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"PSYCHOLOGICAL CAPITAL AS A BUFFER AGAINST FEAR OF MISSING OUT AND IDENTITY INSTABILITY: A STRENGTHS-BASED INTERVENTION AMONG GENERATION Z"

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ABSTRACT

The present study investigated the effect of psychological capital as a protective factor against the Fear of Missing Out (FoMo) and Identify Instability in students among Generation Z. By using experimental study design (n=80) students were divided into experimental and control group by using purposive sampling. The three standardised measures are used to assess variables along with 5-day strengths-based interventions. It includes Fear of Missing Out scale, Compound Psychological Capital Scale, and Identity Instability Scale. Pearson correlation is applied for testing correlation between FOMO, CPC, and Identity instability scale. The results indicated that there was a significant positive correlation between FOMO and Identity Instability. Paired sample T test revealed a significant difference in the score of pre and post-test where the mean value of FOMO (28.23), CPC (47.98) and II (58.43), the t value of FOMO (3.10), CPC (2.04) and II (4.00). However, post test scores for the analysis Paired T test there was no significant relationship between Psychological Capital and FOMO. The Paired sample T test analysis revealed that there was a significant decrease in FOMO and Identity Instability, and a significant increase in Psychological Capital after the intervention. Also, Regression analysis was applied which showed only a minimal increase in explained variance after adding CPC ($R^2 = .035$ to $R^2 = .038$; $\Delta R^2 = .003$), and CPC was not a significant predictor of identity instability ($\beta = -.057$, $t = -.491$, $p = .625$), indicating no mediating effect. This was also proven through the mediation analysis as the bootstrap confidence interval was zero in the indirect effect. The results suggesting the need for intervention to support the psychological well-being to Gen Zs.

Keywords: *Psychological capital, Fear of Missing Out, Identity Instability, Generation Z, Strengths-Based Intervention.*

INTRODUCTION

Psychological capital is a positive psychological state comprised of hope, self-efficacy, resilience, and optimism. Hope provides direction and motivation to goals, self-efficacy provides confidence in one's ability to face challenges, resilience provides the ability to bounce back from setbacks and optimism provides the ability to have positive expectations for the future (Luthans & Youssef-Morgan, 2017). All of these factors contribute to strengthening resilience in the presence of difficult circumstances, to goal setting and to overall health. Psychological capital as a higher order construct, is more encompassing than human and social capital because it focuses on the personal growth and potential and is linked more to improved performance and adjustment at educational institutions by the students (Luthans, Youssef, & Avolio, 2007).

Gen Z were born from 1997 to 2012. They grew up when social media and digital platforms were

fully emerged (Pew Research centre, 2018). They face many issues, which include a high risk of fear of missing out and identity instability issues due to the continuous shifting of online personas and comparison on social platforms (Przybylski et al.,2013). These problems impact the overall well-being of Gen Zs and also decrease their abilities to perform academically and at the workplace. Psychological capitals also contribute to their lives, such as hope, self-efficacy, resilience, and optimism, by strengthening their coping capabilities, goal persistence, and their abilities to strengthen their sense of self (Luthans & Morgan 2017).

Evolving adulthood is a progressive period of psychological/emotional growth. This time of life can be challenging for Gen Z students as they explore issues of identity, emotional regulation and social pressures, potentially effect their mental health (Twenge, 2017)

Fear of missing out (FOMO) is a psychological issue that is common among youngsters. It is the action of being worried about missing out on opportunities for positive activities or socialization (Buglass et al., 2017). The consistent feeling of FOMO can cause stress, unhappiness, and emotional issues.

Fear of missing out can be defined as the anxiety or worry associated with missing out on enjoyable experiences that others may have; therefore, the need for constant connection to online platforms or other forms of communication is created. It drives negative comparison, unhappiness, low self-esteem and caused emotional distress among Generation Z students (Przbylski et al.,2013).

