

Research Paper

## Development and Psychometric Validation of the Joy of Missing Out (JOMO) Scale Among Emerging Adults

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### ABSTRACT

The Joy of Missing Out (JOMO) is a positive psychological state characterized by deliberate disengagement from online activity in favor of autonomy, mindfulness, and self-reflection in an era of perpetual connectivity and digital overload. The purpose of this study was to create and verify a JOMO scale for Indian emerging adults that is both culturally relevant and psychometrically sound. A preliminary pool of items was refined through expert review and pilot testing after being generated using theoretical frameworks and qualitative input. An 11-item unidimensional scale was finalized by psychometric analyses, such as item-total correlations, discriminating power, and Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA). The scale demonstrated excellent internal consistency (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .863$ ) and strong model fit ( $\chi^2 = 37.1$ ,  $df = 35$ ,  $p = .372$ ; RMSEA = .024; CFI = .994; TLI = .991). Criterion validity was supported by a significant negative correlation with Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) ( $r = -.563$ ), and face validity was established through expert judgment. The JOMO scale, scored on a five-point Likert scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree, offers a reliable tool for assessing digital well-being and fostering mindful technology use among Emerging adults in India.

**Keywords:** JOMO, Emerging Adults, Kerala, Psychometric Validation

**E**merging adulthood, which occurs in late teens to mid-twenties, includes identity exploration, greater levels of independence, and changes in social relationships (Arnett, 2000). As a consequence of increased digital technology and social media penetration in the day-to-day lives of individuals, this phase has been typified by the increased online connectivity, continuous information exchange, as well as the overall feeling of comparison on a digital platform. Such connectivity also provides the means of learning and socialization; however, it is becoming accompanied by emotional stress, distraction, and fear of being left out. Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) is a widespread fear that other people are having enjoyable experiences with which one is not associated (Przybylski et al., 2013), which has become a serious psychological issue for this age group. FOMO has been identified to be associated with low sleep quality, dissatisfaction with life, stress, and

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Received: September 12, 2025; Revision Received: December 26, 2025; Accepted: December 31, 2025

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addictive behaviors related to social media consumption (Elhai et al., 2018; Milyavskaya et al., 2018).

As the antithesis to FOMO, there is Joy of Missing Out (JOMO), where people purposefully choose to be alone, introspective, and unplugged from the digital world. JOMO refers to the satisfaction of taking care of oneself instead of obsessively engaging in social actions, which states autonomy, mindfulness, and intentionality (Hayes et al., 2020). The construct of JOMO is underdeveloped, even though conceptually it can be grounded in digital wellness and positive psychology, especially when considering adolescents going through the stages of self, relationship development, and independent living in an interconnected society. A psychometrically sound scale being standardized would not only be supportive of empirical orientation but also would allow for the creation of the instruments of intervention that could help individuals build healthier digital habits and psychological resilience.

### THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Joy of Missing Out construct shares the most important credos of Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000) that addresses the concepts of human needs in terms of autonomy, competence, and relatedness. JOMO is the fulfillment of autonomy, which is a desire to stop being pressured by the outside world but to engage in actions that one has selected and that have meaning to them. Mindfulness Theory (Kabat-Zinn, 2003) also relates to it, which points at present-awareness and non-judgmental acceptance equating to the state of emotional well-being. People with high JOMO have a higher propensity toward being purposeful than time seekers, are more prone to digital boundaries, and lifelong satisfaction that happens inwardly and not by the externality of the approval.

In addition, the concept of Digital Well-being (Vanden Abeele, 2021) also assumes that problematic usage of technology can occur when it interferes with a person's psychological purpose or ideals. The protective element of JOMO is that it encourages the execution of reflection and value-compatible actions. Through the Positive Psychology lens (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000), JOMO perfectly fits the pattern of thinking towards the knowledge of a positive approach to digital behavior, as well as the use of psychological flourishing in the fast-paced digital world.

#### *Need and Significance of the Study*

In the modern world, where every person is connected, young adults constantly face social comparisons, curated images on the internet, and the flood of online data. These difficulties are further enhanced by culturally derived collectivism, pressure on academic performance, and growing online presence matters in the Indian setting (Kuss et al., 2021). This has exposed adolescents to the risks of technology-related stress, low self-esteem, and poor well-being. The negative side of FOMO has been extensively investigated; however, the positive and self-affirmative experience of JOMO has received little consideration.

A shortage of a validated standardized tool that is able to measure JOMO poses a major gap in the research. The western-centric scales that exist might not reflect the subtle experience of the emerging adults in India, whose digital attitudes as well as cultural norms could be very different. Therefore, this is an attempt to generate and confirm a culturally sound measure for Joy of Missing out among the youth in India.

