



Study of the Impact of Stoicism and Mindfulness Practices on Fear of Missing Out in the Digital Age

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ABSTRACT

Stoicism is a Greek philosophy that teaches self-control and peace inside by concentrating on our own power to handle things while accepting what we cannot. These can be achieved through meditation and deep breathing, which are commonly used for mindfulness practice of getting rid of judgment and staying in the present moment. The study sought to evaluate the relationship of stoic ideals and mindfulness practices on fear of missing out. Fear of Missing out refers to when one feels others are having rewarding experiences without them, often intensified by social media and digital connectivity. The study adopted a quantitative approach. The total sample size was 118 young adults aged between 18 to 25 years. Standardized scale was used to measure FOMO, Stoicism and Mindfulness. The result found out that Mindfulness techniques showed promise in reducing FOMO but is not significant enough, whereas Stoic Principles may show increasing in FOMO.

Keyword: *Stoicism, Mindfulness, Fear of missing out, Digital age*

INTRODUCTION

“Fear of missing out is the anxiety or fear that others are having valuable experiences without you, emerging as a widespread psychological phenomenon in digital age” (Przybylski et al., 2013). The increasing use of social media, constant notifications and the pressure to stay connected heighten the feelings of inferiority and fear of being left out. This has sparked interest in exploring ancient philosophies and modern mindfulness practices as interventions to mitigate the negatives effects of Fear of missing out (FOMO). Fear of missing out arises from the basic human need for social connection, autonomy, and competence” (Deci & Ryan, 2000). People engage in extreme social comparison and tend to seek constant affirmations via online interactions. The dread of falling behind and losing out on pleasurable acts fosters anxiety as well as stress that adversely affect mental health.

Stoicism a philosophical approach of resilience, founded in ancient Greece by philosophers like Epictetus and Seneca, offers a framework for facing life’s challenges with equanimity and strength. “Key stoic principles include distinguishing between what is within our control (internal states) and what is not (external circumstances), accepting impermanence and adversity, and cultivating virtue and wisdom as the highest goods” (Irvine,2008). Adopting a stoic mindset can build resilience against uncertainty and adversity, reducing vulnerability to FOMO-induced stress. Research links stoicism to increased psychological well-being, reduced anxiety and improved coping strategies (Robertson, 2019).

Mindfulness is rooted in Buddhist philosophy, “mindfulness involves cultivating present moment awareness and non-judgmental observation of thoughts, emotions and sensations” (Kabat-Zinn,1994), practices like meditation, mindful breathing and body scans help individuals observe their inner experiences without attachment or aversion, promoting acceptance. Mindfulness enhances emotional regulation; resilience and reduces anxiety linked

to FOMO. Research suggests that mindfulness-based interventions effectively reduce symptoms of anxiety, depression and stress (Hofmann et al., 2010). Mindfulness modulated neural activity in brain regions related to emotion regulation and self-reference, increasing well-being and reducing reactivity to stressors (Tang et al., 2025). Additionally, mindfulness interventions decrease FOMO-related symptoms by fostering present-moment awareness and reducing rumination about past or future experiences (Dvořáková et al., 2018).

In today's world everyone is busy and attached to their devices, for work, social media, shopping, ordering food and basically from basic to difficult tasks of life. This is called as a "Digital Age". Achieving a happier existence necessitates acknowledging and accepting our emotions, cultivating mindfulness of external factors within our control, and maintaining awareness of our immediate surroundings. Incorporating mindfulness and stoic practices can foster personal growth by mitigating the effects of FOMO, comparison, and neglect of physical and mental well-being. By concentrating on our efforts, emotions, and maintaining clarity of thought, individuals can aspire to greater heights in life.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Stoicism and Fear of Missing Out

The relationship between stoicism and FOMO has been the subject of recent empirical research and studies, highlighting how stoic principles and practices can alleviate the negative psychological impacts of FOMO. Studies have shown that stoic attitudes and exercises significantly contribute to increased psychological resilience and reduced anxiety, both of which are closely associated with lower levels of FOMO. Stoicism emphasizes focusing on what is within one's control and accepting what is not, thereby promoting emotional resilience (Pigliucci, 2017).

Laithwaite and Straughan (2019) conducted a comprehensive study to investigate the impact of stoic practices on university students experiencing fear of missing out. The study aimed to determine whether engaging in stoic exercises could help students manage the anxiety and stress associated with FOMO, particularly in a university setting where social comparison and peer pressure are prevalent. The study involved 150 university students who reported high levels of FOMO. Standardized scales to measure levels of FOMO, emotional resilience, and social comparison before and after the interventions were used. FOMO scale assessed the participants feelings of missing out on rewarding experiences that others might be having. The emotional resilience scale comparison scale measured their ability to cope with stress and recover from setbacks, while the social comparison scale evaluated the extent to which participants compared themselves to others. The results of the study indicated that students in the intervention group who engaged in Stoic exercises reported significantly lower levels of FOMO compared to the control group. Specifically, the intervention group showed a marked reduction in compulsive social media checking, fear-based decision-making, and feelings of inadequacy related to social comparison. The researchers concluded that Stoic practices helped students develop greater emotional resilience and a more balanced perspective on social comparison, which are critical factors in mitigating FOMO.

