Governance and Management Review (GMR)
Volume 10, No. 1, 2025

Hooked, Hectic, and Hyperconnected: How Workplace Fear of Missing Out Fuels Technostress Through Digital Dependency

Zahra Ishtiaq Paul[1], Mifrah Mudassar[2]

[1]Institute of Administrative Sciences, University of the Punjab Lahore
[2]Pakistan Society for Training and Development

Abstract

This paper examines the influence of WFoMO on technostress among online workers with digital dependency as a mediating variable. Data has been collected from 322 respondents of five countries-Pakistan, China, USA, India, and the United Kingdom-through a validated survey instrument. Purposive sampling has been adopted to collect data in a time-lagged study design. The data was analyzed using structural equation modeling. Results show WFoMO as a strong predictor of technostress with digital dependency being the partial mediator of their relationship. WFoMO and digital dependency found no significant differences between countries, whereas technostress showed massive disparities between levels. Results fall under Cognitive-Behavioural Model of Problematic Internet Use that emphasized an interaction effect between psychological characteristics and behavioral patterning in digitally intensive work settings. This study provides a theoretical contribution to research on digital behaviour. It will enable organizations to adopt digital wellness strategies and context-specific interventions aimed at mitigating technostress.

Keywords: Workplace Fear of Missing Out (WFoMO), Technostress, Digital Dependency, Online Work, Cross-Cultural, Mediation, Workplace Psychology

Introduction

Background

The rapid development of digital technologies profoundly changes the structure of work. Speedy internet access, cloud computing, and collaborative digital platforms facilitate remote and online work, which is becoming increasingly common today (Ortiz-Ospino et al., 2025). Recent data shows that many workers around the world are working under remote and hybrid working schedules-a development driven by the COVID-19 pandemic but far from being temporary (Williams & Shaw, 2025).

The transition to digital work has been accompanied by an increase in various positive aspects such as flexibility, autonomy, and the ability to collaborate with others from almost every corner of the world. At the same time, however, there is also a very strong dependence on digital technologies that has led to a host of psychological and behavioral problems, the most important of which is technostress (TS). This occurs when one cannot cope effectively with technology (Pang & Wang, 2025). Current literature states that TS is more prevalent in the case of online workers, negatively influencing not just their health but also the final performance of the whole organization (Alhammadi et al., 2025; Goel et al., 2025).

The workplace fear of missing out (WFoMO) has recently become an important contributor to technology-related stress (Deng et al., 2025). While initially related to the use of social media, it is already extended into professional life and especially in digitally intensive work environments (Gonçalves et al., 2023). WFoMO describes the feeling of anxiety in possibly missing out on any critical information about work or, generally, online interactions. In this respect, it leads to compulsive behaviors-viewing e-mails or messages out of work time-to increase feelings of stress (Rubén, 2025).

Moreover, digital dependency (DD) means over-reliance on digital technologies to execute work-related responsibilities and is also a source of workplace stress, like WFoMO. The more workers rely on digital technologies to perform their work, the more they would develop compulsive use habits (Bilderback, 2025). These tendencies result in the fear of disconnection; this fear, in turn, results in a snowballing effect that increases TS.

Research Gap

WFoMO has been well researched in social perspectives, its implications in professional settings, such as online workspaces, have remained under-researched. Many studies have focused on regular office employees or general ICT users (Reimann et al., 2023; Tandon et al., 2021). TS may differently affect online workers because they blur boundaries between work and personal life. Generally, WFoMO, DD, and TS remain explored independently from one another. Few integrated models have discussed the role of DD in the relationships between WFoMO and TS. Moreover, quantitative research on mediating processes and their role in real-world online work contexts is scarce.

This will bridge the gaps in the literature by providing a more informed theoretical understanding and practical ways of managing psychological stressors in digitally mediated work contexts (Rašticová et al., 2025; Sanchez-Lomeli, 2025).

Research Objectives

There are five objectives in the study: to investigate among online workers 1) the association of WFoMO with TS, 2) the association of WFoMO with, 3) the association of DD with TS, 4) the mediating effect of DD in the link between WFoMO and TS, and 5) to study the levels of WFoMO, DD, and TS across the five culturally diverse countries: Pakistan, China, the United States of America (USA), India, and the United Kingdom (UK).

Significance of the study

Understanding the psychological effects of longer online work is critical as organizations embrace digital transformation. Although TS is widely recognized as a significant occupational risk, little is known about its causes and consequences for online workers (Lin & Yu, 2025). It is still unknown how WFoMO and the development of TS are related. Anecdotal evidence and preliminary research point to a connection between WFoMO and TS, despite the paucity of theoretical and empirical research (Hwang & Seo, 2025). Furthermore, DD, which is often regarded as an outcome of digitalization, may also act as a mediator in this process.

The current study adds to this growing literature by contextualizing WFoMO as a predictor of TS and by introducing DD as a mediating mechanism, in line with the Cognitive-Behavioral Model of Problematic Internet Use.

The study provides useful cross-national comparisons, in which data are collected from five culturally diverse nations. This helps provide insights pertinent to multinational corporations by expanding our knowledge of the various cultural and technological contexts that might influence digital behaviors and workplace stress.

The CBMPIU model has been used to enrich the understanding of WFoMO. In addition, it shows how technostress presents a challenge in productivity to employees in evolving organizations through many micro-level struggles. A look at the impact of WFoMO on DD and how technostress contributes goes to add literature on work relations in the internet era. Lastly, time-lagged data collected from employees of diversified industries across five countries is used to deepen an understanding of heterogeneous workplace dynamics.

Conceptual Model

This study has developed Caplan's (2010) Cognitive-Behavioral Model of Problematic Internet Use (CBMPIU) to examine the psychological and behaviour tendencies that predisposed individuals to problematic activities online.

