

Research Paper

## The Triadic Relationship Between Fear of Negative Evaluation, Fear of Missing Out and Personal Fable

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### ABSTRACT

Fear of Negative Evaluation (FNE) is progressively becoming a significant concern for Gen Z in this high-pressure digital world where constant judgment (both online and offline) has become a norm. With the existence of social media, it's almost impossible to evade the Fear of Missing Out (FOMO), which leads to feeling the need to stay connected and engaged 24/7. This study examines the relationship between FNE (Fear of Negative Evaluation), FOMO (Fear of Missing Out), and the Personal Fable (encompassing omnipotence, personal uniqueness, and invulnerability), aiming to investigate how these factors collectively influence social behavior and psychological well-being. This study addresses a critical research gap by linking FNE, FOMO, and the Personal Fable and by examining their collective influence on young adults across two different age groups (18-24 and 25-29). The study aims to address how these variables impact young adults transitioning into adulthood. The data was collected from 211 participants using Google Forms and the results were analyzed through SPSS software, employing correlation and regression techniques. The findings reveal a significant correlation between FNE and both FOMO and Personal Fable traits. Notably, FOMO acts as a protective factor that intensifies FNE, while omnipotence and invulnerability serve to mitigate its effects. No significant age-related differences in FNE were observed between the 18-24 and 25-29 age groups. However, females consistently reported higher levels of FNE than males, and introverts exhibited significantly more FNE than extroverts. These insights suggest that while FNE affects young adults broadly, gender and personality traits play a crucial role in its intensity. The study proposes targeted interventions to alleviate FNE among young adults by addressing the interconnected psychological constructs.

**Keywords:** *Personal fable, Fear of Missing Out (FOMO), Fear of Negative Evaluation (FNE), Invulnerability, Omnipotence, Personal Uniqueness*

Generation Z, also known as Genz, is currently navigating the major transition from adolescence to adulthood. This phase is particularly demanding in today's competitive world, where there is immense pressure to excel across all domains of

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life. The desire to appear competent in new workplace environments, educational institutions, etc., in general intensify the need to make positive impressions. Additionally, the desire to fit in and avoid social rejection fosters a significant fear of negative evaluation. An important aspect of Gen Z's experience is their reliance on social media. Various online platforms largely showcase the highlights of people's lives and often leading to feelings of inadequacy and the pervasive fear of missing out (FOMO) among the users. Such constant exposure to idealized and curated images of success and happiness can elevate feelings of inadequacy and reinforce social comparison.

A key concept rooted in Elkind's theory of adolescent development is the personal fable. It is a belief shared by many adolescents, that they are unique and special and that they are somehow protected from life's problems and difficulties. Similarly, many young adults feel that their lives are singular, with emotions and experiences that others cannot fully understand or relate to.

This research aims to explore the interconnections between these phenomena - fear of negative evaluation, FOMO, invulnerability, omnipotence, and personal uniqueness and to analyse how they may influence and perpetuate one another as Gen Z (18-24 years) navigates adulthood along with the age group 25-29 years. Numerous researches have been conducted in terms of adolescents, however there exists a major research gap in the realm of young adults and adolescents transitioning into adulthood. This study aims to explore the possible contributions of these variables in the progression into adulthood.

### ***Personal fable***

Personal fable is a psychological term introduced by David Elkind in the theory of adolescent egocentrism in order to describe a phenomenon observed typically in adolescents. This concept is rooted in a broader framework of adolescent egocentrism, where individuals believe that they are unique and invincible. The personal fable involves a belief that one's thoughts, feelings, and experiences are exceptional and that others cannot possibly understand them (Elkind, 1967). This is often coupled with an "imaginary audience," where teenagers believe that they are constantly being watched and judged by their peers, (spotlight effect) further amplifying their sense of specialness and self-consciousness (Lapsley, 1993). Personal Fable influences their emotional experiences and decision-making processes, potentially leading to both positive outcomes, like resilience and ambition on one hand and negative outcomes, such as increased risk of mental health issues and unsafe behaviours on the other (Vartanian, 2000). Understanding personal fable is crucial not only among adolescents but parents, educators, and mental health professionals as they support adolescents through this critical developmental stage. It has three major dimensions.

### ***Invulnerability***

Adolescents often grapple with a sense of invulnerability, believing they are immune to the dangers and risks that affect others (Leman & Cinnirella, 2007). This feeling comes from a skewed perception of reality, where they see themselves as exceptions to the rules. Consequently, they may engage in risky behaviours like reckless driving, substance abuse, or unprotected sex thinking that negative consequences won't apply to them. This overconfidence in their safety can lead them to ignore protective measures, such as wearing seat belts or helmets. The sense of invulnerability not only poses significant health and safety risks but also emphasises the need for educational programs and interventions that address adolescents' risk perceptions and promote safer behaviours (Fergusson et al., 2007).

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### ***Personal Uniqueness***

Another key aspect of adolescent development is the personal uniqueness component of the personal fable. This involves the belief that one's experiences, feelings, and thoughts are unique and unlike anyone else's (Elkind, 1967). Teens often feel that their situations are exceptional and that no one can truly understand what they're going through, whether it's the intensity of their romantic relationships, the depth of their friendships, or the struggles they face. This belief can lead to feelings of loneliness and alienation, creating a perceived gap between their experiences and those of their peers or adults. Recognising this aspect of adolescent development is essential for providing the support and empathy that help teenagers feel understood and less isolated (Rodriguez et al., 2020).