Waller and Watts (2018) examined the effectiveness of stoic cognitive techniques in reducing FOMO among adults. The study involved participants practicing techniques such as cognitive distancing, where they consciously observed their thoughts and emotions without immediate reaction. The study recruited a diverse group of adult participants who reported high levels of FOMO. These individuals were introduced to various stoic cognitive techniques, with a particular focus on cognitive distancing. Cognitive distancing involved deliberately observing one's thoughts and emotions before responding to them. This practice encourages individuals to create a mental space between themselves and their automatic thoughts which

lead to a more objective evaluation of emotional responses by an individual. Participants underwent training sessions in cognitive distancing for eight weeks comprising workshops lasting several days or even a whole week together with practical sessions held every day throughout this period. The results of the study were significant. Participants who regularly practiced cognitive distancing reported a marked reduction in FOMO-related behaviours.

A longitudinal study was conducted by Gill (2020) to explore the long-term effects of stoic practices on FOMO and overall life satisfaction. This study sought to evaluate whether frequent participation in stoic exercises could create long-term psychological benefits and relieve the chronic anxiety associated with FOMO. Participants were invited to implement stoic practices into their regular routines for a six-month period. They attended frequent workshops and received continuing coaching to ensure that they followed the regimen and addressed any issues that arose during the practice. Over six-month period, participants reported significant reductions in FOMO and increases in overall life satisfaction.

Mindfulness and Fear of missing out

Theoretical Framework of Mindfulness provides a potential antidote to the distress caused by FOMO because it focuses on present moment awareness and acceptance. By cultivating mindfulness, individuals can increase their ability to recognize from automatic reactivity and rumination patterns associated with FOMO. Mindfulness practice encourages a nonjudgmental approach toward one experience, allowing people to notice their thoughts and feelings with inquiry and compassion rather of becoming consumed by them, Mindfulness allows an individual to create a more balanced and informed perspective, minimizing their vulnerability to stress caused by FOMO. Practices like meditation and mindful breathing enhance emotional regulation and reduce anxiety (Hölzel et al., 2011).

Elhai et al. (2018) conducted a thorough investigation into the relationship between mindfulness and FOMO among university students. The study sought to investigate how mindfulness techniques could alleviate the harmful impacts of FOMO, particularly considering widespread social media use. The study participants were placed into two groups; one group received mindfulness training in techniques such as mindful breathing, body scan meditation, and present moment awareness, while the control group received no intervention. The results showed that the mindfulness group reported considerably lower levels of FOMO than the control group. Participants who exercised mindfulness demonstrated improved emotional regulation and reduced anxiety during social media interactions. The findings suggest that mindfulness helps guard against FOMO by encouraging a nonjudgmental awareness of one's thoughts and emotions.

Baker, Krieger, and LeRoy (2016) investigated the impact of mindfulness on FOMO among working people. The study comprised a six-week mindfulness program in which participants practised mindful eating, listening, and meditation. The study discovered that participants who practiced mindfulness reported less FOMO-related behaviours, such as the temptation to check work emails and social media during their free time.

Furthermore, these participants reported increased life satisfaction and a better feeling of balance in their work and personal lives. The study indicated that mindfulness activities could help reduce FOMO and increase overall life happiness.

METHODOLOGY

PURPOSE

The purpose is to study the relationship of Stoicism and mindfulness practices on Fear of missing out among young adults.

HYPOTHESIS

- There will be significant negative relationship between stoicism and FOMO.
- There will be significant negative relationship between mindfulness and FOMO.
- There will be no significant relationship between stoicism, mindfulness.

METHODS

SAMPLE

A total sample of 153 young adults in the age range of 18-25 years. From which 2 respondent were removed due to exclusion criteria. 33 respondents were removed who scored negative in stoic ideology scale. Sample was from Delhi NCR region. Convenience sampling technique was used for collecting the data.

MEASURES

- ***The Pathak-Wieten Stoicism Ideology Scale***

The Pathak-Wieten Stoicism Ideology Scale (PW-SIS) is a 12-item questionnaire. All items are assessed on a five- point Likert scale (0 “disagree” to 4 “agree”). Pathak et al. (2017) advocated recording scores (-2 = “disagree” to +2 = “agree”) before analysing mean values. Since its beginning in 2017, it has been used in a variety of studies and has previously been proven to have strong content validity and reliability; Cronbach’s alpha was 0.78.

