



# Fear of Missing Out (FoMO): A Current Review

## Gelişmeleri Kaçırma Korkusu (FoMO): Güncel Bir Derleme

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### ABSTRACT

Recently, the fact that the majority of communication and interaction between people is carried out through the internet and mobile devices and the widespread use of social media has brought new disadvantages as well as certain advantages to people's lives. In the literature, a type of anxiety called Fear of Missing Out (FoMO), referred as Gelişmeleri Kaçırma Korkusu (GKK) in Turkish, is an important concept underlying many of these disadvantages. In order to understand this type of anxiety well, to take preventive steps and to carry out correct intervention studies, its theoretical framework should be put forward well. In this context, the purpose of this study is to present a comprehensive theoretical study on the subject, to draw attention to the fact that FoMO has a significant negative effect especially in the education, social, economic and psychological lives of young people and young adults, and to form a basic perspective on the importance of knowing this concept, its causes, symptoms, negative effects and how to tackle it in dealing with this problem. In this study, which was presented by making a literature review, the results of national and international studies on the subject were compiled. Fear of Missing Out can be defined as the constant desire to follow the exciting and glorious lives of others through the internet and a state of constant anxiety about it. Understanding the reasons as well as the consequences of this fear is important at this point. As a result of the study, there are suggestions on what should be done for understanding the subject well and the steps to be taken.

**Keywords:** Fear of missing out, FoMO, review

### ÖZ

Son zamanlarda, insanlar arası iletişim ve etkileşimin büyük çoğunluğunun internet ve mobil cihazlar aracılığıyla gerçekleştirilmesi ve yaygın sosyal medya kullanımı, insanlara belli avantajlar sağlamanın yanı sıra yeni olumsuzluklar da katmaktadır. Alan yazında Fear of Missing Out (FoMO) olarak adlandırılan, Türkçeye Gelişmeleri Kaçırma Korkusu (GKK) olarak geçen kaygı türü, bu olumsuzlukların birçoğunun altında yer alan önemli bir kavramdır. Bu kaygı türünün iyi anlaşılması, önleyici adımların atılması ve doğru müdahale çalışmalarının yapılması açısından, kuramsal çerçevesinin iyi şekilde ortaya konulması gerekmektedir. Bu bağlamda, bu çalışmanın amacı, konu üzerine kapsamlı bir kuramsal çalışma ortaya koymak, GKK'nin özellikle gençler ve genç yetişkinlerin eğitim, sosyal, ekonomik ve psikolojik hayatlarında önemli bir olumsuzluğa sahip olduğuna dikkat çekmek ve bu kavramın ne olduğunun, nedenlerinin, belirtilerinin, olumsuz etkilerinin ve nasıl mücadele edileceğinin bilinmesinin bu sorunla baş etmedeki önemi üzerine temel bir bakış açısı oluşturmaktır. Literatür taraması yapılarak ortaya konan bu çalışmada, konu üzerine yapılan ulusal ve uluslararası çalışmaların sonuçları derlenmiştir. Gelişmeleri Kaçırma Korkusu, başkalarının sahip olduğu heyecanlı ve görkemli hayatlarına yönelik internet aracılığıyla sürekli takip etme isteği ve buna yönelik sürekli endişe hali olarak tanımlanabilir. Bu korkunun sonuçları kadar nedenlerinin de anlaşılması, bu noktada önem arz etmektedir. Çalışma sonucunda, konunun iyi anlaşılması ve bu kapsamda atılacak adımlara yönelik neler yapılmasına dair öneriler yer almaktadır.

**Anahtar sözcükler:** Gelişmeleri kaçırma korkusu, FoMO, derleme

The need to communicate has been one of the most important demands in human history as a part of human existence. This need has played an important role in shaping people's lives as well as being effective in their survival. Changes brought by technology and modern life have also changed people's communication tools and ways of communicating. In recent years, this change continues to increase incredibly rapidly. In this context, the ways of communication of individuals are in a constant change. The ability to access the internet at any place and time through tools such as smart phones, tablets and computers has made the

internet the most important way of communication in today's world. Thus, the internet has become an important part of individuals' lives. Internet is used for a wide variety of purposes, such as, listening to music, watching videos/movies and playing online games for leisure; communicating with friends and families to improve social relationships; conducting research to gain information (Wu and Chen 2015, Carlisle and ark. 2016). With the internet becoming accessible to many people, the way people communicate with each other has also begun to differ. Social media platforms, which were previously only followed by

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computers, can also be followed by many technological tools, especially smart phones. With the ability of smart phones to connect to the internet anytime and anywhere, social media networks have started to be used more frequently.

The increasing number of social media applications and their intense use by people accelerates the ability of users to follow the shared content instantly and deliver their own content to their followers. This situation facilitates the information exchange of social media network users and contributes to their constant communication. Thus, the ground has been prepared for the internet, smart phones and social media applications to take place at every point and every moment of life (Metin et al. 2017). According to the data of 2020, the time spent with smart phones in Turkey is stated as an average of 4 hours per day. Social media users aged 16-64 spend nearly 3 hours a day on social networks. There are over 60 million internet users, nearly 55 million social media users, and nearly 77 million registered smart phones in Turkey. The number of individuals using the internet in the world has reached 4.54 billion and this number constitutes more than half of the world's population. The number of individuals using social networks has exceeded 3.80 billion and the number of smart phone users has exceeded 5.19 billion. The number of individuals using mobile phones constitutes 67% of the world population. While the number of individuals using smart phones is increasing in the world and in Turkey, the number of people using computers, tablets and similar devices is decreasing (Wearesocial 2020). However, this situation provides an increase in internet usage. The increasing number of internet, smart phone and social platform applications have also affected and changed human relations. Almost every individual has started to perform their social communication and relationships by being connected to the phone and social networks. Individuals who communicate socially through virtual means are being curious now about what others do and share in social environments.

