

Exploring the Role of Fear of Missing Out and Attention-Seeking Behavior in Problematic Social Media Use among Adolescent Instagram Users

Aisyah Syihab, Dyah Rani

Departement of Psychology, Faculty of Psychology, Universitas Pancasila, Jakarta

Abstract. Adolescents are often faced with the issue of problematic social media use (PSMU), particularly on platforms such as Instagram. The factors contributing to PSMU include *fear of missing out* (FoMO) and attention-seeking behavior, but it is unclear which one plays a more significant role in causing PSMU. Therefore, this study aimed to analyze the role of FoMO and attention-seeking behavior in PSMU among adolescent Instagram users. The participants were 167 adolescents aged 13-18, and the method used was the non-probability web survey sampling (self-selected polls). The results showed that FoMO and attention-seeking behavior simultaneously and positively affect PSMU in adolescent Instagram users by 32.4% and a significance value of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$) was tested using Multiple Linear Regression. Meanwhile, attention-seeking behavior did not play a role in PSMU when tested individually. Future studies should analyze the same variables on social media users or at different stages of development to compare the results.

Keywords: adolescent, attention-seeking behavior, fear of missing out, Instagram problematic social media use

Peranan *Fear of Missing Out* dan *Attention-Seeking Behavior* terhadap *Problematic Social Media Use* pada Remaja Pengguna Instagram

Abstrak. *Problematic social media use* (PSMU) merupakan salah satu permasalahan yang dihadapi remaja. Salah satu media sosial yang sering digunakan remaja adalah Instagram. Ada banyak hal yang memengaruhi PSMU, di antaranya adalah *fear of missing out* (FoMO) dan *attention-seeking behavior*, namun belum diketahui manakah yang lebih berperan membuat individu mengalami PSMU. Oleh karena itu penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis peranan FoMO dan *attention-seeking behavior* terhadap PSMU pada remaja yang menggunakan Instagram. Partisipan pada penelitian ini berjumlah 167 orang remaja yang berusia 13-18 tahun, dengan metode pengambilan sampel berbasis *non-probability web survey* (*self selected polls*). Hasil dari penelitian ini adalah FoMO dan *attention-seeking behavior* secara simultan memiliki peranan positif terhadap PSMU pada remaja pengguna Instagram sebesar 32.4% dan nilai signifikansi sebesar .000 ($p < .05$) yang diuji menggunakan teknik analisis Regresi Linear Berganda. Sedangkan jika diuji masing-masing, *attention-seeking behavior* tidak memiliki peranan terhadap PSMU. Saran bagi peneliti selanjutnya adalah melakukan penelitian dengan variabel yang sama pada pengguna media sosial atau tahapan perkembangan yang berbeda, untuk melihat apakah hal yang sama terjadi pada media sosial lainnya, atau pada tahapan perkembangan lainnya.

Kata Kunci: *attention-seeking behavior*, *fear of missing out*, Instagram, *problematic social media use*, remaja

Correspondence: Aisyah Syihab. Email: aisyah.syihab@univpancasila.ac.id

According to data from 2022, there are 204.7 million internet users in Indonesia (Annur, 2022). The total of 204.7 million users represents an increase of 1.03% from 2021, with 202.6 million in Indonesia. The total also indicates that around 73.7% of the population in 2022 at 277.7 million are internet users (Annur, 2022). According to a survey conducted by the Indonesian Internet Service Provider Association in 2022 on 7,568 respondents aged 13-55, the most developed stage of internet users is adolescence, where 99.16% aged 13-18 are users (Riyanto, 2022). The Indonesian Internet Service Provider Association (APJII, 2020) survey stated that the highest number of users are aged 10-24, with a percentage of 29.2%.

Almost all people in the world, including adolescents, specifically those living in urban areas, can no longer be separated from the internet, from waking up to going to sleep. All aspects of their lives, specifically those related to work and school, require internet access (Kusumo & Jatmika, 2020). According to Garvin (2019), the internet provides many conveniences for almost every activity in various fields of work, school tasks, and even daily activities. It provides current information that users can quickly access with many entertainments, such as watching social media and games.

