

Joy of Missing Out- (JOMO)- Could it be the Current Choice of the Youth?

Ms VIDHI DEDHIA

*UG Student of Department of Life Science
Ramnarain Ruia Autonomous College
Matunga, Mumbai (Affiliated to University of Mumbai)*

Dr ASHWINI DESHPANDE

*Assistant Professor, Department of Statistics
Ramnarain Ruia Autonomous College
Matunga, Mumbai, (Affiliated to University of Mumbai)*

Dr KANCHAN CHITNIS

*Associate Professor, Department of Life Science
Ramnarain Ruia Autonomous College
Matunga, Mumbai, (Affiliated to University of Mumbai)*

Abstract

The unpredictable and devastating covid-19 pandemic made people experience various effects on physical and mental health. Due to lockdown, social media was the prime source of information. Heavy dependence on social media because of Fear Of Missing Out (FOMO) had its negative effect on people. But there was a transformation in the mindset of the people, they learnt to let things go happily and log off from social media as they did not want to be updated with the fearful news displayed on social media. This phenomenon is called Joy of Missing Out (JOMO). To analyze this change and to study the prevalence of the feeling of JOMO in people, a cross sectional e-survey was carried out during the lockdown period. Multiple-choice questions pertaining to psychological factors of FOMO and JOMO were asked. The questionnaire had a self-scoring pattern. Every option in a particular question had different scores. The lowest scores corresponded to factors contributing to JOMO whereas the highest scores corresponded to FOMO. The data was then grouped into various age groups and analyzed using various statistical tools. A psychological shift towards JOMO was observed in the responses. Various independent factors contributing to the change in the score were correlated and the significant factors affecting the scores were determined using statistical tools. Those who had FOMO were given suggestions and interventions to shift towards a JOMO kind of mental state. This will overall bring a positive change in people's mindset and aid in their well-being.

Keywords: Covid-19 pandemic, JOMO, FOMO, Psychology, Social media, Well-being.

Introduction

Infectious diseases have always been proved to cause devastating damage and changes to mankind. As per the historical view, the physical aspects of the pandemic have been controlled more efficiently than before due to the advancements in science and technology. (Madhav et al, 2017). But the psychological effects have always been more severe and persisting leading to various other side illnesses. Previous studies have shown evidence of dominating psychological effects and changes that are a consequence of the pandemic. There has been rise in the risk of the mental health disorders (Brooks et.al, 2020)

The current covid-19 pandemic has brought a drastic change in the lives of people, like work from home online, emphasis on sanitation and personal care, constant social media updates of the number of infected cases, about the novel virus and many more. Earlier, it was noticed that people, especially the youth, often had a fear of missing out on things and thus were hooked up with social media (Pryzybylski et al, 2013). Digital Media overuse was reported in students and younger age groups because of FOMO.

FOMO which refers to Fear of Missing Out has always prevailed in the youth and led to social media overuse, but due to the current scenario and various

misleading information on social media, it is hypothesized that people are tending to let go things happily and logging off from social media willingly to avoid the misleading and fearful information that is displayed on the social media. A change in their mindset is observed as their psychology is swiftly transformed to JOMO which is Joy of Missing Out (Ahmad and Murad, 2020).

Literature Review

According to the previous research, covid-19 disease has been the 'most searched' disease on the internet. Internet-based searches on various aspects related to the covid-19, including the government policies, quarantine information, rules and regulations in lockdowns, daily cases, mortality rates and the important updates by the Government increased (Bento et.al, 2020). However, misleading information is more easily available than the truth that pops up as headlines on various unauthorized sites. The pandemic has led to an increase in the fear of contracting the covid-19 disease and it is accelerated by information available on social media. Research also suggested that online information on covid-19 disease contains misleading information which misguides people, increasing their interest further towards repeated search for information online, leading to excessive use of social media (Ahmad and Murad, 2020). Due to rising use of social media, communication and dissemination of information and news to people has become easy. It is fast and can spread true as well as misleading information, leading to fear and anxiety in people (Ahmad and Murad, 2020). Several myths and hypothetical aspects have been displayed on social media including false symptoms, incorrect information about the number of cases and availability of beds in the hospitals. There were many fake sites that displayed false Government measures and political controversies that led to anxiety in people that forced them to search for more information. World Health Organization (WHO) declared that they are fighting not only the pandemic but also a social media infodemic, as some believe that it has accelerated the spread of information worldwide fueling the panic and fear amongst the people (Hao and Basu, 2020). FOMO has been prevailing in the people before the pandemic and during the initial period of pandemic due to lack of knowledge and information.