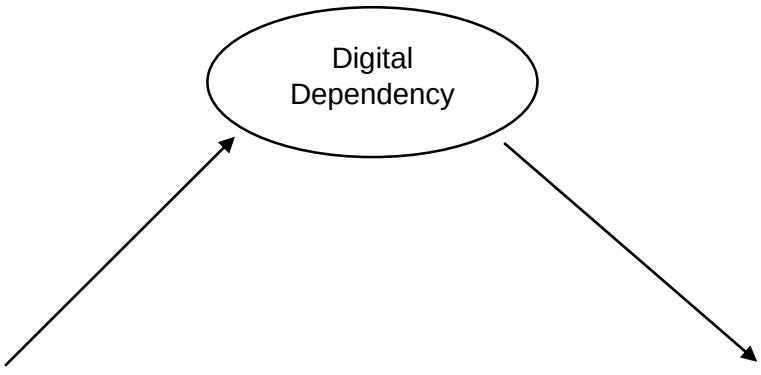
A catalyst is WFoMO, a cognitive-emotional phenomenon characterized by the fear that others might be having enjoyable experiences from which one is excluded (Przybylski et al., 2013). Individuals with high levels of WFoMO often act compulsively online because they want to stay informed and feel important in society. CBMPIU says that people may become dependent on talking to people online as their main way to feel good about themselves and control their emotions because of negative thoughts.

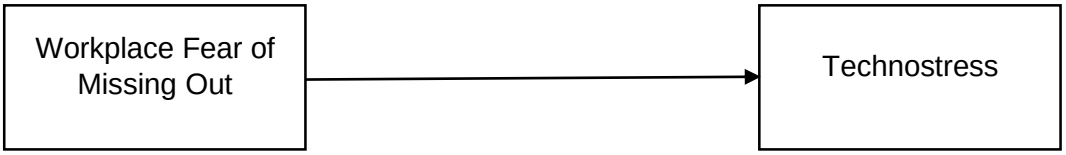
The continual use of digital devices leads to DD (Patil, 2023). This dependency shows how the cognitive-Behavioral model works, where using digital devices gives an individual immediate pleasure and makes compulsive behaviour worse over time. This reliance shows how the Cognitive-Behavioral model works: using digital devices makes individuals feel good right away, but it also makes their compulsive behaviour worse over time.

As workers rely more on digital technologies, they are more prone to feel TS (Samsura & Rufaidah, 2021; Tarafdar et al., 2011). In line with Caplan's model, this study examines that TS is the mental impacts of having trouble with technology, DD is the behavioural mediator, and WFoMO is the cognitive-emotional precursor. This conceptual framework shows how improper digital habits and mental demands can induce stress in online jobs. Therefore, the proposed model, illustrated in Figure 1, is supported by CBMPIU.

Figure 1

Conceptual Model





Literature Review

Workplace fear of missing out and technostress

The WFoMO has drawn considerable interest from researchers in recent times (Supti et al., 2025) due to its proven link to online vulnerability and maladaptive social media behaviours, such as the spread of false information and fake news, sleep issues, and social media fatigue (Kaliebe & Shah, 2025). WFoMO has been associated with poorer mental health, particularly when it comes to depression, envy, and hedonic well-being (Rafeekh et al., 2025).

Similarly, digital technologies have changed the workplace in a significant manner, including online and working from home, causing TS (Dutta & Mishra, 2024). TS is visible in the form of anxiety, tiredness, and less job satisfaction and results in burnout, poor health and low productivity (Bottaro et al., 2025; Goel et al., 2025; Wang & Yao, 2025).

The relationship between WFoMO and TS has gained considerable attention in recent years due to the constant use of digital technology in daily routine. Individuals who exhibit higher levels of WFoMO often monitor digital platforms obsessively, which results in excessive connection and a disturbed work-life balance (Murtaza et al., 2025).

Researchers argue that WFoMO acts as a driver of TS in that it initiates relentless digital connectivity often at the expense of wellbeing and performance (Naga & Ebardo, 2025). Those in WFoMO might be obligated to check the several platforms simultaneously. Hence, this can lead to cognitive overload, which is an integral part of TS (Tian et al., 2025).

The association between WFoMO and TS can be theoretically conceptualized, with regards to the role of maladaptive cognitions and compulsive online behaviors, using Caplan's (2010) Cognitive–Behavioral Model of Problematic Internet Use. WFoMO is a maladaptive cognitive belief marked by a persistent fear of being excluded from rewarding experiences when constant connectivity is absent (Przybylski et al., 2013). According to Caplan, these maladaptive cognitions increase individuals' motivation toward online interaction and encourage them to act compulsively in relation to digital use.

These repeated actions lead to cognitive overload, interruptions, and trouble with self-regulation over time, leading to technostress (Li & Liu, 2022). WFoMO amplifies maladaptive Internet use through distorted cognitive processes and the reinforcement of compulsive behavior; these factors then lead to TS and its negative consequences, such as anxiety, burnout, and decreased productivity.

Thus, the literature consistently indicates a meaningful and typically detrimental relationship between WFoMO and the experience of TS.

H1: There is a relationship between WFoMO and TS.

Digital dependency as a mediator

According to González et al. (2023), digital dependency is the inability to carry out tasks independently or autonomously without the use of digital communication devices, such as social networks, smartphones, tablets, and the Internet.

Digital dependency has been identified as a contributing factor to workplace stress. Workers may start using digital tools obsessively as they become more reliant on them for their work. These kinds of activities may increase individual's fear of disconnecting and lack of knowledge about current affairs, which would increase their level of TS (Nayak et al., 2025).

Moreover, WFoMO also affects individuals' interaction with digital technologies and by making them more mentally vulnerable and more motivated to use the internet. Research studies have highlighted the role of WFoMO in increasing DD (Enginkaya & Sağlam, 2025; Samsura & Rufaidah, 2025). DD effects one's analytical, interpersonal and communication skills.

WFoMO encourages workers to always be connected digitally outside work hours while working from home and in a hybrid setting. This could be because individuals fear that being offline can equate to missing emails, updates, or potential jobs (Khan et al., 2025). This constant connectivity can develop DD, wherein one experiences psychological compulsions to go online, always to the distress of their well-being.

In addition, DD-affected individuals experience WFoMO and transcend TS, as these people tend to mix the boundaries of personal life and work more under the influence of compulsive connectedness (Marsh et al., 2022). The mediating role of digital dependency has become increasingly apparent as it acts as the behavioural conduit through which WFoMO affects stress outcomes (Gezgin, 2025; Naga, & Ebardo, 2025).

These relationships can be understood through the lens of Cognitive-Behavioral Model of Problematic Internet Use, which asserts that maladaptive cognitions fundamentally influence problematic internet use via channeling behavior and reinforcing dependence on online interactions. WFoMO in this regard is viewed as a maladaptive thought pattern whereby individuals feel that they should be connected all the time in order not to miss essential social or informational experiences (Wu-Ouyang, 2022). Such distorted thinking results in compulsive use of digital platforms, which in due course develops into DD. The need arises in these people to use technology to connect to others, to manage their emotions, and simply to feel happy (Quan et al., 2024).

