

SELF-ESTEEM AS A PROTECTIVE FACTOR AGAINST FEAR OF MISSING OUT IN SOCIAL MEDIA ENGAGEMENT AMONG EMERGING ADULTHOOD

Carolina Ester Sopyana Tampubolon^{1*}, Nuram Mubina², Yuwono Pratomo³

¹²³ University of Buana Perjuangan Karawang, Indonesia

*Corresponding Author: ps21.carolinata@mhs.ubpkarawang.ac.id

ABSTRACT

This study aims to determine the effect of *self-esteem* on *Fear of Missing Out* (FoMO) on *emerging adulthood* of Instagram users in Karawang. FoMO is a feeling of anxiety when not connected to social activities that others do, as well as an urge to continue engaging in social experiences through social media. This study used a quantitative approach with 222 respondents in the age range of 18 to 25 years. The sampling technique used is *convenience sampling*. The measurement tool used in this study was adapted from *Online Fear of Missing Out* and adopted from the Rosenberg *Self-Esteem Scale* (RSES). The hypothesis test uses simple linear regression. The results showed that *self-esteem* had a negative effect on FoMO with a contribution of 17.3%. Individuals in *emerging adulthood* with high *self-esteem* tend to have lower levels of FOMO.

Keywords: *Self-esteem, Fear of Missing out, Instagram, Emerging Adulthood, social media*

INTRODUCTION

In today's digital era, social media has become an inseparable element of daily activities, especially for individuals in the *emerging adulthood phase*. According to Arnett (in Wijaya & Saprowi, 2024), the *emerging adulthood* phase which is in the age range of 18 to 25 years is a stage of life characterized by the search for identity, emotional instability, self-orientation, the feeling of being in a transition period between adolescence and adulthood, and full of possibilities. In this phase, individuals often experience feelings of vulnerability, anxiety, and self-doubt due to significant changes in social and emotional aspects. This process reflects the transition from adolescence to adulthood full of challenges and self-discovery. In the context of modern developments, the process of discovering identity is largely mediated through interactions on social media, which are a means of self-exploration, identity formation, and the search for social validation. One of the social media that is most used by individuals in this phase is Instagram. Based on a DataReportal report (Kemp, 2024), at the beginning of 2024 there will be around 100.9 million Instagram users in Indonesia, or around 36.2% of the total population. As many as 31.6% of them were in the 18-25 age range, making it the second largest group of users after the age range of 25 to 34 years. This condition indicates that Instagram is still a very popular platform among *emerging adulthood*.

Instagram provides a variety of features that facilitate users to share photos and videos, as well as interact with friends, family, and even strangers. Features such as *Stories*, *Reels*, *Instagram Live*, as well as photo and video posts give users the opportunity to showcase their lives online, which can reinforce feelings of social connectedness (Meta, 2024; Sheldon & Bryan, 2016). However, on the other hand, seeing other people's lives on *these platforms* can trigger excessive social comparisons, the condition negatively impacts the psychological well-being of users (Augusta & Putri, 2023).

One of the impacts that arise through Instagram's frequent social media activities is *Fear of Missing Out* or later called FoMO. According to Sette et al. (2020) explained that FoMO is related to a strong desire to stay socially connected, and the fear of being left behind from social experiences carried out collectively (with others). FoMO also reflects the feeling of anxiety

when not staying connected to the internet network and having a strong urge to stay connected to activities carried out by others through social media. They emphasized that FoMO arises when individuals feel incapable of participating in social activities that others do, especially those displayed on social media. In the long term, FoMO not only affects user behavior on social media, but can also have an impact on mental health, such as sleep disorders, decreased concentration, anxiety, and depression (Elhai et al., 2020). Therefore, understanding FoMO is important, especially in *emerging adulthoods* who are vulnerable to social pressure and the search for validation through social media such as Instagram.

FoMO is closely related to a number of psychological dimensions that support each other in shaping the behavior patterns of social media users. According to Sette et al. (2020), there are four main dimensions of FoMO, namely *need to belong* which refers to discomfort when feeling ignored or not accepted on social media, *need for popularity*, which is the urge to gain acceptance and recognition from others on social media, *anxiety*, which is a feeling of anxiety when not connected to the internet, and *addiction* namely difficulty controlling oneself in social media activities, these four dimensions support each other in forming FoMO behavior patterns in social media users (Sette et al. 2020).

