

Upward State Social Comparison, Fear of Missing Out, Impression Management Efficacy, and Self-Concept Clarity Among University Students on Social Media Use

Ms. Harshithaa M J¹, Ms. Soumya Simon²

¹Student, ²Assistant Professor

^{1,2}Psychology

Kristu Jayanti College

Abstract

Social media has evolved into a primary stage for youth to share their views, get connected with others, and build their identity. This study explored the connection of upward social comparison (USSC), fear of missing out (FOMO), impression management efficacy (IME), and self-concept clarity (SCC) among students of the university in India. Based on the Social Comparison Theory and identity-based perspectives, a quantitative, cross-sectional research design was used. 350 undergraduate and postgraduate students aged 18–25 years were selected through convenience sampling. Psychological standardised scales were administered, and the data were recorded and analysed in Jamovi 2.7.9, which involved descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, and simple linear regression.

The findings revealed that USSC was significantly positively related to both FOMO and IME. This means that individuals who frequently compare themselves with the highly idealised online portrayals feel more of the exclusion-related anxiety and, at the same time, get involved in strategic self-presentation behavior to a greater extent. On the contrary, SCC showed statistically significant negative correlations with all three variables, demonstrating that people with a more stable sense of self are less likely to seek external digital validation. The regression results supported the view that USSC significantly predicted FOMO and IME, whereas SCC was a negative predictor of these variables, thus illustrating its protective role against them. The present findings demonstrate the existence of a vicious circle in which individuals who tend to compare themselves more with others have less clarity of their identity and are more susceptible to the pressures of social media.

Keywords: upward social comparison, fear of missing out, impression management efficacy, self-concept clarity, social media use, young adults

1. Introduction

Social media has become an essential part of our daily lives. It has been noted that individuals aged 18 to 25 years constitute the largest share of social media users in India. Around 31% of individuals in this age group use six to nine social media platforms simultaneously (Statista, 2025). University students rely on social media for communication, social connections, information, and entertainment, effectively weaving these platforms into their academic and personal lives (Bhandarkar et al., 2021; Alshantiti et al., 2023). Platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, WhatsApp, YouTube, and Snapchat provide opportunities for self-expression and identity exploration. However, these platforms are also characterised by highly curated and idealised portrayals of users' lives, making information about others' achievements, lifestyles, and social experiences readily accessible. Students typically spend two to five hours daily on social media (Chandrasena & Ilankoon, 2022).

The Social comparison theory defines upward social comparison as a comparison of oneself with another individual who is perceived to be better than oneself (Festinger, 1954). While upward comparisons can drive self-improvement, evidence indicates that it can also negatively influence psychological well-being, raise body image concerns, lower mood, negative affect, and feelings of inadequacy (Guyer & Vaughan-Johnston, 2018; Tian et al., 2024; Fardouly et al., 2015).

Social media platforms encourage deliberate self-presentation through visibility, feedback, and audience evaluation. Exposure to idealised representations may encourage strategic self-presentations to maintain favourable identities (Dinh & Lee, 2025). This perceived ability to manage one's online persona effectively is referred to as Impression Management Efficacy (IME), indicating confidence in shaping how others perceive one (Liu & Lei, 2025). Greater impression management efficacy (IME) has been linked to better perceived social functioning and lower social anxiety, whereas ineffective self-presentation may relate to stress and reduced life satisfaction. (Liu & Lei, 2025; Wang et al., 2020).

Regular exposure to idealised content on social media has been linked to Fear of Missing Out (FoMO), defined by the anxiety that others may be having rewarding experiences without oneself (Elhai et al., 2021; Gupta & Sharma, 2021). FoMO has been associated with compulsive checking and excessive social media engagement (Tandon et al., 2021). Self-concept clarity is the extent to which the self-beliefs of an individual are clearly articulated, internally consistent, and stable over time (Jankowski et al., 2023). High self-concept clarity is related to emotional well-being, high self-esteem, and high resilience, while low self-concept clarity is related to identity confusion and susceptibility to anxiety and depression (Yang et al., 2025; Wang & Wang, 2024). In the university setting, social media can be both a platform for identity expression and a context that erodes self-concept through continuous comparison and evaluation. This study draws on Social Comparison Theory (Festinger, 1954), Self-Discrepancy Theory (Higgins, 1987), and Self-Presentation Theory (Goffman, 1956) to explain how upward social comparisons, perceived self-discrepancies, and strategic self-presentation. These processes may jointly influence emotional outcomes such as FoMO, IME, and self-concept clarity among university students.