Identity instability is defined as having limited stability because your self-image is defined by how you make significant changes in your decisions on things like your career goals, relationships, and beliefs over a period of time. When the instability increases it caused anxiety, Emotional distress, indecisiveness. It also impacts the overall wellbeing and academic performance of students (Kernberg, 1975).

Another major concern is identity fluctuations with Gen Z students. There is a lot of confusion around values, goals, and self among many people. Erik Erikson (1968) states that healthy psychosocial adjustment depends on the development of identity. Students could have psychological well-being that includes hopefulness, self-efficacy, resilience, and optimism that can assist them in successfully managing these challenges (Luthans et al., 2007). The higher the psychological capital, the more likely one is to have emotional stability and adaptable coping. This study aims to explore the psychological capital as a protective factor against FOMO and identity instability among Gen Z students.

This study is intended to investigate the psychological capital as a protective factor against Fear of missing out and Identity instability in the Gen Z students. In today's digital platforms, Gen Z experiences psychological stressors caused by their continuous presence in the digital world, which only enhance their level of anxiety of missing out on rewarding activities that others may enjoying (FOMO) and drives rapid identity changes—such as changing self-images and social comparisons—leading to identity instability (Przybylski et al., 2013; Kernberg, 1975). The problems are associated with higher levels of stress and emotional problems, lower self-efficacy, and poorer school adjustment in emerging adulthood (Twenge, 2017). Psychological capital means the interaction of a set of positive states of being: hope, self-efficacy, resilience, and optimism, and is considered a higher-order construct that enhances emotional stability, adaptive coping, and goal-directed behaviour (Luthans et al., 2007; Luthans & Youssef-Morgan, 2017). This study aims to fill a critical need highlighted by the literature to identify internal resources that can counteract the negative impact of FOMO and identity shifts in the modern context in which Gen Z is operating, in which hyper-connectedness is widespread. The results will help to create interventions to help students as they face the challenges of transitioning into adulthood.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This study examines psychological capital as a protective psychological resource that reduces fear of missing out and identity instability among Generation Z students and evaluates the effectiveness of strength-based interventions in improving psychological well-being. Psychological capital is a positive psychological resource consisting of hope optimism, resilience and self-efficacy that helps individuals' scope with challenges and maintain psychological strength.

Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) is a psychological state of worry that others are enjoying pleasurable activities without the individual and is typically associated with spending too much time on social media and feelings of depression. (Fred Luthans et al., 2007) Numerous studies have shown that psychological capital and FOMO have an inverse correlation.

In a cross sectional study in Indian University students (N=103) Satish and Kumar 2026 showed that a higher FOMO was related to decrease in psychological capital which included hope resilience, optimism, and self efficacy.

Likewise college students in China with higher psychological capital scaled low FOMO scores and high psychological functioning indicating that psychological capital is a protective factor against social comparison and internal exclusion among college students (Wenli and Lopez,2025).

Researcher has also found that there are number of psychological factors that are linked to FOMO. Tanrikuly and Mouratids (2022) demonstrated that social anxiety and excessive social media use (SMS) were strong predictors of FOMO among adolescents .Similarly Wilson and Michael (2025) found that FOMO was linked to higher anxiety and lower self esteem in Generation Z , underscoring the negative mental health effects of FOMO.

Identity has also been found to be associated with psychological capital. Other theories proposed by Erik Erikson (1968) and Otto Kernberg (1975) suggested that psychological strengths, like self-efficacy, would help reduce instability in the sense of self, by increasing meaning of life and self-esteem. Terry et al. (2025) also revealed that greater psychological capital is associated with greater resilience and psychological adjustments , thus providing sport for the role of psychological capital in fostering identity stability.

On the other hand research has shown that FOMO is linked to identity instability. According to Zhong 2023 there would be a rise in emotional insecurity and reliance on social media which would have a negative impact on psychological stability with higher FOMO.

