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# The Effect Of Fear Of Missing Out Behavior On Social Media Fatigue Among Generation Z In Padang

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#### **Abstract**

The development of digital technology has made it easier for humans to communicate and access information, especially through social media, which has become an integral part of Generation Z's lives. The high intensity of social media use exposes Generation Z to the phenomenon of Fear of Missing Out (FoMO), which is the fear of being left behind in terms of information, trends, and social activities shared by others. This condition has the potential to cause social media fatigue, which is a feeling of tiredness, boredom, and overwhelm due to an excessive flow of information. The aim of this study is to analyze the influence of FoMO on social media fatigue among Generation Z in Padang. Using purposive sampling, this study involved 100 respondents. In this study, the respondents were Generation Z active social media users in Padang who were between the ages of 18 and 28. The test was conducted using simple linear regression analysis. The results of the study show that there is a relationship between FoMO and social media fatigue with a value of 34.3%. The results of this study are expected to contribute theoretically to communication studies and practically to efforts to improve the digital literacy of young people so that they can use social media more wisely.

Keywords: Fear of Missing Out; Social Media Fatigue; Generation Z; Social Media

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## Introduction

The development of digital technology has brought about major changes in the global communications landscape. The internet, which initially served only as a means of exchanging information, has now transformed into a new social space that connects people without the constraints of time and space. The emergence of social media has reinforced this change. These platforms are no longer just a place to share information, but also a space for identity formation, social interaction, and the search for validation (Serliacy & Brahmana, 2023). This phenomenon shows a significant shift in human interaction patterns, from face to face to digital spaces with increasing intensity.

In Indonesia, social media has become an integral part of everyday life. A recent report from the Indonesian Internet Service Providers Association (APJII) states that in 2024, the number of internet users will reach 221.56 million, or around 80% of the population. Of that number, people spend an average of 7 hours and 38 minutes per day surfing the internet, with 3 hours and 11 minutes of that time spent on social media (APJII, 2024; Hootsuite We Are Social, 2024). This figure not only shows the massive penetration of the internet, but also how social media has penetrated various aspects of life, from entertainment to economic means.

Among various user groups, Generation Z is the most intense in accessing social media. Born between 1997 and 2012, this generation grew up in the digital era and is often referred to as digital natives (Przybylski et al., 2013). Based on APJII data, around 34.40% of Indonesian internet users belong to this generation. In Padang, the Generation Z population was recorded at 224,440 in 2022 (BPS, 2023). Compared to previous generations, Generation Z relies more on social media as their main source of information, while Generations X and Y still depend on television (Arum, 2023). This condition makes Generation Z a group that is vulnerable to both the positive and negative impacts of digital media exposure (Wijaya, 2023).

One of the most common psychological phenomena among Generation Z is Fear of Missing Out (FoMO). This concept refers to the fear of being left out of information, trends, or important moments shared by others on social media (Przybylski et al., 2013). Surveys show that around 64.6% of teenagers in Indonesia experience symptoms of FoMO, mainly due to the urge to constantly keep up with their peers' online activities (Kaloeti, 2022). Furthermore, research by Almayniwati and Rizal (2024) shows that the intensity of social comparison on digital media reinforces an individual's tendency to experience FoMO, which ultimately triggers anxiety and dissatisfaction with oneself.

The FoMO phenomenon has serious consequences, one of which is social media fatigue, a condition of exhaustion caused by overexposure to information on social media. This fatigue can take the form of cognitive, emotional, or behavioral exhaustion, causing individuals to feel overwhelmed and ultimately withdraw from the digital space (S. Zhang, 2021). Previous research by Hattingh (2022) confirms that FoMO is closely related to social media fatigue through the mechanisms of compulsive social media use and excessive exposure to information. However, this research is still limited to certain platforms such as Instagram and Snapchat, while in Indonesia, Generation Z actively uses various social media platforms simultaneously, including Instagram, TikTok, WhatsApp, and X (APJII, 2024).