Upward Social Comparison

A substantial body of research has consistently demonstrated that social media environments intensify upward social comparison by increasing exposure to idealised portrayals of others' lives. Across diverse cultural contexts, upward social comparison has been associated with a range of adverse

psychological outcomes, including negative affect, reduced self-esteem, appearance-related anxiety, and diminished well-being (Fardouly et al., 2015; Guyer & Vaughan-Johnston, 2018; Tian et al., 2024). Several studies highlight Fear of Missing Out (FoMO) as a central mechanism through which upward social comparison exerts its effects. For instance, cross-sectional and longitudinal findings indicate that social comparison is a strong predictor of FoMO, which in turn is associated with compulsive social media engagement and maladaptive online behaviours (Dinh & Lee, 2025; Piko et al., 2025). Meta-analytic evidence further supports the association between upward social comparison and negative self-evaluative outcomes in social media contexts (McComb, 2023).

Impression Management Efficacy

Social media platforms provide environments in which individuals actively manage how they are perceived by others, making self-presentation a central aspect of online interaction. Prior research on impression management has demonstrated that users frequently curate content to project favourable identities, particularly in contexts characterised by visibility, audience feedback, and evaluative norms (Hollenbaugh, 2021). While impression management behaviors have been widely examined, more recent work has emphasised the importance of Impression Management Efficacy (IME), defined as individuals' confidence in their ability to effectively manage others' impressions in online settings. Excessive or ineffective self-presentation efforts have been linked to increased stress, loneliness, and reduced life satisfaction (Wang et al., 2020). However, empirical research examining IME in relation to social comparison, Fear of Missing Out, and identity-related outcomes remains limited, highlighting the need for integrated models.

Fear of Missing Out

Fear of Missing Out (FoMO) has emerged as a key psychological construct for understanding maladaptive patterns of social media engagement. Existing research consistently indicates that FoMO is closely linked to upward social comparison, as exposure to peers' curated and rewarding experiences heightens concerns about social exclusion and unmet opportunities (Dinh & Lee, 2025; Tandon et al., 2021). Empirical studies have demonstrated that FoMO is associated with a range of problematic outcomes, including compulsive checking behaviors, social media fatigue, and addictive patterns of platform use (Steinberger & Kim, 2023; Zhu & Xiong, 2022). In addition, FoMO has been shown to interact with self-esteem and social comparison processes, amplifying distress when individuals perceive themselves as falling behind others in social or experiential domains (Servidio et al., 2024). Among university students, FoMO appears particularly salient due to heightened peer comparison and developmental sensitivity to social belonging.

Self-Concept Clarity

Self-concept clarity (SCC) has been identified as a crucial psychological factor influencing how individuals interpret and respond to social information. Prior research indicates that lower levels of SCC are associated with identity confusion, emotional instability, and increased vulnerability to anxiety and depressive symptoms, whereas higher SCC is linked to greater self-esteem, emotional well-being, and resilience (Petre, 2021; Yang et al., 2025). Empirical studies suggest that extensive or problematic social media use is negatively associated with SCC, especially when engagement involves frequent upward social comparison and evaluative feedback (Yang et al., 2021; Wang et al., 2022). Individuals with lower

SCC may be more prone to internalizing idealized portrayals, leading to heightened self-doubt and fragmented self-views. Among university students, a period marked by identity exploration, SCC may be particularly sensitive to social media dynamics. Despite its relevance, SCC has rarely been examined alongside behavioral constructs such as impression management efficacy and emotional processes such as Fear of Missing Out, highlighting the need for integrative models that consider SCC as both a vulnerability and protective factor in social media use.