Likewise,Tufan et al.(2025) reported that overuse of social media and digital burnout negatively impacted the psychological well being and affected self concept while Elsyed (2025) stated that FOMO negatively affected psychological well being and academic functioning .Based on these findings it is predicted that the relationship between identity instability will be mediated by psychological capital. Psychological capital can help mitigate the negative outcome of social comparison and facilitate more positive identity development by building resilience optimism, hope, and self efficacy.

There is also research that supports the effectiveness of strength based interventions to improve psychological capital. A psychological capital intervention by Luthans, et al. (2007) was found to increase significantly hope, optimism, resilience, and self-efficacy. Similarly, Terry et al. (2025) reported that structured training led to significant improvement in psychological capital and Sun et al . (2025) found that psychological interventions had a positive effect on self efficacy and outcomes related to identity. These results indicate that strength based interventions may increase psychological capital and decrease FOMO and instability of identity.

Operational Definitions

Psychological capital refers to a positive psychological state consisting of hope, optimism, resilience, and self-efficacy that enhances individuals' ability to cope with challenges and improve performance**.** Fear of missing out refers to a psychological phenomenon characterized by

persistent apprehension that others are experiencing rewarding events without one's participation, leading to social media dependency and reduced well-being. Identity instability refers to a psychological condition characterized by confusion, inconsistency, and lack of clarity in self-concept and personal identity. Strength-based intervention refers to a structured psychological approach focused on enhancing individuals' strengths, such as resilience, optimism, and self-efficacy, to improve mental well-being and reduce psychological distress.

Research problem: Generation Z students are increasingly exposed to social media environments that intensify Fear of Missing out which can lead to emotional distress and unstable identity development. Although psychological capital is recognized as a protective psychological resource its role in reducing fear of missing out and identity in stability is still not fully explored. Furthermore, moral limited research has examined whether strengths-based interventions can effectively enhance psychological capital and improve identity stability. Therefore, it is necessary to investigate these relationships and evaluate the effectiveness of interventions among Generation Z students.

The objectives of the study were:
1. To examine the relationship between Psychological Capital and Fear of Missing Out in Gen Z students.
2. To investigate the relationship between Psychological Capital and Identity Instability in Gen Z students.
3. To assess the relationship between Fear of Missing Out and Identity Instability in Gen Z students.
4. To examine whether Psychological Capital acts as a mediator between Fear of Missing out and Identity Instability in Gen Z students.
5. To examine whether Strengths-based intervention significantly decreases Identity Instability and Fear of Missing out among Gen Z students.

The hypotheses of study were:
H_1: There will be a significant correlation between Physiological Capital and Fear of Missing Out among Gen Z students.
H_2: Psychological Capital will be negatively correlated with Identity Instability among Gen Z students.
H_3: Fear of Missing Out is positively correlated with Identity Instability among Gen Z students.
H_4: Psychological Capital acts as a mediator between Fear of Missing out and Identity Instability in Gen Z students.
H_5: Strengths-based psychological intervention significantly decreases Identity Instability among Gen Z students.
H_6: Strengths-based intervention significantly decreases Fear of Missing out among Gen Z students.

METHOD

Research Design

This research used multiple interventions randomly assigned across generations to demonstrate the current research focus on participants from Generation Z (who have two different forms of identity) by using both groups. The participants were questioned about their strengths through both self-reporting and 3-time intervals prior to and following the intervention. The hypothesized relationship between Psychological Capital (PsyCap), Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) and Identity Instability was also assessed among participants before and after receiving the psychological intervention(s). The effectiveness of the psychological strengths-based intervention(s) was also assessed and compared across the intervention.

Participant

The study consisted of 80 Generation Z students who participated in the study. These students are currently enrolled in universities of sialkot,Pakistan. Before taking a sample an initial observation done to evaluate the issues regarding self and fear of missing out among students. The participants were also assigned randomly into two

groups, including an experimental group(n=40) and a control group (n=40). The participation in the study was voluntary, and participant's confidentiality was ensured throughout the research process.