Therefore, this study focuses on Generation Z in Padang to analyze the extent to which FoMO affects social media fatigue. This group was chosen not only because they are the most frequent internet users, but also because they are in a phase of psychological and social development that is vulnerable to the influence of digital media (Wijaya, 2023). Thus, this study is expected to contribute theoretically to the study of communication and digital psychology, as well as practically in the form of digital literacy recommendations so that the younger generation can use social media more wisely, balanced, and healthily (Serliacy & Brahmana, 2023; Almayniwati & Rizal, 2024).

The methodology used in this study is an explanatory quantitative approach. The researcher tested the causal relationship between the independent variable, Fear of Missing Out, and the dependent variable, social media fatigue, using simple linear regression analysis. This method was chosen because it allows the researcher to explain the direction, strength, and significance of FoMO's influence on social media fatigue among Generation Z in Padang .

## Literature Review

## Fear Of Missing Out

Fear of Missing Out (FoMO) describes the anxiety that arises when someone worries that others are experiencing interesting or enjoyable things while they are not involved (Przybylski et al., 2013). This feeling drives individual to stay connected to social media, often leading to excessive use and other negative effects (Rozgonjuk et al., 2020; Fioravanti et al., 2021; Akbari et al., 2021). FoMO is also often associated with the phenomenon of technology anxiety, which is a state of unease that arises when someone is unable to use technological devices or is disconnected from digital networks. More broadly, FoMO reflects the basic human need to stay connected and be part of social relationships, which is now greatly facilitated by social media (Tandon et al., 2021). For those who are prone to FoMO, social media is a very tempting space. These platforms not only make it easier to build social relationships, but also provide greater opportunities to continue to engage in social dynamics yet this can also intensify comparison, pressure to disclose, and fatigue (Jabeen et al., 2023).

In many ways, social media lowers the barriers to participation in interactions, so individuals with high levels of FoMO feel compelled to be more active (Akbari et al., 2021; Tandon et al., 2021). Przybylski et al. (2013) explain that FoMO can be measured through two

main dimensions, namely relatedness and self; later work further ties these to self-concept processes and identity construction in online spaces (Zhang et al., 2020). The relatedness aspect relates to the need to feel close, connected, and accepted by others. Meanwhile, the self-aspect emphasizes the psychological need to build self-identity, gain control, and seek recognition through digital social interactions dynamics that can escalate problematic use via social comparison and lowered self-esteem (Servidio et al., 2024). Both aspects form the basis for why someone is driven to remain active and attached to social media.

#### Social Media Fatigue

Social Media Fatigue (SMF) describes a state of exhaustion, both physical and psychological, experienced by individuals as a result of excessive social media use. This fatigue typically manifests as boredom, loss of energy, stress, and a decrease in motivation to interact digitally, and is frequently linked to information/communication overload on platforms (Zheng & Ling, 2021; Pang, 2022). SMF is often triggered by an overwhelming flood of information that is difficult to control, causing individuals to feel overwhelmed and withdraw from online activities; among Gen Z, pandemic era information overload significantly increased discontinuance intentions and harmed wellbeing (Liu et al., 2021).

This phenomenon can be viewed from three main perspectives. First, the cognitive aspect difficulty managing too much information which produces confusion and reduced concentration (Pang, 2022; Zheng & Ling, 2021). Second, the behavioral aspect changes in daily habits such as delaying responses, reducing interaction, or discontinuing use (Liu et al., 2021; Liu, 2021). Third, the emotional aspect negative feelings like frustration, anxiety, or boredom under constant exposure, where privacy concerns, cyberbullying, and overload heighten emotional exhaustion that, in turn, feeds SMF (Sheng et al., 2023). In other words, social media fatigue is not just a technical problem of use, but a psychological strain with downstream effects on health related efficacy and help seeking (Li et al., 2023). This condition is increasingly relevant in today's digital age, where young people especially Generation Z spend substantial time in virtual environments (Zheng & Ling, 2021; Liu et al., 2021).