Research Gap and Rationale

Although a growing body of research has examined upward social comparison, Fear of Missing Out (FoMO), and online self-presentation within social media contexts, these constructs have largely been investigated in isolation. In particular, Impression Management Efficacy (IME) remains underexplored as a confidence-based construct reflecting individuals' perceived ability to manage online impressions, despite evidence that impression management can have both adaptive and maladaptive implications. Additionally, self-concept clarity (SCC) has rarely been examined as a potential protective factor that may buffer the emotional and behavioral consequences of social comparison and FoMO. Addressing these gaps, the present study adopts an integrative framework to examine the associations among upward social comparison, FoMO, IME, and SCC, thereby contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of digital identity processes and informing interventions aimed at promoting healthier social media engagement among emerging adults.

2. Methodology

Research design

The study employs a quantitative, correlational research approach to investigate relationships between selected psychological factors and social media use.

Participants

This study includes 350 young adults aged 18-25 years. Convenience sampling was employed to select participants who are active users of social media and are currently enrolled in university-level programs.

Inclusion and exclusion criteria

University students between the ages of 18 and 25 who actively use at least one social media platform meet the inclusion criteria. The exclusion criteria include individuals with diagnosed psychological disorders, who are illiterate, are unfamiliar with digital technology.

Data Collection

The data was collected via a Google Form, which included the informed consent form, demographic details, and questionnaires, distributed through student WhatsApp/Telegram groups. The data were collected only after the participants gave their consent.

Tools for the study

Upward Social Comparison Scale (Yu and Cingel, 2025)

Fear of Missing Out Scale (Przybylski et al., 2013)

Impression Management Efficacy Scale (Liu and Lei, 2025)

Self-Concept Clarity Scale (Campbell et al., 1996)

Hypotheses

H1: There is a significant relationship between upward social comparison and impression management efficacy.

H2: There is a significant relationship between fear of missing out (FOMO) and impression management efficacy.

H3: There is a significant relationship between upward social comparison and self-concept clarity.

H4: There is a significant relationship between fear of missing out (FOMO) and self-concept clarity.

H5: Upward social comparison significantly predicts impression management efficacy among university students.

H6: Upward social comparison significantly predicts fear of missing out (FOMO) among university students.

H7: Self-concept clarity significantly predicts upward social comparison among university students.

Statistical Analysis

Descriptive statistics, correlation, and linear regression were used in the analysis. The primary study variables and participant demographics were summarised using descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation, frequency, and percentage). The intensity and direction of correlations between upward social comparison, impression management effectiveness, fear of missing out (FoMO), and self-concept clarity were assessed using Pearson's correlation analysis. Lastly, the predictive impact of upward social comparison and FoMO on impression management effectiveness and self-concept clarity was investigated using linear regression analysis.

Ethical Consideration

The study adhered to standard ethical guidelines. Informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to participation. Participation was voluntary, and respondents could withdraw at any time without penalty. Data were collected anonymously and used solely for research purposes.

3. Results and Discussion

Results

The study examined relationships between upward state social comparison, FOMO, IME, and self-concept clarity. The sample comprised of 350 undergraduate and postgraduate students, where 33.1% were males, 66.6% were females, 0.3% preferred not to say. The mean age was 20.7 years (SD = 1.79). The demographics of the participants are given in Table 1 and Table 2.

Table 1

Descriptive statistics of age of the sample

Descriptives	N	Mean	Median	Mode	SD	Minimum	Maximum
Age	350	20.70	21.00	21.00	1.79	18	25

Note. N = 350. Participants were, on average, 20.7 years old (SD = 1.79).

