

FEAR OF MISSING OUT (FOMO) AND THE DIGITAL EXTENDED SELF: ANOTHER VIEW ON THE SHARING OF TOURISM EXPERIENCES ON SOCIAL MEDIA

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study was to investigate how the Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) and the Digital Extended Self (DES) relate to individuals' habits (HSTE) and reasons (RSTE) for sharing tourism experiences on social media. An online survey was carried out on a sample of 371 participants and the data was analyzed by using Structural Equation Modelling (SEM). Findings showed the existence of relationships between FOMO→HSTE, FOMO→RSTE and DES→RSTE. A positive correlation was also found between FOMO↔DES. This study advances the understanding of the tourist consumer by analyzing their behavior on social media during trips.

Keywords: Fear of Missing Out; Digital Extended Self; Sharing Tourism Experiences; Social Media.

Fecha de recepción: 15 de julio de 2024.

Fecha de aceptación: 15 de enero de 2025.

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Fear of Missing Out (FoMO) y el Yo Extendido Digital: otro punto de vista sobre el intercambio de experiencias turísticas en las redes sociales

RESUMEN

El objetivo de este estudio era investigar cómo el fear of missing out (FOMO) y el yo digital extendido (DES) se relacionan con los hábitos (HSTE) y las razones (RSTE) de los individuos para compartir experiencias turísticas en las redes sociales. Se llevó a cabo una encuesta en línea con una muestra de 371 participantes y los datos se analizaron mediante modelos de ecuaciones estructurales (SEM). Los resultados mostraron la existencia de relaciones entre FOMO→HSTE, FOMO→RSTE y DES→RSTE. También se halló una correlación positiva entre FOMO↔DES. Este estudio avanza en la comprensión del consumidor turístico analizando su comportamiento en las redes sociales durante los viajes.

Palabras clave: Fear of missing out; Yo digital extendido; Compartir experiencias turísticas; Redes sociales.

1. INTRODUCTION

Social media began to emerge in the 1990s and soon spread around the world, quickly gaining a significant number of users. It is estimated that Instagram alone, the main platform for social interaction today, has approximately 2 billion users in various countries (Kemp, 2023). From a socio-analytical point of view, these tools are based on the set of connections they can promote between their users. Just as in the offline environment, in the digital world, individuals also seek to relate to others who, in some way, share habits, tastes, profiles and lifestyles in common with their own. In other words, the movement towards closeness is strongly based on the similarity of interests, which is considered a pillar of social media (Zhou *et al.*, 2020). For Mozzini-Alister (2021), the connection between people in this environment occurs through ‘nodes’, which are nothing more than topics (or themes) capable of attracting, uniting, and maintaining interpersonal relationships online and which certainly reflect the subject’s own identity (or Self).

Issues related to the Self, and the factors that are in some way associated with its constitution, have attracted the attention of scholars for some time now. As long ago as 1890, William James (American philosopher and functional psychologist) proposed a complex and multifaceted notion of the Self, suggesting that the essence of an individual was composed of (or complemented by, and therefore better understood by) everything that could be called ‘theirs’. This included not only their body and mind, but also certain other ‘objects’¹, such as items of personal use, family, friends, reputation, work and even their bank account (James, 1890). For Ye and Gawronski (2016), this idea of possession (‘my’/‘mine’), which often develops between subject-object, clearly highlights the close link between what the individual relates to and their own self-concept. This suggests the

¹ An object is understood as anything with which the subject can establish a relationship of possession.

existence of a relational Self, whose origin is far from being exclusively intrinsic and/or inherent to the subject (Baumeister, 2014).

According to Wheeler and Bechler (2021), regardless of the nature of the objects, they all carry (often symbolic) meanings that naturally tend to be absorbed by the subject. For example, pets, cars, mansions, positions of authority in organizations and even vacations are elements that can easily be used as a complementary way of constituting the Self for some individuals. According to McCullough and Lester (2021), objects like these are usually associated with symbolic constructions that refer to a sense of resistance, agency, privileged lifestyles and so on. Therefore, traits that highlight a specific type of subject, whose notion of Self is confused with the very relationship of possession that they maintain with such objects. In other words, these 'possessions', as termed by Belk (1988), end up providing clues to the individual identity that is intended to be transmitted to the other members of a network. Therefore, the objects end up taking on a sense of extension - as part of the individual, which is the origin of the notion of the Extended Self.

If, on the one hand, social media has made interpersonal connections easier, on the other, it has also made it possible to expose more of what individuals consider fundamental to the constitution of their Selves. Based on this, Belk (2013) proposed the concept of the Digital Extended Self, understanding that, even in the online environment, the objects with which the subject relates represent constituent elements of their virtual identity. Shared tourism experiences are an example of this. Currently, sharing travel experiences online has become increasingly common, with TikTok and Instagram being the main platforms used (Hunt et al., 2023). He, Xu and Chen (2021) claim that such practice is part of an individual's intention to convey meanings related to the expression of their self-concept, creating a clear 'self-other' divide that, somehow, impacts on their own way of relating to these 'others'. It is no coincidence that, according to Oliveira, Araujo and Tam (2020), the fun experienced by individuals when travelling is considered one of the main motivators for sharing content on social media.

Nevertheless, the growing search for a constant presence in the digital environment, especially on social media, is a phenomenon that has been described in the literature as the 'Fear of Missing Out'. For Eitan and Gazit (2023), the so-called FoMO is directly linked to the strong desire to be on top of what other people, especially friends, are doing. This consequently requires people to access their networks as often as possible. However, it should be noted that frequent exposure to other people's experiences on social media can make people feel obliged to also share their own experiences with others in their network. Even when on holiday, some people imagine that their followers are waiting for them to share travel-related content, for example. According to Luo and Hancock (2020), social media posts are an excellent way for users to keep their followers up to date on what they are living - or experiencing - now. So perhaps this is also a way to avoid weakening, or even losing, your own constructed digital identity.

