



## Research Article

# Analysis of predictive variables for the fear of missing out on social media users: a systematic review

Tolga Turkan<sup>1</sup>

*Clinical Psychology Master Program, Istanbul Aydin University, Istanbul, Turkiye*

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### Abstract

The development of technology has facilitated our lives, but alongside its positive outcomes, it has also brought negative effects. Due to these negative impacts, the fear of missing out on advancements (FoMO) has emerged in our lives. The purpose of this research is to explain and discuss the predictors of the fear of missing out on advancements. Since the concept of FoMO is relatively new in the Turkish literature, this study will provide guidance and contribute to future research. Nine thesis studies related to the fear of missing out on advancements, published only in the field of psychology after 2020, were included in this research through the National Thesis Center. Due to the limited number of studies and the qualitative research method used, it is not possible to generalize the results. The fear of missing out on advancements has been examined particularly in relation to nomophobia, problematic mobile phone usage, internet addiction, and social media addiction. The majority of existing studies in the literature are correlational. To strengthen the significance levels of these findings, increase causal research, include qualitative studies, employ objective measurement tools, and conduct research with more generalizable results are recommended.

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## Introduction

The need to communicate is a human necessity throughout the ages. With the development of technology, this need has begun to be met with technological tools more easily and without the need to be face to face. It is seen today that these technological tools are constantly changing and diversifying (Hızarcı, 2018). The internet is developing rapidly and it has become possible to access the internet easily with smart phones (Karatay, 2018). Human communication needs; It has led to the emergence of social media software along with the internet and smart phones. These social media tools have also enabled people to make the one-way communication mutual and continuous provided by the tools such as radio and television that they used before. These new communication tools make life and communication easier, but their use in non-functional ways brings along various problems (Hızarcı, 2018). In this respect, the conscious use of these social media tools is very important.

Individuals can now learn about sections of the lives of the people around them, developments and what they are doing at that moment from their social media accounts. In this way, people can introduce themselves to their followers as they wish, as well as face to face, and communicate with them. People can follow the person they want on their social media accounts, see what they are doing as soon as they share and be aware of the developments about them. People may

<sup>1</sup> Master student, Clinical Psychology Master Program, Istanbul Aydin University, Istanbul, Turkiye. E-mail: [tolgaturkan@stu.aydin.edu.tr](mailto:tolgaturkan@stu.aydin.edu.tr) ORCID: 0000-0002-0749-6817

want to have simultaneous access to a large number of social media resources, and this may make communication difficult and reduce the functionality of these tools, as they try to reach a lot of information (Hizarci, 2018).

With the development of technology and the updates of social media applications, the concept of FoMO has entered our lives. This concept expresses the intense anxiety of not being able to stay in touch with the experience and that the people around him have a rewarding experience despite their absence. People who want continuous access to these social resources are in need of social media tools. While quick and easy access to social resources is a great benefit for all users, a great thing for FoMO residents is a good thing for them (Przybylski, Murayama, DeHaan, & Gladwell, 2013). Although this situation seems to be an advantage for individuals in the short term, it is a disadvantage in the long term. As the individual's probability of socializing with different people and in different environments increases, the probability of choosing the best socialization environment will decrease, and this confusion will increase FoMO even more (Cakir, 2020). As the person spends time on social media, they will not be able to find out what the best experience is for them, and this may create stress for them.

The fact of FoMO includes thoughts that come to mind due to the lack of chronic or conditional factors in the fulfillment of psychological needs. Social media tools help to meet the need for socialization. The psychological needs mentioned here are autonomy, competence, and establishing close relationships. It is inevitable to examine the high level of FoMO, as well as low well-being and low life satisfaction due to the inability to meet these needs. It is possible to associate this with the excess of time spent on the Internet (Przybylski et al., 2013). Although the use of social media seems to facilitate socialization, it also has a side that increases loneliness..

