

Self-Regulation as a Strength for Adolescents in Coping with Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) in Social Media Use: A Literature Review

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Abstract.

The rapid advancement of information and communication technology has significantly changed social interactions, with social media becoming a powerful and multifunctional platform. One common effect of this change is Fear of Missing Out (FoMO), a feeling of anxiety caused by the fear of missing information or experiences that others enjoy online. Teenagers are particularly vulnerable to FoMO, which can negatively impact their emotions, behavior, academic performance, and daily life. This study aims to examine how self-regulation influences FoMO in teenagers who use social media. Self-regulation refers to a person's ability to manage thoughts, emotions, and behaviors to reach personal goals. It is believed that better self-regulation can reduce FoMO. The method used in this research is a literature review, which includes summaries and analysis of relevant articles, books, and documents. The findings suggest that higher self-regulation is linked to lower levels of FoMO. Teenagers who can control their emotions and behaviors are more likely to manage their social media use wisely and avoid excessive fear of missing out. On the other hand, poor self-regulation often leads to excessive social media use and higher FoMO. This study aims to determine the importance of developing self-regulation skills as a strategy to reduce FoMO and improve the psychological well-being of adolescents in the digital age.

Key words: Self-regulation, FoMO, Adolescents

INTRODUCTION

The rapid development of information and communication technology has brought significant changes to various aspects of life, including how individuals interact and obtain information. Internet usage in Indonesia has reached 221 million, equivalent to 79.5 percent of the total Indonesian population. Indonesia is one of the countries with the largest number of internet users in the world (Komdigi, 2025). Social media, which initially served as a communication tool, has now transformed into a multifunctional platform that supports business development, creativity, and access to up-to-date information. The global increase in social media users, including in Indonesia, which reached 143 million social media user accounts in January 2025, represents 50.2% of the total population. This figure underscores the popularity of social media as the primary platform for communication, information, and entertainment in Indonesia (We are Social, 2025).

This digital phenomenon often leads to Fear of Missing Out (FoMO), which is the fear and anxiety individuals feel about missing out on information or enjoyable experiences that others are having in the virtual world. FoMO is the fear and anxiety individuals feel about missing out on information, while according to Herman (Mandas, 2022), who first studied this syndrome in 1996, concluded that such behavior is similar to the fear of missing out on opportunities and pleasures. A strong desire to know is one of the factors contributing to FoMO, leading to a tendency to engage in social media. Adolescents of Generation Z (born between 1997-2012), who grew up with internet technology, are highly vulnerable to FoMO. According to Abel, Buff, and Burr (Utami, 2021), there are several symptoms in teenagers who have a tendency toward FoMO, such as difficulty letting go of their smartphones, feeling anxious and restless when not checking social media, and feeling that communicating with friends in the virtual world is more important than with real-world friends. Additionally, they are highly enthusiastic about others' posts or statuses on social media, always wanting

to showcase themselves, such as sharing photos or videos of their activities, and they feel anxious or even depressed if only a few people view their posts. FoMO has significant negative consequences, including the inability of individuals to control their behavior and emotions, decreased performance, and a hedonistic lifestyle due to fear of rejection by their social environment.

One factor that is strongly believed to influence FoMO is self-regulation. Self-regulation is an individual's ability to manage thoughts, behaviors, and emotions, as well as plan actions to achieve set goals. Zimmerman (Handayani & Aviani, 2023) defines self-regulation as a process that involves thoughts, feelings, actions, planning, and how an individual repeatedly adapts these elements to achieve desired goals. The aspects of self-regulation include standards and goals, monitoring, self-evaluation, and consequences, so self-regulation is related to the fact that individuals who fail to regulate themselves will accelerate the increase in FoMO. Adolescents with high self-regulation tend to be able to control their social media use, focus on their life goals, and are not easily influenced by trends, so they have low levels of FoMO. Conversely, low self-regulation can lead to excessive social media use and high levels of FoMO. The assumption that self-regulation influences FoMO is in line with research conducted by Zahroh and Sholichah (2022) on the Influence of Self-Concept and Self-Regulation on Fear of Missing Out (FoMO). Among Instagram users, the results indicate that self-regulation influences FoMO behavior: high self-regulation is associated with low FoMO levels, and vice versa. However, some studies have not found a significant relationship between the two variables. This study aims to further analyze the influence of self-regulation on FoMO among adolescent social media users.