### ***Omnipotence***

The omnipotence component of the personal fable reflects adolescents' belief that they have significant power or influence over their surroundings and that they possess a special destiny (Ellett et al., 2017). Many teens feel they can effect substantial changes in their environment or that they are destined for greatness. While this sense of omnipotence can fuel ambition and drive, it can also lead to overestimating their abilities and underestimating the challenges they might face. Acknowledging this aspect of adolescent thinking is important for guiding them in setting realistic goals and understanding the effort required to achieve them, all while nurturing their aspirations and dreams (Steinberg, 2014).

### ***Fear of Negative Evaluation***

Fear of negative evaluation (FNE) is a psychological construct that refers to an individual's apprehension of being judged unfavourably by others (Watson & Friend, 1969). This fear can significantly impact one's social interactions and overall mental health. Watson and Friend (1969) introduced the concept, defining it as a specific type of social anxiety characterised by a concern over negative evaluations from peers and authority figures. Individuals with high levels of FNE often experience intense anxiety in social situations, leading to behaviours aimed at avoiding potential criticism or rejection. This can manifest in various ways, including social withdrawal, perfectionism, and excessive reassurance-seeking (Leary, 1983). The impact of FNE extends beyond immediate social interactions. Additionally, it can hinder academic and occupational performance, reduce the quality of life, and contribute to the development of other mental health issues such as depression (Weeks et al., 2005).

### ***Fear of Missing Out***

Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) is a pervasive anxiety characterized by the apprehension that others might be having rewarding experiences from which one is absent. This phenomenon has gained significant prominence in the context of social media usage, where individuals are constantly exposed to curated highlights of others' lives. The term was first popularized by a study conducted by Przybylski et al. (2013), which defined FOMO as a feeling of anxiety regarding others enjoying rewarding experiences while one is not present, coupled with a desire to remain continually connected to what others are doing. FOMO is associated with various negative psychological outcomes, including increased stress, decreased sleep quality, and lower life satisfaction (Oberst et al., 2017). It can drive compulsive social media use, prompting individuals to frequently check their devices for updates and engage in comparisons with others, which can exacerbate feelings of inadequacy and exclusion (Blackwell et al., 2017). This cyclical nature of FOMO often leads to a diminished sense of well-being and increased feelings of loneliness and depression (Baker et al., 2016).

## METHODOLOGY

### *Sample*

The study sample consisted of 211 people with an age ranging from 18-29, recruited from schools, colleges, universities, workplaces etc. The participants gave their informed consent and wilfully participated in the research. The criteria for participation included the following statements.

1. The participant falls between 18-29 years.
2. The participant is committed to providing honest and forthright responses

### *Instruments*

Three measures were used in this study,

- 1. Fear of Negative Evaluation Scale (FNE):** The Brief Fear of Negative Evaluation Scale (BFNE) is a condensed version of the original Fear of Negative Evaluation Scale (FNE), designed by Leary (1983) to measure an individual's anxiety or apprehension about being negatively evaluated by others, especially in social situations. The BFNE is commonly used in psychological research to assess social anxiety, as fear of negative evaluation is a core component of social anxiety disorder. The BFNE consists of 12 items on a 5-point Likert-Scale which assess how concerned a person is about being judged, criticized, or rejected in social or performance contexts. These items tap into both cognitive and emotional responses to perceived negative evaluation. It has demonstrated high internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha typically  $> 0.80$ ) across different populations. The scale has been shown to have strong construct validity, correlating positively with other measures of social anxiety, shyness, and depression (Leary, 1983).
- 2. Fear of Missing Out Scale (FOMO):** The Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) Scale is a psychological tool designed by Przybylski et al. (2013) to measure the extent to which individuals experience anxiety or discomfort about missing out on social events, experiences, or information. FOMO has become increasingly relevant in the digital age, where social media can amplify feelings of exclusion or inadequacy due to seeing others' activities and experiences. The scale typically includes items assessing emotional responses, behaviors, and perceptions related to social exclusion and the desire to stay connected. FOMO scale contains 10 items that assess the frequency of thoughts or feelings related to missing out. These items typically focus on emotional distress (e.g., feeling anxious or upset about being excluded) and the behavioral urge to stay constantly connected to social networks (e.g., checking social media frequently). The FOMO scale has demonstrated good reliability (Cronbach's alpha  $> 0.80$ ) and validity in a variety of contexts. It has shown significant correlations with social media use, life satisfaction, and well-being, as well as with increased anxiety and depression in some populations (Przybylski et al., 2013)
- 3. New Personal Fable Scale (NPFS):** The New Personal Fable Scale (NPFS) is a psychometric tool designed by Lapsley et al. (1989) to assess the personal fable belief system, a cognitive phenomenon often observed in adolescents. The NPFS consists of 46 Likert-scale items, with responses ranging from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree. Each item is carefully crafted to assess one of the three dimensions of the personal fable. The scale's total score is typically broken down into three subscale scores corresponding to the three dimensions (Uniqueness, Invulnerability, and Omnipotence), which can then be analyzed individually or in relation to one another. The scoring system allows for the assessment of an individual's relative emphasis on each dimension. Higher scores on the Uniqueness

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subscale indicate stronger feelings of exceptionalism, while higher scores on the Invulnerability subscale reflect a greater belief in personal invincibility. Similarly, elevated scores on the Omnipotence subscale suggest a stronger belief in personal timelessness. Cronbach's alpha coefficients for these subscales generally range from 0.70 to 0.90, indicating that the scale has adequate to excellent reliability. Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) has provided additional support for the three-factor model, with good fit indices supporting the construct validity of the NPFS. The NPFS offers a comprehensive and multidimensional approach to understanding the cognitive biases that underlie adolescent egocentrism (Lapsley et al., 1989).