Measures

The Fear of Missing Out Scale (FoMoS): The Fear of Missing Out Scale (FoMoS) was developed by Przybylski et al. (2013) to measure individuals' fear of missing out on gratifying experiences and social encounters. The scale has 10 items that are rated on a five-point Likert scale of 1 (Not at all true of me) and 5 (Extremely true of me). This scale measures thoughts and feelings about missing out on fun experiences, being socially connected and concerns about being left out of activities or interactions. Participants' scores are calculated by adding the responses to all items. Higher scores indicate high fear of missing out, while the lower grades indicate low FoMo scores. The scale has been widely utilised among adolescents and young adults to examine social media use and psychological functioning. The FoMoS shows good reliability with Cronbach's alpha being reported to be at 0.87.

Compound Psychological Capital Scale (CPC-12): The Compound Psychological Capital Scale (CPC-12) was developed by Lorenz et al. The positive psychological components of hope, self-efficacy, resilience, and optimism known as Psychological Capital are assessed using the Compound Psychological Capital Scale (CPC-12) developed by Lorenz et al. (2016). The scale is a measure of positive psychological resources and the ability of individuals to cope with challenges, be optimistic, achieve goals, and adapt successfully to problematic situations. The total score for each participant is obtained by summing up the responses given in all the items. The scale has also demonstrated good reliability, and internal consistency, with the overall Cronbach's alpha reported to be at about 0.90 and having satisfactory psychometric property.

Identity Instability Scale (IIS): To measure identity instability among individuals, Lechner and Bokoch (2023) developed the Identity Instability Scale, IIS. The scale items focus on unstable sense of self, self-disconnection, and identity confusion caused by over-reliance on others. The statements are scored based on a 5-point Likert scale, where 1 stands for "Strongly Disagree," and 5 represents "Strongly Agree." The range reflects the average level of identity instability in individuals (Lechner & Bokoch, 2023). Participants' total scores are calculated based on the sum of all responses. The scale is used to identity confusion, an unstable self-image, and emotional difficulties that have to do with identity. The IIS boasts a Cronbach's alpha of about 0.94, ensuring reliability, internal consistency, and presenting a strong scale for psychometric evaluation.

Procedure:

Before conducting the study, permission was obtained from the participants, and they were informed about the purpose of the research. A participant information sheet was made use for obtaining demographic details of the participants such as age, sex, education and academic status. This sheet also assisted participants in understanding the research purpose, their right to participate voluntarily, confidentiality of their responses and that they could withdraw from the study at any time without penalty and that the information collected will be used for research purposes. On day one both groups completed the pre-test assessment using the fear of missing out scale (FoMoS) compound psychological capital scale (CPC-12) and identity in stability scale (IIS). After the pre-test experimental group participated in a structured strength-based intervention program for 5 days design to enhance hope resilience self-efficacy and optimism while reducing fear of missing out and identity instability the intervention included box breathing, relaxing deep breathing exercises, goal setting tasks, problem solving activities, daily reflection exercises, CBT based cognitive reframing and gratitude journaling. Participants

were also encouraged to identify their personal strength and reflect on positive progress. Meanwhile the control group received no intervention and continue their normal daily routine. After completion of the intervention period post- test were administered to both groups using the same three scales in psychological capital fear of missing out and identity instability. The collected data were then prepared for statistical analysis.

Data Analysis

The collected data was analysed using the SPSS. Descriptive statistics including frequencies, mean, median, and standard deviation were computed to summarize participants demographic characteristics and their scores on Psychological Capital, Fear Of Missing Out (FOMO), and Identity Instability Scale (IIS). The reliability of the CPC- 12, FoMo scale and llS scales was assessed using Cronbach's alpha coefficients to ensure internal consistency of the measures. Correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationships among psychological capital on fear of missing out by and identity instability while regression analysis was performed to determine the predictive role of psychological capital on fear of missing out and identity instability. Mediation analysis was conducted to examine the indirect effect of Psychological Capital on Identity Instability through Fear of Missing Out. To evaluate the effectiveness of strength-based intervention paired- sample t -tests were conducted to compare pre-test and post-test scores within both the experimental and control groups.