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The study is both theoretical, methodological, and practical. Theoretically, it extends on the positive psychology framework, creating JOMO as a positive strength-based concept of digital behaviour. In methodology, it offers a psychometrically sound instrument to be used in future studies and interventions. In practice, it provides mental health specialists, teachers, and digital wellness activists with an evidence-based tool to evaluate and support mindfulness technology use and well-being. As interest in digital burnout and youth mental health is increasingly on the rise, the creation of the Joy of Missing Out Scale is both up-to-date and sorely needed.

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The psychological impacts of digital hyperconnectivity have recently garnered more attention, especially in view of the developing adult population. The concept of Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) was introduced by Przybylski et al. (2013) and is correlated to behaviors like spending more time on social media, anxiety, and low satisfaction with life. Alternatively, Joy of Missing Out (JOMO) has potential positive notions related to individualism, disengagement from technology, and being ok with being alone. Relating to this, Hayes et al. (2020) described JOMO as being self-regulated and mindful disengagement from digital interactions, is also thought to promote emotional balance and psychological well-being. In providing additional support for JOMO, Vaterlaus et al. (2021) found that emerging adults who had more JOMO experienced less social anxiety and more emotional regulation. Likewise, Elhai et al. (2018) demonstrated that FOMO is significantly associated with smartphone addiction and psychological distress, indicating that constructs such as JOMO need to be explored to address FOMO's potential negative impacts.

#### *Scale Development and Planning*

After investigating some psychological dimensions of digital wellbeing and intentional disengagement, as well as creating relevant interventions, the researcher was alarmed to find a lack of culturally relevant, psychometrically assessed forms of Joy of Missing Out (JOMO) within the Indian sample. Other measures were relying upon Western definitions of behaviors and values, which did not adequately assess the engagement practices (and attitudes) of this sample of Indian emerging adults, which are generally more collectivistic and based on a different sequence of social interactions. In addition to this, using long scales or scales with a lot of repeated questions does not engage respondents well and increases some areas of response bias (such as central tendency bias, acquiescence or social desirability bias) that is related to self-image, autonomy and social computing and while this applies to all people, it frequently is more apparent in higher risk categories. Therefore, the researcher has developed a culturally relevant JOMO scale, which will be short to make it culturally relevant and reliable in measuring the phenomenon for Indian college students.

#### *Item Preparation*

The researcher proposed the formulation of a uni-dimensional scale with at least 10 items on a 5-point Likert scale with Strongly Disagree (1) and Strongly Agree (5). A pool of 30 items in English and Malayalam languages was prepared to be more approachable and linguistically literal. The panel of subject matter experts involved psychologists, counseling professionals, and researchers in positive psychology to diagnose the face and content validity of these items. According to their suggestions, redundancies and ambiguities were stripped off, and 6 items were removed. There were 24 items in the final draft scale after revisions, which were ready to be pilot-tested to determine their reliability and construct validity.

## **METHOD**

### ***Participants***

Participants of this study consist of 250 college-going students. All participants belong to Kerala and speak Malayalam.

### ***Instrument***

1. Joy Of Missing Out (Draft Scale) - The scale comprises 24 items presented in both Malayalam and English languages, utilizing a 5-point Likert-type response format to collect responses from participants. The scale was designed to be accessible to individuals proficient in reading and writing both Malayalam and English. Response options were aligned to the right of each statement, with clear instructions displayed at the top of the scale. Subjects usually required less than 15 minutes to complete the questionnaire.

### ***Try out***

Twenty-four PG Psychology students from the Psychology Department at the University of Kerala were administered the scale to determine how each individual would receive, perceive, interpret, and respond to each item. Almost all respondents said they had no difficulties understanding the statements' meanings or marking their responses, etc.

### ***Procedure***

The investigator met with the principal and class teachers in person and discussed the purpose, significance, and aims of the study with them. After obtaining consent, the instructor introduced the researcher to the participants, explained the purpose and significance of the study, and asked for their steadfast involvement. After gaining their signed agreement, each participant received the three Scales, which they were instructed to complete according to the guidelines on the actual instruments. Even yet, the researcher gave the individuals verbal guidance on how to make their responses better. After both instruments were finished, it was collected and checked for omission. Then, for additional statistical analysis, both instruments were scored/coded following the previously created scoring key and placed into a spreadsheet.

### **Procedure followed for the Administration of Draft Scales**

The draft scales were a self-administering one. The subjects were requested to follow the printed instructions given in the scale, which were as follows: "The statements given below are related to life experiences and your beliefs. Choose to what extent each statement is correct or incorrect according to you. For each statement there are five possible response categories were given, viz. Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree, and Strongly Agree. After carefully and completely reading each statement, place a mark against the response you have selected. Please do not omit any of the statements. Your answers will be kept confidential and will be used only for research purposes."