The individual is afraid that others will have a better time in his absence than he spends. He fears that his environment will have more motivating experiences. He worries about his friends having fun at events he is not invited to. He gets stressed because he doesn't know what his friends are doing. It is important for them to understand that when their friends are trying to prank them, it is not serious. Sometimes he wonders if he has too much time to learn about what's going on around him. Being deprived of motivating activities with friends makes him uncomfortable. When he has a pleasant time, he wants to share the details of it online. Feels uncomfortable missing a planned event. He wants to keep informed about what his friends are doing even when he is on vacation (Przybylski et al., 2013).

Technological social media applications have established an algorithm based on keeping users inside (Przybylski et al., 2013). Online times will increase even more when there is FoMO in user profiles. With the increase in the duration, problematic mobile phone use will occur (Elhai, Levine, Dvorak, & Hall, 2016). It is also thought to be an important factor in explaining problematic social media use (Franchina, Vanden Abeele, Van Rooji, Lo Coco, & De Marez, 2018). With the increase in the time spent online, the level of information received from social sources will also increase. This loneliness and depressive state will increase as the individual sees that his environment spends more quality time than himself (Hunt, Marx, Lipson, & Young, 2018). Besides the advantages of technology, the effects of disadvantageous situations can also be great.

FoMO research is increasing day by day. It is very important for researchers to determine the course of these studies.

### **Problem of Study**

In this study, it was aimed to examine the theses made in Turkey to determine the explanatory and predictive variables of FoMo. Thus, this research will guide new studies on FoMO. At the same time, the predictors of FoMO will be determined, and protective measures against possible negative consequences will be determined. There is a limited discussion in the literature due to the scarcity of thesis studies on the subject and the uniformity of research models. At the same time, it is not possible to generalize all the thesis studies included in the study to Turkey.

### **Method**

This research is a systematic review to explain FoMO and determine its predictive variables. The literature review includes thesis research published after 2020. The reason for this is that the thesis studies on FoMO started towards the

end of the 2010s. Since 2020, the number of studies is more. Only the theses found in the system by the "Turkey National Thesis Center" were included in the research and only those with "Psychology" in the subject section were taken into account. As a result of the scanning process, 71 theses on FoMO were found on the "Turkey National Thesis Center" site, and after the theses that did not meet the above-mentioned criteria were eliminated, the findings of a total of 9 theses were examined in the research (See Appendix 1).

## Results

### Examination of Thesis 1

In Çakır's (2020) thesis study, a negative and significant relationship was determined between secure attachment style and FoMO. A positive and significant relationship was determined between insecure attachment and FoMO. When the relationship between self-construal and FoMO is examined; While a negative and significant relationship was found between autonomous self-construal and FoMO levels, a positive and significant relationship was found between relational self-construal and FoMO. Positive and significant relationships between depressive symptoms and anxiety and FoMO were examined. When we look at the duration of social media usage, the participants who use the Youtube application '1-3 hours' have a significantly higher FoMO than the participants who use '1 hour or less' and the participants who use '3 hours or more' than the participants who use '1-3 hours'. determined to live. No difference was found in social media applications such as Facebook, Instagram, Whatsapp and Twitter. No significant relationship was found between perceived social support and fear of missing out. No significant relationship was found between the demographic characteristics of 226 university students, whose age range was 18-26, such as age, psychiatric illness, relationship status, place of residence, and FoMO.

### Examination of Thesis 2

In the study of Çiftçi (2021), a negative and significant relationship was determined between social comparison and FoMO levels. He determined a positive and significant relationship between loneliness and the fear of missing out. He determined a negative and significant relationship between subjective well-being and fear of missing out. Constituting the sample of the research; There was no significant relationship between FoMO and demographic characteristics of 1000 students studying at state high schools in Sivas, such as age, gender, grade level, school type, perceived parent type, purpose of internet use, and frequency of checking social media accounts.

