

# Fear of Missing Out and Social Media Addiction in Teenage K-Pop Fans

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## Abstract

The rapid development of the internet and social media has transformed how individuals interact and access information, including among K-Pop fan adolescents. This study aims to empirically measure the relationship between fear of missing out (FOMO) and social media addiction in K-Pop fan adolescents. The respondents in this study are K-Pop fan adolescents aged 17-21 years who use social media for at least 6 hours per day. This study employs a quantitative method with a total of 122 respondents. The findings reveal that although the intensity of social media use tends to decrease with age among K-Pop fan adolescents, they are likely to experience an increase in FOMO levels.

Keywords: Social Media Addiction; Fear of Missing Out; Teenager, K-pop

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## 1. Introduction

One of the greatest advancements of the 20th century is the interconnected network, commonly known as the internet. The internet has now become an integral part of everyone's life. According to Kurniasih (2017), a significant number of people cannot carry out their activities without internet access and regularly check their devices from the moment they wake up until they go to bed. As the most popular platform on the internet, social media has quickly become the most important tool for communication and interaction (Kircaburun, 2016).

According to a survey conducted by the Kepios team (2023), the global population of social media users worldwide stands at 4.76 billion, equivalent to 59.4% of the global population. This number has continued to grow over the past year, with 137 million new users added since the previous year. The development of the internet since the late 1990s has played a crucial role in spreading the Korean Wave, or Hallyu, across the globe. The internet has made it easier to access various Korean cultural content, such as music, dramas, and films.

One significant impact of internet development is the emergence of social media platforms and streaming services such as YouTube, Instagram, Twitter, and VLive. These platforms enable fans worldwide to easily access and share content related to K-pop and K-drama. Consequently, the internet has accelerated the globalization of Korean culture, which was previously popular only in East Asia (Jin & Yoon, 2016). Through these interactions, fans from around the globe can communicate and share experiences despite geographical distances. The internet's role in creating this interactive space helps strengthen bonds within the global K-pop fan community (Oh & Park, 2012). According to a survey conducted by Kumparan (2017), 28% of K-pop fans spend more than six hours online observing their idols' activities. This behavior could be the beginning of social media addiction.

According to Andreassen, Pallesen, & Griffiths (2017), social media addiction is more common among adolescents than adults. This aligns with research findings by KOCIS (2011), which indicate that approximately 66% of K-Pop fans are teenagers or in their early twenties. According to Lestari & Winingsih (2020), social media addiction is a mental disorder where individuals spend excessive time on social media due to curiosity, lack of self-control, and engaging in unproductive activities. Meanwhile, Sriwilai & Charoensukmongkol (2016) highlight that social media addiction is an issue gaining significant attention in society, as people now have easier and more frequent access to social media through mobile devices compared to the past.

Another factor contributing to social media addiction among adolescents is Fear of Missing Out (FoMO) (Fathadika & Afriani, 2018). According to Przybylski, Murayama, DeHaan, & Gladwell (2013), individuals suffering from FoMO allow themselves to become dependent on social media. The desire to continuously use social media is a characteristic feature of FOMO.

This aligns with research findings by Blackwell, Leaman, Trampusch, Osborne, and Liss (2017), which show that Fear of Missing Out (FoMO) is significantly influenced by social media addiction. The study found

that FoMO plays a notable role. Similarly, research conducted by Raharjo and Soetjningsih (2022) identified a positive correlation between FoMO and social media addiction, where a lower level of FoMO indicates a lower tendency to develop social media addiction. Additionally, Rahmawati and Halimah (2021) found a significant and strong positive relationship between Fear of Missing Out and social media addiction.

The purpose of this study is to empirically measure the relationship between fear of missing out (FoMO) and social media addiction among adolescent K-Pop fans who use social media.

## 2. Methodology

This study involved 122 respondents who met the following criteria: K-Pop fans aged 17–21 years, having been K-Pop fans for at least one year, owning a social media account, and using it for more than six hours per day. The sampling technique employed was snowball sampling, which is a method of data collection that starts with a small number of sources and gradually expands. This approach was chosen because the initial data sources were insufficient to provide satisfactory data, necessitating the inclusion of other informants as additional data sources (Sugiyono, 2017). Data were collected through an online structured questionnaire using a Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree). The analysis technique used was Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation test.

In this study, Social Media Addiction was measured using the Social Media Addiction Scale (SMAS) developed by Al-Menayes (2015), with a reliability score (Cronbach's alpha) of 0.83. The SMAS consists of 14 items that assess overall social media addiction, covering three aspects: social consequences, time displacement, and compulsive feelings.

Fear of Missing Out (FoMO) was measured using the Fear of Missing Out Scale (FoMOS) developed by Przybylski et al. (2013), with a reliability score (Cronbach's alpha) of 0.85. The FoMOS consists of 10 items that measure overall fear of missing out, encompassing two aspects: unmet psychological needs for relatedness and unmet psychological needs for self.