Digital dependency, in turn, affects the link between WFoMO and TS. Although WFoMO starts the cycle with negative thoughts, it is the compulsive and dependent use of digital technologies that leads to cognitive overload, constant interruptions, and less self-control, which are all key parts of TS. In other words, WFoMO alone may make people want to stay connected, but it is the growth of DD that turns this want into long-term patterns of bad use, which leads to TS.

Hence, following hypotheses can be derived from the above literature as:

H2: There is a relationship between WFoMO and DD.

H3: There is a relationship between DD and TS.

H4: Digital dependency mediates the relationship between WFoMO and TS.

Materials and Methods

Research Design

This study employs a quantitative research design to investigate the effect of WFoMO on TS among online workers, with a specific focus on the mediating role of digital dependency. It is a descriptive and correlational study framed in a cross-sectional research design.

Sample and sampling Technique

The research focused on online workers and to reduce methodological bias, a time-lagged study design has been employed with two phases (Time 1 and Time 2), as recommended by Podsakoff et al. (2003). In a time-lagged study, social scientists may readily record changes over time, improving the survey data's depth and dependability and greatly enhancing the study's design.

Maintaining a stable 350 sample throughout both time points is made considerably more difficult by this study design. Consequently, the efficient recruitment of respondents who were online workers, employed in various industries, fluent in English and eager to

participate in this study has been studied using non-probability purposive sampling. Based on these features, it was made sure that participants provide insightful and objective information at both ties and that the sample stays in line with the study's goals.

During the distribution of the self-administered surveys, responses confidentiality was assured. The same respondents provided data for the research variables twice. Respondents filled out questionnaires evaluating WFoMO at Time 1 (T1). Respondents reported technostress and digital dependency three weeks later, at Time 2 (T2).

Instrumentation and Measures

The data was gathered through a questionnaire employing adapted scales. The workplace fear of missing out is assessed using the scale developed by Przybylski et al. (2013), which comprises 10 items. These items were evaluated using a 5-point Likert scale that ranged from (1) not at all true of me (5) extremely true of me. A sample item includes *I worry that I might miss important work-related updates*. Technostress is assessed using a twenty-three items questionnaire developed by Urukovicova (2023). These items were evaluated using a 5-point Likert scale that ranged from (1) strongly disagree (5) strongly agree. A sample item includes *I am forced by this technology to work much faster*. DD is assessed using the Digital Dependence Employee Scale developed by Gonçalves et al. (2019). It comprises 19 items. These items were evaluated using a 5-point Likert scale that ranged from (1) Never (5) Always. A sample item includes *How often do you feel destabilized when CCPT&O access restrictions are imposed on your organization*?

The survey method was used to collect data via questionnaire consisting of 52 closed-ended questions. Item-to-item correlation was calculated to assess construct validity. Moreover, reverse statements were incorporated to augment data validity. There were 160 Questionnaires distributed to workers of Pakistan, and the response rate was 94%. Whereas 190 questionnaires were distributed to China, USA, India, and the United Kingdom workers

with a response rate of 90%. Out of 350 distributed questionnaires, 322 were returned, resulting in a total response rate of 92%. Additionally, demographic data was gathered on gender, age, education, place of residence, and country.

Among 322 responders, 237 (73.6%) were female and 85 (26.4%) were male online workers. Seventy respondents (21.7%) were from rural areas, whereas 252 respondents (78.3%) were from metropolitan areas. In terms of national diversity, 151 (46.9%) respondents were from Pakistan, 54 (16.7%) from China, 42 (13.0%) from the UK, 40 (12.4%) from USA, and 35 (10.8%) from India. All other variables (gender, age, education level, area, country) do not significantly predict the dependent variable, as their p-values are much greater than .05. Only marital status has a statistically significant effect (p = .000). It negatively influences the technostress.

The marital status has been controlled, as evidenced by the results of the multiple regression presented in Table 1. There is a 6% variation in technostress attributable to control variable, 23% variation owing to WFoMO, and 33% variation due to the existence of DD as a mediating variable. The change in R^2 is 10%.

Table 1

Results of Regression Analysis for Technostress

	Technostress		
Predictors	B	R^2	△ R^2
Step1		.066	
Control variable[b]			
Step 2	0.412	0.232	0.166
WFoMO			
Step 3	0.362	0.331	0.100
WFoMO, DD			

[a]n = 322, [b]Control Variable (marital status), ***p < .001

Results indicate a moderate relationship between WFoMO and technostress, which becomes stronger when DD is considered as a mediator. The 10% increase in explained variance underscores the substantial role of DD in amplifying the effect of WFoMO on technostress.

Table 2
Intercorrelations and Reliability of Variables

Variables	Mean	SD	SE	1	2	3
1. WFoMO	27.73	11.69	0.365	0.969		
2. TS	62.01	27.63	1.539	0.443**	0.986	
3. DD	49.56	20.65	1.150	0.488**	0.483**	0.989

*Internal consistency reliabilities appear along the diagonal and bold and ** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)*

According to Nunnally and Bernstein's (1978) standards, Table 2 indicates that all the variables assessed had a Cronbach's value of more than 0.7. This means that they are reliable and can be used for further analysis. DD has a significant ($p < .01$) and positive relationship with WFoMO and TS, while WFoMO has a positive and significant ($p < .01$) relationship with TS.

Results

Various multivariate techniques were used for data analysis. First, Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) and Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) were conducted to check the scales' validity and reliability. It was ensured that underlying factors were related to the measurement scales and were also consistent.