### Examination of Thesis 3

In Özcan Karaboğa's study (2021), a positive and significant relationship between FoMO and depression was investigated in individuals with high levels of self-dissociation. A positive and significant relationship was determined between FoMO and depression in individuals with a high level of dependence on others, which is a sub-dimension of self-dissociation. A positive and significant relationship was determined between FoMO and depression in individuals with high level of emotional disconnection, which is a sub-dimension of self-dissociation. A positive and significant relationship was determined between depression and FoMO. Demographic characteristics such as income status, education level, number of children, type of birth of the youngest child, planned/unplanned pregnancy, pregnancy history, family type, feeding method of the baby, and daily social media usage time of the 410 participants who gave birth in the last 13 months were included in the sample of the study. No relationship was found between the fear of missing out and the fear of missing out.

### Examination of Thesis 4

In Saatçi's (2021) study, a positive and significant relationship was determined between sociotelism and FoMo. A positive and significant relationship was determined between Nomophobia and FoMO. A positive and significant relationship was found between the tendency to acquiescence and FoMO, a positive and significant relationship between the tendency to aggression and FoMO, and a positive and significant relationship between the tendency to disconnection and FoMO (Saatçi, 2021). A total of 730 undergraduate and associate degree students from 3 different

universities, gender, age, faculty, grade level, whether they have received psychological support before, purpose of internet use, social media applications they use, daily internet usage time, daily smartphone usage time, relationship status and No significant relationship was found between FoMO and demographic characteristics such as the means of communication with which social media is accessed.

#### **Examination of Thesis 5**

In Şahin's (2022) study, a positive and significant relationship was determined between compulsive online buying behavior and FoMO. A negative, weak and significant relationship was determined between life satisfaction and FoMO. There was no significant relationship between FoMO and demographic characteristics such as age, gender, marital status, education level, perceived income level and how many credit cards they have in the 439 participants with a wide (18-57 age range).

#### **Examination of Thesis 6**

In Şener's (2022) study, a positive and significant relationship was determined between cognitive completion and FoMO. A negative and significant relationship was determined between emotional balance and FoMO. A positive and significant relationship was determined between the duration of social media use and FoMO. High school students who use social media for 0-1 hours a day have the lowest SSQ scores, while students who use social media for more than 3 hours a day have the highest score. It has been determined that the students whose family income is 6000 TL and above have a significantly higher FoMO level than the students whose family income is between 0-3000 TL and 3000-6000 TL. The average FoMO score of high school students who use the Internet for gaming and shopping; Internet use was significantly higher than high school students whose purpose was social media use, watching video-films and studying. There was no significant relationship between the sub-dimensions of personality traits such as extraversion-introversion, agreeableness-incompatibility, responsibility-irresponsibility, openness-conservatism and FoMO. No significant relationship was found between the age, gender and grade levels of 296 high school students and their fear of missing out.

#### **Examination of Thesis 7**

In Taş's (2022) study, a positive and significant relationship between neuroticism and fear of missing out was examined; A negative and significant relationship was determined between responsibility and FoMO. No significant relationship was found between FoMO and agreeableness, openness to experience, and extraversion. He determined a positive and significant relationship between problematic mobile phone use and fear of missing out. It was studied that women experienced significantly more FoMO than men. The FoMO levels of the 10th grade high school students are significantly higher than the 9th and 12th grade students. There was no significant difference according to mother's education level, father's education level and income level of 673 high school students who participated in the study.

#### **Examination of Thesis 8**

In Tecdelioğlu's (2021) study, a positive and significant relationship was determined between partner sociotellism and FoMO. A positive and significant relationship was determined between emotional loneliness and FoMO. No significant relationship was found between the gender, age, relationship status, duration of smartphone use, number of times a day, and the social media platforms used, and FoMO, of the 478 participants in a romantic relationship.

#### **Examination of Thesis 9**

In Tekin's (2022) study, a moderately positive and significant relationship was determined between social media addiction and FoMO. 18- and 19-year-old participants found FoMO significantly higher than 22-year-old participants. The FoMO levels of the participants whose marital status was single were significantly higher than the FoMO levels of the participants whose marital status was married. The FoMO levels of the participants with a university education level were found to be significantly higher than the FoMO levels of the participants with a high school education level. In 400 high school students aged between 18-22, no significant relationship was found between FoMO's gender, being constantly connected to the internet, the most frequently used social media application, and the level of depression.

