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Investigating Fear of Missing Out: A comparative study of gender, employment status, and social media accounts

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to describe the condition of fear of missing out (FoMO), and to investigate differences in FoMO based on gender, employment status, and number of social media accounts. This study uses a quantitative approach to the type of comparative research. Sampling using incidental sampling technique, the sample in this study amounted to 469 respondents (male = 112; female = 357). Data were collected using the FoMO instrument. Data were analyzed using anova with the help of JASP software. The results showed that FoMO conditions were experienced by all respondents, but FoMO in respondents who did not work or students were more worried about not having access to their smart phones. This is of course related to the number of social media accounts and free time (respondents who do not work or students have a lot of free time) to access the internet, because smart phones cannot work optimally when there is no internet access. Another finding is that female students who have two to three social media accounts and even those who have more than three are more dominant in responding to the FoMO instrument compared to male. However, when viewed from the average, men who do not work to experience the highest FoMO condition compared to men who have jobs, even with women who work and those who do not work.

Keywords: Fear of Missing Out (FoMO), Gender, Employment Status, Social Media Accounts

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Introduction

The rapid development of technology, information and communication is increasingly felt in the millennial era (Syahputra & Erwinda, 2020). The behavior of the millennial generation is characterized by the desire to always be connected to social media, allowing users to continuously monitor their social networks at all times (David et al., 2017; Roberts et al., 2014). Przybylski et al. (2013) reveal that social media has a dual nature – it can open many avenues for interaction and/or it can expose users to too many interaction opportunities to pursue. Fear of loss (FoMO) is best understood as an excessive worry that others may have valuable experiences that are not there (Przybylski et al., 2013). Fear of Missing Out (FoMO) causes feelings of discomfort, anxiety or restlessness if information from smart phones is not met through internet access (Young, 2010). Problematic smart phone use is associated with problematic Internet usage constructs (J Kuss et al., 2014).

The results of an Indonesian research in collaboration with the Association of Indonesian Internet Service Providers (APJII), internet users in Indonesia increased by 10.12% (Indonesia, 2016). According to the Secretary-General of APJII, this survey involved 5,900 samples with a margin of error of 1.28% (Anastasya et al., 2022). This field data was obtained from March to April 14 2019, 98% of students are active internet users, and 97% actively use social media (Saputra, 2019). Aykanat et al. (2016) found 24-hour smart phone usage in Turkish universities was less than 1 hour (23.4%), 1 to 2 hours (27%), 2 to 3 hours (13.1%), 3 to 4 hours (5, 1%), 4 to 5 hours (4.9%) and more than 5 hours (14.4). Children in Taiwan spend 11 hours per week using either a smart phone or tablet (Chang et al., 2019). The prevalence of smart phone addiction among fifth graders is 15.2%. Emotional dependence on the Internet can trigger anxiety and in most people that can lead to a FoMO mindset in individuals (Swan & Kendall, 2016). Three-quarters of young adults have been diagnosed with fear of missing out on pleasurable activities experienced by others, and shared on social media (Przybylski et al., 2013). A study conducted by (Roberts & David, 2020) stated that the reason social media is so popular among young adults is

because humans are social creatures, so they need social networks. Strong social networks increase our chances of living longer and happier lives (Holt-Lunstad et al., 2010). Real or imaginary sense of social exclusion can have a negative impact on both the quantity and quality of our lives (Konrath, 2018). Social exclusion poses a significant threat to a person's innate need to have a social network (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Williams, 2007).