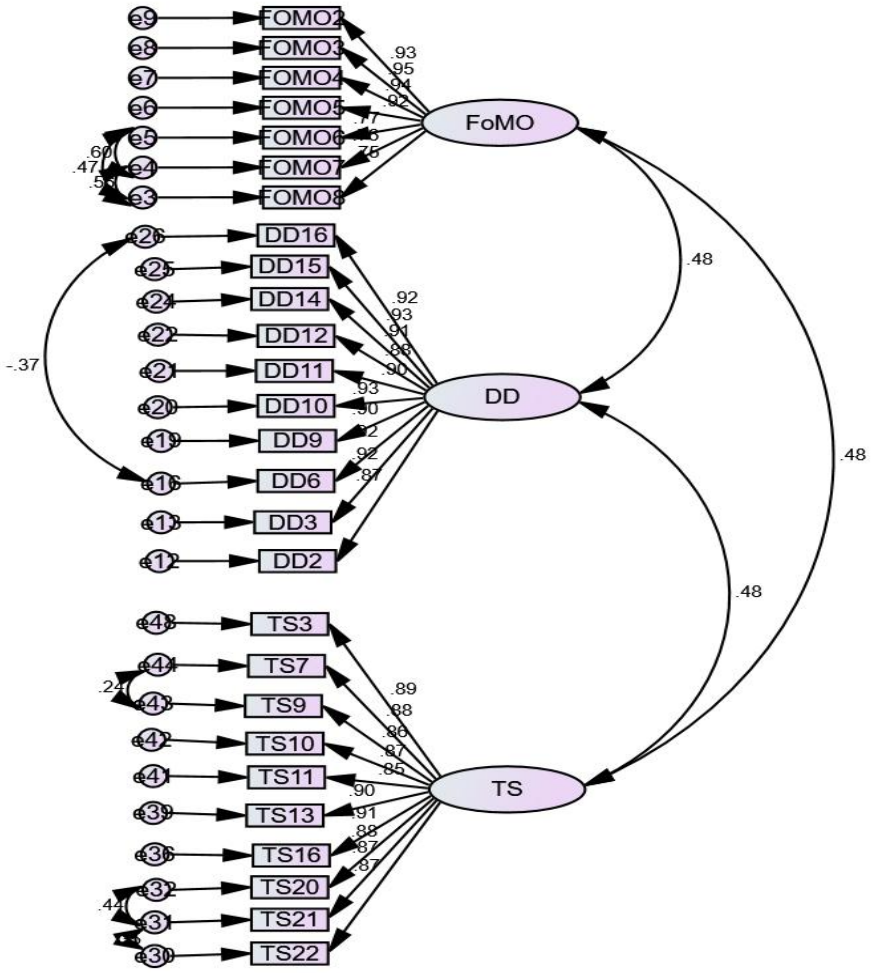
Second, the hypothesized relationships were tested using the Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) method. The AMOS v. 21 was used to do factor CFA on the measurement models. All the variables were analyzed as first-order latent constructs.

Analysis of Measurement Fit, Validity, and Reliability

The three items TS18, TS19 and TS23 (items of technostress) were removed having communalities less than 0.70. The EFA estimates' KMO and Bartlett sphericity tests were: WFoMO (KMO = 0.944, Bartlett test = 0.000), TS (KMO = 0.967, Bartlett test = 0.000), and DD (KMO = 0.974, Bartlett test = 0.000). According to the guidelines outlined by Hair et al. (2017), with a KMO > 0.5 and a significance level of the Bartlett test < 0.01, it is considered that the EFA meets the construct validity of the individual scales.

Figure 2

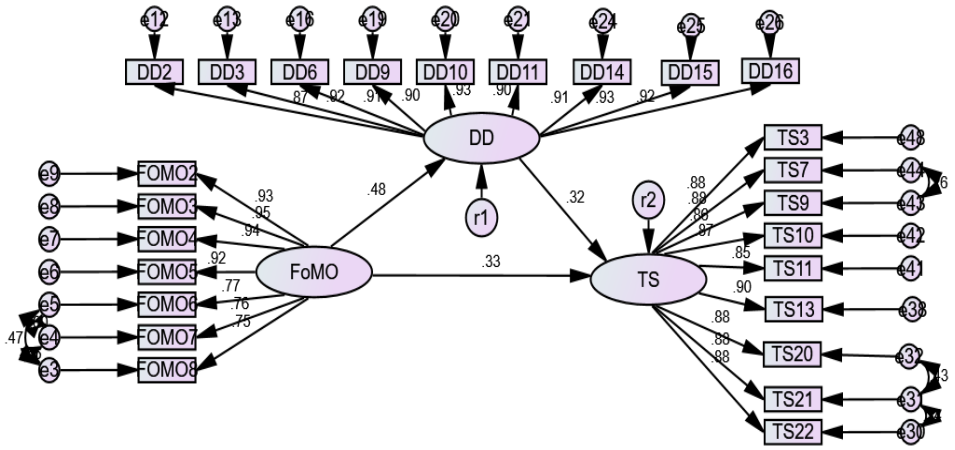
CFA model



The confirmatory and structural measurement models are illustrated in Figures 2 and 3. The factor loadings for each item were established following the validation of variables by CFA. All items exhibited factor loadings of 0.7 or above (Hair et al., 2017). To improve the model, the covariance of the items was computed.

Figure 3

Measurement model



In accordance with the guidelines of Loehlin (2017) and Hu and Bentler (1999), the CFA model is calculated and determined to have a good fit, followed by SEM. All values fell within their respective common acceptance levels when the model's overall goodness of fit was evaluated using the Model Chi-Square Test (CMIN/DF), Comparative Fit Index (CFI), Bentler-Bonett Normed Fit Index (NFI), Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR), and Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) (Schuberth et al., 2022). The three-factor model (Workplace Fear of Missing Out, Digital Dependency and Technostress) yielded good fit for data as indicated in Table 3, indicating the model fulfills the threshold (Hair et al., 2017). It signifies that all elements measured and related to the constructs researched.

Table 3
Model fit estimates for CFA and measurement model

	Estimates		Threshold	Interpretation
Measures	CFA	ST Model		
CMIN	887.971	774.243	--	--
DF	314	266	--	--
CMIN/DF	2.828	2.911	Between 1 and 3	Excellent
CFI	0.951	0.952	>0.95	Excellent
NFI	0.926	0.929	>0.90	Excellent
SRMR	0.029	0.029	<0.08	Excellent
RMSEA	0.075	0.077	<0.06	Acceptable

The Standardized Factor Loading falls between 0.749 to 0.949, meeting Worthington and Whittaker's (2006) suggested threshold of 0.40. At p = 0.001, the coefficient estimates for each measurement item were also significant. Thus, the measurement model is both theoretically sound and valid.