Sharing in virtual environments, checking the personal pages of friends and acquaintances have become easy. This situation has given individuals the opportunity to be in constant communication with people in virtual environments, regardless of time and place. These platforms, which have now become an indispensable part of human life, have become valuable for those who follow others' posts and content on social media (Kacker and Saurav 2020). With the change in human relations and the transfer of these relations to the virtual environment, various negative emotional states have begun to be experienced. A new disorder called Fear of Missing Out (FoMO) in English and Gelişmeleri Kaçırma Korkusu in Turkish is one of these negative situations. Fear of Missing Out (FoMO) can be defined as the sum of an individual's negative and persistent feelings that other people have a better life. These individuals feel a desire and obligation to constantly follow the content that others share on social media. It has been revealed that this situation affects the life of the individual negatively. Fear of Missing Out (FoMO) can cause depression, decreased psychological well-being, increased symptoms of anxiety, stress, deterioration in the functionality of life, increased risk of psychopathology and technology addiction

(O'Connell 2020). In our age, where behavioral addictions take place as a very important problem area in modern societies, it is of great importance to examine in detail, intervene and take precautions for every reason that leads to this situation. In this context, it is very important to investigate a problem area such as Fear of Missing Out in Turkey and to take steps to deal with this situation. This negative situation can negatively affect the social, economic and educational life of the individual. One of the greatest ways to deal with this situation is to know what it is, its symptoms, causes and ways of coping. Knowing these is thought to be effective in combating the Fear of Missing Out. The aim and presentation of this study is to give together what the concept of FoMO is, its symptoms, causes, intervention and prevention methods together and to fill the deficiency in the Turkish literature on this subject.

### Definition

The intense penetration of social media into people's lives has had a very serious impact on people's lives. With increasing shares, social media addiction has caused users to worry about sharing and missing information. This situation has led to the formation of FoMO, especially in users of the post-90s generation (Wang et al. 2021). Cambridge Dictionary (2020) defines FoMO as a state of anxiety that occurs when people are not aware of fun and exciting events shared by their friends on social platforms. According to Urban Dictionary (2006), FoMO is defined as a kind of anxiety about not being aware of valuable experiences in a social organization or meeting or missing important events shared on social media. According to the Oxford Dictionary (2018), FoMO also is included as the anxiety about missing more interesting or exciting events on social media. On the other hand, FoMO was explained as the feeling of missing the life that others shared on social media and worth seeing, and it is stated that FoMO is associated with unhealthy social media use (Riordan et al. 2021). According to Blum (2016), FoMO is defined as seeing the photos of one's friends on social media platforms, not seeing herself/himself in the photos and therefore feeling negative emotions. Based on these definitions, FoMO can be defined as the fear of not being able to follow what is going on in the lives of other people. This situation can push individuals to constantly visit social media platforms such as Facebook and Instagram. Therefore, people give more importance to social media applications and spend more time on them. Sapadin (2015) has stated that FoMO is mostly seen in individuals who use social media extensively. The reason for this is that these individuals constantly follow what others are doing and sharing through social media. While individuals receive thousands of likes on social media; these people get much less likes. That's why it's very important what others do on an ongoing basis to people who are experiencing FoMO. Similarly, Erciş et al. (2021) have expressed FoMO as the anxiety of being aware of the magnificent experiences that another person may have.

Individuals who are constantly curious about what other people are doing can also be sensitive to the warnings of technological tools. Hodkinson (2019) has stated that when the phone rings,

if the individual feels that the individual has to pick up the phone, FoMO can occur. The longer the phone rings, the longer the individual's FoMO experience can be. The word fear in the expression FoMO refers to the anxiety that causes the individual who does not actually have to do something, to feel that she/he has to do it. Therefore, when the individual is invited to a place that may be important on social media, she/he may feel obliged to accept the invitation, even though she/he has a very important task. This feeling of "I should not miss the developments" enables the individual to make irrational decisions. In this respect, FoMO plays an important role in the source of many ailments. FoMO can be defined as a kind of "anxiety disorder" or "unnecessary regret" that has come into our lives recently (Argan et al. 2018). FoMO may arise from the idea that people are not aware of the opportunities they have or that they should have more things or a good life by comparing their own lives to other lives. With the widespread use of the internet feature of smart phones and the increasing interest in social media platforms, FoMO has become a part of our lives and its incidence has increased in the society. McCoy (2016) has stated that FoMO is very common, especially among young students. Also, FoMO can also be defined as the feeling of emotional and mental tension caused by not being able to receive news about situations that are important for one's social life. Bisping (2018) has stated that individuals with FoMO mostly look to social media to reduce this fear. This can result in involuntary and continuous browsing on social media sites. Individuals who spend time in the virtual platform cannot give the necessary importance to their real environment. E.g; they feel the need to constantly check their phones while driving. When they attend a meeting or party, they prefer to deal with their phones instead of communicating with the people there. Such situations can break the person's ties with real life, also cause the person to establish a relationship with the artificial world only in the phone. The level of anxiety that arises with the Fear of Missing Out, on the other hand, increases more because the individual's connection with real life breaks.