In the *emerging adulthood* phase, individuals tend to have a strong desire to gain acceptance in social groups and gain recognition from the surrounding environment, which ultimately increases the risk of experiencing FoMO (Milyavskaya et al., 2018). According to Al-Menayes (2016), individuals who experience FoMO have the potential to feel dependent on internet use, because they are encouraged to continuously monitor and participate in the activities of friends or individuals online. Social media, especially Instagram, has become a space where individuals can compare themselves to others, thereby increasing social pressure and anxiety over missed experiences.

This pressure not only has an impact on emotional well-being, but can also trigger stress, feelings of envy, and negative emotions due to the habit of comparing oneself with others (Milyavskaya et al., 2018). In addition, individuals with FoMO tend to experience sleep disturbances because they often spend time on social media until late in the day, leading to fatigue and decreased energy. Another impact that can arise is a lack of focus and productivity is also another impact, as individuals are more often distracted by social media in the midst of their activities (Milyavskaya et al., 2018).

Abel et al. (2016) stated that one of the factors that affect the level of FoMO is *self-esteem*. Individuals with *low self-esteem* tend to be more susceptible to FoMO due to the need to gain validation from others through social media. According to Rosenberg (1965), *self-esteem* is defined as an individual's evaluation of himself, which reflects how much a person feels valuable and competent. They feel confident and optimistic in facing challenges. In contrast, those who show *low self-esteem* tend to feel inadequate or worthless, pessimistic, dissatisfied with themselves, and more vulnerable to criticism. They often seek validation from others to confirm their self-worth. This can make them feel isolated or left behind, especially when seeing other people's achievements on social media.

Self-esteem has two aspects according to Rosenberg (1965) which consist of *self-competence* and *self-liking*. *Self-competence* is related to a person's assessment of his or her ability to control situations and achieve goals, which arises from success in managing the physical and social environment. Individuals with good *self-competence* tend to feel confident and satisfied with their achievements. Meanwhile, *self-liking* describes how an individual views himself, good or bad, without relying too much on the judgment of others, as well as the extent to which the individual feels valuable in the social environment. These two aspects together form *self-esteem*, which shows the extent to which a person values themselves as valuable, capable, and accepted.

According to Rosenberg (1965), it is explained that individuals with *high self-esteem* generally have a positive assessment of themselves, feel valued, and are competent. They feel confident and optimistic in facing challenges. On the other hand, individuals with *low self-esteem* tend to feel inadequate or worthless, pessimistic, dissatisfied with themselves, and more susceptible to criticism. They often seek validation from others to confirm their self-worth. This can make them feel isolated or left behind, especially when seeing other people's achievements or successes through social media platforms. Because social media often shows the best side of others, individuals with *low self-esteem* can feel not good enough, which exacerbates negative feelings about themselves. Rosenberg (1965) also explains that *low self-esteem* is often related to negative self-esteem and dependence on external recognition. Zywicki and Danowski (2008) found that individuals with *low self-esteem* often access social media platforms as social compensation, which increases their tendency to experience FoMO.

In addition, Sorensen (in Engel, 2021) explains that *low self-esteem* plays a role as a disorder in the mindset, in which individuals see themselves as a figure who is not good enough, unworthy of acceptance, unworthy of love, or less competent in various aspects of life. Individuals with *low self-esteem* tend to feel worthless, worthless, and powerless, which arises from a persistent negative assessment of themselves and their abilities.

Studies related to the influence between *self-esteem* and FoMO have been conducted previously which play a role in predicting FoMO tendencies in individuals. A study conducted by Siddik et al., (2020) showed that *self-esteem* significantly affected FoMO in adolescent users of social networking sites. In addition, research conducted by Fitri et al., (2024) also shows similar findings, where *self-esteem* is proven to significantly affect the level of *Fear of Missing Out* in Generation Z who actively use social media. This finding is the basis for this study to further explore the FoMO phenomenon among *Instagram users* in Karawang.

Although there have been many studies that have addressed *self-esteem* with FoMO, most studies have been conducted in a global context or on a broader population. Research on the influence of *self-esteem* on FoMO in the context of *emerging adulthood* in Indonesia, especially in Karawang, is still limited. Therefore, this study has an urgency to fill the gap by looking at how *self-esteem* affects FoMO levels in *emerging adulthood* Instagram users in Karawang.