### ***Procedure***

An online survey approach was utilised, where questionnaires were distributed to participants via a Google Form sent through email. The survey included a range of demographic details, such as age, gender, family type, birth order, highest educational qualification, employment status, marital status, personality type, and average time spent on social media.

The research design used in this study is ex-post facto, aiming to examine the relationships between personal fable, Fear of Negative Evaluation (FNE), and Fear of Missing Out (FOMO). An ex post facto design, also known as a causal-comparative design, is used to investigate possible cause-and-effect relationships without manipulation of the independent variables.

Convenience sampling was employed to collect data by distributing questionnaires to individuals within the experimenter's immediate social network. This sampling method was chosen due to its practicality and ease of access to participants, enabling the efficient collection of responses. The SPSS software (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) is a software program used by researchers in various disciplines for quantitative analysis of complex data. Correlation analysis and multiple linear regressions were employed along with an independent sample T-test.

## **RESULTS**

This section presents the study's findings, as obtained through statistical analysis conducted using SPSS software. The results demonstrate the relationships between Fear of Negative Evaluation (FNE), Fear of Missing Out (FOMO), and the Personal Fable (including traits of omnipotence, personal uniqueness, and invulnerability), and how FOMO and Personal Fable constructs collectively predict FNE in an individual, thereby influencing one's social behavior and psychological well-being among young adults.

Tabulations of descriptive statistics, demographic statistics, correlation analysis, multiple linear regressions, and independent t-test for various demographic variables are presented. Furthermore, graphical representation for correlation analysis and independent t-tests are presented for better understanding and visually highlight the differences among the variables. Descriptive statistics provide an overview of the key variables, such as the means and standard deviations for FNE, FOMO, Omnipotence, Invulnerability and Personal Uniqueness. Demographic statistics outline the distribution of age, gender, employment, family type, presence of siblings, marital status and personality traits (introversion vs. extroversion) within the sample. Multiple linear regression analysis is conducted to examine the predictive relationships between FNE, FOMO, and Personal Fable traits, while

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independent t-tests assess significant differences in FOMO, FNE, Omnipotence, Invulnerability, Personal Uniqueness based on demographic variables.

**Table No. 1 Descriptive Statistics**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>
<b>Fear of Negative Evaluation</b>	112	34.535	13.270
<b>Fear of Missing out</b>		25.540	7.3505
<b>Omnipotence</b>		55.241	11.743
<b>Personal Uniqueness</b>		43.796	7.3789
<b>Invulnerability</b>		40.568	7.562

Table 1 shows the mean and the standard deviation of the 5 variables. Fear of Negative Evaluation (FNE) has the highest standard deviation of 13.27 which is greater than 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of the mean. This indicated that the data of FNE is widely dispersed and the mean is not a representative of the sample. All other variables have lower standard deviation and thus their respective means are representative of the sample data. Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) has the lowest standard deviation of 7.3505, suggesting that the sample experiences a more uniform level of fear about missing out on opportunities or experiences. Omnipotence, Personal Uniqueness and Invulnerability show moderate variability, meaning there is a fair amount of individual difference in people's perception of their omnipotence, uniqueness, and invulnerability.

**Table No. 2 Demographic Statistics**

<b>Demographic Variables</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Age</b>		
18 – 24 years	187	88.2%
25-29 years	25	11.8%
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	73	34.4%
Female	138	65.1%
Others	1	0.5%
<b>Family Type</b>		
Nuclear Family	158	74.5%
Joint Family	48	22.6%
Single Parent	6	2.8%
<b>Siblings</b>		
Present	128	83%
Absent	36	17%
<b>Highest Education Qualification</b>		
12 <sup>th</sup> Standard	65	30.7%
Under Graduation	124	58.5%
Post-Graduation	23	10.8%

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<b>Employment</b>		
<b>Employed</b>	28	13.2%
<b>Unemployed</b>	184	86.8%
<b>Marital Status</b>		
<b>Married</b>	207	97.6%
<b>Unmarried</b>	5	2.4%
<b>Average Time Spent on Social Media</b>		
<b>&lt; 1 hour</b>	24	11.3%
<b>1-3 hours</b>	108	50.9%
<b>3-7 hours</b>	76	35.8%
<b>&gt; 7 hours</b>	4	1.9%
<b>Personality Type</b>		
<b>Extrovert</b>	135	63.7%
<b>Introvert</b>	77	36.3%