But, as the time passed, it is assumed that people have realized that it is not necessary to always be online and logged in to the internet as against which they are logging off social media to avoid the displayed misleading and fearful information which accelerates the stress in people. Thus, people have changed their mindset to and feel the joy to miss out on the misleading and fearful information on the social media.

Hypothesis

- 1) The youth has moved from FOMO to JOMO as they have realized that being active on social media all the time is not necessary.
- 2) Misleading information on social media and change in mindset of people to be ready to let go, are the leading cause of adapting to JOMO.

Aim and Objectives

- 1) To study the prevalence and extent of the transition from FOMO to JOMO in the wake of covid-19 pandemic.
- 2) To analyze the psychological effects of covid-19 pandemic.
- 3) To analyze the correlation between social media and its effect on missing out
- 4) To promote a healthy lifestyle and mental well-being of the people during the pandemic, by providing some interventions to people with FOMO to reduce stress.
- 5) To prepare for future pandemics by promoting JOMO so that it would prevail in the people even after the current pandemic is over.
- 6) To analyze the post pandemic prevalence of JOMO

Rationale

It is thought that Covid pandemic brought change in the mindset of people, change in their perspective of what is happiness, an overall paradigm shift in their psychology to let things go, and that too happily. Thus, there is assumed to be a transition of mental status from FOMO to JOMO. JOMO is a positive feeling because of choice between mutually exclusive events. Has JOMO, the Joy of Missing Out emerged as a new choice of the youth, is the question to be answered. Is the youth happy to log off social media and ready to give up on it? If yes, could it be because they no longer want to be updated with the fearful news or

misleading information provided on social media? Social media played an important role pertaining to changes during covid-19 pandemic as it was on one hand the sole source of information as well as on the other hand quite often gave misleading information which eventually accelerated nosophobia (Ahmad and Murad, 2020) or has the youth realized how flimsy that media world could be sometimes, and that they would achieve their most coveted peace of mind by letting go.

These are some of the pertinent questions, aimed to be addressed in the survey carried out in this study. There has been a lot of research on social media and its correlation with FOMO, but very little is researched about JOMO. This study would investigate transition from FOMO to JOMO and its prevalence in the people of the age group of 15 to 30 years in the wake of the current covid-19 pandemic. It also investigates the prevalence of JOMO after the covid-19 pandemic.

Materials and Methods

Design

This quantitative study employed a cross-sectional e-survey design. The questionnaire used for data collection was self-reported. The data was kept confidential, and the participants willingly gave their responses. The study was conducted from July 2020. Participants were grouped according to their age and the data was sought pertaining to JOMO and FOMO. Analytical tests between different age groups and various other aspects were employed.

Respondents

Total 126 responses were obtained from people of different age groups (15-20 years, 21-35 years). The variety in age group was taken to compare the score and analyze the data based on age, JOMO and FOMO.

Materials

The research instrument employed was a self-scoring "FOMO-JOMO e-questionnaire" (appendix) made using google forms. The first part of the questionnaire was designed to collect demographic information (name, email, age, gender, profession, qualification, country, and state). The next section contained multiple choice questions pertaining to factors that were assumed to contribute to JOMO and FOMO with allotted scores to each question

with the lower scores corresponding to options that support JOMO and the high scoring options corresponding to FOMO. At the end of the questionnaire, the respondents were supposed to write the total score obtained by them and then they could themselves interpret their results based on the interpretation provided based on the range of scores whether they have FOMO, JOMO or they are balanced.

Procedure

Initially literature review was done, and the previous studies were analyzed, and the information was gathered. The pros and cons of the previous studies, their results were taken into consideration. Based on the previous studies and the current scenario, a hypothesis was set, and the aim and objectives were settled. Google forms tool was used to make the questionnaire which was then circulated among the people of age group between 15-35 years. This age group is proved to maximally use social media according to previous studies and thus this was used as the sample population for the study. After collecting the data, it was then bifurcated into two age groups and according to the scores obtained. The data was then exported to MS Excel and was categorized using filters for further statistical analysis. Statistical tools were used to determine various parameters contributing to FOMO/JOMO, the most significant factors that contribute to the existence of FOMO/JOMO and the extent of each aspect in the existing population. The questionnaire was circulated during the covid-19 pandemic to the respondents and a similar questionnaire was circulated during the post pandemic period to check if the results are consistent or they have changed after the pandemic.