The purpose of this study is to determine the influence of *self-esteem* on *Fear of Missing Out* (FoMO) on *emerging adulthood* Instagram users in Karawang. So the hypothesis in this study is: H_a : There is an influence of *self-esteem* on FoMO levels in individuals in *emerging adulthood* Instagram users in Karawang. H_0 : There is no effect of *self-esteem* on FoMO levels in individuals in *emerging adulthood* of Instagram users in Karawang

METHOD

The method used in this study is a quantitative approach, the respondents in this study, namely *emerging adulthood* in Karawang amounted to 222 respondents, because the population is not known for sure, the determination of the number of samples refers to the formula proposed by Cohen (1992) with a minimum sample of 204. Respondents were selected using *convenience sampling techniques*. This technique allows the researcher to select respondents based on their ease of access and willingness to fill out questionnaires. Etikan et al. (2016) explained that *convenience sampling* is a *non-probability sampling technique*, where participants are selected because they are easily accessible to researchers. A similar opinion is also expressed by Creswell (2014), who states that *convenience sampling* is used when researchers select individuals who are available and willing to participate in the study.

Data Collection

Data collection in this study was carried out online using a psychological scale disseminated through social media. In this study, the FoMO variable uses the *Online Fear of Missing Out* (ON-FoMO) scale developed by Sette et al. (2020) and has been adapted into Indonesian by Kurniawan and Utami (2022). This scale consists of 20 items covering four dimensions, namely *need to belong*, *need for popularity*, *anxiety*, and *addiction*, with *Cronbach's Alpha* values for each dimension as follows: *anxiety* (0.89), *need to belong* (0.74), *addiction* (0.76), and *need for popularity* (0.69), with reliability overall by 0.85. However, both in the original scale and the adaptation version, it was found that item number 9 had a low loading factor value, which was 0.28 in the original study by Sette et al. (2020) and 0.37 in the adaptation results by Kurniawan and Utami (2022).

Thus, the researcher adapted the scale by conducting *expert judgement* to 3 experts and re-testing (*try out*) to regain the value of validity and reliability. The validity results using Aiken's V obtained a value of 0.7 to 0.8. Furthermore, the results of the *try out* showed that there were 2 (two) items, namely item number 5 (five) and number 9 (nine) had an item-total correlation value that did not meet the criteria ($r < 0.30$) and was declared disqualified. Thus the final scale consists of 18 *favorable* items spread across the four dimensions, with the item-total correlation value ranging from 0.373 to 0.676 and *Cronbach's Alpha* reliability of 0.870. Each item was answered using a *likert* scale in 5 (five) answer choices: very appropriate, appropriate, neutral, non-appropriate, very inappropriate, with scores of 5, 4, 3, 2, and 1 on each item.

The *self-esteem* variable was measured using a scale adopted from the Indonesian version of the *Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale* (RSES) which has been adapted by Alwi and Razak (2022). This instrument consists of 8 (eight) items with a *likert* scale in 4 (four) answer choices: very suitable, suitable, non-suitable, very unsuitable, with a score of 4, 3, 2, and 1 on each item, and has a composite *reliability* (CR) test result of 0.899, and an *average variance extracted* of 0.531. The eight items have a *loading factor* above 0.5, which ranges from 0.63 to 0.82. This scale includes two main aspects, namely *self-competence* and *self-liking*.

Data Analysis

This study analyzed data using a simple linear regression test, to determine the influence of *self-esteem* on FoMO. Before the main analysis is carried out, normality and linearity tests are first carried out to ensure that statistical assumptions are met. The entire data analysis process was carried out with the help of SPSS statistical software version 25.0 for windows 64-bit.

RESEARCH RESULTS

Descriptive Statistics

In this study, descriptive statistics were used to describe the distribution of respondents by gender. The results of descriptive statistics are shown in the following table:

Table 1. Respondent demographics by gender

| Gender | Frequency (n) | Percentage (%) |
|--------|---------------|----------------|
| Woman | 165 | 74,3 |
| Man | 57 | 25,7 |
| Entire | 222 | 100 |

From the table, it can be seen that there were 165 women (74.3%) and 57 men (25.7%) who were respondents to the study. This percentage shows that some of the respondents in this study are women.

Normality Test

Table 2. Normality Test

| Variable | N | D | p |
|-----------------------------|-----|-------|------|
| <i>Non-Standard Residue</i> | 222 | 0,057 | .073 |

Significance values (Asymp. Sig.) of $0.073 > 0.05$ indicate that the distribution of residual data follows the normal distribution, thus meeting the assumption of normality is met.

Linearity Test

Table 3. Linearity test

| Source | F | p |
|----------------------------------|--------|-------|
| <i>Linearity</i> | 44,457 | 0.000 |
| <i>Deviations from Linearity</i> | 0,591 | 0.910 |

A significance value of $0.000 < 0.05$ indicates that the relationship between *self-esteem* and FoMO is linear, while a *deviation from linearity* of $0.910 > 0.05$ indicates that there is no deviation from linearity.