- ***The Applied Mindfulness Process Scale***

The original Applied Mindfulness Process Scale (AMPS) was created in 2016 and consisted of three subscales: positive emotion regulation (5 items), negative emotion regulation

(5 items), negative emotion regulation (5 items), and decentring. The total AMPS was determined by a psychometric features examination. The entire AMPS has Cronbach's alpha coefficient value of 0.91 showing its high internal consistency (Marek & Bowers, 2016). Valid psychometric parameters were indicated by the three-factor model with CFI 0.97, TLI 0.94, RMSEA 0.06.

- ***Fear of Missing Out Scale***

FoMO scale is a 10-item questionnaire all items are measured using a 5-point Likert scale. 1: Not at all true of me. 2= Slightly true for me, 3 = Moderately true of me; 4 = Very true of me; and 5 = Extremely true of me. The scale consists of ten unidimensional items. The scale's concept validity (loadings > 0.40), internal homogeneity reliability (Cronbach's alpha = 0.91), and composite reliability (0.84) were all acceptable.

PROCEDURE

The participants were educated about the goal of the study, and the questionnaires were completed using a google form; all questions in the google form were from standardized tests that were delivered to the participants. The participants were thanked for completing the form.

ANALYSIS OF DATA

The findings of this research of data analysis were analysed through Jamovi. Pearson correlation analysis was utilized to study the relationship between the variables.

RESULTS**Table 1***N, Mean and Standard Deviation*

	N	Mean	Median	SD
Stoicism	118	7.24	6.00	5.59
Mindfulness	118	37.4	37.5	9.43
FoM0	118	24.7	24.0	7.84

The data sample constitute of 118 individuals both female and male. Overall participants reported moderated levels of stoicism (M=7.24, SD=5.59), indicating a moderate inclination towards following stoic ideology. Mindfulness scores were relatively high (M=37.4, SD=9.43), indicating a notable agree of mindfulness practice among participants. Additionally, participants reported moderate levels of FOMO (M =24.7, SD=7.84)

Table 2*Correlation between Stoicism, Mindfulness and FOMO*

Variables	Stoicism	Mindfulness	FOMO
Stoicism	—		
Mindfulness	0.101	—	

FOMO	0.193*	-0.024	—
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Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

DISCUSSION

Stoicism and Fear of missing out: A Pearson correlation analysis found a statistically significant positive relationship between Stoicism and Fear of Missing out ($r=0.193$, $p=0.036$). This indicates that higher levels of Stoicism were associated with higher levels of FOMO, with the correlation coefficient reaching significance at the $p < .05$ level. Therefore, individuals reporting greater adherence to Stoic philosophy also tended to experience higher levels of fear of missing out in the digital age. This unexpected discovery prompts a deeper exploration into the underlying psychological mechanisms at work, shedding light on the nuanced interplay between philosophical beliefs and contemporary socio-cultural phenomena. This contradicts the research (Satriawan et al., 2023) which has found that stoicism helps in decreasing FOMO. The result is inconsistent with a positive relationship between social loneliness and FOMO.

Mindfulness and Fear of missing out: The correlation coefficient between mindfulness and FOMO was ($r= -0.024$), showing a very mild negative association. However, this connection was not statistically significant ($p = 0.793$), indicating that there is no substantial link between mindfulness and FOMO. The analysis used a sample size of 118 people. The lack of a substantial link between mindfulness and FOMO calls into question the premise that mindfulness practices naturally reduce levels of FOMO. While mindfulness has been linked to a variety of mental health benefits, its effect on FOMO may be more subtle and context

dependant. Future research could dive more into the processes by which mindfulness techniques may influence FOMO, considering individual differences as well as situational circumstances. Contrary to the results from previous research that mention there is a significant correlation between one's using mindfulness with The Fear of missing out (Baker et al., 2016), which mean, that findings are not consistent.

Stoicism and Mindfulness: Correlation matrix between Stoicism and Mindfulness with Fear of Missing Out (FoMO): Pearson Correlations A Pearson correlation coefficient = r was calculated between Stoicism and Mindfulness ($r = 0.101$, i.e., the weakest positive connection).

CONCLUSION

The purpose of the current research was to investigate the impact of Stoics principles and mindfulness practices on FOMO. FOMO was described as the feeling that others are having rewarding experiences without you, a sensation exacerbated by social media, digital connections, and their implied constant peer engagement updates. All 118 individuals included in the sample were young adults aged between 18 and 25 years old. The results found that mindfulness techniques showed promise in reducing FOMO but were not significant enough, whereas Stoic principles may have shown an increase in FOMO. Pearson correlation was done to fine the correlation between Stoicism, FOMO, and Mindfulness.

The research compares the impact of both on FOMO. The research can also look for different factors of stoicism effecting FOMO. Further research could investigate the long-term effects of sustained engagement with Stoic and mindfulness practices on reducing FOMO and enhancing overall well-being. Additionally, a large sample of participants or different statistical analyses may be needed in the future studies.

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