Table 2 represent the descriptive statistics of various demographic variables. The sample primarily consists of individuals within the age range of 18-24, making up 88.2% of the sample, while only a small portion (11.8%) is in the 25-29 age range. The sample is predominantly female, with 65.1% identifying as female and males make up 34.9% which may limit the generalizability of the findings, particularly in relation to gender-specific behaviours or attitudes. In terms of family structure, most participants come from nuclear families (74.5%). Fewer participants are from joint families (22.6%), and an even smaller percentage (2.8%) come from single-parent households. This may suggest a more traditional family structure is common in the sample. A large majority (83%) of the participants have siblings, while 17% do not. This suggests that most participants are part of larger family units with siblings. The sample is mostly comprised of individuals with an undergraduate education (58.5%) due to convenience sampling. Around 30.7% have completed their 12th standard, and smaller proportion of 10.8% has completed post-graduate education. The vast majority of participants are unemployed (86.8%), which is consistent with the younger age range in the sample (primarily 18-24 years) who are in schools, colleges and universities. Almost all participants (97.6%) are unmarried, which aligns with the younger demographic in the sample. Only a very small percentage (2.4%) is married. Social media engagement is notably high, with the majority of participants spend between 1 to 3 hours daily on social media (50.9%), with a significant portion (35.8%) spending 3 to 7 hours. Very few participants spend less than an hour (11.3%) or more than 7 hours (1.9%) on social media, indicating substantial time dedicated by the majority of the sample to online interactions. Finally, a majority of the participants (63.7%) have reported to be extroverts, while a smaller proportion (36.3%) are introverts. This reflects a relatively extroverted sample.

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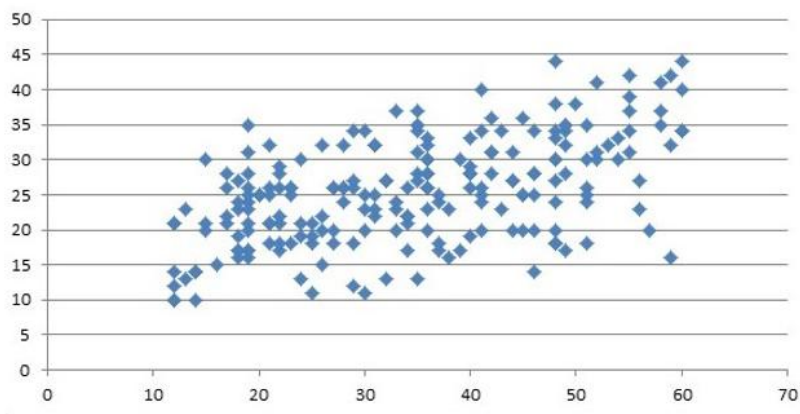
**Table No. 3 Correlation Table**  
**Relationship between FOMO, Omnipotence, Personal Uniqueness, Invulnerability with Fear of Negative Evaluation.**

VARIABLES	N	r	Sig
<b>Fear of Missing out</b>	211	.535**	.000
<b>Omnipotence</b>		-.299**	.000
<b>Personal Uniqueness</b>		-.070	.070
<b>Invulnerability</b>		-.396**	.000

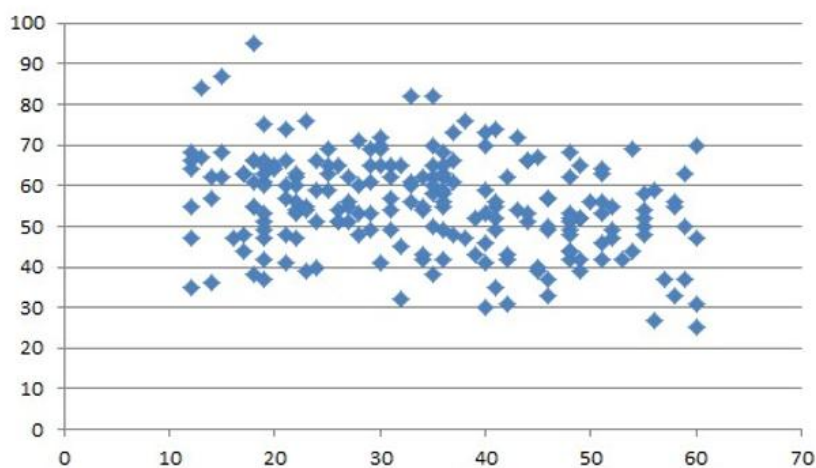
\*\**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).*

\**. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).*

The Table 3 represents the correlation table. The correlation analysis which was done using SPSS software reveals that there exists significant correlation among Fear of Negative Evaluation (FNE), Fear of Missing Out (FOMO), invulnerability, and omnipotence. FNE shows a moderate positive correlation with FOMO ( $r = 0.535, p < 0.01$ ).

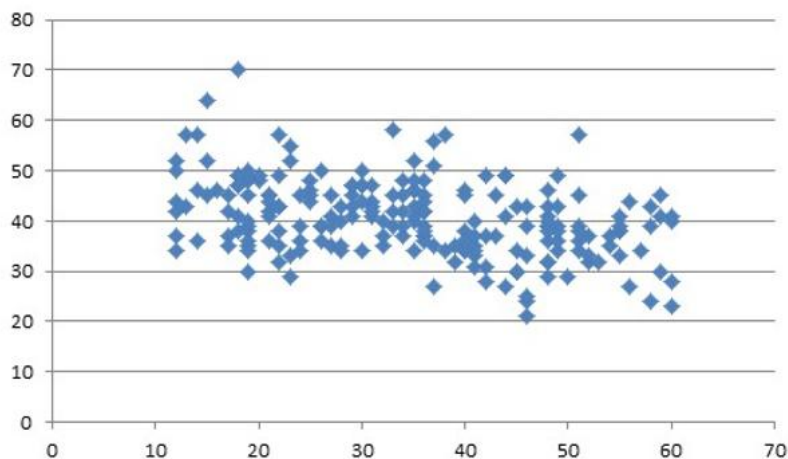


Conversely, FNE is negatively correlated with omnipotence ( $r = -0.299, p < 0.01$ ).