Table 4
Reliability and Construct Validity (Convergent and Discriminant)

Variables	Items	CR	AVE	CR-AVE	MSV	MaxR(H)	WFoMO	DD	TS
WFoMO	7	0.953	0.745	0.208	0.235	0.970	**0.863**		
DD	10	0.979	0.825	0.154	0.235	0.980	0.484**	**0.908**	
TS	10	0.972	0.773	0.199	0.231	0.972	0.481**	0.480**	**0.879**

Internal consistency reliabilities appear along the diagonal and bold and ** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Convergent and discriminant validity were evaluated using Average Variance Extracted (AVE) and Composite Reliability (CR). According to Hair et al. (2017), an AVE of 0.5 or higher indicates adequate convergent validity and is notable. The AVE estimate for two components must be greater than the square of their correlation to assess discriminant validity (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). This indicates that the scales being utilized are reliable for collecting data and analyzing the model under study.

According to Cheung et al. (2024), the scale reliability and construct validity are indicated by Cronbach α (mentioned in table 2) and CR > 0.70. Convergent validity was validated by positive CR-AVE scores. Discriminant validity is measured to assure validity (Rönkkö & Cho, 2022). Discriminant validity was shown by each construct having a value less than 0.90.

Bootstrapping has been used in AMOS software for measuring mediation (the indirect effect caused by DD). The bias-corrected confidence interval for the 5000 bootstrapped samples was 95%.

Table 5
SEM Model Regression Weights—Construct Interrelationships

Construct relationships	Standardized / Unstandardized Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Hypotheses
WFoMO → TS	0.327/ 0.385	0.070	5.538	***	H1: Accepted
WFoMO → DD	0.485/ 0.496	0.059	8.374	***	H2: Accepted
DD → TS	0.317/0.364	0.066	5.521	***	H3: Accepted
WFoMO → DD → TS	0.154/0.181	0.039	4.611	***	H4: Accepted

Source: SEM text output, # Sig. level *** indicate P value less than 0.001

According to Table 5, at $\beta = 0.327$, $p < 0.001$, and CR = 5.538, the hypothesis H1 is supported. This indicates that WFoMO will increase TS. Increased WFoMO correlates with elevated technostress in individuals. Consequently, increased WFoMO may affect worker stress levels. The H2 is also substantiated by the data, at $\beta = 0.485$, $p < 0.001$, and CR = 8.374. It suggests that WFoMO among online workers increases DD. Individuals with higher WFoMO demonstrate markedly increased DD. Hypothesis 3 is supported by $\beta = 0.317$, $p < 0.001$, and CR = 5.521. It shows that increased DD contributes significantly to higher TS levels. The standardized indirect effect β is 0.154 with $p < 0.001$, and CR = 4611, indicates that WFoMO significantly effects TS indirectly through the presence of digital dependence. Hence H4 is supported that DD significantly mediates the association between WFoMO and TS. The workers with high levels of WFoMO are more digital dependent resulting in higher

levels of TS. Although WFoMO-TS has direct positive relationship, the indirect path WFoMO-DD-TS further enhances this relationship, signifying partial mediation. According to the guidelines established by Hayes (2022), there exists a direct interaction between WFoMO and TS, along with some significant indirect relationship; thus, the mediation is characterized as partial.

Country wise Analysis

A one-way between-groups (ANOVA) was conducted to examine the effect of country on WFoMO, DD, and TS among online workers. There were no significant differences found in WFoMO, $F(4, 317) = 0.769$, $p = 0.54$, and DD, $F(4, 317) = 1.15$, $p = 0.33$. However, there was a statistically significant difference in TS, $F(4, 317) = 2.72$, $p = 0.030$.

Table 7

Country Wise Analysis of Mean of all variables

Country	N	WFoMO	DD	TS
Pakistan	151	28.01	48.93	63.02
China	54	27.37	45.93	55.44
United States of America	40	29.58	51.63	73.08
United Kingdom	42	27.79	50.12	58.98
India	35	24.97	54.91	58.77

There is a statistically significant difference in TS across the five studied countries, with the USA displaying the highest levels and China the lowest. However, no differences were found to be significant in WFoMO and DD. This would suggest that while TS appears to be dependent on culture and national work environments, other constructs, like responses for WFoMO and DD, may tend to be more universal for online workers. The difference in TS may be due to infrastructure, digital overload, work norms, or even perhaps at a national level-tech policies affecting how TS is experienced (Duong et al., 2025).

Discussion

The hypotheses generated by this study have been generally validated according to empirical findings and theoretical reasoning, consistent with existing literature on workplace dynamics in the digital age. All evidence of WFoMO in online workers antagonistically associated with gender, location (urban versus rural), or national context (within five nations) indicates the psychological plausibility of DD on professional behavior. In relation to this, WFoMO is understood as cross-demographic phenomena encouraged by the ceaseless digital flow of information and social comparison in online working situations.

The Hypothesis 1 states that the correlation between WFoMO-TS is a positive and significant one, which convincingly asserts the earlier theoretical assertions and empirical evidence (Marsh et al., 2024; Reimann et al., 2023; Rubén, 2025; Yıkılmaz et al., 2023). This indicates that people who experience WFoMO tend to keep themselves updated and connected, which results in cognitive overload, emotional fatigue, insecurity, and uncertainty—basic elements of TS.

Hypothesis 2 states that the relationship between WFoMO and DD has been established in previous studies (Muzzammil & Malik, 2025; Sapmaz, 2023). Theoretically, WFoMO leads workers to engage compulsively with the digital platform to deal with the fear of exclusion. Such behaviour creates a psychological dependency on technology, leading to behaviours associated with digital addiction. This goes in accordance with Cognitive-Behavioural Theory, which postulates that thoughts drive behaviours and emotions.

Hypothesis 3 points out the relationship between DD and TS. It is consistent with the results from several studies (Nisafani et al., 2020; Techmanska et al., 2024. Hypothesis 4 deals with how DD mediates the link between WFoMO and TS. This association fits well with findings from Budnick et al. (2020), Reimann et al. (2023), and Rosen (2017). Later studies back up this connection even more, such as Ash and Karmakar (2025), Dhir et al. (2018), and Tugtekin et al. (2020).

Empirical evidence clearly shows that WFoMO appears often among different groups of online workers. It also raises TS and DD quite a bit in noticeable ways. These links fit well with the overall ideas in the CBMPIU framework, which helps to enhance the reliability and generalizability of the results.

