

Analysis of the Fear of Missing Out Phenomenon (FOMO): A Case Study on Hedonism Lifestyle of FIA UB Students Class of 2022

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Abstract. This study aims to provide descriptions, understanding, and analysis of the Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) phenomenon in the hedonistic lifestyle of FIA UB students. This research uses a qualitative approach with an emphasis on holistic description. The research location is at the Faculty of Administrative Sciences, Universitas Brawijaya, in Malang City, East Java province. Primary data was obtained through direct interviews with Faculty of Administrative Sciences students and indirect interviews using WhatsApp. Interviews are conducted by researchers using a structured interview approach with questions that have been prepared in advance by the interviewer. Then, responses from respondents are recorded using a standard format. Secondary data, including documents, archives, books, and journals related to this research, is obtained indirectly. This study shows that FOMO is often caused by continuous exposure to social media, where people often see posts from friends or others doing interesting activities or attending exciting events. FOMO behavior in FIA UB students affects their decision to complete daily activities.

Keywords: FOMO, hedonism, lifestyle

1. Introduction

Nowadays, the rapid development of technology will certainly significantly affect human life. With technology, everyone, regardless of age, can carry out their activities, such as communicating, searching for information for work, ordering service applications, and even showing off their lifestyle so that others can see and know about it. The ease of access has resulted in many people wanting their lives to be seen by others on social media.

In Boyd's words, as cited by [1], social media can be described as a software platform that allows individuals or groups to move together, interact, communicate, and cooperate or play together in certain situations. Some examples of social media are Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, TikTok, etc. With the existence of social media that is easy to reach and use, it is also easier for people to access each other or see other people's lifestyles, which is not always true.

The easier it is for someone to see other people's lifestyles, the greater the desire to be like the others they see, which often occurs in adolescents. This behavior can be called Fear of Missing Out (FOMO). According to [2], Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) can be defined as a concern about losing valuable experiences experienced by other individuals or groups, where the individual cannot follow the experience directly. It is characterized by the desire to stay connected to the activities carried out by others through the internet or cyberspace. FOMO has several components, as described by [2], including the following:

- a. Competence refers to an individual's ability to function effectively in daily life, including feeling capable and carrying out tasks effectively at various difficulty levels.
- b. Autonomy refers to an individual's ability to take personal initiative, including making decisions or acting independently without being influenced by external factors.
- c. Psychological dissatisfaction is related to unfulfilled social relationships, which can be explained as an individual's need to feel close to others and comfortable in a shared existence.

In general, FOMO is characterized by an uncontrollable urge to stay connected to what others are doing. For adolescents experiencing FOMO, the absence of access to social networks (SNSs) can lead to feelings of fear, worry, and anxiety, as social connections have great significance to them. Adolescents may overreact to accessing SNSs [3]. According to [4], FOMO is influenced by six drivers, including the level of access to information available on social media, the individual's age, the drive to compete socially, the type of topics shared, the level of relative deprivation, and the number of stimuli that drive the desire for information.

In this case, FOMO behavior is focused on students, where, in general, students will do things to help them enter into a desired association. With social media being one of the means for students to find out what can be done to achieve the social integration they want? [5] indicated that social media brings benefits to current students in terms of getting information related to lectures and maintaining relationships with separated families, and can be social capital that helps individuals adapt to their environment.

Previous research conducted by [6] confirmed that Fear of Missing Out contributed 55.7% with a t value of 18.876 and a significance level of 0.000, which indicates a positive and significant effect of Fear of Missing Out on the level of hedonism in generation Z. The higher the Fear of Missing Out, the higher the level of hedonism. In addition, Intrapersonal Communication and Fear of Missing Out together contribute 93.6% with an f value of 2811.397 and a significance level of 0.000, which indicates a positive and significant effect of Intrapersonal Communication and Fear of Missing Out on the level of hedonism.