With FoMO, the use of technology is increasing in direct relation to individuals who spend more time on social media platforms. FoMO refers to being constantly engaged with social media so as not to miss out on something or other rewarding activities. This situation can be defined as the emergence of feelings of social anxiety to eliminate the feeling of missing events, activities or experiences when not in online activities (Kaloeti et al. 2021). Wiesner (2017) sees FoMO as a situation that causes excessive use of technology. Individuals with high FoMO usually establish relationships with their social environment through social media. The findings show that the underlying cause of FoMO is the individual's sense of belonging to a group or environment. As the individual's need to belong to a group increases, she or he is more likely to experience FoMO more intensely and more. According to Wiesner (2017), people have had concerns about losing or missing something they have planned or owned since their existence. The opportunities offered by the age of technology have caused a change in our relationship culture. This has made it possible for us to follow more content, sharing and information flow about

human life. When this information flow is stopped or interrupted, individuals may experience anxiety (FoMO). It is known that technology has a significant impact especially on the last periods of our lives. Along with this effect, technology has brought its own problems. The communication culture specific to the age of technology and internet has become a culture that makes it a habit to interact with people actively in the virtual world. In this culture, while individuals can establish relationships with each other quickly, relationships can end abruptly. Individuals stop chatting even when they are with their friends in a social environment and are interested in what others are doing. This situation has created a new type of addiction FoMO which prevents people from establishing face-to-face relationships and creates an obligation to follow social media. While it is still a matter of debate whether FoMO is a type of addiction, some researchers have stated that this situation can be considered as a type of addiction in new Technologies (Przybylski et al. 2013, Tomczyk and Selmanagic-Lizde 2018, Kaloeti et al. 2021). FoMO is a kind of fear caused by missing the agenda or not being aware of what is going on on social platforms. This fear or anxiety can cause individuals to constantly check their smartphones and social media accounts. The underlying reasons for this situation can be classified as getting approval and acceptance. In order to meet this need, individuals are constantly in virtual environments. This situation disrupts the reward-punishment system and the pleasure balance in the brain. These people go to social media sites more in order to get pleasure, share in these areas and spend most of their time on these sites in order not to miss the shares of others.

FoMO can become a problem that deeply affects people's daily lives. Cohen (2013) has defined FoMO as the concern that people have happier, more interesting and enjoyable lives. People can experience this anxiety in all areas of their lives while sitting on the bus, at the dinner table or at home. This situation can affect a person's whole life. Ertürk (2012) has stated that FoMO can be a new type of internet addiction. FoMO can be associated with the feeling of missing out on developments in the virtual world, the fear of falling behind when missed, excessive control of their smartphones, sharing every activity they have done in the social media world and constant control of what other users share. In this way, the individual becomes addicted to the virtual world and sites and can begin to exhibit new habitual behaviors. Argan et al. (2018) have stated that social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter reveal what people do and what they have. By using these platforms, people have started to compare their own lives with the lives of others; this has revealed the fact that it has caused the spread of FoMO. 2013 is considered to be a very important year in terms of observing the FoMO. Because this year, the sales of smartphones have exceeded the sales of computers. In this situation, people have had the opportunity to enter social media platforms with their smart phones with the ability to connect to the internet 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Today, this situation has increased a lot with the use of smart phones. It can be said that FoMO is a cognitive condition that affects almost everyone. Individuals who experience this anxiety

at a low level may have a feeling of exclusion by following a party on social media that they do not attend because they are tired or uncomfortable. Individuals with this high level of anxiety may have the idea that everyone except themselves is very happy and has exciting lives. Comparing one's own life with other lives may be at the focal point of FoMO. But the point that should not be forgotten is that people only share their happy lives, they do not share their sad and unhappy lives on social media (Gürsoy Atar and Gürsoy Ulusoy 2020). McCoy (2016), on the other hand, has stated that FoMO is very common among students. According to the author, FoMO can be defined as a feeling of emotional and mental tension arising from not being able to receive information about situations that are important for one's social life. FoMO can be defined as a concern about the belief in young individuals to miss out on activities and experiences that include the glorious lives shared by their peers. This often happens through social media and leads to a constant desire to be aware of what others are doing (Franchina et al. 2018, Silva Santos et al. 2021).

In summary, FoMO can be defined as the feeling of tension, anxiety and emptiness that arises when the individual is deprived of what is happening in other people's lives, events, situations that develop outside his own life and what other people are doing, due to his desire to be known moment by moment. In order to better understand the concept of FoMO, it is important to know its causes, in which situations it occurs and how it affects individuals.

## Causes

Man has lived with a sense of wonder since his existence, and he has maintained this feeling as a situation that affects his life most deeply. Although this sense of curiosity has always taken humanity one step further, the curiosity of individuals in other lives has in some cases led to bad results. Although this sense of curiosity about other people was eliminated up to a certain point in the periods when technology was not developed that much, this sense of curiosity has increased and started to be eliminated more and more with the introduction of technological tools into every aspect of people's lives. FoMO is mostly due to the inability of the individual to meet their satisfaction needs. In order to meet this need, individuals are constantly connected to social networks and constantly use their smart phones to learn the pages, updates and shares of the people they follow and to satisfy this curiosity (Przybylski et al. 2013, Yang et al. 2021). Luna (2014) has stated that FoMO is an old fear, but it has gained importance again with today's social media communication. As individuals living in society, it is vital to belong to the society and be aware of the society. We follow the events that are important for the society we are in through television, newspaper, internet and social media platforms. It is an important situation that should be considered that the individual living in the society does not feel excluded. Our brain has a special part that responds when we experience exclusion. This part of our brain is the limbic system, the amygdala. The job of the amygdala is to detect anything that can pose a threat to our lives. Therefore, individuals with sensitive amygdala may react more than other

individuals to exclusion and ignorance of developments. The inability to be a part of a person, group or society is an event that can threaten life and cause stress. Individuals who experience the feeling of being excluded want to get rid of the stress. Therefore, in order to get rid of stress, individuals make an effort to control something by making almost double efforts not to miss the developments. Karadağ and Akçınar (2019), similar to the result they found in individuals who have problems or use social media excessively, says people who have experienced FoMO have psychological trauma in the past or control everything constantly and exaggeratedly. This may also indicate that these individuals may have Obsessive Compulsive Disorder. This situation can be shown as one of the important reasons for FoMO.