Additionally, a strong negative correlation exists between FNE and invulnerability ( $r = -0.396, p < 0.01$ ).

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Thus, hypothesis H1, H3 and H4 are accepted as there exists a significant correlation between FOMO, Omnipotence, Invulnerability and FNE. However H2 is rejected as there did not exist a significant correlation between Personal Uniqueness and FNE. Thus H1, H3, H4 are accepted while H2 is rejected.

**Table No. 4 Multiple Linear Regression coefficient, Beta Value, and 't' Value**

Variables	B	t	Sig	R <sup>2</sup>	F
<b>FOMO</b>	.499	8.983	.000		
<b>Omnipotence</b>	-.147	-1.907	.058	.394	44.838
<b>Invulnerability</b>	-.210	-2.690	.008		

The multiple linear regression analysis reveals that FOMO, omnipotence, and invulnerability significantly relate to FNE. The constant value of 35.687 represents the expected FNE score when all predictors are zero. FOMO has the strongest positive effect on FNE, with an unstandardized coefficient of 0.901 ( $p < 0.001$ ), indicating that for each unit increase in FOMO, FNE increases by 0.901 units. The standardized coefficient (Beta) for FOMO is 0.499, highlighting its substantial impact. In contrast, omnipotence shows a marginally negative effect (unstandardized coefficient = -0.166,  $p = 0.058$ ) that is not statistically significant. Finally, invulnerability significantly reduces FNE, with an unstandardized coefficient of -0.369 ( $p = 0.008$ ) and a Beta of -0.210. Overall, these findings suggest that while FOMO significantly increases FNE, invulnerability plays a critical role in reducing it, whereas omnipotence exerts a weaker, non-significant influence. Overall 39.4% of FNE is predicted by the collective influence of FOMO, Omnipotence and Invulnerability. Thus H5 and H7 are accepted as FOMO and invulnerability significantly predicts FNE. Omnipotence has a only a weaker non-significant influence on FNE and thus H6 is rejected. Personal Uniqueness, did not have any relation and thereby influence on FNE and thus H8 is rejected.

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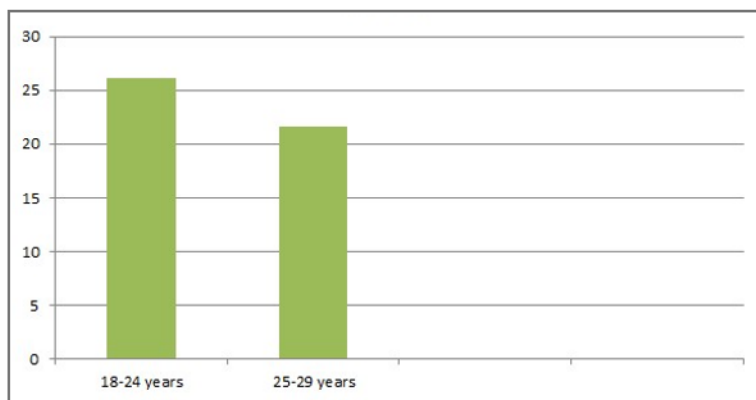
**Table No. 5 Independent sample T-Test**

Variables	Group	N	Mean	SD	T	Sig
<b>FOMO</b>	18-24 yrs	186	26.06	7.414	2.874	.004**
	25-29 yrs	25	21.64	5.574		
	Employed	28	22.25	6.780	2.577	.011*
	Unemployed	183	26.04	7.321		
<b>Fear Of Negative Evaluation</b>	Female	137	37.01	13.606	3.797	.000**
	Male	74	29.96	11.358		
	Introvert	135	36.19	13.451	2.446	.015*
	Extrovert	76	31.59	12.494		
<b>Omnipotence</b>	Female	137	54.02	12.256	2.069	.040*
	Male	74	57.50	10.437		
	Married	5	62.00	3.937	3.561	.012*
	Unmarried	206	55.08	11.825		
	Introvert	135	52.76	11.178	4.249	.000**
	Extrovert	76	59.64	11.499		
<b>Invulnerability</b>	Female	137	39.02	7.112	4.200	.000**
	Male	74	43.43	7.582		
	Introvert	135	39.14	7.412	3.769	.000**
	Extrovert	76	43.11	7.196		

\*\**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).*

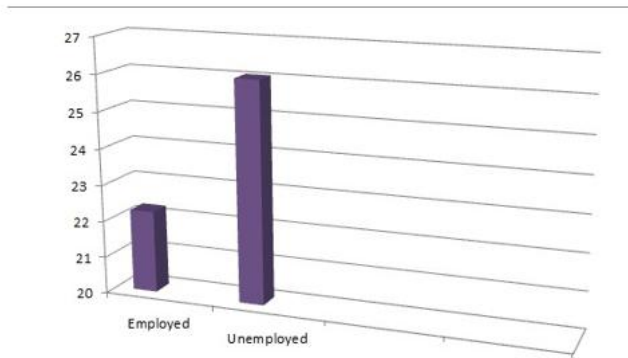
\**. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).*

Table 5 indicates the t scores and the significance values of the variables across the demographic variables including age, gender, marital status, employment, personality etc. Younger individuals aged 18-24 reported a higher mean score for FOMO (Fear of Missing Out) at 26.06 (SD = 7.414) compared to those aged 25-29, who had a mean score of 21.64 (SD = 5.574), with a t value of 2.874. This suggests that younger people may feel a stronger sense of missing out on social experiences.

