Occurrence, Contributing Factors, and Impact of Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) in Workers: A Systematic Literature Review

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Abstract: Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) is a set of psychological symptoms associated with social media use. Various studies show that FOMO is a health problem that can occur to everyone because it is inevitable that today almost everyone relies on communication technology, especially mobile phones, in their social interactions by accessing various social media platforms, including work activities. Studies that have been conducted still focus on FOMO among adolescents, students, and very limited studies on workers. Through a systematic literature review, the phenomenon of FOMO in workers is described in the form of occurrence, contributing factors, and impact. These results can be used as a basis for various stakeholders including health professionals to develop prevention and mitigation programs for FOMO so that workers' health can be improved.

Keywords: Fear of missing out, occurrence, contributing factors, impact, workers

INTRODUCTION

In a digitally driven period of life, the phenomenon of Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) is one that is interesting to discuss, not only because of its increasing occurrence but also because of the complexity of the phenomenon. FOMO was first recognized around 2004 at Harvad Business School and defined as the fear of being left behind. FOMO can occur in all people of any age group who have low levels of self-esteem and self-confidence and high levels of loneliness (Barry & Wong, 2020). Furthermore, it is explained that the behaviour of comparing oneself to others and the fear of missing out on developments have long occurred. However, easy access to other people's lives through social media occurs in the era of digital technology. This convenience can have a more damaging impact on mental health. So, everyone has the possibility of experiencing FOMO, not limited to teenagers who were born in the era of technology but can also occur in previous generations, such as parents and workers.

FOMO is a feeling of anxiety caused by thinking that other people's lives are more enjoyable than their own (Gupta & Sharma, 2021). Individuals who experience FOMO feel that the lives of others they see on social media are more pleasant and begin to compare themselves to the lives of others. It can be concluded that FOMO is synonymous with the desire to stay connected to what others are doing. FOMO can be explained using self-determination theory (Przybylski, Murayama, DeHaan, et al., 2013).

Unmet psychological needs become a factor in a person's vulnerability to unhealthy experiences including experiencing FOMO.

The fundamental psychological needs are autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Autonomy is the need for individuals to organize their own experiences and actions (Bouffard, 2017). Autonomy is a form of functioning that relates to feelings of volition, congruence, and integration. Autonomy is considered a sense of voluntariness; therefore, autonomy is not the same as independence. People can be autonomously or autonomously independent depending on the context and behaviours involved. The hallmark of autonomy is that one's behaviour is self-supported or in accordance with one's authentic interests and values. When acting with autonomy, behaviours are performed wholeheartedly, and one experiences inner conflict when doing something against one's will. In SDT theory, competence refers to the basic human need to feel effectiveness and mastery. In other words, competence is the human need to feel capable. Competence needs are manifested in the form of curiosity, manipulation, and various epistemic motives. Competence energizes a wide range of behaviours from playing games to discovering the laws of the universe. Competence is also diminished when challenges are too difficult, negative feedback is experienced, or undermined by interpersonal factors such as self-criticism and social comparison. Relatedness is the feeling of being socially connected. People feel connected if they feel cared for by others. Relatedness is also a sense of belonging and feeling important among others. Thus, relatedness is feeling oneself as a person who gives or contributes to others (Ryan & Deci, 2017).

FOMO is often associated with the social media era. Research shows that there is a positive relationship between social media use and a person's level of FOMO (Elhai et al., 2021); (Przybylski, Murayama, Dehaan, et al., 2013). Social media makes it easy for everyone to know each other's achievements, problems, opinions, and all aspects of life. On the positive side, it facilitates friendships. But on the other hand, it increases the potential for showing off and envy. While not associated with a specific gender or age group, FOMO is higher in younger individuals. In relation to social media usage, younger age groups as digital natives do have a higher intensity in connecting with social media than older age groups.

Digital natives, young people born in the digital age, are assumed to be the tech-literate generation. On the other hand, digital immigrants are those who learned to use computers at some stage in their adult life (Q. Wang et al., 2013). However, with the development of technology, changes in internet technology and computers that were once large and complicated have now turned into smartphones that are more accessible and always at hand.

