The Fear of Missing Out (FoMO): Dimensions of Personality & Psychopathology in Smartphone Overuse

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Agenda

- Evolution of the internet and social networking
- Early challenges with advancing social media technology
- Smartphone Use & Problematic Use
- What is the Fear of Missing Out (FoMO)
- Our previous study (FoMO & personality)
- New study (FoMO, psychopathology risk, and psychological well-being)
- Future directions
The Original Devices

Source: Wikimedia Commons
Social Networking in the Millennium

AOL

Facebook

GEnie

Twitter

Geocities

MySpace

Google+
By 1998 reports indicated problematic internet use similar to substances with some similar negative outcomes (Young, 1998)

Merit for Inclusion in DSM-V but… (Block, 2008)

Internet Addiction (IA, or, better, Internet Use Disorder) global prevalence rate hit 6%
Technological Advances & New Challenges

INTERNET GAMING DISORDER
...And now the Smartphone

► How many times do Americans check their cell phones daily?
  ▶ 8 billion

► How often does the average user check their cell phone per day?
  ▶ 46x

► How long before you checked your phone in this workshop?

Source: Time Magazine (Dec. 2015)
Smartphone Use Demographics

Source: Time, Dec. 2015
How long is the interval between waking up and looking at your phone?

- 40% say within 5 minutes
- 18% say immediately

Source: USA edition, Deloitte Global Mobile Consumer Survey
How long is the interval between looking at your phone for the last time and preparing to sleep?

- 30% say 5 minutes before bed
- 50% check in the middle of the night

What is the first thing accessed on a smartphone daily?

• 35% Text Messages or IM
• 22% Email
• 12% Social Media

Smartphones, Social Media, & Emerging Concerns

Facebook → Instagram → Twitter
Smartphones, Social Media, & Emerging Concerns

- Easy access to social media has led to overuse for some users

- Most studies on Facebook users

- Some users experience difficulty controlling their time on Facebook (Lee, Cheoung, & Thadani, 2012)
Facebook Studies

Most studies since 2008 generally indicate strong relationships exist between one’s personality and overuse or problematic use of social media.

As the need for narcissistic validation increased so did the amount of time spent on Facebook.

Lower self-esteem was moderately associated with higher check-ins on Facebook.

Source: Mehdizadeh, 2010
Fear of Missing Out (FoMO)

- A “pervasive apprehension that others might be having rewarding experiences from which one is absent.” (Przybylski et al., 2013)

- An intense desire to stay continually connected with what others are doing.
Fear of Missing Out (FoMO)

- Huffington Post
- Time
- Anxiety & Depression Association of America
- The New York Times
FoMO Characteristics

- Preoccupation with social media often to the exclusion of other social interactions
- Mood & Anxiety
- Psychosocial issues
- Loss of control
- Increasing need to use social media
- Withdrawal Effects
FoMO Studies

- Worthman (2011)
- JWT Intelligence (2012)
- Przybylski (2013)
- Haeto (2013)
- Alt (2017)
- Rodriguez (2017)
People who reported a higher than average degree of FoMO also experienced a moderate level of Neurotic symptomatology

\[ r = 0.336, n=114, p < 0.01 \]
People who tended to be less Agreeable reported a higher than average degree of FoMO

$r = -0.258, n=114, p < 0.01$
Quality of life demonstrated a weak, negative, significant relationship with FoMO but with no practical importance.

\[ r = -0.192, \quad n = 114, \quad p < 0.05 \]
Current Study Questions

- Since we found a relationship between neurosis and FoMO, is there an expanded relationship between certain psychopathology & levels of FoMO?
- Since there was a weak relationship between quality of life and FoMO, is there a specific relationship between psychological well-being and FoMO?
- Is there a relationship between narcissism and FoMO?
- How well do psychopathology, psychological well-being, and narcissism predict FoMO?
Method

- 92 undergraduate students; 77 valid participants
- Demographic Form
- Narcissistic Personality Inventory (Raskin & Hall, 1979)
- Fear of Missing Out Scale (Przybylski et al., 2013)
- Ryff Psychological Well-being Scale (Ryff, 1989, 1995)
- Personality Assessment Screener (PAS) (Morey, ???)
Results

- 78% Female
- 95% 18-21 years old
- 57% White
- 65% Freshman
Results: Psychopathology & FoMO

People who reported a higher than average degree of FoMO also demonstrated moderate level of risk for emotional & behavioral problems

$r = 0.472, n= 77, p < 0.001$
Results: Psychopathology & FoMO

People who reported a higher than average degree of FoMO also experienced a high level of Negative Affect

$r = 0.577, n = 77, p < 0.001$
Results: Psychopathology & FoMO

People who reported a higher than average degree of FoMO also experienced a moderate level of Social Withdrawal

$r = 0.302, n= 77, p < 0.01$
People who reported a higher than average degree of FoMO also experienced a moderate level of Anger Control

\[ r = 0.351, n= 77, p < 0.01 \]
People who reported higher than average levels of FoMO also experienced less overall psychological well-being.

