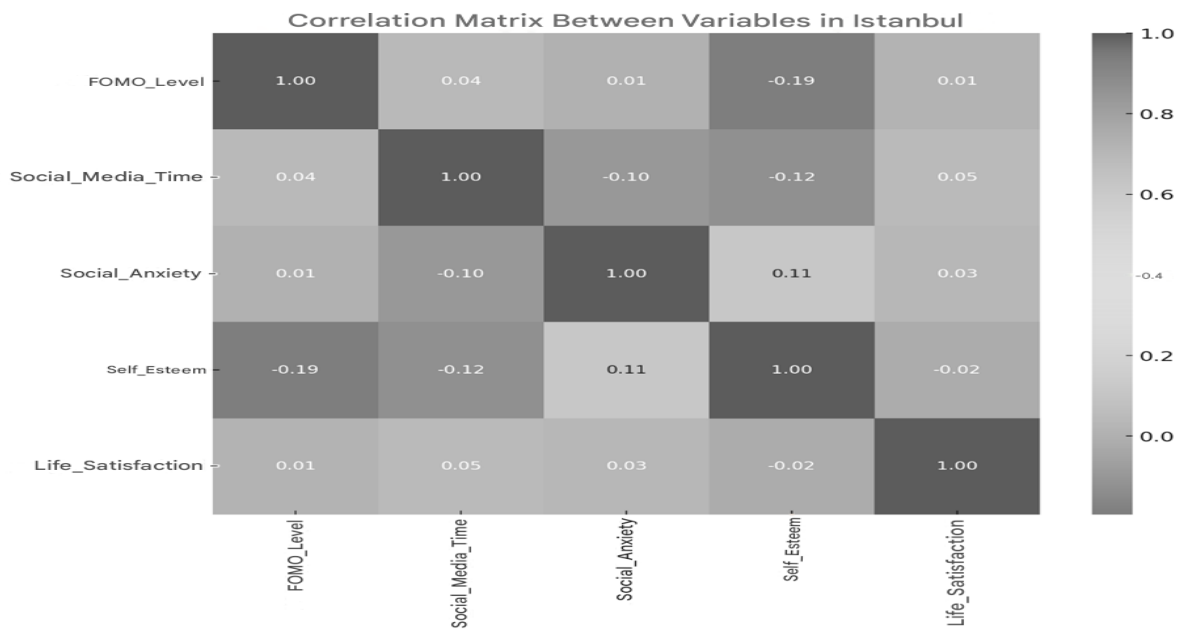
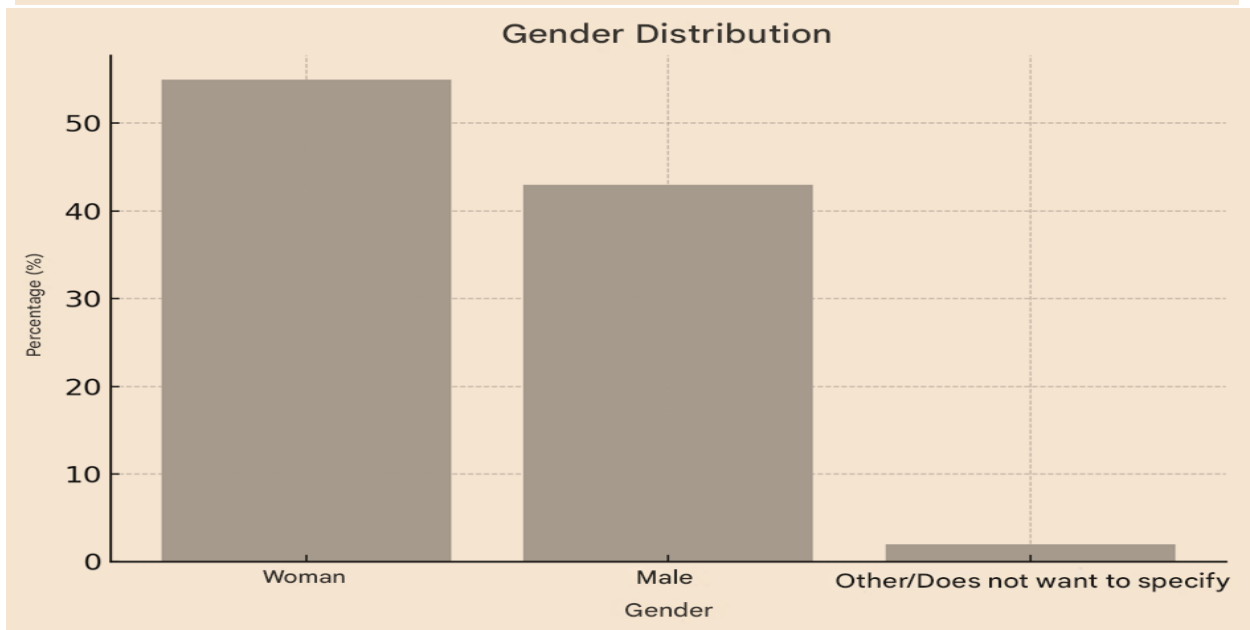
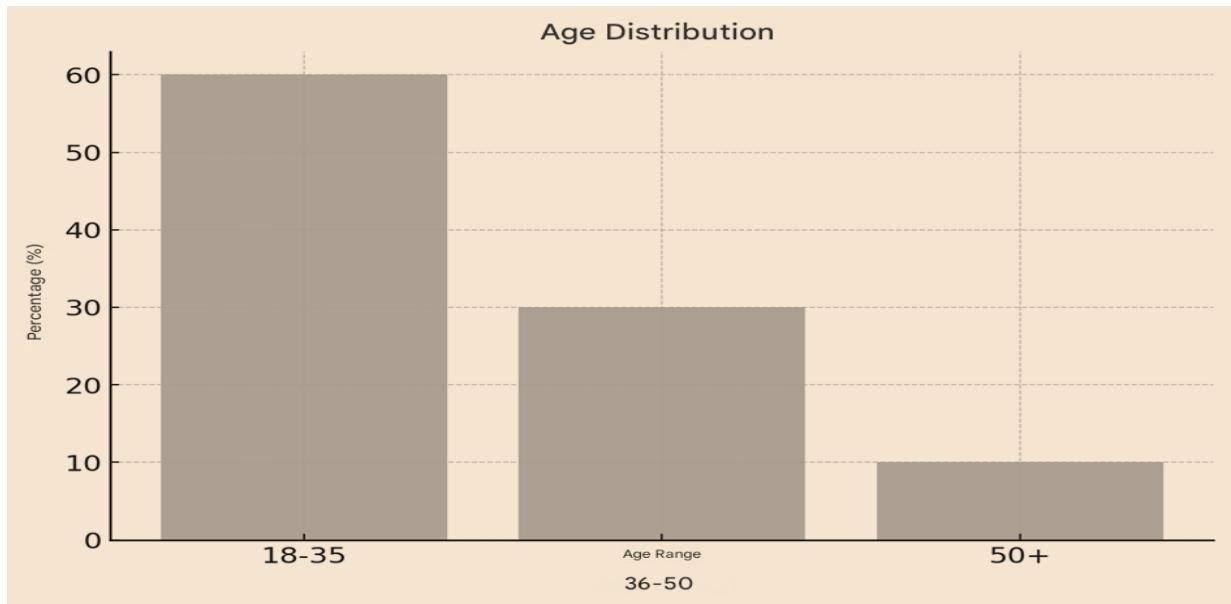
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