This research is very relevant to the behavior of Fear of Missing Out (FOMO), which greatly affects the lifestyle of students. Because imitating other people can cause students to become more hedonic. Therefore, FOMO will significantly affect a person's lifestyle, especially that of students, because following someone's style on social media is not just imitating but also affects their activities and feelings or, in other words, their lifestyle. Because someone affected by FOMO does this, others can see and notice him. Adler suggests that lifestyle includes each individual's unique approach in seeking to achieve certain goals they have set in their lives [12]. In addition, hedonism is one lifestyle that emphasizes freedom of indulgence and luxury [7]. Hedonists refer to the need for consumers to use products or services to create fantastic experiences and sensations and fulfill emotional drives ([8].

2. Methods

This research uses a qualitative approach with an emphasis on holistic description. The selection of qualitative methods by researchers is aimed at providing descriptions, understanding, and analyzing the phenomenon of Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) in the hedonistic lifestyle of FIA UB students. In addition, the objects studied in this study are natural without deliberate manipulation. The research location is at the Faculty of Administrative Sciences, Universitas Brawijaya, in Malang City, East Java province. The researcher chose this location

because the scope and reach were very close to the researcher, and the Faculty of Administrative Sciences was known as the Faculty of Artist Sciences, where the lifestyle was in the spotlight.

This study's primary and secondary data sources are primary and secondary data. Primary data was obtained through direct interviews with Faculty of Administrative Sciences students and indirect interviews using WhatsApp. Interviews are conducted by researchers using a structured interview approach with questions that have been prepared in advance by the interviewer. Then, responses from respondents are recorded using a standard format. Secondary data, including documents, archives, books, and journals related to this research, is obtained indirectly. This research applies inductive data analysis techniques, where the results of the interview data that have been collected based on existing facts are drawn to general conclusions.

3. Results

3.1. FOMO Phenomenon Among FIA UB Students

Among students of the Faculty of Administrative Sciences (FIA) Universitas Brawijaya, the phenomenon of Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) affects student activities, especially in today's media development. [9] defines FOMO as a person's feeling of anxiety, discomfort, or anxiety about losing a moment experienced or owned by someone else, making someone tend to compare themselves with others. The following are the results of the interview with resource person C of the tourism program.

"Yes, because FOMO creates feelings of anxiety, and because of this anxiety, a person will engage in excessive consumption to feel up to date." (Interview June 24, 2023).

Meanwhile, resource person N, a business administration study program, emphasizes one's mental state more when experiencing the FOMO phenomenon. Interviewee N stated:

"True, FOMO can be a disaster for someone if they are unable to manage what they want. In fact, it will be very dangerous for mental health where the mere pleasure they get is not worth the pressure." (Interview June 27, 2023).

Regarding the hedonistic lifestyle, informant T of the taxation program linked the FOMO phenomenon to the events that have been happening lately, namely the competition to buy a limited number of concert tickets or war tickets. Interviewee T stated:

"In my opinion, yes, for example, many people have FOMO to buy Coldplay concert tickets. As we know the price is expensive, but people are willing to buy it because of FOMO." (Interview June 29, 2023).

Based on the interviews conducted by researchers, it can be concluded that each FIA UB student has a perception regarding the definition of the FOMO phenomenon. FOMO is defined as a phenomenon experienced by individuals or society that affects their mental state, such as feelings of anxiety, fear, and inability to manage the importance of necessary needs. This condition can trigger a person to prioritize temporary satisfaction so that a person does not hesitate to spend quite a lot of money. If this activity continues further, the FOMO phenomenon can trigger hedonism in each individual.

3.2. Types of FOMO in Students of the Faculty of Administrative Sciences, Universitas Brawijaya

Based on the results of interviews, students of the Faculty of Administrative Sciences (FIA), Universitas Brawijaya, are more inclined to 2 types of FOMO: FOMO Social Media and FOMO Lifestyle.

[10] explained that there is a relationship between FOMO and social media dependence, which can be seen again through the role of social media on individuals who experience FOMO. The urges and needs that arise due to FOMO can be fulfilled through social media because social media provides a variety of information to individuals that allow them to know the activities carried out by others, which can trigger feelings of FOMO. Based on the results of interviews conducted by researchers, FIA UB students agree that the type of FOMO social media influences the existence of the FOMO phenomenon. Interviewee T of the Taxation study program revealed:

“When I see an item endorsed by a celebrity, it will only be my reference in its use whether the item is worth it to buy or not.”