Hypothesis Test

Table 4. Anova Test

| Source | SS | Df | MS | F | p |
|-------------------|-----------|-----|----------|--------|------|
| <i>Regression</i> | 9.657,89 | 1 | 9.657,89 | 46,086 | .000 |
| Remnant | 46.104,06 | 220 | 209,564 | | |
| Entire | 55.761,95 | 221 | | | |

A significance value of $0.000 < 0.05$ indicates that the regression model is significant, so it can be concluded that there is an influence of *self-esteem* on FoMO.

Table 5. Simple Linear Regression Test

| Variable | B | ONE | β | t | P |
|--------------------|--------|-------|---------|--------|-------|
| <i>(Constant)</i> | 88,685 | 4,604 | — | 19,263 | 0.000 |
| <i>Self-esteem</i> | -1,316 | 0,194 | -0,416 | -6,789 | 0.000 |

The results of a simple linear regression test showed that a sig (p) value of 0.000 indicates that there is a statistically significant influence between *self-esteem* and FoMO, because it is below the threshold of 0.05. The regression coefficient (B) for the *self-esteem* variable is -1.316, which indicates that every one unit increase in the *self-esteem* score will decrease the FoMO score by 1.316. This indicates the direction of the negative influence, according to the following simple linear regression formula:

$$Y = 88.685 + (-1.316 \times X)$$

In addition, the standardized beta coefficient (β) value of -0.416 indicates the direction of the negative influence of *the self-esteem* variable on FoMO. These results show that the higher the level of *self-esteem* that an individual has, the lower the tendency to experience FoMo. In contrast, individuals with low levels of *self-esteem* tend to exhibit higher levels of FoMO.

Table 6. Coefficient of Determination (R^2)

| R | R^2 | R^2 Customized | SE of Forecast |
|------|-------|------------------|----------------|
| .416 | 0.173 | 0.169 | 14,476 |

An R^2 value of 0.173 indicates that *self-esteem* contributes 17.3% in explaining FoMO, partly explained by other variables or factors that were not studied in this study.

Categorization

Table 7. Measurement categorization

| Variable | Category | Frequency (n) | Percentage (%) |
|--------------------|----------|---------------|----------------|
| FoMO | Low | 40 | 18 |
| | Keep | 133 | 59,9 |
| | Tall | 49 | 22,1 |
| <i>Self-esteem</i> | Low | 42 | 18,9 |
| | Keep | 144 | 64,9 |
| | Tall | 36 | 16,2 |

Based on the results of the categorization, the majority of respondents in this study 59.9% were in the medium category, while as many as 22.1% of respondents showed a high level of FoMO, and the remaining 18.0% were in the low category. Meanwhile, the results in the *self-esteem* category showed that most of the respondents, namely 64.9%, had a moderate level of *self-esteem*, followed by 18.9% of respondents who were in the low category, and another 16.2% were in the high category.

Table 8. Categorization of FoMO by Gender

| Fear of Missing Out | | | |
|---------------------|----------|---------------|-------------|
| Gender | Category | Frequency (n) | Percentage% |
| Woman | Low | 25 | 15,2 |
| | Keep | 100 | 60,6 |
| | Tall | 40 | 24,2 |
| | Entire | 165 | 100,0 |
| Man | Low | 15 | 26,3 |
| | Keep | 33 | 57,9 |
| | Tall | 9 | 15,8 |
| | Entire | 57 | 100,0 |

Female respondents were more in the medium FoMO category (60.6%) and quite high in the high FoMO category (24.2%). While male respondents were also dominant in the medium category (57.9%), more were in the low category (26.3%) than women. This suggests that women tend to have higher levels of FoMO than men

Table 9. Categorization of Self-esteem Based on Gender

| <i>Self-esteem</i> | | | |
|--------------------|----------|---------------|-------------|
| Gender | Category | Frequency (n) | Percentage% |
| Woman | Low | 30 | 18,2 |
| | Keep | 112 | 67,9 |
| | Tall | 23 | 13,9 |
| | Entire | 165 | 100,0 |
| Man | Low | 12 | 21,1 |
| | Keep | 32 | 56,1 |
| | Tall | 13 | 22,8 |
| | Entire | 57 | 100,0 |

The majority of women are in the medium *self-esteem* category (67.9%), but only 13.9% are in the high category. In contrast, males showed a slightly more even distribution, with 22.8% in the high category and 56.1% in the medium category. These findings indicate that men in this study tend to have higher *self-esteem* than women. The results of this study confirm the hypothesis proposed, where *self-esteem* is proven to have a significant effect on FoMO in *emerging adulthood* Instagram users in Karawang. The influences found to have a negative direction, which means that the lower a person's *level of self-esteem*, the higher the tendency to experience FoMO. The results showed that *self-esteem* contributed 17.3% to FoMO, while the remaining 82.7% was influenced by other variables that were not studied in this study. These findings reinforce the notion that individuals with low *self-esteem* are more prone to experiencing *Fear of Missing Out* (FoMO) in social activities displayed on Instagram.