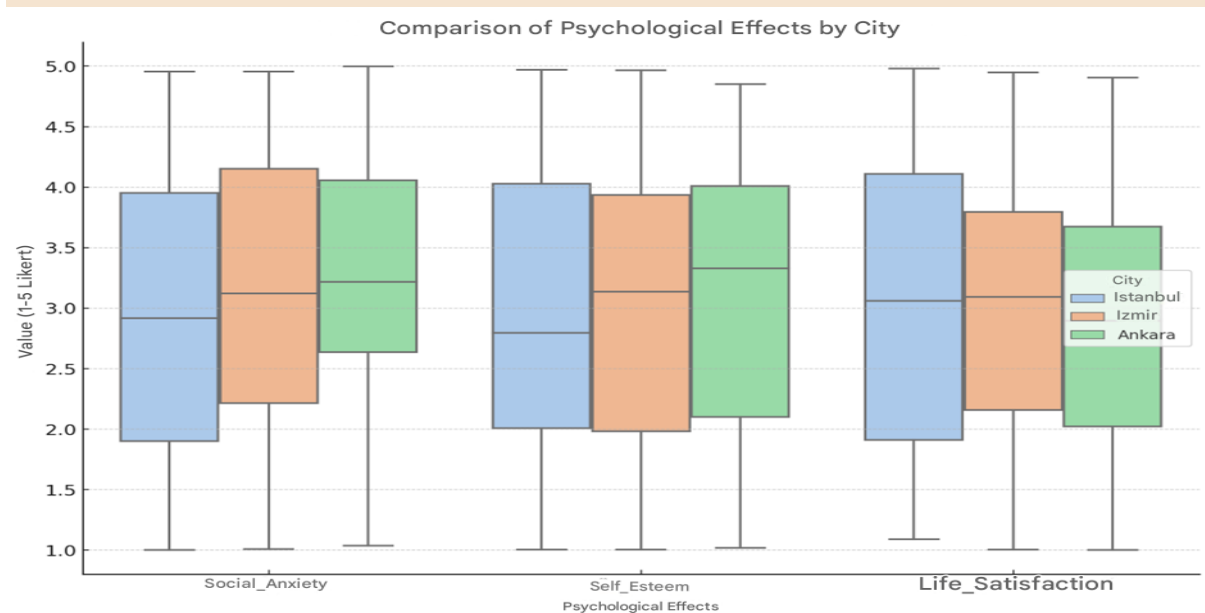
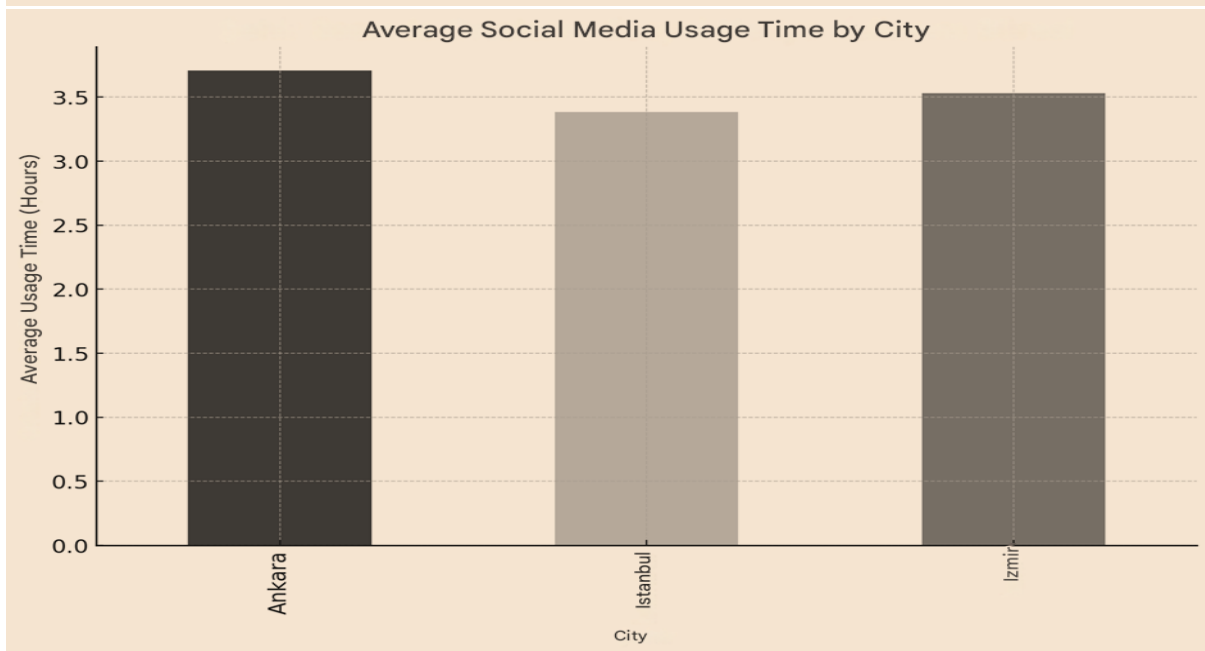
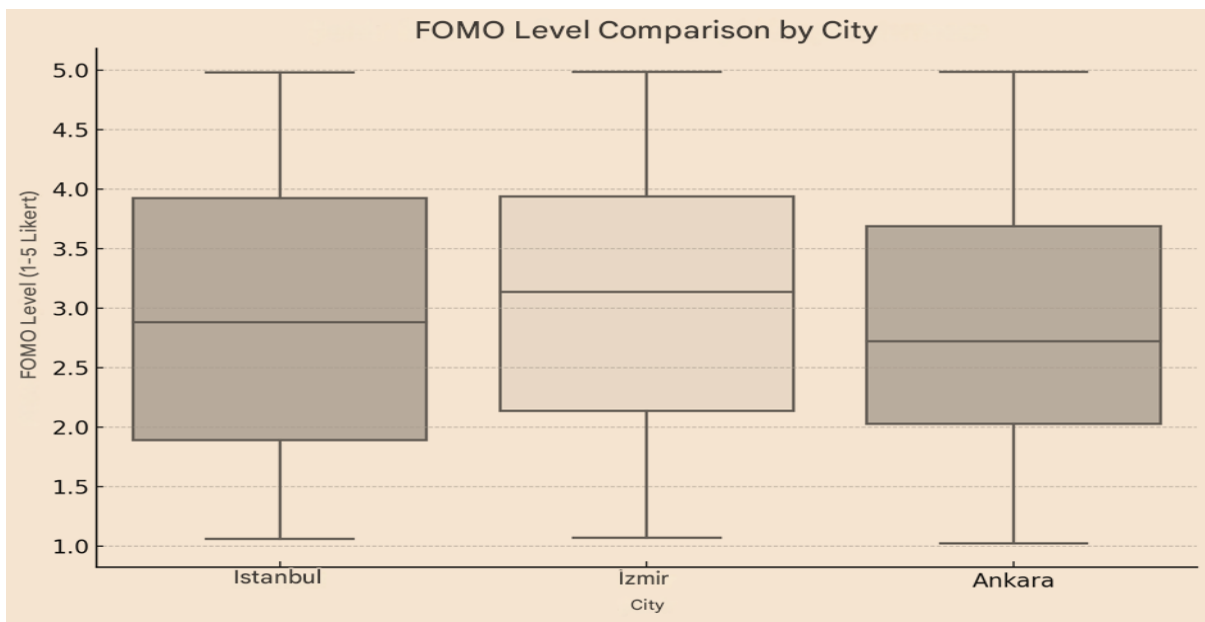