In line with T’s opinion, informants E from the Business Administration and I from the Tourism study program also explained that they would further consider the endorsed goods based on their needs or uses. Informant E and informant C stated:

“I will consider further whether the item suits my needs and preferences, then evaluate the quality and price of the item, and then read reviews from several sources or people who have bought the item.”

“In my opinion, we look for information first; if the item endorsed by the celebrity suits our needs and is good, then I buy it.”

Furthermore, the second type of FOMO is FOMO Lifestyle. This type of FOMO is also more likely to be felt by Faculty of Administrative Sciences (FIA) Universitas Brawijaya students. FOMO syndrome is a type of symbolic interaction that involves the thinking process. In addition, we can learn more about the lifestyle and self-perception of Millennials with the syndrome by applying symbolic interaction theory. FOMOs spend more time on mobile devices from when they wake up until they fall asleep, even when they have free time. What characterizes the lifestyle of millennials who experience FOMO syndrome at a moderate level is when someone sees social media as an essential thing to do in daily life. This lifestyle is often abused by most children, especially members of the Millennial generation, who like a lifestyle that is very tied to the times and technology.

[11] explain that millennials affected by FOMO syndrome are always curious and informed. Similar to the lifestyle characteristics of people who always check the latest developments. Millennials who suffer from FOMO syndrome use social media constantly, and quite often, it is a daily necessity for them. With this, the millennial lifestyle has become hedonic and like other friends. In line with the opinion of E from the Education Administration study program in 2022, who stated that:

“In my opinion, FOMO can strengthen a person’s drive to seek instant gratification immediately. FOMO makes a person feel left behind and thinks that other people’s lives on social media are more enjoyable than their own. So, in the end, they will try to follow the trend to look happy and cool on social media for instant enjoyment.”

“I think FOMO can cause a person to become trapped in a cycle of overconsumption to try to overcome their fear of missing out on important moments or fulfilling experiences. If they see others having better or more interesting experiences, they may be left behind or feel inadequate. So, it is important for individuals to understand the influence of their environment and social environment and to take action to strengthen self-efficacy to reduce unnecessary FOMO anxiety.”

From E's statement above, it can be concluded that the existence of FOMO makes us change our lifestyle by following the surrounding environment. This is done for fear of being left behind by existing trends, so they change their lifestyle according to the development of existing trends.

3.3. The Impact of FOMO Phenomenon on Students of the Faculty of Administrative Sciences, Universitas Brawijaya

FOMO behavior among FIA UB students impacts their decision to carry out an activity, such as deciding to buy an item. FOMO behavior that occurs among FIA UB students impacts their decision to carry out an activity, such as deciding to buy an item. According to [6], FOMO behavior affects a person's worry or feeling left behind by their social environment if they do not follow trends ranging from acquiring the latest goods to attending popular places. Based on the results of interviews by researchers show that FIA UB students feel the influence of FOMO on their psychology. Interviewee C said:

“I think FOMO can reinforce a person's drive to seek instant enjoyment and immediate gratification. When experiencing FOMO, people will feel pressured to participate immediately in the popular activity or experience.”

Then, another impact of this FOMO phenomenon, according to the informants, is that it also causes a feeling of regret after doing it because it is only based on desire. This can be seen from the opinion of informant E, who said:

“Initially, you will feel satisfied, but in the long run, there is often a feeling of dissatisfaction or regret that the item is rarely used.”

Based on the interviews conducted by researchers, it can be concluded that the FOMO phenomenon impacts students of the Faculty of Administrative Sciences, Universitas Brawijaya, in the form of dissatisfaction or regret due to the event. Thus, FOMO often has a negative impact on the students themselves.

4. Conclusions

The results of this study show that FOMO behavior is a psychological phenomenon in which a person feels anxious or worried about missing out on something exciting or important. This study also shows that FOMO is often caused by continuous exposure to social media, where people often see posts from friends or others doing interesting activities or attending exciting events. FOMO behavior in FIA UB students affects their decision to complete an activity, such as buying an item. Another impact of this FOMO phenomenon, said the source, is that it causes regret after implementation because it is only based on desire.

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