

Fear of Missing Out and Self-Control in Relation to Problematic Social Media Use Among Adolescents

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Abstract. This study aims to determine the relationship between Fear of Missing Out (FoMO) and Self-Control with Problematic Social Media Use (PSMU) among adolescents. This study uses a correlational quantitative approach with sampling using the simple random sampling technique. The research population consists of 236 tenth-grade students from Senior High School 1 Jatinom. The measurement tools used are the PSMU, FoMO, and Self-Control scales, which were developed based on relevant theories. The results of the hypothesis test showed that there is a very significant relationship between FoMO and Self-Control with PSMU ($R = 0.355$; $p < 0.001$). There is also a very significant positive relationship between FoMO and PSMU ($r = 0.279$; $p < 0.001$) and a very significant negative relationship between Self-Control and PSMU ($r = -0.254$; $p < 0.01$). The effective contribution of FoMO is 17.27% and Self-Control is 6.22% to PSMU. These results indicate that FoMO has a greater influence on PSMU compared to Self-Control. These findings indicate the importance of strengthening self-control and managing FoMO to prevent problematic social media use among adolescents.

Keywords: Adolescent, Fear of Missing Out, Problematic Social Media Use, Self-Control

1. Introduction

In our daily lives, social media is no longer something unfamiliar. Social media makes it easy to interact with others through social networks. With social media, people can easily receive and share information with other users [1]. It cannot be denied that technology has advanced rapidly, and social media has become the gateway for worldwide communication [2]. The emergence of social media can serve as the fastest and most affordable means of spreading information [3].

The rri.co.id [4] states that 191 million people in Indonesia use social media, which is equivalent to 73.7% of the current population. The majority of social media users (54.1%) are between 15 and 34 years old; 51.3% of them are female, and 48.7% male. As many as 81% of users access social media daily, with an average frequency of 3 hours and 14 minutes per day. The most popular social media platforms in Indonesia in 2024 are Whatsapp (90.9%), Instagram (85.3%), Facebook (81.6%), Tiktok (73.5%), Telegram (61.3%), X (Twitter) (57.5%), Facebook Messenger (47.9%), Pinterest (34.2%), Kuaishou (including Kwai & Snack Video) (32.4%), and LinkedIn (25.3%), according to kompasiana.com [5]. Based on observations and interviews conducted on April 22, 2025 with seven students, it was found that students feel it is difficult

not to check messages on their social media even while doing other activities such as studying in class. Students struggle to focus due to frequently checking notifications on their phones; for example, during the interview, students often looked at their phones, and when asked what the subject was looking at, they said they were checking notifications because their phone vibrated. Students mentioned feeling anxious when there is no signal or when they run out of data. They prefer spending time on social media rather than overthinking. At night, students find it hard to sleep early because they get caught up scrolling through social media. According to a teacher, students sometimes also secretly use their phones during class. According to Xu, Y [6], factors influencing Problematic Social Media Use include inhibitory control, FoMO, and reactivity to social media cues. FoMO in this context acts as a mediator between PSMU and control deficits. Individuals with PSMU tend to experience FoMO, and FoMO further reduces self-control. Problematic Social Media Use (PSMU) is excessive or compulsive use of social media. Symptoms of PSMU resemble those of addiction, such as preoccupation, tolerance, withdrawal symptoms, and negative impacts on daily life, including interpersonal interactions and work. This is in line with what is conceptualized in the framework adapted from Internet Gaming Disorder (IGD) [7], [8], [9].