In this regard, there has been attention drawn to the need for a better understanding of the possible consequences of too much active management of the Self on social media for some time now (Przybylski *et al.*, 2013; Sigala, 2019). Despite this, the search for an online reputation (or even recognition) is growing, based almost exclusively on sharing experiences of consuming various products, especially those related to leisure, travel, and

tourism (Kang & Schuett, 2013; Taylor, 2020; Brammer, Punyanunt-Carter & Duffee, 2022). Thus, understanding this phenomenon is of great relevance to studies of consumer behavior in the tourism sector, especially given the way in which individuals have been relating to these digital interaction platforms recently. Based on this, this research aims to answer the following question: *How does the FoMO (Fear of Missing Out) phenomenon and the Extended Self in the digital environment relate to individuals' habits and reasons for sharing tourism experiences on social media?*

2. SHARING TOURISM EXPERIENCES ON SOCIAL MEDIA AND THE FEAR OF MISSING OUT

Today's world is unthinkable without the digital platforms for social interaction. For Belk (2013), the internet is a kind of 'cornucopia' in the sense that it provides an abundance of information and entertainment. Countless amounts of material are made available online at any given moment. All this makes the virtual world extremely attractive to users who tirelessly spend hours of their day exploring the various possibilities that the web environment has to offer. According to Coyne *et al.* (2020), young adults tend to spend at least two hours a day accessing content on social media. Although, according to Twenge *et al.* (2018), unlimited access to these platforms and their content can have an impact on the emotional state and well-being of some users.

Chou and Hsu (2018) and Wang *et al.* (2021) state that social media allow users to share opinions, experiences and/or complaints not only with organizations, but mainly with other individuals in their network. In fact, this communication between users has been pointed out in the literature as often being more assertive than the institutional forms of communication themselves (Filieri *et al.*, 2021). Bigne *et al.* (2021) define the material that is produced and posted by ordinary people on their networks as 'User-Generated Content'. This includes texts, images, photos, audio, and videos. When referring to consumer experiences, Lee *et al.* (2019) argues that such UGC usually tend to express individuals' relationship with a particular brand/product in order to serve as a source of information for other consumers.

According to Schwarz (2010), it is undeniable that society has entered an era of unprecedented self-portraiture. For Lee *et al.* (2019), sharing content on social media has become a form of personal presentation to other people that often tends to stimulate social interactions in the digital environment. This means that by posting certain material on their online profiles, individuals certainly expect to get reactions from their followers. In the case of tourism experiences, for example, Oliveira *et al.* (2020) argue that travel posts serve both to maintain social contacts and to provide information to other potential travelers. Therefore, reactions arise through likes, comments or even questions from followers. It is worth noting that current mobile technologies allow people to share their travelling experiences in real time. However, Arica *et al.* (2022) emphasize that, as well as simply generating interactions, this sharing also functions as documentation of a trip, which the individual can always revisit in the future.

According to Sotiriadis (2017), most people share travel information during and after a trip. Although there are also those who do so even before it begins. Arica *et al.* (2022)

suggest that travelers should try to keep their tourism experiences to themselves, rather than bragging about them, turning the documentation of a trip into an obsession. At this point, it is understood that fun should not be compromised in favor of instant content dissemination. This is because, according to Hunt *et al.* (2023), while social media has certain advantages (which can also be exploited in the field of tourism consumption), there are enough reasons to consider its negative effects. As such, the authors argue that the way in which individuals engage with them needs to be observed with caution. For Dedeoglu (2019) and Dedeoglu *et al.* (2020a; 2020b), the importance attached to sharing travel and tourism content on social media is something that can also lead to unwanted consequences if there is no sense of control on the part of the user.

Based on behavioral parameters, Verduyn *et al.* (2015) classified the roles played by social media users as 'active' and 'passive'. In the passive role, the individual basically consumes the digital content of others, while in the active role, it is the individual who produces such material (photos, videos, statuses, etc.) and posts it to others. Although it may seem that these roles are isolated and independent, it should be emphasized that the relationship between them tends to be cyclical and, to a certain extent, simultaneous. In other words, while checking for news in their network of contacts (passive role), the individual feels in the position of also updating their followers about themselves. However, Hunt *et al.* (2023) draw attention to the fact that, when playing an active role, users tend to experience greater levels of well-being compared to the passive role. According to Chou and Edge (2012), in the latter case, it is more common for individuals to consider the lives of other users in their network to be better than their own, especially those they do not actually know in the real world.

By asking participants in a study to separate the people they followed on social media into 'friends', 'acquaintances' and 'strangers', Hunt *et al.* (2023) found that those who followed more friends experienced lower levels of loneliness. On the other hand, those who followed more strangers tended to be more prone to depressive episodes and showed a strong sense of what is known in the literature as FoMO - or Fear of Missing Out. Originally, the concept of FoMO designates a state of 'pervasive apprehension' that an individual may experience due to the possibility that other people are having rewarding experiences in their absence (Przybylski *et al.*, 2013). In other words, it is the fear of not participating in an event that is experientially significant for oneself and one's peers. In the digital world, this notion has been revisited and has come to represent people's strong desire to keep up to date with what other people - especially their friends - are doing (Eitan & Gazit, 2023).

It is common to associate the Fear of Missing Out with behaviors characteristic of users in a passive role on social media. Nevertheless, it should be emphasized that its effects also affect the individual's other role. According to Zhou *et al.* (2021), people are very curious to know what their friends, family, acquaintances, or strangers are doing at any given time. When it comes to tourism, for example, there is no denying that people enjoy following in the footsteps of travelers as they visit tourist attractions and sites on a trip. Xu *et al.* (2023) state that this can even generate a certain degree of envy in people for not being able to experience the same thing as someone else at the time. Even so, the simple fact of following someone's 'virtual travel diary' can encourage constant access

to social media in search of updates on a traveler's experiences. As relationships in this digital media environment are not a one-way street, the same individual who shares their tourism experiences online (Sigala, 2019; Wong *et al.*, 2020) does not allow themselves to disconnect from the experiences of their own virtual contacts, even while travelling.

This suggests that the Fear of Missing Out and the behavior of sharing tourism experiences online are somewhat related. It is as if, by accessing social networks in search of news about their contacts, the traveler themselves feels that, at some point, their followers will do the same. As a result, they feel an urgency to publish something about their trip, so that those people do not have to deal with a lack of updates about their tourism experiences. FoMO is therefore assumed to affect the behavior of users on social media both as passive and active users. It is thought that the same fear of not being up to date with what their contacts are doing now causes the subject a kind of 'Fear of Being Missed Out'. In other words, the concern not to fail their followers in the sense of constantly providing them with up-to-date information about their experiences while travelling. In view of this, the following hypotheses are raised:

***H1:** The Fear of Missing Out influences the individuals' habits of sharing tourism experiences on social media.*

***H2:** The Fear of Missing Out influences the reasons for sharing individuals' tourism experiences on social media.*

2.1. Tourism Experiences and the Digital Extended Self on Social Media

Self is a concept that has been discussed in different fields of knowledge for some time. However, it was from the 1950s onwards that social psychology found greater space for debate and broad development of the notion of what this phenomenon comprises. It is worth remembering that until the first half of the 20th century, the field of psychology was dominated by two major paradigms: behaviorism and Freudian psychoanalysis (Reis, 2019). While the latter defended the existence of the 'ego' and therefore focused heavily on understanding it, the former took little account of the subject's unique identity constitution. Thus, it can be said that the conception of what is now understood to be a socio-individual characteristic is the result of the efforts of social psychologists to propose the idea of a relational Self.

