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**THE ASSESSMENT OF FEAR OF MISSING OUT (FOMO) AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS****Güllü YAZKAN<sup>1</sup>****Nezihe UĞURLU<sup>2</sup>****Fatma BIRGILI<sup>3</sup>**

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**ABSTRACT**

As the adaptation of the young to novel technologies is more rapid than people of other ages, it can be said that the use of mobile devices is more common among the young. The constant updating behavior of individuals in social networks has brought about a new behavioral disorder known as Fear of Missing Out (FoMO). This lead the individuals to checking their mobile phones or tablets as they have fears such as “Did I miss something?”, “Who shares anything now?”, or “Am I outside the topic of discussion?” and spending too much time on social networks. This study was carried out in order to assess the fear of missing out among university students. No sampling was performed and questionnaire form was implemented on 155 persons who volunteered to take part in the study. The 10-item introductory information form and the 10-item, 5-point Likert-type missing out scale were implemented on the participants.

**Keywords:** social development, student nurse, smartphone

**INTRODUCTION**

Humans, who are social beings, tend to have a need of belonging to a group (Çınar and Mutlu, 2018). While they met this need living together in the past, today this has moved to the virtual

domain. Social media, which enables individuals to be informed about their social environments any time and at any place, has brought about certain problems in addition to facilities it has created. The conditions known as the Fear of Missing Out (FoMO) is one of the. FoMO is explained as the desire to keep up with what others are doing constantly (Przybylski, Murayama, DeHaan and Gladwell, 2013). When the literature is examined, it is seen that FoMO is quite a new phenomenon (Przybylski et al., 2013). FoMO has definitions such as “missing out things”, “staying behind things”, “fear of missing out the agenda”, and “social anxiety individuals experience in case when they are not informed about a social interaction”. FoMO has been mentioned as an obsession, addiction, and disorder (Eşitti, 2015).

In one study, a 10-item, 5-point and 1-factor Likert scale was developed to measure the level of FoMO. This study concluded that it was more frequently observed in people who lacked affection and respect psychologically. Also according to this study, it occurs more in young people, young males, and individuals with a low life satisfaction. Another significant results of this study is that FoMO is more prevalent among students (Przybylski et al., 2013). Students with FoMO may try to check their social media accounts instead of listening to their teachers and participating in lessons during class hours. It can be thought that FoMO may inflict a threat for learning environments as well since social media and other tools of communication on the web are in easy reach of students in lessons given in laboratories (Tozkoparan and Kuzu, 2019).

According to a study by the Turkish Statistical Institute, the rate of Internet and computer use is 84.3% and 82.4% of those who use the Internet use it for purposes such as to create profiles or share content like photographs or messages in the social media (TUIK, 2016). In the “Digital in 2017 Global Overview” report prepared in cooperation with We Are Social/Hootsuite, it was stated that there were 48 million Internet users and 48 million active social media accounts in our country, and the number of Internet users increased by 4% and that of active social media accounts by 14% compared to 2016. The same report stated that people connected to the Internet and social networks for an average of 3 hours each on a day through their smartphones (Yıldırım and Kişioğlu, 2018).

It was found in the literature that intensive use of smartphones is associated with general self-efficacy, social self-efficacy and life stress, sleep disorders, stress, anxiety, retreating from social environments, low academic success, decreasing physical activity, seeking for excessive assurance, compulsivity, and extroversion (Traş and Öztemel, 2019). On the other hand, it is understood that excessive use of smartphones may negatively affect interpersonal communication of individuals. It leads to problems that might adversely affect humans' lives,

such as weakening communication skills, having difficulty in establishing eye contact with the other one while dealing with the smartphone, insufficient understanding of what is being told, and shutting oneself off from what is going on around them (Karadağ et al., 2016).

The first study on the fear of missing out was carried out in 2013 and it was concluded that it might be linked with self-determination theory. Self-determination theory can be defined as the ability of individuals to initiate and adapt their behaviors in line with their own beliefs and values (6). This theory explains behaviors by focusing on internal processes. FoMO acts as a self-regulatory tool in satisfying psychological tools (Przybylski et al., 2013).

In such a period in which technology spreads so rapidly, there are limited studies on FoMO and it is important determine the level of FoMO, which is considered as a new disease of the present era, therefore, this study aims to determine the level of fear of missing out among university students.

## **METHOD**

This is a descriptive study. The study was planned to be implemented on students who took summer course lessons in Muğla Sıtkı Koçman University. No sampling was performed and students who volunteered to take part in the study formed the sample.

### **Data Collection Tools**

#### **Demographic Information Form**

The participants were given the questionnaire on demographic characteristics consisting of 9 items, 3 of which were items about introductory information and 6 items about phone use, which were obtained from similar studies. Demographic data form involved information about sex, age, grade, the duration of smartphone use, and the daily frequency of checking smartphone.