#### Method

This study employed an explanatory quantitative approach to examine the causal relationship between Fear of Missing Out (FoMO) as the independent variable and social media fatigue as the dependent variable. The research was conducted in Padang, targeting Generation Z social media users aged 18-28. The sample size was determined using the Lameshow formula, resulting in 100 respondents selected through purposive sampling based on specific characteristics, such as being active social media users.

Data were primarily collected using a closed questionnaire with a Likert scale. The FoMO variable was measured using an instrument based on Przyblski's aspects of relatedness and self, while social media fatigue was measured using Zhang's instrument covering cognitive, emotional, and behavioral dimensions. The research instruments were tested for validity using Pearson Product Moment and for reliability using Cronbach's Alpha. Data analysis was performed using simple linear regression, preceded by normality and linearity tests as prerequisite tests.

# **Results and Discussion**

This study involved 100 respondents aged 18–28 years, the majority of whom were students and young individuals from Generation Z in Padang. Of these, most respondents (77%) were aged 21–23 years, indicating that this age group dominated participation in the study. Demographically, the respondents consisted of 53 women and 47 men, indicating a fairly balanced gender distribution. All respondents resided in Padang in accordance with the research criteria, so the results of this study can reflect the real conditions of young people in the population.

When viewed in terms of the length of time spent on social media per day, the majority of respondents (46%) access social media for 2–5 hours per day. This figure indicates that almost half of the respondents fall into the medium user category, which cannot be considered low but does not yet fall into the extreme user category. However, this intensity is quite significant because using

social media for more than two hours a day can affect psychological and social aspects (Andreassen et al., 2017). Furthermore, 84% of respondents stated that they access social media every day, confirming that social media has become an integral part of their routine.

Based on the type of content accessed, the majority of respondents use social media to view entertainment content, followed by informational and educational content. This phenomenon reflects the digital consumption patterns of Generation Z, who tend to seek entertainment as a means of relaxation and distraction from their daily activities. However, behind these activities lie psychological risks such as unhealthy social comparison or fear of missing out (FoMO), which can lead to social media fatigue. Before conducting regression analysis, this study first tested the assumptions of data normality and linearity.

Normality and Linearity Test

Table 1. Normality Test

Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) <sup>c</sup>	$.200^{d}$

(Primary Source, 2025)

The normality test results show that the data is normally distributed with an Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) value of 0.200. Since this value is greater than 0.05, the data is declared to meet the assumption of normality. Thus, further analysis can be carried out validly because the data distribution does not experience significant deviations.

Deviation from Linearity	43.187	1.420	.175

Table 2. Linearity Test

(Primary Source, 2025)

Next, linearity testing was conducted by referring to the deviation from linearity. A variable is said to be linear if the significance value (Sig) is greater than 0.05. From the test results, a Sig value of 0.175 was obtained, which means that the relationship between the variables Fear of Missing Out (FoMO) and social media fatigue (SMF) is linear. This is important because the simple regression analysis used in the study requires a linear relationship between the two variables.

Regression Test

Table 3. Regression Test

	Unstandardized		Standardi	4	C:~	
	Coefficients			zed Coefficients	l	Sig.
			Std.			
M	odel	В	Error	Beta		
1	(Const	11.687	3.349		3.49	.001
	ant)				0	
	FoMO	.772	.108	.586	7.15	.001
					9	
a.	a. Dependent Variable: SMF					

(Primary Source, 2025)

The results of simple regression analysis show that the Fear of Missing Out (FoMO) variable has a significant effect on social media fatigue (SMF). Based on the analysis output, the regression coefficient ( $\beta$ ) value obtained is 0.586, with a significance level of 0.001 (p < 0.05). This finding indicates that the higher an individual's level of FoMO, the greater their tendency to experience

social media fatigue. The relatively large coefficient value (0.586) indicates that FoMO contributes significantly to the emergence of SMF.