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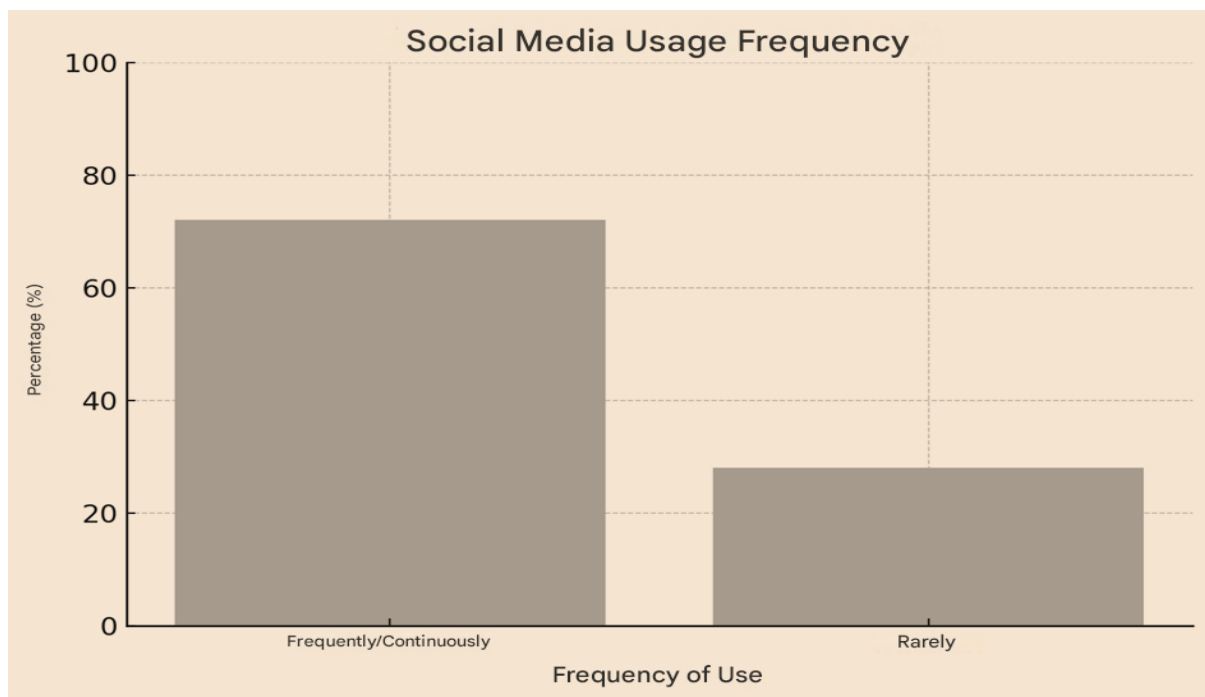
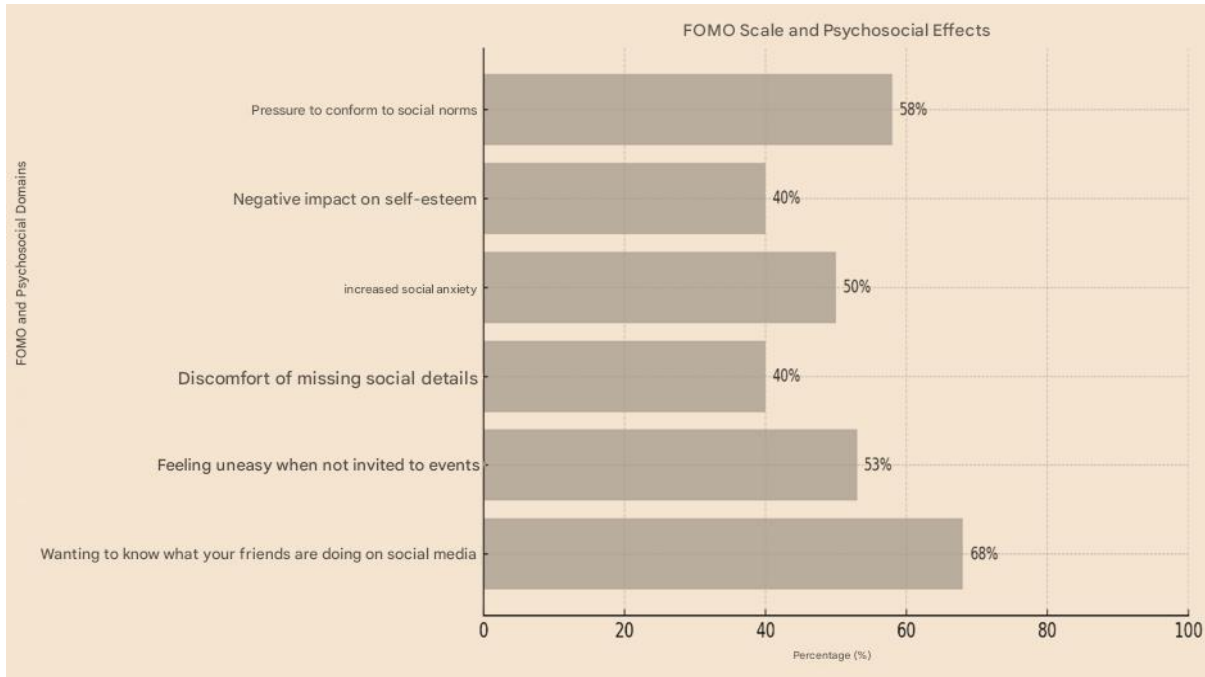