#### **FoMO Scale**

The Fear of Missing out Scale, developed by Przybylski et al. (2013) and adapted to Turkish by Gökler et al. (2016), consists of 10 5-point Likert-type items and one dimension. The Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of the FoMO Scale is .81.

### The Assessment of the Data

The data obtained from the questionnaire form were assessed with the SPSS 22.0 (The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) software. Normality tests were performed on the study data. The Mann Whitney U Test was used for pairwise comparisons and the Kruskal Wallis Test for multiple comparisons in the analysis of the data that did not show a normal distribution.

Frequency and percentile were used for descriptive criteria of the analyses and standard deviation and minimum-maximum values were used as the criterion of prevalence. The association between FoMO and subscales was investigated through the Pearson correlation coefficient. The values of  $p < 0.05$  and  $p < 0.01$  were chosen as the lowest statistical significance levels in the analyses.

## RESULTS

**Table 1**

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Distribution of Introductory Characteristics

	N	%
<b>Sex</b>		
Female	81	52.3
Male	74	47.7
<b>Age</b>		
Below 20 years	3	1.9
20-25 years	141	91.0
Above 25 years	11	7.1
<b>Grade</b>		
2. grade	32	20.6
3. grade	74	47.7
4. grade	48	31.6
<b>Duration of phone use</b>		
Less than 1 year	2	1.3
1-2 years	3	1.9
3-4 years	38	20.6
More than 4 years	118	76.1

<b>Daily frequency of phone use</b>		
1-16 times	16	10.3
17-32 times	42	27.1
33-48 times	29	18.7
49 times and above	68	43.9
<b>Carrying a charger</b>		
Yes	79	51.0
No	76	49.0
<b>Checking phone upon waking up</b>		
Yes	130	83.9
No	25	16.1
<b>Spending time with phone before sleep</b>		
Yes	147	94.8
No	8	5.2
<b>Turning off phone at night</b>		
Yes	15	9.7
No	140	90.3

According to the data on Table 1, 52.3% of the participants were females, 91% were in the 20–25 age group, 47.7% were third-grade university students, and 76.1% used phones for more than 4 years. The frequency of checking social media was 49 and above in 43.9% of the participants. The rate of those who responded “yes” to the item whether they check phones when they wake up was 83.9%, and 94.8% of the participants said they spent time with their phones before they went to bed at night. Finally, 90.3% responded “no” to the item whether they turn off their phones at night.

**Table 2**

The total FoMO score and score distribution of phone use

	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Median</b>	<b>Std. Dev.</b>	<b>Min.</b>	<b>Max.</b>	<b>Significance level</b>
<b>Duration of phone use</b>	155	3.72	4.00	.567	1	4	p>0.05
<b>Frequency of checking phone</b>	155	2.96	3.00	1.062	1	4	<b>p&lt;0.01</b>
<b>Carrying a charger</b>	155	1.49	1.00	.502	1	2	p>0.05
<b>Checking phone upon waking up</b>	155	1.16	1.00	.369	1	2	p>0.05
<b>Total FoMO</b>	155	23.60	22.00	7.077	10	44	

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Table 2 presents data about phone use and the total score distribution of the FoMO scale. According to this, the duration of phone use was  $X \pm SD = 3.72 \pm 0.567$ , carrying a charger with the phone was  $X \pm SD = 1.49 \pm 0.52$ , and the checking the phone immediately after waking up was  $X \pm SD = 1.16 \pm 0.369$ , and these values were not statistically significant ( $p < 0.05$ ). The frequency of checking the phone was found to be  $X \pm SD = 2.96 \pm 1.062$ , which was statistically highly significant ( $p < 0.01$ ).

**Table 3**

Score distribution of the FoMO Scale items

<b>Items</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Median</b>	<b>Std. Dev.</b>	<b>Min.</b>	<b>Max.</b>
Fomo1	155	1.81	2.00	1.012	1	5
Fomo2	155	1.72	1.00	.930	1	5
Fomo3	155	1.89	1.00	1.302	1	5

Fomo4	155	1.98	1.00	1.271	1	5
Fomo5	155	2.90	3.00	1.205	1	5
Fomo6	155	2.67	3.00	1.152	1	5
Fomo7	155	2.59	3.00	1.231	1	5
Fomo8	155	2.17	2.00	1.270	1	5
Fomo9	155	3.37	3.00	1.310	1	5
Fomo10	155	2.48	2.00	1.208	1	5
Total Fomo	155	23.60	22.00	7.077	10	44

Table 3 presents the score distribution of the FoMO Scale. According to the table, the mean score of FoMO5 (It is important that I understand my friends in jokes.) was 2.90, and that of FoMO9 (When I miss out on a planned get-together it bothers me.) was 3.37.