Baumeister (2014) states that the Self is not part of the brain, nor is it an illusion, but an essential interface between the body and the social system. In other words, rather than thinking of the individual's identity as something intrinsic and inherent to their very nature, it is argued that its process of constitution goes through broader and more complex paths. Sedikides and Brewer (2015) suggest that representations of the Self manifest themselves in different ways: a) individual, b) relational and c) collective. Therefore, its analysis should be based on an integrative approach, in which both individual characteristics and social needs are accessed inseparably from interpersonal relationships. This is because, according to Veglia and Di Fini (2017), it is precisely interactive connections that

make the process of constituting the Self dynamic, continuous and, above all, dependent on the interactions established with the other(s).

In a similar proposal, Baumeister (1998) also suggested a Self composed of three distinct instances. However, despite equally acknowledging the relevance of interpersonal relationships, he argued for the individual's possibility of choice/control as another important element of analysis, and furthermore, emphasized the central role of the so-called 'reflective consciousness' for a deeper understanding of the subject's identity. According to Rosenthal (2002), this is a type of introspective consciousness, capable of bringing the subject a clearer notion about their own Self.

Considering this, Baumeister (2014) revised his initial proposition and began to consider 'social needs' as a fundamental part of human behavior. Consequently, these have taken on a prominent position in terms of understanding the process of constituting the Self, to the point where it is accepted that the individual can prioritize them to the detriment of satisfying their own physiological needs. For Buijs *et al.* (2021), social needs are made up of: a) affection (feeling loved and realizing that there are people who care about you), b) behavioral confirmation (acting in accordance with your network of relationships, obtaining approval and feeling part of the group) and c) status (recognition for your achievements, which results in respect and influence over others). Often, the achievement of these elements tends to occur through consumer relationships that individuals develop with certain products, which can assist them in satisfying their social needs.

Solomon (2018) argues that the relationship people establish with certain objects of desire - products - is so relevant to understanding the Self that the individual's identity ends up being molded by what they consume. For Fernandes and Moreira (2019), products (be they goods, services, or the combination of both) provide something far beyond mere functional benefits. It is because, according to Palusuk, Koles and Hasan (2019), consumers tend to connect with such objects in various ways, including affectively. This is the case, for example, with certain products from famous brands, which can arouse in people more than just the desire to buy. Possession of these objects ends up translating into feelings that have an impact on the subject's relationship with themselves and with others. D'Souza *et al.* (2023) point out that there are products that become so significant in some people's lives that it is as if they were part of them. Consequently, the lack of them represents a kind of loss that sometimes results in damage to the subject's identity.

It was precisely this notion that gave rise to the concept of the Extended Self. In 1988, Belk suggested that, consciously or unconsciously, intentionally, or unintentionally, individuals consider their properties to be part of their Selves (Belk, 1988). In addition to physical objects, these possessions also include family members, groups of friends and everything else that the individual may consider to be theirs. However, what stands out is the strong relationship people develop with their own clothes, cars, homes, home décor and the places they go (e.g. restaurants, clubs, events, etc.) (Belk, 2016). In this sense, the tourism trips individuals undertake also become part of their array of possessions. In other words, the destinations they choose to visit, the attractions they frequent, the activities they engage in and the products they acquire during a trip all clearly express part of the individual's identity (Belk & Hsiu-yen Yeh, 2011; Lyu, 2016; Li *et al.*, 2021).

It is worth noting that while before the extension of the Self based on tourism experiences was easily observed through photos, postcards or even travel reports, the advance of technology has brought with it certain changes. According to Belk (2016), with the advent of the internet, various activities have expanded into the digital environment, giving rise to virtual worlds, online games, and social media. Therefore, the possibility of extending and representing the Self to others has expanded even further. Lo and McKercher (2015) argue that in the digital world, tourism photographs connect the traveler to their audience. It is as if the experiences lived during a trip gave rise to a kind of 'Travelling Self', which is nothing more than an attempt to project a Self based on experiences in a tourism destination. For Taylor (2020), this process of reifying the subject's online identity is a clear evidence of how the extension of the Self presents certain particularities that are specific to the digital sphere.

While referring to social media, Belk (2014) states that the Extended Self tends to acquire a more narcissistic and promotional form. Not rare, Instagram users seek to be perceived in a positive light in ways that they put so much effort to appear 'cool' (Sheldon & Bryant, 2015). To some extent, this relates to their incessant search for likes, comments and other forms of interaction with followers. On TikTok, in turn, the focus is on gaining as many views as possible in short-form videos (Du *et al.*, 2020). According to Sheldon and Bryant (2015), social activities as traveling are amongst the core motivations for users to post digital content on social media. In this online world, things (including tourism experiences) rather than being mine or yours, tend to become ours, says Belk (2014). Thus, Instagram, TikTok and other platforms alike serve as billboards for the individuals to intentionally promote certain aspects of their intended Selves by constructing thematic narratives, including 'travel & tourism'.

Belk (2013) suggested then expanding the original notion of the Extended Self so that it could also explain the new consumption relations observed in this type of media. Therefore, the concept of Digital Extended Self was introduced, drawing attention to five characteristic aspects of the new technologies that have impacted on the constitution of individuals' virtual identity. These include sharing, which in terms of tourism experience, acts as a mechanism to reinforce conceptions of the Self (Cao *et al.*, 2022; Zhang *et al.*, 2022). According to Suler (2005), the boundary between the 'inner-me' and the 'outer-me' has become blurred in the social media era. Especially when sharing (tourism) experiences with others is strongly related to the individual's search for social support (Kang & Schuett, 2013; Kim & Tussyadiah, 2013). To Barasch *et al.* (2018) and Liu, Moyle and Kralj (2022), individuals with self-centered motivations often experience self-presentation concerns when sharing digital content on social media, such as Instagram and TikTok. Therefore, the following hypotheses are raised:

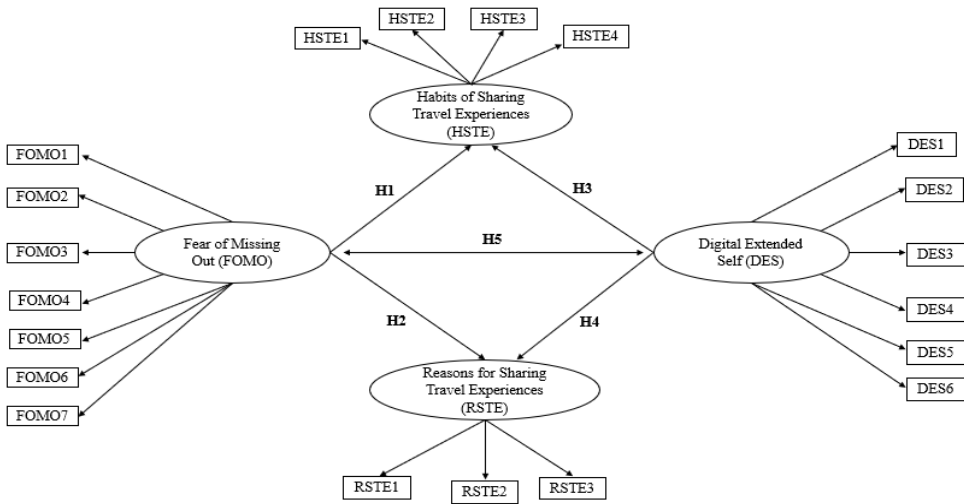
H3: *The Digital Extended Self exerts an influence on the individuals' habits of sharing tourism experiences on social media.*

H4: *The Digital Extended Self influences the reasons for sharing individuals' tourism experiences on social media.*

H5: *The Fear of Missing Out and the Digital Extended Self are positively correlated.*

Figure 1 below illustrates the theoretical model drawn up for this study. It shows the proposed relationships between the constructs, according to the hypotheses already presented.

Figure 1
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK



Source: Authors (2023).

3. METHOD

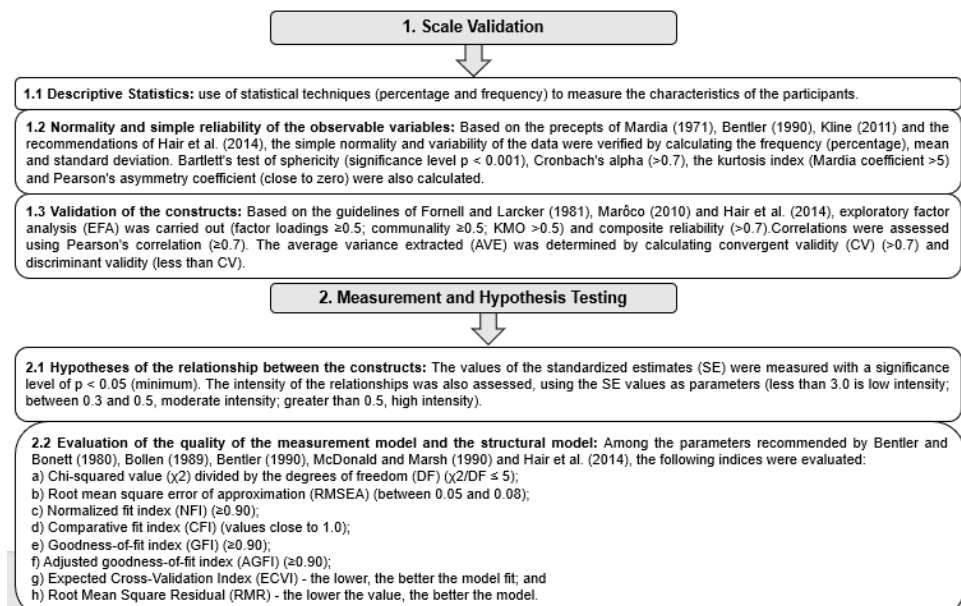
This study is characterized as being conclusive in nature, with a descriptive and single cross-sectional approach (Malhotra, 2019). The empirical data was collected in October 2023, via an online survey, whose access link was initially disseminated on different social networks (Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, and WhatsApp), in addition to mailing. The study population was made up of Brazilian individuals, aged at least 16, with some previous tourism travel experience. The final sample consisted of 371 valid responses, selected using the non-probabilistic snowball-sampling technique.

The four scales used in this study (Table 2) were Likert-type, with five points each. The first of these, referring to the Fear of Missing Out (FOMO), contained 7 items taken from the study by Wegmann *et al.* (2017), which were adapted from the original proposal by Przybylski *et al.* (2013). To measure the behavior of sharing tourism experiences on social media, the scale developed by Arica *et al.* (2022) was used, which is an adaptation of the instruments proposed by Munar and Jacobsen (2014) and Oliveira *et al.* (2020). Although it was originally used to measure ‘the facilitators of travel experience sharing on social media’, this research opted to subdivide it into two separate sets of items, in which only the items relating to the dimensions of ‘actual travel experience sharing’ and ‘personal fulfillment and self-actualization’ were used. While the 4 items in the first

dimension served to measure individuals' habits of sharing their tourism experiences on social media (HSTE), the other 3 in the latter sought to record the reasons given by the interviewees for doing so (RSTE).

The Digital Extended Self (DES) was measured using a 6-item scale proposed by Sivadas and Machleit (1994) to assess the degree of 'possession incorporation in the extended Self'. The items were adapted to reflect travel and tourism, and the participants were asked to the social media context in mind. Finally, the instrument also included 9 socio-demographic, psychographic and behavioral questions. Figure 2 describes in detail the path adopted to evaluate the following aspects of the scales: i) Normality and simple reliability of the observable variables; ii) Validation of the constructs; iii) Assumptions about the relationship between the constructs; and iv) Evaluation of the quality of the measurement model and the structural model. To this end, the method applied in this research was based on the studies by Mardia (1971), Fornell and Larcker (1981), Bentler and Bonett (1980), Bollen (1989), Bentler (1990), McDonald and Marsh (1990), Marôco (2010), Kline (2011), Hair *et al.* (2014) and De Guimarães *et al.* (2016).

Figure 2
DATA ANALYSIS



Source: Adapted from Severo *et al.* (2023).