It can be said that another situation that causes the formation of FoMO is the high sense of competition. Individuals with high FoMO levels may look for more flashy and interesting qualities in addition to the features that can meet their needs while buying a car, looking at a house or going on vacation. This situation can cause people to push their economic power more and spend more money. It can be said that individuals with high FoMO levels try to catch the best in the choices they make. No matter how ostentatious a person is, owning something does not bring happiness. The idea of constantly having quality and flashy things can cause anxiety. To summarize, the desire to always have more expensive and more popular items is also an important situation that is thought to cause FoMO. Being able to meet this demand can negatively affect the life of the person both psychologically and economically. On the other hand, Kacker and Saurav (2020) have stated that FoMO is not only specific to individuals using social networks. People who experience this situation at a high level feel compelled to constantly follow their friends' activities and posts. The continuous use of social media by individuals who carry out their communication activities from social platforms is effective in increasing the FoMO. Vitelli (2016), on the other hand, has stated that one of the reasons for the prevalence of FoMO is the ways that enable people to communicate on social media. Social media has also increased the options of individuals with so much information and sharing. In another study, the cause of FoMO was explained as follows. It can be said that individuals who have so many options on social media are paralyzed by choice. It can be caused by uncertainty about choosing the best due to the excess of social-specific activities and events of FoMO and regret over things that cannot be preferred (Milyavskaya et al. 2018, Servidio 2021).

Individuals who try to meet their need to communicate in a different way may need to meet their other emotional states in a different way. According to Barker (2016), FoMO can be caused by unhappiness. Individuals with high levels of this fear do not have positive feelings towards themselves and their lives. Therefore, they think that others have happier lives than themselves. Individuals can follow social media while eating, before going to sleep or just after waking up. Individuals relieve their unhappiness by following such environments. On the contrary, this situation affects the mental health of the person more negatively. She/He compares the fun lives that others follow on social media platforms

with her/his own unhappy lives, and her/his thoughts about her/his life and herself/himself can be affected even more negatively. According to Gottberg (2017), one of the biggest causes of FoMO is anxiety or fear of missing out on the important, interesting and exciting lives of others. Individuals experience this fear and anxiety many times during the day. The person experiences this state of anxiety even when asking questions such as “Is my choice correct or Why is nothing going well”. This situation forces the person to follow someone many times in daily life and to follow their friends and status updates in the virtual environment. Individuals who constantly experience these anxieties are now under the influence of this anxiety; this brings out the FoMO. According to Tekayak and Akpınar (2017), FoMO can be associated with constantly following the profile updates shared by friends made through social media and their pages while engaged in anything. Individuals with high FoMO levels may feel anxious and nervous because they cannot get information about what their social media friends are doing for any reason, and cannot find answers to questions such as “what’s going on, what are their friends doing”. This situation can also cause FoMO. Without access, individuals with high FoMO levels can relax by looking at all the events to the last place they looked when access is available.

With the increase in studies on individuals with high FoMO levels who experience feelings such as unhappiness, anxiety and irritability, it is seen that this disturbing condition is associated with many ailments and its causes have common points. Tarhan (2021), who has one of these studies, has stated that as a result of a recent scientific research, there is a gene for seeking novelty in humans. Individuals with this gene are at high risk of developing the Fear of Missing Out. These individuals are interested in innovation and follow the latest models of technology, smart phones. According to Eriş (2014), Fear of Missing Out is a phenomenon frequently encountered in the 13-33 age groups. The researcher, who has stated that the incidence of FoMO is increasing gradually in the society, has stated that FoMO can be defined as an obsessive situation arising from the need to be deficient in something or not wanting to be left behind.

Yuan et al. (2020) have investigated the effect of FoMO on problematic internet-based gaming, problematic smart phone use, and depression symptoms thought to be related to them in their study conducted with 341 Chinese university students. As a result of the study, it is found that FoMO seriously affects the relationship between depression and problematic smart phone. In addition, the researchers have stated in the results of the study that FoMO has a key role in the connection between psychopathology symptoms and excessive use of the internet. Yıldız et al. (2020) have conducted a study on 458 voluntarily licensed athletes and it is revealed that FoMO is moderately associated with nomophobia and internet addiction. On the other hand, it is also revealed that FoMO and nomophobia significantly predict internet addiction. It is thought that situations related to excessive use of social media such as internet addiction may be one of the causes of FoMO. Fioravanti et al. (2021) have conducted a meta-analysis on FoMO, use of social networking sites and use of problematic

social networking sites in their study. In the findings of the study, it is revealed that there is a serious relationship between FoMO, use of social networking sites and problematic social networking site use. Another finding of the study is that the variables of age, gender and geographic area do not predict this relationship. FoMO has also been found to be positively correlated with depression, anxiety, and neuroticism, and negatively correlated with consciousness. Dou et al. (2021) have conducted an investigation on the relationship between perceived social support, basic psychological needs, perceived stress and FoMO in a study involving 806 university students. In the findings of the study, it is revealed that there is a negative relationship between perceived social support and FoMO and that the relationship between perceived social support and FoMO is partially mediated by basic psychological needs.