Furthermore, the table of determination coefficients for variables X and Y shows an R Square value of 0.343. This means that FoMO contributes 34.3% to the variation in the emergence of SMF in respondents, while the remaining 65.7% is influenced by other factors not examined in this study. These factors may include psychological aspects such as self-esteem, academic pressure, the quality of online social interactions, lifestyle, and the balance between online and offline activities.

**Table 4. Model Summary** 

## **Model Summary**

				Std. Error of the
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Estimate
1	.586ª	.343	.337	5.608

(Primary Source, 2025)

The results of this study clearly show that Fear of Missing Out (FoMO) has a significant influence on social media fatigue among Generation Z in Padang. These findings provide a clear picture of how digital life is ingrained in this generation, bringing both positive and negative impacts. Generation Z, who were born and raised in the digital technology era, have made social media an integral part of their daily lives. From the moment they wake up until they go to sleep, many of them are constantly interacting with social media, from simply checking notifications and following the latest trends to actively participating in simultaneous online conversations (Beyens et al., 2020). This phenomenon is not surprising. For Generation Z, social media is not just a means of entertainment, but also a primary medium for building self-identity, expanding their network of friends, and gaining social validation. However, behind all these conveniences, there is considerable psychological pressure. FoMO arises when individuals feel worried about being left behind from what others are doing, talking about, or feeling in the virtual world. This feeling seems to demand that they always be present and never fall behind, because if they do, they will feel powerless, outdated, or even marginalized from their social circle (Przybylski et al., 2013; Fioravanti et al., 2021).

In this study, the majority of respondents were aged between 21 and 23 years old. This is an important phase in life, where a person is in a transitional period towards adulthood that is full of dynamics. On the one hand, they face increasingly complex academic, work, and social responsibilities. On the other hand, they are also actively building their self-image, seeking recognition, and expanding their social networks. Social media has become a strategic space to fulfill these needs, but at the same time it also presents serious challenges. The pressure to constantly update and stay connected often makes them feel burdened (Tandon et al., 2021).

High FoMO encourages individuals to constantly follow every notification, post, or latest news from their environment. This creates an exhausting cycle: the more often they open social media, the more likely they are to compare themselves to others, and the more anxious they become because they feel left behind. For example, when seeing peers who have successfully landed a job, continued their studies abroad, or simply attended a certain event, someone with a high level of FoMO will feel that they are unlucky, left behind, or even a failure. These feelings then accumulate into emotional pressure that drains energy, eventually leading to social media fatigue (Rozgonjuk et al., 2020; Liu et al., 2021). Social media fatigue in this context is not just physical exhaustion from staring at screens for too long, but rather psychological exhaustion. Individuals feel bored, lose motivation, and even tend to want to avoid social media, even though they still feel the need to access it. This is the great paradox in the digital lives of Generation Z: they feel tired of social media, but at the same time feel they cannot completely escape it (Sheng et al., 2023).

Gen Z's profile helps explain the pattern we observe. They score high on needs for relatedness and self, which social media seems built to satisfy: staying plugged into conversations and trends meets the pull to belong, while likes, comments, and subtle acknowledgements speak to self-validation (Zhang et al., 2020). When those needs aren't met or are pushed to excess the result is dissatisfaction, anxiety, and mental drain. Consistent with this, Putri and Brahmana (2023) show that heavier social media intensity predicts stronger FoMO, which in turn sustains the compulsion to keep checking even as wellbeing worsens. Complementing that pathway, Almayniwati and Rizal (2024) find that habitual social comparison online amplifies FoMO by making people feel less accomplished or less interesting than their peers pressures that accumulate into social media fatigue.

The results of this study show clearly that Fear of Missing Out (FoMO) has a strong influence on social media fatigue among Generation Z in Padang . Rather than treating this as an isolated statistical link, it helps to see it in the flow of everyday digital life: Gen Z grew up inside platforms where connection, comparison, and constant updates are the norm (Beyens et al., 2020). That context sets the stage for how FoMO turns into strain.