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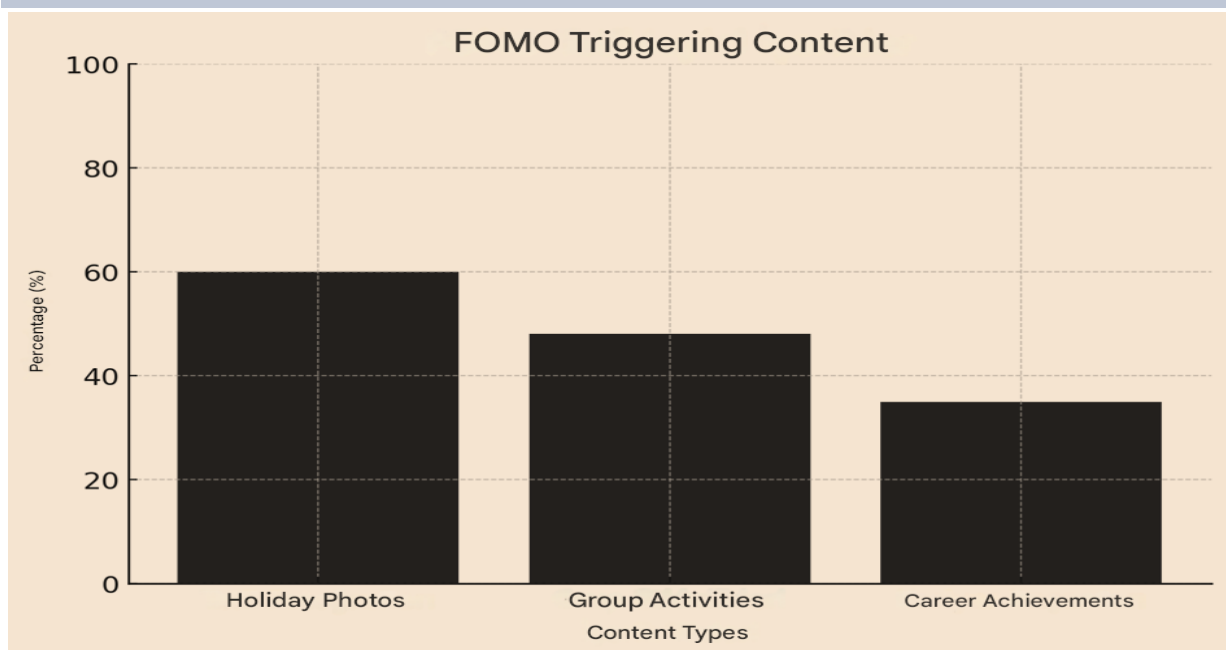
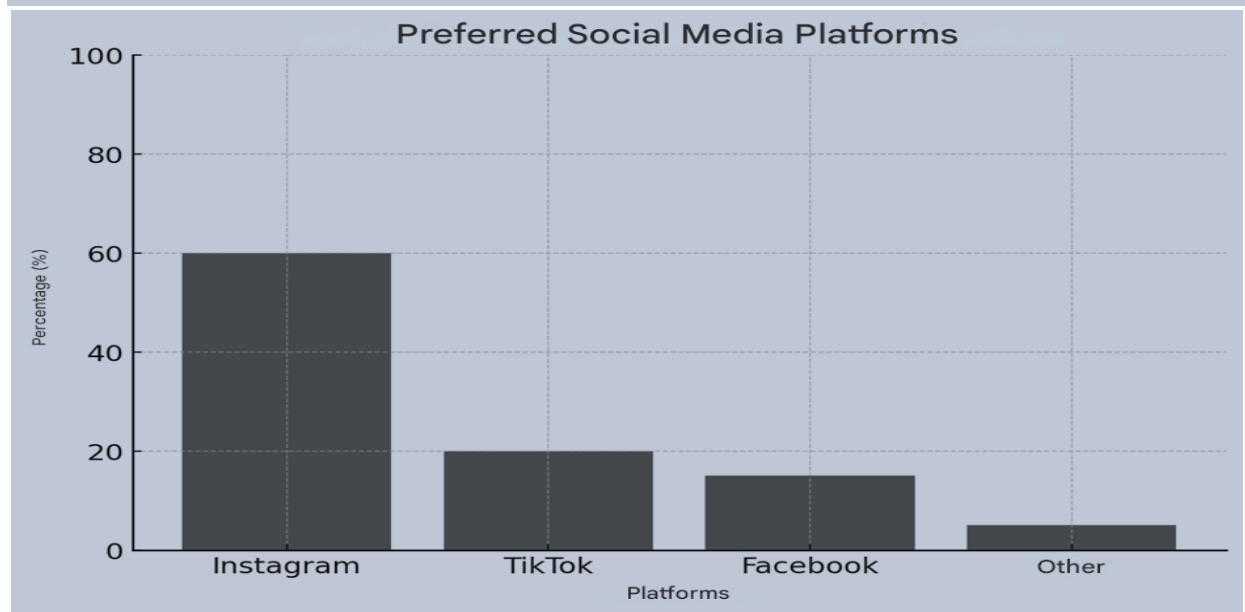
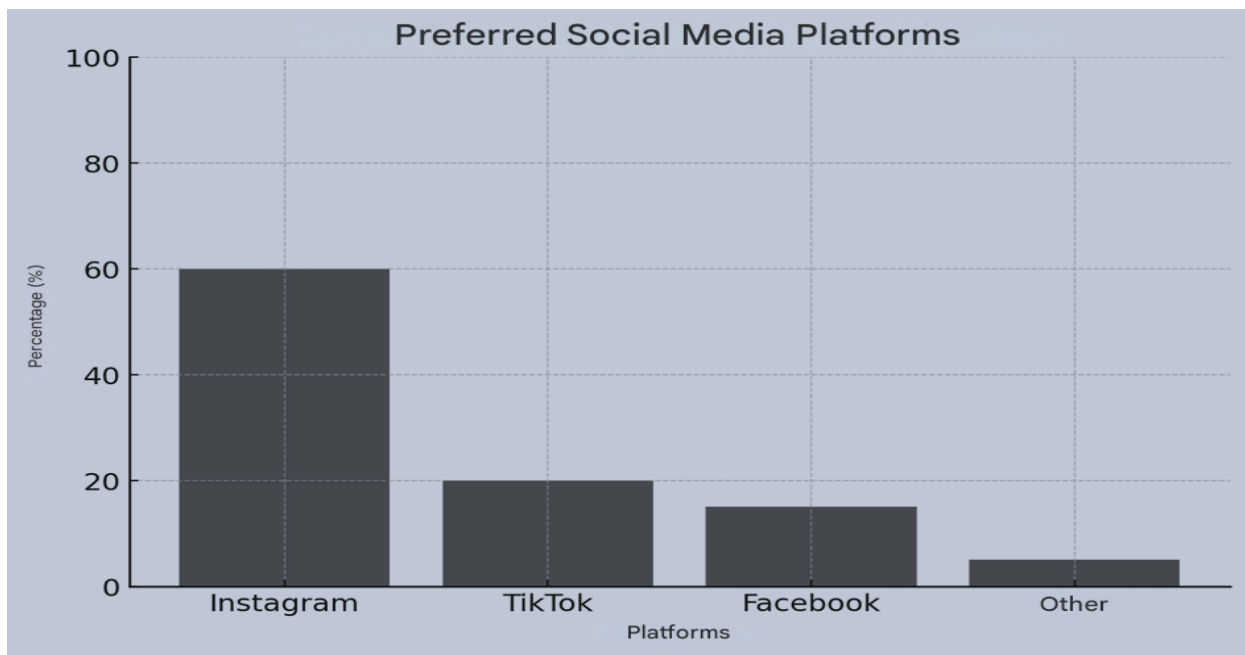