Among the various activities that can be conducted using the internet, accessing social media is one of the most frequent, consisting

of about 51.5% (APJII, 2020). Social media provides a space for various activities for users, ranging from making and viewing writing posts, photos, audio, and video posts, and communicating with others, such as giving comments or messages (Youssef et al, 2020). The activities have a positive impact in the form of entertainment for its users. Due to feeling entertained, users can spend more time and open social media more often. According to Kemp (2019), the average time to access social media daily is 2 hours and 16 minutes. That time becomes wasted on what should be used for important activities, such as studying and completing tasks. This can cause problems in individuals who frequently use social media, and the problems caused are known as PSMU.

PSMU is a strong desire or motivation to continuously open, view, and use social media, requiring much time sacrifice and disrupting other daily activities. Furthermore, it can interfere with interpersonal relationships, psychological health, and well-being (Andreassen & Pallesen, 2014).

According to Griffiths (2005), six components contribute to problematic behavior when using social media (PSMU). These include a) silence, where social media dominates an individual's thoughts, feelings, and behavior, b) mood modification, where social media is used to improve one's mood, c) tolerance, where an individual increases the amount of time spent on social media beyond set limits, d) withdrawal symptoms, where an individual

experiences negative feelings when not accessing social media or reducing activity, d) conflict, where interpersonal or intrapsychic conflicts arise from excessive use of social media, and e) relapse, where individuals struggle to reduce or stop using social media

Adolescents are particularly susceptible to PSMU (Savci et al, 2022) due to being the largest group of internet users (APJII, 2020) and experiencing more varied problems during this developmental stage (Papalia et al, 2009). This is because adolescents are in the transition stage from childhood to adulthood. This transition causes adolescents to experience biological, cognitive, and socio-emotional changes. This stage is characterized by quick changes in thoughts, feelings, and actions and a vulnerability to anger, depression, and difficulty controlling emotions (Feldman, 2017; Santrock, 2019), making them more susceptible to PSMU.

One of the emotions difficult to control when using social media is fear, which causes PSMU is fear of missing out (FoMO) (Franchina et al, 2018; Risdyanti et al, 2019). FoMO is an individual's fear of being left behind with information about what other people are doing through cyberspace, specifically social media (Przybylski et al, 2013).

According to Wegmann et al. (2017), FoMO is made up of two components: trait and state. Trait-FoMO is the tendency for individuals to experience fear when missing something or someone specific. State-FoMO component develops in individuals during the use of online-

based communication applications, which can make them to feel afraid after missing related information (Wegmann et al, 2017).

The developmental tasks of adolescents include achieving new, more mature relationships with peers of both sexes (Santrock, 2019). Adolescents can communicate through the internet to achieve new relationships while learning and sharing information with others. This makes adolescents want to stay connected on social media with their friends to prevent the experience of FoMO. Dhir et al. (2018) also found that FoMO can impact PSMU, as individuals may feel anxious about maintaining relationships and staying connected in the virtual world (Dhir et al, 2018).

During this stage, individuals are in the process of discovering their identity, which can lead to a desire to stand out and be recognized by others (Pratiwi & Basuki, 2011), resulting in the emergence of an imaginary audience. This audience is a tendency to feel as the main characters in front of many people (Elkind, 1967) and drive a person to perform attention-seeking behavior (Frothingham, 2020). Horn (2004) defined attention-seeking behavior as a method of seeking validation from others, with the goal of having more positive impressions.

Attention-seeking behavior is commonly found on social media (Edwards, 2016), and it is increasing, according to Edwards (2016). Social media provides a means to promote oneself, showcase activities, and seek

validation in the form of views, comments, and likes from others. These are conducted to seek attention from others through social media, thereby leading to its frequent usage.

There is a suspicion that attention-seeking behavior affects the occurrence of PSMU. This is in line with Evanytha et al. (2020) where attention-seeking behavior has a positive relationship with PSMU. According to Casale dan Banchi (2020), behavior that attracts excessive attention and leads to narcissism also has a positive effect on PSMU.