Seen through that lens, social media is no longer just leisure it doubles as a stage for self-presentation, networking, and validation. Each post or story sets an (often illusory) benchmark for how life "should" look, inviting comparisons that keep people checking, scrolling, and refreshing (Fioravanti et al., 2021; Tandon et al., 2021). Those comparisons are the ignition point: when peers share jobs, study abroad, or even trendy events, high FoMO users feel behind, unlucky, or excluded. Over time, that unease accumulates into emotional pressure, which is exactly the path toward social media fatigue (Rozgonjuk et al., 2020).

The age profile of our respondents (21–23) makes this dynamic especially acute. They are navigating heavier academic and work demands at the same moment they are trying to consolidate identity and expand networks. Social media conveniently serves those goals, but it also imposes a rhythm of constant connectivity "stay up to date or fall behind" that many experience as a burden (Tandon et al., 2021). In practice, that burden looks familiar: anxiety if they haven't checked feeds for a few hours; a need to confirm "what's viral" before bed; and a strange hollowness despite hours online classic cue checking and overload patterns (Zheng & Ling, 2021; Pang, 2022).

Importantly, fatigue here is not only about screen time. It is psychological depletion: boredom, reduced motivation, irritability, and a growing wish to pull back while still feeling unable to disconnect because social ties, news, and recognition live on the same apps (Sheng et al., 2023). That is the central paradox our data underline: the very tools that satisfy relatedness and self-validation needs are also the ones that drain them (Zhang et al., 2020).

These findings align with recent evidence showing that information/communication overload and social evaluation pressures heighten emotional exhaustion and discontinuance intentions, especially among Gen Z during and after the pandemic (Liu et al., 2021; Sheng et al., 2023). The takeaway is pragmatic: FoMO is a psychological mechanism that can be managed. Time boxing, intentional checking routines, and literacy around algorithmic cues are small but tested levers; structured FoMO coping interventions also show promise (Alutaybi et al., 2020; Li et al., 2023). In short, social media fatigue is not inevitable. With better digital literacy efforts particularly for young users we can help them manage expectations, protect attention, and keep a healthier balance between online and offline life (Zheng & Ling, 2021; Pang, 2022).

# Conclusion

This study confirms that Generation Z in Padang exhibits a moderate level of Fear of Missing Out (FoMO). This condition reflects a fairly strong attachment to social media, both as a means of maintaining social relationships and expressing oneself. However, this tendency has not yet reached a very high or alarming level, but is at a point that needs to be watched so that it does not develop into a more serious psychological problem. On the other hand, the level of social media fatigue (SMF) was also found to be in the moderate category. Of the three dimensions studied, the cognitive aspect emerged as the most dominant, indicating that respondents often experience difficulty in filtering information and maintaining focus due to excessive exposure to social media. The behavioral aspect ranked second, describing a decline in productivity, while

the emotional aspect was the lowest, but still showed symptoms of boredom, frustration, and anxiety. These findings confirm that social media fatigue not only affects the physical aspect, but also extends to the mental and behavioral aspects of daily life. The results of a simple regression analysis show that FoMO has a significant influence on SMF with a contribution of 34.3%. Every increase in FoMO is directly proportional to an increase in an individual's tendency to experience social media fatigue. Thus, the greater a person's fear of missing out, the greater their potential to experience boredom, stress, and fatigue due to intensive social media use.

Overall, this study provides an overview that FoMO is not merely a modern psychological phenomenon, but an important factor that needs to be considered in understanding digital fatigue among the younger generation. These results also open up opportunities for further research to examine other factors beyond FoMO that play a role in shaping social media fatigue, such as the intensity of social media use, the quality of online interactions, and individual psychological conditions. Therefore, it is recommended that there be greater awareness and strategies for managing social media use, especially among the younger generation, in order to maintain a balance between online activities and real life. For future researchers, exploring factors beyond FoMO is expected to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the causes of social media fatigue.

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