Ethical Considerations

Informed consent was obtained from all participants before data collection, with a clear explanation of the study's purpose, procedure, duration, and activities. Participants had the freedom to join voluntarily and could leave at any time without consequences, facing no pressure to participate. Confidentiality of responses was maintained, with personal information kept secure and shared only with authorized individuals. Data collected was solely for academic purposes and stored securely. The final report excluded identifying details. The study involved safe, non-invasive intervention activities such as goal setting and coping skills exercises, ensuring no harm to participants' psychological or physical well-being, in adherence to ethical research guidelines.

RESULTS

The scales were analysed using reliability analysis which showed a satisfactory internal consistency. Fear of Missing Out Scale (FoMoS) had good reliability (a = 0.81), Compound Psychological Capital Scale (CPC-12) also had good reliability (a = 0.80), and Identity Instability Scale reliability was excellent (a = 0.94).

Table 1
Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	M	SD	Variance
Age	81	16.00	26.00	20.74	2.23	4.97
Gender	81	1.00	2.00	1.59	.49	.24
Group	81	1.00	2.00	1.51	.50	.25
FOMO Pre-test	81	10.00	43.00	28.23	7.95	63.23
CPC Pre-test	81	12.00	68.00	47.98	9.57	91.50
IIS Pre-test	81	21.00	93.00	58.43	19.95	398.05

Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics of the demographic variables and study measures for 81 participants. Participants' ages ranged from 16 to 26 years, with a mean age of 20.74 years (SD = 2.23), showing that most

participants were young adults. The mean score for FOMO before the intervention was 28.23 (SD = 7.95), indicating a moderate level of fear of missing out among participants. The average CPC pre-test score was 47.98 (SD = 9.57), while the mean IIS pre-test score was 58.43 (SD = 19.95), suggesting noticeable variation in identity instability among participants.

Table 2 Pearson Correlation between study variables (N = 81)

		1	2	3	4	5	6
1.FoMO Pre-test	Pearson Correlation	-					
2.FoMO Post-test	Pearson Correlation	.03	-				
3.CPC Pre-test	Pearson Correlation	-.02	.06	-			
4.CPC Post-test	Pearson Correlation	-.13	.01	-0.4	-		
5.IIS Pre-test	Pearson Correlation	.52**	-.12	-.18	-.03	-	
6.IIS Post-test	Pearson Correlation	.03	.59**	.03	.06	.22*	-

Note. *FOMOs = Fear of Missing Out Scale, CPC-12 = Compound Psychological Capital, IIS= Identity Instability Scale. P<.05. P<.01.*

Pearson correlation analysis of FOMO, CPC and IIS scores before and after the intervention is presented in Table 2. There was a significant moderate positive correlation between the pre-test scores of FOMO and IIS ($r = .52$, $p < .01$), suggesting that those who had higher scores on the FOMO pre-test also had higher scores on the IIS pre-test. Likewise, there was a strong positive correlation between the FOMO post-test and the IIS post-test scores ($r = .59$, $p < .01$), with higher post-intervention FOMO scores correlated with higher identity instability scores after the intervention. Furthermore, the correlation between pre-test and post-test scores on IIS was weak but significant and positive ($r = .22$, $p < .05$), indicating some stability in identity instability across time. All other study variables were not significantly related to the CPC scores ($p > .05$).

