

# The Relationship between Social Media Use and Mental Health in Users with FoMO

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## ABSTRACT

*The Fear of Missing out (FoMO) phenomenon triggered by excessive social media use can have an impact on users' mental health, particularly anxiety, stress and sleep disturbances. FoMO influences individuals' behavior to stay connected to social media, leading to feelings of anxiety about missing out on important information or experiences shared by others. This study identified the relationship between excessive social media use, feelings of FoMO, and their impact on sleep quality and mental health. The results showed that users who experience FoMO tend to sleep later, have poorer sleep quality, and experience higher anxiety and stress. This creates a cycle that worsens their mental and physical health conditions. It is important to manage social media use wisely and maintain a balance between the digital world and real life to reduce the negative impact of FoMO on mental health. Further studies are needed to understand the factors that influence this relationship as well as to design more effective interventions to address the FoMO phenomenon.*

## INTRODUCTION

Technological advancements and social networking have changed the way people interact and communicate. One of the impacts of this progress is the emergence of a new phenomenon in the digital world, namely anxiety related to feeling left behind or Fear of Missing Out (FoMO). This feeling often arises when a person feels unable to keep up with activities or events that are happening around them, especially those seen through social media. Social media provides an image of a life full of achievements, social events, and seemingly idealized experiences, which can trigger individuals to feel left behind from what is happening in other people's lives.

The impact of these feelings is limited to the habitual use of social media, and affects an individual's mental health. When a person feels constantly compared to the seemingly better or more interesting lives of others, feelings of anxiety and stress can arise. This is a major concern, as it can negatively impact one's quality of life, including feelings of low self-esteem, social anxiety and even depression. This phenomenon is not just an individual psychological issue, but also a broader societal challenge regarding the influence of technology on people's mental well-being.

A key issue associated with FoMO is the increasing levels of anxiety and stress among social media users (Roberts & David, 2020). Studies show that individuals who are more frequently exposed to idealized content on social media tend to experience increased anxiety about falling behind in their social and personal lives (Przybylski et al., 2013). The inability to keep up with friends or even celebrities they idolize, often leads to feelings of dissatisfaction and stress (Tandon et al., 2021). Fioravanti et al. (2021) explain this can be detrimental to mental health, as individuals feel they are not good enough or do not have achievements comparable to those seen online.

Another issue that arises is the relationship between FoMO and sleep disorders. A number of studies have revealed that anxiety caused by FoMO is associated with increased use of electronic devices, especially at night (Levenson et al., 2016). Excessive social media use, especially during sleeping hours, can disrupt sleep behaviors and causes sleep disorders, leading to a decrease in physical and mental health. It is not uncommon for individuals to feel like they cannot miss a single moment or update on social media, leading to bad habits such as neglecting rest time (Gupta & Sharma, 2021).

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FoMO may also contribute to a decrease in the quality of social relationships. Individuals who focus too much on the lives of others on social media may feel that their relationships with friends or family are not adequate enough (Fox & Moreland, 2015). They may feel insufficiently “connected” to others, despite the fact that they already have good social relationships. This can potentially increase feelings of loneliness and dissatisfaction in interpersonal relationships. Feelings of isolation triggered by FoMO can worsen one's mental health condition (Hunt et al., 2018).

Phenomenon affects almost all levels of society, especially the younger generation who use social media more intensely. As the influence of technology continues to grow, it is important to understand the impact of this habit on individuals' mental health. Further research on the link between FoMO and mental health will help to open up deeper insights into the possible long-term effects, as well as provide information that can be used to design better interventions for those affected.

The high number of social media users worldwide, especially among adolescents and young adults, the influence of FoMO on mental health is becoming increasingly relevant to research. This phenomenon has the potential to be one of the main factors driving the increasing cases of anxiety, depression and other mental health issues faced by many individuals. Understanding more about this relationship will make an important contribution to the prevention and treatment of mental health problems that are increasing in the digital age.

