

**ROLE OF FOMO AND PSYCHOLOGICAL FLEXIBILITY IN
RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN OSTRACISM AND HYPERVIGILANCE
AMONG ADULTS WITH BODY IMAGE DISSATISFACTION**



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By

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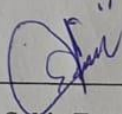
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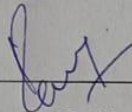
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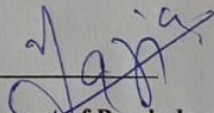
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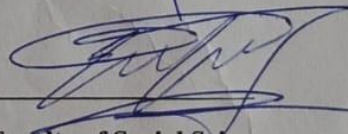


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DECLARATION

I, **Ms. HALEEMA FAHEEM**, Registration No. **491-FSS/MSCP/F-23** student of **MS** in the subject of Psychology, session **2023-2025**, hereby declare that the matter printed in the thesis titled: Role of FoMO and Psychological Flexibility in Relationship Between Ostracism and Hypervigilance among Adults with Body Image Dissatisfaction is my own work and has not been printed, published and submitted as research work, thesis or publication in any form in any University, Research Institution etc in Pakistan or abroad.

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RESEARCH COMPLETION CERTIFICATE

Certified that the research work contained in this thesis titled: Role of FoMO and Psychological Flexibility in Relationship Between Ostracism and Hypervigilance among Adults with Body Image Dissatisfaction has been carried out and completed by **Ms. HALEEMA FAHEEM**, Registration No. **491-FSS/MSCP/F-23** under my supervision.

Date

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Dedication

Dedicated to Allah Almighty for His endless blessings and to my parents for their unconditional love and support

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List of Abbreviations

APA	American Psychological Association
DSM5-TR	Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition, Text Revision
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
FoMO	Fear of Missing Out
OES	Ostracism Experience Scale
BHS	Brief Hypervigilance Scale
AAQ-II	Acceptance and Action Questionnaire-II
BDSS	Body Dysmorphic Symptom Scale
PF	Psychological Flexibility
SD	Standard Deviation
SE	Standard Error
CL	Confidence Level
r	Correlation Coefficient
α	Cronbach's Alpha

B	Standardized Regression Coefficient
N	Sample Size

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Abstract

The present study examined how ostracism predicts hypervigilance among young adults experiencing body image dissatisfaction, with fear of missing out (FoMO) as a mediator and psychological flexibility as a moderator. A total of 330 young adults were recruited through convenience sampling, all of whom reported high levels of body image dissatisfaction. Data were collected using validated self-report questionnaires measuring ostracism, hypervigilance, body image dissatisfaction, FoMO, and psychological flexibility. Analyses in SPSS included correlations, t-tests, ANOVAs, and moderated mediation. Results indicated that ostracism meaningfully predicted hypervigilance both directly and indirectly through FoMO. Moreover, the mediating role of FoMO was stronger among participants with lower psychological flexibility, indicating a noteworthy moderated mediation effect. These findings highlight the role of social isolation and body image dissatisfaction in fostering psychological vulnerability, particularly when coping resources are limited. The study contributes to psychological literature by clarifying the mechanisms linking ostracism to hypervigilance and suggests that interventions aimed at enhancing psychological adaptability and addressing FoMO-related behaviors may promote mental health and resilience in young adults.

Key words: Ostracism, Hypervigilance, Body Image Dissatisfaction, Psychological flexibility, Fear of Missing Out.

Chapter 1

Introduction

Ostracism means being left out, ignored, or rejected by others. This can happen directly, such as not being invited to join an activity, or in subtle ways, such as being excluded from conversations, social groups, or online interactions. It can take place in many areas of life, including schools, workplaces, families, friendships, and social media. When ostracism occurs, it hurts some of the most basic human needs the need to belong, to feel valued, to have control, and to feel that life has meaning. As a result, one can feel upset and try to rebuild their sense of connection and worth.

Ostracism is not just a small or passing experience. Even short periods of exclusion can cause emotional pain, such as sadness, loneliness, and feelings of worthlessness. When it continues for a longer time, it can lead to bigger problems, including stress, trouble managing emotions, and becoming overly alert to possible rejection. This shows that ostracism acts as a powerful form of social stress with long-term effects on mental health. In modern society, ostracism is not limited to face-to-face settings. With the growth of social media and digital communication, exclusion also happens online for example, being ignored in group chats, not invited to virtual gatherings, or being unfriended or unfollowed. Such experiences can make social disconnection even stronger and may lead to constant worrying about social acceptance. Because of these effects, it is important to study ostracism closely. It also lays the foundation for understanding its links with other psychological factors, including hypervigilance, body image dissatisfaction, fear of missing out (FoMO), and psychological flexibility. Ostracism has various forms as explained by Williams (2007);

- *Social exclusion*: deliberately left out of social interactions and activities.
- *Relational ostracism*: given the “silent treatment” by others such as close relationships.
- *Cyber ostracism*: being excluded or ignored in online settings, such as social media platforms.

Ostracism, especially when related to appearance, meaningfully affects body image. Chao and Jackson (2023) found that appearance-related social exclusion leads to increased body image dissatisfaction among young adults. This highlights the negative impact of ostracism on body image, supporting the idea that exclusion based on appearance intensifies body dissatisfaction, aligning with your study's focus on how ostracism influences body image concerns. Many people report that feeling judged or ostracized based on the appearance, further increase the psychological burden of body image dissatisfaction (Tiggemann, 2011).

There are sociocultural theories of body image disturbance which highlight the impact of social rejection and internal standards related to appearance in shaping body image dissatisfaction (Heinberg, 2001). Building on this, ostracism experiences may increase appearance related sensitivity, increasing negative body image perceptions and reinforce vulnerability to psychological distress.

In today's society body image dissatisfaction has appeared as a universal concern affecting the people across various age groups especially the adult population. This concept holds negative feelings and perception about one's physical appearance usually impacted by societal standards, interpersonal interactions, and social media. Body image is individual's own subjective experience of their body. Researches and clinical studies usually pay attention on negative or poor body image. Negative body image can include distorted perception of body image shape and size, like seeing a specific part of body or whole body as different then it objectively is, along with that such individuals also experience feeling of dissatisfaction or discomfort, anxiety or shame about their body. On the other hand, a satisfactory positive body image is considered as encompassing accurate perception of one's body size or shape as well as acceptance or comfort with their body.

Body dissatisfaction is a component of negative body image, holding negative feelings about one's body. Body dissatisfaction and negative body image are common among youth, it does not only relate with shape or size but also refer to dissatisfaction with general appearance, height,

and body parts. Body image dissatisfaction slightly differs from body image disturbance as in former person has accurate perception of his body but still dissatisfied with own body. In body image disturbance a person has distorted perception in the way he sees his body and this misperception may influence by his/her thoughts, feelings, and attention (Cooper & Timko, 2022).

The study of Cash (2004) explored that body image is multidimensional construct including feelings, thoughts, and behavior related to one's own appearance. There are various sociocultural factors which influence the thoughts of a person related to one's appearance. Several sociocultural theories have played vital role in explaining the development of body image concerns. These theories emphasize on social and cultural messages and their influence on individual's perception related to their bodies. These theories explained that the messages transmitted through interpersonal relationships and media contribute to shaping one's appearance related beliefs by promoting externally defined beauty standards as desirable and ideal (Thompson et al., 1999; Fitzsimmons-Craft, 2011). These standards boost oneself to self-monitor and discipline the body in chase of these ideals, leading to dissatisfaction and psychological stress.

Body image dissatisfaction refers to having negative thoughts and feelings about one's physical appearance, essentially feeling unhappy with the way one's body looks. It is a discrepancy between how a person perceives their body and how they wish their body looked. Body dysmorphic is a term often used by the public to express body dissatisfaction but it is attribute of body dysmorphic disorder also called as body dysmorphophobia. The fifth edition of American's psychiatric Association's Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders-5TR define body dysmorphic disorder as preoccupation with perceived defect or a marked excessive concern where there is slight physical anomaly with associated noteworthy distress and functional impairment. In BDD individuals engage in repetitive behaviors such as mirror checking, excessive grooming, and constant comparison with others which ultimately results in important emotional distress and functional impairment. This disorder is associated with anxiety, guilt, shame, and poor insight which sometimes reach to delusional level. Muscle dysmorphia a subtype, involves the belief of

being inadequately muscular. Body dysmorphic disorder often coexist with other psychiatric disorders like social anxiety disorder, major depressive disorder, and obsessive compulsive disorder. People with body dysmorphic disorder alarmingly show high rates of suicidal ideation and suicidal attempts. Regardless of its seriousness, body dysmorphic disorder often underdiagnosed due to its low patient disclosure and clinician unawareness. The prevalence rate of this disorder vary in different settings, from 1.9 % in general population to 20.1 in cosmetic surgery clinics. Instead of seeking professional help early, many individuals spend a heavy amount of time worrying about their appearance, repeatedly checking mirrors, comparing themselves with others, and even investing significant money and energy into altering or hiding perceived flaws. This constant preoccupation highlights how body image concerns can take over daily life and lead to distress (Singh & Veale, 2019).

Many people nowadays are worried about at least one part of their body. Having negative evaluation of one's body could be the expression of body image dissatisfaction. Negative thoughts and feelings about one's body are defined as body image dissatisfaction. It is considered as one of the most important stressor related to body (Thompson et al., 1999).

Previous studies shown that female adolescents and women of all ages report body image dissatisfaction. On the other hand, some studies revealed that body dissatisfaction level varied across different age groups (Duncan et al., 2006). Some studies show that importance of appearance appear to decrease with age (Pliner et al., 1990). Tinger mann and Lynch (2001), also found that in group of females from 20-84 years the importance of appearance was lower in older than in younger women. One of the study (Oberg & Tornstam, 1999) found that women placed more importance to their appearance than men did.

Social media usage contributes to impact appearance related concerns as the study by Frost and Rickwood (2017) showed that the time spend on using social media such as Facebook, photo-based activities, and high volume of peer comments all contribute to poor body image and internalization of thin body-type ideals. Psychological well-being is also negatively impacted by

these standards.

Sociocultural Influences and Psychological Processes Related to Body Image

Moreover, sociocultural viewpoints have intensified the development of universal beauty standards. Irrespective of gender and cultural variation, a global tendency towards a uniform beauty ideal is becoming evident: slender, toned yet curvy bodies for women, and muscular, lean physiques for men (Widdows, 2018). According to recent studies, social comparisons especially those that take place on social media are crucial in determining how people perceive their bodies. People commonly compare their appearance to the idealized representations found on platforms like Facebook and Instagram, which usually display carefully curated and unattainable ideals of beauty (Fardouly et al., 2015). A sense of discontent is likely to surface when there is a perceived discrepancy between one's actual body and these socially produced ideals. Repeated exposure to these comparisons can make individuals more self-conscious, trigger negative emotions, and increase susceptibility to body image issues, including anxiety and low self-esteem (Hogue & Mills, 2019).

In the context of body image, repeatedly comparing oneself with others perceived as more attractive can heighten self-criticism and internalization of appearance ideals, which are rarely attainable. This cycle not only fosters body dissatisfaction but may also contribute to the development of hypervigilance, where individuals frequently monitor their body and social appearance. Research suggests that heightened surveillance of appearance can amplify attentional biases toward perceived flaws, reinforcing anxiety and avoidance behaviors (Rogers et al., 2018). Hypervigilance in body image contexts often involves fear of being negatively evaluated, leading to maladaptive coping mechanisms such as social withdrawal, appearance-related anxiety, excessive grooming, or concealment behaviors (Veale et al., 2014).

Moreover, the pervasive influence of social media also increases the likelihood of fear of missing out (FoMO), which exacerbates preoccupation with social approval and appearance-based

comparisons. Individuals high in FoMO are more likely to engage in compulsive social media use, reinforcing exposure to unattainable beauty standards and heightening body dissatisfaction (Przybylski et al., 2013; Dhir et al., 2018). This process may further interact with hypervigilance by keeping individuals in a constant state of alertness about how they are perceived by others.

Another psychological mechanism that shapes responses to sociocultural pressures is psychological flexibility, which refers to the ability to adaptively regulate thoughts and behaviors in alignment with personal values despite negative emotions (Kashdan & Rottenberg, 2010). Lower psychological flexibility has been linked to rigid adherence to beauty ideals and maladaptive body image coping strategies, whereas greater flexibility predicts resilience against sociocultural appearance pressures (Sandoz et al., 2013). Importantly, psychological flexibility acts as a protective factor, helping individuals manage distress caused by social comparison and preventing the escalation into hypervigilant or avoidance-based behaviors.

Taken together, sociocultural influences not only drive the internalization of unrealistic beauty standards but also interact with psychological processes such as hypervigilance, FoMO, and psychological inflexibility, thereby shaping the trajectory of body image concerns.

People who are excessively concerned about their body image usually become more sensitive about how they are seen by others, they may start to anticipate and perceive rejection from others based on their appearance. This can cause ostracism in them which means being ignored, rejected, left out, treated as less important by others (Williams, 2007). A literature analysis was conducted by Smart-Richman and Leary (2009) on the impact of social rejection and it was found that there are various psychological implications that results from experiences of rejection from members of society. Feelings of rejection can arise in various social contexts, including cases of bullying, avoidance, betrayal, neglect, exclusion, discrimination, and ostracism. Although the explicit interpersonal harm caused by these events varies, they are similar in posing threat to need for belongingness and may reduce relational value, which can lead to feelings of rejection. when

these relational values are low, individuals experience emotional distress including sadness, anxiety, emotional numbness, loneliness, and general distress feelings. In addition to this, it was also found that people frequently withdraw psychologically, socially, and physically after experiencing social rejection in order to prevent further suffering. A fear of being harmed by others, social anxiety, and low self-esteem can all be brought on by this withdrawal.

Perceiving a purposeful exclusion or being ostracized from social encounter that results in generation of feelings as being devalued is known as social rejection (Beekman et al., 2017; Leary, 2017). In other words, the degree to which individuals believe their relationship with others is important, relevant, and useful determines whether they experience acceptance or rejection. Even if being included people can still feel rejected, for it there is no need for them to see observable signs of rejection to feel rejection. The underlying assessment of any real, potential, or imagined behavior, or lack of that (such as being ignored) that makes someone to feel their relational value is lower than one wants is what induces feelings of rejection (Leary, 2017). Examples of this include a child on the playground who is selected last for a team sport, a wife whose husband would rather watch TV than talk to her, and small insults like unanswered phone calls, critical remarks, and teasing.

Being ostracized is considered very harmful because it threatens basic human needs like feeling accepted, feeling good about oneself, having control, and living meaningful life. When individuals experience ostracism, they seek further isolation by withdrawing from social interactions, which has negative effects on their overall health and mental well-being. Even though socially rejected people are temporarily isolated, intentionally isolating themselves from people deprives them of opportunities to reestablish social ties and connections (Williams, 2009). Ostracism typically hurts the individual who experience it regardless of either it is enacted by relatives/ close friends or by strangers (Nezlek et al., 2015). Social rejection causes mood and emotional disturbance, leading to reduction in happiness and overall well-being, physical health problems, and risk behaviors (Gere & MacDonald, 2010).

Results of the study conducted by beyens et al. (2016) indicated that people with high need to belong, especially those who felt rejected by others used social media in an attempt to fulfill belonging needs. Core psychological needs are threatened by ostracism and they can be satisfied by having stable and supportive interpersonal relationships, the need for belongingness, self-esteem, meaningful existence and control are all threatened by ostracism (Cacioppo et al., 2006).

The study by Ren et al. (2018) found that this is the first stage which people experience when they are excluded, in the next stage they try to overcome this pain by finding ways to reconnect or protect themselves.

The need to form and maintain social bonds is rooted in evolutionary principles, according to which those who form attachments with other people are more likely to survive as compared to isolated individuals (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). The study also highlighted that individual differences in the intensity of person's need to belong are caused by biopsychosocial factors, these evolved processes cause tendency to fear and avoid threats to belonging. When individuals experience ostracism, the resulting threat to their fundamental need for belonging often heightens sensitivity to social cues. This increased vigilance toward potential rejection or exclusion can gradually manifest as hypervigilance, where individuals become overly alert to signs of negative evaluation or social threat (Williams, 2007).

Chronic Ostracism and Emergence of Hypervigilance

If social rejection continues for longer period of time, then they may feel hopeless and helpless which lead to emotional distress. This ostracism can elevate anxiety in individuals and make them vigilant for further rejections in future. After experiencing ostracism multiple times, they may become sensitive to the possibility of rejected or judge negatively by others, which ultimately leads to constant alertness to social threats and increased awareness. Hypervigilance is characterized by an enhanced state of sensory sensitivity and increased attention to perceived threats. It often manifests as excessive worry, a constant scanning of the environment for potential

dangers, and heightened awareness of social rejection (Perry et al., 2015).

It is found that when social cues indicate dangers to belonging (such as social exclusion) and social stimuli signal potential sources to meet requirements to belonging, increased cognitive resources are used. When social cues are seen as either enhancing or threatening person's sense of belonging, people will pay close attention to them and in this way use more cognitive efforts to analyze them (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; DeWall & Bushman, 2011; Gere & MacDonald, 2010).

Studies found that ostracized individuals feel compelled to further seek isolation as the research by Buhs & Ladd (2001) explored that rejected children tend to disconnect from the other children in classroom settings and they hold profound desire to avoid school. Likewise, the conflicting experiences with partner is the primary reason why individuals prefer to isolate themselves (Wesselmann et al., 2014). This withdrawal behavior could exacerbate feelings of further rejection and cause emotional distress, leading to heightened sensitivity to future social threats. This elevated sensitivity and heightened awareness may cause hypervigilance in which individual constantly alert to the possibility of further social rejection.

Theoretical Perspective related to Body Image Dissatisfaction

According to need to belong theory of Baumeister & Leary (1995) humans have innate needs for making social connections and belongingness demonstrate that humans have the motivation to form and build interpersonal relationships, and absence of these relationships, particularly social rejection or ostracism can result in negative outcomes. For those young adults who experience body image dissatisfaction, this impact of social rejection become profound. When individuals experience this rejection or ignorance because of their appearance, they are likely to feel depression, anxiety, or loneliness which effect their well-being negatively. Although the need to belong theory explains that humans are innately motivated to establish and maintain a minimal number of meaningful and long-lasting relationships with others, motivation of every person is different in how much one wants to fit in and be accepted (Leary et al., 2013).

In another model given by Williams (2007), named as Monitoring system theory, describe that individuals continuously monitor their social environment for cues of acceptance or rejection. In ostracized individuals this monitoring system is activated and they become alert for social threats. For young adults with body image dissatisfaction, this intensified monitoring is relatable, as they are more sensitive to any signs of social rejection or judgment related to their physical appearance. This elevated sensitivity to social cues cause anxiety or distress. The theory posits that the monitoring system is adaptive in a way that people stay alert to social cues and adjust their behavior to fit in and avoid rejection, but if this rejection prolong for long time among adults with body image dissatisfaction, their sensitivity to these signals become too strong. This can easily lead to hypervigilance where they constantly look for signs of rejection specifically related to their appearance.

In the context of body image dissatisfaction, even minor signals of rejection or being negatively evaluated may be seen as substantially threatening, stimulating hypervigilance toward social signals. Deepening this understanding, it is necessary to identify that young adults with body image dissatisfaction experience elevated emotional reactions other than constant exploration for signs of rejection, when they observe themselves as rejected from social activities or gatherings.

Nowadays, constant exposure to idealized representations of others' lives, especially social media has strengthened this negative relationship. The psychological phenomenon called as the Fear of Missing Out (FoMO) becomes predominantly related in this context. Fear of missing out can play a major role in explaining how ostracism or feeling of social rejection can lead to hypervigilance and negative emotional responses in individuals who are already facing body image dissatisfaction.

Fear of Missing Out (FoMO) refers to a pervasive anxiety that others might be engaging in rewarding experiences from which one is absent, particularly within online or digital contexts. It reflects a strong desire to remain continually connected through social media to monitor others' activities and ensure inclusion in virtual social circles. Przybylski et al. (2013) originally

conceptualized FoMO as a self-regulatory state driven by unmet social needs for relatedness and belonging, while later research by Buglass et al. (2017) and Beyens et al. (2016) linked FoMO specifically to problematic social media engagement and emotional distress among digital users. Thus, FoMO represents both a cognitive and behavioral pattern emerging from excessive online connectivity, where individuals fear social exclusion or disconnection from online peer experiences. Before social media, people were not frequently exposed to social lives of other people on a wide scale (Buglass et al., 2017). On the other hand, the rise in social media use has made other people's social life more dominant, increasing exposure to social gatherings to which one was not invited (Buglass et al., 2017). Exposure to these missed events is said to provide the impression that the lives of one's social media friends are more desirable, which in turn leads to fear of missing out on major social experiences (Buglass et al., 2017).