Statistical Analysis

Statistical tests were performed for the data obtained. The data was presented as mean \pm SD. The data was analyzed using GraphPad Prism (ver. 9.0).

Various statistical tests were used to analyze the data including Spearman rank correlation test, Kruskal-Wallis test, Mann-Whitney U-test and multiple regression analysis. Spearman rank correlation is used to summarize the relationship between two variables. If the result is -1 it signifies perfect negative correlation and +1 denotes a perfect positive correlation between the two variables.

Kruskal Wallis H test, also known as one-way ANOVA, is used to determine if there are statistically significant differences between two or more groups of an independent variable on a dependent variable. Kruskal Wallis H test can be used for more than two groups whereas Mann Whitney U-test is used for 2 or less than two variables. The p values were compared, and the results were interpreted. Graphs were plotted using GraphPad Prism (ver. 9.0) and MS Excel. P-value less than 0.05 ($P < 0.05$) was considered as significant. Paired t test was used to analyze the scores of the respondents, before and after the pandemic.

Results

Demographic Information

The table below displays the demographic information of all the respondents like age, gender, location, profession, etc.

Table 1 The sample size (n=126) distribution demographic factors like gender and occupation

Demography	Categories	N	%
Gender	Male	32	25.4%
	Female	94	74.6%
Occupation	Students	115	90.5%
	Employed	11	9.5%

Table 2 Age wise distribution of the respondents Respondents were divided into 2 age groups

Age group (in years)	Number of respondents
15-20	69
21-35	57
Total	126

Table 3 Distribution based on the scores

Score range	Category	Number of respondents
Below 90	JOMO	43
95-130	Neutral	60
Above 130	FOMO	23

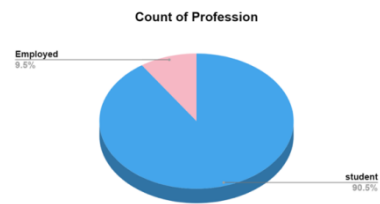


Figure 1 Profession of the respondents

Correlation between FOMO/JOMO and the Personality trait

A Spearman correlation test was performed using GraphPad Prism (ver 9.0) to find the correlation between the personality trait (introvert, extrovert) and FOMO/JOMO scores. According to the test, there was a positive correlation between the two as the $p < 0.0001$ was obtained.

Study of Factors Affecting FOMO/JOMO

Statistical analysis was done to study the effect of various individual independent variables on the dependent variable.

Independent variables: Personality trait, decision for the trip, conversation with a friend, watching series, uploading updates on social media, knowing things happening around.

The above independent variables were compared to the FOMO/JOMO scores which is a dependent variable.

Effect of the Personality Trait on FOMO/JOMO

It is seen that being an introvert who chooses to stay within boundaries and few people or an extrovert who loves to talk to people and easily befriends has a significant effect on scores denoting FOMO/JOMO. Mann Whitney test was performed and $p < 0.0001$ was obtained for the data which denoted that it had a significant effect. According to the results in the figure 2 below, it was seen that the more extroverted the person was, the more the fear of missing out. The introverts however had scores corresponding to joy of missing out as they did not fear missing out things as they talked and interacted less.

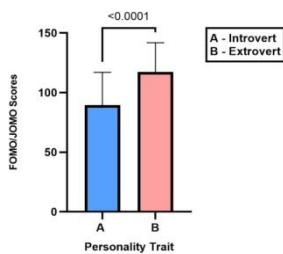


Figure 2 Correlation between FOMO/JOMO Scores vs Personality Trait of all Respondents

Effect of Going to a Trip on FOMO/JOMO

The decision of going on a trip planned by friends or staying at home has a significant effect on the FOMO/JOMO scores. Kruskal Wallis H test was performed to analyze the effect of decision going on the trip and the FOMO/JOMO scores, $p < 0.0001$ was obtained which denotes that there is a significant effect on FOMO/JOMO by the decision of going on a trip. According to figure 3, it was seen that the people who chose not to go for the trip and relax at home had lower scores corresponding to joy of missing the trip and those who would definitely go, had scores corresponding to FOMO.