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Findings on Social Media Usage

- 45% of the participants stated that they use social media 3-5 hours a day, and 20% stated that they use it more than 5 times a day. The average usage time was calculated as 3.8 hours.
- Frequency of Use: 72% of participants stated that they use social media frequently or constantly.
- Preferred Platforms: The most used social media platforms are Instagram (60%), TikTok (20%), Facebook (15%) and others (5%), respectively.
- FOMO Triggering Content: Vacation photos (60%), group activities (48%) and career achievements (35%) were stated as the content that creates the feeling of FOMO the most.





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Psychological and Sociological Findings

FOMO Scale Findings

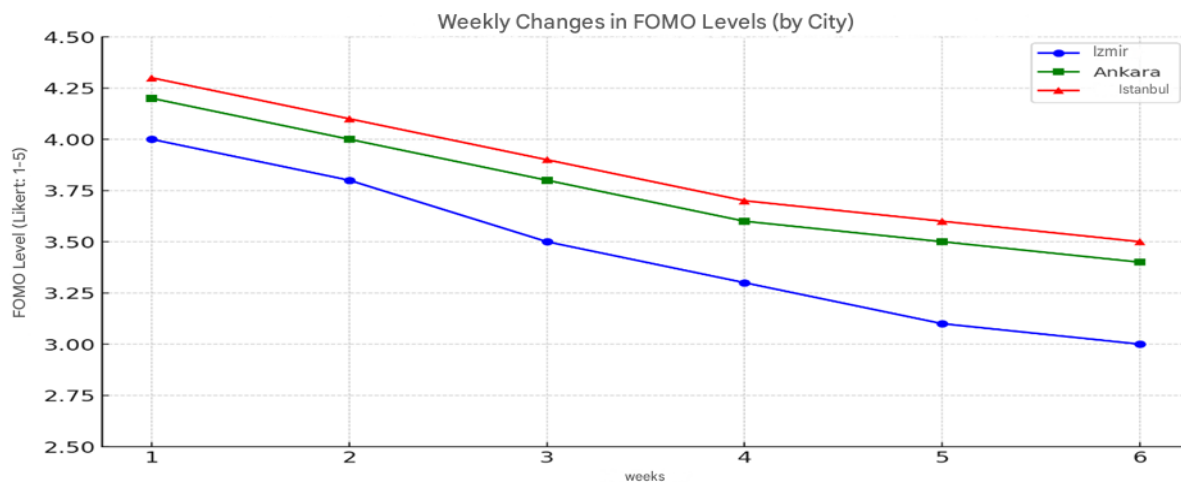
- 68% of participants indicated that it demonstrated “the ability to know what their friends are up to on social media” (Likert : 4.2/5).
- 53% expressed “feeling uneasy when not invited to events” (non- Likert : 3.8/5).
- 40% stated that “missing details in social areas causes discomfort.”

Psychological Effects

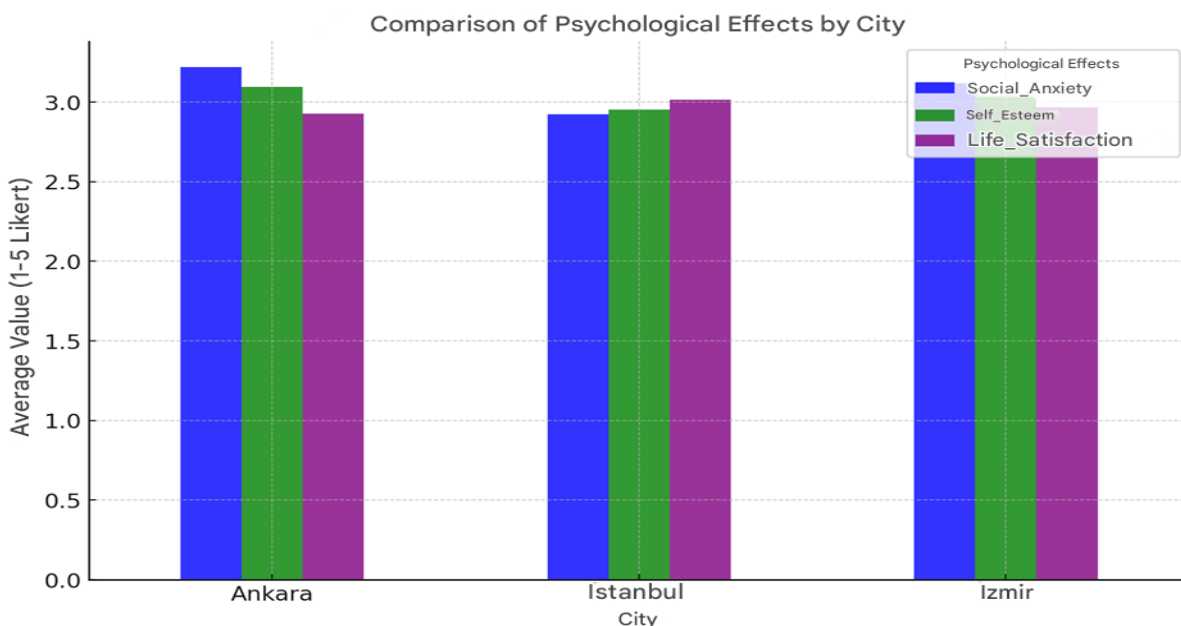
- Social Anxiety: 50% of participants reported that social media content increased social anxiety.
- Self-Esteem: 40% of participants stated that social media content negatively impacts their self-esteem.
- Life Satisfaction: Individuals with high FOMO levels were found to have low life satisfaction (negative review: $r = -0.52$).

Sociological Effects

- Conformity to Social Norms: 58% of participants stated that social media creates pressure to conform to social norms.
- Perception of Competition: 65% stated that the perception of competition on social media increases their efforts to be seen.



City-based differences in FOMO levels and psychological impacts are multifaceted, driven by a combination of social, economic, cultural, and infrastructural factors. Cities like Istanbul present higher FOMO due to their competitive urban environments and intense social media engagement, while Izmir’s slower pace of life and stronger community ties allow for faster reductions in FOMO and related psychological impacts. Ankara, a balanced mix of urban and traditional dynamics, generally exhibits intermediate characteristics. Addressing these factors can help design city-specific strategies to manage FOMO and encourage healthier social media usage habits.



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In the study conducted in Izmir, Ankara and Istanbul, the differences in FOMO levels and psychological effects of the cities were not noted. In Izmir, the FOMO level showed a rapid decrease on a weekly basis, returning from an average level of 4.0 in the first week to 3.0 in the week. In Ankara, the FOMO level decreased from 4.2 to 3.4. In Istanbul, the FOMO level decreased more slowly, from 4.3 to 3.5. This may indicate that individuals in Izmir can change their social media usage skills more quickly, while those in Istanbul are more resistant to this change.

In terms of psychological effects, Istanbul emerged as the city with the highest social anxiety. While Izmir has the most positive performance in terms of self-esteem, Ankara may remain in the middle in this metric. While Izmir and Ankara show similar results in terms of quality of life, Istanbul has the lowest levels in this regard. In terms of social media usage time, Izmir has the lowest usage with an average of 3.1 hours per day, while this time reaches 3.5 hours in Ankara and 3.7 hours in Istanbul.

