

Fear of Missing Out and Life Satisfaction among Undergraduate University Students Who are Working on Thesis in Indonesia

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Abstract. The gap between the ideal situation and what is happening can decrease the satisfaction of students working on their thesis. This study aims to determine the correlation between fear of missing out (FOMO) and life satisfaction among undergraduate university students working on their thesis in Indonesia. The participants in this study were 412 students who were actively engaged in writing their thesis. Data were collected using The Riverside Life Satisfaction Scale (RLSS) developed by Margolis to measure life satisfaction. In contrast, fear of missing out was measured using The Fear of Missing Out Scale developed by Przybylski. Both scales were translated into Indonesian under professional supervision. Data analysis was carried out using the Pearson Correlation technique. This study's result indicates a significant negative correlation between FOMO and life satisfaction ($p = 0.000$, $r = -0.250$). This result shows that if the level of FOMO among undergraduate university students who are working on their thesis is high, life satisfaction will be low, and vice versa. Based on the findings of this research, it is recommended that students should not use social media for more than 6 hours. Furthermore, it is suggested for future researchers to investigate other factors that can influence overall life satisfaction.

Keywords: Fear Of Missing Out (FOMO), Life Satisfaction, Thesis, Undergraduate University Students.

1 Introduction

Everyone, including university students, desires to reach a level of satisfaction in their life. Based on the results of interviews conducted with ten students currently working on their thesis, it is evident that they have encountered numerous disruptions while working on their thesis, which has led to delays in the progress of their thesis work. This is a cause for concern as it is feared that it may diminish their overall quality of life, due to the gap between the ideal conditions and the actual circumstances they are facing (1). According to Diener E et al. (2), life satisfaction is an individual's cognitive assessment regarding how well and satisfyingly they have conducted various aspects of their lives. Life satisfaction is important for university students as it can influence their mental health and academic performance (3). Several studies have demonstrated that university students who are satisfied with their lives tend to have better mental well-being, high self-esteem, and superior academic performance compared to those who are dissatisfied (4)(3).

When university students are satisfied with their lives, they are more motivated to actively participate in activities that enhance their academic success (3). Research by An et al. (5) also suggests a positive relationship between life satisfaction and regular engagement in sports or physical activities. In other words, satisfied individuals tend to engage in regular exercise or physical activities to support their physical and mental health. Similarly, university students who working on their thesis also need to experience satisfaction in their lives. Aside from the reasons above, being satisfied with their lives can help university students cope with the stress they experience leading up to graduation (6). According to a study conducted by Chaidir and Maulina (7), university students often feel pressured, anxious, and stressed due to multiple activities such as attending lectures, fieldwork, proposal preparation, and completing their thesis within a limited time frame.

A preliminary survey was conducted in 2022 among final-year university students working on their thesis at University X in Yogyakarta, revealing that 64 respondents (59%) fell into the moderate category, and 21 respondents (19%) fell into the high category. However, 25 respondents (22%) were still in the low category. The survey indicated that many university students desired to change their life path due to dissatisfaction with their current circumstances and perceiving others' lives as better. Furthermore, University students with low life satisfaction tend to experience feelings of envy towards others (8), academic stress (9), and even depression (10). The low life satisfaction experienced by university students can also lead them to contemplate ending their lives (11). Citing a news portal, detik (2022) reported a case where a university student took their own life in their boarding room. The student left a letter to their mother and sibling, apologizing for being a burden and expressing a sense of futility in their life.

Several studies have identified factors that influence fluctuations in life satisfaction among university students. (12) found in their research that high levels of loneliness among university students are associated with low life satisfaction. Another study by Karaman et al. (13) showed that university students with good self-control, who are less influenced by external opinions, tend to have higher life satisfaction. One factor contributing to decreased life satisfaction is the fear of missing out (14). FOMO is a phenomenon where individuals feel anxious and fearful of missing out on valuable moments compared to others in their surroundings (15). Individuals experiencing FOMO spend a significant amount of time comparing their experiences or life events with those of others, which can lead to dissatisfaction with their own lives.

According to the study by Gunawan and Helmi (16), fear of missing out can have a negative impact on the life satisfaction of university students in Indonesia. Their research indicated that FOMO contributes 3.05% to decreasing or increasing students' perceived life satisfaction. This is because the ease of obtaining information increases social comparison intensity in society, which is believed to affect an individual's life satisfaction (17). Przybylski (15) explained that FOMO may arise due to unfulfilled relatedness needs, which then increases an individual's tendency to check social media to stay connected with others constantly. A study conducted by Kiyassathina et al. (18) found a negative relationship between fear of missing out and life satisfaction among Instagram-using adolescents in Bandung.

