

FEAR OF MISSING OUT FOMO

Dr. Selvavinayagam G
Assistant Professor
Department of IT/ KITE

Fear of missing out, or FOMO, is "a pervasive apprehension that others might be having rewarding experiences from which one is absent". This social anxiety is characterized by "a desire to stay continually connected with what others are doing". FOMO is also defined as a fear of regret, which may lead to a compulsive concern that one might miss an opportunity for social interaction, a novel experience, a profitable investment, or other satisfying events. In other words, FOMO perpetuates the fear of having made the wrong decision on how to spend time since "you can imagine how things could be different".

Self-determination theory (SDT) asserts that the feeling of relatedness or connectedness with others is a legitimate psychological need that influences people's psychological health. In this theoretical framework, FOMO can be understood as a self-regulatory state arising from situational or long-term perception that one's needs are not being met.

With the advent of technology, people's social and communicative experiences have been expanded from face-to-face to online. On one hand, modern technologies (e.g., mobile phones, smartphones) and social networking services (e.g., Facebook, Twitter) provide a unique opportunity for people to be socially engaged with a reduced "cost of admission". On the other hand, mediated communication perpetuates an increased reliance on the Internet. A psychological dependence to being online could result in anxiety when one feels disconnected, thereby leading to a fear of missing out or even pathological Internet use. As a consequence, FOMO is perceived to have negative influences on people's psychological health and well-being because it could contribute to people's negative mood and depressed feelings.

Measure twice; cut once." --Harrison Ford