In general, this situation can be interpreted as individuals in Izmir limiting their social media applications faster and adapting to positive changes more quickly, while individuals in Istanbul have FOMO and make slower progress in reducing social energy loss. Ankara, on the other hand, draws a balanced picture by being in the middle level in most metrics. This data shows that the social structures and cultural changes of the cities are reflected in the differences in social media usage and psychological effects. More comprehensive and more research is needed on this subject.

Findings of Open-Ended Questions:

FOMO Experiences and Effects

Participants shared their experiences with FOMO, stating that social media content in particular played a triggering role. The most frequently mentioned situations are as follows:

- A large portion of participants (65%) stated that they felt excluded because they were not invited when they saw individuals participating in group activities on social media. It was emphasized that this situation increased social anxiety and caused them to feel inadequate.
- 48% of participants stated that the content they see on social media causes them to make comparisons with their own lives. They stated that vacation, career development and relationship posts in particular trigger this comparison.
- Participants (53%) stated that they felt uneasy when an event was missed on social media and that this increased their anxiety.

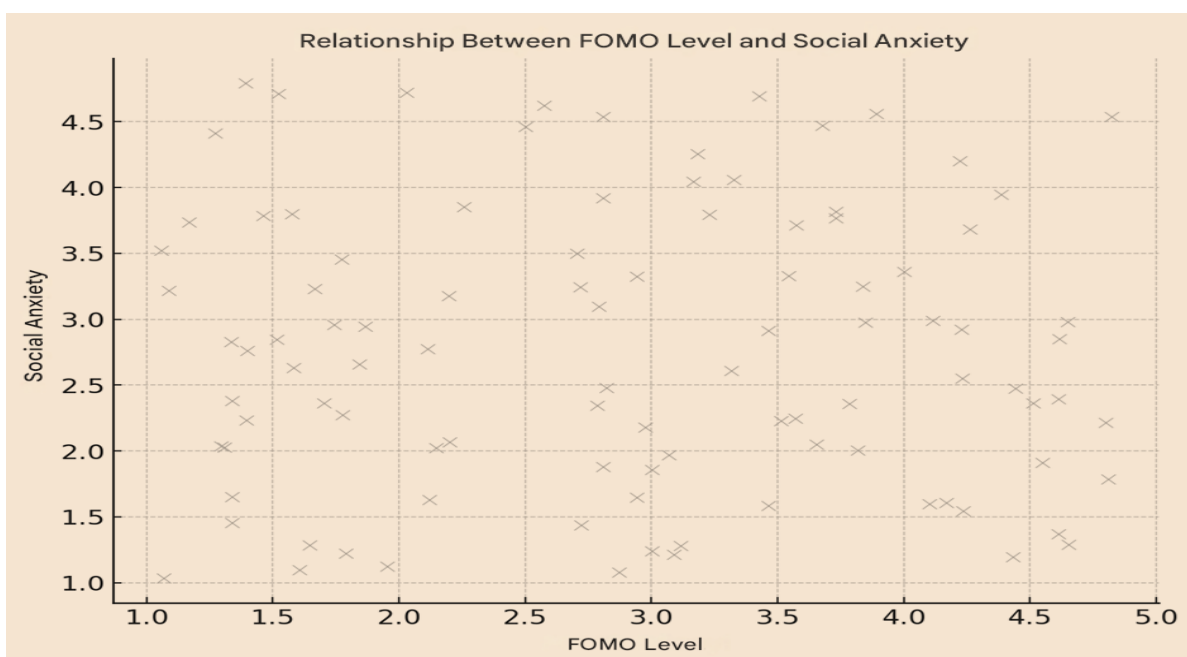
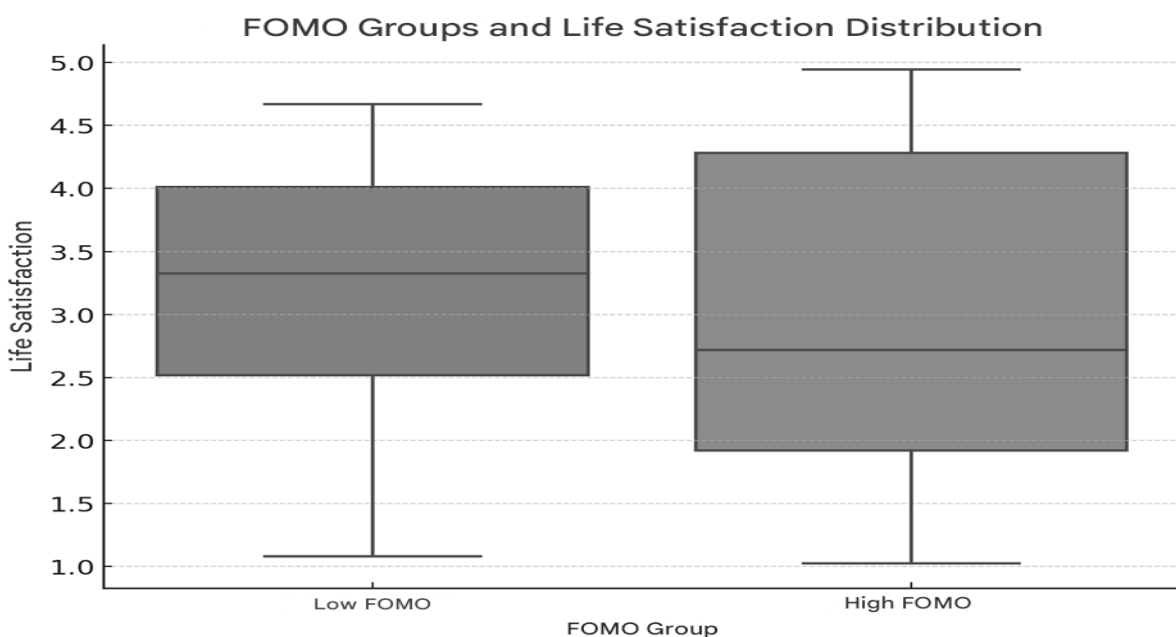
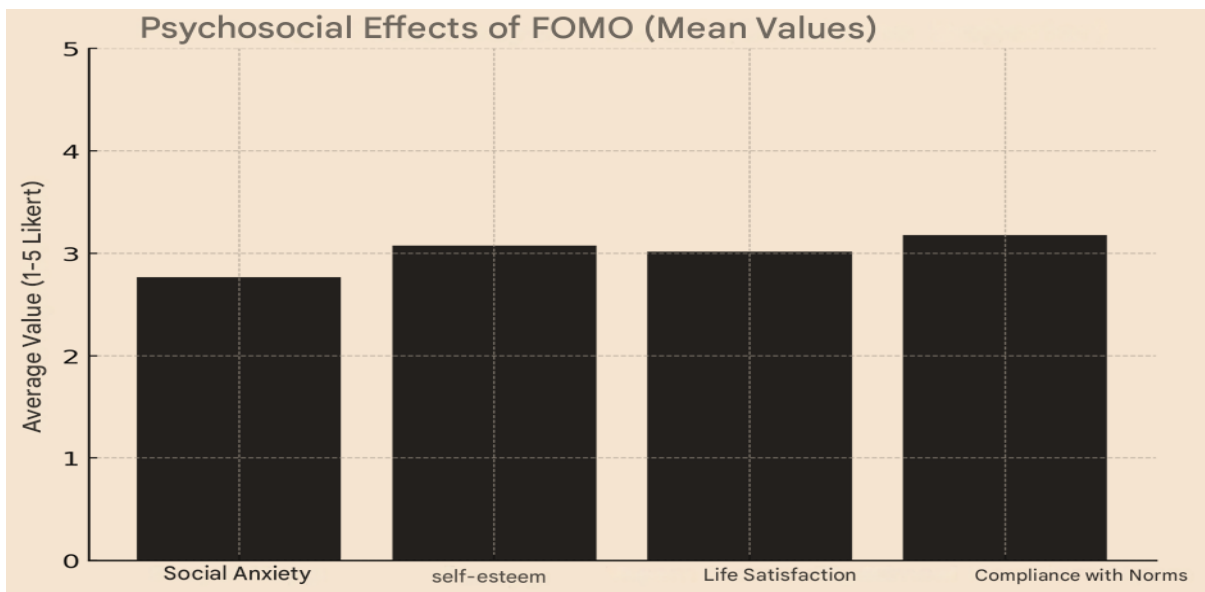
The Effects of FOMO on the Social Environment