**Table 1.** Analyzing the theses about FoMO in terms of their structures

No	Type	University	Method	Participants	Predictive variables
Thesis 1	Master	İstanbul Medipol University	Quantitative	226 students studying at the undergraduate and graduate levels of İstanbul Medipol University, aged between 18 and 38	Demographic characteristics, Social media usage, Attachment style, Self construal, Depression, Anxiety, Perceived social support
Thesis 2	Doctoral	Ondokuz Mayıs University	Quantitative	1000 studying students in Sivas state high schools	Demographic characteristics, Subjective well being, Social comparison, Loneliness
Thesis 3	Master	Fatih Sultan Mehmet University	Quantitative	410 women have given birth in the last 13 months	Demographic characteristics, Social support, Differentiation of self
Thesis 4	Master	Trabzon University	Quantitative	There are 730 undergraduate and graduate levels students	Demographic characteristics, Phubbing, Neurotic tendencies, Nomophobia
Thesis 5	Master	Fatih Sultan Mehmet University	Quantitative	439 individuals aged between 18 and 57 years old	Demographic characteristics, Compulsive online shopping, Life satisfaction
Thesis 6	Master	Aksaray University	Quantitative	296 high school students	Demographic characteristics, Need for cognitive closure, Personality traits
Thesis 7	Master	Kırıkkale University	Quantitative	673 high school students	Demographic characteristic, , Problematic cell phone use, Personality traits
Thesis 8	Master	Hasan Kalyoncu University	Quantitative	478 participants who are in a romantic relationship	Demographic characteristics, , Phubbing, Loneliness
Thesis 9	Master	İstanbul Aydın University	Quantitative	400 students aged between 18 and 22, studying in high school and university	Demographic characteristics, Social media addiction, Depression

As seen in Table 1, only one of the theses examined is a doctoral thesis. 4 of the theses were made at a state university and 5 of them were made at a foundation (private) university. Quantitative research method was used as research method in all theses. Most of the participants in the studies were selected from high school and university students. Life satisfaction, depression, loneliness, phubbing, personality traits, nomophobia, neurotic tendencies, social comparison were chosen as the variables in the studies.

### Conclusion and Discussion

In this research, it is a qualitative research in which the predictive variables of FoMO were examined and 9 thesis studies selected according to the criteria were systematically examined. For this reason, the aim is only to describe, and causal inferences are not made in terms of variables. In this study, predictive relationships of FoMO with different variables emerged and similar studies in the literature (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Blackwell, Leaman, Tramosch, Osborne & Liss, 2017; Doğan, 2019; Elhai, et al., 2016; Franchina et al., 2018; Gökler, Aydın, Ünal, & Metintaş, 2016; Hızarcı, 2018; Hunt et al., 2018; Milyavskaya, Saffran, Hope & Koestner, 2018; Mueller, Pearson, Muller, Frank & Turner, 2010; Roberts & David, 2019; Rozgonjuk, Sindermann, Elhai and Montag, 2021; Stead and Bibby, 2017; Uram and Skalski, 2020). In the systematic review, it was determined that there was only one doctorate-level theses related to FoMO made in Turkey. This may indicate that FoMO studies are not studied very much at the doctoral level. In addition, it has been determined that all theses are based on quantitative research methods. The majority of theses were done in private universities. It can be said that the predictive variables of FoMO are related to the psychological effects that may occur in the individual with the effect of FoMO, and these are related to personal characteristics such as life satisfaction, depression, and loneliness. Among the variables selected as predictors of FoMO, the most frequently researched ones were social support, personality trait, depression, and anxiety.

In further studies, metaanalysis can be done. Thus, more comprehensive and detailed information can be accessed.

### Limitations

This research is limited to 9 theses in Turkey selected according to certain criteria. Since the number of studies on the fear of missing out is low, studies before 2020 can also be evaluated. Apart from the thesis work, articles can also be evaluated. A cause-effect relationship cannot be established because all of the 9 theses examined look at quantitative and correlational relationships.

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