Table 2

Frequencies of gender and educational qualification

Frequencies	Gender			Education	
	Female	Male	Prefer not to say	Undergraduate	Postgraduate
Counts	233	116	1	239	117
% of Total	66.6	33.1	0.3	68.3	31.7

Correlational analysis

Variables

According to the analysis, there was a significant positive correlation between Upward State Social Comparison (USSC) (M = 24.4, SD = 6.36) and Impression Management Efficacy (IME) ($r = .320, p < .001$) and Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) ($r = .354, p < .001$). On the other hand, USSC and Self-Concept Clarity (SCC) had a strong negative connection ($r = -.437, p < .001$). FOMO also had a negative correlation with SCC ($r = -.344, p < .001$) and a positive correlation with IME ($r = .187, p < .001$). Additionally, there was a negative correlation ($r = -.214, p < .001$) between IME and SCC. Table 3 displays the correlation coefficients for each variable.

Table 3

Correlation between variables

Variable	df	M	SD	Upward Social Comparison	State Fear Missing Out	of Impression Management Efficacy
Upward Social Comparison	348	24.4	6.36	—		
Fear of Missing Out		24.5	7.51	.354***	—	
Impression Management Efficacy		110.0	22.1	.320***	.187***	—
Self-Concept Clarity		35.1	7.79	-.437***	-.344***	-.214***

Note. df = 348. p < .05*, p < .01**, p < .001***.

Regression analysis

Variables

Linear regression was used to see if upward social comparison predicted impression management effectiveness. The findings showed that impression management efficacy was strongly predicted by upward social comparison ($F(1, 348) = 39.80, p < .001$), with $R = .32$ and $R^2 = .10$. This implies that upward social comparison accounts for about 10% of the variation in impression control effectiveness. According to the unstandardized regression coefficient, impression management efficacy rose by 1.11 units (SE = 0.177) for every unit increase in upward social comparison.

Table 4

Linear Regression Predicting Impression Management Efficacy (IME) from Upward Social Comparison (USSC)

Variable	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	F	p	Std. Error
Impression Management Efficacy	0.320	0.103	0.100	39.80	< .001	
Upward Social Comparison						0.177

Variables

Linear regression was carried out to ascertain if Self-Concept Clarity (SCC) predicted Impression Management Efficacy (IME). Overall, the model explained about 4.6% of the variance in IME ($R^2 = .046$, Adjusted $R^2 = .043$), and it was significant overall ($F(1, 348) = 16.70, p < .001$). Higher self-concept clarity was associated with poorer impression management efficacy ($B = -0.61, SE B = 0.15, t(348) = -4.09, p < .001$).

Table 5

Linear Regression Predicting Impression Management Efficacy (IME) from Self-Concept Clarity (SCC)

Variable	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	F	p	Std. Error
Impression Management Efficacy	0.214	0.046	0.043	16.70	< .001	
Self-Concept Clarity						0.149

Variables

A linear regression was performed to see if USSC predicted FOMO. The total model explained 12.5% of the variance in FOMO ($R^2 = .125$, Adjusted $R^2 = .123$) and was significant ($F(1, 348) = 49.90, p < .001$). FOMO was significantly positively predicted by USSC ($B = 0.42, SE B = 0.06, t(348) = 7.06, p < .001$), suggesting that higher levels of upward social comparison were linked to higher levels of FOMO.

Table 6

Linear Regression Predicting Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) from Upward Social Comparison (USSC)

Variable	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	F	p	Std. Error
Fear of Missing Out	0.354	0.125	0.123	49.90	< .001	
Upward Social Comparison						0.059

Variables

A simple linear regression was employed to see whether Self-Concept Clarity (SCC) substantially predicted Fear of Missing Out (FOMO). The study found that SCC was a significant negative predictor of FOMO ($F(1, 348) = 46.90, p < .001$), accounting for 11.9% of the variance ($R^2 = .119, \text{Adjusted } R^2 = .116$). Higher SCC was associated with lower levels of FOMO, according to the regression coefficient ($B = -0.33, \text{SE } B = 0.05, t(348) = -6.85, p < .001$).