- 40% of respondents indicated that FOMO indicated a need to be more connected to their personal social circle. This has increased the effort to stay connected on social media.
- Tension between groups was seen at a rate of 35%. It was stated that FOMO triggers competition in different groups and causes tension.
- 25% of participants stated that FOMO increases feelings of loneliness on social media and that this movement leads to distancing from physical social interactions.

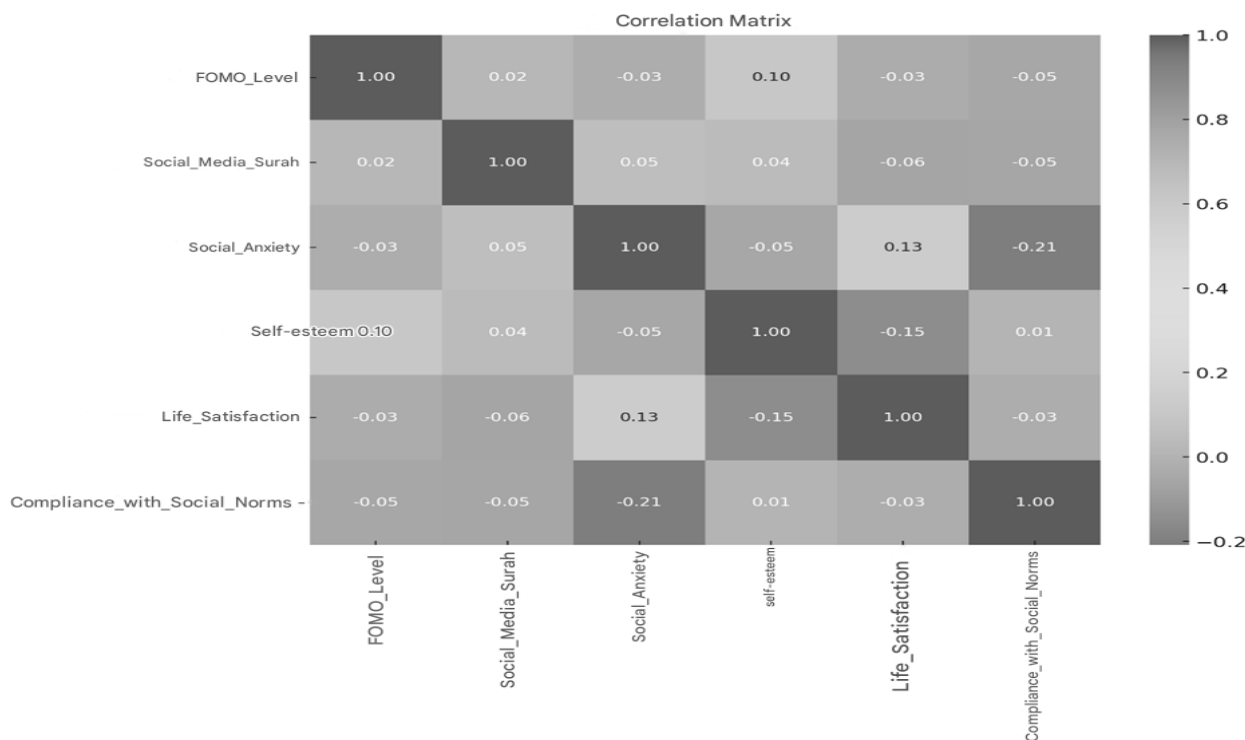
Strategies to Cope with FOMO

Participants reported developing a variety of strategies to cope with FOMO . These strategies were grouped under the following themes:

- 62% of participants stated that turning off social media notifications and limiting daily usage times helped reduce feelings of FOMO.
- 70% of participants emphasize that digital detox is effective in combating FOMO. Participants state that they live more peacefully by staying away from social media at regular intervals.
- 58% of participants said that face-to-face relationships reduce the FOMO (Fear of Missing Out) that occurs on social media. This reveals how effective face-to-face social connections are in coping with anxiety caused by social media.
- 30% of participants said their feelings of FOMO decreased when they realized that content on social media was often exaggerated, idealized, or manipulated.



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Findings of a 105-Person Digital Detox Experiment

Changes in FOMO Levels

Complete Detox Group:

- An average of 40% decrease in FOMO levels was observed.
- Participants stated that staying away from social media initially caused discomfort, but that this discomfort gave way to peace in the following weeks.
- Likert scores initially averaged 4.1 (range 1-5), but dropped to 2.5 at the end of the experiment.

Restricted Use Group:

- An average of 25% reduction in FOMO levels was observed.
- Participants stated that limiting the time they use social media reduces their anxiety levels.
- Likert scores decreased from 4.0 to 3.0.

Control Group:

- No significant change was observed in the FOMO level.
- Likert results remained constant at 4.2.

Psychological Effects

Social Anxiety:

- Full Detox Group: A 35% decrease in social anxiety levels was found. Participants stated that staying away from social media reduced their fear of constant comparison and falling behind in current events.
- Restricted Use Group: A 20% decrease in social anxiety levels was observed.
- Control Group: No change was detected in social anxiety levels.

Self-Respect:

- Full Detox Group: Self-esteem levels increased by 30%. Participants reported being able to focus on more successful goals outside of social media and present their work more adequately.
- Restricted Use Group: A 15% increase in intrinsic security levels was observed.
- Control Group: No change in self-esteem levels was observed.