### **Item Analysis**

The responses of all individuals in each item were put into a spread sheet and loaded into statistical software. There are numerous strategies accessible for item selection. Here the investigator opted to compute the corrected item-total correlation (Point Biserial Correlation) and discriminating power of each item in the scale. The criterion for including an item in the scale was as follows. If an item attains corrected item-total correlation of .25

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or above (Seema, n.d), discriminating power more than 2.58 (t value) as indicated by Edwards (1957) above will be include in the final scale.

**Table 1: Item Analysis Showing t-values and Item-Rest Correlations**

Item No	t-value	Item-Rest Correlation
1	-1.70	0.14
2	-4.48	0.48
3	-6.76	0.55
4	-8.63	0.63
5	-2.09	0.50
6	-4.30	0.18
7	2.43	-0.01
8	-5.82	0.49
9	3.07	-0.06
10	-0.91	0.15
11	-8.49	0.23
12	-4.04	0.16
13	-1.60	0.48
14	-4.68	0.24
15	-5.06	0.45
16	-2.08	0.57
17	-9.68	0.69
18	-8.28	0.65
19	-6.03	0.54
20	-5.47	0.54
21	-6.81	0.62
22	-6.21	0.12
23	-1.98	0.47
24	-4.35	0.42

Following this two-stage analysis, twelve items (Items 1, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 16, 22, and 23) were also flagged for removal. A few of these items (e.g., Items 1, 7, 10) failed both criteria, which suggests bad consistency and statistical differentiation. Other items (such as Items 6, 9, and 12) had weak item-rest correlations but acceptable t-values, indicating that they merely did not contribute any meaningfulness to the scale's internal consistency. In final results, 11 items (Items 2, 3, 4, 8, 15, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, and 24) that met the suggested psychometric thresholds after eliminating items that performed poorly.

### Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA)

An Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was completed to investigate the factor structure of the refined 12-item scale. The EFA used minimum residual extraction method with oblimin rotation (allowing for correlation among factors), as is common when considering psychological constructs that are expected to be related. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) tests the sampling adequacy and the factorability of the correlation matrix.

The results suggest that the internal structure of the scale is sound, in that the final included items are measuring a single coherent construct. The unidimensionality of the 12-item factor

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model supports the interpretation and parsimony of the scale, and provides an excellent foundation for planned confirmatory analyses or further refinement of the scale.

**Table 2. Exploratory Factor Analysis: Factor Loadings, Uniqueness, and KMO (MSA) Values**

Item	Factor Loading	Uniqueness	KMO (MSA)
Item 2	0.483	0.767	0.859
Item 3	0.610	0.628	0.843
Item 4	0.666	0.557	0.814
Item 8	0.495	0.755	0.828
Item 15	0.482	0.768	0.815
Item 17	0.772	0.403	0.882
Item 18	0.733	0.463	0.885
Item 19	0.598	0.642	0.774
Item 20	0.555	0.692	0.832
Item 21	0.618	0.618	0.797
Item 24	0.405	0.681	0.823

### Confirmatory Factor Analysis

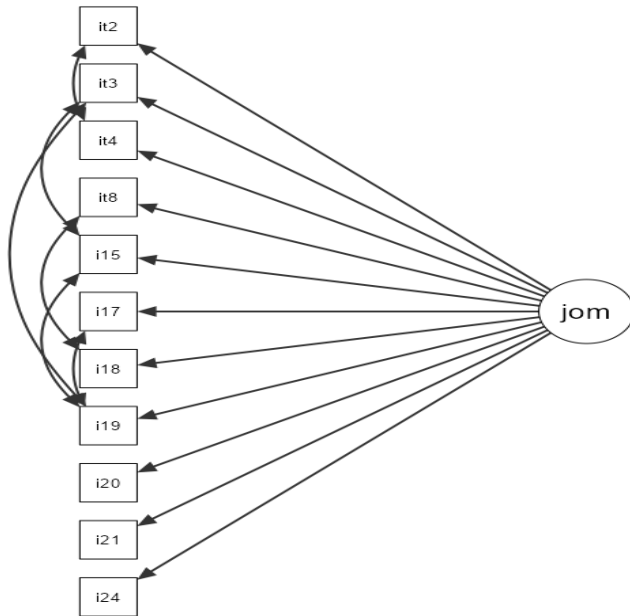
**Table 3. Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) Fit Indices**

Fit Index	Value
Chi-square ( $\chi^2$ )	37.10
Degrees of Freedom (df)	35
RMSEA	0.0243
Comparative Fit Index (CFI)	0.994
Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI)	0.991
p-value	0.372