When we look at the causes of FoMO, it is seen that there are many reasons such as the individual’s sense of curiosity, the need to feel belonging, the feeling of competition and showing off, the change in the communication culture, the desire to reach the feelings that he cannot achieve in real life, and the feeling of incompleteness. It is also revealed by the researches that this discomfort situation is more common in terms of eliminating the anxiety that occurs with FoMO. It can be said that the most important effect among the causes of FoMO is the change of communication culture and its elimination through social media. It is seen that FoMO has increased in direct proportion to the widespread use of smart phones. In this context, the increase in the use of technology, especially smart phones and the increase in addiction levels, and the incidence, causes and symptoms of FoMO overlap at some points. Understanding the symptoms as well as the causes of FoMO is important for conceptualizing and combating FoMO.

## Symptoms

Research on FoMO has revealed that individuals with this condition experience common feelings, situations, and reactions. Studies focusing on the young generation in general have revealed that the situation is more common in individuals who grow up, especially in the period of increased technological developments. First, JWTIntellegence Marketing Communications (2012) has evaluated FoMO in terms of social media use. The study has suggested that FoMO increased with the introduction of smart phones into our lives at a high rate. In the study’s findings, the researchers have concluded that FoMO triggers the behavior of regularly checking smart phones. The findings have showed that people aged 13-33 years are more likely to develop FoMO. More than half of the students participating in the study have stated that they could not resist FoMO. 65% of the participants in the study stated that they feel excluded when their friends did something without them.

In another study (Przybylski et al. 2013), it is concluded that individuals with high FoMO scores used smart phones more. Also, FoMO has been found to be negatively associated with mood and life satisfaction. In a study on the prevalence of FoMO

among university students (Hoşgör et al. 2017), it is revealed that students' addiction levels are moderate. It has been revealed that students with high FoMO constantly check their phones and carry chargers with them because they are afraid that their phones will run out of charge. It has been revealed that these students are constantly participating in social media platforms and have at least 4 different social media accounts for at least 7 years. In addition, it is revealed that the students are busy with their smart phones when they go to bed and when they wake up, and it is concluded that these individuals spend at least 7 hours a day on social media applications.

Mcginnis (2017) has stated that FoMO can be seen frequently in everyone today, especially in people who grow up in the millennium. According to the author, there may be some symptoms of this condition. These symptoms are:

- Having the desire to do all the attractive activities that the individual sees on social platforms and to go to the places he sees in these environments,
- The individual always follows and controls social media networks,
- Feeling bad when the individual is not aware of any event or activity organized or in which his friends follow on social networks,
- The individual's inability to catch up with people by looking at the experiences and events in the virtual worlds and the feeling of being behind people,
- It can be shown as being influenced by the experiences shared by other people on social media.

In another study, Modzelewski (2020) has described the symptoms of FoMO as follows: not being able to take one's eyes off the phone when crossing the street, in a crowded environment, or when there is nothing left unchecked on a social media account; taking pictures of everything he sees; failing to refuse events or invitations invited by people; constantly checking e-mails, even on vacation; Spending a lot of money on expensive things that others have or have experienced, despite having difficulty in purchasing power. Modzelewski (2020) has stated that these symptoms are caused by FoMO and are common in individuals with high FoMO levels. On the other hand, Metz (2019) has stated that individuals experiencing FoMO have some common symptoms. According to the author, these are:

Constantly checking mobile devices even when they are with friends in social environments,

- Actively navigating and sharing on social media networks,
- Asking people about what to do, where to go,
- Willingness to gossip,
- Inability to reject the choices people have made,
- It is the inability of the person to leave parties and similar social events despite being tired or sick.

In addition to these symptoms, Sapadin (2015) has stated that FoMO is a common situation today and stated that the person feels obliged to participate in parties and similar social activities even though it harms the person's budget and prevents the person from fulfilling the responsibilities. In addition, it was stated that when individuals see instant vacation and adventure photos published on social media by their friends, they experience anxiety and negative emotions caused by not being able to be in the places shown by looking at these photos and missing these things as one of the important symptoms. In addition, according to Sapadin (2015), looking at social media constantly and receiving criticism from one's friends for not listening to them, even in social environments, are also important symptoms. Russell (2020) has listed the symptoms of FoMO in his research as follows;

- Constantly checking the smart phone and computer to be aware of something,
- Continuously checking social media applications from a smart phone in order to follow messages and statuses,
- When he is with friends in the social environment, sending messages to his friends who are not there and browsing social media sites,
- When the person's smart phone or tablet is out, the red icon indicating that the battery indicator is dead appears and the person is panicked and worried because she or he cannot be informed about the developments.

Some studies have revealed that there is a great deal of similarity between the symptoms of FoMO and the symptoms of technology addiction. In one of these studies, according to Ertürk (2012), FoMO in the virtual environment manifests itself with certain symptoms. He has listed these symptoms as follows:

- Not being able to stop herself/himself from surfing on Facebook, Twitter and similar virtual environments, although she/he has surfed a lot in social media networks,
- Spending more and more time in virtual media networks and this time's effect on one's social life, especially on family - friend relationships,
- Emotions such as feeling of emptiness, depression, restlessness or nervousness are revealed in case of not being able to enter or access social media networks,
- The individual's hiding the truth and lying about the time she/he spends on social media networks and the way she/he uses these networks by misleading those around her/him,
- It is the desire to feel happy and happy when entering or accessing virtual environments, but to reach the uncontrolled virtual environment when prevented from entering these environments.