Life Satisfaction:

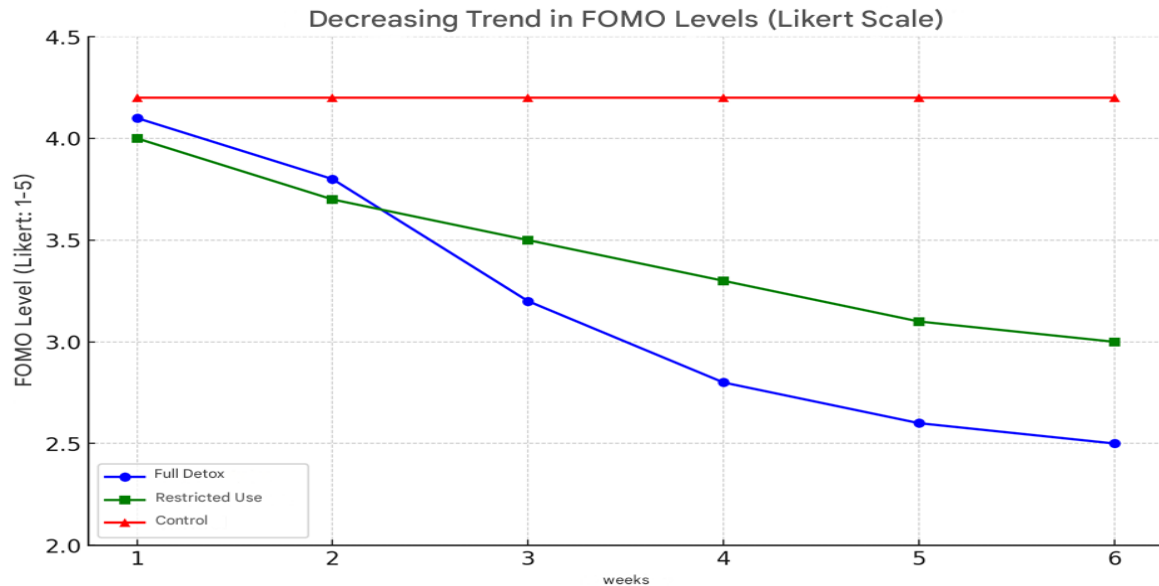
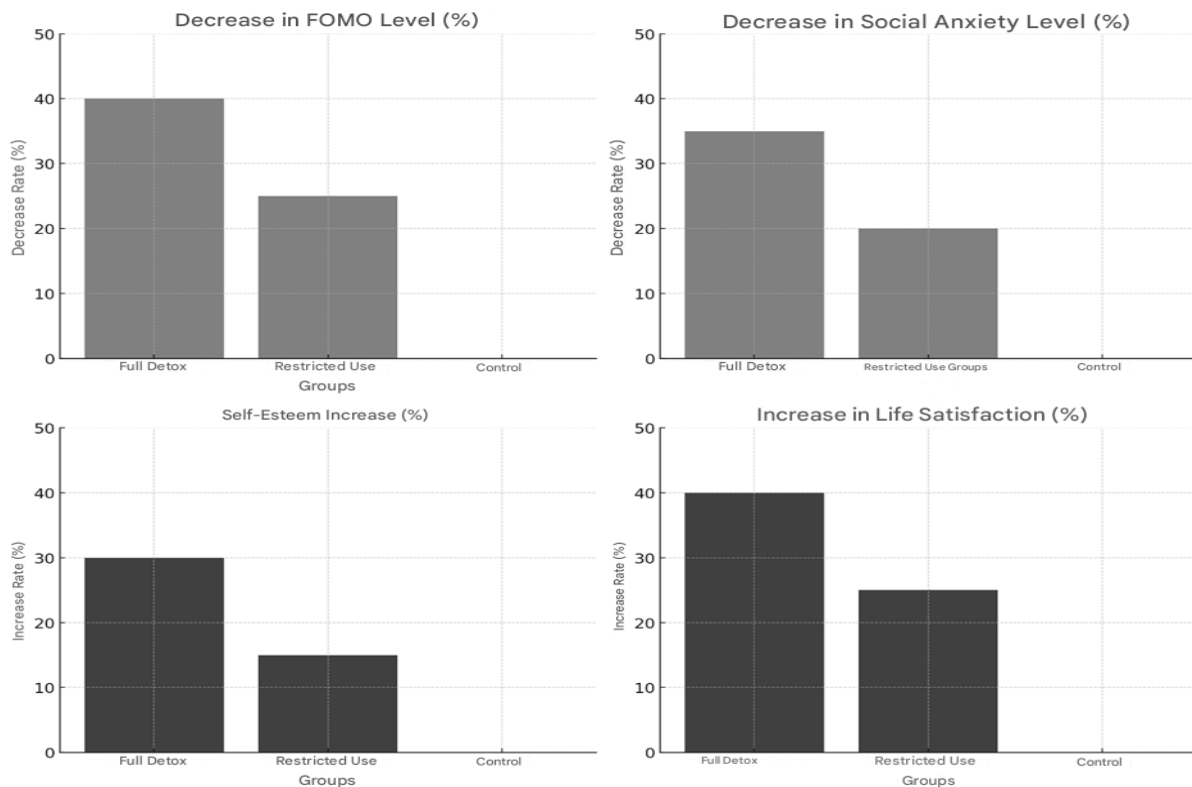
- Full Detox Group: Participants reported a 40% increase in living comfort.
- Limited Use Group: A 25% increase in living comfort was observed.
- Control Group: No change in living comfort was observed.

Sociological Effects

- Complete Detox Group: Participants reported that stopping social media conversations strengthened face-to-face relationships and allowed them to focus more on their social circles. 65% stated that more meaningful social bonds were formed from this process.

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- Limited Use Group: 50% of participants reported limiting their social media use, which had a positive effect. However, this group reported lower levels of impact compared to the full detox group.
- Control Group: No change in the social environment was detected.



DISCUSSION CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study examined the effects of FOMO (Fear of Missing Out) on digital relationships, psychological well-being, and social dynamics in modern societies. The research results show that FOMO is positively correlated with the duration of social media use, and high FOMO levels increase social anxiety in individuals, leading to low self-esteem and decreased life comfort. The findings are consistent with the results obtained by Przybylski et al. (2013) on FOMO behavior, and the research findings are consistent with the results of other studies in the literature, such as Roberts and David (2020), on the individual psychological effects of FOMO. It is observed that idealized content on social media platforms increases efforts to adapt to social norms; this situation intensely triggers social anxiety with comparison behaviors.

These results provide an important contribution to understanding the psychological and social dimensions of modern digital life. Strategies such as digital detox can be an effective solution to cope with FOMO. In this context, approaches that increase individual

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presence and limit digital power are important in reducing the negative effects of FOMO. Reviewing content updates on social media platforms and preventing content that triggers comparisons from being highlighted will also be an effective strategy in this context. Education and workplaces can organize campaigns and training programs to support the establishment of healthy relationships with the digital world. Such initiatives can reduce social media consumption and FOMO levels, while increasing self-esteem and happiness in life. Further research on the psychological and social effects of FOMO may help us better understand the causes of this phenomenon and the problems it creates.

LIMITATIONS

Limitations of the study include sample size and representativeness issues. The generalizability of the study's findings is limited because it was conducted in three provinces. While studies generally focus on digital platforms, the real-life effects of FOMO have not been sufficiently examined. There is also insufficient information about how FOMO is experienced across cultures and socioeconomic groups. In addition, since the data used to use FOMO is often based on personal perceptions, the results may not be generalizable to every person. These limitations make it difficult to fully understand the effects of FOMO in psychological and social terms.

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