Instagram is one of the most used social media in Indonesia, specifically by adolescents (Dahono, 2021). Currently, it is not the most popular with adolescents, but can be found among the top three (Josina, 2021). Individuals can experience PSMU since Instagram has various elements that make them feel entertained and want to continue using this social media. According to Limniou et al. (2022), users are more likely to encounter PSMU on Instagram than on Facebook due to the prevalence of humorous and engaging postings.

Instagram is also a social media that can make its users experience FoMO (Moore & Craciun, 2021) with Insta Story, Insta Live, and Insta Post features, where users can immediately send live posts. Users, who desire to participate in or experience the activity but are unable to, may feel excluded from the information and miss out on the opportunity upon viewing the post (experiencing FoMO).

The features on Instagram can also make its users engage in attention-seeking behavior. Users seek validation or evaluation from others by posting interesting contents for likes and comments (Tamplin, 2017).

Based on the explanations above, it is necessary to determine the simultaneous role of FoMO and attention-seeking behavior on PSMU in adolescent Instagram users. The existing study only confirmed the impact of the behavior on PSMU. Franchina et al. (2018) stated that FoMO is a predictor of PSMU and phubbing. The study by Risdyanti et al. (2019) also reported that FoMO plays a role of 35.8% in PSMU. Meanwhile, Hawk et al. (2019) found that attention-seeking behavior affects PSMU. These studies analyzed the role of FoMO and attention-seeking behavior on PSMU in adolescent Instagram users.

Method

Participants

This study used a quantitative approach to determine the role (R square value) of the two independent variables towards one dependent variable. It used a sample of adolescents aged 13-18 who are Instagram users and reside in *Jakarta-Bogor-Depok-Tangerang-Bekasi* (Jabodetabek). The participants involved were 167 adolescents, consisting 107 females and 67 males. Furthermore, the sampling was conducted through a non-probability web survey technique.

Instruments

This study measures PSMU, FoMO, and attention-seeking behavior using Bergen Social Media Addiction Scale (BSMAS), Fear of Missing Out Scale (FoMOS), and Attention-Seeking Scale, respectively.

Bergen Social Media Addiction Scale (BSMAS)

The Bergen Social Media Addiction Scale (BSMAS) developed by Andreassen et al. (2016) is used to measure the PSMU variable. The BSMAS is a modified version of the Bergen Facebook Addiction Scale (BFAS) (Andreassen et al., 2012) which replaces the word "Facebook" with "Social Media" to include other platforms such as Twitter, and Instagram. The BSMAS consists of 6 items, each reflecting 6 elements of addiction, according to Griffiths (2005). The first, second, third, fourth, fifth, and sixth item represents the salience, tolerance, mood modification, relapse, withdrawal, and conflict elements, respectively. Furthermore, a Likert scale is used with 5 alternative answers, where Scores 1 and 5 are rated as "very rarely," and "very often", respectively. The minimum and maximum scores for the BSMAS are 6 and 30, and an example of an item provided is "I feel anxious when I am forbidden or unable to use social media". The Cronbach's alpha coefficient of this measurement tool is .788, which indicates reliability. Furthermore, each item on this measurement tool has a significance value of .000, indicating validity.

Fear of Missing Out Scale (FoMOS)

The variable (FoMO) is measured using the Fear of Missing Out Scale (FoMOS) developed by Wegmann et al. (2017) with slight modifications in the form of the addition of items related to the online context, where the previous tool by Przybylski et al. (2013) was not available. The FoMOS developed by Wegmann et al. (2017) has two subscales that measure each component. The first subscale measures the trait-FoMO component, as a general tendency when an individual loses something. The second measures the state-FoMO component, which is a specific measurement in the online context. This component is a condition that develops during the use of online-based communication applications. An example item for trait-FoMO is "I worry that others are having more enjoyable experiences than me". Meanwhile, an example item for state-FoMO is "I am constantly online not to miss any information". The Cronbach's alpha values for trait-FoMO and state-FoMO are .873 and .890, respectively, which indicates both are reliable for use in the study. Similarly, each item on this measurement tool has a significance value of .000, which means the scores are valid.