Tekayak and Akpınar (2017) has stated that FoMO is a kind of anxiety and fear arising from the fact that people can observe the lives they envy and want to have through social media, and

that people on social media have better lives than individuals. According to the authors, there are four most important symptoms of FoMO. These:

- Feeling of anxiety and nervousness that occurs when social media applications or social media friends cannot be reached,
- Continuous monitoring of who shares what and interacts with in social media applications,
- The individual who cannot follow the social media networks for any reason, looking backwards to the last place she/he looked when she/he had the opportunity,
- It is the feeling of tension that occurs when she/he cannot connect to social media networks, when it reaches access, it is replaced by relaxation or tension is reduced.

In addition to these symptoms, according to Tarhan (2021), FoMO is associated with heavily used social media. Social media tools have become an important part of people's lives. Individuals who follow social media environments a lot can feel happy as if they have taken some kind of drug. When people cannot connect with the virtual environment, they may feel bad. With the development and spread of social media networks, individuals can reach thousands of people. Considering the mentioned symptoms, it is seen that the most common symptom of FoMO is that the individual prefers the way of communication through social media, and therefore people constantly follow what they are doing through social media channels. When the individual tries to prevent himself from this situation, he feels bad and experiences tension. In order to reduce this tension, she/he follows social media sites more and more constantly.

Considering the symptoms of FoMO, it is seen that individuals who experience this situation in general are in negative and disturbing situations. It is obvious that it will be important to examine the negative effects that occur together with the symptoms of FoMO in combating this situation.

### **Adverse Effects**

Research on FoMO has revealed that individuals who experience this condition have common negative traits. McCoy (2016) has stated that FoMO is very common in society and that the side effects of this fear include irregular sleep, excessive eating and drinking, lack of focus, anxiety, and inability to keep up with academic life. FoMO has also stated that it can prevent students from fulfilling their responsibilities, and the need to constantly follow something and have information about something can negatively affect students' school and course success. Busch (2016) has also stated that FoMO can affect students negatively and listed these effects as follows:

- Decreased focus: Students who have a high fear of not being aware of developments can frequently check their smart phones to be aware of what is going on. Constantly checking the phone and looking at social media applications instead of things that need to be done in situations that require focus,

such as doing homework, can make it difficult for the person to focus and cause many problems.

- Decreased face-to-face communication: The student or individual, who has the behavior of constantly following things and the sense of curiosity about what is going on in the social media, cannot focus on face-to-face relations even in the environment of friends and can follow the social media constantly. This situation deprives people of quality and real communication, which is important in people's lives.
- Irregular sleep: Students who think that "who did what" on their smart phones in the evening or at night, or who think that others have more exciting lives than themselves, cannot go to bed until late, cannot get enough sleep, and sleep hours and quality may decrease.
- Delaying responsibilities: It has been stated that FoMO delays students' responsibilities and assignments in the United States. Instead of fulfilling their responsibilities, they may exhibit behaviors such as following social media with their mobile phones, playing games and shopping on the internet.
- Increased stress level: When young people who are constantly connected to their mobile phones and keep track of things, stay away from their mobile phones, their stress levels increase, which can cause feelings of anger and impatience.

Milyavskaya et al. (2018) have investigated the effects of FoMO on university students. The researchers have concluded that college students with higher FoMO have more attention deficits and are less able to focus. It is observed that these students had difficulties in fulfilling their responsibilities and regretted afterwards. In addition, negative situations such as stress, anxiety, fatigue, physical and sleep problems experienced by students are also associated with FoMO. Çınar and Mutlu (2019) have concluded that there is a serious relationship between FoMO and attention deficit and neurotic personality traits in their study on university students. In addition, it has been determined that there is an important link between FoMO and internet addiction. Lee et al. (2020) have found in their study that mobile phone use negatively affects the learning process. Qutishat and Sharour (2019) have found a negative relationship between university students' sleep hours and FoMO in their study. It has been revealed that individuals who sleep less have more FoMO.

FoMO causes loss of time in addition to these negative effects. Likewise, Eriş (2014) has stated that one of the most important negative consequences of FoMO to the person is that the person wastes a large amount of time with this fear. The person spends most of his time uncontrollably checking social media networks and his phone. The individual who spends his time in this way cannot produce something important for his life. Individuals who cannot fulfill their responsibilities experience the distress of not being able to reach something and may express that they are missing something. Individuals who think that they are lacking in something are not able to fulfill their life responsibilities and they may give up everything and give up in the face of life. According to Gottberg (2017), FoMO can cause many negative

situations that negatively affect a person's life. Individuals do not appreciate the things they have, and therefore they cannot enjoy it. The person may feel excluded and alone. The person may develop feelings of inferiority and insecurity towards himself. The individual is suspicious of the decisions she/he has taken and the choices she/he has made, and may be insecure about their correctness. Since the person is constantly trying to control something, she/he cannot live in the moment, which can reduce the quality of life of the individual. The individual who watches others, their lives and experiences constantly compares themselves with others. According to Eriş (2014), a person forgets the environment and the moment she/he is in, pays attention to the lives around her/him or on social media and focuses on these lives. In this way, the person does not like the moment or the environment and starts to compare her/his own life with other lives and starts to be unhappy with her/his life. She/He thinks that others have more fun, better quality and better lives. The person asks herself/himself the questions of "did she/he eat better food, watch better movies, be in a better vacation spot, laugh more, feel better". Since she/he does not answer these questions in line with the comparison mechanism, she/he may experience different anxieties. Therefore, the person may feel lonely, unhappy, depressed, unsuccessful and backward.