The study of Edmonds (2021) explored that social media act as source of promoting unrealistic standards of beauty through different social media platforms. Frequent exposure to these idealized body images set unattainable expectations about how young adults behave and look. When these expectations are not fulfilled, it eventually leads to body image dissatisfaction and low self-esteem. This study also found that such idealized standards trigger social rejection, feeling of exclusion, and emotional distress, eventually intensifying hypervigilance for further cues related to social rejection.

Psychological Needs and FoMO

The fear of missing out is believed to be caused by psychological needs deficits in relatedness (i.e., connection with others), competence (i.e., effective action), and autonomy (i.e., personal initiative), as people with these deficits in these needs are sensitive to a fear of missing out on events that have implications for psychological wellbeing (Przybylski et al., 2013). This sensitivity causes a behavioral dysregulation that increases social media use, frequently to problematic levels, in the attempt to fulfill these psychological needs. In addition to this, the fear

of missing out emerges from deficiencies in the need to belong, where exposure to missed events presents a social danger and ostracizes people, which thwarts their need for belonging (Baker et al., 2016; Buglass et al., 2017).

FoMO as a Mediator Between Ostracism and Emotional Distress

Fear of missing out may act as mediating factor between experiences of social rejection (ostracism) and emotional distress (hypervigilance). The study by Liu et al. (2023) showed that individuals who feel lonely or avoid social interactions are likely to experience fear of missing out, which in turn intensifies level of stress, depression, and anxiety in such individuals.

Need to belong is supposed to increase fear of missing out on social activities because emotional distress is experienced as a result of unfulfilled social belonging needs which in turn motivates people to use social media to satisfy their needs. Beyens et al. (2016) developed and assess model that explored the mediating role of fear of missing out (FoMO) in relationship between social demands (such as need to fit in), Facebook use, and stress related to Facebook.

In the study of Oberst et al., (2017), FoMO was mediating the relationship between psychopathological symptoms like depression, anxiety and their negative outcomes. Considering these findings, it is suggested in the present study that FoMO may mediate the relationship between ostracism and hypervigilance among young adults with body image dissatisfaction. Fear of missing out on friend's activities was found to be positively associated with need to belong with others in study by James et al. (2017). The link between the fear of missing out and social rejection (ostracism) is not directly examined in the literature (Perna, 2020).

As FoMO describe the mechanism of how ostracism may intensify emotional distress by elevating feelings of exclusion and fear of missing out, the phenomenon of psychological flexibility can serve as moderating and protective factor by helping individuals to cope with experiences of social exclusion and reduce vulnerability to distress.

Psychological Flexibility as defined by Steven C. Hayes and based on acceptance and

commitment therapy, is the ability to adapt one's thoughts and behaviors to changing situational demands, to be open to and aware of present-moment experiences, and to pursue valued goals despite challenging thoughts and emotions (Bond et al., 2013). It is based on six key processes that help to break free from rigid patterns of thoughts and behavior: acceptance, being present, cognitive diffusion, values, self as context, and committed actions.

Building blocks of Psychological Flexibility

Although researchers disagree over the precise mechanisms and elements of executive functioning, it is crucial for promoting self-regulation and psychological flexibility. According to Diamond (2013), executive functions are higher level cognitive processes that are mainly controlled by the prefrontal cortex part of brain. These processes enable people to modify their behavior, plan, focus, and suppress reactions in response to changing conditions. Goal-directed behavior and adaptive self-regulation depend on the ability to refocus attention and alter cognitive sets, which are possible through these processes (Teper et al., 2013). Particularly in stressful or uncertain situations, it enables the thoughts and actions to modify in accordance with personally chosen goals, competent executive functioning is therefore important to psychological flexibility.

Content of a person's consciousness, situational awareness, and capacity to concentrate on contextually relevant elements are all dependent on what they pay attention to. Passive, bottom-up cognitive techniques are those to which people are more vulnerable, as they trigger automatic or dominating behavioral responses when they lack this control. In complicated or unexpected situations, these default behaviors can be maladaptive, notwithstanding their occasional efficiency (Kashdan & Rottenberg, 2010). To become psychological flexible, an individual need to consciously stop their automatic reactions and choose those responses that are suitable to the situation by using self-control and having understanding of what is the requirement of situation.

According to Hayes et al. (2011), negative emotional experiences are aspect of human development that are unable to be avoided and are most noticeable during identity transitions,

social role changes, or when achieving momentous life objectives. According to Bond et al. (2011), a tendency to categorize such events as negative right away and make an effort to repress, escape, or avoid them is a sign of psychological inflexibility and is associated with lower wellbeing.

Therefore, psychological flexibility is characterized by the capacity to stay focused on the here and now while preserving mental energy for future difficulties. In complex contexts, humans frequently use stereotypes, habits, and heuristics to have less cognitive stress. Although these automated processes might be adaptive, they can also result in judgements that are biased or rigid. In particular, stereotyping shows an excessive dependence on incomplete or unrelated data and an inability to revise opinions in light of fresh or contextually relevant data. According to Fiske and Taylor (2020), this rigidity impairs social functioning and lowers the caliber of interpersonal interactions. Therefore, psychological flexibility is being aware of the limitations of automatic thought patterns and remaining receptive to fresh insights and information.

According to Gloster et al. (2017), psychological flexibility can act as a buffer in association between stress and negative psychological outcomes. Also those who are more psychologically flexible usually report lower levels of distress, anxiety, and depression during stressful events of life (Masuda et al., 2011). The two terms related to psychological flexibility are experiential acceptance and experiential avoidance. Experiential avoidance means to avoid specific internal experiences, even if this avoidance has harmful results (Hayes et al., 2004). On the other hand, experiential acceptance is defined as, to fully engage with all thoughts, feelings, and sensations even when they are difficult, and this is the key element of psychological flexibility (Bond et al., 2011).

One of the studies by Wesselmann et al. (2013), individuals with higher psychological flexibility contemplate less on their ostracism experiences, which leads to faster emotional recovery. This is relatable with the current study where psychological flexibility moderates ostracism and its resulting psychological distress that is hypervigilance in the present study. Those

high in psychological flexibility may better adapt with painful emotions which come from ostracism, without doing excessive struggle.

Moderated-Mediation Model

In addition to simple moderation, the present study uses moderated-mediation model. Psychological flexibility is supposed to moderate the direct relationship of ostracism and hypervigilance and the indirect relationship through the mediator of FoMO. This shows that psychological flexibility will influence the mediator's strength that is FoMO. Moderated mediation models are normally used in psychological researches to gain understanding of complex pathways and explain how and when effects occur (Preacher et al., 2007). Statistically, moderated mediation tests whether the strength of an indirect effect varies as a function of a moderator variable (Hayes, 2018). This approach goes beyond simple mediation or moderation by examining conditional indirect effects

Furthermore, previous studies emphasize the positive link of ostracism with social vigilance, as individuals become more sensitive to social threats (Wesselmann et al., 2012). As for the current study, feelings of exclusion may increase the sensitivity of individuals with body image dissatisfaction about social evaluation that could lead to psychological distress or hypervigilance.

Likewise, FoMO has been associated with increased level of depression, anxiety, and distress (Oberst et al., 2017). Among young adults with body image dissatisfaction, fear of missing out may make the impact of ostracism stronger. Psychological inflexibility, manifested by active avoidance of unpleasant experiences may predict higher distress (Bond et al., 2011). For young adults who are not satisfied with their appearance, lower level of psychological flexibility can resist coping of social exclusion, which may lead to high level of hypervigilance in them.

Regardless of these associations individually, there is still gap in literature related to the association between ostracism, FoMO, and psychological flexibility among young adults with body image dissatisfaction. So the present study aims to overcome these loop holes by proposing

moderated mediation model by investigating how ostracism predicts hypervigilance among young adults with body image dissatisfaction, taking psychological flexibility as moderator and FoMO as a mediator.

Theoretical Framework

To sum up the discussion, the present study examines the role of psychological flexibility and fear of missing out (FoMO) in the relationship between ostracism and hypervigilance among adults with body image dissatisfaction. Specifically, a moderated mediation model 58 of SPSS Process macro is used in the study in which fear of missing out mediates the relationship between ostracism and hypervigilance, and psychological flexibility moderates this mediation along with direct moderation. Numerous theories provide the conceptual framework for understanding the relationship among these variables, the Temporal Need-Threat Model of Ostracism, Social Comparison Theory, Self- Discrepancy Theory, Objectification Theory, Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT), Self- Determination Theory, and Cognitive Behavioral Theory (CBT).

The Temporal Need-Threat Model of ostracism given by (Williams, 2009) provides a foundational theoretical framework for understanding the psychological effects of social exclusion. According to this model, ostracism threatens four fundamental psychological needs: belongingness, self-esteem, control, and meaningful existence. When these needs are unfulfilled, individuals experience emotional distress and increased sensitivity to social cues which is usually exhibited as hypervigilance. For individuals with body image dissatisfaction, these threats can be particularly important, as perceived social acceptance and physical appearance are dependent on sense of belonging and self-esteem. Therefore, ostracism may intensify their responses related to hypervigilance, as they become increasingly attentive to potential signs of rejection or negative evaluation from others.

To understand body image dissatisfaction in the context of social exclusion, numerous

appropriate theories are there. Self-Discrepancy Theory suggests that psychological distress arises when there is a perceived gap between an individual's actual self and their ideal self. In the case of body image dissatisfaction, individuals may perceive that they fail to meet societal or internalized standards of physical attractiveness, intensifying their vulnerability to social rejection. Objectification Theory further explains the ways like societal pressures and media portrayals that contribute to body image dissatisfaction, particularly among young adults. This theory explains that individuals internalize an observer's perspective on their bodies, leading to chronic self-surveillance and appearance-related anxiety. When these individuals experience ostracism, it may reaffirm their perceived physical inadequacies, exacerbating their vigilance to social threats. The Tripartite Influence Model complements these perspectives by highlighting how peers, parents, and media shape body image concerns. This model is rooted in sociocultural theory and posits that these three sources exert pressure through mechanisms such as appearance comparison and internalization of the thin ideal. These pressures increase the likelihood of body image dissatisfaction, which in turn sensitizes individuals to social exclusion.

Fear of Missing Out (FoMO) is a relevant psychological construct in the context of modern digital socialization, especially among young adults. Fear of missing out is characterized by a pervasive apprehension that others might be having rewarding experiences from which one is absent. This phenomenon is closely linked to Social Comparison Theory (Festinger, 1957), which asserts that individuals evaluate their self-worth by comparing themselves to others. In digital environments, constant exposure to curated social media content enhances upward social comparisons, particularly in relation to appearance, lifestyle, and social engagement. For individuals with body image dissatisfaction, these comparisons are often unfavorable, further exacerbating feelings of exclusion and FoMO. Furthermore, Self-Determination Theory (SDT) posits that fear of missing out may stem from unmet psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Ostracism undermines the need for relatedness, which can lead to compensatory behaviors such as increased social media usage and heightened vigilance to social

exclusion. Thus, fear of missing out can act as a mediator that explains how ostracism contributes to hypervigilance: individuals who fear being excluded may become increasingly alert to social cues that signal rejection.

Psychological flexibility, grounded in the Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) framework (Hayes et al., 2011), is conceptualized as the ability to remain in contact with the present moment and to adapt behaviorally to changing situational demands in a way that is consistent with one's values. In this study, psychological flexibility is posited to moderate the effect of ostracism on hypervigilance by influencing how individuals interpret and respond to exclusionary experiences. Individuals with high psychological flexibility are more likely to accept distressing thoughts and feelings without attempting to control or avoid them, thus reducing the impact of ostracism. This process can interrupt the chain of events that leads from ostracism to FoMO and ultimately to hypervigilance. By promoting values-driven action and mindful awareness, psychological flexibility may buffer the individual from maladaptive coping mechanisms, such as hypervigilance. The relational roots of ACT in Relational Frame Theory (RFT) further support the idea that individuals construct meaning through language and relational networks. Those with low flexibility may fuse with thoughts like "I am being excluded because I am unattractive," which heightens distress and vigilance. In contrast, psychological flexibility allows for defusion from such thoughts, thereby mitigating their emotional and behavioral consequences.

Hypervigilance, defined as heightened sensory sensitivity accompanied by an exaggerated intensity of behaviors whose purpose is to detect threats, is often associated with anxiety and trauma. Cognitive Behavioral Theory (CBT) helps explain how maladaptive thought patterns contribute to hypervigilant behavior. According to CBT, individuals develop schemas based on prior experiences such as being ostracized or judged based on appearance that influence how they perceive and interpret future social interactions. In this context, ostracized individuals with body image dissatisfaction may hold core beliefs such as "I am not good enough" or "Others are always

judging me,” leading to constant scanning of the environment for signs of disapproval. These cognitive distortions reinforce hypervigilance, particularly when combined with low psychological flexibility and high FoMO.

The proposed theoretical framework integrates the aforementioned theories into a cohesive model that explains how ostracism can lead to hypervigilance, particularly among young adults with body image dissatisfaction. The Temporal Need-Threat Model provides the foundation for understanding the initial psychological impact of ostracism. Self-Discrepancy Theory, Objectification Theory, and the Tripartite Influence Model explain the heightened sensitivity to social exclusion in individuals with body image issues. Fear of missing out, influenced by Social Comparison Theory and Self-Determination Theory, is positioned as a mediator that explains the psychological pathway from ostracism to hypervigilance. Psychological flexibility, as conceptualized in ACT and informed by RFT, acts as a moderator that can weaken the effects of ostracism and FoMO. Finally, CBT provides a lens for understanding how maladaptive cognitions lead to the development and maintenance of hypervigilance. Together, this framework not only advances theoretical understanding but also offers practical implications for intervention strategies aimed at enhancing psychological flexibility and addressing FoMO in young adults experiencing social exclusion and body image dissatisfaction.

Literature Review

Ostracism and Psychological Outcomes

The current literature review logically examines core psychological constructs that are foundation of present research study: ostracism, hypervigilance, fear of missing out, psychological flexibility, and body image dissatisfaction. Theoretical framework is used as foundation to define each psychological construct, supported by empirical findings to clarify the relationship between all these constructs. After carefully exploring the relevant studies, this section aims to provide foundational knowledge by understanding how fear of missing out and psychological flexibility

may interact with ostracism or experiences of social exclusion and hypervigilance among young adults with body image dissatisfaction.

Ostracism and social exclusion are experiences that impact the psychological well-being of an individual. Ostracism means being ignored or excluded by others that can lead to negative outcomes related to one's emotions, behavior, and cognition. In a research by Williams (2007), this phenomenon of ostracism is studied deeply where individuals, who ostracized by others, reported increased loneliness, anxiety, and depression, which increase their chances of mental health challenges.

Beyond emotional consequences, cognitive process also influences by experiences related to ostracism and social exclusion, Baumeister et al. (2002), investigated that ostracism experiences can impact self-regulation and decrease intelligent thought of individual, indicating that a person become more alert and active when experience social exclusion. This state of heightened alertness goes well with the concept of hypervigilance, where individual become excessively alert to potential social rejection.

William's Temporal Need-Threat Model

William's temporal Need-Threat model provide understanding about the impact of ostracism on individual's well-being. This model explained three stages which may act as response to ostracism: first stage is reflexive where individual immediately feel pain and distress after experiencing ostracism, next stage is reflective, in it one uses coping strategies and cognitive appraisal to reduce negative response, last stage is resignation, in this stage when ostracism persists for longer time period, person may feel helpless and depressed (Williams, 2009). Actually in this last stage of TNT model, individual may likely to experience negative consequences in life, one of which may be to become more sensitive for future cues related to ostracism.

An experimental study was conducted in the research conducted by Williams (2007), where a

virtual ball-tossing game was used to stimulate ostracism. Participants were thinking that they are playing with others, but after initial participation. This experiment was utilized to prompt feelings of ostracism and its psychological impacts were studied.

Psychological impact of ostracism is evident from the literature as a research done by Reinhard et al. (2020) found that the symptoms of individuals with psychiatric disorders such as depression, anxiety, and borderline personality disorder worsened with the experience of ostracism. A vicious cycle is created in this way where mental health symptoms also increase the likelihood of exclusion, which ultimately increase those symptoms.

Research consistently explored the impact of ostracism on mental well-being. For instance, Tang (2011) found that those who experienced frequent episodes of ostracism showed increase levels of vigilance towards social cues and increased desire to reconnect emphasizing both emotional distress and cognitive hyperawareness. Building on this, Poon et al. (2020) also showed that even observing ostracism activates negative emotions, social pain, and reduce self-regulation thereby impacting psychological well-being of an individual. This effect is especially obvious in teenagers, for whom peer rejection or neglect causes severe discomfort (Leary, 1990) and is highly stressful (Frankel, 1990).

In the context of present study, individuals who experience body image dissatisfaction may be likely to have heightened vigilance following social exclusion. These experiences can activate threat monitoring systems which impact cognitions as explained by Williams (2007). Supporting this, the research conducted by Deros (2021) also found that socially anxious individuals showed increased attentional bias after experiencing ostracism, demonstrating the process of how ostracism may strengthen hyper-vigilant processing in psychologically challenged people.

Ostracism, when related with body image, noticeably affects appearance related concerns. It is evident by study of Chao and Jackson (2023) that appearance related social exclusion leads to increased body image dissatisfaction among young adults.

(FoMO): A response to Social Exclusion

Social exclusion, induced by appearance related concerns, can heighten the fear in individuals of being excluded and left out in other social situations. This type of fear is called as fear of missing out or (FoMO), it means that others are having rewarding or pleasing experiences in your absence, leading to a persistent desire to stay connected with others' social lives, it usually include exclusion from major and fun activities which cause feeling of disconnection or left behind in an individual. This fear can make the individual to frequently check social media or look for validation to avoid further missing from social activities and gatherings that stimulate anxiety and insecurity in them (Przybylski et al., 2013).

Feelings of not included or left behind usually cause fear of missing out. Studies showed that those who experience FoMO are likely to feel rejected and hurt after excluded (Holte et al., 2022). This support the present study in the way that FoMO may be the one-way through which ostracism affects emotional well-being and mental health.

Recently a research was conducted by Gao et al., (2023) related to FoMO showed that within mobile social media use, feelings of social exclusion and emotional distress can become stronger with increased level of fear of missing out. This socially excluded phenomenon align with experience of ostracism and may lead to emotional distress such as heightened vigilance among individuals with heightened body image dissatisfaction.

Desai (2023) explored that high level of fear of missing out (FoMO) was found among individuals with high need to belong (NTB), this ultimately contributed to increased social anxiety, FoMO was partially mediating this relationship.

These findings conform with current research where fear of missing out (FoMO) is also taken as mediator between ostracism and hypervigilance. This suggest that when individuals feel excluded, FoMO can induce increase attention on what others are doing, increasing sensitivity to social cues specifically in those with body image dissatisfaction.

FoMO -Driven Appearance Comparisons and Body Image

Extending the findings linking FoMO with social exclusion and hypervigilance, Haroon et al. (2023) examined that in young adults, use of Instagram knowingly predicted higher levels of fear of missing out and body surveillance. This is supporting the present study, proposing that fear of missing out may contribute to body image dissatisfaction particularly in settings where appearance-based comparisons are common.

Murfita et al. (2023) also found that higher level of FoMO is associated with more negative body image. Based on these concepts, it is essential to find out how these emotional and behavioral responses also manifest cognitively. One such consequence is hypervigilance, state closely related to ostracism.

Hypervigilance and FoMO in Social Context

Hypervigilance is defined as the excessive and heightened state of sensory sensitivity along with the behavior having exaggerated intensity related to detecting threats, usually appears as a response to perceived or anticipated threat and danger. It includes constant scanning of environment, difficulty relaxing, and feeling of anxiousness. It becomes maladaptive when chronic, persistent, and disproportionate to actual danger, causing cognitive load, emotional exhaustion, and impair daily functioning of life (Brosschot et al., (2018).

Hypervigilance towards perceived social threat is often exhibited by those who have social anxiety, predominantly fear of rejection or fear of being negatively evaluated is exhibited by such individuals Fistikci et al., (2015). This bias in attention include problem in shifting focus from threats and increase self-monitoring, showing patterns parallel to hypervigilance, suggesting that social concerns such as FoMO may stem from related cognitive processes.

Likewise, Littman-Ovadia & Russo-Netzer, (2024) found that emerging adults are vulnerable to negative effects of FoMO by seeing friends and others posting on social media that can lead to comparison and fear of missing out.