Although it has been mentioned that FOMO is not limited to a particular age group, a common research gap is that FOMO-related studies have been mostly conducted on adolescent populations (Alt & Boniel-Nissim, 2018); (Tomczyk & Selmanagic-Lizde, 2018) and young adults/students (Hayran & Anik,

2021); (McKee et al., 2022). Thus, the interventions provided are also limited to young populations. This study aims to collect and analyse FOMO-related research conducted in the working adult population. In order to become one of the sources of information for professional organizations in providing interventions to workers both in self-development and professional development.

FOMO in the context of work can be conceptualized as the fear that others may experience more rewarding and enjoyable experiences in which one is not involved (Przybylski, Murayama, Dehaan, et al., 2013). Although FOMO in workers is a new concept in academia, with a span of only a decade, high interest has been shown by scholars. Specific to the work scenario, FOMO is posited as a widespread concern regarding the fear of missing out on important career opportunities during one's absence or termination (Budnick et al., 2020). The intensified digitalization of the workplace facilitated by modern technology keeps employees connected to work-related tasks around the clock and in a state of readiness. Moreover, influenced by prolonged engagement with social media and smartphones while at work, employees are bombarded with a constant stream of updates and notifications, contributing to a sense of inadequacy or social distress. Given this, employees' workplace concerns and related behaviours deserve academic attention and can be analysed through the dimensions of FOMO (Farivar & Richardson, 2021).

In this systematic review research, there are three research questions. The research questions came from the results of the needs analysis of the chosen topic, in this case "FOMO in employees". The research questions are: 1) What is the current occurrence rate of FOMO in employees? 2) What factors contribute to FOMO in employees, and 3) What is the impact of FOMO on employees?

METHOD

This research is a systematic literature review (SLR). The SLR process is divided into three phases, namely the planning phase, conducting phase, and reporting phase (Wibowo & Putri, 2021). In the planning phase, stages have been carried out to prepare the study through determining specific research questions, meeting eligibility criteria, and methodological planning as outlined in the protocol. The planning phase has been described in the introduction section. The second phase, which is the SLR work phase, describes the detailed stages of how articles are identified and selected and the implementation of critical appraisal (quality assessment of studies or literature retrieved), data extraction and synthesis. The third phase includes the reporting phase, which includes interpreting and writing up the results of the systematic review itself.

The search for the reviewed articles was conducted using the Publish or Perish application in consideration of being able to conduct a quick and comprehensive search. In addition to being able to

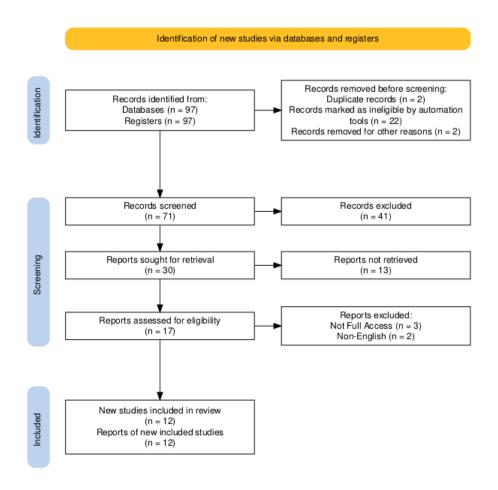
retrieve and analyse academic citations quickly, the program uses various data sources to obtain raw citations, then analyses them and presents various citation metrics, including the number of papers, total citations, and h-index (Harzing, 2016). The data sources selected were Google Schooler, PubMed, and Scopus. Furthermore, each of these databases was searched by utilizing the title and keyword menu. The initial step of searching by entering fear of missing out in the title and using keywords and the help of Boolean operators as follows: (fear of missing out OR FOMO) AND (employee OR worker OR workforce).

In Addition to the above, at the beginning of the search, a time limit for the publication of articles has been set, which is in the last 10 years or from 2014 to 2024. There are 97 articles related to the use of predetermined criteria. Furthermore, the selection of articles in several steps by considering the article criteria (type of article, title analysis, abstract and keywords, relevance to the study context, article publisher, and full article availability) as presented in table 1. Some of the selection components include selecting articles based on the selection of FOMO words in the title, abstract, or keywords. Furthermore, a review of the relationship between FOMO articles and workers was carried out. Selection of reputable publishers of articles, including: Elsevier, Mary Ann Liebert, Inc., ResearchGate, Springer, Dovepress, DergiPark Akademik, Canadian Center of Science and Education, and MDPI. All publishers are reputable international journal publishers that are Scopus indexed, comprehensive in coverage and have a relatively high reputation for peer-reviewed publications.