METHODS

According to John W. Creswell in Habsy et al., (2023), a literature study is a written summary that covers various sources such as journals, books, and other documents containing theories and information from the past and present, which are systematically arranged based on relevant topics and documents. Meanwhile, according to Nazir (2003) in his book *Research Methods*, a literature review is a method of data collection through analysis and examination of books, literature, records, and reports related to the problem being studied. Literature studies are used to collect data and information relevant to the research topic being studied. After the data is collected, it is then analyzed using descriptive methods, which aim to describe the facts obtained, then provide explanations and understanding of them. Literature studies conducted prior to research have various objectives, including identifying the issues to be studied, finding relevant information related to the research issue, reviewing related theories, and describing the theoretical and empirical aspects that include research factors, indicators, variables, and parameters. In addition, this study also helps broaden researchers' knowledge of the topic to be studied, review previous research findings on the same topic, and avoid repeating the same research. Through literature studies, researchers can gain a deeper understanding of the research problem and ensure that the research conducted is novel and not duplicative (Habsy, 2017).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The data analyzed in this study consists of eight articles presented in Table 1.

No	Author and Title	Objectives and Methods	Research Results
1	Analisis Pengaruh Regulasi Diri Terhadap Fear of Missing Out (Studi Remaja Pengguna TikTok) (Meishe Agatha, Yuli Asmi)	The purpose of this study is to examine the effect of self-regulation on FoMO among adolescents who use TikTok in DKI Jakarta. The research method used is quantitative research with a questionnaire data collection method.	Based on the results of the study, it can be concluded that there is a significant negative effect of self-regulation on FoMO among teenage TikTok users. The higher the level of self-regulation, the lower the level of FoMO among teenage TikTok users. Conversely, the

			lower the level of self-regulation, the higher the level of FoMO among teenage TikTok users.
2	Hubungan Antara Regulasi Diri dengan Fear of Missing Out (FoMO) pada Mahasiswa Pengguna Media Sosial (Melisa Lusiana Kusnadi, Paulus Eddy Suhartanto)	This study aims to examine the relationship between self-regulation and FoMO among college students who use social media. The research method used is quantitative research with a questionnaire data collection method.	The results of the study indicate that there is a negative and significant relationship between regulation and FoMO among college students who use social media. These results indicate that the higher the level of self-regulation, the lower the level of FoMO among college students who use social media.
3	Hubungan Regulasi Diri dengan Fear of Missing Out Pada Mahasiswa Baru Pengguna Aplikasi TikTok (Anifa Handayani, Yolivia Irna Aviani)	To determine the relationship between self-regulation and Fear of Missing Out (FoMo) among new students who use the TikTok app. The research method used is quantitative research with purposive sampling collection method.	The results of this study indicate a negative relationship between self-regulation, whereby the higher the FoMo, the lower the self-regulation, and vice versa, the lower the FoMo, the higher the self-regulation of new students who use the TikTok application.
4	Hubungan Regulasi Diri dengan Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) Pada Mahasiswa (Alfanny Maulany Yusra, Lisfarika Napitulu)	To determine whether there is a relationship between self-regulation and fear of missing out (FoMO) among final-year students at Riau Islamic University. The research method used is quantitative research with convenience sampling collection method.	Research shows that there is a negative relationship between self-regulation and fear of missing out (FoMO), which means that the higher the self-regulation, the lower the fear of missing out (FoMO) experienced. Conversely, the lower the self-regulation, the higher the fear of missing out (FoMO) experienced by final-year students.
5	Hubungan Antara Regulasi Diri dengan Fear of Missing Out (Fomo) pada Remaja Pengguna Instagram (Putri Dianda Utami, Yolivia Irna Aviani)	This study aims to prove whether there is a relationship between self-regulation and FoMO among adolescent Instagram users. The research method used is quantitative research with purposive sampling collection method.	The results of this study indicate that there is a relationship between self-regulation and Fear of Missing Out (FoMO) among adolescents who use Instagram.
6	Hubungan antara Regulasi Diri dengan <i>Fear of Missing Out</i> (FoMO) pada Mahasiswa di Pekanbaru (Nurul Natasha, Rini Hartati, Auliya Syaf)	This study aims to examine the relationship between self-regulation and fear of missing out among students in Pekanbaru. The research method used is quantitative research with quota sampling collection method.	The results of the study show that there is a significant positive correlation between self-regulation and fear of missing out among students in Pekanbaru, meaning that when people are able to regulate themselves, they will not necessarily be able to

