


Chapter 10

FOMOPhobia: The Psychological Drivers of OTT Media Consumption Through Social Comparison, Self-Esteem, and Anxiety

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ABSTRACT

In the era of social media, where users have easy access to a constant stream of updates about their peers' lives, individuals may dread missing out on social events, experiences, or opportunities. This phenomenon is known as fear of missing out. The present research examines the underlying psychological factors that influence the consumption of over-the-top media, with a particular emphasis on the influence of social comparison, self-esteem, and anxiety. Through qualitative research methods, including interviews and systematic coding procedures, the research uncovers the psychological implications of media consumption habits. The findings highlight the detrimental effects of social comparison on individuals' self-esteem, leading to heightened anxiety and the emergence of FOMOPhobia. These insights emphasize the urgent need for tailored interventions and media literacy programs to mitigate these adverse effects.

1. INTRODUCTION

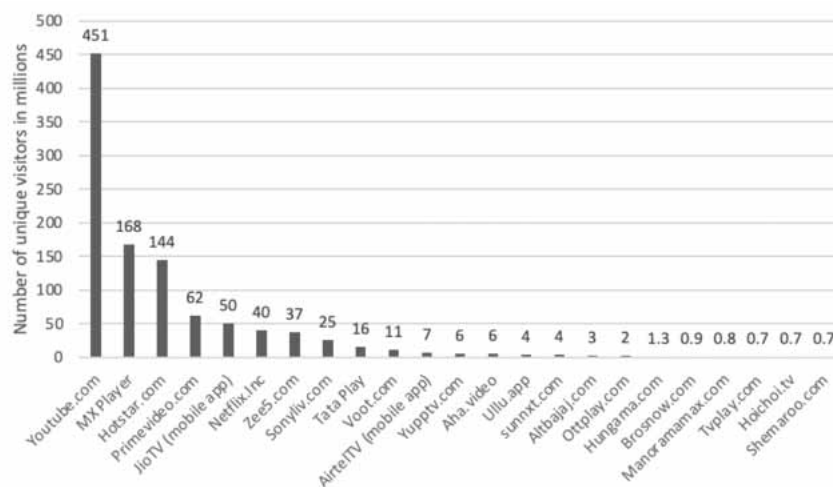
The advent of social media has ushered in a paradigm shift in the way individuals communicate, connect, and consume media content. The widespread adoption of platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Snapchat has transformed the social landscape, facilitating instantaneous sharing of personal experiences, updates, and interactions. Concurrently, the rise of over-the-top (OTT) media platforms, such as Netflix, Zee5, Hotstar and Amazon Prime Video, has revolutionized the entertainment industry,

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providing on-demand access to a vast array of movies, TV shows, and original content. Social media platforms have become an integral element of billions of users' daily lives around the globe. People can now share photos, videos, thoughts, and opinions with their social network, including friends, family, and acquaintances. This interconnectedness has nurtured a sense of virtual community, allowing people to remain informed, engaged, and connected regardless of their geographical location. In addition, social media has enabled the cultivation of online personas and the creation of carefully curated digital identities, spawning new forms of self-expression and social interaction.

Meanwhile, the presence of OTT media platforms has changed the way people consume entertainment material. These platforms provide a wide variety of streaming alternatives, enabling users to watch their favourite TV series, movies, and documentaries whenever and wherever they choose. Individuals may now engage in binge-watching sessions and tailor their media consumption experiences because to the proliferation of internet-connected gadgets such as smartphones, tablets, and smart TVs. The advent of social media and the dominance of OTT media platforms have resulted in a tremendously immersive and fascinating digital ecosystem. India had approximately 451 million unique visitors to the over-the-top (OTT) video platform YouTube in April 2022 as shown in Figure 1. YouTube was predominantly an OTT video platform supported by advertisements and had the highest number of unique visitors among streaming platforms during that time period. MX Player had the second-highest number of unique visitors in the South Asian market, far behind the market leader (comScore, 2022). These platforms have not only influenced how people engage with and consume media, but they have also given birth to new modes of information distribution, cultural exchange, and entertainment consumption. This revolution has repercussions that go beyond simple technology improvements, affecting societal dynamics, personal connections, and human well-being.

Figure 1. Number of unique visitors of video over-the-top (OTT) platform in India in April 2022, by platform (in millions) (comScore)



The psychological phenomenon known as the fear of missing out (FOMO) has gained significant relevance in contemporary times, particularly in the context of social media. The phenomenon under consideration is characterized by a sense of unease and concern that is experienced by individuals who

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