Theoretical Contribution

This study further develops the TS concept in new ways. Most literature views DD as either the consequence or the moderator; this paper proposes a mediating approach, placing DD as a bridge connecting psychological traits of WFoMO to the consequences of TS, which improves the understanding of the mechanism through which WFoMO leads to TS.

The study provides a cross-disciplinary framework by linking WFoMO to DD and TS through integrating Behavioral studies, organizational psychology, and digital stress research. It will involve many demographic groupings (genders, urban/rural, countries), thus enhancing the theoretical generalizability of the influence of WFoMO across the digital workforce and sociocultural contexts.

Practical Contribution

The findings can help organizations create efficient remote work policies through the reduction of expectations of a constant online presence or responsiveness. This may be through "right to disconnect" policies, revision of productivity standards, or the encouragement of asynchronous communication practices.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study concludes and provides empirical evidence that WFoMO significantly contributes to TS among online workers, and this relationship is mediated by DD. The results confirm that workers experiencing higher levels of WFoMO are more likely to become involved in compulsive digital behaviours that, in turn, raise their vulnerability to TS. The study demonstrated that this process is similar across gender, geographical areas (urban

versus rural), and across workers from five distinct nations, which underlines the cross-cultural significance and universality of the digital workplace concerns examined. The external validity and generalizability of findings are, therefore, enhanced.

The results show that WFoMO and DD are stable across different countries. This suggests that these are global psychological patterns among people who work online. However, TS levels differ markedly among countries, suggesting that national, cultural, or workplace contexts may influence the perception and experience of digital demands. This supports the idea that even though digital behaviours may be the same for everyone, the effects of those behaviours on mental health (like stress) may still depend on the context.

The results advance the theoretical understanding of TS by identifying DD as a key behavioural mechanism through which psychological factors like WFoMO manifest in occupational stress outcomes. This study, which was based on Cognitive-Behavioural Model of Problematic Internet Use, and the findings suggested and tested a mediation model in which DD serves as a mediating variable through which WFoMO causes TS.

Recommendations

The study recommends include the need pf establishing structured digital well-being programs, such as digital detox workshops, application usage assessments, and mindfulness trainings to help workers identify and manage WFoMO and practice good digital habits. The organizations should develop guidelines for digital interaction (e.g., prohibiting emails after hours, implementing response time requirements) to lessen the perceived necessity for constant availability and WFoMO-induced DD. Moreover, formal disengagement measures outside of work hours could decrease compulsive monitoring and prevent burnout and TS.

Strengths and Limitations

The measures have been made to increase confidence in the results during the study. The data is collected using a time-lagged study design, in which responses were gathered at

two distinct moments in time, to remove the potential for common method bias in data collecting.

This study offers valuable insights but has few limitations. The self-reported measure may be subject to single-method bias and social desirability effects. To reduce the bias, mixed methods are advised. Another limitation is although study incorporate five-nation sample, the cultural influences were not examined. Finally, although DD was examined as a mediator, other psychological or organizational factors such as organizational support, coping mechanisms, or job autonomy may significantly affect WFoMO and TS.

References

Alhammadi, H. A., Bani-Melhem, S., Mohd-Shamsudin, F., & Ramanathan, R. (2025). From Overwhelm to Quiet Quitting: Exploring the Impact of Technological Overload,

Technological Work Burnout, and Poor Work-Life Balance. *International Journal of Human–Computer Interaction*, 1-13. https://doi.org/10.1080/10447318.2025.2475994

Ash, S., & Karmakar, R. (2025). Addressing Digital Distraction at Work: A Systematic Literature Review. *Emotional Intelligence in the Digital Era*, 263-281. 9781032715377

Bilderback, S. (2025). Screen time addiction and mental health: navigating work-life balance in global careers. *Journal of Systems and Information Technology*. DOI 10.1108/JSIT-02-2024-0036

Bottaro, R., De Giovanni, K., & Faraci, P. (2025). Do technologies damage our personal life? The association of technostress and work-life fit for employees' psychological well-being: A cross-cultural mediation model. *Psychological Reports*, 00332941251320556. https://doi.org/10.1177/00332941251320556

Budnick, C. J., Rogers, A. P., & Barber, L. K. (2020). The fear of missing out at work: Examining costs and benefits to employee health and motivation. *Computers in Human Behavior*, *104*, 106161. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2019.106161Get rights and content

Byrne, B. M. (2001). Structural equation modeling with AMOS, EQS, and LISREL: Comparative approaches to testing for the factorial validity of a measuring instrument. *International journal of testing*, *1*(1), 55-86. https://doi.org/10.1207/S15327574IJT0101_4

Caplan, S. E. (2010). Theory and measurement of generalized problematic Internet use: A two-step approach. *Computers in human behavior*, *26*(5), 1089-1097. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2010.03.012

Chen, S., Ebrahimi, O. V., & Cheng, C. (2025). New Perspective on Digital Well-Being by Distinguishing Digital Competency From Dependency: Network Approach. *Journal of Medical Internet Research*, *27*, e70483. doi:10.2196/70483

Cheung, G. W., Cooper-Thomas, H. D., Lau, R. S., & Wang, L. C. (2024). Reporting reliability, convergent and discriminant validity with structural equation modeling: A review and best-practice recommendations. *Asia pacific journal of management*, *41*(2), 745-783. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10490-023-09871-y

Deng, X., Li, J., & Huang, Y. (2025). Social media-induced fear of missing out (FoMO) in the workplace: the influence on job burnout and workplace relations. *Internet Research*. DOI 10.1108/INTR-02-2024-0244

Dhir, A., Yossatorn, Y., Kaur, P., & Chen, S. (2018). Online social media fatigue and psychological wellbeing—A study of compulsive use, fear of missing out, fatigue, anxiety and depression. *International journal of information management*, *40*, 141-152. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijinfomgt.2018.01.012

Duong, B., Lee, J., Van Slyke, C., Lou, H., & Ma, X. (2025). A comparative study of telework stressors-distress-outcome in the United States and China. *Journal of Global Information Technology Management*, 1-24. https://doi.org/10.1080/1097198X.2025.2520712

Dutta, D., & Mishra, S. K. (2024). "Technology is killing me!": the moderating effect of organization home-work interface on the linkage between technostress and stress at work. *Information Technology & People*, *37*(6), 2203-2222. DOI 10.1108/ITP-03-2022-0169