## 3. Result and Discussion

The results of the hypothesis testing revealed a positive relationship between fear of missing out (FoMO) and social media addiction, with a correlation coefficient of 0.449 and a significance value of 0.000 ( $p < 0.01$ ). Based on these results, it can be concluded that the hypothesis in this study is accepted, indicating a very significant positive relationship with a moderate strength of 51% between FoMO and social media addiction among K-Pop fan teenagers who use social media.

The results of this study are consistent with the research by Azizah and Baharuddin (2021), which found a positive relationship between FOMO and social media addiction among teenagers who use Instagram. FOMO acts as a driving force behind individuals' use of social media and is a variable that is positively related to social media usage. A study by Oberst (2017) indicated that high social media usage is associated with higher levels of FOMO in teenagers. Oberst (2017) also found that social media interactions can intensify FOMO feelings, as teenagers are constantly exposed to the social activities of others.

On the Social Media Addiction scale, there are three aspects: social consequences, time displacement, and compulsive feelings. Among these, the aspect of time displacement shows the highest tendency, with a true score of 3.54 (out of 5). This is supported by research conducted by Khalaf, Alubied, Khalaf, and Rifaey (2023), which found that teenagers who spend a significant amount of time on social media often experience difficulties in time management, leading to a decrease in productive activities and real-life social interactions.

The previous findings are reinforced by the results of this study, particularly in one aspect of fear of missing out (FoMO), which is the psychological need for relatedness. This aspect shows the highest tendency, with a true score of 3.26 (out of 5). This is due to the fact that FoMO is closely related to the need for social interaction, as individuals experiencing FoMO often feel pressured to stay connected with friends and events occurring on social media in order to fulfill their social needs (Ostic, Qalati, Barbosa, Shah, Vela, Herxallah, & Liu, 2021).

This study also revealed another finding: 17-year-olds showed a high empirical mean tendency in fear of missing out (FoMO), with a score of 32.81. Teenagers at the age of 17 are in a developmental phase where they are exploring their identity and trying out different social roles. Social media provides a space for experimenting with identity and self-expression. This is supported by Boyd (2014), who stated that teenagers use social media as a tool to explore their identity and express themselves. A study by Baker (2016) further supports this statement, indicating that FoMO can serve as a tool for teenagers to develop their self-identity, but it can also become a source of stress and anxiety.

Based on the descriptive analysis results in the gender category, it was found that males exhibit a stronger tendency toward social media addiction. Neurobiological differences between males and females also contribute to this tendency. Males have a stronger response to neurotransmitters involved in the brain's reward system, such as dopamine, which increases the risk of developing addictive behaviors. These factors make males more

vulnerable to social media addiction compared to females (Fonseca, Rogut, & Rocha, 2021).

Another finding reveals that teenagers who use YouTube are more likely to experience high levels of social media addiction, as shown by the empirical mean score of 38.73 for YouTube. YouTube's recommendation algorithm is highly effective in presenting videos that capture users' interest. A supporting study by Kuss and Griffiths (2017) emphasized that video-based platforms like YouTube are particularly effective in maintaining user engagement through unpredictable intermittent reinforcement, which is a key mechanism behind addiction. Furthermore, Anderson and Jiang (2018) found that teenagers spend more time on YouTube than on other platforms, indicating YouTube's significant potential to contribute to addiction.

Another finding shows that TikTok has a high empirical mean tendency in fear of missing out (FoMO), with a score of 34.21. TikTok offers a continuous and diverse flow of content through its "For You Page" (FYP) feature, which displays videos personalized based on user preferences. This rapidly changing and unpredictable content can trigger FOMO, as teenagers feel the need to constantly keep up with the latest trends and popular videos to avoid being left out. According to Johnson and Sanders (2021) in the article "*FOMO and Social Media: The Role of TikTok in Adolescents' Social Comparisons*", they explored how TikTok facilitates intense social comparisons among teenagers.

#### 4. Conclusion and Suggestion

Based on the results of this study, it can be concluded that the hypothesis is accepted. This means that there is a positive relationship between fear of missing out (FoMO) and social media addiction among K-Pop fan teenagers who use social media. Specifically, the higher the FoMO, the higher the likelihood of social media addiction, and conversely, the lower the FoMO, the lower the likelihood of social media addiction in these teenagers.

This study also revealed that although the intensity of social media use tends to decrease as K-Pop fan teenagers age, older teenagers tend to experience an increase in FoMO levels. This is due to changes in priorities and greater responsibilities at this stage of life, which create pressure to stay socially connected and a desire to constantly stay updated with the developments of friends or communities.

Based on the research findings, it is recommended that K-Pop fan teenagers be more cautious when accessing social media by seeking alternative activities that can divert their attention from social media. Additionally, it is important to be selective in choosing the content consumed and to realize that not all trends need to be followed in order to avoid the effects of fear of missing out (FoMO). For future researchers, ensuring a more balanced distribution between male and female respondents is suggested. By doing so, the results regarding the tendency toward FoMO and social media addiction can be more clearly represented, providing a more balanced insight into the differences between the two gender groups.

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