The aspects of PSMU according to Eijnden [9] are as follows: Preoccupation: A condition in which an individual constantly thinks about social media. Tolerance: A condition in which an individual needs to spend more time on social media to achieve a certain level of satisfaction. Withdrawal: The feeling of discomfort when an individual is unable to use social media. Persistence: Efforts made by an individual who fails to reduce their social media usage. Displacement: Ignoring other activities in order to use social media. Problems: Social media is used as a way to deal with problems at work, school, or in relationships. Deception: Lying about the frequency of social media use. Escape: Using social media to avoid negative emotions. Conflict: Individuals experience significant conflicts due to social media use. Fear of Missing Out (FoMO) is a psychological phenomenon that causes anxiety, irritability, and the fear of missing out on important experiences or information—something that is often exacerbated by social media use. FoMO can affect various aspects of life, such as the desire to purchase more expensive items just to “fit in.” This phenomenon also creates social pressure that drives individuals to participate in activities or events they do not actually want to join. FoMO is the fear of missing out on important experiences, essential information, or meaningful connections, often triggered by the use of social media [10], [11], [12]. Aspects of FoMO according to Przybylski [11] include: Missed Experience refers to individuals feeling they have missed out on important social connections, leading to stress or jealousy. Compulsion is the compulsive use of mobile phones due to anxiety over missing out on something. Comparison with friends is a negative social comparison where individuals feel their lives are not as enjoyable as their friends’.

Self-Control is the individual's ability to guide or direct themselves to do good and restrain themselves from bad behavior [13], [14], [15]. Aspects of Self-Control according to Averill [13] include three aspects of self-control, namely: Behavioral Control is the individual's ability to regulate or change their behavior according to certain situations. Cognitive Control is the individual's ability to change how they perceive certain situations, thereby reducing discomfort. Decisional Control is the individual's ability to make decisions that affect their life. The purpose of this study is to examine whether there is a relationship between Fear of Missing Out and Self-Control with Problematic Social Media Use among adolescents, specifically tenth-grade students at Senior high school 1 Jatinom.

2. Method

This study used the population of 10th grade students at Senior High School 1 Jatinom, totaling 286 individuals. From this population, a sample was selected using the Cluster Random Sampling technique, resulting in 4 classes as the sample, comprising 144 students. The sample in this study represented approximately half of the population. A correlational quantitative approach was used in this research. The quantitative approach emphasizes numerical data for analysis, which is processed using statistical methods. Correlational research aims to determine the relationship between the dependent variable (PSMU) and two independent variables (FoMO and Self-Control). In this study, psychological measurement tools in the form of scales were used. Three scales were used in this study: [1] Social Media Disorder Scale, [2] Fear of Missing Out Scale, and [3] Self-Control Scale. Each scale contains two categories of statements: favorable statements that support a certain trait and unfavorable statements that oppose that trait. These statements provide five answer choices: (SS) Very Appropriate, (S) Appropriate, (TS) Inappropriate, (STS) Very Inappropriate. The scores assigned to favorable and unfavorable statements differ: for favorable statements, SS=4, S=3, TS=2, STS=1, while for unfavorable statements, SS=1, S=2, TS=3, STS=4. The validity of this study employed content validity, which is evaluated through content feasibility testing or test content relevance based on rational analysis by professional judgement from thesis supervisor Ismiradewi, S.Psi., M.Psi., Psikolog. Reliability testing utilized the Cronbach Alpha method, which aims to assess how well the components within the instrument are correlated. Reliability analysis was carried out with the help of the SPSS (Statistical Programme for Social Science) software.

3. Results

This study examined the relationship between Fear of Missing Out and Self-Control with Problematic Social Media Use among 10th grade students at Senior High School 1 Jatinom. After the research data went through a series of processes and was declared valid and reliable, several testing stages were conducted, including assumption and hypothesis tests. Based on both the major and minor hypothesis tests, the hypotheses were accepted. The major hypothesis test using the Statistical Product and Service Solution IBM (SPSS) 25.0 for Windows program yielded a coefficient (R) value of 0.355 and an R Square of 0.126. The F value obtained was 8.718, with a significance level of 0.000, indicating a highly significant result, and the hypothesis was accepted. This means there is a relationship between Fear of Missing Out and Self-Control with Problematic Social Media Use.