Table 1. Criteria of the reviewed articles

Criteria	Inclusion	Exclusion		
Journal Type	Non-reviewed research journals	arch journals conference papers, book chapters, review articles, thesis publications		
Title, abstract, keywords	FOMO or fear of missing out in title, abstract, or keyword	FOMO theme is not related to workers		
Relevance to the context of the study Articles on Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) in employees	Studies relevant to the empirical study of FoMO	FOMO articles that are not about employees or the workplace		
Publisher of the article	SJR value and Scopus Index or reputable	Not known reputation		
Language	English	Published in other languages		

The entire selection process is depicted through the PRISMA flowchart in picture 1 (Haddaway et al., 2022).



Picture 1. PRISMA Article Assignment

RESULTS

Research Article Profile

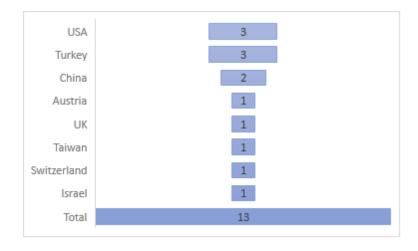
The thirteen selected articles were published in 12 different journals by 8 publishers. Each journal has been analysed for validity by looking at the SJR score and index level on Scopus or the publisher's reputation by tracing the history and other information through the publisher's website. The SJR indicates the weighted average number of citations received in the selected year by documents published in the selected journal in the previous three years (Guerrero-Bote & Moya-Anegón, 2012) while the Scopus Index is an indicator of a journal's quality and impact in the academic community (Discovery R, 2024). Journals that are part of the Scopus database are referred to as Scopus indexed journals. Both validity criteria are valuable for researchers in assessing the quality and impact of articles published in the journal. The results of the validity review of the journals are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Validity of the reviewed articles

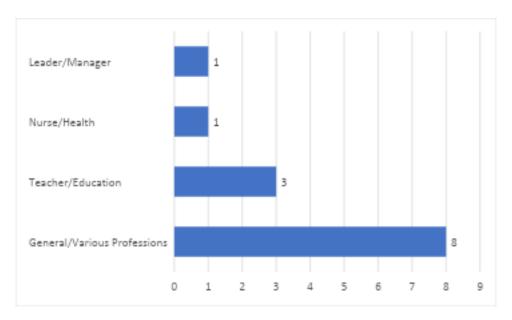
Publisher	Journal Name	Number	SJR	Index Scopus
Elsevier	Journal of Business Research	1	3.13	Q1
	Computers in human behavior	1	2.64	Q1
	Technological Forecasting & Social Change	2	3.12	Q1
Mary Ann Liebert, Inc.	Cyberpsychology, Behavior, And Social Networking	1	1.44	Q1
ResearchGate	Environment and Social Psychology	1	0.11	Q4
	Perspectives in Psychiatric Care	1	0.67	Q2
Springer	Current Psychology	1	1	Q1
Dovepress	Psychology Research and Behavior Management	1	0.81	Q2
DergiPark Akademik	Journal Of Social Sciences And Education (Josse)	1	NA	NA
Canadian Center of Science and Education	Journal of Education and Learning	1	0.3	Q3
MDPI	Behavioral Science	1	0.62	Q2
IJRAR Research Journal	The Journal of Psychology	1	0.79	Q1

Table 2 illustrates that research on FOMO in employees is mostly published by Elsevier (n = 4) in 3 journals. Furthermore, there are 2 articles published on ResearchGate, and for other publishers each published 1 article. All articles have a range of SJR values between 0.11 and 3.13, which means they have a broad impact on scientific development in their field of study. At the Scopus index level, it can be seen that most (n=6) in Q1, Q2 (n=2), Q3 and Q4 have 1 article each. There is one journal that has not been indexed by SJR or Scopus, namely Journal of Social Sciences and Education (JOSSE), but after searching through the publisher's website, it can be concluded that the published articles have gone through a critical appraisal process and have been widely cited as references by other authors. With these considerations, articles published in these journals are still included in the study.