This study aims to examine how the Fear of Missing out (FoMO) experienced by individual social media users is associated with increased anxiety and stress. It also aims to understand the impact of excessive social media use on sleep disorders often experienced by individuals with FoMO. This study is expected to provide a clearer picture of the influence of FoMO on individuals' mental and physical health.

## RESEARCH METHOD

The approach used in this review is a literature study, which aims to collect and analyze various relevant sources regarding the FoMO phenomenon and its impact on mental health. The literature study allows the researcher to identify trends, patterns, and findings that have been generated by previous research, as well as examine the various perspectives that exist on this topic. We will collect scholarly articles, books, research reports, and other reliable sources that address the relationship between social media use, FoMO, and psychological well-being. This process involves checking academic databases such as Google Scholar, JSTOR, and PubMed to ensure that only relevant and current literature is used (Tandoc et al., 2015).

Through this approach, it is hoped that the study can provide a comprehensive picture of how FoMO affects anxiety, stress and sleep disorders in social media users. This literature review also aims to identify factors that exacerbate or ameliorate the impact of FoMO on mental health. By comparing findings from different studies, the researcher was able to draw stronger conclusions and offer deeper insights into this topic. The literature review also allowed the researcher to identify gaps in the existing literature, which can then serve as a foundation for further research in the future (Kuss & Griffiths, 2017).

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### The Effect of Fear of Missing Out (FoMO) on Anxiety and Stress in Social Media Users

The feeling of Fear of Missing out (FoMO) is a psychological phenomenon that refers to a person's anxiety or fear of being left out of events or experiences that others consider important, especially those shared through social media (Barry et al., 2017). This phenomenon is strongly associated with the active use of social media, as platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter allow users to see a live picture of other people's lives (Shensa et al., 2018). FoMO can arise when a person feels their life is less interesting or more boring compared to the lives of others who seem full of happiness or success (Przybylski et al., 2013). This phenomenon often causes significant anxiety in individuals who feel compelled to stay connected and keep up with every update, event or experience happening online.

The impact of FoMO on anxiety has been widely researched, and the results show a direct relationship between anxiety levels and the intensity of social media use. When individuals are constantly exposed to images or stories of seemingly idealized lives on social media, they begin to compare their lives to those of others they see on these platforms. The resulting feeling of being left behind can increase anxiety, as individuals feel that they are not good enough or do not have an adequate life. Hunt et al. (2018) showed that increased social media use is associated with increased feelings of anxiety and isolation, which further deteriorates individuals' mental health.

Excessive social media use may exacerbate feelings of anxiety caused by FoMO. Users who access social media more frequently tend to see more updates about other people's social lives, which makes them feel more anxious about being left behind. This can create a continuous cycle where the anxiety of falling behind encourages individuals to be more active on social media, even though this adds to their feelings of anxiety.

Levenson et al. (2016) showed that excessive social media use can trigger increased anxiety, which often leads to sleep disorders and increased stress.

FoMO affects anxiety, and is closely related to stress levels in social media users. The stress experienced by individuals who have high levels of FoMO often relates to the pressure to stay in the “digital crowd,” keep up with every trend, or not miss important information (Fabris et al., 2020). This stress can arise due to the guilt or anxiety that arises when they feel unable to keep up or participate in the activities seen on social media. Kross et al. (2013) state that social media use can increase feelings of loneliness and stress, as people feel more isolated despite being digitally connected to many people.

FoMO can exacerbate pre-existing stress, such as stress from work or personal problems. Feeling anxious about falling behind on social media can increase overall psychological burden, worsen existing mental states, and even lead to physical health problems (Primack et al., 2017). Individuals become more susceptible to social and emotional overstress, which in turn exacerbates their stress if they constantly feel the need to be in the center of online social activities. Constant stress and anxiety can affect the body's systems, potentially leading to sleep disturbances, headaches, or even other long-term health issues (Medic et al., 2017). Not only does FoMO exacerbate existing stress, but it can also worsen overall physical and emotional health.