Table 7

Linear Regression Predicting Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) from Self-Concept Clarity (SCC)

Variable	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	F	p	SE
Fear of Missing Out	0.344	0.119	0.116	46.90	< .001	
Self-Concept Clarity						0.049

Variables

A simple linear regression was performed to see if Self-Concept Clarity (SCC) predicted Upward Social Comparison (USSC). SCC substantially predicted USSC, $F(1, 348) = 82.20, p < .001$, accounting for 19.1% of the variance ($R^2 = .191, \text{Adjusted } R^2 = .189$). Higher SCC was related with lower levels of USSC, as demonstrated by the unstandardized coefficient ($B = -0.36, \text{SE } B = 0.04, t(348) = -9.07, p < .001$).

Table 8

Linear Regression Predicting Upward Social Comparison (USSC) from Self-Concept Clarity (SCC)

Variable	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	F	p	SE
Upward Social Comparison	0.437	0.191	0.189	82.20	< .001	
Self-Concept Clarity						0.039

4. Discussion

Descriptive statistics indicated moderate levels of upward social comparison ($M = 24.4, SD = 6.36$) and fear of missing out ($M = 24.5, SD = 7.51$) alongside relatively high impression management efficacy ($M = 110.0, SD = 22.1$) and moderate self-concept clarity ($M = 35.1, SD = 7.79$). All scales in the current sample had satisfactory reliability levels, and assumptions of normality were met, supporting the use of parametric analysis.

The findings indicated that upward social comparison was positively linked to FOMO and IME, whereas SCC had a negative association with all three variables. These patterns suggest that comparison-

focused engagement may heighten vulnerability, while a clearer self-concept may function as a protective factor. The results align with the expectations of Social Comparison Theory (Festinger, 1954) and assist in unravelling the psychological mechanisms related to social media usage and identity clarity among young adults.

This research supports the positive relation between USSC and FoMO. It is also consistent with prior findings that identify USSC as a major source of FoMO. Individuals who frequently compare themselves with others online are more prone to experiencing FoMO (Dinh & Lee, 2025). In the same way, the research has pointed out that recurrent upward comparison, especially at social networking sites, can make users to feel more dissatisfied and anxious about missing some rewarding experiences (Piko et al., 2025; Liu et al., 2023). Furthermore, the negative emotional regret of envy and the feeling of being inferior that arise from exposure to upward comparison targets have even been intensified (McComb, 2023).

A significant positive correlation was found between the FoMO and IME, which basically indicates that people who have gone through FoMO more are generally more likely to engage in self-presentational behaviours in the online environment. The finding aligns with the earlier research, which views FoMO as a key driver of image curation and self-presentation in virtual places, thus facilitating individuals to stay connected socially and get social approval (Zhu & Xiong, 2022; Servidio et al., 2024). Individuals experiencing FoMO may engage in calculated self-presentation to enhance their online image. Hence, impression management can be considered as a coping mechanism for FoMO-induced social insecurity.

The observed positive relationship between the usage of upward social comparison and the self-perceived ability of impression management aligns well with the previously published research results, which have already established the identification of social comparison processes as the main sources of self-enhancement and self-presentation activities. Individuals who come across more heavily idealised content on social media are more inclined to participate in impression management, mostly for the purpose of retaining or elevating their self-image (Nor et al., 2025; R  ther et al., 2023). Social media platforms often function as environments that encourage strategic self-presentation for gaining social approval (Blunden & Brodsky, 2024). The findings suggest that upward social comparison encourages greater use of impression management strategies online.

This study reinforces prior results that show a negative correlation between self-concept clarity, social comparison (upward), FOMO, and impression management efficacy. People who lack self-concept clarity appear to be more vulnerable to social comparison and a desire for external approval. Petre (2021) and Yang et al. (2021) ascertained that those with an unclear self-concept become more dependent on social feedback as a source of identity, which results in more frequent social comparison and image management. Research has shown that unclear self-concept may bring about self-objectification and increase susceptibility to other people's opinions (Cui & Fang, 2022; Y. Wang et al., 2022). In the present research, higher self-concept clarity was found to be adversely related to upward social comparison and the fear of missing out. As a result, those with a strong and consistent identity are less likely to have an effect on social media dynamics. The finding that self-concept clarity may function as a psychological buffer, reducing susceptibility to upward comparison and validation-seeking behaviours in a digital environment.