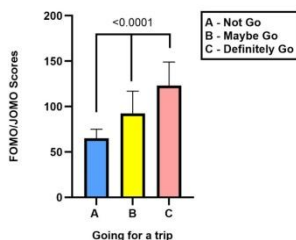


Figure 3 Correlation between Going for a Trip and FOMO/JOMO Scores of all Respondents

Effect of Change in the Attitude during Covid-19 Pandemic and FOMO/ JOMO Scores

A change in the attitude was seen in the pandemic with respect to letting go of things and not being constantly online and aware of updates. To analyze the effect of this change in the attitude on FOMO/JOMO scores, Kruskal Wallis H test was performed and $p = 0.0087$ was obtained denoting its significant effect on the scores. As per the figure 4, it was seen that those who agreed that they had noticed a change in their attitude had lower scores corresponding to JOMO and felt joy of missing out and

letting go things happily, whereas those who had not changed their attitude had high scores and thus feared missing out on things and important updates.

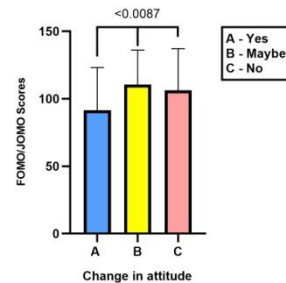


Figure 4 Correlation of Change in the Attitude and FOMO/JOMO Scores

Effect of Length of Conversation with a Friend on the FOMO/JOMO Scores

It is often noticed that the people who have long conversations with their peers often have a desire to know everything that is happening in their life. To analyze the effect of these conversations on the FOMO/JOMO scores, Kruskal Wallis H test was performed and $p < 0.0001$ was obtained denoting that there was a significant effect of length of conversation with the friend and the FOMO/JOMO scores. According to the Figure 5, it was seen that the respondents who tend to ignore the texts from their friend had low scores corresponding to joy of missing out and letting go long discussions with their friends while the ones who had long conversations with their peers had comparatively high scores corresponding to FOMO as they did not want to miss any update in their friend's life.

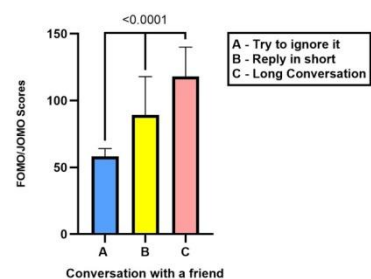


Figure 5 Correlation of Length of Conversation and FOMO/JOMO Scores

Effect of Updates on Everything Happening in the World and FOMO/JOMO Score

People who fear missing out on things and wish to know everything that is happening around often wish to be updated with information from various sources. To analyze its correlation with FOMO/JOMO scores, Mann Whitney test was performed and $p = 0.001$ was obtained which denotes that there was a significant effect of the desire to know everything in the world on the scores. According to the figure 6, it was seen that the respondents who did not care about the things happening in the world and relaxed, had a low score corresponding to JOMO and those who had the desire to know everything that was happening in the world, had comparatively high scores that corresponded to fear of missing out on things.

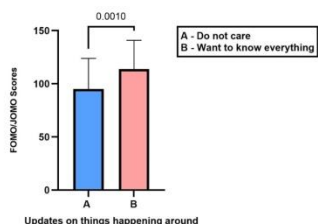


Figure 6 Correlation of Desire to know Everything and FOMO/JOMO Scores of all Respondents

Effect of Uploading about your Trip on Social Media on FOMO/JOMO Scores

It is often seen that the youth tend to upload pictures or information about each and every trip they go with their friends while few of them do not wish to reveal things publicly on social media. To analyze the effect of these updates on social media on the FOMO/JOMO scores Kruskal Wallis H test was performed and $p = 0.0001$ was obtained which denotes that updating about the trips on social media significantly affected the FOMO/JOMO scores. According to figure 7, it was observed that those respondents who always updated about their trips on social media had a high score corresponding to FOMO and as against the people who never uploaded on social media had low scores.