FoMO as a motivator for someone to use a smart phone, for example, those who experience higher levels of FoMO tend to check their smart phone more often than those who have lower levels of FoMO (Elhai et al., 2016; Przybylski et al., 2013; Syahputra et al., 2019, 2020). This is because smart phones facilitate communication via text messages, calls, social media, and other applications that allow them to be freed from their FoMO. Clayton et al. (2015) found that when individuals were unable to answer their ringing iPhone, their anxiety levels tended to increase, possibly due to high FoMO and they knew someone was trying to call but couldn't answer. This study is adapted to fill the gaps from previous studies; this study describes the condition of fear of missing out (FoMO), and investigates differences in FoMO based on gender, employment status, and number of social media accounts.
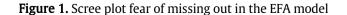
Method

This study uses a quantitative approach to the type of comparative research. Sampling using incidental sampling technique (non-probability sampling), the sample in this study amounted to 469 respondents (male = 112; female = 357), along with the demographic details of this study (table 1). Data were collected using the Fear of Missing Out (FoMO) instrument using a 5-point Likert scale. The FoMO instrument measures three aspects, namely: 1) autonomy, 2) competence, and 3) relatedness (Przybylski et al., 2013).

The results of the reliability test of the FoMO instrument's alpha cronbach (0.91) are at a good level. The FoMO instrument is valid with a Chi-square goodness of fit statistic that is statistically significant ($\chi2$ = 303.723, d.f = 74, p = <0.001) and has an acceptable Fit index, including: Comparative Fit Index (CFI) = 0.917; Incremental Fit Index (IFI) = 0.917; Root Mean Squared Error of Approximation (RMSEA) = 0.072; and Standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) = 0.054. Furthermore, the three aspects developed from (Przybylski et al., 2013) are in accordance with the Eigen value > 1, it can be seen that 469 samples form three data points, meaning that there are three factors identified on the FoMO instrument (figure 1). Furthermore, it is strengthened by the results of factor correlation showing a good relationship between factors for measuring fear of missing out (factor 1 - factor 2 = 0.756; factor 1 - factor 3 = 0.738; and factor 2 - factor 3 = 0.747).

Data were analyzed using ANOVA with the help of JASP software, there are several that will be analyzed in this study, namely: 1) descriptive FoMO test, 2) FoMO condition testing based on demography using various plots, and 3) ANOVA test to see differences in FoMO based on gender, employment status, and number of social media accounts.

Table 1. Demographics of Research Respondents

Gender Code	n	%	Job Status Code	n	%	Number of Social Media Accounts Code	n	%
Male (1)	112	23,9	Have a Job (1)	100	21,3	1 account (1)	78	16,6
Female (2)	357	76,1	Don't have a job or Student (2)	369	78,7	2 - 3 account (2)	204	43,5
						> 3 account (3)	187	39,9

Figure 1. Scree plot fear of missing out in the EFA model

Results and Discussion

Fear of Missing Out Descriptive Test

Table 2. Result test of Descriptive FoMO (n = 469)

	Score FoMO
Mean	44,13
Median	43
Mode	42
Std. Deviation	12,3
Skewness	0,63
Kurtosis	1,02
Minimum	19
Maximum	92
Sum	20695

The results of the descriptive test show that the central tendency value in the FoMO data is M = 44.13, Md = 43, Mode = 42 (Table 1). The trend of the score that appears on the FoMO instrument is 42 and the distribution of the FoMO data is 12.3. The skewness value in the FoMO data shows a positive value of 0.63 meaning that most of the data tends to be skewed to the left side of the curve.

The Condition of FoMO testing based on Demographics

Tabel 3. The results of the descriptive test based on demographics (n = 496)

Gender	Job Status	Number of Social Media Accounts	Mean	SD	N
Male	Don't have a job or Student	> 3 account	52,9	15,7	35
		1 account	40,53	8,9	15
		2 - 3 account	47,5	14,3	35
	Have a Job	> 3 account	49,4	13,3	14
		1 account	51,8	13,7	5
		2 - 3 account	47,3	15,2	8
Female	Don't have a job or Student	> 3 account	44,5	11,5	111
		1 account	44,0	11,8	45
		2 - 3 account	41,9	10,6	128
	Have a Job	> 3 account	41,4	12,3	27
		1 account	33,8	8,1	13
		2 - 3 account	42,6	10,5	33