Overall, the findings align with Social Comparison Theory (Festinger, 1954) and the self-concept model (Campbell et al., 1996), suggesting that frequent upward social comparison heightens vulnerability to FoMO and impression management behaviours, particularly among individuals with lower self-concept clarity. A strong self-concept helps to buffer the negative impacts of social comparison and assists in psychological stability, highlighting the interplay between external validation and internal self-concept as a self-perpetuating cycle.

5. Conclusion

The study examined the relationships among upward social comparison, fear of missing out (FoMO), impression management efficacy, and self-concept clarity among university students in social media contexts. The findings indicate that greater upward social comparison is associated with higher FoMO and stronger tendencies toward strategic online self-presentation. In contrast, self-concept clarity appears to function as a protective factor that reduces the psychological pressures associated with social comparison. Overall, the results highlight the role of identity stability in shaping how young adults navigate social media environments.

Limitation

This study has a few limitations that should be considered when interpreting the findings. A pilot study was not conducted before data collection, which may have limited the identification of potential issues in the research instruments. Additionally, the use of self-report measures may have introduced response bias.

Assistant Professor

References

1. Alshanjiti, A., Alharbi, O., Ismaeel, D., & Abuanq, L. (2023). Social media usage and academic performance among medical students in Medina, Saudi Arabia. *Advances in Medical Education and Practice*, 14, 1401–1412. <https://doi.org/10.2147/amep.s434150>
2. Aygar, H. (2020). Association between fear of missing out in social media and problematic internet use in university students. *Dusunen Adam the Journal of Psychiatry and Neurological Sciences*. <https://doi.org/10.14744/dajpns.2019.00044>
3. Bhandarkar, A. M., Pandey, A. K., Nayak, R., Pujary, K., & Kumar, A. (2021). Impact of social media on the academic performance of undergraduate medical students. *Medical Journal Armed Forces India*, 77, S37–S41. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.mjafi.2020.10.021>
4. Blunden, H., & Brodsky, A. (2024). A review of virtual impression management behaviors and outcomes. *Journal of Management*, 50(6), 2197–2236. <https://doi.org/10.1177/01492063231225160>
5. Campbell, J. D., Trapnell, P. D., Heine, S. J., Katz, I. M., Lavalley, L. F., & Lehman, D. R. (1996). Self-concept clarity: Measurement, personality correlates, and cultural boundaries. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 70(1), 141–156. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.70.1.141>