Initially, the data was analyzed using descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) to assess the behavior of the variables under study, as well as profiling the sample and analyzing the factor loadings and commonalities. The constructs were validated using

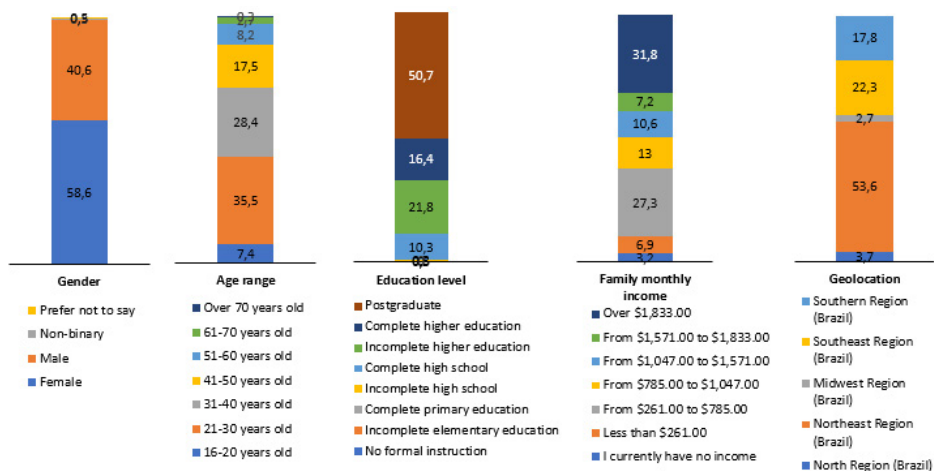
exploratory factor analysis (EFA). Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was also used to verify the measurement model. Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) was used to test the hypotheses, using SPSS and AMOS version 21 software.

4. DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

4.1. Sample profile

The study participants were 58.6% female and 40.6% male. The most predominant age group in the sample was 21 to 30 years old (35.5%), followed by 31 to 40 years old (28.4%). Regarding level of education, 50.7 per cent of the respondents had a postgraduate degree (MBA, Master's or Doctorate), while 16.4 per cent had completed higher education and 21.8 per cent incomplete. 31.8 per cent of the interviewees said they had a monthly family income of over \$1,833.00. In absolute terms, the second most representative range of earnings in the sample was made up of individuals with monthly family incomes between \$261.00 and \$785.00. As for the geolocation of the participants, 53.6% are residents of the Northeast Region of Brazil, while 22.3% live in the Southeast Region and 17.8% in the South of the country (Figure 3).

Figure 3
SAMPLE DISTRIBUTION REGARDING SOCIODEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

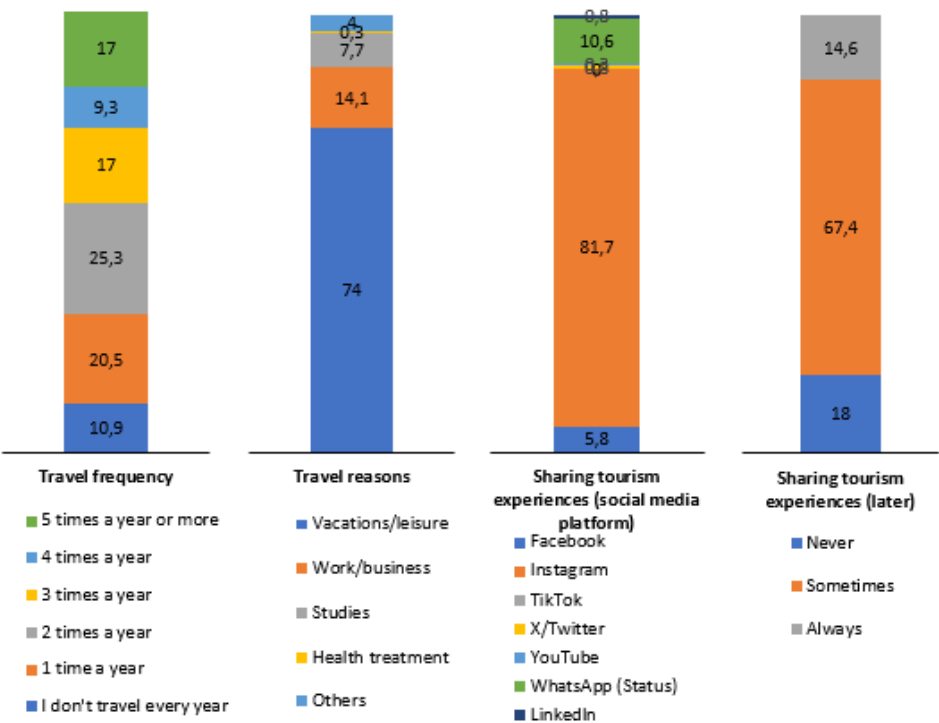


Source: Research data (2023).

According to Figure 4 below, 45.8% of respondents said they travelled at least 1 or 2 times a year, while 17% travelled 3 times and 9.3% travelled 4 times a year on average. The main reason given for these trips was holidays/leisure (74% of responses), followed by work/business (14.1%). Regarding sharing tourism experiences on social media, 81.7%

said they used Instagram as their main platform, with WhatsApp status being the second most used for this purpose, accounting for 10.6%. Finally, most respondents (67.4%) indicated that, even after returning from a trip, they continue to share content about their tourism experiences on their social media profiles.

Figure 4
SAMPLE DISTRIBUTION REGARDING TRAVEL AND USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA



Source: Research data (2023).

4.2. Results

Table 1 describes the results obtained from the Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA). As can be seen, almost all the constructs had Variance Explained above 50%, indicating satisfactory adequacy of their variability. The result obtained for the FoMO construct represented the only one that was just below this index. The sample adequacy analysis used the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) test, whose parameter establishes a value above 0.5 (Hair *et al.*, 2014). For all dimensions, data analyzed showed higher values than the minimum acceptable. Furthermore, to measure the suitability of the factor analysis, Bartlett's test

of sphericity was used, and the numbers were significant. The degree of reliability of the scales was checked using Cronbach’s alpha which, according to Hair *et al.* (2014), must be equal to or greater than 0.7. As can be seen, all the research constructs showed values above the established minimum. The Composite Reliability also showed values higher than recommended (above 0.7).

Table 1
EFA RESULTS

	Fear of Missing Out (FOMO)	Habits of Sharing Travel Experiences (HSTE)	Reasons for Sharing Travel Experiences (RSTE)	Digital Extended Self (DES)	All constructs
Cronbach’s alpha	0.778	0.721	0.822	0.858	0.863
KMO	0.811	0.606	0.719	0.827	0.829
Bartlett’s Test of Sphericity	534.631*	262.622*	399.517*	1021.194*	2644.878*
Variance Explained	47.99%	64.34%	73.92%	58.93%	59.64%
Composite Reliability	0.851	0.823	0.892	0.913	0.964

*Significance level $p<0.001$.
Source: Research data (2023).