Görür (2019) has stated that with the introduction of the internet and smart phones into our lives, these technological opportunities have become one of the indispensable parts of our lives. Social media networks have become popular because of the ease of being able to reach everyone provided by the internet and the ease of carrying small computers provided by smart phones in our pockets. These networks have become popular applications used by everyone, young and old, in the society. Thanks to these platforms, people have started to communicate with their spouses, friends and relatives and follow them. While following people on social media, individuals begin to feel left behind when they come across content that they could not but made by the people they follow. This causes the Fear of Missing Out. It is very difficult for a person to follow every development in social media and to be aware of every development. Despite this, the person experiences constant distress and may feel obliged to follow social media constantly. Therefore, the person may experience a serious loss of time and his life may be adversely affected. For this reason, the person may miss his lessons and may be sleepless. She/he may feel excluded due to activities that she/he does not participate in or are not invited to, and may experience many negative emotions and situations. FoMO can also negatively affect the economic status of individuals. It can be said that FoMO also encourages impulsive consumption in purchasing and communication activities. FoMO can also increase extrinsic motivation and lead them to spend money on activities such as the FIFA World Cup for sports events (Kim et al. 2020, Aydın et al. 2021).

Holte and Ferraro (2020) have concluded that FoMO is directly related to depression, anxiety, and boredom in their study with 450 volunteer adults in the United States. In their study with

high school students in Turkey, Kartol and Peker (2020) have concluded that there is a moderate relationship between FoMO and anxiety and depression. In a study on the general population in Germany (Rozgonjukab et al. 2020a), FoMO is found to be associated with problematic social media use. In addition, it is found that the decrease in the functionality of the participants in the daily and work environment was associated with FoMO. The same researchers (Rozgonjukab et al. 2020b) have conducted another study on 3370 German volunteers. In the study, it is aimed to look at the relationship between FoMO and big five personality traits, age and gender of individuals. As a result of the study, it is seen that there is no significant relationship between FoMO and the gender variable. It has been revealed that FoMO is observed more in young individuals. While FoMO has a positive relationship with neuroticism, a negative relationship has been found with openness, extraversion, agreeableness and conscientiousness.

Al-Furaih and Al-Awidi (2021) have measured the FoMO levels of students during the course in their study on 2084 undergraduate students at Kuwait University. Another purpose of the study is to investigate whether FoMO is a predictor of students' distraction and disconnection from the lesson. As a result of the study, it is observed that the FoMO levels of the students were high. It has turned out that FoMO is significantly associated with distraction and absenteeism. Sarıca Keçeci et al. (2021) have reached 497 participants from Erciyes University in their study. In this study, the relationships between FoMO and social media addiction, smart phone addiction, gaming disorder and happiness variables are examined. It is determined that there is a significant relationship between FoMO and mobile addiction, gaming disorder and social media addiction.

Fan and Anik (2021) have studied whether they experienced FoMO when quarantine measures are taken and in the absence of travel and party photos on social media. The study shows that FoMO did not disappear during the pandemic, even with social distancing at home, but is replaced by feelings towards new online events (eg online concerts, virtual meetings). Researchers have found that FoMO causes significant psychological and health problems such as sleep deprivation, loss of focus, decreased productivity, and those individuals have difficulty keeping up with the abundant digital content of others, which in turn harms psychological well-being.

Wang et al. (2021) have investigated the effects of cognitive, emotional and behavioral dimensions of FoMO on romantic relationships. As a result of the study, they have found that the behavioral dimension of FoMO have a negative effect on romantic relationships. It is revealed that the emotional and cognitive dimensions of FoMO does not have a significant relationship with romantic relationships. In another study, Tandon et al. (2021) has conducted a study on FoMO, social media fatigue, social media harassment, and online social comparison. 321 social media users from the UK are included in the study. According to the findings obtained as a result of the study, they have found that social comparison with FoMO is closely related

to social media fatigue. Social comparison partially mediates the relationship between FoMO and social media fatigue.

When we consider the symptoms and negative effects of FoMO together, it is seen how important it will be to cope with this situation in the life of today's people. As a result of the researches, effective methods have been revealed in dealing with this situation.

## Coping Methods

It is of great importance to develop ways of coping with a situation such as FoMO, which affects daily life in many ways and causes a lot of negativity, especially in the lives of young people. Paker (2019) has stated that if individuals spend most of their time on the internet and virtual media, if this affects their mood negatively and negatively affects their social relationships, individuals should know how to cope with the Fear of Missing Out. Barker (2016) has stated that it is very important to deal with FoMO and suggested the following in terms of coping:

- FoMO is caused by sadness. When a person starts to fill his life with activities that make him happy and love to do, she/he will be able to develop positive feelings towards her/his life.
- Social media can make the problem even worse. When a person feels unhappy, she/he tries to reduce the tension caused by unhappiness by following social media. But this will only make the problem worse. When the person is unhappy, she/he should leave the environments where people in the virtual world share their happy memories and focus on real relationships and realistic lives.
- When a person focuses on the good and positive emotions, his thoughts and feelings can also be positively affected by this situation. It should not be forgotten that everyone has negative memories as well as everyone's positive memories in life.

Considering these suggestions, it is understood that the individual should know himself, focus on his own interests, focus on himself rather than other people, stay away from comparison in situations where she/he feels unhappy, and be aware that everyone will have positive and negative feelings from time to time. In addition to these suggestions, Dossey (2014) has stated that coping with FoMO includes 3 strategies as a result of his research. She/He listed these strategies as follows:

Strategy one - FoMO is not factual; People who share on social media networks show a certain part of their lives in their posts and share dazzling memories of their lives. The most important way to deal with FoMO is to realize that these lives do not really exist as shown. There is no use in making people unhappy with the pictures and words they see. It is necessary to be aware that the lives of the people who share are not all those photographs.