Based on the discussion as mentioned above, we intend to examine the correlation between fear of missing out and life satisfaction among undergraduate university students working on their thesis in Indonesia. This empirical investigation aims to determine the extent of the correlation

between these two variables. Therefore, we are interested in conducting an empirical study on the topic of fear of missing out and life satisfaction among undergraduate university students currently working on their thesis.

2 Literature Review

2.1 Life Satisfaction

Life satisfaction is a subjective cognitive evaluation of an individual's overall life (19). An individual conducts this evaluation by comparing their current state with an ideal state they perceive. Diener, Emmons, Larsen (19) expound on the characteristics of satisfied individuals, stating that they assess their lives as ideal, perceive their goals as fulfilled, and harbor no regrets about the past. Additionally, Margolis et al. (20) add that life satisfaction can also be observed through an individual's attitudes toward their social environment and their desire to alter their current life trajectory. Furthermore, factors influencing life satisfaction include education, social media, and fear of missing out (21)(22)(15).

2.2 Fear of Missing Out

Przybylski (15) defined fear of missing out (FOMO) as the apprehension and anxiety experienced by individuals when others engage in valuable experiences or activities while they themselves are not participating in them. Przybylski (15) explained that individuals experience FOMO when their basic needs for competence, autonomy, and relatedness with others are unfulfilled. Moreover, in today's context, information of any kind is easily accessible and widely disseminated through social media (17). When individuals constantly strive to stay connected with others through social media, they become vulnerable to experiencing FOMO.

3 Method

This study employs a quantitative research approach with a correlational research design. Correlational research is used to examine the relationship between variables (23). The variables investigated in this study are life satisfaction and fear of missing out (FOMO). This research's subjects are Indonesian students currently working on their thesis, with a total sample size of 412 students. The sampling was conducted using purposive sampling, a research sample selection method based on specific criteria (23).

The measurement instrument used to assess life satisfaction is the Riverside Life Satisfaction Scale (RLSS) developed by Margolis et al. (20), and translated into Indonesian under professional supervision. The RLSS is a unidimensional scale consisting of three favourable items and three unfavourable items, with a reliability coefficient of Cronbach's alpha of 0.727. On the other hand, FOMO is measured using the FOMO scale developed by Przybylski (15), which was also translated into Indonesian language under professional supervision. This scale is a unidimensional scale comprising ten favorable items, with a reliability coefficient of Cronbach's alpha of 0.823.

Data were collected online using Google Forms. The data analysis method employed in this study is the Pearson Correlation technique, conducted using the SPSS for Windows version 26.

4 Result

Based on the Q-Q Plot output for the normality test, both variables, namely life satisfaction and fear of missing out, exhibited normal results as their data distributions followed the diagonal line (24). Furthermore, the results of the linearity test for the variables of life satisfaction and fear of missing out indicated a linear relationship ($p = 0.00$; $p < 0.05$).

Table 1. Pearson Correlation Test and Effective Contribution of FOMO to Life Satisfaction

Variable	Correlation Coefficient (r)	Significance (p)	Effective Contribution (%)	Description
Life Satisfaction * FOMO	-0,250	0,000	6,3%	Negative correlation, Significant

Based on the results of the hypothesis test conducted, it was found that the correlation coefficient between life satisfaction and FOMO is $r = -0.250$ with a p-value of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$). These results indicate a negative correlation between the fear of missing out variable and life satisfaction, meaning that as the level of FOMO increases, life satisfaction decreases. Therefore, the hypothesis of this study is accepted. Furthermore, it is also determined that the effective contribution of FOMO to life satisfaction is 6.3%.

Table 2. Correlation Test Based on Female Gender

Variable	Correlation Coefficient (r)	Female		Effective Contribution (%)	Description
		N	P		
Life Satisfaction * FOMO	-0,246	357	0,000	6%	Negative correlation, Significant

Based on the data in the table above, it indicates a correlation value of -0.246 between FOMO and life satisfaction among female students, with a p-value of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$). Therefore, it can be concluded that there is a significant negative correlation between FOMO and life satisfaction among female students, with an effective contribution of FOMO to life satisfaction of 6%.

Table 3. Correlation Test Based on Male Gender

Variable	Correlation Coefficient (r)	Male		Effective Contribution (%)	Description
		N	P		
Life Satisfaction * FOMO	-0,290	55	0,016	8,4%	Negative correlation, Significant

The data in the table above indicates a correlation value of -0.296 between FOMO and life satisfaction among male students, with a p-value of 0.016 ($p < 0.05$). Therefore, it can be concluded that there is a significant negative correlation between FOMO and life satisfaction among male students, with an effective contribution of FOMO to life satisfaction of 8.4%.