Despite the fact that hypervigilance is extensively studied in relation to anxiety and related disorders, its role in socially driven cognitive behaviors is overlooked. In adults with body image dissatisfaction, fear of missing out (FoMO) may elevate sensitivity to social cues, leading to constant scanning of environment. Dempsey et al. (2019) support this by examined that fear of missing out mediate the relationship between social vulnerabilities like social anxiety and behavioral responses.

In another study by Al-Assaf et al. (2024), social anxiety had direct positive relationship with fear of missing out among adolescents, FoMO was taken as mediator in this study which is also the aim of present study where fear of missing out is taken ad mediator in relationship between ostracism and hypervigilance. There is gap in literature where FoMO is directly linked with hypervigilance so it is explored in current research.

Oberst et al. (2017) also found that fear of missing out majorly mediated the relationship between psychological symptoms (anxiety and depression) which is further supporting present study's mediator role of FoMO. Elhai et al. (2019) examined that FoMO knowingly mediated the relationship between anxiety symptoms and behavioral responses.

A study conducted by Zhou et al. (2023) showed that individuals with high fear of missing out scores had problem in controlling their attention when detect social media stimuli, showing cognitive patterns same as in hypervigilance. This support the framework that FoMO may explain the link between social exclusion and hyper-alert behavior.

The Interplay of Ostracism, FoMO, and Hypervigilant Behavior

It is often known that unmet psychological needs, especially the need to belong, are the cause of fear of missing out (FoMO). People who are socially excluded or ostracized may become extremely concerned about missing out on rewarding experiences, which makes them to fanatically watch what other people are doing, frequently on social media (Beyens et al., 2016; Buglass et al., 2017; Oberst et al., 2017; Park et al., 2015). As people try to rejoin or find occasions from which

others excluded them, research has demonstrated that social media usage rises in response to perceived rejection and unfulfilled demands of belonging (Baker et al., 2016; Buglass et al., 2017). This increased sensitivity to cues related to exclusion may intensify feelings of FoMO and, in turn, increase hypervigilance.

Meaningfully, it has been demonstrated that social demands and hypervigilant behaviors are mediated by FoMO. For example, Beyens et al. (2016) discovered that Facebook use was higher among teenagers with higher social demands, mediated by FOMO. Additionally, Jones (2014) found a weighty association between fear of missing out and increased felt stress, showing that anxiety related to social disconnection plays a role in psychological arousal. Moreover, Przybylski et al. (2013) highlighted anxiety as a key component of unmet psychological requirements in predicting FoMO. It is reasonable to suggest that FoMO, which results from ostracism, may serve as a psychological mechanism by which social exclusion causes increased hypervigilance, as worry and stress are closely linked to hypervigilance (Kim et al., 2011).

Psychological Flexibility as Buffer against FoMO

Healthy psychological outcomes have consistently been associated to psychological flexibility. It is crucial to differentiate between the active presence of good outcomes and well-being and the absence of negative outcomes (such stress and psychopathology) when evaluating its relationship to mental health. The essential idea, which is originated on acceptance-based approach, is that psychological well-being is improved by taking a flexible approach towards one's inner sensations, even if they are unpleasant or painful. Experiential avoidance, which is the inability to stay in touch with specific interior experiences, is a vital concept related with this (Hayes et al., 1999). This contrasts with a welcoming and mindful approach that refrains from making strict assessments regarding the acceptability of certain feelings or ideas (Kabat-Zinn et al., 2009).

A considerable amount of studies on anxiety has shown how harmful rigid, avoidant

reaction patterns can be. Specifically, anxiety disorders are characterized by experiential avoidance in a number of areas, such as increased body arousal in panic disorder (Zvolensky & Eifert, 2001), a fear of strong emotional states in generalized anxiety disorder (McLaughlin et al., 2007), and uneasiness when it comes to publicly expressing emotional experiences (Kashdan & Steger, 2006). Such avoidance behaviors may eventually take precedence over other behavioral responses, perpetuating the condition. Additionally, studies show that autonomic responses are less flexible in people with anxiety disorders, supporting the idea that inflexibility plays a larger role in psychological dysfunction (Friedman et al., 2000).

Individuals having high psychological flexibility are more capable to cope with ostracism, decreasing the chances of hypervigilance and alleviating the adverse effects of FoMO (Howell and Demuyne, 2021). Moreover, people who fear missing out are likely to be less mindful and show less cognitive flexibility than people who fear missing out less because the fear of missing out preoccupies people with psychological need fulfillment (Baker et al., 2016).

Relationship Among Current Variables

The present research investigated the associations among psychological flexibility, hypervigilance, ostracism, and fear of missing out (FoMO) in young adults with body image dissatisfaction. Individuals who have difficulties with body image are often more vulnerable to social rejection or ostracism, which can worsen their preoccupation with what other individuals perceive about them. Individuals who go through this type of exclusion usually tend to feel more anxious about missing out on social opportunities or being excluded, further fueling their FoMO. Such patterns have also been observed among young adult and youth groups that are not body image-concerned, wherein social media surveillance habits and increased frequencies of FoMO have been linked with ostracism (Beyens et al., 2016; Buglass et al., 2017).

Greater FoMO can then lead to hypervigilant patterns, where individuals are excessively vigilant for and sensitive to the possibility of rejection or criticism, especially on matters of

appearance or social judgment. The previous work has shown that in both young adults and adolescents, FoMO predicts stress and attentional biases consistent with hypervigilance (Oberst et al., 2017; Przybylski et al., 2013).

Yet psychological flexibility can act as a buffer here. Young adults who are more skilled at managing their internal experiences are more likely to cope with discomfort related to negative body image and social rejection without becoming excessively anxious or distracted. Peer-reviewed studies validate the protective role of psychological flexibility (PF) in socially stressful contexts through its demonstration of negative correlations with fear of missing out (FoMO) and its buffering of the relationship between social exclusion and suffering (Waldeck et al., 2017; Bal et al., 2025). The study therefore postulates a model where psychological flexibility reduces the intensity of these ill effects and encourages adaptive adjustment, but ostracism heightens FoMO and hypervigilance in adolescents with body image concerns.

Rationale

The current justification incorporates the ideas of the previous literature review, which emphasized the psychological toll of body image issues, the intricate role of social exclusion, and the growing significance of psychological flexibility and fear of missing out (FoMO), in order to support the necessity of the current investigation. Individual relationships between these variables have been highlighted in the reviewed literature, but there is not a thorough model that looks at how they interact, especially with regard to hypervigilance. By putting forth an integrated, theoretically informed framework that captures the ways in which these dimensions interact within adults' lived psychological experiences, the present study seeks to close this gap.

In today's society, body image issues have grown to be a major psychological problem, especially for young adults, as pressure to meet idealized and unrealistic appearance standards exacerbates psychological distress. These concerns are not only about how people perceive

themselves but are also strongly tied to how they think others see them. In this context, social dynamics are crucial, particularly when people believe they are being excluded because of their appearance, which exacerbates feelings of vulnerability and leads to hypervigilant behavior. People who fear social rejection or exclusion because of body image dissatisfaction may use hypervigilance, which is defined as heightened attention and sensitivity to prospective risks, as a psychological defense mechanism.

The detrimental psychological impacts of social exclusion or ostracism, including low self-esteem, elevated anxiety, sadness, and social disengagement, have been previously studied (Williams, 2007). However, little is known about the mechanisms by which ostracism leads to hypervigilance, especially in individuals with heightened concerns about their body image. Complementing international findings, Pakistani research also highlights the salience of body image concerns among young adults. For instance, Tufail et al. (2022) documented important body dissatisfaction among Pakistani university students, shaped by sociocultural ideals such as fairness and facial features, showing that this construct holds strong cultural relevance.

In today's digital world, fear of missing out the pervasive fear that others may be enjoying fulfilling experiences while one is absent is increasingly common and appears particularly pronounced among individuals with body image issues. Such individuals often feel compelled to remain socially connected and validated, engaging in comparison-based thinking. International studies have linked FoMO with social media addiction, low self-esteem, and anxiety (Przybylski et al., 2013), and Pakistani research has reinforced its prevalence and psychological consequences. Saeed et al. (2022) found FoMO to be strongly tied to unmet psychological needs and problematic social media engagement among Pakistani university students, while Parveiz et al. (2023) associated FoMO with social comparison and social media addiction. These findings support FoMO's role as a plausible mediator in the link between exclusion and hypervigilance.

Furthermore, psychological flexibility the ability to adapt to situational demands, maintain

balance, and pursue value-driven behavior (Kashdan & Rottenberg, 2010) emerges as a resilience factor. It may act as a moderator in the relationship between FoMO and hypervigilance by alleviating the adverse effects of unpleasant social experiences, including ostracism. While psychological flexibility has been increasingly studied in therapeutic contexts, its protective role in body image and social exclusion has been largely overlooked in non-clinical adult populations.

Although previous research has examined social rejection, body image dissatisfaction, and FoMO separately, there are few integrative models explaining how these factors interact within a unified framework. Most existing research is either cross-sectional or confined to clinical or adolescent samples, which limits its generalizability to broader adult populations. Importantly, research often overlooks psychological flexibility's moderating role, a potentially vital protective factor in reducing the negative psychological impacts of ostracism and appearance-related insecurities. These gaps are also evident in the local context. Pakistani studies on ostracism have shown it to be an important workplace and interpersonal issue associated with stress and reduced well-being (Qureshi et al., 2020; Fatima et al., 2023), but no study has yet examined its link with hypervigilance or its interaction with body image concerns and FoMO among young adults.

Considering these gaps, the present study develops a novel conceptual framework that investigates the way ostracism contributes to hypervigilance among young adults with body image concerns, with FoMO as a mediator and psychological flexibility as a moderator. By situating this inquiry within the Pakistani context and integrating cross-cultural evidence, the study not only enhances theoretical understanding but also strengthens cultural validity.

The findings are expected to have substantial theoretical and practical implications. At the theoretical level, the study contributes to a more integrative understanding of how body image dissatisfaction, social exclusion, FoMO, and psychological flexibility interact to predict hypervigilance. Practically, the results may guide preventive efforts such as social media literacy programs that reduce appearance-based comparisons and perceptions of exclusion, thereby

fostering healthier social engagement among young adults. Beyond the clinical sphere, the implications extend to educational and organizational contexts, where awareness of these psychosocial dynamics can inform counseling services, student support initiatives, and workplace wellness programs. Overall, this study addresses critical gaps in the literature and offers pathways toward strengthening psychological resilience and well-being among young adults in today's socially connected, appearance-focused world.

Objectives

The objectives of the present study are as follows:

- To examine the influence of ostracism on hypervigilance among young adults with body image dissatisfaction.
- To investigate the mediating role of fear of missing out (FoMO) in the relationship between ostracism and hypervigilance.
- To evaluate the impact of psychological flexibility as a moderator on the relationship between ostracism and hypervigilance.
- To explore the moderating role of psychological flexibility on the mediated relationship between ostracism and hypervigilance through FoMO.
- To examine demographic differences in age, gender, number of hours spent on social media, and type of social media platforms used with respect to ostracism, FoMO, hypervigilance, psychological flexibility, and body image dissatisfaction.

Hypotheses

The hypotheses of the present study are as follows:

- Ostracism will positively affect hypervigilance among young adults with body image dissatisfaction.
- Fear of missing out (FoMO) will mediate the relationship between ostracism and hypervigilance.
- Psychological flexibility will moderate the relationship between ostracism and hypervigilance.
- Psychological flexibility will moderate the mediating role of FoMO in the relationship ostracism and hypervigilance.
- There will be gender differences on the study variables.
- Early young adults will report higher levels of FoMO and hypervigilance compare to older young

adults.

- Young adults who spend more hours daily on social media will report higher levels of FoMO and hypervigilance compare to those who spend fewer hours
- Users of media-sharing platforms (Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok) will report higher hypervigilance, FoMO, and ostracism, and lower psychological flexibility compared to those using messaging and video-sharing platforms.

Conceptual Framework

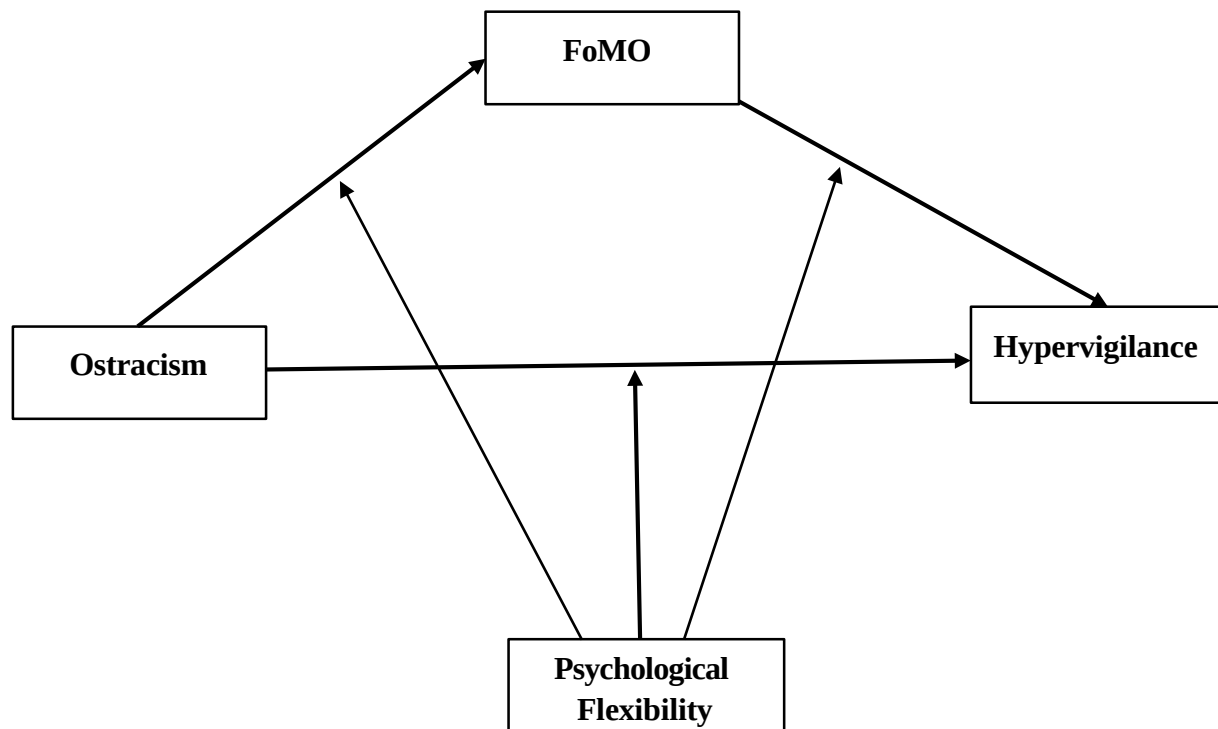


Figure 1.

Hypothesized model showing the relationship between study's variables

Chapter 2

Methodology

Research Design

A cross-sectional correlational research design used to collect the data, meaning it was conducted simultaneously on various individuals to collect data. Multiple scales were utilized with various questionnaire items to gather the required data from participants. Self-report based questionnaire had made available to young adults through a physical survey.

Sample

A total of 450 young adults were initially approached for participation in the study. Following preliminary screening, participants who scored above the cutoff scores on both the Body Dysmorphic Symptom Scale (BDSS) and the Fear of Missing Out Scale Przybylski et al. (2013) were retained for the final analysis. This ensured that the final sample of 330 participants represented individuals who exhibited noticeable levels of body image dissatisfaction as well as digital behavior linked to FoMO. Including participants who demonstrated both characteristics was essential to maintain the relevance of the study's focus on the interplay between body image concerns, FoMO, and hypervigilance within the context of social media use.

Data were collected through a convenience sampling technique, with participants recruited from workplaces, educational institutions, and community centers. The sample included both working adults (employed and self-employed) and non-working adults (students and unemployed individuals), ensuring heterogeneity in socio-professional backgrounds.

Participants provided demographic information on a structured sheet. Variables assessed included age (18–20, 21–23, 24–26, and 27–29 years), gender, marital status (married, unmarried, separated, divorced, or widowed), and educational qualification (undergraduate or graduate). Employment status was recorded as employed, unemployed, or self-employed, with job type

further classified as government, private, or other. Socio-economic status was categorized as below average, average, or above average. Additional information included number of close friends (1–2, 3–5, or six and above), origin, academic scale or grade, and open-ended responses regarding experience level. Participants also reported their use of social media platforms (WhatsApp, YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, and TikTok) and their average daily use, grouped into three categories: less than or equal to three hours, four to nine hours, and more than ten hours. Details of the demographic characteristics of the sample are presented in Table 1.

Inclusion Criteria. Participants were young adults aged between 18 and 29 years who provided informed consent to participate in the study. Individuals were included if they scored at or above the cutoff score on the scale measuring body image dissatisfaction, indicating the presence of significant concerns related to body image. This criterion was set to ensure that the sample accurately represented individuals experiencing body image dissatisfaction, a key focus of the study. Participants were required to be literate in English, as all instruments and consent forms were administered in English, and comprehension was essential for accurate self-reporting. Furthermore, only those with a minimum educational qualification of a bachelor's degree were included to ensure adequate cognitive and reading comprehension for understanding psychological constructs and questionnaire items. Additionally, participants were required to have maintained their current educational, employment, or non-working status for at least one year. This condition ensured that participants had stable exposure to their respective environments, which could influence their social interactions, feelings of ostracism, and experiences of hypervigilance.

Exclusion criteria. Young adults who did not provide consent or who scored below the cutoff score on the body image dissatisfaction scale were excluded from the study to maintain sample relevance to the research objective. Individuals who were not literate in English or who did not possess a minimum of a bachelor's degree were excluded due to potential difficulties in understanding questionnaire items and responding accurately. Furthermore, participants who had

not maintained at least one year in their current educational, employment, or non-working status were excluded to control for variability related to transitional life circumstances, which might confound the results regarding ostracism, FoMO, and hypervigilance.

Operational Definitions

Ostracism. Ostracism refers to the act of being ignored or excluded by others, which threatens fundamental human needs such as belonging, self-esteem, control, and meaningful existence (Williams, 2007). Ostracism was operationalized in terms of ostracism experience scale (Shahzad et al., 2022).

Hypervigilance. Hypervigilance is characterized by an enhanced state of sensory sensitivity and increased attention to perceived threats. It often manifests as excessive worry, a constant scanning of the environment for potential dangers, and heightened awareness of social rejection (Perry et al., 2015). It measured operationalized by using brief hypervigilance scale (Bernstein et al., 2015).

Fear of Missing Out (FoMO). Fear of Missing Out (FoMO) is the pervasive apprehension that others might be having rewarding experiences from which one is absent, leading to a persistent desire to stay connected with others' social lives. This variable was operationalized in terms of fear of missing out scale (Przybylski et al., 2013).

Psychological Flexibility. Psychological flexibility as the ability to adapt one's thoughts and behaviors to changing situational demands, to be open to and aware of present-moment experiences, and to pursue valued goals despite challenging thoughts and emotions (Kashdan & Rottenberg, 2010; Hayes et al., 2006). Psychological flexibility was operationalized by using acceptance and action questionnaire- II (Bond et al., 2011).

Body Image Dissatisfaction. Body image dissatisfaction is defined as the subjective perception of dissatisfaction with one's appearance, often accompanied by distress, preoccupation, and dissatisfaction over perceived flaws (Cash & Pruzinsky, 2002). This variable was operationalized in terms of body dysmorphic symptom scale (Ramos et al., 2016).

Instruments

Ostracism Experience Scale (OES). The Ostracism Experience Scale (OES) was developed by Shahzad et al. (2022) to assess experiences of ostracism and their associated psychological effects

among young adults and university students. The scale consists of 15 items rated on a five-point Likert scale, yielding a total score ranging from 15 to 75, with higher scores reflecting greater levels of ostracism. Although the scale comprises two subscales, ostracism experience and psychological effects both highly reliable ($\alpha = .97$ and $\alpha = .93$, respectively), the present study employs the overall total score ($\alpha = .97$), which captures the combined effect of both dimensions. The scale contains no reverse-coded items and was validated through exploratory factor analysis.

Brief Hypervigilance Scale. Brief hypervigilance scale is created by Bernstein et al. (2015), evaluates hypervigilance as a response to trauma. This scale focuses on the heightened sensitivity to potential threats and includes a 5-point Likert scale, with responses ranging from 1 (never) to 5 (always) and consisting of five items in total. It has shown excellent reliability, with a Cronbach's alpha of .87.