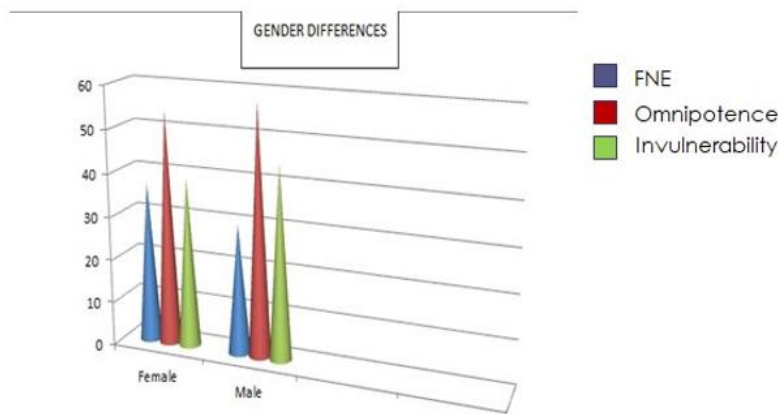


Employment status also played a role, as employed individuals had a mean score for FOMO of 22.25 while unemployed individuals reported a mean of 26.04. This suggests that employment can potentially buffer against FOMO.

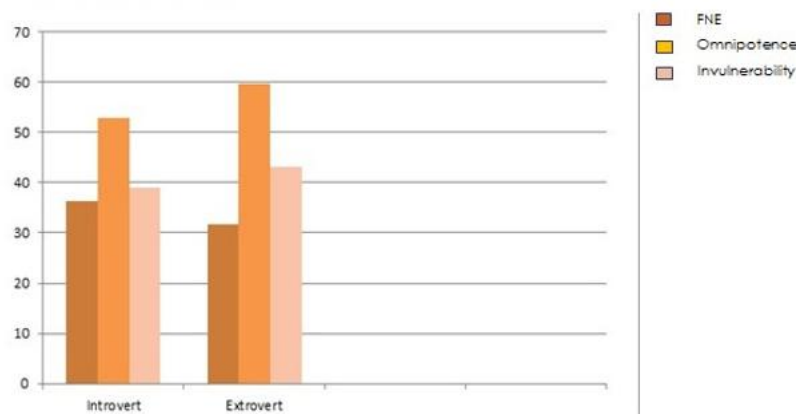
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In terms of fear of negative evaluation, females scored higher ( $M = 37.01$ ,  $SD = 13.606$ ) than males ( $M = 29.96$ ,  $SD = 3.797$ ), with a  $t$  value of 3.797. This indicates that women may be more affected by concerns about negative judgment from others. With respect to omnipotence, males reported a higher mean score ( $M = 57.50$ ,  $SD = 12.256$ ) than females ( $M = 54.02$ ,  $SD = 12.256$ ), with a  $t$  value of -2.069. Furthermore, regarding invulnerability, males had a higher mean score ( $M = 43.43$ ,  $SD = 7.112$ ) than females ( $M = 39.02$ ,  $SD = 7.112$ ), with a  $t$  value of -4.200.



Introverts ( $M = 36.19$ ,  $SD = 13.451$ ) showed greater fear of negative evaluation compared to extroverts ( $M = 31.59$ ,  $SD$  not reported). Extroverts ( $M = 43.11$ ,  $SD = 7.412$ ) also reported greater feelings of invulnerability compared to introverts ( $M = 39.14$ ,  $SD = 7.412$ ). Extroverts also demonstrated higher levels of omnipotence ( $M = 59.64$ ,  $SD = 11.178$ ) compared to introverts ( $M = 52.76$ ,  $SD = 11.178$ ).



## **DISCUSSION**

The study provides a comprehensive analysis of how psychological constructs such as Fear of Negative Evaluation (FNE), Fear of Missing Out (FOMO), Omnipotence, Invulnerability, and Personal Uniqueness interact and correlate with each other. One key finding is the significant positive correlation between FNE and FOMO. This correlation indicates that individuals who experience high levels of FOMO are more likely to suffer from concerns and fear about negative evaluation. The constant exposure to curated lives on social media increases FOMO and heightens the fear of being judged negatively. This underscores the need for interventions that address both FOMO and FNE simultaneously to improve emotional well-being.

Omnipotence shows a negative correlation with FNE. This is consistent with the study mentioned previously by Cai and Wu (2017) which stated that perceived power and omnipotence are negatively correlated, with increased perceived power mitigating FNE. Similarly, individuals who perceive themselves as omnipotent report lower levels of FNE, suggesting that enhancing feelings of personal power and capability can help mitigate fears of negative evaluation. Similarly, Invulnerability, or the perception of being immune to harm and criticism, also negatively correlates with FNE. Individuals who feel invulnerable tend to experience lower levels of FNE, indicating that fostering a sense of personal invincibility can alleviate fears of negative judgment. Omnipotence and Invulnerability thus act as protective factors against FNE and their interrelationship highlights the importance of addressing Invulnerability and Omnipotence in interventions designed to manage social anxieties (FNE) and self-perception issues.