Attention-Seeking Scale

The variable attention-seeking is measured using the Attention-Seeking Scale developed by Hawk et al. (2019), which consists of 5 items. The scale used is a 4-point Likert

scale, starting from 1 rated for “very not appropriate” to 4 rating for “very appropriate”. An example item will be given: “I think it is very important to obtain many comments on my posts”. Based on the reliability test results, Cronbach’s Alpha value of this measurement tool is .857, and reliable for use. Each item on this tool has a significance value of .000, indicating that all are valid. Furthermore, the three measurement tools have been translated into the Indonesian language and have received expert judgment in the Faculty of Psychology at Pancasila University.

Procedure

This study procedure has been subjected through the following steps: (1) The initial stage is to obtain the phenomena, and determine the related problem and theories; (2) Establishing the psychological construct to be studied; (3) Formulating the thinking framework, theoretical review, and determining the appropriate method; (4) Preparing the Attention-Seeking Scale, FOMOS, and BSMAS in the form of questionnaires; (5) Determining the population and sample based on the determined characteristics; (6) Preparing questionnaires to be distributed as a trial; (7)

Testing the validity and reliability of the measurement tools; (8) Collecting data from the respondents; (9) Analyzing the data with the statistics collected; and (10) Making conclusions and reporting the results.

Data analysis

The data analysis is assisted by using the Statistical Product and Service Solution (SPSS) ver.23. The method for testing hypotheses is conducted with Multiple Linear Regression calculations. It tests the role of two variables on one by looking at the value of R, F, and R square (R²) obtained from the results.

Results

This study aimed to determine the role of FoMO and attention-seeking behavior on PSMU. The participants were 167 adolescents aged 13-18 with an average age of 15.8 years. Female adolescents were more than males with a percentage of 64.1%. The participants reside in Jabodetabek, with the following details, 33.5%, 29.9%, 22.8%, 10.8%, and 3% lived in Tangerang, Bogor, Bekasi, and Depok. Most participants at 43.1% used Instagram for 1-3 hours daily, and a general description can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1*Overview of Participants*

| Characteristics | <i>n</i> | % |
|---|----------|------|
| Gender | | |
| Female | 107 | 64.1 |
| Male | 60 | 35.9 |
| Age | | |
| 13 years | 11 | 6.6 |
| 14 years | 31 | 18.6 |
| 15 years | 35 | 21 |
| 16 years | 26 | 15.6 |
| 17 years | 30 | 18 |
| 18 years | 34 | 20.4 |
| Residence | | |
| Jakarta | 50 | 29.9 |
| Bogor | 38 | 22.8 |
| Depok | 5 | 3 |
| Tangerang | 56 | 33.5 |
| Bekasi | 18 | 10.8 |
| Instagram Social Media Usage Time Per Day | | |
| <1 hour | 41 | 24.6 |
| 1-3 hour | 72 | 43.1 |
| 3-5 hour | 30 | 18 |
| > 5 hour | 24 | 14.4 |

Noted. N = 167

In this study, descriptive analysis is also conducted to determine the high or low values of participants in each variable. The values are categorized into two, namely high and low, to

see whether the participants' values tend to the right (high) or left (low). The categorized variables are PSMU, FoMO (trait and state dimensions), and attention-seeking behavior.