Fear of Missing Out Scale (FoMO). This scale is developed by Przybylski et al. (2013), assesses the anxiety individuals experience when they believe others are enjoying rewarding experiences without them. Participants respond on a 5-point Likert scale, from 1 (not at all true of me) to 5 (very true of me), consisting of 10 items with a reported Cronbach's alpha of .89 for reliability.

Acceptance and Action Questionnaire-II (AAQ-II). Psychological Flexibility is measured using the Acceptance and Action Questionnaire-II (AAQ-II), created by Bond et al. (2011). This instrument assesses the ability to adapt thoughts and behaviors in response to changing situations and employs a 7-point Likert scale consisting of 7 items ranging from 1 (never true) to 7 (always true). Higher scores on the Acceptance and Action Questionnaire-II (AAQ-II) indicate lower psychological flexibility, while lower scores reflect higher psychological flexibility. The AAQ-II demonstrates high internal consistency, with a Cronbach's alpha between .84 and .88, making it relevant for analyzing the role of psychological flexibility in moderating relationships among study variables. According to previous research, lower scores suggest greater psychological flexibility, while higher scores indicate lower levels of psychological flexibility and greater experience avoidance (Sairanen et al., 2023). According to the current study, better psychological flexibility

was indicated by lower AAQ-II scores. Previous validation studies showing the AAQ-II's usage as a general measure of psychological flexibility support this interpretation of lower scores as indicating higher psychological flexibility (Badinlou et al., 2022). It was found that lower AAQ-II scores were associated with greater psychological flexibility.

Body Dysmorphic Symptom Scale (BDSS). Body dysmorphic symptom scale is developed by (Ramos et al., 2016), evaluates body image dissatisfaction for screening purpose. The scale utilizes yes or no response format, high scores suggest the presence of dissatisfaction with body image. Based on the findings of Ramos and colleagues a cut-off score of 6 and above is recommended for screening, such as scores of 6 are associated with dissatisfaction with body image. The scale is consisting of 10 items and has shown strong internal consistency with a Cronbach's alpha of .80.

Demographic sheet. The demographics sheet contained data on the age, gender, marital status, level of education, occupation, socio-economic status, number of close friends, home town, academic grade/scale, and experience.

Ethical considerations

In present study, participants were asked for their permission to take part after explaining the purpose of the research, what it involves and any possible risks or benefits. Their information was kept private and their identity was not shared. The present study followed ethical guidelines to make sure participants treated fairly and respectfully throughout the study.

Procedure

In this study, convenience sampling was used to gather data from young adult participants. Participants were fully informed about the purpose of the study, procedures, potential risks (not present), and benefits, ensuring their understanding before they consent to participate. Confidentiality of their responses was guaranteed, and anonymity had been maintained in the reporting of results. Questionnaires measuring variables such as ostracism, hypervigilance, fear of missing out (FoMO), psychological flexibility, body image dissatisfaction, and demographic

information was distributed to the participants.

Following the process of screening, 330 young adults were selected from the pool of 450 participants. The collected responses were carefully checked for completeness and consistency. Data was analyzed using statistical software (SPSS 26 version), starting with descriptive statistics to summarize the sample characteristics. Group comparisons, correlations between variables, and analyses testing the mediation and moderated mediation models were followed. Findings were interpreted in relation to the study's research objectives and hypotheses. Finally, a comprehensive report was prepared and submitted as part of the thesis, integrating the results with the relevant literature and drawing conclusions based on the research questions.

Chapter 3

Results

Table 1*Sociodemographic Characteristics of Participants (N=330)*

Variables	<i>f</i>	%	Mean	SD	Range
Experience level			3.12	1.71	1-7
Age					
18-20	73	22.1			
21-23	93	28.2			
24-26	90	27.3			
27-29	74	22.4			
Gender					
Male	161	48.8			
Female	169	59.2			
Marital Status					
Married	131	39.7			
Un-married	133	40.3			

Separated/	66	20.0
Divorced/Widow		
Qualification Level		
Undergraduate	133	40.3
Graduates	197	59.7
Employment Status		
Employed	137	41.5
Un-employed	82	24.8
Self-employed	111	33.6
Job		
Government	94	28.5
Private	123	37.3
Other	113	34.2
Social media apps		
WhatsApp	60	18.2
YouTube	58	17.6
Facebook	53	16.1
Instagram	82	24.8

Snapchat	47	14.2
Tiktok	30	9.1
Socioeconomic status		
Below average	98	29.7
Average	162	49.1
Above average	70	21.2
No of close friends		
1-2	97	29.4
3-5	106	32.1
6 and above	127	38.5
Place of origin		
Islamabad	33	10.0
Rawalpindi	29	8.8
Wah cantt	36	10.9
Attock	31	9.4
Taxila	39	11.8
Mianwali	30	9.1
Gujranwala	25	7.6

Kashmir	30	9.1
Swabi	24	7.3
Others	53	16.1
Time spent daily on using social media		
≤ 3 hours	141	42.7
4-9 hours	116	35.2
≥ 10 hours	73	22.1

Note: f = Frequency, %= Percentages, SD= Standard deviation

There were 330 individuals in the sample, ranging in age from 18 to 29 years, and their mean experience level was 3.12 years (SD = 1.71). The age groups with the lowest percentages of participation were 18–20 years (22.1%) and 27–29 years (22.4%), while the majority were between 21–23 years (28.2%) and 24–26 years (27.3%). There were slightly more women (51.2%) than men (48.8%), making the gender distribution almost equal. The majority of individuals were either married (39.7%) or un-married (40.3%), with a lesser percentage being widowed, separated, or divorced (20.0%). Nearly half of participants (41.5%) were employed, followed by self-employed people (33.6%) and jobless people (24.8%). The majority of participants (59.7%) had graduate-level degrees. The largest group, by employment category, was employed in the private sector (37.3%), followed by those in the government (28.5%) and others (34.2%). Instagram (24.8%), WhatsApp (18.2%), and YouTube (17.6%) were the most popular social media apps. Facebook (16.1%), Snapchat (14.2%), and TikTok (9.1%) were less commonly used. While some participants claimed having jobs like manager (10.3%), teacher (10.3%), assistant (9.1%),

administrator (9.1%), and others (7.6%), the majority of participants (53.6%) did not report having a specific work scale or grade. The majority of respondents (49.1%) reported an average socioeconomic status, while a smaller percentage reported below-average (29.7%) or above-average (21.2%) status. A major percentage of participants (38.5%) reported having six or more close friends, followed by those with three to five friends (32.1%) and one to two friends (29.4%) in terms of social ties. With the highest percentages living in Taxila (11.8%), Wah Cantt (10.9%), and Islamabad (10.0%), participants came from a wide range of places. Other participants were from Rawalpindi, Attock, Mianwali, Gujranwala, Kashmir, Swabi, and other areas. 42.7% of participants said they used social media for up to three hours a day, 35.2% for four to nine hours, and 22.1% for ten or more hours. Participants generally reported spending a important amount of time on social media.

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics and Cronbach's Alpha for the Scales of FoMO, Psychological Flexibility, Ostracism, and Hypervigilance (N=330)

Measures	K	α	Actual Range		Potential Range		Mean	SD	Skew.	Kurt.
			Min	Max	Min	Max				
BHS	5	.91	5	25	5	25	14.20	5.58	.18	-1.19
OES	15	.94	15	72	15	75	42.96	14.10	.05	-1.03
AAQ-II	7	.92	7	47	7	49	27.66	9.57	.01	-.91
BDSS	10	.77	0	10	0	10	6.63	1.71	-1.09	-1.25
FoMO	10	.90	10	50	10	50	30.09	9.04	-.02	-1.08

Note: BHS= Brief hypervigilance scale; OES= Ostracism experience scale; AAQ= Acceptance and action questionnaire; FoMO= Fear of missing out scale; Skew= Skewness; Kurt= Kurtosis.

Table 2 presents the descriptive statistics and reliability coefficients (Cronbach's alpha) for the scales used in the current study, including measures of hypervigilance (BHS), ostracism (OES), psychological flexibility (AAQ-II), body dysmorphic symptom scale (BDSS), and fear of missing out (FoMO), based on a sample of 330 participants. All scales demonstrated high internal consistency, with Cronbach's alpha (α) values ranging from .77 to .94, indicating excellent reliability. Specifically, the BHS ($\alpha = .91$), OES ($\alpha = .94$), AAQ-II ($\alpha = .92$), BDSS ($\alpha = .77$) and fear of missing out ($\alpha = .90$) all exceeded the commonly accepted threshold of .70, supporting the internal reliability of these measures. The actual score ranges for all scales closely matched their respective potential ranges, indicating good utilization of the full scale by participants. The mean

scores for each measure suggest a moderate level of responses across the constructs assessed. The data approximates a normal distribution, as indicated by the skewness and kurtosis values, which are both within the acceptable range of ± 1 (Byrne, 2013) and ± 2 (Mishra et al., 2019). Minor negative kurtosis values suggest slightly flatter distributions than a normal curve but not to a degree that would violate assumptions of normality. Overall, the psychometric properties of the scales used in this study are sound, with high internal consistency and appropriate distribution characteristics, supporting their suitability for further statistical analyses such as correlations, regressions, and mediation/moderation modeling.

Table 3

Pearson Product Correlation FoMO, Psychological Flexibility, Ostracism, and Hypervigilance (N=330)

Variables	1	2	3	4
Hypervigilance	-	.88**	.83**	.85**
Ostracism (		-	.83**	.88**
Psychological Flexibility			-	.84**
Fear of missing out				-

*Note: P= * < .05, ** < .01*

The Pearson correlation analysis revealed important relationships among the study variables. Hypervigilance showed a strong positive correlation with ostracism and fear of missing out, indicating that individuals experiencing greater ostracism and fear of missing out are also more likely to exhibit heightened vigilance to potential threats in their environment.

Importantly, hypervigilance also demonstrated a positive correlation with the AAQ-II scores. Since the AAQ-II assesses psychological inflexibility (higher scores represent lower psychological flexibility), this suggests that individuals with greater hypervigilance tend to be less psychologically flexible. Similarly, ostracism showed a positive correlation with both fear of missing out and psychological inflexibility indicating that individuals who feel more ostracized are also more likely to experience fear of missing out and demonstrate difficulties in adapting to internal experiences (i.e., lower psychological flexibility).

Furthermore, fear of missing out and psychological inflexibility were also strongly positively correlated suggesting that individuals who frequently fear missing out may have reduced

capacity for psychological flexibility. These findings collectively support the theoretical model of the study, where higher ostracism and fear of missing out are linked with lower psychological flexibility and increased hypervigilance, aligning with existing literature on emotion regulation, cognitive rigidity, and social stress responses.

Table 4

Linear Regression Analysis Predicting the Effect of Ostracism, Psychological Flexibility, and Fear of Missing Out on Hypervigilance Among Young Adults with Body Image Dissatisfaction (N=330)

Predictors	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	β	95% <i>CI</i>		<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
				<i>UL</i>	<i>LL</i>		
Hypervigilance (constant)	-1.94	.47		-2.87	-1.00	-4.01	.00
Psychological Flexibility(AAQ-II)	.15	.03	.25	.09	.21	4.99	.00
Fear of missing out	.13	.04	.21	.06	.20	3.67	.00
Ostracism	.19	.02	.49	.15	.23	8.77	.00
R ²	.81						
Adjusted R ²	.80						
F	3337.59***						

*Note: B = Unstandardized Coefficient, SE = Standard Error, β = Standardized Coefficient, F = F-value, UL = Upper Limit, LL = Lower Limit, *** $p < .001$, AAQ-II = Acceptance and Action Questionnaire-II (measuring Psychological Inflexibility), FoMO = Fear of Missing Out, DV = Hypervigilance.*

The results of a multiple linear regression analysis revealed that psychological flexibility (measured using the Acceptance and Action Questionnaire-II), fear of missing out (FoMO), and ostracism meaningfully predicted levels of hypervigilance among young adults (N = 330). The overall model was statistically substantial and explained 81% of the variance in hypervigilance

indicating a very strong model fit.

Specifically, psychological flexibility suggestively predicted hypervigilance suggesting that individuals with higher psychological inflexibility experience greater hypervigilance vice versa. Similarly, FoMO was an important predictor, indicating that individuals who fear missing out on experiences tend to be more hypervigilant. Furthermore, hypervigilance was knowingly predicted by the ostracism scores showing that those who experience higher degrees of ostracism are meaningfully more likely to engage in hypervigilant activities. These findings suggest that lower psychological flexibility and higher level of fear of missing out and experiences of ostracism meaningfully contribute to heightened hypervigilance.

Table 5

Mean, Standard Deviation and t-value to See the Effect of Gender on FoMO, Psychological Flexibility, Ostracism, and Hypervigilance (N=330).

Variables	Male		Female		<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	995% CI		Cohen's <i>d</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>			<i>LL</i>	<i>UL</i>	
Hypervigilance	11.65	4.91	16.49	5.09	-8.80	.00	-5.93	-3.76	.97
Ostracism	36.48	12.39	49.42	12.80	-9.32	.00	-15.67	-10.21	1.03
Psychological Flexibility	23.35	8.24	31.75	8.82	-8.94	.00	-10.25	-6.55	.98
Fear of missing out	25.52	7.93	34.40	7.98	-10.14	.00	-10.61	-7.16	1.12

Note: M= Mean, SD= Standard deviation, LL= Lower limit, UL= Upper limit, CI= Confidence interval.

An independent samples *t*-test was conducted to examine gender differences in the study variables. The results revealed statistically important differences between males and females across all variables. Female participants reported meaningfully higher levels of hypervigilance compared to males. Similarly, females scored higher on ostracism than males. In terms of psychological inflexibility, females also scored meaningfully higher than males which shows they have less psychological flexibility as higher scores on AAQ-II indicated less flexibility. Furthermore, fear of missing out (FoMO) was knowingly greater among females than males. These findings suggest that females experience higher levels

of hypervigilance, ostracism, and FoMO and low scores in psychological flexibility compared to their male counterparts.

Table 6

Mean, Standard Deviation and t-value to See the Effect of Qualification Level on FoMO, Psychological Flexibility, Ostracism, and Hypervigilance (N=330).

Variables	Under- graduates		Graduates		<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	995% <i>CI</i>		Cohen's <i>d</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>			<i>LL</i>	<i>UL</i>	
Hypervigilance	15.39	5.68	13.27	5.31	3.45	.001	.91	3.33	0.39
Ostracism	45.95	15.30	41.19	13.01	3.03	.003	1.63	7.89	0.33
Psychological Flexibility	30.07	9.55	26.02	9.15	3.87	.000	2.12	5.98	0.43
Fear of missing out	32.06	9.72	28.72	8.42	3.32	.001	1.44	5.24	0.37

Note: M= Mean, SD= Standard deviation, LL= Lower limit, UL= Upper limit, CI= Confidence interval.

On all study variable, the results of the independent samples t-test showed an important difference between undergraduates and graduates. With a small to moderate effect size undergraduates reported substantially greater levels of hypervigilance than graduates. Likewise, ostracism scores were higher for undergraduates than for graduates. Undergraduates scored higher than graduates in psychological inflexibility, indicating a substantial difference showed that undergraduates had a substantially higher fear of missing out than graduates. With effect sizes in

the small to intermediate range, these data show that undergraduates have higher degrees of psychological inflexibility, perceived ostracism, hypervigilance, and FoMO than graduates.

Table 7

One-way Analysis of Variance of Four Categories of Age. (N=330)

Variables	18-20		21-23		24-26		27-29		<i>f</i>	<i>p</i>	η^2
	(n=73)		(n=93)		(n=90)		(n=74)				
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>			
BHS	14.67	5.72	16.27	5.26	13.03	5.39	12.23	5.00	9.60	.00	.08
OES	43.72	14.48	47.99	14.55	41.50	13.18	38.34	12.64	7.33	.00	.06
AAQ-II	28.90	9.46	30.53	9.57	25.93	9.20	24.89	8.79	6.64	.00	.06
FoMO	30.89	9.75	32.98	8.89	28.82	8.46	27.12	8.41	6.85	.00	.06

*Note: BHS= Brief hypervigilance scale, OES ostracism experience scale, AAQ-II= Acceptance and action questionnaire-II, FoMO= Fear of missing out, M=Mean, SD=Standard deviation, f= degree of freedom, p= significant level, η^2 = eta squared. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .000$.*

A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to examine the differences in hypervigilance, ostracism experiences, psychological flexibility, and fear of missing out (FoMO) across four age groups: 18–20, 21–23, 24–26, and 27–29 years. The results revealed important differences in all four psychological variables across age categories. Specifically, hypervigilance differed meaningfully with the 21–23 age group reporting the highest levels. Ostracism experiences also varied meaningfully across age groups with higher scores again observed among individuals aged 21–23. Psychological flexibility, measured through the AAQ-II, showed noteworthy differences indicating that individuals (particularly those aged 27–29) demonstrated greater psychological flexibility (i.e., lower experiential avoidance). Finally, fear of missing out

scores meaningfully differed across age groups with younger participants reporting higher levels of fear of missing out. These findings suggest that younger adults, especially those in the 21–23 age range, are more vulnerable to psychological stressors such as hypervigilance, social exclusion, and fear of missing out, whereas older adults exhibit greater emotional regulation and flexibility.

Table 8

Pairwise Comparison Across Categories of Age Groups with Respect to FoMO, Psychological Flexibility, Ostracism, and Hypervigilance (N=330).

Variable	(I)	(J)	(I-J)	MD (I-J)	p	SE	95% CI	
							LL	UL
Hypervigilance(BHS)	21–23	24–26	1 > 2	3.24*	.00	0.84	1.19	5.28
	21–23	27–29	1 > 2	4.04*	.00	0.84	1.89	6.19
	18–20	27–29	1 > 2	2.44*	.03	0.88	0.16	4.72
Ostracism	21–23	24–26	1 > 2	6.49*	.01	2.15	1.24	11.74
	21–23	27–29	1 > 2	9.65*	.00	2.17	4.12	15.19
Psychological Flexibility (AAQ-II)	21–23	24–26	1 > 2	4.59*	.01	1.45	1.05	8.13
And wh	21–23	27–29	1 > 2	5.64*	.00	1.46	1.90	9.37
	18–20	27–29	1 > 2	4.01*	.05	1.53	0.06	7.96
FoMO	21–23	24–26	1 > 2	4.16*	.01	1.39	0.77	7.54
	21–23	27–29	1 > 2	5.86*	.000	1.40	2.29	9.43

*Note: BHS= Brief hypervigilance scale, OES ostracism experience scale, AAQ-II= Acceptance and action questionnaire-II, FoMO= Fear of missing out, CI= Confidence interval, LL=Lower limit, UL=Upper limit, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .000$.*

Post hoc analysis using the Tukey HSD test was conducted to examine age-wise differences in the study variables. The results revealed that individuals aged 21–23 years reported

meaningfully higher levels of hypervigilance compared to those aged 24–26 and 27–29 years. Similarly, participants aged 18–20 also showed knowingly greater hypervigilance than those aged 27–29. In terms of perceived ostracism, the 21–23 age group experienced suggestively higher ostracism than the 24–26 and 27–29 age groups. Regarding psychological flexibility (measured through the AAQ-II), individuals aged 21–23 exhibited meaningfully greater psychological inflexibility (Lower psychological flexibility) than those aged 24–26 and 27–29. Additionally, participants aged 18–20 were also more psychologically inflexible (less psychological flexible) compared to those aged 27–29. As for fear of missing out (FoMO), the 21–23 age group scored meaningfully higher than both the 24–26 and 27–29 age groups. These findings suggest that younger adults, particularly those in the early twenties, tend to show heightened emotional reactivity, lower psychological flexibility, and increased social sensitivity, as reflected by higher levels of hypervigilance, ostracism, FoMO, and psychological inflexibility compared to older participants.