Twenge et al. (2017) highlighted that stress from FoMO occurs in individuals who feel isolated, and in those who feel trapped in constant social comparison. This leads to stress stemming from activity on social media, and from an internal tension to reach the standards that digital society seems to want. Continued use of social media leads to a feeling that one cannot fully rest or enjoy personal moments without feeling anxious that they are missing out on something more important (Gupta & Sharma, 2021).

The FoMO phenomenon also affects sleep quality, which plays an important role in increasing anxiety and stress. Many social media users feel the need to keep checking updates or conversations happening on social media platforms, even during the night (Roberts & David, 2020). This leads to a reduction in the sleep time the body needs to recover and rest. Individuals who are frequently exposed to FoMO tend to have poor sleep quality, which can exacerbate the level of stress and anxiety they feel. According to Levenson et al. (2016), it was found that sleep disorders due to social media use contribute to increased anxiety, which further affects overall mental health.

Overall, the influence of FoMO on anxiety and stress in social media users is complex and involves various psychological and social factors. FoMO often triggers feelings of anxiety as individuals feel isolated or left out of what is happening in other people's lives, which is often showcased on social media. The study conducted by Przybylski et al. (2013) showed that this phenomenon has a significant impact on individual well-being, as it increases feelings of isolation and anxiety. It is important to understand the mechanisms that influence the relationship between social media, FoMO, anxiety and stress so that we can develop strategies to overcome the negative impact of this phenomenon.

### **The Relationship between Over-use of Social Media and Sleep Disorders in FoMO Individuals**

Over-use of social media can contribute to various health disorders, one of which is sleep disorders. This phenomenon is increasingly relevant with the emergence of Fear of Missing out (FoMO), a psychological condition in which individuals feel anxious for fear of missing out on important moments shared through social media (Milyavskaya et al., 2018). This feeling of anxiety often encourages users to stay connected to social media, even when they shouldn't, such as at bedtime. They feel that if they don't check the latest updates, they will miss important information or social opportunities that might affect their status or relationships (Abel et al., 2016). Levenson et al. (2016) showed that excessive social media use is strongly associated with sleep disorders, which can further deteriorate an individual's quality of life.

Dependence on social media often stems from the feeling of not wanting to miss out on information or experiences shared by friends or acquaintances on platforms such as Instagram, Twitter, or Facebook. Users with high levels of FoMO feel pressured to stay up-to-date with the online world, so they cannot tear themselves away from their electronic devices, even while sleeping (Gezgin, 2018). This can lead to a reduction in sleep quality that gets worse over time. Even if they feel tired, the anxiety associated with missing out can interfere with their ability to sleep peacefully and adequately (Shoval et al., 2021). According to Thomée et al. (2011), sleep disorders due to excessive social media use can occur due to an individual's exposure to blue light from electronic device screens that disrupts the production of melatonin, a hormone that regulates the sleep cycle. Social media addiction not only ruins sleep habits, but also affects the body's ability to rest optimally, which can adversely affect physical and mental health in the long-term (Valasareddy et al., 2019).

This decrease in sleep quality caused by social media use is especially true for those with FoMO. A study by Drouin et al. (2015) found that social media users who often feel these feelings of lag-related anxiety tend to sleep later and have poorer sleep quality compared to those who do not feel this way. This is due to the habit of constantly checking updates on social media, which keeps them awake longer and reduces the sleep time the body needs for recovery. They feel that they should always be connected and don't want to miss out on important moments that are happening online (Rozgonjuk et al., 2021). This sleep disturbance can lead to a decrease in an individual's performance and well-being the next day, creating a negative cycle between social media anxiety and lack of quality sleep (Li et al., 2020).