Table 2*Problematic Social Media Use (PSMU) Category*

| Score | Category | <i>n</i> | % |
|-----------|----------|----------|------|
| X = 17.62 | high | 81 | 48.5 |
| X < 17.62 | low | 86 | 51.5 |

Noted. N = 167

Table 3*Fear of Missing Out Score-Category Trait Dimension (Trait-FoMO)*

| Score | Category | <i>n</i> | % |
|-----------|----------|----------|------|
| X = 12.07 | high | 73 | 43.7 |
| X < 12.07 | low | 94 | 52.3 |

Noted. N = 167

Table 4*Category Score Fear of Missing Out State Dimension (State-FoMO)*

| Score | Category | <i>n</i> | % |
|-----------|----------|----------|------|
| X = 18.27 | high | 76 | 45.5 |
| X < 18.27 | low | 91 | 54.5 |

Noted. N = 167

Table 5*Category Attention-Seeking Behavior Score*

| Score | Category | <i>n</i> | % |
|-----------|----------|----------|------|
| X = 12.31 | high | 81 | 48.5 |
| X < 12.31 | low | 86 | 51.5 |

Noted. N = 167

Based on Tables 2, 3, 4, and 5, 51.5%, 52.3%, 54.5% and 51.4% of participants have low PSMU, Trait-FoMO, State-FoMO, and attention-seeking behavior values, respectively.

Before testing multiple regression analysis to answer the study hypothesis, an assumption test in the form of a normality is carried out. Kolmogorov-Smirnov normality test shows $p = .2$ ($p > .05$), and since the value is greater than .05, the data are normally distributed.

Multiple regression analysis is conducted, and the R-value in this study is .569. Therefore, the strength of the relationship between attention-seeking behavior, trait-FoMO, and state-FoMO with PSMU obtains a result of .569. This correlation value indicates that the relationship between independent and the dependent variable has a moderate correlation between .5 - .8. The correlation is also positive,

meaning there is a direct relationship between FoMO and attention-seeking behavior with PSMU.

The F test analysis is used to see the F count and the significance values produced from the attention-seeking behavior and the FoMO variable. These include trait-FoMO and state-FoMO as independent variables towards PSMU as the dependent variable. Furthermore, the F count value obtained is 26.013, while the F table is 2.60. The results indicated that F count > F table since the resulting significance value is .000 with $p < .05$. In conclusion, attention-seeking behavior and FoMO, which includes trait-FoMO and state-FoMO, simultaneously have a significant effect on PSMU in adolescents. Additionally, an R² value of .324 is also obtained, where the role of FoMO and attention-seeking behavior on PSMU is 32.4%, as seen in Table 6.

Table 6*Multiple Regression Test Analysis*

| Variable | R | R ² | F count | p |
|--|------|----------------|---------|------|
| Attention-Seeking Behavior – FoMO – PSMU | .569 | .324 | 26.013 | .000 |

A test is also conducted to determine the significant effects of the two independent variables on the dependent. Independent variables have a significant effect on the

dependent when the t count value generated is greater than the t table ($t \text{ count} > t \text{ table}$), and the value from each independent variable is less than .05 ($p < .05$).

Table 7

Results of T-Test Analysis

| Variable | B | t count | p |
|----------------------------|-------|---------|------|
| Constant | 5.152 | | |
| Attention-seeking behavior | 0.056 | 0.469 | .640 |
| Traits-FoMO | 0.420 | 3.403 | .001 |
| State-FoMO | 0.367 | 3.657 | .000 |

Based on Table 7, the t-count results for the attention-seeking behavior variable was 0.469, and the resulting significance was .640. These showed that the t-count value for the attention-seeking behavior variable is less than the t-table ($0.469 < 1.975$), and the resulting significance was .640. Therefore, there was no effect of this variable on PSMU since the results of the regression coefficient is equal to 0.056.

The t-test result of the FoMO variable specifically referring to the trait-FoMO component was found to have a score of 3.403 and a significance of .001. The result showed that the t-test with the trait-FoMO component is greater than the t-table ($3.403 > 1.975$), and the significance value obtained was .001 ($.001 < .05$). Therefore, this variable can significantly affects PSMU with a regression coefficient of 0.420, indicating that the effect is positive.”