The results show that fear of negative evaluation (FNE) is moderately linked to FOMO; meaning people with more FOMO are likely to fear judgment. This is consistent with the research findings of Wolniewicz et al. (2017), which stated that FOMO mediated the relationship between fear of negative evaluation and smartphone use, suggesting that individuals who experience higher levels of FNE may also experience higher levels of FOMO. FNE is lower in people who feel invulnerable or powerful, with invulnerability having a stronger negative effect. Invulnerability is also tied to FOMO (negative) and omnipotence (positive), suggesting those who feel immune to harm see themselves as unique and powerful. The regression model explains 39.4% of the variation in FNE, with FOMO increasing FNE the most, invulnerability decreasing it, and omnipotence having a small, non-significant impact.

Young adults between 18 and 24 often feel more FOMO (Fear of Missing Out) than those in their mid-to-late twenties, and there are several reasons behind this. At this stage, social media plays a huge role in their lives and platforms like Instagram and TikTok are full of posts showing others having fun, travelling, or achieving milestones. Seeing these curated snapshots can make them feel like they're missing out on important experiences. This age group is also going through major life changes, like moving out, starting college, or figuring out their first jobs, which brings a lot of uncertainty. They may still be figuring out who they are and are more likely to seek social validation. As a result, there's often a strong need to feel connected and involved in everything happening around them. For those in the 25-29 range, life tends to be more stable, with clearer social and professional paths, so the pressure to constantly be in the loop isn't as intense. This significantly higher level of FOMO potentially predisposes them to developing higher levels of Fear of Negative Evaluation.

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Fear of Negative Evaluation (FNE) was found to be significantly higher in females than in males. For females, societal expectations often place more emphasis on maintaining relationships, social harmony, and being perceived positively by others. As a result, women may feel more pressure to avoid situations where they could be judged or evaluated negatively. This aligns with the tendency for higher levels of FNE in females, where the fear of not meeting social or personal expectations becomes heightened. Females might be more attuned to interpersonal feedback and sensitive to how they are perceived by others, particularly in social and academic settings. Research has shown that women are often socialized to prioritize relationships and emotional connections, making them more vulnerable to the anxiety of negative judgment (Weeks et al., 2005).

Traits like omnipotence and invulnerability were found to be significantly higher among males. This is consistent with the study mentioned previously conducted by Goossen et al., (2002) which concluded that perceived power and invulnerability are higher for men than women. For males, societal norms often encourage traits like independence, dominance, and risk-taking, which can manifest as feelings of omnipotence and invulnerability. This belief in one's ability to control situations or avoid harm can be linked to traditional masculine ideals, where men may feel pressured to project confidence and strength, even when facing uncertain or risky situations. Men are often socialized to downplay vulnerability, leading them to feel a sense of invincibility or less concern about potential social consequences. These traits may protect men from FNE, but they can also lead to risky behaviours and the denial of limitations (Mahalik et al., 2003). This gendered difference can be attributed to various social, psychological, and cultural factors and reflects broader patterns of socialization, where men and women are taught to handle social evaluations and perceived risks in contrasting and different ways.

FOMO (Fear of Missing Out) was found to be significantly elevated in unemployed individuals, and this can be attributed to several psychological and social factors. This suggests that when people are unemployed, they may feel disconnected from the structure and social interactions that come with work. Employment often provides not only financial security but also a sense of purpose, routine, and social belonging. Without these, unemployed individuals may feel isolated and more acutely aware of the opportunities they are missing, whether it's professional advancement, social events, or personal achievements that their peers are experiencing. Social media can further amplify these feelings. Unemployed individuals may see friends or colleagues posting about their jobs, vacations, or accomplishments, which can intensify the sense of being left behind or excluded. Additionally, the lack of financial stability might limit their ability to participate in social activities, contributing to a greater feeling of FOMO. The absence of daily structure and professional engagement can also lead to more time spent online, increasing exposure to social comparisons and feelings of inadequacy. This heightened FOMO in unemployed people can, in turn, lead to increased stress, anxiety, and even depression as they struggle with both the tangible challenges of unemployment and the emotional toll of feeling disconnected from their social and professional circles and significantly increases their vulnerability to experience fear of negative evaluation. (Przybylski et al., 2013; Stead & Bibby, 2017).

Married individuals exhibited higher levels of omnipotence and thus could act as a protective factor against fear of negative evaluation. This could be attributed to numerous factors. Being in a stable, committed relationship can foster confidence, as individuals often

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feel supported by their partners, which enhances their belief in handling life's challenges effectively. The shared responsibilities and combined resources within marriage, such as financial stability and emotional support, can also contribute to a greater sense of control over life events. This perceived invulnerability might be bolstered by societal validation, as marriage is often viewed as an accomplishment, reinforcing self-assurance (Karney & Bradbury, 1995).

With respect to personality traits, introverts had statistically higher levels of Fear of Negative Evaluation, while extroverts were found to have significantly high traits of omnipotence and invulnerability. Introverts are generally more sensitive to social judgment and often prefer solitude or small, familiar social settings. As a result, they may worry more about how others perceive them, fearing negative feedback or social rejection. This heightened sensitivity makes them more prone to anxiety in social situations, leading to higher FNE (Leary, 1983). On the other hand, extroverts are typically more confident and assertive in social interactions, which can lead to feelings of omnipotence and invulnerability. Extroverts often thrive in social environments and are less concerned about others' judgments, as they tend to seek out and enjoy social approval. Their outgoing nature and comfort with risk-taking can make them feel more in control of situations and less vulnerable to failure or rejection (Watson & Clark, 1997).