Enginkaya, E., & Sağlam, M. H. (2025). Social Commerce Platforms Role in FoMO driven consumption: The Hidden psychological toll of continuous use. *IEEE Access*. 10.1109/ACCESS.2025.3565127

Fornell, C., & Larcker, D. F. (1981). Evaluating structural equation models with unobservable variables and measurement error. *Journal of marketing research*, *18*(1), 39-50. doi: 10.2307/3151312

Gezgin, D. M. (2025). Fear of Missing Out (FoMO) and Social Media Addiction: The Moderated Mediation Role of Mental Well-being and Mindfulness. https://doi.org/10.21203/rs.3.rs-6322544/v1

Goel, R., Singla, J., Mittal, A., & Arora, M. (2025). A decade analysis of employees' well-being and performance while working from home: a bibliometric approach. *Information Discovery and Delivery*, *53*(1), 22-42. DOI 10.1108/IDD-03-2023-0030

Gonçalves, L., Nardi, A., & King, A. (2023). Digital dependence in the past decade: A systematic review. *Journal of Addiction Research and Adolescent Behaviour*, *6*(1), 1-18. DOI:10.31579/2688-7517/059

Hair, J. F., Black, W. C., Babin, B. J., Anderson, R. E., & Tatham, R. L. (2017). Multivariate data analysis (Vol. 5), Prentice Hall, Upper Saddle River, NJ.

Hu, L. T., & Bentler, P. M. (1999). Cutoff criteria for fit indexes in covariance structure analysis: Conventional criteria versus new alternatives. *Structural equation modeling: a multidisciplinary journal*, *6*(1), 1-55. https://doi.org/10.1080/10705519909540118

Hwang, I., & Seo, R. (2025). Organizational support for digital transformation in the metaverse: a contingent pathway from user experience to digitalization resistance. *R&D Management*, *55*(2), 420-437. https://doi.org/10.1111/radm.12706

Kaliebe, K., & Shah, K. (2025). Digital Distractions and Misinformation. *Pediatric Clinics*, *72*(2), 235-248. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pcl.2024.08.002

Khan, S., Rehman, A., Kareem, S., & Al Rousan, R. (2025). Livestreaming in events: a systematic literature review and research agenda. *International Journal of Event and Festival Management*, *16*(2), 168-206. DOI 10.1108/IJEFM-05-2024-0042

Li, X., & Liu, D. (2022). The influence of technostress on cyberslacking of college students in technology-enhanced learning: mediating effects of deficient self-control and burnout. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, *19*(18), 11800. https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph191811800

Lin, Y., & Yu, Z. (2025). An integrated bibliometric analysis and systematic review modelling students' technostress in higher education. *Behaviour & Information Technology*, *44*(4), 631-655. https://doi.org/10.1080/0144929X.2024.2332458

Loehlin, J. C. (2004). *Latent variable models: An introduction to factor, path, and structural equation analysis*. Psychology Press. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781410609823

Marsh, E., Vallejos, E. P., & Spence, A. (2022). The digital workplace and its dark side: An integrative review. *Computers in Human Behavior*, *128*, 107118. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2021.107118

Marsh, E., Perez Vallejos, E., & Spence, A. (2024). Overloaded by information or worried about missing out on it: a quantitative study of stress, burnout, and mental health implications in the digital workplace. *Sage Open*, *14*(3). DOI: 10.1177/21582440241268830

Mordi, C., Akanji, B., & Ajonbadi, H. (2025). Exploring the impact of technostress on the work–life boundary of UK academics during the coronavirus pandemic. *Information Technology & People*. DOI 10.1108/ITP-08-2022-0581

Murtaza, S. A., Bandar Al-Asadi, A. A., & Molnár, E. (2025). Scroll, Pause, and Repeat: How Social Media Fuels Procrastination and Disrupts Work-Life Balance. *International Journal of Organizational Leadership*, *14*. https://doi.org/10.33844/ijol.2025.60456

Muzzammil, A., & Malik, L. (2025). Impact of FOMO on NOMO Phobia and Internet Addiction. *Social Science Review Archives*, *3*(2), 1053-1062. https://doi.org/10.70670/sra.v3i2.697

Naga, J. F., & Ebardo, R. A. (2025). Social network sites (SNS) an archetype of techno-social stress: A systematic review. *Heliyon*, *11*(1). https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2024.e41119

Nayak, S., Budhwar, P., & Malik, A. (2025). Technostress of HR professionals: the darker implication of remote work transformations. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 1-46. https://doi.org/10.1080/09585192.2024.2446508

Nisafani, A. S., Kiely, G., & Mahony, C. (2020). Workers' technostress: A review of its causes, strains, inhibitors, and impacts. *Journal of Decision Systems*, *29*(sup1), 243-258. https://doi.org/10.1080/12460125.2020.1796286

Nunnally, J. C., & Bernstein, I. (1978). Psychometric Theory, New York, NY: McGraw-Hills.

Ortiz-Ospino, L., González-Sarmiento, E., & Roa-Perez, J. (2025). Technology trends in the creative and cultural industries sector: a systematic literature review. *Journal of Innovation and Entrepreneurship*, *14*(1), 39. https://doi.org/10.1186/s13731-025-00497-6

Pang, H., & Wang, Y. (2025). Deciphering dynamic effects of mobile app addiction, privacy concern and cognitive overload on subjective well-being and academic expectancy: The pivotal function of perceived technostress. *Technology in Society*, *81*, 102861. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.techsoc.2025.102861

Patil, A. (2023). Psychology in the Age of Technology Dependence and the Mobile Dilemma. *Preprints. org*, *2023070101*. doi: 10.20944/preprints202307.0101.v1

Podsakoff, P. M., MacKenzie, S. B., Lee, J. Y., & Podsakoff, N. P. (2003). Common method biases in behavioral research: a critical review of the literature and recommended remedies. *Journal of applied psychology*, *88*(5), 879. https://doi/10.1037/0021-9010.88.5.879

Przybylski, A. K., Murayama, K., DeHaan, C. R., & Gladwell, V. (2013). Motivational, emotional, and behavioral correlates of fear of missing out. *Computers in human behavior*, *29*(4), 1841-1848. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2013.02.014