Table 3 Paired Samples t-Test Analysis

Variables	t	df	p	95% CI Upper
FOMO Pre-test-FOMO Post-test	3.10	80	.003	6.67
CPC Pre-test-CPC Post-test	2.04	80	.044	6.85
IIS Pre-test-IIS Post-test	4.00	80	.001	16.83

The results of paired sample t-test, comparing pre-test and post-test scores on FOMO, CPC and IIS are presented in Table 3. A significant difference between pre-test and post-test scores for the FOMO [$t(80) = 3.10$, $p = .003$] was observed, showing the FOMO level of the participants changed significantly after the intervention. Likewise, the results of the CPC indicated a pre-test to post-test difference that was statistically significant, $t(80) = 2.04$, $p = .044$, giving indication

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of increased psychological capital as a result of the intervention. Additionally, the difference between pre-test and post-test was highly significant for IIS, with a t(80) = 4.00, p < .001, suggesting a significant pre-test to post-test change in identity instability following the intervention.

Table 4 Regression Analysis Model Summary

Model	R	R^2	Adjusted R^2	SE of Estimate	ΔR^2	F Change	df
1	.19	.04	-.002	7.96	.04	.93	3
2	.20	.04	-.01	8.00	.003	.24	1

The results of the regression model summary are summarized in Table 4.The results of the regression model summary are presented in Table 4. For Model 1, the variance accounted for by age, gender and group was .04, or 4%; this is a weak predictive model. When demographic variables and CPC pre-test scores were added to the model, 4% (R2 = .04) of the variance was explained (Model 2). The change in R square, however, was very small (.003) indicating that there was little increase in the amount of variance explained by the CPC pre-test scores.

Table 5
Regression Coefficients Analysis

Model		B	SE B	β	t	P
1	(Constant)	26.64	9.35	-	2.85	.006
	Age	-.23	.40	-.06	-.56	.576
	Gender	2.47	1.81	.15	1.36	.177
	Group	1.57	1.78	.10	.88	.382
2	(Constant)	29.25	10.71	-	2.71	.008
	Age	-.16	.41	-.07	-.63	.530
	Gender	2.54	1.82	.16	1.39	.168
	Group	1.70	1.81	.11	.94	.350
	CPC Pre-test	-.05	.10	-.06	-.49	.625

The regression coefficients for each predictor in the regression models are shown in Table 5. In Model 1, age (β = -.06, p = .576), gender (β = .15, p = .177), and group (β = .10, p = .382) were not significant predictors of the dependent variable. When the CPC pre-test scores were added to the model in Model 2, none of the predictors were significant. The effect of the scores from the pre test administered by CPC was small (β = -.06, p = .625) and not statistically significant. For the whole sample, the results suggest that the age, gender, group and pre-test scores for the CPC were not significant predictors of the outcome variable for this study.

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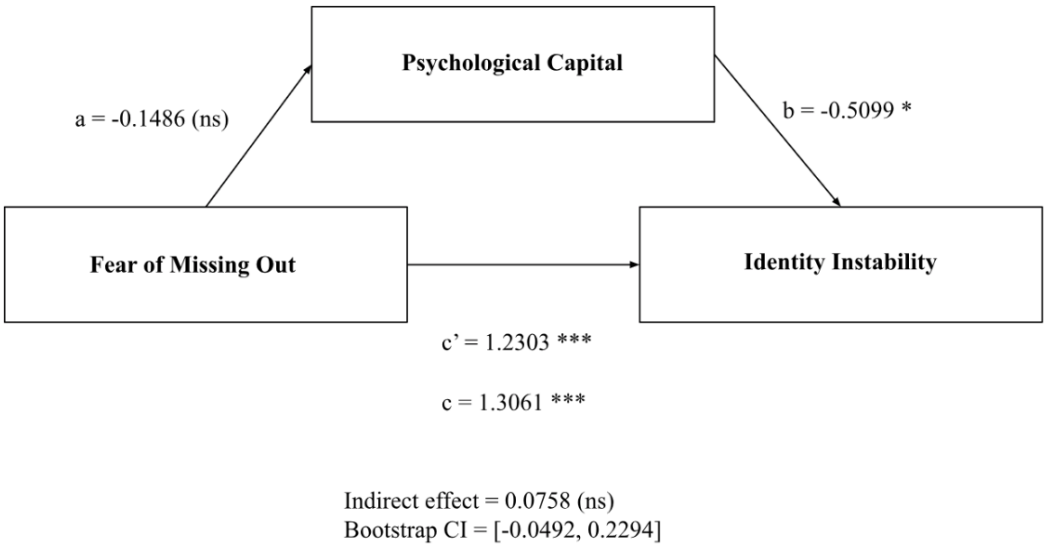