These results are in accordance with the findings of Siddik et al. (2020) which show that *self-esteem* has a significant influence on FoMO in adolescents. This research is also in line with the results of research by Fitri et al. (2024) which found that *self-esteem* plays a role in influencing the level of FoMO in generation Z of social media users. Both studies emphasized that individuals with low *levels of self-esteem* are more prone to experiencing feelings of being left behind, tend to seek social validation, and experience fear when disconnected from other people's activities on social media.

Theoretically, this finding can be explained based on the concept of *self-esteem* introduced by Rosenberg (1965), which is an individual's assessment of his or her own value and competence. Individuals with low *levels of self-esteem* usually feel inadequate, pessimistic, and relies heavily on external judgment to feel valuable. When they see the accomplishments of others on social media such as Instagram that tend to display the best moments, individuals with low *self-esteem* will feel left behind, and experience the emotional distress that triggers FoMO.

In the context of *emerging adulthood*, this phase is a developmental stage in which individuals are in search of self-identity, building social relationships, and exploring adult roles (Arnett, 2000). This condition makes *emerging adulthood* more vulnerable to social influences,

including comparison and the need for self-validation, especially on visual and interactive social media such as Instagram. As a visual *platform*, Instagram increases the chances of intense social comparisons, which can lower *self-esteem* and trigger FoMO (Chou & Edge, 2012). It is therefore not surprising that *self-esteem* has an important contribution in shaping psychological experiences such as FoMO. Individuals with *low self-esteem* tend to have a greater need to gain recognition from others and are more sensitive to social content that indicates social success or involvement, thus feeling left behind and experiencing psychological distress (Buglass et al., 2017). Research by Franchina et al. (2018) also shows that *low self-esteem* is significantly related to high levels of FoMO.

In addition, FoMO not only has an impact on behavior in social media, but it can also have negative psychological impacts. Elhai et al. (2020) show that FoMO can cause sleep disturbances, anxiety, and decreased concentration, which ultimately affects an individual's quality of life. Wati and Setyorini (2023) also found that FoMO is significantly associated with depression and social media addiction, in which individuals feel unable to break free from digital attachment due to fear of being left behind. However, some previous studies have also found that FoMO is influenced by other factors, such as basic psychological needs such as autonomy, competence, and unmet social connectedness can trigger FoMO (Przybylski et al., 2013). In addition, the intensity of social media use also plays a role, where the higher the frequency of exposure to other people's social activities, the more likely a person is to experience FoMO (Rozgonjuk et al., 2021). Social factors such as peer support and pressure to always engage in social activities were also found to correlate with increased FoMO (Barry et al., 2017). These findings underscore the importance of paying attention to psychological conditions such as *self-esteem* in reducing the negative impact of social media use on *emerging adulthood*. Thus, it is important to understand the factors that affect FoMO so that more appropriate prevention and treatment efforts can be made.

This study also has limitations, namely it only examines the influence of *self-esteem* on FoMO without considering other variables that have the potential to have a direct influence on FoMO such as peer influence, as well as social media usage patterns, which include the length of time and intensity of use that has the potential to increase the risk of FoMO and also intervening variables, namely mediators or moderators in the influence of *self-esteem* against FoMO. Therefore, further research can use other factors to see the influence on FoMO and/or include moderator or mediator variables in order to provide a more comprehensive picture of the factors that affect FoMO. Thus, this study provides preliminary evidence on the influence of *self-esteem* on FoMO in *emerging adulthood*, as well as opening up opportunities for further research that explores psychological phenomena related to development in the digital era.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the study, it can be concluded that *self-esteem* has a negative and significant effect on *Fear of Missing Out* (FoMO) in *emerging adulthood* Instagram users in Karawang, with a contribution of 17.3%. In addition, there are various other factors or variables that also affect the level of *Fear of Missing Out* (FoMO) in individuals, which is important to investigate further.

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