			control their fear of missing out on information on social media.
7	<i>Fear of missing out</i> pada remaja di Surabaya: Bagaimana peranan regulasi diri? (Veni Anjar Wati1, Herlan Pratikto, Akta Ririn Aristawati)	This study aims to determine the relationship between self-regulation and fear of missing out among adolescents in Surabaya. The research method used is quantitative research with accidental sampling collection method.	The results show that the higher the self-regulation, the lower the fear of missing out, and vice versa. The hypothesis stating that there is a relationship between self-regulation and fear of missing out in adolescents is accepted. The hypothesis stating that there is a relationship between self-regulation and fear of missing out in adolescents in Surabaya is accepted.
8	Understanding the Role of Fear of Missing Out an Deficient Self-Regulationn in Sharing of Deepfakes on Social Media: Evidence from Eight Countries (Saifuddin Ahmed, Sherly Wei, Adeline Wei)	Investigating the influence of Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) and Deficient Self-Regulation (DSR) on individuals' tendency to share deepfakes. The research method used is quantitative research with quota sampling collection method.	This study found that the effects of FOMO and DSR on deepfake sharing behavior were largely unmoderated by cognitive ability, except in Singapore for DSR, suggesting that certain socio-psychological traits and problematic social media use can override critical thinking, even in individuals with high cognitive ability.

Based on the above findings, there is a significant negative influence between self-regulation and Fear of Missing Out (FoMO) among adolescents who use social media, particularly TikTok and Instagram. These findings align with those from various studies reviewed in the appendix, such as the research by Vikcyati & Rozali (2023) on TikTok users in Jakarta, which reported a negative regression coefficient (-0.248) and a significance level of $p=0.000$ (<0.05), indicating that higher self-regulation is associated with lower FoMO. The contribution of self-regulation to FoMO in that study reached 46%. In other studies conducted by Yusra & Napitulu (2022), Ahmed et al., (2023), Kusnadi & Suhartanto (2022), Handayani & Avivah (2023), Wati et al. (2023), and Zahroh & Sholichah (2022) also showed that adolescents with good self-regulation tend to be able to control their social media use, are less anxious about missing out on information, and are more confident. The consistency of these results reinforces the argument that an individual's ability to manage thoughts, emotions, and behavior plays a crucial role in mitigating anxiety about missing out on information in the digital world.

The mechanism behind this negative relationship can be explained through the concept of self-regulation itself. According to Zimmerman (2002), self-regulation involves an individual's ability to set goals, plan actions, monitor progress, and evaluate themselves. Adolescents with high self-regulation tend to have clear goals in using social media, such as seeking specific information or planned entertainment, rather than simply spending time aimlessly. They are able to control the urge to constantly check notifications or compare themselves to others, as they are aware of the limits and consequences of excessive social media use. This ability allows them to avoid feeling anxious or stressed if they are not always up-to-date with every trend or their friends' activities, resulting in low levels of FoMO. Conversely, adolescents with low self-regulation struggle with planning and self-control, making them vulnerable to compulsive social media use and an excessive desire to stay connected, which ultimately increases FoMO.

Although most studies show a significant negative relationship, it is important to note that there are studies that did not find a significant correlation, such as the study by Se'u and Rahayu (2022) on late adolescents who use social media in Kupang City, as well as Utami and Aviani (2021) on adolescents who use Instagram. These differing results may be attributed to various factors, including sample characteristics (e.g., age, social environment, awareness of FoMO), research methodology, or the presence of other moderator and mediator variables that were not measured. Factors such as unmet basic psychological needs (competence and connectedness), as proposed by Przybylski (2013), may also play a role in triggering FoMO regardless of self-regulation levels. Therefore, while self-regulation is a strong predictor, FoMO is a multifactorial phenomenon that requires a holistic approach to understanding it.

CONCLUSION

This study shows that self-regulation has a significant negative effect on Fear of Missing Out (FoMO) among adolescent social media users. The analysis results indicate that adolescents with high levels of self-regulation tend to experience lower levels of FoMO, meaning they are better able to manage anxiety and uncertainty related to social experiences displayed on social media. Conversely, adolescents with low self-regulation are more vulnerable to FoMO, which can lead to excessive social media use and negative impacts on their mental health.

These findings underscore the importance of developing self-regulation skills among adolescents as a strategy to reduce FoMO and improve psychological well-being. Therefore, interventions focused on enhancing self-regulation, such as training in emotional management skills and time management, can be effective steps in helping adolescents cope with the challenges posed by social media use. While this study provides valuable insights, it is important to remember that the results should be interpreted with consideration of existing limitations, and further research is needed to explore other factors that may influence the relationship between self-regulation and FoMO.

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