Table 2 below shows the factor loadings, commonalities, mean, and standard deviation obtained for each item in the questionnaire. Most of the commonalities were above the level of 0.5 recommended by Hair *et al.* (2014). However, FOMO2, FOMO6 and FOMO7 were slightly below the recommended range (0.407 - 0.396 - 0.436, respectively). In these cases, Hair *et al.* (2014) argue that it is up to the researcher to decide whether to keep these variables in the study, considering their relevance and the possible theoretical contribution they can make to the research findings. Based on these assumptions, it was decided not to exclude them. On the other hand, variables FOMO5 and HSTE3 had commonality values significantly below those recommended (0.279 - 0.187, respectively). As a result, it was decided to exclude them. Out of the 20 items originally contained in this study’s data collection instrument, 18 remained, as described in Table 2. Most factors loading for the variables that remained were above 0.7. Only items FOMO2, FOMO6, FOMO7, HSTE4 and DES5 did not reach this index, although they also showed values above 0.5. Therefore, all 18 items meet the acceptability criteria established by Hair *et al.* (2014). The standard deviations of the 18 items analyzed were very close to 1, indicating low variability in the respondents’ answers.

Table 2
RESULTS OF OBSERVABLE VARIABLES

Items	Factor loadings	Commonalities	Mean	Standard Deviation
Fear of Missing Out (FOMO)				
FOMO1) I am continuously online in order not to miss out on anything.	0.746	0.599	2.879	1.2120
FOMO2) It is important that I have a say about the latest issues in my online social networks (videos, images, posts, etc.).	0.619	0.407	1.949	1.0905
FOMO3) I fear not to be up-to-date in my social networking sites.	0.700	0.553	2.175	1.1873
FOMO4) I continuously consult my smart-phone, in order not to miss out on anything.	0.752	0.596	2.803	1.3179
FOMO6) It is important that I understand the Internet-slang my friends use.	0.598	0.396	2.615	1.3615
FOMO7) When I go on vacations, I continue to keep tabs on what my friends are doing.	0.558	0.436	3.032	1.3573
Habits of Sharing Travel Experiences (HSTE)				
HSTE1) Every time I travel, I share videos.	0.796	0.721	2.846	1.3952
HSTE2) Every time I travel, I share personal blogs.	0.728	0.546	1.933	1.2748
HSTE4) Every time I travel, I share photos.	0.683	0.621	3.765	1.3076
Reasons for Sharing Travel Experiences (RSTE)				
RSTE1) It is important to me that people know I travel.	0.826	0.757	2.140	1.2826
RSTE2) I like to transmit what I want people to think of my travels.	0.766	0.698	2.598	1.4324
RSTE3) I want to be more recognized for my travel experiences.	0.770	0.708	2.127	1.3060
Digital Extended Self (DES)				
DES1) My travels help me achieve the identity I would like to have.	0.766	0.626	3.429	1.3243
DES2) My travels help me narrow the gap between what I am and what I would like to be.	0.711	0.579	3.202	1.4064

Items	Factor loadings	Commonalities	Mean	Standard Deviation
DES3) My travels are part of what I am.	0.783	0.622	4.011	1.1717
DES4) My travels are central to my identity.	0.844	0.738	3.439	1.3905
DES5) When I do not travel, I feel as if my identity has been snatched from me.	0.638	0.500	2.499	1.4111
DES6) I derive some of my identity from my travels.	0.752	0.631	2.992	1.4075

Source: Research data (2023).

Table 3 gives the results of the calculation of the Average Variance Extracted (AVE). These data were obtained using the Fornell and Larcker (1981) criterion, in which convergent validity (CV) is established when a latent construct is responsible for at least half of the variance in its associated indicators. In this sense, CV should result in values greater than 0.5. Based on this recommendation, FoMO’s explanation ratios were lower than recommended, indicating that it could be improved by including new observable variables or excluding those with low factor loadings and commonalities. Therefore, only one item from the FoMO construct was excluded (FOMO5) and the others were kept, as they were considered fundamental for understanding and measuring the proposed analysis model. Hence, this study accepted a CV result of less than 0.5 (FOMO=0.494), as shown in Table 3. In turn, the Discriminant Validity (DV) showed adequate values, except for the FOMO \leftrightarrow HSTE relationship, where the CV is equal to the DV value, indicating that there is a high correlation between these constructs, which the study already predicted theoretically.

Table 3
AVE - INTEGRATED MODEL

Constructs	FOMO	HSTE	RSTE	DES
Fear of Missing Out (FOMO)	0.494 ^a			
Habits of Sharing Travel Experiences (HSTE)	0.494 ^b	0.626 ^a		
Reasons for Sharing Travel Experiences (RSTE)	0.516 ^b	0.574 ^b	0.735 ^a	
Digital Extended Self (DES)	0.309 ^b	0.232 ^b	0.396 ^b	0.639 ^b

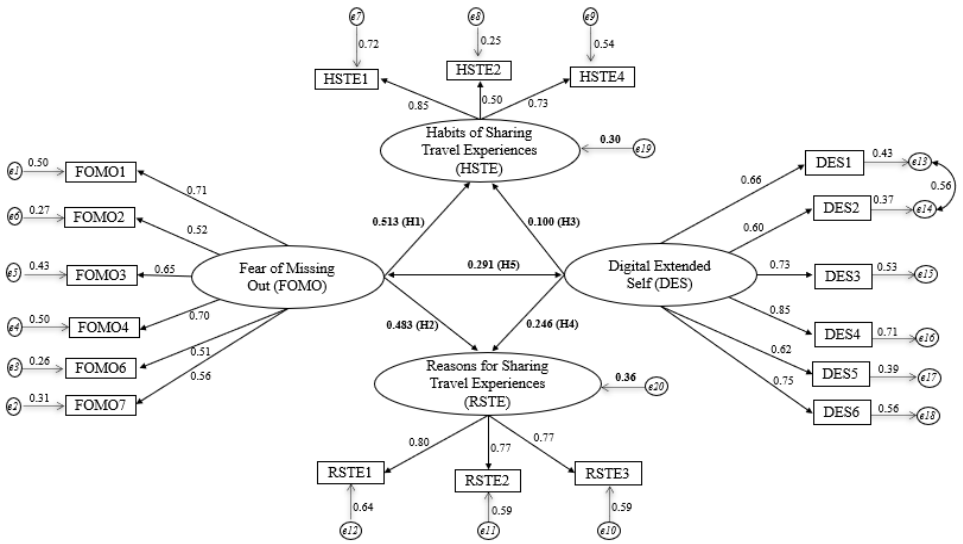
Source: Research data (2023).