Table 9

One-way Analysis of Variance of Time Spent Daily on Using Social Media. (N=330)

Variables	≥ 3 hrs (n=141)		4-9 hrs (n=116)		≤ 10 hrs (n=73)		<i>f</i>	<i>p</i>	η^2
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>			
BHS	13.03	5.43	14.69	5.49	15.36	5.56	5.28	.006	.03
OES	40.04	14.08	44.25	13.31	47.22	14.44	7.02	.001	.04
AAQ-II	25.48	9.50	28.83	9.15	29.97	9.34	6.98	.001	.04
FoMO	28.06	9.23	30.88	8.60	32.64	8.91	7.05	.001	.04

*Note: BHS= Brief hypervigilance scale, OES ostracism experience scale, AAQ-II= Acceptance and action questionnaire-II, FoMO= Fear of missing out, M=Mean, SD=Standard deviation, f= degree of freedom, p= significant level, η^2 = eta squared, hrs=hours, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .000$*

The impact of daily social media usage (≤ 3 hours, 4–9 hours, and ≥ 10 hours) on psychological flexibility, ostracism, hypervigilance, and fear of missing out (FoMO) was investigated using a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA). On all four factors, the results showed a substantial difference between the three groups. There was a statistically substantial difference in hypervigilance across the three groups. Individuals who used social media for more than 10 hours a day reported being more hypervigilant than those who used it for less than 3 hours. Similar differences were observed in perceived ostracism with individuals who used social media for more than 10 hours a day perceiving more ostracism than those who used it for less than 3 hours. Additionally, there were substantial differences in psychological flexibility between the groups where participants who used social media the most reported less psychological flexibility

than the group that used it for ≤ 3 hours. Finally, individuals who spent more than 10 hours on social media scored higher than those who used it for less than three hours, indicating that those who used social media more had considerably higher fear of missing out scores. With small-to-moderate effect sizes, these findings imply that increased social media use is linked to lower levels of psychological flexibility and higher level of perceived ostracism, hypervigilance, and FoMO.

Table 10

Pairwise Comparison Across Time Spent Daily on Using Social Media with Respect to FoMO, Psychological Flexibility, Ostracism, and Hypervigilance (N=330).

Variable	(I)	(J)	(I-J)	MD (I-J)	SE	95% CI	
						LL	UL
Hypervigilance(BHS)	≥ 3 hours	4-9 hours	1<2	-1.66*	.69	-3.28	-.04
		≤ 10 hours	1<2	-2.33*	.80	-4.19	-.47
Ostracism	≥ 3 hours	4-9 hours	1<2	-4.21*	1.75	-8.31	-.11
		≤ 10 hours	1<2	-7.18*	2.00	-11.89	-2.46
Psychological Flexibility (AAQ-II)	≥ 3 hours	4-9 hours	1<2	-3.35*	1.17	-6.10	-.59
		≤ 10 hours	1<2	-4.50*	1.35	-7.66	-1.32
FoMO	≥ 3 hours	4-9 hours	1<2	-2.82*	1.12	-5.45	-.18
		≤ 10 hours	1<2	-4.58*	1.29	-7.62	-1.54

*Note: BHS= Brief hypervigilance scale, OES ostracism experience scale, AAQ-II= Acceptance and action questionnaire-II, FoMO= Fear of missing out, CI= Confidence interval, LL=Lower limit, UL=Upper limit, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .000$*

Group variations in psychological flexibility, fear of missing out (FoMO), ostracism, and hypervigilance were examined through pairwise comparisons across varying degrees of daily social media use. Participants who used social media for 4–9 hours a day reported suggestively higher levels of hypervigilance than those who used it for ≤ 3 hours. In a similar way, people who used social media for more than 10 hours a day reported being much more hypervigilant than those who used it for less than three hours. Additionally, individuals who spent 4–9 hours a day on social

media reported feeling more ostracized than those who spent ≤ 3 , and those who spent ≥ 10 hours a day reported feeling the most ostracized. Those who used social media for 4–9 hours a day reported psychological flexibility at a knowingly lower level than those who used it for ≤ 3 hours, and those who used it for ≥ 10 hours reported even more inflexibility than those who used it for ≤ 3 hours. Lastly, the 4–9-hour group had considerably greater fear of missing out than the ≤ 3 -hour group while the ≥ 10 -hour group had even higher fear of missing out. According to these results, spending more time on social media is linked to noticeably higher levels of psychological inflexibility (lower psychological flexibility), perceived ostracism, hypervigilance, and FoMO.

Table 11

One-way Analysis of Variance of Categories of Social Media Apps. (N=330)

Variables	WhatsApp (n=60)		YouTube (n=58)		Facebook (n=53)		Instagram (n=82)		Snapchat (n=47)		TikTok (n=30)		F	p	η ²
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD			
BHS	12.20	4.92	11.91	5.25	13.55	6.15	16.28	5.00	15.38	5.28	15.43	5.35	7.33	.00	0.10
OES	35.52	13.08	37.71	13.61	43.21	14.34	49.26	12.57	46.60	13.21	46.30	12.55	10.43	.00	0.14
AAQ-II	24.18	7.95	23.74	9.67	27.98	10.14	30.18	8.88	29.77	9.34	31.33	8.70	6.62	.00	0.09
FoMO	25.80	7.94	26.53	9.03	29.70	9.38	33.32	8.43	32.43	7.95	33.50	9.03	8.94	.00	0.12

*Note: BHS= Brief hypervigilance scale, OES ostracism experience scale, AAQ-II= Acceptance and action questionnaire-II, FoMO= Fear of missing out, M=Mean, SD=Standard deviation, f= degree of freedom, p= significant level, η²= eta squared. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .000$.*

The table presents the results of a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) conducted to examine the differences in hypervigilance, ostracism, psychological flexibility, and fear of missing out across six categories of preferred social media apps among participants (N=330). The findings indicate statistically substantial differences among the groups for all four variables.

For hypervigilance (BHS), a noteworthy difference was found across app users, indicating a moderate effect size. Instagram, Snapchat, and TikTok users reported higher mean hypervigilance scores compared to WhatsApp and YouTube users, suggesting users of more visually interactive or socially intense platforms experience greater vigilance.

Similarly, noteworthy differences were observed in ostracism experiences (OES). Instagram users reported the highest mean scores followed by Snapchat and TikTok users,

indicating a higher perception of social exclusion among users of these platforms. For psychological flexibility measured via the AAQ-II, a substantial variation was also found. TikTok, Instagram, and Snapchat users exhibited lower psychological flexibility, while WhatsApp and YouTube users had higher score (as high scores in AAQ-II shows low psychological flexibility), suggesting that app preference may relate to one's cognitive-emotional regulation styles. Lastly, fear of missing out showed important group differences. TikTok, Instagram, and Snapchat users again scored higher on fear of missing out whereas WhatsApp and YouTube users reported lower levels, indicating stronger FoMO tendencies among users of content-dense or interaction-heavy platforms. Overall, these results suggest that individuals' psychological experiences differ meaningfully by the type of social media platform they predominantly use, with Instagram, TikTok, and Snapchat users showing higher levels of hypervigilance, perceived ostracism, psychological inflexibility, and fear of missing out.

Table 12

Pairwise Comparison Across Categories of Social Media Apps with Respect to FoMO, Psychological Flexibility, Ostracism, and Hypervigilance (N=330).

Variable	(I)	(J)	(I-J)	MD (I-J)	β	95% CI	
						LL	UL
Hypervigilance(BHS)	WhatsApp	Instagram	1 < 4	-4.08*	0.90	-6.66	-1.5
	WhatsApp	Snapchat	5>1	-3.18*	1.03	-6.14	-.22
	YouTube	Instagram	4>2	-4.37*	.91	-6.97	-1.76
	YouTube	Snapchat	2 < 5	-3.47*	1.04	-6.45	-0.49
	YouTube	Tiktok	2<6	-3.52*	1.19	-6.94	-.10
	Facebook	Instagram	3 < 4	-2.73*	0.93	-5.41	-0.05
Ostracism	WhatsApp	Instagram	1 < 4	-13.74*	2.25	-20.18	-7.29
	WhatsApp	Facebook	1<3	-7.691*	2.49	-14.84	-.54
	WhatsApp	Snapchat	1<5	-11.08*	2.58	-18.47	-3.69
	WhatsApp	Tiktok	1<6	-10.78*	2.96	-19.27	-2.30
	YouTube	Instagram	2<4	-11.55*	2.28	-18.06	-5.04
	YouTube	Snapchat	2 < 5	-8.89*	2.6	-16.33	-1.44
	YouTube	Tiktok	2<6	-8.59*	2.98	-17.12	-.06

Psychological Flexibility (AAQ-II)	WhatsApp	TikTok	1 < 6	-7.15*	2.04	-13	-1.30
	WhatsApp	Instagram	1<4	-6.00*	1.55	-10.44	-1.55
	WhatsApp	Snapchat	1<5	-5.58*	1.78	-10.68	-.49
	YouTube	Instagram	2 < 4	-6.44*	1.57	-10.93	-1.95
	YouTube	Snapchat	2<5	-6.03*	1.79	-11.16	-.89
	YouTube	Tiktok	2<6	-7.59*	2.05	-13.48	-1.71
FoMO	YouTube	Instagram	2 < 4	-6.78*	1.48	-11.01	-2.55
	WhatsApp	Instagram	1<4	-7.52*	1.46	-11.71	-3.33
	WhatsApp	Snapchat	1<5	-6.63*	1.68	-11.43	-1.82
	WhatsApp	Tiktok	1<6	-7.70*	1.92	-13.21	-2.19
	YouTube	Snapchat	2<5	-5.89*	1.69	-10.73	-1.05
	YouTube	Tiktok	2<6	-6.97*	1.93	-12.51	-1.42

*Note: BHS= Brief hypervigilance scale, OES ostracism experience scale, AAQ-II= Acceptance and action questionnaire-II, FoMO= Fear of missing out, CI= Confidence interval, LL=Lower limit, UL=Upper limit, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .000$.*

The pairwise comparisons across different social media apps revealed important psychological differences in users' experiences of hypervigilance, ostracism, psychological flexibility, and fear of missing out (FoMO). Participants who primarily used Instagram, Snapchat, or TikTok showed suggestively higher hypervigilance levels compared to those who used WhatsApp or YouTube. In particular, WhatsApp users reported lower hypervigilance scores than Instagram and Snapchat users, while YouTube users also exhibited lower hypervigilance

compared to Instagram, Snapchat, and TikTok users. Similarly, Facebook users showed lower hypervigilance in comparison with Instagram users.

Regarding ostracism, WhatsApp and YouTube users consistently reported 0knowingly lower feelings of social exclusion compared to users of Instagram, Facebook, Snapchat, and TikTok. WhatsApp users showed the lowest ostracism scores across all comparisons, particularly when compared with Instagram, Snapchat, and TikTok users. Likewise, YouTube users reported expressively lower ostracism than users of Instagram, Snapchat, and TikTok. These findings suggest that more interactive or visually immersive platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and Snapchat may contribute more to social exclusion perceptions than text-based or content-focused platforms like WhatsApp and YouTube.

In terms of psychological flexibility, users of WhatsApp and YouTube showed expressively higher psychological flexibility (indicated by lower AAQ-II scores) than those who primarily used Instagram, Snapchat, or TikTok. WhatsApp users were more psychologically flexible than TikTok, Instagram, and Snapchat users, while YouTube users demonstrated more flexibility compared to Instagram, Snapchat, and TikTok users. These patterns suggest that users of image-centric or short-video platforms may struggle more with regulating internal experiences or distress.

The trend in fear of missing out further reinforced these findings. WhatsApp and YouTube users experienced substantially lower levels of fear of missing out compared to Instagram, Snapchat, and TikTok users. Among all comparisons, WhatsApp users showed the lowest fear of missing out levels, particularly in contrast to Instagram and TikTok users. YouTube users also had meaningfully lower fear of missing out scores compared to users of Instagram, Snapchat, and TikTok. This suggests that platforms centered around curated lifestyles and constant content sharing (e.g., Instagram, TikTok) are more likely to evoke fear of missing out and associated psychological challenges than platforms with less real-time interpersonal comparison or social

surveillance. Overall, users of WhatsApp and YouTube generally demonstrated better psychological outcomes across all four constructs, while Instagram, Snapchat, and TikTok users showed elevated distress in terms of hypervigilance, ostracism, psychological inflexibility, and fear of missing out.

Table 13

One-way Analysis of Variance of Three Categories of Marital Status. (N=330)

Variables	Married (n=131)		Unmarried (n=133)		Separated/ divorced/widow (n=66)		<i>f</i>	<i>p</i>	η^2
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>			
BHS	12.34	5.15	15.63	5.32	14.64	5.83	12.78	.00	.07
OES	39.44	12.52	46.79	13.61	42.97	16.39	9.35	.00	.05
AAQ-II	25.1	8.59	29.84	9.46	28.3	10.25	8.80	.00	.05
FoMO	27.37	8.16	32.44	8.8	30.62	10.13	11.02	.00	.06

*Note: BHS= Brief hypervigilance scale, OES ostracism experience scale, AAQ-II= Acceptance and action questionnaire-II, FoMO= Fear of missing out, M=Mean, SD=Standard deviation, f= degree of freedom, p= significant level, η^2 = eta squared. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .000$.*

The findings indicate that all four psychological factors are considerably impacted by marital status. With a substantial difference, indicating a medium effect size, unmarried participants reported the highest mean scores on hypervigilance, followed by separated/divorced/widow and married participants. Likewise, separated/divorced/widow, married participants, and unmarried individuals had the highest mean ostracism ratings, with a meaningful difference. There was a considerable difference in the psychological flexibility (AAQ-II) scores of unmarried participants, separated/divorced/widow participants and married participants. Finally, the participants who were un-married had the highest fear of missing out followed by those

who were separated, divorced, or widowed and those who were married. In comparison to married and separated/divorced/widow participants, un-married people often reported higher levels of ostracism, hypervigilance, and FoMO and lower level of psychological flexibility.

Table 14

Pairwise Comparison Across Categories of Marital Status with Respect to FoMO, Psychological Flexibility, Ostracism, and Hypervigilance (N=330).

Variable	(I)	(J)	(I-J)	MD (I-J)	SE	p	95% CI	
							LL	UL
Hypervigilance	Married	Un-married	1<2	-3.29	.66	.00	-4.84	-1.73
		Separated/divorced/widow	1<3	-2.29	.81	.01	-4.20	-.39
Ostracism	Married	Un-married	1<2	-7.35	1.70	.00	-11.35	-3.35
		Separated/divorced/widow	1<3	-3.25	1.33	.04	-6.39	-.11
Psychological Flexibility (AAQ-II)	Married	Un-married	1<2	-4.74	1.14	.00	-7.44	-2.05
		Separated/divorced/widow	1<3	-3.25	1.33	.04	-6.39	-.11
FoMO	Married	Un-married	1<2	-5.07	1.09	.00	-7.63	-2.51
		Separated/divorced/widow	1<3	-3.25	1.33	.04	-6.39	-.11

*Note: BHS= Brief hypervigilance scale, OES ostracism experience scale, AAQ-II= Acceptance and action questionnaire-II, FoMO= Fear of missing out, CI= Confidence interval, LL=Lower limit, UL=Upper limit, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .000$.*

All study variables showed substantial variations across marital status categories, according to pairwise comparisons. Married individuals scored considerably lower on the hypervigilance scale than unmarried individuals and separated/divorced/widow. The ostracism scores of married participants were also considerably lower than those of unmarried people. Married people scored considerably lower than unmarried participants on the psychological

inflexibility (AAQ-II) scale. Married people also scored considerably lower than unmarried/divorced/widow participants and unmarried participants on the fear of missing out scale. According to these results, those who are un-married, separated, divorced, or widowed report higher degrees of ostracism, hypervigilance, and FoMO and lower level of psychological flexibility than people who are married.

Table 15

One-way Analysis of Variance of Three Categories of Employment Status. (N=330)

Variables	Employed (n=163)		Unemployed (n=92)		Self-employed (n=125)		<i>f</i>	<i>p</i>	η^2
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>			
BHS	13.04	5.33	16.91	5.51	13.72	5.33	15.99	.00	0.08
OES	39.02	14.37	49.82	13.20	43.06	12.43	18.87	.00	0.09
AAQ-II	26.76	9.32	31.00	10.13	26.38	8.93	7.71	.00	0.04
FoMO	28.13	8.73	34.18	9.17	29.64	8.40	14.37	.00	0.07

*Note: BHS= Brief hypervigilance scale, OES ostracism experience scale, AAQ-II= Acceptance and action questionnaire-II, FoMO= Fear of missing out, M=Mean, SD=Standard deviation, f= degree of freedom, p= significant level, η^2 = eta squared. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .000$.*

A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to examine differences in hypervigilance, ostracism, psychological flexibility, and fear of missing out (FoMO) across three employment status groups: employed, unemployed, and self-employed. The results revealed statistically important differences in all four variables. Unemployed participants reported suggestively higher levels of hypervigilance compared to employed and self-employed individuals. Similarly, levels of perceived ostracism were meaningfully higher among the unemployed group than the employed and self-employed. A major group difference was also observed in psychological flexibility (measured through AAQ-II), with unemployed individuals showing lower flexibility compared to employed and self-employed individuals. Finally,

unemployed participants exhibited meaningfully higher fear of missing out than those employed and self-employed. These findings indicate that unemployed individuals experience greater psychological distress across multiple domains compared to their employed and self-employed counterparts.

Table 16

Pairwise Comparison Across Categories of Employment Status with Respect to FoMO, Psychological Flexibility, Ostracism, and Hypervigilance (N=330).

Variable	(I)	(J)	(I-J)	MD (I-J)	SE	95% CI	
						LL	UL
Hypervigilance(BHS)	Employed	Unemployed	1 < 2	-4.12*	.742	-5.87	-2.38
	Un-employed	Self-employed	2>3	3.26*	.773	1.44	5.08
Ostracism	Employed	Unemployed	1 < 2	-11.56*	1.88	-15.98	-7.14
	Employed	Self-employed	1 < 3	-4.11*	1.72	8.15	-0.07
	Unemployed	Self-employed	2 > 3	7.45*	1.96	2.85	12.06
Psychological Flexibility (AAQ-II)	Employed	Unemployed	1 < 2	-4.77*	1.30	-7.83	-1.70
	Unemployed	Self-employed	2 > 3	4.77*	1.36	1.57	7.96
FoMO	Employed	Unemployed	1 < 2	-6.03*	1.23	-8.93	-3.14
	Unemployed	Self-employed	2 > 3	4.39*	1.28	1.37	7.41

*Note: BHS= Brief hypervigilance scale, OES ostracism experience scale, AAQ-II= Acceptance and action questionnaire-II, FoMO= Fear of missing out, CI= Confidence interval, LL=Lower limit, UL=Upper limit, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .000$.*

The results of the pairwise comparison across employment status categories indicated major differences in hypervigilance, ostracism, psychological flexibility, and fear of missing out (FoMO). Unemployed individuals reported meaningfully higher hypervigilance compared to those who were employed, indicating that lack of employment may be linked to increased psychological alertness or threat sensitivity. Additionally, self-employed individuals demonstrated lower

hypervigilance than the unemployed, suggesting that having control over one's work may help reduce such symptoms.

In terms of ostracism, unemployed individuals perceived meaningfully more social exclusion than both employed and self-employed individuals. Employed individuals also experienced slightly less ostracism than those who were self-employed, though this difference was negligible. These findings highlight that unemployment may heighten feelings of being left out or ignored by society, while employment particularly structured or self-directed can provide a buffer against social disconnection. Regarding psychological flexibility, unemployed participants had lower flexibility compared to the employed. In contrast, self-employed individuals reported greater psychological flexibility than the unemployed, reinforcing the idea that autonomy in work may enhance emotional regulation and mental agility.

Similarly, fear of missing out was found to be considerable higher among unemployed individuals as compared to the employed, suggesting that disconnection from work and routine might contribute to a heightened fear of being excluded from rewarding experiences. Self-employed individuals also reported lower fear of missing out than unemployed ones, indicating a potential psychological benefit of being productively engaged, even outside of traditional employment structures. These patterns collectively suggest that unemployment is associated with increased psychological vulnerability across several dimensions, while employment especially self-employment may offer protective effects by promoting psychological flexibility and reducing social and cognitive distress.

Table 17

One-way Analysis of Variance of Three Categories of Job Designation. (N=330)

Variable	government (n=94)		private (n=123)		other (n=113)		<i>f</i>	<i>p</i>	η^2
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>			
BHS	13.02	5.26	12.88	5.42	16.41	5.25	15.82	.000	.09
OES	40.17	14.54	39.90	13.24	49.04	12.94	16.67	.000	.09
AAQ-II	27.44	9.78	25.92	8.78	29.72	9.73	4.84	.008	.03
FoMO	29.29	8.37	27.80	8.75	33.19	9.28	11.49	.000	.07

*Note: BHS= Brief hypervigilance scale, OES ostracism experience scale, AAQ-II= Acceptance and action questionnaire-II, FoMO= Fear of missing out, M=Mean, SD=Standard deviation, f= degree of freedom, p= significant level, η^2 = eta squared. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .000$.*

The three job designation groups (government, private, and other) differed meaningfully on all research variables, according to the findings of the one-way analysis of variance. The "other" group reported higher levels of hypervigilance than the government and private groups, according to the mean scores. The difference was statistically noteworthy, indicating a moderate effect size. Additionally, the "other" group outperformed the government and private groups in terms of ostracism. The difference was substantial suggesting a moderate effect size. The "other" group outperformed the government and private groups on the psychological flexibility (AAQ-II) scale. The difference was important indicating a small-to-moderate effect size. The government and private groups reported lower scores than the "other" group due to FoMO. The difference reached

statistical substantial, indicating a moderate effect size. Overall, the results show that compared to people in the public and private sectors, those in the "other" occupational category reported higher degrees of ostracism, hypervigilance, and FoMO and lower level of psychological flexibility.