The Data of descriptive FoMO based on demographics shows that female students who have two to three social media accounts (n = 128) and even those who have more than three (n = 111) are more dominant in responding to the FoMO instrument. However, when viewed from the average male unemployed (students; M = 52.9), it means that males who do not work experience the highest FoMO conditions compared to males who have jobs, even with women who work. or not working.
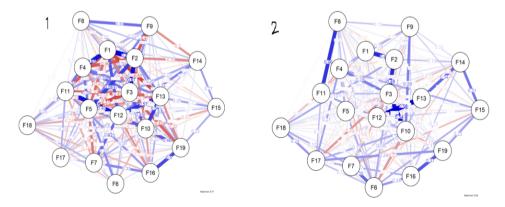

Figure 2. Network FoMO Based on Gender (n = 469)

Figure 2 above shows that there is a strong positive relationship between items in males which is higher than females, as seen from the maximum r-value for males (0.71) and females (0.58). This condition indicates that men are more worried about losing access to their smart phones than women. Furthermore, the condition of FoMO based on job status is presented in Figure 3 below.

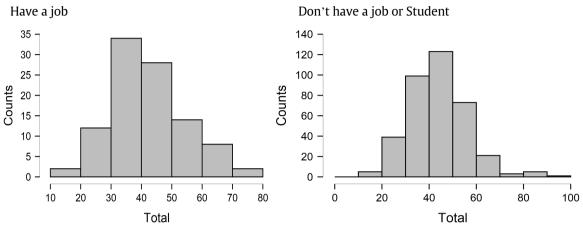**Figure 3.** Distribution Flot FoMO Based on Job Status (n = 469)

Figure 3 above shows that respondents who do not work or are students are higher than those who work, it can be seen from the bar graph that students get a score of 100 and those who work only get the highest score of 80. The FoMO condition was experienced by all respondents, but FoMO in respondents who did not work or students were more worried about not having access to their smart phones. This is of course related to internet access, because smart phones cannot work optimally when there is no internet access. Furthermore, the condition of FoMO based on the number of social media accounts is presented in Figure 4 below.
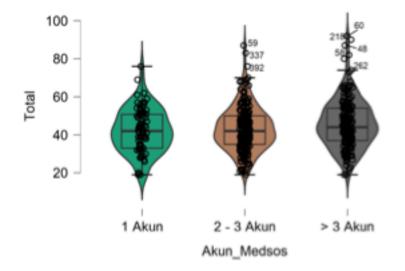

Figure 4. Boxplots FoMO Based on Number of Social Media Accounts (n = 469)

Respondents who experience FoMO conditions are closely related to the number of social media accounts they have (figure 4), this has a positive correlation where the more social media accounts, the more often they see and check social media accounts and of course have an impact on psychological conditions such as worrying if no access to social media accounts. This condition is in line with Figure 3 which states that respondents who do not work or students are more FoMO than those who work, because respondents who do not work or students often play smart phones to access social media accounts. To clarify this condition, see table 4 regarding the differences in FoMO based on gender, employment status, and social media accounts.

Differences of Fear of Missing Out Based on Demographics

Tabel 4. The Result of Anova test FoMO (n = 469)

Cases	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	P
Gender	2396.1	1	2396.1	17.02	< .001
Status Pekerjaan	35.9	1	35.9	0.26	0.613
account Medsos	678.9	2	339.4	2.41	0.091
Gender ∗ account Medsos	111.9	2	55.9	0.4	0.672
Status Pekerjaan ∗ Gender	570.6	1	570.6	4.05	0.045
Status Pekerjaan ∗ account Medsos	197.3	2	98.6	0.7	0.497
Status Pekerjaan ∗ Gender ∗ account Medsos	1087.1	2	543.6	3.9	0.022

In Table 4, there is a significant difference in FoMO based on gender, as evidenced by the p-value < 0.05 (0.001). However, there is no significant difference in employment status and social media accounts. Furthermore, if employment status is associated with gender, there is a significant difference in FoMO (p-value < 0.05; 0.045). Likewise, employment status, gender and social media accounts showed a significant difference in FoMO (p-value < 0.05; 0.022).