6. Chandrasena, P. P. C. M., & Ilankoon, I. M. P. S. (2022). The impact of social media on academic performance and interpersonal relations among health sciences undergraduates. *Journal of Education and Health Promotion*, 11(1), 117. https://doi.org/10.4103/jehp.jehp_603_21
7. Crusius, J., Corcoran, K., & Mussweiler, T. (2022). Social comparison: Theory, research, and applications. In D. Chadee (Ed.), *Theories in social psychology* (2nd ed.). Wiley. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781394266616.ch7>
8. Cui, J., & Fang, Y. (2022). Mediating effects of self-concept clarity and self-objectification on the relationship between celebrity worship and the process of considering cosmetic surgery among Chinese undergraduates. *BMC Psychology*, 10(1). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40359-022-00975-6>
9. Dinh, T. C. T., & Lee, Y. (2025). Understanding the psychological drivers of online self-presentation: A survey study on social media exposure, social comparison, social network type and FoMO. *BMC Psychology*, 13(1). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40359-025-03117-w>
10. Elhai, J. D., Yang, H., & Montag, C. (2020). Fear of missing out (FoMO): Overview, theoretical underpinnings, and literature review on relations with severity of negative affectivity and problematic technology use. *Brazilian Journal of Psychiatry*, 43(2), 203–209. <https://doi.org/10.1590/1516-4446-2020-0870>
11. Emery, L. F., Hughes, E. K., & Gardner, W. L. (2022). Confusion or clarity? Examining a possible tradeoff between Self-Expansion and Self-Concept clarity. *Social Psychological and Personality Science*, 14(1), 3–12. <https://doi.org/10.1177/19485506211067040>
12. Fardouly, J., Diedrichs, P. C., Vartanian, L. R., & Halliwell, E. (2015). Social comparisons on social media: The impact of Facebook on young women's body image concerns and mood. *Body Image*, 13, 38–45. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bodyim.2014.12.002>
13. Festinger, L. (1954). A theory of social comparison processes. *Human Relations*, 7(2), 117–140. <https://doi.org/10.1177/001872675400700202>
14. Goffman, E. (1956). *The presentation of self in everyday life*. University of Edinburgh Social Sciences Research Centre. https://monoskop.org/images/1/19/Goffman_Erving_The_Presentation_of_Self_in_Everyday_Life.pdf
15. Gupta, M., & Sharma, A. (2021). Fear of missing out: A brief overview of origin, theoretical underpinnings and relationship with mental health. *World Journal of Clinical Cases*, 9(19), 4881–4889. <https://doi.org/10.12998/wjcc.v9.i19.4881>
16. Higgins, E. T. (1987). Self-discrepancy: A theory relating self and affect. *Psychological Review*, 94(3), 319–340. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-295x.94.3.319>
17. Hollenbaugh, E. E. (2021). Self-presentation in social media: Review and research opportunities. *Review of Communication Research*, 9, 80–98. <https://doi.org/10.12840/issn.2255-4165.027>
18. Jankowski, T., Strózak, P., Zapała, D., Kopiś-Posiej, N., Augustynowicz, P., & Iwanowicz, P. (2023). Self-concept clarity and processing self-relevant information: An event-related potential study. *Social Neuroscience*, 18(1), 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17470919.2023.2197258>
19. Jiang, S., & Ngien, A. (2020). The effects of Instagram use, social comparison, and self-esteem on social anxiety: A survey study in Singapore. *Social Media + Society*, 6(2). <https://doi.org/10.1177/2056305120912488>

20. Jiang, T., Chen, Z., & Sedikides, C. (2019). Self-concept clarity lays the foundation for self-continuity: The restorative function of autobiographical memory. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 119(4), 945–959. <https://doi.org/10.1037/pspp0000259>
21. Liu, Q., Niu, G., Fan, C., & Zhou, Z. (2017). Passive use of social network site and its relationships with self-esteem and self-concept clarity: A moderated mediation analysis. *Acta Psychologica Sinica*, 49(1), 60. <https://doi.org/10.3724/sp.j.1041.2017.00060>
22. Liu, Y., Chi, X., & Xin, X. (2023). Storing, not reading: Investigating the link between upward social comparison via social media and digital hoarding behavior in Chinese youth. *Psychology Research and Behavior Management*, 16, 5209–5224. <https://doi.org/10.2147/prbm.s441859>
23. Liu, Y., & Lei, K. (2025). Development and validity test of impression management efficacy scale based on self-presentation behavior of Chinese youth on social media. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 16. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2025.1494083>
24. McComb, C. A., Vanman, E. J., & Tobin, S. J. (2023). A Meta-Analysis of the effects of social media exposure to upward comparison targets on Self-Evaluations and Emotions. *Media Psychology*, 26(5), 612–635. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15213269.2023.2180647>
25. Nor, N. F. M., Iqbal, N., & Shaari, A. H. (2025). The role of false self-presentation and social comparison in excessive social media use. *Behavioral Sciences*, 15(5), 675. <https://doi.org/10.3390/bs15050675>
26. Petre, C. E. (2021). The relationship between internet use and self-concept clarity: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *Cyberpsychology: Journal of Psychosocial Research on Cyberspace*, 15(2). <https://doi.org/10.5817/cp2021-2-4>
27. Peters, S., Van Der Crujisen, R., Van Der Aar, L., Spaans, J., Becht, A., & Crone, E. (2021). Social media use and the not-so-imaginary audience: Behavioral and neural mechanisms underlying the influence on self-concept. *Developmental Cognitive Neuroscience*, 48, 100921. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.dcn.2021.100921>
28. Piko, B. F., Müller, V., Kiss, H., & Mellor, D. (2025). Exploring contributors to FoMO (fear of missing out) among university students: The role of social comparison, social media addiction, loneliness, and perfectionism. *Acta Psychologica*, 253, 104771. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.actpsy.2025.104771>
29. Przybylski, A. K., Murayama, K., DeHaan, C. R., & Gladwell, V. (2013). Motivational, emotional, and behavioral correlates of fear of missing out. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 29(4), 1841–1848. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2013.02.014>
30. Rüter, L., Jahn, J., & Marksteiner, T. (2023). #Influenced! The impact of social media influencing on self-esteem and the role of social comparison and resilience. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 14. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2023.1216195>
31. Servidio, R., Sinatra, M., Griffiths, M. D., & Monacis, L. (2021). Social comparison orientation and fear of missing out as mediators between self-concept clarity and problematic smartphone use. *Addictive Behaviors*, 122, 107014. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.addbeh.107014>
32. Servidio, R., Soraci, P., Griffiths, M. D., Boca, S., & Demetrovics, Z. (2024). Fear of missing out and problematic social media use: A serial mediation model of social comparison and self-esteem. *Addictive Behaviors Reports*, 19, 100536. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.abrep.2024.100536>