- a Average Variance Extracted (AVE) – Convergent Validity (CV)
- b Correlation between constructs – Discriminant Validity (DV)

The Pearson Correlation analyzes only showed one high correlation between the variables DES1 \leftrightarrow DES2 (0.731). The other variables had Pearson Correlation values of less than 0.7, indicating a low probability of multicollinearity between them. Figure 5 shows the theoretical model with the respective factor loading coefficients (measurement model)

and the influence relationships between the constructs (structural model). It shows the significant correlation identified between the variables $DES1 \leftrightarrow DES2$ (0.56).

Figure 5
INTEGRATED MODEL WITH COEFFICIENTS



Source: Research data (2023).

Table 4 shows the results of the hypothesis test, obtained using the standardized estimate (SE) values. As can be seen, all the p-values are positive and statistically significant ($p < 0.001$), except for H3 ($DES \rightarrow HSTE$), which obtained $p = 0.097$. It is worth highlighting the result of H1, which evaluates the relationship $FOMO \rightarrow HSTE$, whose $EP = 0.513$ revealed the existence of a high-intensity relationship between both (Severo *et al.*, 2018). In turn, the proposed relationship $FOMO \rightarrow RSTE$ (H2) proved to be of moderate intensity ($EP = 0.483$), while the relationship $DES \rightarrow RSTE$ (H4) and $FOMO \rightarrow DES$ (H5) were of low intensity, but with significant and important values, showing results of $EP = 0.246$ and $EP = 0.291$, respectively. This led to the conclusion that hypotheses H1, H2, H4 and H5 of the study were confirmed, with only H3 remaining unsupported.

Table 4
HYPOTHESES TESTING

Hypotheses	Integrated Model	p-values
	SE*	
H1: Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) → Habits of Sharing Travel Experiences (HSTE)	0.513	***

Hypotheses	Integrated Model	p-values
	SE*	
H2: Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) → Reasons for Sharing Travel Experiences (RSTE)	0.483	***
H3: Digital Extended Self (DES) → Habits of Sharing Travel Experiences (HSTE)	0.100	0.097
H4: Digital Extended Self (DES) → Reasons for Sharing Travel Experiences (RSTE)	0.246	***
H5: Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) ↔ Digital Extended Self (DES)	0.291	***

*Standardized Estimate. ***p-values less than 0.001.
Source: Research data (2023).

The next step was to assess the quality of the measurement and structural model (as shown in Figure 2, item 2.2). At this point, the Model Fit Indices were checked. Table 5 below shows the results obtained at this stage of the analyzes. Only the NFI (0.877) and AGFI (0.885) values were slightly below the indicated parameter (≥ 0.90). All the other rates showed adequate values, which means that the results obtained supported the statistical validation of the integrated model.

Table 5
MODEL FIT INDICES

X2/DF	RMSEA	NFI	CFI	GFI	AGFI	ECVI	RMR
2.575	0.065	0.877	0.920	0.913	0.885	1.125	0.109

Source: Research data (2023).

4.3. Discussion

The study’s first hypothesis suggested that Fear of Missing Out would influence the individuals’ habits of sharing their tourism experiences on social media. The tests revealed a structural coefficient of 0.513, indicating a high-intensity relationship between these variables. This result confirmed the idea that by accessing social networks in search of news about their contacts, travelers feel that, at some point, their followers will also do the same. Thus, the need arises to publish/post something about their trip. As argued by Sotiriadis (2017), it is common for people to share information about their trips in real time. And although Verduyn *et al.* (2015) make a distinction between the active and passive roles played by social media users, in this study it became clear that the FoMO can manifest itself in both cases. In other words, by checking for news about the people in their network (passive role), the individual soon feels obliged to also update their followers about themselves (active role). Indeed, according to Hunt *et al.* (2023), the levels of well-being experienced by social media users tend to be higher in the latter case.

The analysis of the second hypothesis, which suggested that the individuals' reasons for sharing their tourism experiences on social media were also influenced by the Fear of Missing Out, resulted in a structural coefficient of 0.483. Therefore, there was a relationship considered to be of moderate intensity between these variables. This shows that, for the social media users interviewed in this study, it is important that their followers have access to posts about their travels. One of the reasons for this, according to Lee *et al.* (2019), is that User-Generated Content usually tends to demonstrate individuals' relationship with a particular brand/product. In the case of tourism, this UGC reinforces the traveler's connection with the place visited. In addition, travel posts also end up becoming a great source of information for other potential travelers, as suggested by Oliveira *et al.* (2020). Thus, it was clear that the fear of not keeping tabs on what friends are doing makes the individuals interviewed share their tourism experiences on social media. In doing so, they seek to convey exactly what they want other people to think of their trips, in a way making them recognizable because of them.

The third hypothesis assumed that the Digital Extended Self could affect the individuals' habits of sharing tourism experiences on social media. However, the p-value obtained for this relationship was 0.09, indicating that this hypothesis did not find statistical support. For Belk (2013), the advent of social media has brought with it a new scenario in which the sharing of personal information has taken on proportions never seen before. It is even believed that people in an individual's network of virtual connections know more about their lives and routine than their own closest relatives. Schwarz (2010) argues that society has entered an era of unprecedented self-portraiture. The results of this study, though, showed that the act of sharing consumer experiences online may not be directly associated with the process of constructing the extended self in the virtual world. At least not when it comes to experiences of a tourist nature.

The lack of support to this particular hypothesis highlights that, for some individuals, sharing tourism experiences on social media might not necessarily be associated with the attempt of constituting a Digital Extended Self. Du *et al.* (2020) postulate that there is also certain mental and imaginative pleasure in such habit. Thus, the hedonic aspect underlying it can sometimes overlap the individual's triggers for online self-presentation. As advocated by Barasch *et al.* (2018) and Liu, Moyle and Kralj (2022), only self-centered individuals would weigh self-related concerns against the mere pleasure of sharing their tourism experiences on social media. Afterall, tourism experiences are mostly about having fun, and sharing content on social platforms such as Instagram and TikTok is also part it. That does not mean turning a traveler's vacation time into a structured and well-planned opportunity for Self-representation.