Discussion

The results showed that there were significant differences in FoMO based on employment status, gender and social media accounts (p-value < 0.05; 0.022; table 4). In addition, all respondents experienced FoMO conditions, but FoMO respondents who did not work or were students were more worried about not having access to their smart phones. This is of course related to free time in using internet access, because smart phones cannot work optimally when there is no internet access. In line with research (Anastasya et al., 2022) showed a significant positive relationship between FoMO and internet addiction variable, where the higher the FoMO, the higher the internet addiction. Saputra (2019) found that 98% of students are active internet users, and 97% actively use social media, this shows that internet access is closely related to social media. Saputra (2019) revealed that students use social media as a communication tool to find information, conduct social interactions and online business, express opinions and entertainment, and carry out activities in their spare time. The ease of internet access from time to time also makes people use the internet more intensively. However, it can lead to a problem commonly known as internet addiction. According to Kompas, Indonesian people access the internet on average 8 hours 36 minutes, and an average of 3 hours 26 minutes spent on social media.

Another finding in this study is that respondents experiencing FoMO conditions are closely related to the number of social media accounts they have (figure 4), meaning that the more social media accounts, the more often they see other people's status and check incoming messages on social media accounts. Three-quarters of young adults have been diagnosed with fear of missing out on pleasurable activities experienced by others, and shared on social media (Przybylski et al., 2013). A study conducted by Roberts & David (2020) stated that the reason social media is so popular among young adults is because humans are social creatures so they need social networks. Strong social networks increase our chances of living longer and happier lives (Holt-Lunstad et al., 2010). Real or imaginary sense of social exclusion can have a negative impact on both the quantity and quality of our lives (Konrath, 2018). Social exclusion poses a significant threat to a person's innate need to have a social network (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Williams, 2007). However, while excessive use of social media has a psychological impact, excessive use of social media has been associated with a variety of negative psychological outcomes including increased levels of stress, anxiety, depression, lower levels of self-esteem, reduced relationship quality, and sleep quality, lower rates, as well as increased suicidal ideation and suicide rates among adolescents (Adams & Kisler, 2013; Kross et al., 2013; Tromholt, 2016; Twenge et al., 2018; Woods & Scott, 2016). The impact of a social media post can influence the individual in triggering negative emotions in the viewer, these negative emotions have the potential to reduce the individual's motivation and thus prevent him from completing the planned task efficiently (Rozgonjuk et al., 2020).

People with high FoMO want to stay connected with others and stay abreast of what others are doing (Abeele & Rooij, 2016; Beyens et al., 2016; Przybylski et al., 2013). Przybylski et al. (2013) explained that the

psychological need for connectedness tends to increase a person's FoMO. FoMO that increases in a person will feel comfortable on social media where users can keep in touch with their peer group. FoMO is positively associated with problematic smart phone use (Wolniewicz et al., 2018). Uses and Gratifications Theory, (Wolniewicz et al., 2018) results explain how individuals high in FoMO are more likely to use their smart phones for social purposes including social media to stay connected with their social networks. Similar research by Makki et al. (2018) focused on Snapchat and found that use of the social media platform was associated with an individual's innate desire to be accepted, affiliate, and connected with others.

Conclusion

The results showed that FoMO conditions were experienced by all respondents, but FoMO in respondents who did not work or students were more worried about not having access to their smart phones. This is of course related to the number of social media accounts and free time (respondents who do not work or students have a lot of free time) to access the internet, because smart phones cannot work optimally when there is no internet access. Another finding is that female students who have two to three social media accounts and even those who have more than three are more dominant in responding to the FoMO instrument compared to male. However, when viewed from the average, men who do not work experience the highest FoMO condition compared to men who have jobs, even with women who work and those who do not work. Furthermore, there was a significant difference in FoMO based on gender and if employment status was associated with gender there was a significant difference with FoMO (p-value < 0.05; 0.045). Likewise, employment status, gender and social media accounts showed a significant difference (p-value < 0.05; 0.022) with FoMO.

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