33. Statista. (2025, June 24). Share of people using social media platforms India 2022, by age group. <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1388571/india-social-media-usage-by-age-group/#statisticContainer>
34. Steinberger, P., & Kim, H. (2023). Social comparison of ability and fear of missing out mediate the relationship between subjective well-being and social network site addiction. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 14. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2023.1157489>
35. Tandon, A., Dhir, A., Talwar, S., Kaur, P., & Mäntymäki, M. (2021). Dark consequences of social media-induced fear of missing out (FoMO): Social media stalking, comparisons, and fatigue. *Technological Forecasting and Social Change*, 171, 120931. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.techfore.2021.120931>
36. Tian, J., Li, B., & Zhang, R. (2024). The impact of upward social comparison on social media on appearance anxiety: A moderated mediation model. *Behavioral Sciences*, 15(1), 8. <https://doi.org/10.3390/bs15010008>
37. Wang, H., Miao, P., Jia, H., & Lai, K. (2023). The dark side of upward social comparison for social media users: An investigation of fear of missing out and digital hoarding behavior. *Social Media + Society*, 9(1). <https://doi.org/10.1177/20563051221150420>
38. Wang, W., Zhou, K., Yu, Z., & Li, J. (2020). The cost of impression management to life satisfaction: Sense of control and loneliness as mediators. *Psychology Research and Behavior Management*, 13, 407–417. <https://doi.org/10.2147/prbm.s238344>
39. Wang, Y., & Wang, S. (2024). Short-video applications use and self-concept clarity among adolescents: The mediating roles of flow and social media self-expansion. *Acta Psychologica*, 249, 104469. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.actpsy.2024.104469>
40. Wang, Y., Tang, W., Cao, L., & Li, Y. (2022). Self-concept clarity and Internet addiction disorder among junior high school students: A moderate mediation model. *Frontiers in Psychiatry*, 13. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.989128>
41. Yang, Q., Van Den Bos, K., Zhang, X., Adams, S., & Ybarra, O. (2021). Identity lost and found: Self-concept clarity in social network site contexts. *Self and Identity*, 21(4), 406–429. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15298868.2021.1940270>
42. Yang, Y., Wang, H., Gong, S., & Qiu, Y. (2025). The relationship between self-concept clarity and meaning in life among adolescents: Based on variable-centered perspective and person-centered perspective. *Behavioral Sciences*, 15(7), 948. <https://doi.org/10.3390/bs15070948>
43. Yu, M., & Cingel, D. P. (2025). The development and validation of measurement scales of upward state social comparison on social media. *Behavioral Sciences*, 15(6), 743. <https://doi.org/10.3390/bs15060743>
44. Zhu, X., & Xiong, Z. (2022). Exploring association between social media addiction, fear of missing out, and self-presentation online among university students: A cross-sectional study. *Frontiers in Psychiatry*, 13. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.896762>