On the other hand, the study's fourth hypothesis, which argued that the individuals' reasons for sharing their tourism experiences on social media were related to the Digital Extended Self, obtained a structural coefficient of 0.246. Although this relationship is not considered to be of high intensity, the statistical significance presented must be considered ($p < 0.001$). Thus, although the habit of sharing such experiences on social media was not explained by the subject's attempt to extend their own Self in the digital sphere, the reasons for doing so proved to be associated with it. For Baumeister (2014), this stems from social needs which, according to Buijs *et al.* (2021), are strongly related to the subject's

search for affection, behavioral confirmation, and status. Lo and McKercher (2015) stress that tourism has the potential to give travelers a certain degree of social recognition among their peers. That notion is followed by Du *et al.* (2020)'s idea that social purposes (i. e. to build social identity) relate to the reasons for sharing their tourism experiences on social media. Therefore, it is believed that the Digital Extended Self (a social purpose) is capable of influencing the reasons for sharing tourism experiences online, unlike the habits.

Finally, the last hypothesis suggested that the Fear of Missing Out and the Digital Extended Self were positively correlated. A statistically significant relationship was also found between these variables ($p<0.001$), although not as high. This result confirms the argument made by Zhou *et al.* (2021) that individuals tend to check social media frequently to keep up to date with what their contacts are up to in their absence, even when travelling. At the same time, the process of constituting an individual's identity in the virtual world based on their tourism experiences is directly associated with it. As such, the role of tourism in the construction of the extended Self in the digital sphere stands out, which, in the view of Lo and McKercher (2015), is a 'Travelling Self'. Table 6 below summarizes the results of the tests of the hypotheses presented.

Table 6
RESULTS OF THE HYPOTHESES

Hypotheses	Description	Result
H1	The Fear of Missing Out influences the individuals' habits of sharing tourism experiences on social media.	Confirmed
H2	The Fear of Missing Out influences the reasons for sharing individuals' tourism experiences on social media.	Confirmed
H3	The Digital Extended Self exerts an influence on the individuals' habits of sharing tourism experiences on social media.	Not Confirmed
H4	The Digital Extended Self influences the reasons for sharing individuals' tourism experiences on social media.	Confirmed
H5	The Fear of Missing Out and the Digital Extended Self are positively correlated.	Confirmed

Source: Research data (2023).

5. CONCLUSION

The aim of this study was to investigate how FoMO (Fear of Missing Out) and the Extended Self in the digital environment might relate to individuals' habits and reasons for sharing tourist experiences on social media. The results showed that the Fear of Missing Out influences both the habits and the reasons for sharing tourism experiences on social media. Digital Extended Self, on the other hand, was only shown to affect individuals' reasons for sharing tourist experiences on social media and therefore had no influence on

their behaviors. The result of the regression $DES \rightarrow HSTE$ showed non-significant values ($p > 0.05$), indicating this influence relationship could not be confirmed here, although there was theoretical support for affirming the existence of it. As a result, the extent of the individual's Self in the digital environment does not necessarily lead to the habit of sharing tourist experiences on social media, according to some studies (Belk & Hsiu-yen Yeh, 2011; Lyu, 2016; Li *et al.*, 2021). It is therefore suggested that new empirical studies on the subject be developed, including an expansion of the sample investigated, to see if the current theory needs to be revised.

This study contributes to the advancement of knowledge by highlighting that FoMO is a phenomenon that impacts on the lives of social media users not only when performing a passive role, as it can be considered an antecedent to active behavior. Therefore, its influence ends up being on both. This research makes theoretical contributions to the field of social media and tourism studies, as it investigates the behavior of individuals who share tourist experiences digitally. In addition, this work provides contributions to the field of consumer behavior research in tourism, as it reveals the main reasons for sharing tourist experiences online and the habits related to such activity. It also brings advances to the theory of the digital extended self (Belk, 2013; 2016), favoring its expansion to the context analyzed, as it is still little addressed in tourism and hospitality research.

As management implications, it is possible to highlight some insights that can be utilized by tourism marketing and/or digital professionals. Firstly, based on the premise that there is a strong tendency for individuals to choose to travel to 'instagrammable' destinations (Sigala, 2019), it is important to offer local facilities that favor taking photos/videos to share on social networks. In this sense, the destination can provide, for instance, attractive backdrops for visitors to take photos during their trip. Secondly, it is suggested to constantly monitor posts about tourist attractions on social media, to check how the place is being publicized online. This initiative can help identify strengths and weaknesses in terms of digital marketing, so that the necessary improvements can be made.

Thirdly, as this research revealed, travelers build their virtual identity based on their tourist experiences. It is therefore recommended that tourist destinations use their official social networks as a tool to encourage visitors to share their trips. This can be done through three main strategies: a) reposting the photos/videos posted by tourists; b) online competitions to decide which photo/video is the most creative; or c) offering special courtesies/promotions to visitors who are most engaged in posting content about their experiences at the destination. As well as bringing marketing benefits to the locality, such actions put the tourist in the spotlight, which is a relevant aspect for the Self that is presented digitally (Lo & McKercher, 2015; Buijs *et al.*, 2021).

One of the limitations of the study is the fact that the procedure adopted - Snowball Sampling - may represent a partial view of the sample. In addition, there is the possibility of the Halo effect (erroneous generalization) and Common Method Variance (CMV) (Bagozzi & Yi, 1991; Podsakoff *et al.*, 2003; De Guimarães *et al.*, 2016). For future research, it is suggested to compare the opinion of individuals from different generations about FoMO, to verify possible discrepancies and/or behavioral similarities between groups. We also recommend investigating the relationship between FOMO, Digital Extended Self, and the sharing of consumer experiences in specific tourism segments.

Finally, the analysis of a phenomenon directly opposite to FoMO, JoMO (Joy of Missing Out), is believed to be relevant to see how it can also affect consumer behavior in tourism.

Acknowledgements: This paper was carried out with the support of the Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel – Brazil (CAPES) – Financing Code 001 and the Pro-Rectorcy of Research and Innovation at the Federal University of Pernambuco (UFPE), which granted financial assistance to translate the article.

Authorship statement: The authors declare no conflict of interest. Conceptualization: Anderson Gomes de Souza. Consulting and treatment of original sources: Anderson Gomes de Souza. Research and writing: Anderson Gomes de Souza, José William de Queiroz Barbosa and Julio Cesar Ferro de Guimarães.

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