Figure 1. Mediation model of Psychological Capital between Fear of Missing Out (FoMO) and Identity Instability

Table 6
Mediation Path Results

Path	Coefficient	Significance	Interpretation
FoMO Psychological Capital (a)	-0.15	Not significant	FoMO negatively predicted psychological capital.
Psychological Capital Identity Instability (b)	-0.51	Significant	Higher psychological capital reduced identity instability.
Direct Effect (c')	1.23	Significant	FoMO significant predicted identity instability.
Total Effect (c)	1.31	Significant	Overall effect of FoMO on identity instability remained significant.
Indirect Effect (ab)	0.08	Not significant	Psychological capital did not significantly mediate the relationship.

Table 6 shows the mediation analysis results which indicate that fear of missing out significantly predicted identity instability. Psychological capital negatively predicted identity instability. However, the indirect effect was not significant because the bootstrap confidence interval included zero. Therefore, psychological capital did not significant mediate the relationship between FOMO and identity instabilit

DISCUSSION

This study aimed to explore the protective role of Psychological Capital (PsyCap) on Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) and identity instability in students of Gen Z and to test the effectiveness of psychological intervention based on strengths. Participants (M age = 20.74 years) reported moderate FOMO levels, moderate-to-high identity instability and relatively high PsyCap levels at baseline. It mirrors the developmental trajectory of emerging adulthood—a developmental stage during which people have substantial psychological resources, but also a high vulnerability to social comparison and self-doubt.

First hypothesis predicting negative relationship between PsyCap and FOMO was not supported. This result contrasts with the previous literature that indicated that higher psychological resources protect people from FOMO (Satish & Kumar, 2026; Wenli & Lopez, 2025). A possible reason is that the FOMO is more closely related to the external contextual and environmental factors, such as social media algorithms and peer relationships, than to personal resources. Or, it could be that the onset of FOMO is not prevented by PsyCap but rather it is a coping mechanism to deal with the emotional reactions that follow once FOMO has been triggered.

Likewise, the second hypothesis was not supported by the results of the study as the correlation between PsyCap and identity instability was negative; however, this was not statistically significant. The development of identity is a very intricate process that is influenced by a variety of deeply rooted factors like attachment style, emotional regulation and self-esteem. Thus, the extent of identity stability may not be fully captured by PsyCap. This lack of significance may also be due to the developmental homogeneity of the samples, which would have reduced the variability of both variables.

However, the third hypothesis was supported, with a significant moderate positive correlation found between FOMO and ID at pre-test and post-test, respectively. A stable profile of this relation indicates that students who feel more threatened by social comparison and exclusion tend to feel their sense of self more fragmented and unstable. This result is consistent with existing studies that show that excessive external validation affects the development of healthy identity (Tufan et al., 2025; Zhong, 2023).

The fourth hypothesis, which suggested that the relationship between FOMO and instability in identity would be mediated by PsyCap was not supported. Given no direct relationship was found between FOMO and PsyCap, a mediation pathway cannot be determined. This indicates other factors, such as FOMO and self-esteem, may be the most key factors in the correlation between FOMO and identity confusion.

The fifth and sixth hypotheses were completely confirmed, as the use of the strengths-based psychological intervention was clearly useful. Significant decreases in FOMO and identity instability and significant increases in PsyCap were reported after the program. The results corroborate the existing literature that indicates that structured training has a positive impact on PsyCap (Luthans et al., 2007; Terry et al., 2025).