Table 18

Pairwise Comparison Across Categories of Job Designation with Respect to FoMO, Psychological Flexibility, Ostracism, and Hypervigilance (N=330).

Variable	(I)	(J)	(I-J)	MD	SE	95% CI	
						LL	UL
Hypervigilance(BHS)	Others	Government	3>1	3.39*	.73	1.64	5.13
		Private	3>2	3.53*	.69	1.90	5.16
Ostracism	Others	Government	3>1	8.87*	1.89	4.43	13.32
		Private	3>2	9.14*	1.76	4.99	13.29
Psychological Flexibility (AAQ-II)	Others	Private	3>2	3.80*	1.23	.91	6.68
FoMO	Others	Government	3>1	3.90*	1.23	1.00	6.80
		Private	3>2	5.39*	1.15	2.68	8.10

*Note: BHS= Brief hypervigilance scale, OES ostracism experience scale, AAQ-II= Acceptance and action questionnaire-II, FoMO= Fear of missing out, CI= Confidence interval, LL=Lower limit, UL=Upper limit, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .000$.*

According to pairwise comparisons, people in the "other" job category had substantially greater hypervigilance scores than both government and private sector workers. The "other" group was found to be more hypervigilant than the government group. In a similar way, the "other" group

reported ostracism on average compared to both government and private groups. The "other" work group reported noticeably greater levels of psychological inflexibility (lower psychological flexibility) than the private group. This suggests that people in the private sector exhibited greater psychological flexibility than those in the "other" category. Both the government and private groups scored far lower than the "other" group when it came to FoMO. It is clear that people in the "other" job category are more afraid of missing out than people in the government and private sectors.

Table 19

One-way Analysis of Variance of Three Categories of No of Close Friends. (N=330)

Variables	1-2 (n=97)		3-5 (n=106)		6 and above (n=127)		<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	η^2
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>			
BHS	16.99	5.26	14.63	5.28	11.52	4.78	32.61	.00	.17
OES	50.48	13.1	44.72	12.8	36.13	12.75	35.43	.00	.18
AAQ-II	32.35	8.48	28.33	9.05	23.5	8.85	28.26	.00	.15
FoMO	34.94	7.5	31.16	9.01	25.43	8.07	32.12	.00	.19

*Note: BHS= Brief hypervigilance scale, OES ostracism experience scale, AAQ-II= Acceptance and action questionnaire-II, FoMO= Fear of missing out, M=Mean, SD=Standard deviation, f= degree of freedom, p= significant level, η^2 = eta squared. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .000$.*

The findings show notable variations in all psychological factors among the three groups based on the number of close friends. The participants who reported the highest levels of hypervigilance were those who had one to two close friends followed by those who had three to five friends and those who had six or more friends. Similarly, participants with fewer friends (1–2) scored highest followed by those with 3–5 friends and those with 6 or more friends for ostracism. Participants with one to two friends similarly had the highest psychological inflexibility (AAQ-II), whereas those with more friends had lower levels of psychological inflexibility (high psychological flexibility). Lastly, participants with 1-2 friends had a substantially larger fear of missing out than those with 3–5 and 6 and above friends. These results imply that a greater number

of close friends is linked to lower levels of fear of missing out, psychological inflexibility, ostracism, and hypervigilance.

Table 20

Pairwise Comparison Across Three Categories of No of Close Friends with Respect to FoMO, Psychological Flexibility, Ostracism, and Hypervigilance (N=330).

Variable	(I)	(J)	(I-J)	MD (I-J)	SE	95% CI	
						LL	UL
Hypervigilance(BHS)	1-2	3-5	1>2	2.36*	.71	.68	4.04
		6 and above	1>3	5.47*	.69	3.86	7.08
	3-5	6 and above	2>3	3.11*	.67	1.54	4.69
Ostracism	1-2	3-5	1>2	5.77*	1.81	1.51	10.02
		6 and above	1>3	14.35*	1.74	10.27	18.44
	3-5	6 and above	2>3	8.58*	1.69	4.60	12.57
Psychological Flexibility (AAQ-II)	1-2	3-5	1>2	4.02*	1.24	1.11	6.93
		6 and above	1>3	8.85*	1.19	6.06	11.65
	3-5	6 and above	2>3	4.83*	1.16	2.11	7.56
FoMO	1-2	3-5	1>2	3.78*	1.16	1.06	6.50
		6 and above	1>3	9.50*	1.11	6.89	12.12
	3-5	6 and above	2>3	5.73*	1.08	3.18	8.27

*Note: BHS= Brief hypervigilance scale, OES ostracism experience scale, AAQ-II= Acceptance and action questionnaire-II, FoMO= Fear of missing out, CI= Confidence interval, LL=Lower limit, UL=Upper limit, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .000$.*

For all psychological factors, the pairwise comparisons reveal substantial differences across the number of close friend categories. Participants with one to two friends scored

considerably higher on the hypervigilance scale than those with three to five friends (and six or more friends. In a similar way, people with three to five friends scored considerably higher than people with six or more. Participants who had one to two friends reported substantially higher scores for ostracism than those who had three to five friends and six or more friends. Those who had three to five friends also reported knowingly higher scores than those who had six or more friends. Those with one to two friends scored meaningfully higher on psychological inflexibility (low in psychological flexibility) than those with three to five friends and six or more friends. Similarly, those with three to five friends scored higher than those with six or more friends. Participants who had one to two friends and six or more friends scored knowingly higher than those who had three to five friends for fear of missing out. These findings suggest that a much lower level of psychological flexibility and higher level of ostracism, hypervigilance, and FoMO is linked to having fewer close friends.

Table 21

Moderation Analysis to Measure the Effect of Psychological Flexibility (Using AAQ-II Scale) on the Relationship Between Ostracism, and Hypervigilance (N=330).

Variables	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	95% <i>CI</i>	
					<i>LL</i>	<i>UL</i>
Constant	1.74	1.3	1.33	.18	-.83	4.30
Ostracism total	0.16	0.04	4.47	.00	.09	.23
Psychological flexibility (AAQ-II)	0.07	0.05	1.29	.20	-.04	.17
Ostracism x Psychological flexibility	0.003	0.001	2.5	.01	.00	.01
ΔF	6.27					
R^2	.80					
<i>F</i>	434.53					

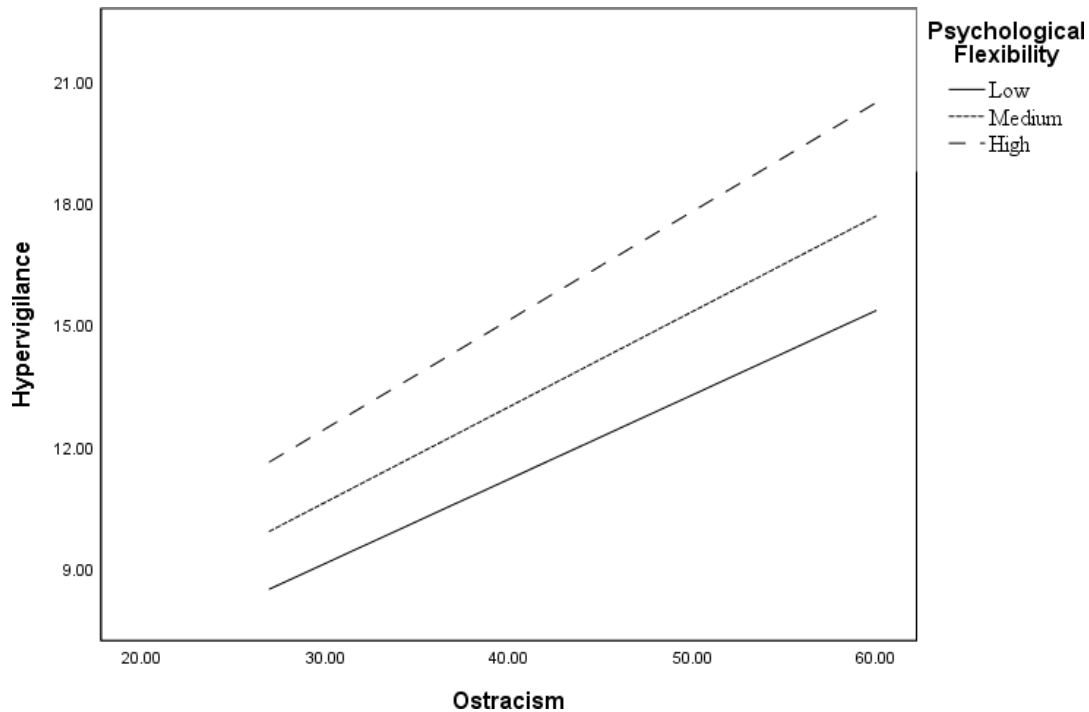
Note: B = unstandardized regression coefficient; SE = standard error; CI = confidence interval; ΔR^2 = change in R-squared; F = F-statistic for interaction term; LL = lower limit of 95% CI; UL = upper limit of 95% CI. $p < .05^*$, $p < .01^{**}$

Moderation analysis was conducted using PROCESS macro (Model 1) in SPSS to examine the moderating role of psychological flexibility in the relationship between ostracism and hypervigilance among adults ($N = 330$). The overall model was substantial with an R^2 of .80, indicating that 80% of the variance in hypervigilance was explained by the predictors. Ostracism meaningfully predicted hypervigilance, whereas psychological flexibility alone was not a major

predictor. However, the interaction term between ostracism and psychological flexibility was statistically noteworthy, suggesting that psychological flexibility moderates the relationship between ostracism and hypervigilance. Specifically, the effect of ostracism on hypervigilance was stronger among individuals with higher psychological inflexibility.

Figure 2

Moderation Graph for psychological Flexibility as Moderator of the Relationship Between Ostracism and Hypervigilance



The role of psychological flexibility as a moderator in the relationship between ostracism and hypervigilance was assessed using moderation analysis. As the graph shows, ostracism correlated with hypervigilance positively at all levels of psychological flexibility, i.e., more ostracism predicted greater hypervigilance. Most importantly, psychological flexibility influenced the strength of this connection. High psychological flexibility participants demonstrated a lower increase in hypervigilance as ostracism grew stronger, as well as lower anticipated levels of hypervigilance. Among contrast, anticipated hypervigilance was always higher in those with low psychological flexibility, and ostracism's effect on hypervigilance was much larger. Between these extremes were those with moderate flexibility. This trend highlights psychological flexibility's protective role, showing that with decreasing flexibility, there is a rise in hypervigilant reactions

to social exclusion, but with increasing flexibility, their intensity is reduced.

It should be noted that the Acceptance and Action Questionnaire-II (AAQ-II), the scale that was used, is normally scored in a manner that reflects higher psychological inflexibility. Low AAQ-II scores were considered as reflecting high flexibility, while high AAQ-II scores were interpreted as reflecting low flexibility, to make understanding of data easier.

Table 22

FoMO as Mediator in Relationship Between Ostracism and Hypervigilance (N=330).

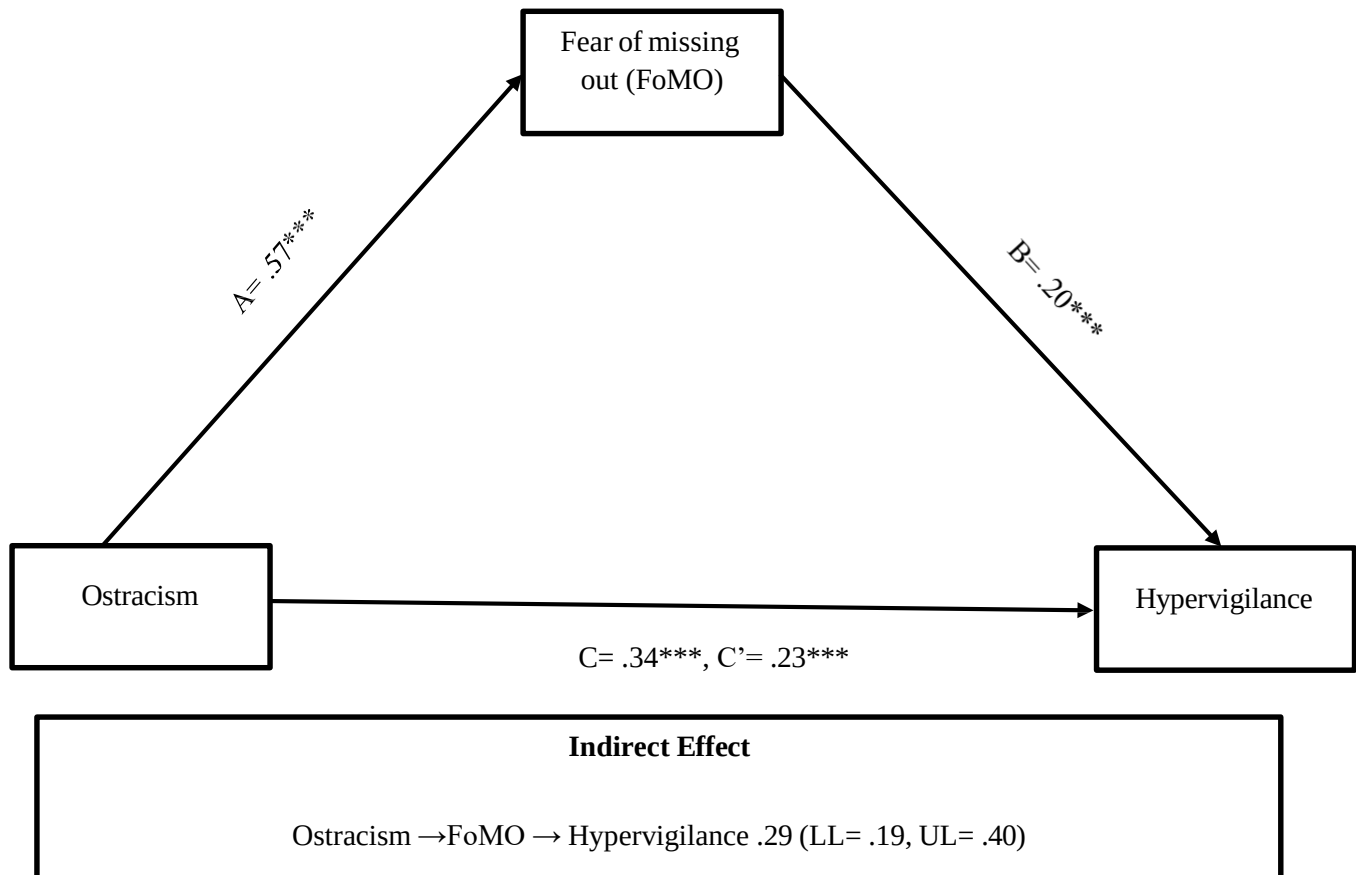
Variable	<i>B</i>	95% <i>CI</i>		<i>SE</i>
		<i>LL</i>	<i>UL</i>	
Step I Mediator (FoMO)				
Constant	5.58**	4.09	7.07	0.76
Ostracism	0.57**	0.54	0.60	0.02
R = .883, R ² = .779, F(1, 328) = 1157.93, p < .001				
Step II Outcome (Hypervigilance)				
Constant	-1.79**	-2.75	-0.83	0.49
Ostracism	0.23**	0.19	0.27	0.02
FoMO	0.20**	0.14	0.27	0.03
R = .888, R ² = .789, F(2, 327) = 612.32, p < .001				

*Note: p < .05 = *, p < .01 = **, p < .001 = ****

A noteworthy prediction of fear of missing out in Step I was ostracism. Ostracism was shown to account for 77.9% of the variance in fear of missing out. Both ostracism and fear of missing out were found to be noteworthy predictors of hypervigilance in Step II. Additionally, hypervigilance was substantially predicted by fear of missing out, this model was likewise substantial and demonstrated that ostracism and fear of missing out jointly explained 78.9% of the variation in hypervigilance. This suggests partial mediation because the indirect effect through fear of missing out was noteworthy and the direct effect of ostracism on hypervigilance reduced from $B = 0.34$ to $B = 0.23$ after adding fear of missing out.

Figure 3

A Partial Mediation Model Reveals that Ostracism Predicts Hypervigilance Both Directly and Indirectly Through FoMO.



The figure indicates that, both directly and indirectly through fear of missing out, ostracism is a strong predictor of hypervigilance. Specifically, $B = .34$ ($p < .001$) is the total effect of ostracism on hypervigilance. The indirect effect via fear of missing out is $B = .29$ (95% CI [.19, .40]), which indicates partial mediation, while the direct effect is reduced to $B = .23$ ($p < .001$) if fear of missing out is controlled. This indicates that ostracism leads to hypervigilant behavior, which can be partly explained by fear of missing out.

Table 23

FoMO; Psychological Flexibility as a Moderator in the Relationship Between Ostracism and Hypervigilance (N=330).

Outcome	predictor	B	SE	t	p	95% CI	
						LL	UL
FoMO	Ostracism (X)	0.38	0.03	13.75	.001	0.32	0.43
	Psychological Flexibility (W)	0.34	0.04	8.43	.001	0.26	0.42
Hypervigilance	Ostracism	0.18	0.02	8.49	.001	0.14	0.23
	FoMO (M)	0.00	0.03	3.83	.96	-0.06	0.20
	Psychological Flexibility (W)	0.14	0.03	5.13	.001	0.09	0.20
	FoMO × Psychological Flexibility	0.01	0.00	2.9	0.004	0.002	0.008

Note: LL= Lowe limit, UL= Upper limit, B= Regression co-efficient, SE= Standardized error, p= Level of significance $p < .05^*$, $p < .01^{***}$, $p < .01^{***}$.

The moderated mediation model tested using PROCESS Model no 58 demonstrated several important paths among the variables ostracism, fear of missing out, psychological flexibility (measured through AAQ-II), and hypervigilance. The findings revealed that ostracism

suggestively predicted fear of missing out, indicating that individuals who experience higher levels

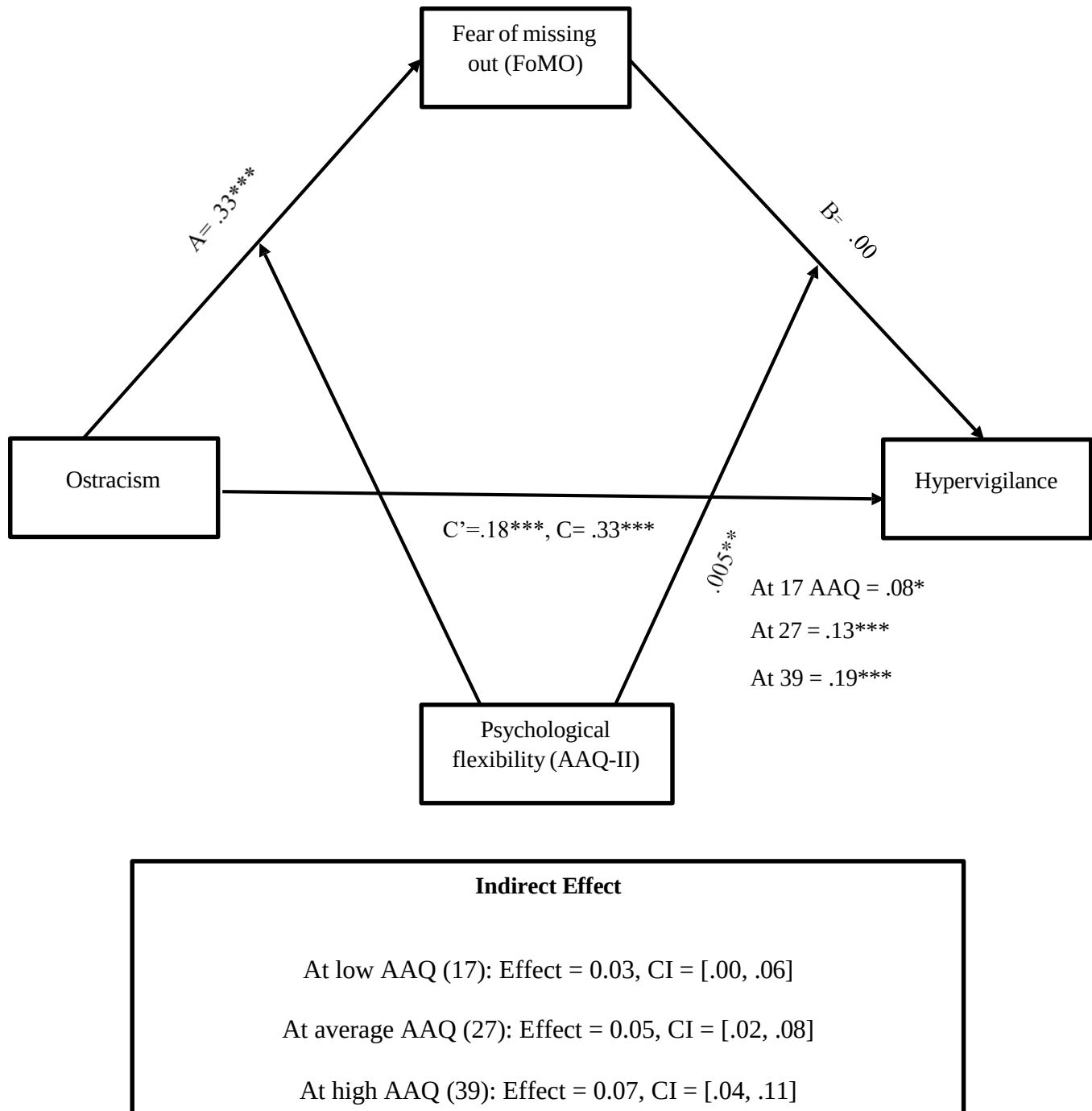
of ostracism tend to report greater fear of missing out. However, this relationship was not meaningfully moderated by psychological flexibility, suggesting that regardless of one's level of psychological flexibility, ostracism has a consistent effect on fear of missing out.