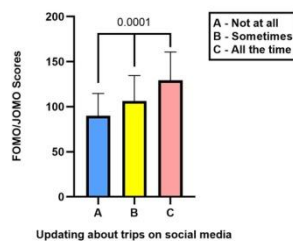


Figure 7 Correlation between Updating about Trips on Social Media and FOMO/JOMO Scores

Effect of taking Constant Updates from Friends of their Life on FOMO/JOMO Scores

Some people wish to be updated with everything that is happening in their friend's life and thus keep in constant touch with them for the updates of their life. To analyze the effect of keeping constant updates of friends' lives on FOMO/JOMO score, Kruskal Wallis H test was performed and $p < 0.0001$ was obtained which denotes significant effect on FOMO/JOMO scores. According to figure 8, it was seen that the respondents who took constant updates daily had a high score corresponding to FOMO and those who had low scores corresponding to JOMO did not bother about their friend's life.

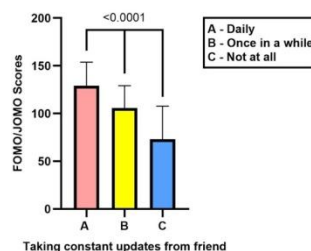


Figure 8 Correlation between Keeping Constant Updates and FOMO/JOMO Scores of all Respondents

Effect of Social Media Platform on FOMO/JOMO Scores

Social media overuse is often reported according to the previous studies, some social media apps like Facebook, Instagram, twitter, are mostly used to display information and updates publicly whereas apps like WhatsApp, hike, are mostly used to chat and converse with people. To analyze the effect of social media platforms on the FOMO/JOMO scores, Kruskal Wallis H test was performed and $p = 0.0002$ was obtained which denotes a significant

effect of social media platforms on the FOMO/JOMO scores. According to figure 9, it was seen that the respondents who did not use social media had a very low score corresponding to JOMO and the ones who used apps like Facebook and Instagram had a comparatively high score corresponding to FOMO.

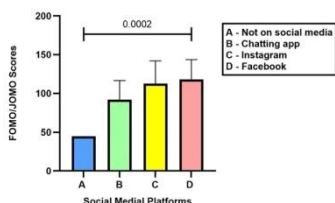


Figure 9 Correlation between Social Media Platforms and FOMO/JOMO Scores of all Respondents

Effect of Watching a Series on Trend on FOMO/JOMO Scores

People often tend to watch the series or movies that are in trend and suggested by people. People tend to watch every trending movie or series so that they do not miss it out whereas few of them do not consider it to be important to watch the trending series and movies. To analyze the effect of watching series on FOMO/JOMO scores, Kruskal Wallis H test was performed and $p < 0.0001$ was obtained denoting a significant effect on FOMO/JOMO scores. According to figure 9, it was seen that people who immediately watched the series had a high score corresponding to FOMO and those who ignored it had a low score corresponding to Joy of Missing Out on things.

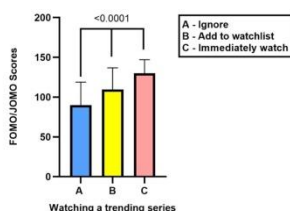


Figure 10 Correlation between Watching the Series in Trend and FOMO/JOMO Scores

Discussion

Total 126 respondents of age groups 15-35 from different states took part in the study and contributed their responses. Among 126 participants, 94 were females and 32 were males. A total of 69 participants were of the age

group 15-20 and 57 participants were of 21-35 years of age group. Most of them were students (90.5%) and only 9.5% of respondents were employed.

Most of the females felt a little anxious on seeing the pictures of their friends on social media all the time, proving that they feared missing out on it. Also, it was seen that 53.2% people worried a little on not been invited to a trip or an outing whereas 30.2% people did not worry at all signifying they did not fear of missing the outing as against which 16.7% people worried all the time about not being invited for the trip or the outing as the feared missing out on all the joy and fun. Many people get somewhat anxious when their friends do things without informing them prior to it as they worry about missing the important events in their friend's life. However, it was seen that social media detox was an emerging trend as people were active on just 1-3 social media sites. Also, while on a trip most of the people refrained from using their cellphones and used only for important calls. Interestingly 60.3% of people would choose to sit back at home and relax rather than going out shopping or for a party with their friends on a holiday and it indicated that people were happy to miss out on things and sit back home. Most of them checked on their friends just once in a while to know about their well-being and did not constantly worry to be updated about their life. There was much evidence that supported the inclination of people towards JOMO mindset and missing out on things rather than constantly being updated. Social media was proved to be important in this changing mindset as fake news and covid-19 updates had a negative impact on the people. On the contrary, when planning a trip or a party with friends, half of them would go for the trip rather than missing it. The reason for this may be that they were tired and bored of sitting at home due to the lockdown. During the pandemic, people somewhat agreed that they had changed their attitude to miss out on things and updates and let go things. Overall, according to the results obtained, signs of JOMO prevailed while many people were neutral and had a balanced psychology. Only a few of them had FOMO.