**Table 4**

The percentages of responses to the items of the FoMO Scale

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	1-Not at all true of me	2-Slightly true of me	3-Moderately true of me	4-Very true of me	5-Extremely true of me
1. I fear others have more rewarding experiences than me.	<b>%48.4</b>	%32.3	%12.3	%3.9	%3.2
2. I fear my friends have more rewarding experiences than me.	<b>%52.3</b>	%30.3	%11.6	%4.5	%1.3
3. I get worried when I find out my friends are having fun without me.	<b>%58.7</b>	%16.8	%9.7	%6.5	%7.7
4. I get anxious when I don't know what my friends are up to.	<b>%51.6</b>	%20.6	%13.5	%6.5	%7.7
5. It is important that I understand my friends "in jokes."	%14.2	%21.3	<b>%38.1</b>	%12.9	%13.5
6. Sometimes, I wonder if I spend too much time keeping up with what is going on.	%18.7	%23.9	<b>%36.8</b>	%12.9	%7.7

7.	It bothers me when I miss an opportunity to meet up with friends.	%22.6	%27.1	<b>%27.7</b>	%13.5	%9.0
8.	When I have a good time it is important for me to share the details online.	<b>%39.4</b>	%28.4	%16.8	%6.5	%9.0
9.	When I miss out on a planned get-together it bothers me.	%11.0	%12.9	<b>%31.6</b>	%16.8	%27.7
10.	When I go on vacation, I continue to keep tabs on what my friends are doing.	%25.2	%27.7	<b>%30.3</b>	%7.7	%9.0

Table 4 presents the percentages of the responses given to the items of the FoMO Scale. According to the table, 48.4% of the participants responded “definitely disagree” to FoMO1, 52.3% “definitely disagree” to FoMO2, 38.1% “agree” to FoMO5, 36.8% “agree” to FoMO6, and 31.6% “agree” to FoMO9.

## DISCUSSION

It is worrying that technology and social media lead to certain changes in our way of behavior and relationships and that this situation threatens particularly new generations (Çınar and Mutlu, 2018). FoMO, which can be explained as the wish to constantly keep up with what others are doing, is a critical and current issue which must be studied in greater depth. Therefore, this study tries to reveal the relationship between the FoMO levels among university students and the use of mobile phone.

It was detected that there were variations in FoMO levels. The FoMO level of students in the 2nd grade was higher than that of 4th-grade students. Similarly, in another study, Abel et al. (2016) found out that individuals aged 18-19, 20-21, and 22-23 had a higher level of fear of missing out than those aged 24 and over (Abel et al., 2016). No significant difference was detected between FoMO and sex in this study ( $p < 0.05$ ). Another finding of Przybylski et al. (2013) is that FoMO is observed more in males, however, this study did not have such a result. When we examine the scale items, the score was 2.90 from FoMO5 and 3.37 from FoMO9, which was similar to Hoşgör et al. (2017) and Tozkoparan and Kuzu (2019) and was found to be statistically significant.

It was determined that students who carry a charger with them all the time, who tend to check their smartphones as soon as they wake up, and who go to bed with their smartphones and spend time with phones in bed had higher mean scores of FoMO. Such situations may be an indication



of addiction to smartphones, but they also have an effect on FoMO levels of students. When triggering factors that lead particularly young individuals to using smartphones more frequently, such as following the developments in social media, monitoring shared content, and updating status, are considered, the importance of the findings of this study becomes clear. When the association of the daily frequency of checking phone with the FoMO scale was examined, it was found to be statistically highly significant ( $p < 0.01$ ). In their study carried out on university students, Hoşgör et al. (2017) obtained results similar to this study. No statistically significant difference was detected between the duration of smartphone use and FoMO, and similar results were also observed in Hoşgör et al. (2017).

## CONCLUSION

-At the end of the study, it was determined that 52.3% of the participants were females, 91% were in the 20–25 age group, the frequency of checking phones was 49 and above in 43.9%, 83.9% said they checked phones when they woke up, 94.8% said they spent time with phones before they went to bed at night, and 90.3% said they did not turn off their phones at night,

-The mean score of FoMO5 (It is important that I understand my friends in jokes.) was 2.90, and the mean score of FoMO9 (When I miss out on a planned get-together it bothers me.) was 3.37,

-There was no statistically significant difference between age, sex, grade, and the duration of smartphone use and FoMO.

## SUGGESTIONS

In order to avoid negative effects of FoMO, to which especially students are exposed, factors should be investigated that are thought to be related with the level of FoMO, such as social media, smartphone, and problematic use of the Internet, and more studies should be carried out on those factors in which a marked effect has been detected,

A controlled inspection mechanism should be established instead of depriving young individuals of social media in order to prevent the development of compulsive generations and increase awareness of the real agenda,

Students should be directed to different social, artistic, and sportive activities so that they spend their free time in order to lower down the excessive time spent on social media.

**Author's notes:** This article, which was accepted in your journal, was previously presented only as a summary presentation at the 6th International 17th National Nursing Congress. It has not been presented as a full text anywhere else and has not been published as an article.

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