The correlational data didn't show a natural association between PsyCap and the other variables, but the intervention data did. This suggests that although having internal psychological resources is not necessarily enough to avoid experiencing FOMO or difficulties with identity in everyday life, actively developing these internal resources in a structured way can have a significant impact on reducing experiences of FOMO and identity difficulties.

Lastly, there was no significant relationship between demographic factors (age, gender) and PsyCap in the regression model. The low percentage of variance explained suggests that other unmeasured psychosocial factors are affecting scores, and suggests that the small sample size may not have provided sufficient power to detect smaller predictive effects.

Implications

The study examines the connections between Fear of Missing Out (FOMO), Psychological Capital,

and Identity Instability in Generation Z students. Although Psychological Capital does not directly impact FOMO or Identity Instability, various social, emotional, and environmental factors play a significant role.

A strength-based intervention aimed at enhancing hope, resilience, optimism, and self-efficacy can improve well-being and lessen FOMO and Identity Instability, suggesting practical applications for schools and mental health services. Active development of Psychological Capital proves beneficial.

Limitations

Several limitations should be considered when interpreting the findings of this study. First, the sample size (N = 81) was relatively small and consisted only of Generation Z students, limiting the generalizability of the findings to other age groups and populations. Second, all variables were measured using self-report questionnaires, making the results susceptible to social desirability bias, response bias, and inaccurate self-perceptions.

Another limitation is that the strengths-based intervention was conducted over only four to five days. Although significant improvements were observed, the short duration may not have been sufficient to produce long-term psychological changes or fully capture the development of Psychological Capital. Additionally, no follow-up assessment was conducted to determine whether the observed improvements were maintained over time.

The present study also did not assess several variables that may influence Fear of Missing Out and Identity Instability, including social media usage, social comparison, self-esteem, emotional regulation, attachment patterns, and perceived social support. These unmeasured factors may have contributed to the non-significant relationships observed between Psychological Capital and the study variables. Finally, the relatively small sample size may have limited the statistical power required to detect weaker relationships and mediation effects.

Recommendations

Future research should recruit larger and more diverse samples to improve the generalizability of the findings across different age groups, educational settings, and cultural backgrounds. Longitudinal research is also recommended to examine how Psychological Capital, Fear of Missing Out, and Identity Instability change over time and to determine whether the effects of strengths-based interventions are maintained in the long term.

Future studies should investigate additional psychological variables that may better explain the relationship between Fear of Missing Out and Identity Instability. Factors such as self-esteem, emotional regulation, social comparison, problematic social media use, attachment style, and perceived social support may serve as important predictors or mediators and could provide a more comprehensive understanding of these relationships.

Researchers should also consider extending the duration of strengths-based interventions and incorporating follow-up assessments to evaluate the sustainability of intervention effects. Since the present study demonstrated improvements in Psychological Capital, FOMO, and Identity Instability following the intervention despite the absence of significant cross-sectional relationships, future intervention-based studies should further explore the mechanisms through which Psychological Capital contributes to psychological well-being.

Conclusion

This study examined the relationships between Psychological Capital, Fear of Missing Out (FOMO), and Identity Instability among Generation Z students, while evaluating the effectiveness of a strengths-based intervention. The findings showed that FOMO was significantly associated with Identity Instability, whereas Psychological Capital was not significantly related to either variable and did not mediate their relationship.

Despite these non-significant correlational findings, the strengths-based intervention significantly increased Psychological Capital while reducing FOMO and Identity Instability. These results suggest that although Psychological Capital may not directly explain these psychological outcomes, developing positive psychological resources through structured interventions can enhance psychological well-being. Overall, the study contributes to the understanding of positive psychology interventions and provides practical implications for supporting the mental health and identity development of Generation Z students.

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