Conclusion

JOMO is emerging as the new trend during the covid-19 pandemic and the lockdown scenario, and the FOMO is however seen to be diminished among the people. The mindset of the people has changed to let go and miss out

on things during the lockdown and a swift transition from FOMO to JOMO is noticeable. Being updated on social media was no more important for people. It was clear that JOMO was dominating amongst the people during the pandemic. Later, a second survey-based questionnaire was circulated, and a Paired t test was performed based on the before and after scores of the respondents which showed no significant difference between the scores during and after the pandemic period. This indicated that there is a permanent change in the mindset of people and JOMO continued to dominate even in the post pandemic period.

Future Research

Further studies can be conducted to analyze the changes in the prevalence of FOMO/JOMO in the following years and the various reasons contributing to the change. It will be interesting to find if people have moved to JOMO after many years of the Covid 19 pandemic and if they have made JOMO their choice, well integrated in their way of life. Also, in future if such pandemics appear again, mental and psychological health can be maintained if the JOMO persists and we would be prepared for such pandemics if JOMO prevails even after many years post pandemic.

Declaration of Conflicting Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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Appendix: FOMO/ JOMO Questionnaire

[kindly write down the points for each question in the space provided and add them at the end to know your score.]

1. When you miss a planned get together or outing, it bothers you?
 - All the time = 10 points
 - Just a little = 5 points
 - Not at all = 0 points
2. You get worried when you find out that your friends are having fun without you?
 - All the time = 10 points
 - Just a little = 5 points
 - Not at all = 0 points
3. Do you enjoy meeting new people?
 - Yes = 10 points
 - No = 0 points
 - Sometimes = 5 points
4. You get anxious or nervous thinking about what your friends are up to?
 - All the time = 10 points
 - Just a little = 5 points
 - Not at all = 0 points
5. How many social networking sites are you active on?
 - More than 5 = 10 points
 - 3- 5 = 5 points
 - 1-3 = 0 points

6. When you are on a trip with family or friends you use the phone for?
- constantly checking your phone= 20 points
 - posting pictures = 10 points
 - For emergency calls= 5 points
 - switch off your phone = 0 points
7. You have a holiday, what will you do?
- Plan a party/ friends get together = 10 points
 - Shopping = 5 points
 - Relaxing at home = 0 points
8. Everyone is talking about a new series in trend that you haven't seen, what do you do?
- Immediately watch the series = 20 points
 - Add to your watch list = 10 points
 - You ignore it = 0 points
9. Which social media platform do you use the most ?
- Facebook = 20 points
 - Instagram = 15 points
 - YouTube = 10 points
 - Whatsapp, Snapchat, other chatting apps= 5 points
 - No, I don't use social media = 0 points
10. Do you take constant updates from your friends about their life?
- Yes, daily = 10 points
 - Yes, once in a while = 5 points
 - No, I do not bother about their life = 0 points
11. When you are having a good time, it is important for you to update on social media?
- All the time = 10 points
 - Sometimes = 5 points
 - Not at all = 0 points
12. What would you choose if given an option?
- Know everything that is happening in the world = 10 points
 - Do not care about anything, just relax and enjoy your life alone = 0 points
13. You received a text from your friend Do you?
- Have a long conversation = 20 points
 - Just reply in a word or two = 10 points
 - Try to ignore it = 0 points
14. Are you an introvert or extrovert
- An Extrovert, would love to have a conversation with and know more. = 10 points
 - Introvert, would love to mind my own business. = 0 points
15. Your friends have planned a trip and invited you. You will
- Definitely go = 20 points
 - May be you will go = 10 points
 - Not go and relax at home = 0 points.

Total Score _____

Above 150 = You are a FOMO

90 - 150 = You are Normal

Below 90 = You are a JOMO

Highest possible score= 200

Lowest possible score = 0

Normal score= 100