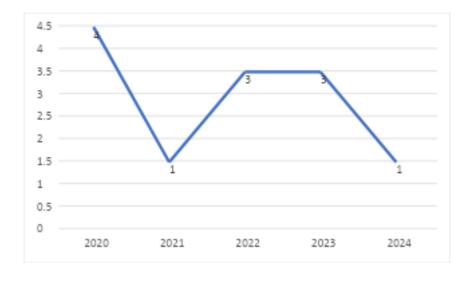
The year of publication of FOMO journals on employees tends to be new in the last 4 years starting in 2020 (n = 4), 2021 (n = 1), 2022 (n = 3), 2023 (n = 3), and 2024 (n = 1), as shown in picture 3. From the aspect of country of origin comes from 8 countries, namely: USA (n=3), Turkey (n=3), China (n=2), Austria (n=1), UK (n=1), Taiwan (n=1), Israel (n=1) and Switzerland (n=1). The type of work involved in the study (picture 2) was mostly general or involved a variety of professions (n=8), teachers/educators (n=3), nurse/health professional (n=1), and leader/manager (n=1).



Picture 1. Spread of Articles by Country



Picture 2. Distribution of Articles by Type of Work Analysed



Picture 3. Distribution of Articles by Year of Publication

Extraction Results

To answer the 3 questions in this study, the research results from the reviewed articles were analysed and presented in conclusion in 3 aspects, which are the occurrence rate of FOMO in employees, contributing factors, and the impact of FOMO (table 3).

DISCUSSION

Degree of FOMO Occurrence in Employees

All studies show that FOMO occurs in all research subjects involved, in this context, employees. This reinforces the statement that FOMO does not only occur in the digital native generation but can happen to anyone. Related research states that there are no gender differences in FOMO and higher scores are associated with younger age (Rozgonjuk et al., 2021). All studies also illustrate that the employees involved are active smartphone users and have personal social media in their daily activities. This is in line with various studies that found that smartphone and social media use are strong determinants of FOMO (Song & Kim, 2022); (Zhang et al., 2023); (Reisenwitz & Fowler, 2023).

Most of the articles reviewed did not clearly state the degree of FOMO in employees. One result stated that the incidence of FOMO increased alarmingly after a period of isolation/pandemic (Tandon, Dhir, Talwar, et al., 2021). Another result explained that overall there were no surprising results regarding FOMO descriptive statistics (Reimann et al., 2023). Three articles mentioned the level of FOMO in employees was at a moderate level (Hoşgör et al., 2021a); (GÜLLÜ & SERİN, 2020) or medium level (Dong et al., 2024)(J. Wang et al., 2024).

Table 3. Results of Article Analysis Based on Occurrence, Contributing Factors, and Impact of FOMO on Employees

An Analysis Aspect	Research Results
Occurrences	1. In general, the study showed that FOMO occurred in all employee respondents involved in the study (n=13).
	2. The incidence of FOMO increased significantly after the pandemic/isolation period (n=1)
	3. There is no outstanding value on descriptive analysis (n=1)4. Employees experience a mild or moderate degree of FOMO (n=3)
Contributing Factors	 Individual tendency: exhibitionism Individual tendency: voyeurism Compulsive Use of social media/CUS (n=3)
	4. Wellbeing (release of psychological stress due to work demands)5. Loneliness at work
	6. Ostracization at work7. Resilience/self-resilience8. Characteristics of increased risk-taking,

	 9. Tendency to over-share information 10. Use of smartphones, 11. Demographic characteristics, age, length of employment and gender 12. Challenge stress, obstacle stress 13. Self-efficacy
Impact	 Decreased performance/ relatively low performance (n=2), Procrastination (n=1) Pressure (stress) at work (n=2) Fatigue (n=3) Restorative experience of psychological release, relaxation, and control (n=1) Motivation (work engagement) (n=1) Rigor (n=1) Phubbing: incivility (n=1) Online information security awareness (n=1) Perceived work overload (n=1) Creativity/creativeness of the leader (n=2) Cyberloafing behaviour (n=2) Decision-making on the use of new technology

Factors Contributing to FOMO in Employees

Each article looks at different aspects in explaining the factors that influence FOMO in employees. One of the research results explains that an important factor affecting FOMO in employees is the individual's tendency to aspects: exhibitionism and voyeurism (Tandon, Dhir, Talwar, et al., 2021). Exhibitionism is a narcissistic trait or tendency that encourages individuals to build a desired self-image by displaying their abilities (self-promotion), seeking admiration, and showing superiority to others (Islam et al., 2019). Meanwhile, voyeurism is a person's tendency to gain psychological value by accessing personal and social information about others through social media (Islam et al., 2019).