In the second stage of the model, the interaction between fear of missing out and psychological flexibility was major in predicting hypervigilance. This indicates that the strength of the relationship between fear of missing out and hypervigilance varies depending on an individual's level of psychological flexibility. Specifically, the conditional effects analysis showed that at low, average, and high levels of psychological flexibility (i.e., at increasing levels of psychological inflexibility as measured by the AAQ-II), the effect of fear of missing out on hypervigilance was important and became stronger as psychological flexibility decreased. These results suggest that individuals with lower psychological flexibility are more susceptible to the influence of fear of missing out, which in turn leads to increased hypervigilance.

Furthermore, the conditional indirect effects of ostracism on hypervigilance through fear of missing out were also found to be substantial across all levels of psychological flexibility. This provides support for the moderated mediation model, indicating that fear of missing out serves as an important mediator in the relationship between ostracism and hypervigilance, and that this indirect pathway is influenced by psychological flexibility. In addition to the indirect effects, the direct effect of ostracism on hypervigilance remained important, suggesting a dual pathway in which ostracism impacts hypervigilance both directly and indirectly through fear of missing out. These results highlight the complex interplay among social exclusion, fear of missing out, individual adaptability, and heightened alertness to potential threats.

Figure 4

A Moderate Mediation Model that is Dependent on Psychological Flexibility (AAQ-II) Demonstrates that Ostracism Indirectly Affects Hypervigilance Through Fear of Missing Out (FoMO).



The model show that ostracism, both directly and indirectly through fear of missing out (FoMO), strongly predicted hypervigilance. Lower psychological flexibility scores (Low AAQ-II scores) were associated with a greater mediating effect of FoMO vice versa, indicating an important moderated mediation. In particular, ostracism's indirect influence on hypervigilance through fear of missing out was more noticeable at greater psychological inflexibility levels, indicating that those with less psychological flexibility are more susceptible to the detrimental effects of ostracism.

Chapter 4**Discussion**

The present study aims to investigate the role of fear of missing out and psychological flexibility in relationship between ostracism and hypervigilance among young adults with body image dissatisfaction.

Dissatisfaction with one's physique has become a widespread issue in today's culture, impacting people of all ages. This idea reflects unfavorable sentiments and perceptions on one's physical appearance, which are typically influenced by social media, interpersonal relationships, and cultural norms. A person's subjective perception of their body is known as their body image. Clinical and research investigations typically focus on poor or negative body image.

The hypothesis 1 of the present study was that ostracism will have a substantial positive effect on hypervigilance among young adults with body image dissatisfaction. The correlation in table 3 demonstrates that relationship between ostracism and hypervigilance is positive so the hypothesis 1 is accepted. This means that variables are correlated as by increasing ostracism in adults with body image dissatisfaction they will experience high levels of hypervigilance concerning their physical appearance. This hypothesis was confirmed by the results, which showed that people who feel ostracized are more likely to be more alert to social risks, especially those involving their looks. This is consistent with the findings of Lavell et al. (2014), who showed that appearance-based rejection sensitivity acted as a mediating factor in the strong association between appearance-based victimization and body dysmorphic symptoms. This sensitivity, which shares many cognitive and affective traits with hypervigilance, is characterized by a persistent tendency to anxiously anticipate rejection based on appearance. Although their study did not specifically refer to hypervigilance, the pattern of increased social alertness and worry over appearance-based appraisal is conceptually consistent with the hypervigilance notion.

Another Research consistently explored the impact of ostracism. For instance, Tang (2011) found that those who experienced frequent episodes of ostracism showed increase levels of vigilance towards social cues and increased desire to reconnect emphasizing both emotional distress and cognitive hyperawareness. The findings of Bilal and Batool (2024) highlight that ostracism significantly predicts depression among older adults, emphasizing the detrimental role of social exclusion in psychological well-being. These results align with the present study's focus on ostracism as a critical social stressor, suggesting that in addition to depression, ostracism may also contribute to heightened vigilance toward social threats and body-related concerns, reinforcing the pathways leading to hypervigilance in younger adult populations.

The hypothesis 2 of the current study was that fear of missing out (FOMO) will mediate the relationship between ostracism and hypervigilance. The parallel mediation in the table 22 supported the hypothesis and shows the mediating effect of fear of missing in the relationship between ostracism and hypervigilance among adults with body image dissatisfaction. Results indicated that ostracism was an important positive predictor of fear of missing out and this fear of missing out in turn substantially predicted hypervigilance. Previous researches revealed the mediating role of fear of missing out as the research conducted by Desai (2023) explored that high level of fear of missing out (FoMO) was found among individuals with high need to belong (NTB), this ultimately contributed to increased social anxiety, fear of missing out was partially mediating this relationship.

Drawing on local empirical data, Haroon et al. (2023) found that Instagram use was meaningfully and favorably correlated with body surveillance and FoMO in young Pakistani adults, indicating that visual social media platforms exacerbate physical appearance and FoMO concerns. Similarly, FoMO was associated with increased social comparison, particularly among female students, and was proven to be a momentous predictor of social media addiction by Parveiz et al. (2023). These findings provide culturally based support for the indirect pathway shown in current sample and are consistent with the findings that FoMO mediates the ostracism and

hypervigilance link.

Another research was conducted by Gao et al., (2023) related to fear of missing out showed that within mobile social media use, feelings of social exclusion and emotional distress can become stronger with increased level of fear of missing out. This socially excluded phenomenon align with experience of ostracism and may lead to emotional distress such as heightened vigilance among individuals with heightened body image dissatisfaction.

The hypothesis 3 of the present research was that psychological flexibility will moderate the direct effect of ostracism on hypervigilance. The table 21 of moderating analysis in results section showed that psychological flexibility considerably moderates the relationship between ostracism and hypervigilance so the hypothesis 3 is accepted. Specifically, the effect of ostracism on hypervigilance was stronger among individuals with lower psychological flexibility which means that among individuals with body image dissatisfaction the relationship between ostracism and hypervigilance weakens as psychological flexibility increases.

Previous research showing the moderating influence of psychological flexibility in the setting of social exclusion supports the current study's findings. For instance, a study by Tyndall et al. (2018) found that experiential avoidance, a core component of psychological inflexibility, substantially moderated psychological distress following perceived ostracism. Specifically, persons high in experiential avoidance showed greater suffering in reaction to ostracism, while those with lower avoidance (i.e., stronger psychological flexibility) were less affected. This demonstrates how psychological flexibility protects against social threats like rejection by controlling emotional reactions. These results are consistent with those of the current study, which found that psychological flexibility moderated the association between hypervigilance and ostracism, with those who were more flexible reporting less hypervigilance in response to ostracism. In the Pakistani context, Chaudhary, et al. (2021) explored psychological flexibility among university students and highlighted traits such as emotion regulation, adaptive personality

patterns, assertive communication, and effective stress management as central components of flexibility. These characteristics align closely with current findings, as they suggest that individuals with greater psychological flexibility are less likely to exhibit hypervigilant responses when facing social rejection or exclusion. In line with present results, the study highlights that flexible individuals are better equipped to regulate emotional and cognitive reactions to ostracism, thereby weakening its negative impact. By grounding current findings within this cultural context, it becomes evident that psychological flexibility can act as a protective buffer against the heightened vigilance triggered by ostracism.

Waldeck et al. (2017) looked at the moderating effect of psychological flexibility in their investigation of the connection between psychological discomfort and common place experiences of ostracism. Only those with limited psychological flexibility showed a substantial positive link between psychological discomfort and experienced ostracism, according to the study. Conversely, ostracism had no longer had an important negative impact on people with great psychological flexibility. The robustness of the findings was further supported by the replication of these results across two separate samples.

By showing that psychological flexibility not only moderates emotional outcomes (like discomfort) but also cognitive and behavioral responses like hypervigilance, the current study advances this area of inquiry. This implies that improving psychological adaptability could be a protective factor for people who are socially excluded, especially those who are already at risk because of issues with their bodies.

According to the study's fourth hypothesis, psychological flexibility would moderate the indirect impact of ostracism on hypervigilance by reducing the fear of missing out (FoMO). There was evidence in table 23 in favor of a moderated mediation model, which partially supported this hypothesis. In particular, at moderate and high levels of psychological inflexibility, an indirect pathway from ostracism to hypervigilance via fear of missing out was visible, highlighting the

mediation function of fear of missing out in these circumstances. However, since the first path (ostracism → FoMO) was not moderated, psychological flexibility did not meaningfully change how much ostracism predicted fear of missing out. On the other hand, the relationship between fear of missing out and psychological flexibility was strong in the second stage of the model, suggesting that the impact of fear of missing out on hypervigilance was dependent upon an individual's psychological flexibility.

Theoretical frameworks such as self-regulation theory by Baumeister et al. (2007) suggest that psychological outcomes of social stressors (e.g., ostracism) may operate through emotional and cognitive mechanisms (e.g., FoMO), which are further influenced by individual coping capacities (e.g., psychological flexibility). Therefore, a moderated mediation framework was deemed appropriate, as it allows testing both the indirect (mediated) and conditional (moderated) effects within a single analytic model.

These results demonstrate the existence of a conditional indirect effect, in which psychological flexibility influences the way that ostracism results in increased hypervigilance through fear of missing out. More specifically, the indirect effect of ostracism on FoMO-driven hypervigilance was less noticeable at higher psychological flexibility and more noticeable at lower psychological flexibility (i.e., higher inflexibility). This pattern demonstrates the protective function of psychological adaptability in reducing the negative emotional and cognitive effects of social exclusion.

Building on the findings, evidence from the Pakistani context also provides support to the moderated mediation role of psychological flexibility and FoMO. Sarfraz et al. (2023) conducted a mindfulness-based intervention with university students and demonstrated that cultivating mindfulness a key component of psychological flexibility was effective in reducing distress responses and enhancing well-being. This suggests that greater psychological flexibility can weaken the indirect effect of ostracism on hypervigilance through FoMO. In other words, flexible

individuals appear better equipped to regulate emotional pathways, thereby reducing the intensity of FoMO-driven hypervigilance in the face of exclusion. These findings reinforce the idea that psychological flexibility acts as a protective mechanism in Pakistani youth, buffering the psychological impact of ostracism.

Conceptually, the current results are also in line with earlier studies that examined comparable moderated mediation models in the setting of ostracism. For instance, Waldeck (2020) investigated whether experiential avoidance, via cognitive arousal, alleviated the indirect impact of ostracism on sleep quality. Their suggested model is similar to the current study's model, where psychological flexibility was supposed to moderate the indirect effect of ostracism on hypervigilance via fear of missing out. Though experiential avoidance was not an important moderator, the current findings continue this line of inquiry by showing that psychological flexibility expressively weakens the indirect pathway, indicating that it may be more important in cognitive vigilance and emotional hyper arousal than in sleep-related outcomes.

Research demonstrating that psychological flexibility moderates the effect of perceived ostracism on adverse psychological consequences gives more credibility to the current study's hypothesis 4. For instance, Waldeck et al. (2017) discovered that the association between psychological suffering and perceived ostracism was mediated by experiential avoidance, a crucial component underpinning psychological inflexibility. Ostracism caused greater suffering for those with high experiential avoidance, while it had less of an impact on those with lower avoidance (i.e., more adaptable). These results are consistent with the current study, which found that psychological flexibility had a protective role in coping with the emotional and cognitive effects of social exclusion by moderating the indirect effect of ostracism on hypervigilance via FoMO.

The hypothesis 5 of the study was that there will be substantial difference among males and females on study variables. The results of t-test in table 5 of present study revealed statistically noteworthy differences between males and females across all variables. Female participants

reported higher levels of hypervigilance compared to males. Similarly, females scored higher on ostracism than males. In terms of psychological flexibility, females scored lower than males which shows they have less psychological flexibility. Furthermore, fear of missing out (FoMO) was greater among females than males. These findings suggest that females experience higher levels of hypervigilance, ostracism, and FoMO and low scores in psychological flexibility compared to their male counterparts.

Previous studies have demonstrated that fear of missing out was negatively correlated with perceived social support among females but not males, indicating that women may experience higher levels of fear of missing out in response to unmet social needs. This finding supports the notion that females reported meaningfully higher levels of fear of missing out than males (Davis et al., 2023). This supports the theory that fear of missing out can serve as a signal for women to recognize and react to deficiencies in the social ties they desire.

Gender differences in the experience of fear of missing out have also been found in several research. For example, it has been shown that teenage girls score higher on the fear of missing out scale than do boys, presumably as a result of their increased focus on preserving relationships and social ties (Stead & Bibby, 2017). Women typically exhibit greater emotional intelligence and employ a wider range of emotion management techniques than men when it comes to emotional processes. These abilities can be adaptive, but they may also make women more susceptible to social exclusion and unfulfilled demands, which makes them more susceptible to fear of missing out and its associated consequences, such as hypervigilance (Cabello et al., 2016; Nolen-Hoeksema, 2012). There are substantial gender disparities in psychological flexibility, according to research. For example, research has shown that women are less psychologically flexible than men, which may make them more susceptible to pressures like social rejection or exclusion. This pattern has been seen in both clinical and non-clinical populations, indicating that men may exhibit comparatively more acceptance-based coping whereas women may rely more on experiential avoidance techniques (Kato et al., 2020; Levin et al., 2016). Because less psychological flexibility

frequently exacerbates maladaptive consequences, it is crucial to take these variations into account when figuring out how women might suffer higher degrees of fear of missing out, ostracism, and hypervigilance. Women may be more reactive to pressures like social rejection or ostracism as a result of this less flexibility. All of these research points to the idea that women are less psychologically flexible than men and are more likely to suffer from higher levels of fear of missing out, ostracism, and hypervigilance.

Although the present findings indicated that females reported higher levels of ostracism, FoMO, hypervigilance, and lower psychological flexibility, contrasting evidence has also been observed in the Pakistani context. Parveiz et al. (2023) demonstrated significant gender differences in FoMO, with males reporting higher levels of fear of missing out than females. This divergence highlights the complexity of gender-based psychological processes and suggests that cultural, social, and contextual factors may differently shape the experience of FoMO across genders. Incorporating such contradictory findings enriches the current study by emphasizing that gender differences in ostracism-related mechanisms are not universal but may vary according to social norms, usage patterns of digital platforms, and evolving gender roles in Pakistani society.

The hypothesis 6 was that younger adults (18-23) will report higher levels of fear of missing out and hypervigilance compare to older young adults (24-29). The current study in table 7 of Anova and table 8 of post hoc analysis found that there were notable age-group differences in psychological flexibility, ostracism, hypervigilance, and fear of missing out, so the hypothesis is accepted. Individuals between the ages of 21 and 23 reported the highest degrees of ostracism, hypervigilance, and fear of missing out along with lower level of psychological flexibility followed by those between the ages of 18 and 20. Participants ages 24–26 and 27–29, on the other hand, showed more psychological flexibility and reported far lower levels of hypervigilance, Ostracism, and fear of missing out. It is essential to remember that higher AAQ-II scores indicate less psychological flexibility and more psychological inflexibility. These results are consistent with earlier studies that found social and developmental factors make younger adults more vulnerable

to social pressures.

These results are in line with Arnett's (2023) theory that emerging adulthood is a developmental stage marked by increased sensitivity to social possibilities, instability, and exploration, which may make younger persons more susceptible to FoMO. Furthermore, because they are more concerned with rejection and exclusion at this point of life, younger adults may exhibit higher levels of hypervigilance in social situations (Sebastian et al., 2010; Masten et al., 2009). Another previous research also showed that early adulthood is a time of increased sensitivity to peer approval, social inclusion, and social opportunity monitoring, which could account for the higher levels of fear of missing out seen in younger adults (Przybylski et al., 2013; Baker et al., 2016).

According to a longitudinal lifespan study on psychological flexibility that included participants ages 11 to 89, emerging adults (18–24 years old) showed noteworthy less flexibility than older age groups, and flexibility became more protective against anxiety as age increased (Okayama et al., 2024). This is consistent with present findings, which showed that people between the ages of 21 and 23 had the highest levels of hypervigilance and fear of missing out along with the lowest levels of flexibility. Younger adults have higher levels of fear of missing out than older adults, according to a large-scale study of German-speaking adults that indicated a strong negative association between age and fear of missing out ($\beta = -0.382$, $p < .001$) (Rozgonjuk et al., 2021).

The hypothesis 7 of the current study was that adults who spend 10 or more hours daily on social media will report higher hypervigilance and fear of missing out than those who spend fewer hours. The results of the research in table 9 of Anova showed that the hypothesis is accepted as there was substantial differences across all study variables on the demographic of hours using social media daily. According to the results individuals who use social media more frequently especially those who use it for ten or more hours every day report much higher levels of perceived ostracism, hypervigilance, and fear of missing out as well as less psychological flexibility than people who use it less frequently.

According to the previous studies adults who use social media for ten or more hours a day report higher levels of fear of missing out which is consistent with present research showing that excessive SNS use raises psychological distress by increasing social comparison and hypervigilance. Leung et al. (2021), found that fear of missing out mediated the association between SNS use and depression, found that even moderate use of SNS carry risks. Another study by Aygar et al. (2019) found that higher daily online time spent for social sharing is linked to increased psychological strain and fear of missing out among college students.

In line with current findings, a cross-sectional survey of Somalian university students revealed that using social media for more than three hours a day was substantially linked to increased levels of anxiety, mental exhaustion, social isolation, and sleep disturbance (Osman et al., 2025). This emphasizes the connection between increased psychological distress and social media use, even at moderate to high levels. In support of this, a comprehensive analysis of social media platforms confirmed that problematic usage of social media is associated with higher levels of anxiety, sadness, and decreased well-being (Ahmed et al., 2024). This strengthens the case for present hypothesis that psychological vulnerability is increased by excessive social media use.

Hypothesis 8 of the study was that Instagram, snapchat, and TikTok users will report higher hypervigilance, fear of missing out, and ostracism and lower psychological flexibility as compare to WhatsApp and YouTube users. The results of the study were all noteworthy on all study variables for the demographic of social media platform. Various studies support the findings of the present research.

As one of the research conducted by Rozgonjuk et al. 2020 showed that higher fear of missing out and daily life disruptions are associated with Instagram, Facebook, and WhatsApp use compared to other platforms. Additionally, Baylor researchers discovered that users of Instagram and TikTok had higher psychological risk indicators (fear of missing out, anxiety, and mind wandering), underscoring the immersive, attention-demanding character of these platforms (Robert & David, 2023). In support of these findings, a policy-driven UK poll found that Instagram

was the worst medium for young people's mental health and fear of missing out, whereas YouTube performed relatively better (Royal Society for Public Health, 2017). When combined, these results support the hypothesis that platforms with short-form and visually demanding material increase social and emotional vulnerabilities.