The t-test score generated from the FoMO variable on the state-FoMO component was found to have a score of 3.657 and a significance of .000. Therefore, the variable with the state-FoMO component was greater than the t-table

($3.657 > 1.975$), and the significance value obtained was .000 ($.000 < .05$). Based on this result, it can be stated that the variable significantly affects PSMU with a regression coefficient of 0.367, indicating a positive effect

Discussion

The results showed a positive correlation between FoMO and attention-seeking behavior with PSMU, meaning that there is a direct relationship. The FoMO and attention-seeking behavior in an individual is directly related to the PSMU score. Meanwhile, both independent variables also have a simultaneous and significant effect on PSMU.

Based on the results, PSMU occurs due to the simultaneous presence of FoMO and attention-seeking behavior of 32.4%. The variable has a significant effect when tested separately on PSMU, and this is in line with the study of Franchina et al. (2018) and Risdyanti et al. (2019). Furthermore, FoMO is one factor that affects the formation of PSMU in individuals (Franchina et al, 2018; Risdyanti et al, 2019), who tend to monitor the lives of

others to reduce or redirect their anxiety about missing information. The continuous monitoring behavior can also cause feelings of being left behind and not present at valuable events (Buglass et al, 2017; Elhai et al, 2016; Fuster et al, 2017; Scott & Woods, 2018; Wegmann et al, 2017). Individuals suffering from FoMO constantly check their social media feeds in an effort to catch up on people and prevent themselves from falling behind, thereby experiencing PSMU.

FoMO has two dimensions, where state-FoMO has a greater impact than trait-FoMO. This may occur because state-FoMO is a continuous and increasingly developing condition in individuals who experience fear of missing out on the latest information about people (Wegmann et al, 2017). Meanwhile, trait-FoMO is a fear of missing out on moments with certain people (Wegmann et al, 2017). This feeling is usually not persistent, and it is normal for its effect not to be as significant as state-FoMO.

The results stated that the attention-seeking behavior variable does not have a significant effect on PSMU when tested separately from FoMO. However, compared to the previous study (Risdyanti et al, 2019), there is a reduction in the value of contribution to PSMU from 35.8% to 32.4%. The possibility of a decrease in the role value is because of the presence of other variables tested simultaneously with FoMO towards PSMU, namely the attention-seeking behavior.

The presence of attention-seeking behavior reduces the role value of FoMO towards PSMU. This is based on the results compared to the study by (Risdyanti et al, 2019) because attention-seeking behavior does affect PSMU. The study by Hawk et al (2019) showed that narcissistic adolescents' attention-seeking behavior affects PSMU. According to Edwards (2016), attention-seeking behavior plays a role in individual behavior on social media, specifically Facebook, requiring affirmation from others on social media. The attention is in the form of the number of views on Instagram Story, as well as likes and comments on feed. Furthermore, the attention obtained increase the rate of being noticed, and famous. The feeling of being noticed by others and becoming more famous makes adolescents experience PSMU. Fame can also impact the individual's finances by becoming a celebrity and be sought after by various business owners to market their products. Instagram celebrities are paid with products or a certain amount when marketing.

These results have implications for developing theories about PSMU, specifically additional information on the factors affecting the variable. Studies on PSMU are currently increasing, following the experience of people, specifically adolescents. Therefore, this study can also have implications for the community when the results are used as psychoeducation material to prevent PSMU in adolescents.

Conclusion

This study aimed to analyze the role of FoMO and attention-seeking behavior on PSMU in adolescent Instagram users. It can be concluded that FoMO and attention-seeking behavior simultaneously have a positive effect and role on PSMU in adolescent Instagram users has a value of 32.4%.

Suggestion

Based on the result of the study, theoretical and practical suggestions can be considered. Theoretically, a suggestion for a similar study in the future should obtain other variables for the role in PSMU, such as subjective well-being, psychological well-being, personality, parenting, and social support. For further study, it is better to re-analyze the data using a cross-sectional method to determine PSMU behavior at various developmental stages other than adolescence, such as in late childhood between 6-11 years, and emerging and young adults. Furthermore, it is recommended that future studies should analyze the impact of PSMU on other social media, such as Tiktok. Psychologists and educators should also offer practical guidance and psychoeducation on the effects of FoMO and attention-seeking behavior on mental well-being.

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