Strategy two - Defeat FoMO with this word; Words are products of the human mind. These words are the things that make up the human mind to a certain extent. People's feelings and thoughts are affected by the words used. This situation can be beneficial in

combating the Fear of Missing Out. For example, we can express the abbreviation of FoMO with positive meanings such as Miss the Developments and Get Rid of it.

Strategy three - Stop; People should be able to stop this fear, which exists in their imagination, from harming their lives. Therefore, individuals should focus on the time in which they are living, namely the present. Individuals should be aware that the most important time is now and that the present moment is much more valuable than the lives shown on social media and similar situations (Dossey 2014).

Gottberg (2017) has stated that one of the most important ways to reduce FoMO or mitigate its impact on our lives is to lead a simple, simple and happy life. There are several things individuals should do in dealing with the fear of FoMO. Technology can be very beneficial to human life when it does not control individuals and is used by people in line with their needs. Technology should not be allowed to dominate human life. People should be able to turn off their technological devices such as phones and laptops whenever they want or when they are with people. It should be noted that status updates or information encountered in virtual worlds and advertisements do not reflect reality. Hendriksen (2016) has stated that FoMO is very common. According to Sokol (2016), there are 8 important ways to deal with FoMO. These:

- Keeping a diary reveals what a person has and does not have. Writing down three things that a person has every day helps one's feelings and thoughts to be positively affected and to think in that direction. Writing can also help a person stay away from smartphones and electronic devices.
- One should stop comparing herself/himself and her/his life with other people. Being famous or rich doesn't mean people are happy. No one has a perfect life, no matter what it looks like. The person should have the awareness that she/he is where he should live or be where she/he should be in life.
- One should be content with him/herself. It should not be forgotten that everyone has a different life story. People should set goals that fit their lives, that they can be achieved and not based on other people's lives or their experiences.
- One should not focus on material things. When friends on social platforms share lives about beautiful cars, belongings and houses that the person cannot afford, this can cause jealousy and negative situations on the person. Instead of feeling jealous towards these luxury items, the person should motivate herself/himself on how to reach and obtain these luxury items, set appropriate goals and plan. In fact, the things that will make life rich are not material and goods, but our meaningful, valuable and happy life experiences. Keep in mind that money can never buy happiness.
- Instead of sharing fast-flowing social media activities such as who shared what and who is doing what, one should focus on the present and spend time calmly on friends, loved ones and hobbies. The life of the individual who is constantly in a hurry to follow something will be negatively affected and she/he will have

negative emotions. One should focus on his real life and live in the moment.

-Although there are many technological opportunities that enable communication with people, the benefit and health benefit of face-to-face relationship that occurs in an authentic environment cannot be denied. Spending time with the people one loves and experiencing natural happiness in a friendly environment are thought to be an effective way to cope with the Fear of Missing Out.

- The effects of the Fear of Missing Out on People can be reduced by going out for a walk or doing physical exercises, instead of sitting in a closed space for hours depending on mobile devices and evaluating life according to what others are doing. The mental health of individuals with good physical health can also be positively affected by this situation. The important relationship between physical health and mental health should be considered.

In order to cope with this situation, which reduces the quality of life of people, awareness of individuals should be increased. It should be noted that the individuals followed share their best and most beautiful life experiences on social media and do not share their negative life experiences. Individuals experiencing FoMO should constantly monitor this situation and evaluate social media in this way. The fact that people share the moments when their happiness peaks does not show that every moment of their lives is progressing in this way. No one is always happy or always happy in every aspect of his life. Since individuals cannot do all the things they see on social media, at the same time, since such a thing is impossible, it will be useful to love what they are doing now and be happy with them in order to beat their FoMO.

## Conclusion

In today's societies, where technological developments cause a rapid change in the lives of individuals, negative situations are frequently encountered in addition to the benefits of technology. It is important to analyze these negative situations well, to know what they are, to know their source, and to put forward appropriate interventions in this direction. A good understanding of FoMO, which is one of these negative situations and has recently affected the lives of many people, is important in terms of struggle and interventions. In this context, this study aimed to discuss the concept of FoMO, its causes, symptoms, negative effects and coping methods in detail. Being constantly busy with social media applications and spending most of our time here can also cause many types of addiction. FoMO, which is frequently seen in young adults and adults, can cause many negative situations in the lives of individuals. Individuals with high FoMO levels spend a lot of time on smart phones. Individuals who constantly follow the sharing of others cannot fulfill their responsibilities and duties, and deterioration in the quality of life and functionality of individuals occurs. Individuals who fail to fulfill their responsibilities also experience intense regret. It has been observed that individuals who have intense relationships with smart phones and social media applications compare their

lives with the lives of friends and followed individuals in the virtual world, and that their own lives are constantly worthless and feel excluded. This situation can cause individuals to experience more anxiety and experience many negative psychological emotions. Especially in these individuals, anxiety and anxiety are frequently seen due to the thought that others have better lives. As can be seen in the studies conducted on these individuals who experience constant worry and anxiety, a tendency to depression and negative depressive moods are also accompanied. In addition to fatigue and mild pain in certain parts of the body, sleep disorders are also common in these people. These negative situations adversely affect the educational, social, economic and relational processes of especially high school and university students and can harm the society in general. It is important to present the information in the literature together in order to eliminate this negative situation and increase awareness on this issue. It is thought that this study conducted for this purpose will contribute to the literature and studies on this subject.

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