In addition to hypothesis-driven analyses, the current study investigated the relationship between the study variables and a number of demographic parameters, including marital status, employment, job classification, socioeconomic background, and the number of close friends. Despite the lack of specific hypotheses for these analyses, the results offer valuable additional information about the relationships between various demographics and psychological flexibility, ostracism, hypervigilance, and fear of missing out. These demographic data, which aid in placing the psychological variables within larger social and personal contexts, are covered in detail in the section that follows.

The participants' sociodemographic details are shown in Table 1. Nearly equal numbers of men and women made up the sample ($N = 330$), with the majority of participants being between the ages of 18 and 29. Most of them were working or self-employed, single, and had graduate-level education. On average, participants indicated moderate levels of expertise, and social media use was widespread, with the most popular platforms being Instagram, WhatsApp, and YouTube. Many participants reported using social media for three or more hours every day. Overall, the sample showed variation by place of origin, occupation, and socioeconomic position.

Across marital status categories, the current study found substantial differences in psychological flexibility, ostracism, hypervigilance, and fear of missing out in table 13 under result section. Married people consistently displayed the lowest scores on these challenges, while single participants reported the highest levels of ostracism, and hypervigilance. These results imply that psychological experiences are importantly shaped by marital status.

By offering steady social support, marriage can operate as a protective factor against

loneliness, exclusion, and vigilance (Robles et al., 2014). On the other hand, people who are single or separated could have fewer emotional support systems, which makes them more susceptible to social rejection and fear of missing out. Unmarried participants' higher levels of fear of missing out are consistent with research showing that social comparisons and unfulfilled needs for belongingness increase fear of missing out (Przybylski et al., 2013).

In line with research that links relationship satisfaction to psychological health, married participants also showed higher psychological flexibility, indicating that close relationships may promote acceptance, adaptive coping, and well-being (Proulx et al., 2007). All things considered, these findings demonstrate the protective function of marriage as well as the risks connected to being single or divorced. Although exploratory, the results suggest that social support and belongingness are possible mechanisms that should be investigated in future studies to explain the disparities in psychological outcomes between married statuses.

The results in table 15 showed that differences in the research variables were substantially correlated with job status, indicating that working people can feel varying degrees of body image issues, fear of missing out, ostracism, or hypervigilance in comparison to participants who are unemployed or do not work. One argument is that work offers a sense of purpose, financial independence, and structured social interactions all of which can lessen the negative impacts of psychological stress and exclusion (Paul & Moser, 2009). In contrast, unemployment has been associated with psychological vulnerability, low self-esteem, and feelings of exclusion, which might exacerbate fear of missing out and hypervigilance in social situations (McKee-Ryan et al., 2005).

Additionally, through professional networks, employment frequently promotes social belonging and identity, which may shield people from loneliness. Social Identity Theory states that professional jobs give employed people a sense of self-worth, while the lack of such roles may make people more vulnerable to issues related to body image and perceived exclusion (Haslam et

al., 2009). This is consistent with research showing that unemployment is a psychosocial stressor that worsens maladaptive thoughts and behaviors in addition to being an economic problem (Wanberg, 2012).

As a result, the current findings emphasize that work status is a important demographic factor that affects the psychological processes being examined. These results imply that programs that foster skill development, social integration, or career prospects may lessen the detrimental psychological effects associated with ostracism and related concepts in an indirect manner.

Substantial differences were found amongst job categories in table 17, indicating a direct relationship between professional duties and psychological experiences such as body image issues, hypervigilance, and ostracism. Lower-level employees frequently face more scrutiny, less autonomy, and less decision-making authority, which can lead to increased vigilance and a sense of exclusion (Rivera, 2011). Higher ranking people, on the other hand, usually have more authority and social recognition, which can protect them from such detrimental psychological effects.

According to Wu et al. (2012), hierarchical power dynamics determine who is more likely to be included or excluded in organizational contexts, hence job designation can also affect experiences of workplace ostracism. These results imply that a person's designation has psychological ramifications in addition to being a structural position, which could account for the variations seen in this study.

Based on the number of close friends, the current findings of table 19 revealed substantial differences in psychological flexibility, ostracism, hypervigilance, and fear of missing out. Those who had six or more close friends reported the lowest levels of psychological challenges, whereas those who had just one or two close friends consistently reported the highest levels of psychological inflexibility, ostracism, hypervigilance, and fear of missing out. This suggests that friendships provide a protective social connection by fostering greater psychological flexibility and lowering emotions of exclusion, alertness, and fear of missing out.

These findings are consistent with earlier studies showing the value of friendships for mental health. Strong social ties serve as a protective barrier against stress and maladjustment, according to Umberson and Montez (2010). According to Hawkley and Cacioppo (2010), people who have less social connections are more susceptible to experiences of ostracism, loneliness, and hypervigilance. According to Przybylski et al. (2013), participants who have less close friends have higher levels of fear of missing out, which can be explained by the fact that unfulfilled belongingness demands lead to a larger fear of missing out. When combined, these results highlight the protective value of having several close friendships. A wider social network seems to promote emotional support and a sense of belonging, which reduces psychological vulnerabilities like ostracism, hypervigilance, and fear of missing out while increasing psychological flexibility.

Limitations

1. The information was gathered using self-report questionnaires, which are prone to response bias, social desirability, and inaccurate self-perception.
2. The cross-sectional research design limited the potential to make inferences about causal relationships among ostracism, FoMO, psychological flexibility, dissatisfaction with body image, and hypervigilance.
3. The study sample was confined to adults of a specific age bracket, which does not mirror the experience of older adults or teenagers.
4. Only those participants with English literacy were used, thus excluding those who were not able to understand the language.

Suggestions

1. Subsequent research can employ a longitudinal approach to test the causal effect and long-term effect of ostracism on hypervigilance.

2. Researchers can employ a probability sampling method to enhance generalizability across populations from different backgrounds.
3. Subsequent research can test these variables across other cultures to test cross-cultural differences.
4. Increasing the sample size to cover adolescents and older adults might give a broader insight into age differences.
5. Qualitative methods like interviews or focus groups may be combined with surveys to provide more detailed insights into participants' lived experiences.
6. Future studies might examine the contribution of other mediators and moderators like social support, resilience, or coping mechanisms.
7. Comparison of findings from clinical versus non-clinical populations may also be explored through studies to comprehend better the mental health effects of ostracism and FoMO.

Implications

There are vital theoretical implications to the current research. This study adds to ones understanding of the ways in which social exclusion interacts with cognitive-emotional processes to influence psychological well-being by investigating the relationship between ostracism, hypervigilance, fear of missing out, and psychological flexibility. The results show that while psychological flexibility serves as a protective element, fear of missing out is an underlying mechanism through which ostracism causes hypervigilance. By combining mediating and moderating processes, the study expands theoretical frameworks on social exclusion and emphasizes the significance of body image issues in this regard.

Practical implications are also present. According to the study, adults who are unhappy with their bodies are more susceptible to the negative effects of social isolation, including hypervigilance and heightened sensitivity to rejection. These results point to the significance of treating fear of missing out as a key component of awareness and prevention initiatives.

Furthermore, institutions, educators, and community settings should be aware of how exclusionary practices might exacerbate psychological issues in those who have body image issues. These hazards can be reduced by encouraging social inclusion and better offline and online engagement habits.

The implications of these findings extend beyond clinical practice to organizational, educational, and community settings. The results highlight psychological flexibility as a protective factor that lessens the negative effects of ostracism on hypervigilance. This suggests that interventions and programs designed to enhance psychological flexibility such as mindfulness-based practices and Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) can be effective not only in clinical populations but also in helping individuals navigate social exclusion, body image-related insecurities, and feelings of isolation in workplaces, schools, and other institutions. Organizations and institutions can develop comprehensive initiatives that promote social connectedness, reduce anxiety, and foster psychological flexibility, thereby supporting mental well-being and adaptive functioning across multiple settings.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to investigate how adults with body image dissatisfaction think, feel, and act when they are excluded or neglected by others, a phenomenon known as ostracism. The results demonstrated that socially excluded individuals are more prone to develop hypervigilance. Simply put, they expect others to judge them negatively and stay vigilant and alert at all times. Both mental health and general well-being may suffer as a result of this hypervigilant state. The study also showed that this process is meaningfully influenced by the fear of missing out. People who are unhappy with their bodies start to worry more about missing opportunities to interact with others or fit in with social groups when they feel excluded. Their hypervigilance is further heightened by this fear, which also makes them more perceptive of social cues and more fearful of rejection.

Simultaneously, psychological flexibility was found to be protective. The ability to absorb challenging ideas and feelings while maintaining focus on one's own ideals and objectives is known as psychological flexibility. Individuals with greater flexibility were better equipped to handle the negative effects of being avoided. Even when individuals felt excluded, their levels of hypervigilance were lower. These results together point to a series of experiences. Fear of missing out can be triggered by feeling left out, which increases hypervigilance. However, this loop can be broken or weakened by psychological flexibility. This provides useful strategies for assisting adults with body image issues in addition to a deeper comprehension of the psychological difficulties they experience. The negative effects of ostracism may be lessened by interventions that emphasize developing psychological flexibility, such as acceptance-based and mindfulness-based techniques. They can help people deal with emotions of exclusion and keep them from becoming unduly cautious or afraid of being rejected.

To put it simply, this study demonstrates that exclusion is important. It can increase feelings of insecurity and alertness in those who struggle with body image issues. However, developing better coping mechanisms for these emotions helps safeguard mental health and enhance quality of life.

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Annexures

Appendix A

INFORMED CONSENT

I am Haleema Faheem (Reg. No: 491-FSS/MSCP/F23), an MS Psychology scholar at the **International Islamic University Islamabad**. I am conducting a research study titled: “Role of FoMO and Psychological Flexibility in Relationship Between Ostracism and Hypervigilance among Adults with Body Image Dissatisfaction” under the supervision of Dr. Kehkashan Arouj. Your participation involves completing a questionnaire, where you are requested to provide honest responses according to the given instructions. Participation is entirely voluntary, and you have the right to withdraw at any point without any negative consequences. I assure you that all the information you provide will be kept strictly confidential and will only be used for research purpose. Your cooperation is highly valued, and your contribution is essential to the success of this study. Thank you for your time and support.

I hereby confirm that I have read and understood the inform consent and my participation in the study is voluntary.

Researcher

Ms. Haleema Faheem

Participant Signature _____

Appendix B**DEMOGRAPHIC SHEET****1. Age**a. 18–20 ☐b. 21–23 ☐c. 24–26 ☐d. 27–29 ☐**2. Gender**a. Male ☐b. Female ☐**3. Marital Status**a. Married ☐b. Unmarried ☐c. Separated ☐d. Divorced ☐e. Widow ☐**4. Qualification Level**a. Undergraduate ☐b. Graduate ☐c. Postgraduate ☐

5. Employment Status

- a. Employed ☐
- b. Unemployed ☐
- c. Self-employed ☐

6. Job Designation/Title: _____

7. Grade/Scale: _____

8. Experience (in Years): _____

9. Socioeconomic Status

- a. Below Average ☐
- b. Average ☐
- c. Above Average ☐

10. Number of Close Friends

- a. 1–2 ☐
- b. 3–5 ☐
- c. 6–10 ☐
- d. More than 10 ☐

11. Place of Origin: _____

12. Most Used Social Media Platform

- a. WhatsApp ☐
- b. YouTube ☐
- c. Facebook ☐

d. Instagram ☐

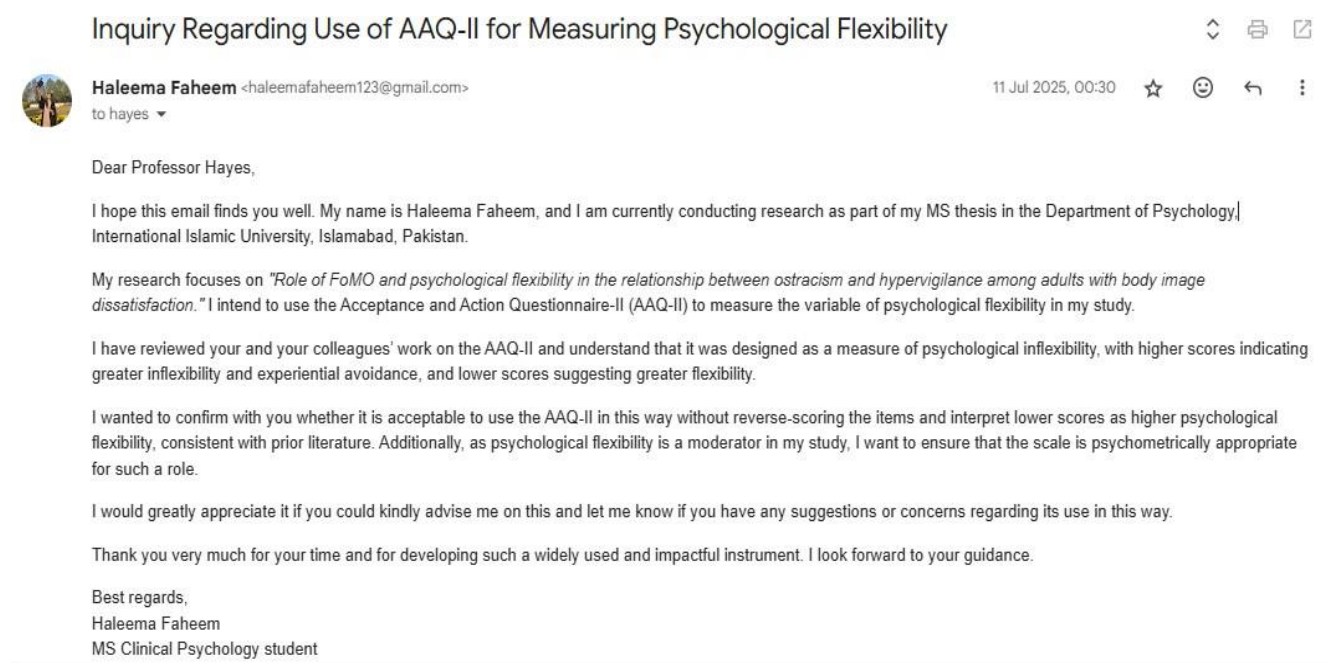
e. Snapchat ☐

f. TikTok ☐

Appendix C

PERMISSION AND CORRESPONDENCE WITH AUTHOR

To ensure appropriate use of the **Acceptance and Action Questionnaire-II (AAQ-II)** in the present research, the scale's author, Professor Steven C. Hayes, was contacted. The following inquiry was sent by the researcher (personal communication, July 11, 2025) as attached here:





Steven C. Hayes <stevenchayes@gmail.com>

to me ▾

Fri 11 Jul, 01:07



It's open source and free to use. People score it positively or negatively but their preference and ease of understanding in the context of their question.

It's been widely used as a moderator and a mediator.

I am very skeptical of psychometrics in general so I'm the wrong person to ask about that (I come from that line mind you: Allen Edwards of the "Edwards Personality Inventory" and the the "Edwards Social Desirability Scale" is my intellectual grandfather -- my mentor's mentor)

I've attached some of my studies on the AAQ though

I suggest you consider joining ACBS (the part in yellow).

Dues are low and "values based" (pay what the work is worth to you as modified by your ability to pay) so even \$15 will get you free access to hundreds of measures / studies / protocols / tape etc all for free

There is not a Pakistani chapter yet but there will be -- interest is obviously picking up

- S

Steven C. Hayes
Foundation Professor of Psychology Emeritus
University of Nevada, Reno

Appendix D

BODY DYSMORPHIC SYMPTOM SCALE

Please respond to the following questions by selecting 'Yes' or 'No' based on your typical thoughts and behaviors regarding your body image.

Sr. No	Items	Yes	No
1	Are you seriously concerned that part of your body is not esthetically pleasing		
2	Do you perform long, detailed checking of yourself, carefully evaluating the part of your body?		
3	Do you completely avoid looking at yourself in the mirror and seeing this part that displeases you?		
4	Do you believe that people are looking at you, especially at the part of your body that displeases you?		
5	Do you try to hide the part of your body that concerns you by using makeup, clothing or other resources?		
6	Do you believe that esthetic surgery can dramatically change your life, correcting the defect that concerns you?		
7	Have you neglected or felt discouraged about performing your usual activities because of the defect that concerns you?		
8	Have you previously received any treatments or undergone any surgery to correct this defect without obtaining satisfactory results?		
9	Does this defect make you angry, impatient or aggressive, especially towards your relatives, friends or coworkers?		
10	Are there are times when you feel so distressed with the defect that you see no meaning in life and wish to die?		

Appendix E

BRIEF HYPERVIGILANCE SCALE

Please respond to each of the statements by encircling the answer column that best applies to you. There is no right or wrong response for each statement.

		1=Not at All like Me	2=Somewhat Like Me	3=Much Like Me	4=Mostly Like Me	5=Very Much Like Me
1	As soon as I wake up and for the rest of the day, I am watching for signs of trouble.	1	2	3	4	5
2	When I am outside, I think ahead about what I would do (or where I would go) if someone would try to surprise or harm me.	1	2	3	4	5
3	I notice that when I am in public or new places, I need to scan the crowd or surroundings.	1	2	3	4	5
4	When I am in public, I feel overwhelmed because I cannot keep track of everything going on around me.	1	2	3	4	5
5	I feel that if I don't stay alert and watchful, something bad will happen.	1	2	3	4	5

Appendix F

OSTRACISM EXPERIENCE SCALE

For each statement, please circle the number that best indicates how true the statement is of you. It is best to give the first response that enters your mind.

1=Strongly		2=Slightly		3=Neither Agree Nor		4=Slightly Agree		5=Strongly	
Disagree		Disagree		Disagree		Agree			
1	My fellows ignored me in group.	1	2	3	4	5			
2	My fellows excluded me from group.	1	2	3	4	5			
3	My fellows did not want to include me in group.	1	2	3	4	5			
4	My fellows treated me as if I was not their team member.	1	2	3	4	5			
5	My fellows did not pay attention to me.	1	2	3	4	5			
6	My fellows ignored my opinion in discussions.	1	2	3	4	5			
7	My fellows did not invite me at their places.	1	2	3	4	5			
8	My fellows did not invite me to gatherings.	1	2	3	4	5			
9	My fellows did not interact with me on social media.	1	2	3	4	5			
10	My fellows did not like to work with me.	1	2	3	4	5			
11	I feel stressed out when my fellows ignored me.	1	2	3	4	5			
12	I felt frustrated when my fellows ignored me.	1	2	3	4	5			
13	While in a group, I felt like I am not one of them.	1	2	3	4	5			
14	While in a group, I doubted my abilities.	1	2	3	4	5			
15	I felt like I was not good enough to be a part of an efficient team.	1	2	3	4	5			

Appendix G

ACCEPTANCE AND ACTION QUESTIONNAIRE-II (AAQ-II)

Below you will find a list of statements. Please rate how true each statement is for you by using the scale below to fill in your choice.

	1=Never True	2=Very Seldom True	3=Seldom True	4=Sometimes True	5=Frequently True	6=Almost Always True	7=Always True
1	My painful experiences and memories make it difficult for me to live a life that I would value.						1 2 3 4 5 6 7
2	I'm afraid of my feelings.						1 2 3 4 5 6 7
3	I worry about not being able to control my worries and feelings.						1 2 3 4 5 6 7
4	My painful memories prevent me from having a fulfilling life.						1 2 3 4 5 6 7
5	Emotions cause problems in my life.						1 2 3 4 5 6 7
6	It seems like most people are handling their lives better than I am.						1 2 3 4 5 6 7
7	Worries get in the way of my success.						1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Appendix H

FEAR OF MISSING OUT SCALE (FoMO)

Below is a collection of statements about your everyday experience. Using the scale provided please indicate how true each statement is of your general experiences. Please answer according to what really reflects your experiences rather than what you think your experiences should be. Please treat each item separately from every other item.

	1=Not at All True of Me	2=Slightly True of Me	3=Moderately True of Me	4=Very True of Me	5=Extremely True of Me
1	I fear others have more rewarding experiences than me.	1	2	3	4 5
2	I fear my friends have more rewarding experiences than me.	1	2	3	4 5
3	I get worried when I find out my friends are having fun without me.	1	2	3	4 5
4	I get anxious when I don't know what my friends are up to.	1	2	3	4 5
5	It is important that I understand my friends "inside jokes".	1	2	3	4 5
6	Sometimes, I wonder if I spend too much time keeping up with what is going on.	1	2	3	4 5
7	It bothers me when I miss an opportunity to meet up with friends.	1	2	3	4 5
8	When I have a good time it is important for me to share the details online (e.g., updating status).	1	2	3	4 5
9	When I miss out on a planned get-together it bothers me.	1	2	3	4 5
10	When I go on vacation, I continue to keep tabs on what my friends are doing.	1	2	3	4 5