The table below shows the results of the major hypothesis tests:

Table 1. Result major hypothesis

Variable	Coefficient (R)	R Square	F	Significant (p)	Explanation
<i>Fear of Missing Out and Self-Control with Problematic Social Media Use</i>	0,355	0,126	8,718	0,000	highly significant

The minor hypothesis correlation coefficient test resulted in a value of 0.279 with a significance level of $p = 0.001$. The correlation analysis showed a significant positive relationship between the Fear of Missing Out (FoMO) variable and Problematic Social Media Use. In other words, the more FoMO a student has, the more frequently they use social media. This result is consistent with research by Przybylski [11], which found that FoMO reflects the intensity of social media use, as individuals feel anxious when they are not up-to-date with what is happening around them or feel left out. According to the calculations, FoMO has an effective contribution of 17.27% toward problematic social media use. This indicates that the FoMO variable provides the greatest contribution in influencing problematic behavior in social media use. Aside from FoMO, the Self-Control variable was found to have a significant correlation with Problematic Social Media Use, but in a negative direction, as shown by a correlation coefficient of -0.254 and a significance level of $p = 0.002$. This means that the greater the students' Self-Control, the lower their Problematic Social Media Use.

Table 2. Result minor hypothesis

Variable	Correlation coefficient (r)	Significant (p)	Explanation
<i>Fear of Missing Out with Problematic Social Media Use</i>	0,279	0,001	Very Significant, hypothesis accepted
<i>Self-Control with Problematic Social Media Use</i>	-0,254	0,002	Very Significant, hypothesis accepted

This finding is consistent with the theory of Baumeister [14], which states that self-control is important for regulating behavior and resisting impulsive urges, such as the desire to use social media. The effective contribution of Self-Control to Problematic Social Media Use is only 6.22%, indicating its influence is not as great as that of FoMO. This shows that external factors, such as social pressure and fear of missing out, play a greater role than internal individual capacity. The results of multiple linear regression analysis showed that FoMO and Self-Control simultaneously have a significant effect on Problematic Social Media Use. With an R value of 0.355 and an R Square of 0.126, these two independent variables provide an effective contribution of 23.49% to the dependent variable. Although this contribution is not very large, it is a fact that both of these components play an important role in determining problematic social media use behaviors. Kuss & Griffiths [16] stated that a combination of internal factors, such as self-control, and external factors, such as FoMO, are primary predictors of PSMU behavior. These results underline the importance of implementing preventive and educational methods in schools to foster digital awareness and self-regulation skills among students.

4. Discussion

The research results show that 60% of tenth-grade students at Senior High School 1 Jatimom fall into the moderate category for problematic social media use; 26.92% of students are in the high category, and 13.08% are in the low category. These findings indicate that adolescents, especially those still in the stage of social and emotional development, frequently engage in excessive use of social media. Overall, the findings of this study show that adolescents with high levels of FoMO are more susceptible to experiencing Problematic Social Media Use, while those with good self-control are more capable of avoiding such behavior. Therefore,

interventions aimed at reducing levels of FoMO while simultaneously increasing self-control abilities could be an effective approach to mitigate Problematic Social Media Use.

5. Conclusion and Suggestions

Based on the research conducted with tenth-grade students at Senior High School 1 Jatinom, it can be concluded that there is a significant relationship between Fear of Missing Out (FoMO) and Self-Control with Problematic Social Media Use (PSMU), as indicated by a coefficient value (R) of 0.355 and a significance level of 0.000. This means that FoMO and Self-Control together contribute to the emergence of PSMU behavior in adolescents. More specifically, it was found that FoMO has a highly significant positive relationship with PSMU, indicating that the higher the students' level of FoMO, the greater their tendency to engage in problematic social media use. Conversely, Self-Control has a highly significant negative relationship with PSMU, meaning that the better the students' self-control, the lower their risk of experiencing PSMU. The FoMO variable contributes an effective 17.27% to PSMU, while Self-Control contributes 6.22%. The categorization results also show that the majority of students are in the moderate category for all three variables: 60% of students are in the moderate category for PSMU, 63.85% for FoMO, and 52.31% for Self-Control. This illustrates that most students remain at a moderate level in terms of social media use, fear of missing out, and self-control skills, but still demonstrate a potential risk of problematic social media use if not properly addressed.

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