The results of this study suggest strong confirmation of the model assessing the latent construct 'jomo' (joy of missing out) as unidimensional. Each of the scale's 11 items showed significant standardized factor loadings ranging from 0.324 to 0.833, indicating that all items were contributing to the underlying factor. However, two items loaded much higher than the others, namely 17 ( $\lambda = 0.833$ ) and 18 ( $\lambda = 0.814$ ), which is indicative of a strong relationship with the latent construct. In addition, the model fit indices confirmed that the model was adequate. Specifically, the chi-square test of model fit was non-significant ( $\chi^2 = 37.1$ ,  $df = 35$ ,  $p = .372$ ), and therefore indicated substantial fit. The RMSEA was in an acceptable range ( $< 0.0243$ ), and the confidence interval ranged from 0.00 to its upper limit of 0.0766. The CFI (0.994) and TLI (0.991) also indicated excellent fit as they were both above the threshold of 0.90. Taken together, this evidence suggests that the model described the data adequately and provides evidence of the construct validity of the scale measuring the Jomo experience. To make sure that there were no major misfit issues in the model, the modification indices and residuals were investigated, and the results revealed that there was no need to substantially respecify the model. Thus, the CFA results provided evidence of the structural validity and reliability of the measurement model for the construct of Jomo.

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**Figure 1: Path Diagram for Confirmatory Factor Analysis**



**Validity and Reliability**

**Table 4: Validity and Reliability Indicators**

Type of Validity / Reliability	Indicator / Value
<b>Internal Consistency</b>	Cronbach’s Alpha = 0.863
<b>Criterion Validity</b>	Correlation with FOMO = – 0.563
<b>Face Validity</b>	Expert-rated and participant-affirmed

The JOMO scale had excellent internal reliability (Cronbach’s alpha = .863). The criterion validity assessment produced a credible correlation that demonstrated a significant negative relationship ( $r = -.563$ ) with the FOMO (Fear of Missing Out) scale. This was important for establishing evidence of discriminant validity, and theoretical validity—meaning that a person with more JOMO would tend to report less FOMO. There was also face validity demonstrated through the participant feedback and expert review, affirming that the items were clear, relevant, and reflected the construct of joyfully opting out of social media or external social pressures.

**Scoring**

The final JOMO (Joy of Missing Out) scale consists of 11 total items using a five-point Likert scale of answered options, ranging from "Strongly Disagree" (1) to "Strongly Agree" (5). The scoring format consists of a total score on the 11 items ranging from 11 to 55, where the higher scores indicate greater levels of joy in missing out. A high score can be referenced from a positive orientation toward solitude, self-reflection, willing disengagement from social or digital pressures, while advocating higher mindfulness and some emotional wellness in young adults.

**CONCLUSION**

The present study aimed to develop and validate a culturally significant as well as psychometrically sound instrument to assess the Joy of Missing Out (JOMO) among

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emerging adults of India. The construct is grounded in theories of self-determination, mindfulness, and digital well-being. The JOMO construct captures a positive and intentional detachment from digital and social pressures in favor of self-reflection, autonomy, and emotional balance.

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### **Acknowledgment**

The author(s) appreciates all those who participated in the study and helped to facilitate the research process.

### **Conflict of Interest**

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

**How to cite this article:** Ganesh, A.V., Jisha, J.G., Aiswarya, R. & Ancy, M. (2025). Development and Psychometric Validation of the Joy of Missing Out (JOMO) Scale Among Emerging Adults. *International Journal of Indian Psychology*, 13(4), 3322-3330. DIP:18.01.302.20251304, DOI:10.25215/1304.302

## **APPENDIX**

### **Joy of Missing out (JOMO)**

#### **Instructions:**

The statements given below are related to life experiences and your beliefs. Choose to what extent each statement is correct or incorrect according to you. For each statement there are five possible response categories were given, viz. Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree, and Strongly Agree.

After carefully and completely reading each statement, place a mark against the response you have selected. Please do not omit any of the statements. Your answers will be kept confidential and will be used only for research purposes.

1	<b>Skipping social events helps me gain clarity about my needs and goals.</b>	1 2 3 4 5
2	<b>I use quiet moments to reflect on what truly matters in my life.</b>	1 2 3 4 5
3	<b>Spending time away from social settings helps me discover what genuinely brings me joy.</b>	1 2 3 4 5
4	<b>I prefer personal growth and autonomy over group activities.</b>	1 2 3 4 5
5	<b>I enjoy engaging in activities that align with my own interests.</b>	1 2 3 4 5
6	<b>I feel happy when I skip events that don't support my growth.</b>	1 2 3 4 5
7	<b>I feel fulfilled when I choose well-being over the fear of missing out.</b>	1 2 3 4 5
8	<b>I value time spent on meaningful and purposeful activities.</b>	1 2 3 4 5
9	<b>I feel empowered—not anxious—when I decide to miss social gatherings.</b>	1 2 3 4 5
10	<b>I remain calm and content even when I don't attend social events.</b>	1 2 3 4 5
11	<b>I quickly let go of Fear of missing out when I prioritize my well-being.</b>	1 2 3 4 5

1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Neutral, 4=Agree, 5=Strongly Agree