$r = -0.519, n= 77, p < 0.001$
Results: Psychological Well-being & FoMO

People who reported higher than average levels of FoMO also experienced less sense of autonomy particularly in decision making

$r = -0.468, n= 77, p < 0.001$
People who reported higher than average levels of FoMO experienced less of a sense of personal growth in their life or a “true self”

$r = -0.562, n= 77, p < 0.001$
People who reported higher than average levels of FoMO experienced less satisfaction from relationships

$r = -0.427, n= 77, p < 0.001$
People who reported higher than average levels of FoMO experienced less positive feelings about themselves and less self-acceptance.

\[ r = -0.432, \quad n=77, \quad p < 0.001 \]
Results: Psychological Well-being & FoMO

People who reported higher than average levels of FoMO expressed feeling less competent in managing their environment particularly when creating environments suitable for their needs.

\[ r = -0.399, n= 77, p < 0.001 \]
People who reported higher than average levels of FoMO expressed feeling less self-directed and having few goals in life.

\[ r = -0.266, n = 77, p < 0.05 \]
Results: Narcissism & FoMO

There was a non-significant correlation of .145 ($p = \text{n.s}$) between narcissism and FoMO.
Results: Psychopathology, Psychological Well-being, & FoMO

Marked risk for clinical problems and low levels of optimism and subjective well-being were significant predictors of FoMO

R² = .301, F(2, 76) = 16.33, p < .001
“When I feel unhappy about my life, I grab my phone and see what others are doing. At least I feel like I am doing something.”
Results: Psychopathology, Psychological Well-being, & FoMO

Feeling stagnant, bored, or uninterested in one’s life and negative affect were stronger, significant predictors of FoMO

$R^2 = .406, F(2,77) = 26.28, p<.001$
“I look at my phone when I am bored or just need to pass time. It is like I just have to do it. I don’t even think about it. That’s crazy, right?”
-- 16 year old

Source: www.slate.com
Personal growth was moderately, negatively associated with negative affect

$r= -0.551$, $n=77$, $p<.001$
Secondary Correlations

Negative affect was largely, negatively correlated with overall well-being with self-acceptance the largest effect respectively

$r = -.642, n=77, p<.001$

$r = -.629, n=77, p<.001$
Secondary Correlations

Personal growth was moderately & negatively associated with FoMO
$r= -.562$, $n=77$, $p<.001$

Personal Relationships was moderately & negatively associated with FoMO
$r= -.427$, $n=77$, $p<.001$
Conscientiousness was moderately & positively associated with agreeableness
$r = .406, n = 114, p < .01$

Agreeableness had a small, negative association with neuroticism
$r = -.292, n = 114, p < .01$
Secondary Correlations

Self-acceptance was moderately, negatively associated with FoMO

$r = -0.432, n = 77, p < .001$
### Secondary Correlations

#### Social Media

**TABLE 1**

Pearson Product-Moment Correlations Between Social Media & FoMO

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</table>

*Note. * p< .05, ** p< .01, *** p< .01
Technological advances has made it possible for us to stay connected regardless of location and time BUT…

It also appears to attract people with heightened worries about staying connected and “being in the know.”

In our first study Neuroticism played a key role in understanding FoMO
Discussion – The Take Away

- For young adults, decreases in overall psychological well-being and increases in emotional symptoms are strongly related to FoMO.

- More specifically, when interest in personal growth and self-acceptance decreases in the context of increasing negative affect, young adults are more likely to display more FoMO symptomatology.

- Negative affect demonstrated a moderately strong relationship with all PAS and Ryff variables.
Discussion – The Take Away

Since FoMO represents a preoccupation or obsession with knowing what others are doing in “real time, young adults use smartphones compulsively in a manner that resembles other behavioral addictions.

Clinical work might focus on the underlying variables of declining personal growth & self-acceptance with negative affect as a core problem.
Limitations

- Not a full representative sample
- FoMO scale
Future Directions

FoMO Phase Three

- Negative Affect (PAS)
- Envy
- Ryff Scales of Psychological Well-being (RSPW)
- Mindful Awareness

ACT-Mindful Meditation Intervention targeting

- negative affect
- Personal growth
- ?
Thank you!
Questions?
References


References