Overall, these findings underscore the complex interplay between psychological constructs and the importance of considering various demographic factors when designing interventions. By focusing on enhancing Invulnerability and addressing specific needs related to age, gender, employment status, marital status, and personality type, practitioners can develop more targeted and effective strategies to improve emotional well-being and manage social anxieties.

### ***Implications***

In today's generation, psychological constructs such as Fear of Negative Evaluation (FNE), Fear of Missing Out (FOMO), Omnipotence, Invulnerability, and Personal Uniqueness are being increasingly influenced by the digital and competitive worlds. The digital world of social media significantly amplifies FOMO by constantly presenting curated and idealized portrayals of others' lives, which can exacerbate feelings of inadequacy and anxiety about missing out. This continuous exposure keeps individuals perpetually aware of what they might be lacking or excluded from, intensifying FNE as they worry about negative judgment and evaluation from others. As a result, high levels of FNE can lead to increased anxiety and stress, which can severely impact overall well-being. This environment fuels FNE and FOMO as individuals strive to excel and fear being judged negatively compared to their peers. The implications of high FNE include heightened anxiety and stress, which can undermine emotional well-being, lead to mental health challenges, and affect overall life satisfaction.

However, having high levels of omnipotence and invulnerability can mitigate Fear of Negative Evaluation. Having a strong sense of omnipotence and invulnerability can act as a buffer against effects of FOMO and FNE and thus enables an individual to be resilient to the negative effects inflicted by the world around.

Based on the findings regarding the protective effects of omnipotence and invulnerability, several supportive interventions can help individuals navigate Fear of Missing Out (FOMO)

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and Fear of Negative Evaluation (FNE), ultimately enabling a healthy transition of GenZ into adult life.

Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) can be particularly effective, as it requires individuals to challenge and reframe negative thoughts associated with FOMO and FNE. By restructuring these thought patterns; individuals can cultivate a healthier self-image and boost their feelings of invulnerability and confidence (Beck, 2011). Additionally, mindfulness training and acceptance commitment therapy encourages participants to stay present and accept themselves without judgment. This practice can significantly reduce anxiety and fear related to social comparisons and allow individuals to develop a stronger sense of self and invulnerability (Kabat-Zinn, 1990).

Furthermore, empowerment workshops with a focus on helping individuals set and achieve personal goals, reinforcing their omnipotence can be useful. By actively engaging in the process of defining and reaching these goals, participants boost their confidence and develop a stronger belief in their own capabilities (Ba, 2024). Resilience training is another valuable intervention that equips individuals with essential coping strategies and problem-solving skills. These programs teach participants how to effectively navigate challenges and setbacks, which fosters a feeling of invulnerability in the face of adversity (Reivich & Shatté, 2002). Furthermore, social skills development can enhance effective communication, helping individuals form deeper connections and reduce feelings of inadequacy that often accompany social comparison.

Additionally, digital literacy is critical and must be incorporated in schools, colleges, universities etc. This involves teaching individuals how to critically evaluate social media content, they can recognize that online portrayals are often curated and not reflective of reality. This understanding can foster a more balanced view of themselves and their experiences (Przybylski et al., 2013). Moreover, goal-setting and achievement workshops can assist individuals in setting realistic objectives, celebrating small victories along the way. This approach enhances their sense of agency and reduces the pressure to meet unrealistic societal standards.

Formation of peer support groups can serve as an avenue for fostering omnipotence and sense of belongingness and invulnerability during transition. Thus, creating safe spaces for individuals to share their experiences can significantly reduce feelings of isolation, as hearing others' stories can strengthen community ties and enhance emotional well-being (Yalom & Leszcz, 2005). Finally, encouraging authenticity in social interactions can help individuals feel more comfortable being themselves, alleviating the need to project an image of invulnerability. By integrating these supportive interventions, individuals can manage their fear of negative evaluation and build a solid foundation for healthy transition into adult life, enabling them to navigate the complexities of the digital world with greater sense of omnipotence and invulnerability (in optimal levels), at the same time maintaining their psychological well-being.

### ***Limitations and Recommendations***

Despite shedding light on the correlation and interplay of the variables, it is not without limitation. A non-probability convenience sampling was utilized indicating that the sample might not be representative of the population, questioning the generalizability of the results to the population. Furthermore, the responses were collected on a google form and thus

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creating a sample bias as people without internet access or familiarity could not participate. The sample did not have an equal proportion of participants across the demographic variables and the differences and results obtained cannot be generalized. Additionally, utilization of ex-post facto research has its own limitations. Although the study can explore correlations and predictive relationships between FNE, FOMO, and Personal Fable traits, it cannot definitively establish cause-and-effect links between these constructs. There is a possibility that other unmeasured factors (confounding variables) could influence the outcomes, due to a lack of manipulation of variables. Moreover, the subjects' responses reflect their perceived invulnerability, FOMO, personal uniqueness, fear of negative evaluation, and omnipotence, which may not accurately represent their actual experiences or behaviours, leading to potential discrepancies between self-reported data and reality.

Further studies can include representative samples such as simple random sampling and conduct direct interviews along with self-report questionnaires in order to evade various biases that could have played a role in this research. An experimental research design could be utilized to prove cause and affect relationships. Equal number of participants can be taken from various demographic backgrounds to better understand their influence.

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