The sleep disorders experienced by individuals with FoMO may progress to bigger problems, such as insomnia (Roberts & David, 2020). Insomnia is characterized by difficulty falling asleep or waking up too early and difficulty getting back to sleep, which can interfere with daily quality of life (Kyle et al., 2010). This condition can significantly impair daily quality of life as individuals who experience insomnia often feel tired, anxious and less productive (Morin et al., 2015). Dogruer et al. (2018) showed that insomnia is often a side effect of excessive social media use, especially for those who have a tendency to feel anxious about missing important information. Social media users with FoMO feel the need to constantly check their phones, even before bedtime, which causes them to stay awake longer and have difficulty sleeping (Barry et al., 2017). This chronic sleep disorder can create a negative spiral, where anxiety associated with FoMO exacerbates insomnia, which in turn worsens the individual's physical and mental well-being.

These sleep disorders caused by social media use can also worsen an individual's mental state. Schønning et al. (2020) showed that sleep disorders caused by excessive social media use can increase feelings of anxiety and depression. Individuals who sleep less and are more exposed to social media tend to experience greater feelings of fatigue and are at higher risk of mental health disorders. This is associated with increased reliance on social media to cope with feelings of loneliness or emotional emptiness, which worsens sleep quality and overall mental health (Tandon et al., 2021). This creates a continuum of behavior between poor sleep, stress, anxiety, and social media dependency, which further deteriorates the sleep quality and mental health of individuals.

Impact of poor sleep habits triggered by FoMO is also seen in increased stress. The study by Lee et al. (2017) explains that the effects of stress exacerbated by sleep disorders can lead to more serious psychological disorders. Excessive social media use leads to higher levels of anxiety, which further leads to sleep disorders, and ultimately increased stress. This inability to rest well creates physical and emotional strain that increases overall stress levels (Swenson, 2014). Constant stress can affect mental health, triggering feelings of anxiety and even depression. This vicious circle makes individuals who experience FoMO feel even more stressed, as they feel they must always be connected to the virtual world, but their bodies are increasingly deprived of adequate rest. It is important to develop healthier habits in using social media so that individuals can reduce the impact of stress and sleep disturbances caused by FoMO.

Some studies have also highlighted how social media use at night can disrupt healthy sleep patterns with a more significant impact on individuals who have FoMo. Exelmans and Van den Bulck (2016) showed that most social media users engage their devices before bedtime, which disrupts the natural sleep process. For individuals with FoMO, the need to constantly update the information they receive from social media causes an imbalance in their sleep cycle, which exacerbates sleep disorders (Gupta & Sharma, 2021). Social media users with FoMO tend to check their devices constantly, even when they know that it will disrupt their sleep. This process disrupts the body's transition to the state of relaxation needed for restful sleep, reducing the sleep time the body needs to recuperate. This can worsen their overall quality of life, as poor sleep can decrease cognitive function and increase feelings of fatigue throughout the day.

The importance of understanding the relationship between social media use, FoMO and sleep disorders lies in its impact on long-term health. Excessive social media use, especially when triggered by anxiety about missing out on information or social experiences, can disrupt sleep quality and create chronic sleep disorders. Chronic sleep disorders can lead to more serious physical and mental problems, such as obesity, diabetes, mood disorders and decreased quality of life. As pointed out by Firth et al. (2019), poor sleep can affect many aspects of a person's life, and increase anxiety and stress. Therefore, it is important to raise awareness about the importance of maintaining balanced social media use, especially for individuals who often experience FoMO feelings.



## CONCLUSION

Fear of Missing out (FoMO) phenomenon that has developed along with the use of social media has a significant impact on mental health, especially anxiety and stress, as well as sleep disorders in users. Individuals who experience FoMO tend to feel anxious and pressured to keep up to date on social media, which often leads to excessive social anxiety. This creates constant emotional stress, which can worsen one's mental state. Excessive social media use is also closely related to sleep disorders, which are exacerbated by the habit of constantly checking electronic devices, even at night. Exposure to blue light from screens can decrease the production of melatonin, a sleep-regulating hormone, which makes one feel more awake and have trouble falling asleep. This process creates a negative cycle, where sleep disorders and anxiety mutually worsen the quality of life of social media users.

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