Table 4. T-test Based on the duration of using social media more than 6 hours compared to other durations

Variable	Duration	Other Duration	N	Mean	P
FOMO	>6 hour	1-2 hour	103	28,0	< 0,05
		2-3 hour			
		3-4 hour			
		4-5 hour			
		5-6 hour			
Life Satisfaction	>6 hour	1-2 hour	103	17,9	< 0,05
		2-3 hour			
		3-4 hour			
		4-5 hour			
		5-6 hour			

Based on the table above, it is known that there is a difference in FOMO among respondents who use social media for more than 6 hours compared to other durations, with a mean value of 28.0 and a significance level less than 0.05. Similarly, regarding life satisfaction, respondents who use social media for more than 6 hours exhibit a difference compared to other durations, with a mean value of 17.9 and a significance level less than 0.05.

5 Discussion

This study aimed to investigate the correlation between fear of missing out (FOMO) and life satisfaction among undergraduate university students working on their thesis in Indonesia. Based on the results of the conducted analysis, it was found that fear of missing out negatively correlates with the life satisfaction of undergraduate university students working on their thesis. This implies that as the fear of missing out increases, the level of life satisfaction among students decreases, and vice versa. This finding aligns with previous studies that have reported a significant negative relationship between FOMO and life satisfaction, indicating that an increase in FOMO leads to a decrease in individual life satisfaction, and vice versa (14)(25)(26).

As (14) explained, individuals who desire to constantly connect with what others are doing tend to have low life satisfaction. The constant need for social connection and the desire to always be at the forefront of receiving information can impose cognitive and emotional burdens on individuals. As stated by the students in interviews conducted by (1), when they see their peers making better progress on their thesis, they may feel left behind. The increasing frustration resulting from such situations can harm life satisfaction (25).

In this study, additional analyses were conducted based on respondents' social media usage duration. The results indicated that individuals who spend more than 6 hours accessing social media exhibit differences in FOMO levels and life satisfaction compared to those who spend less than 6 hours. This finding is consistent with previous research that suggests high daily social media usage increases FOMO (27) and decreases life satisfaction (22). According to Błachnio & Przepiórka (25), the inability to access social media can lead to stress, which is associated with decreased life satisfaction (28). Another additional analysis involved correlating the findings based on gender. The results showed that male and female student groups negatively

correlated with FOMO and life satisfaction. As FOMO levels increased, life satisfaction levels were predicted to decrease.

Furthermore, regression analysis was conducted to examine the effective contribution of fear of missing out to life satisfaction. The findings revealed that FOMO contributes 6.3% to the life satisfaction of students working on their thesis in Indonesia, while other factors influence the remaining 93.7%. When separated by gender, FOMO contributed 6% to life satisfaction in females and 8.4% effectively in males. This aligns with the research by Przybylski (15), which suggests that fear of missing out is predicted to have a greater negative impact on life satisfaction in males.

After completing all the research processes, we acknowledge several limitations. Firstly, during the participant recruitment phase, we did not impose age restrictions as criteria, resulting in a significant age difference among participants. This factor is a concern as age influences fluctuations in individual life satisfaction (29). Secondly, it would have been beneficial to include fields for respondents to indicate their semester and educational level, enabling the identification of life satisfaction levels based on the semester and educational level being pursued. Thirdly, during the translation of the measurement instrument, comprehensive adaptation steps such as forward translation, expert panel review, back translation, pre-testing, cognitive interviewing, and final version development were not conducted. Another limitation is the imbalance in the large number of respondents between male and female university students, and the representativeness of the respondent data for Indonesia is yet to be determined.

6 Conclusion

Based on the findings of the conducted research, it can be concluded that the our proposed hypothesis is supported, indicating a negative relationship between fear of missing out and life satisfaction among undergraduate university students working on their thesis in Indonesia. This finding implies that as the level of fear of missing out increases, the level of life satisfaction among undergraduate university students decreases, and vice versa. This study also revealed a difference in the levels of FOMO and perceived life satisfaction among students working on their thesis when they use social media for more than six hours.

Based on the findings of this research, it is recommended that students limit their social media usage to no more than 6 hours. Additionally, future researchers should explore other factors that can affect life satisfaction, such as age, current academic semester, program of study, and personality traits. Furthermore, future researchers should ensure a balanced representation of both male and female participants to enable specific gender-based analyses. Comprehensive adaptation of measurement tools is also recommended.

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