Quan, F., Wang, L., Gao, Y., Gong, X., Lei, X., Liang, B., ... & Li, H. (2024). How does adolescents and college students' personal relative deprivation affect mobile phone dependence? The mediating roles of stress and fear of missing out. *Current Psychology*, 1-14. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-024-06744-5

Rafeekh, R., Sreerakuvandana, S., & Kumar, G. S. (2025). Digital Age and Mental Health: Role of Social Media, FoMO, Social Appearance. In *Psychological Patterns and Lifestyle Influences in Academia Experience* (pp. 51-78). IGI Global Scientific Publishing. DOI: 10.4018/979-8-3693-8709-2.ch003

Rašticová, M., Šácha, J., Lakomý, M., & Mishra, P. K. (2025). Technostress Among Older Workers: A Central European Perspective. *Psychology Research and Behavior Management*, 1211-1225. https://doi.org/10.2147/PRBM.S508500

Reimann, L. E., Binnewies, C., Ozimek, P., & Loose, S. (2023). I do not want to miss a thing! Consequences of employees' workplace fear of missing out for ICT use, well-being, and recovery experiences. *Behavioral Sciences*, *14*(1), 8. https://doi.org/10.3390/bs14010008

Rönkkö, M., & Cho, E. (2022). An updated guideline for assessing discriminant validity. *Organizational research methods*, *25*(1), 6-14. https://doi.org/10.1177/1094428120968614

Rosen, L. D., Carrier, L. M., Pedroza, J. A., Elias, S., O'Brien, K. M., Lozano, J., ... & Ruiz, A. (2017). The role of executive functioning and technological anxiety (FOMO) in college course performance as mediated by technology usage and multitasking habits. *Psicologia Educativa*, *24*(1), 14. doi:10.5093/psed2018a3.

Rubén, R. E. (2025). Nomophobia and FOMO Syndrome: Emerging Psychosocial Risks in the Digital Workplace. *Disease and Health: Research Developments Vol. 7*, 128-140. DOI: https://doi.org/10.9734/bpi/dhrd/v7/4837

Samsura, A. D. F., & Rufaidah, P. (2025). Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) and Consumer Behaviour: What is Next?(A Bibliometric Analysis and Systematic Literature Review). *Society*, *13*(2), 806-829. DOI: 10.33019/society.v13i2.864

Sanchez-Lomeli, N. S. (2025). *Ancient Threads, Digital Webs: Navigating Psyche and Smartphone Use in Young People* (Doctoral dissertation, Pacifica Graduate Institute).
Sapmaz, F. (2023). The direct and indirect effects of workplace loneliness on FoMO: Nomophobia and general belongingness. *Journal of Educational Technology and Online Learning*, *6*(4), 947-965. https://doi.org/10.31681/jetol.1369184

Schuberth, F., Rademaker, M. E., & Henseler, J. (2023). Assessing the overall fit of composite models estimated by partial least squares path modeling. *European Journal of Marketing*, *57*(6), 1678-1702. https://doi.org/10.1108/EJM-08-2020-0586

Supti, T. I., Yankouskaya, A., Barhmagi, M., Nhlabatsi, A., Khan, K. M., Martin Domingo, J., ... & Ali, R. (2025). Digital Dependency and Security Risk: Investigating the Connections Between Fear of Missing Out, Problematic Social Media Use, and Vulnerability Perceptions. *Journal of Technology in Behavioral Science*, 1-16. https://doi.org/10.1007/s41347-025-00515-0

Tandon, A., Dhir, A., Almugren, I., AlNemer, G. N., & Mäntymäki, M. (2021). Fear of missing out (FoMO) among social media users: a systematic literature review, synthesis and framework for future research. *Internet Research*, *31*(3), 782-821. DOI 10.1108/INTR-11-2019-0455

Tandon, A., Laato, S., Islam, N., & Dhir, A. (2025). Social comparisons at social networking sites: how social Media-induced fear of missing out and envy drive compulsive use. *Internet Research*, *35*(2), 691-718. DOI 10.1108/INTR-10-2022-0770

Techmanska, A., Ortner, E., & Stöckmann, C. (2024). Mastering Computing in the Presence of Functional vs. Emotional Technostress: The Moderating Influence of Technology and Task Dependency. *Zagreb International Review of Economics & Business*, *27*(2), 327-351. https://doi.org/10.2478/zireb-2024-0030

Tian, Y., Chan, T. J., Liew, T. W., Chen, M. H., & Liu, H. N. (2025). Overwhelmed online: investigating perceived overload effects on social media cognitive fatigue via stressor-strain-outcome model. *Library Hi Tech*. https://doi.org/10.1108/LHT-03-2024-0145

Tugtekin, U., Barut Tugtekin, E., Kurt, A. A., & Demir, K. (2020). Associations between fear of missing out, problematic smartphone use, and social networking services fatigue among young adults. *Social Media+ Society*, *6*(4). https://doi.org/10.1177/20563051209637

Wang, Q., & Yao, N. (2025). Understanding the impact of technology usage at work on academics' psychological well-being: a perspective of technostress. *BMC psychology*, *13*(1), 130. https://doi.org/10.1186/s40359-025-02461-1

Williams, S., & Shaw, N. (2025). Hybrid working–Benefits and challenges for productivity and performance. *International Journal of Productivity and Performance Management*, *74*(1), 163-179. DOI 10.1108/IJPPM-05-2023-0230

Worthington, R. L., & Whittaker, T. A. (2006). Scale development research: A content analysis and recommendations for best practices. *The counseling psychologist*, *34*(6), 806-838. https://doi.org/10.1177/0011000006288127.

Wu-Ouyang, B. (2022). Are smartphones addictive? Examining the cognitive-behavior model of motivation, leisure boredom, extended self, and fear of missing out on possible smartphone addiction. *Telematics and Informatics*, *71*, 101834. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tele.2022.101834

Ying, H., Gong, J., & Apuke, O. D. (2025). Social media fatigue and the circulation of fake news: modelling social media fatigue as the mediator of the predictors of fake news sharing behaviour on social media. *Current Psychology*, *44*(7), 6115-6127. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-025-07531-6

Yıkılmaz, İ., Güleryüz, İ., & Efe, Y. (2023). Workplace fear of missing out and telepressure: How digital workplace challenges contribute to employee burnout?. *Üniversite Araştırmaları Dergisi*, *6*(3), 347-355. https://doi.org/10.32329/uad.1343420