Another determinant factor described in the article is Compulsive Use Of Social Media/CUS (Andreassen et al., 2017). This variable is often described in articles that discuss FOMO. Compulsive social media users are often exposed to various content from friends, family, celebrities, or other people they follow. Seeing posts about other people's activities, achievements, and precious moments can make individuals feel left behind or inadequate. This triggers feelings of FOMO as they feel that they are missing out on important experiences or fun that others are having. The tendency to always want to know what is going on and who is doing what causes individuals to constantly check their social media. This can become a vicious cycle, where the fear of missing out makes them continue to over-access social media, which in turn exacerbates FOMO.

Personal demands for well-being (psychological stress release due to work demands) have also been reported to significantly influence the incidence of FOMO (Reimann et al., 2023). Results suggest a negative indirect effect between the FOMO in the workplace and perceived psychological/stress release through the use of technology. The results were more ambivalent regarding the dependent variables of fatigue, relaxation, and control. This reinforces the literature that categorizes technology use as a job demand. The results also strengthen previous research on work-related technology use during leisure time and demonstrate the relevance of personal demands such as FOMO for employee well-being.

In contrast to the results of the above research, there are 3 factors that influence the incidence of FOMO in employees, which are: loneliness at work, ostracism at work, and resilience / self-resilience as a mediating factor (Tang, 2024). Loneliness represents the mental distress of not being able to satisfy one's desire to have meaningful social relationships and can cause unrelenting discomfort that leads to other pathological behaviours and conditions including the emergence of FOMO characteristics in employees.

In the age of technology and information disclosure, employees with characteristics of increased risk-taking, problematic Internet use (related to social media use), and a tendency to overshare information are factors that influence FOMO in employees (Hadlington & Scase, 2018). Research on nurse respondents states that the factors that influence FOMO in them are: smartphone use, social media use, age, length of service, and gender (Hoşgör et al., 2021b). Another article mentioned that the factors that affect FOMO in employees are: challenge stress, obstacle stress, and self-efficacy (Shi et al., 2024).

Impact of FOMO on Employees

Of the 13 articles reviewed, almost all (n=11) mentioned the impact of FOMO on employees. Combined, the observed research results resulted in 13 categories of FOMO impact on employees or work (table 3). The first article mentioned three further impacts of FOMO on employees are: decreased performance, procrastination work delays (Tandon, Dhir, Islam, et al., 2021). In another article, different things are mentioned regarding the impact, namely pressure (stress) at work, fatigue, the experience of psychological release recovery, relaxation, and control (Reimann et al., 2023). Another interesting research result is Phubbing behaviour as an impact of FOMO (Tandon et al., 2022). Phubbing is a different type of social exclusion facilitated by the use of smart phones to access social media during workplace interactions; this smart phone use may or may not have the specific purpose of excluding others, but is driven by the pervasive concern of missing social media updates during work hours (Chotpitayasunondh & Douglas, 2016). FOMO also leads to a sense of fatigue or a perception of work overload (Budnick et al., 2020); (Hoşgör et al., 2021b). Further research suggests that FOMO impacts

leader creativity (Shi et al., 2024), online information security awareness (Hadlington et al., 2020), cyberloafing behaviours ('personal', 'search', 'social', and 'news') (DİKTAŞ & YÜCEKAYA, 2023); (GÜLLÜ & SERİN, 2020), as well as new technology usage decisions (Gartner et al., 2022). The negative impact of FOMO is also described in the form of relatively low levels of job performance (Fridchay & Reizer, 2022) and Perceived work overload (PWO) (Hoşgör et al., 2021b).

CONCLUSIONS

The results clearly show that the FOMO phenomenon has also occurred in employees in various types of jobs. The increasing trend of FOMO is in line with employees' dependence on technology, especially smartphones and their accompanying devices, namely social media. Therefore, anticipation of an increase in the incidence of FOMO in employees needs to be carried out by organizational leaders. Specifically, there is no conclusion on the factors that contribute to FOMO in employees. However, research shows that the factors that cause FOMO in employees are complex or compound. Specific approaches are needed, including further research projects for prevention programs. The systemic impact of FOMO was also described in the studies reviewed, both from individual and organizational aspects. Individual and organizational approaches need to be taken so that the impact does not become more burdensome in the future.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare have no affiliations with or involvement in any organization or entity with any financial interest or non-financial interest in the subject matter or materials discussed in this manuscript.

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