

The Effectiveness of Psychoeducational Intervention in Reducing FoMO and Enhancing Positive Self-Concept among Junior High School Students

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Abstract

Background: Fear of Missing Out (FoMO) is a psychological phenomenon that affects many adolescents, especially in the context of excessive social media use. Adolescents with low self-concept are more vulnerable to anxiety, peer pressure, and compulsive online behavior. **Objective:** This study aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of a structured psychoeducational intervention in reducing FoMO among junior high school students. **Method:** This research used a quasi-experimental one-group pre-test and post-test design. A total of 20 students from SMP Bukit Aksara participated in the intervention. Data were collected using the FoMO Scale adapted into Indonesian and analyzed using descriptive statistics and paired sample t-test. **Results:** The analysis showed a statistically significant reduction in FoMO scores between the pre-test and post-test ($p = 0.015$). Most participants shifted from moderate-high FoMO categories toward lower levels after the intervention. **Conclusion:** The psychoeducational program was effective in reducing FoMO tendencies among adolescents. This study contributes a practical intervention model that emphasizes active and structured group psychoeducation to address social media-related anxiety in junior high school students.

Keywords: Adolescents; FoMO; mental health; psychoeducation; self-concept

Abstrak

Latar Belakang: *Fear of Missing Out* (FoMO) merupakan fenomena psikologis yang banyak dialami remaja, terutama dalam konteks penggunaan media sosial yang berlebihan. Remaja dengan konsep diri yang rendah lebih rentan terhadap kecemasan, tekanan teman sebaya, dan perilaku daring kompulsif. **Tujuan:** Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengevaluasi efektivitas intervensi psikoedukatif terstruktur dalam menurunkan kecenderungan FoMO pada siswa sekolah menengah pertama. **Metode:** Penelitian ini menggunakan desain kuasi-eksperimen dengan model one-group pre-test and post-test. Sebanyak 20 siswa dari SMP Bukit Aksara mengikuti intervensi. Data dikumpulkan menggunakan Skala FoMO yang telah diadaptasi ke dalam Bahasa Indonesia dan dianalisis dengan statistik deskriptif serta uji t berpasangan. **Hasil:** Analisis menunjukkan penurunan skor FoMO yang signifikan secara statistik antara pre-test dan post-test ($p = 0,015$). Mayoritas peserta berpindah dari kategori FoMO sedang-tinggi ke tingkat yang lebih rendah setelah intervensi. **Kesimpulan:** Program psikoedukatif terbukti efektif dalam menurunkan kecenderungan FoMO pada remaja. Penelitian ini memberikan kontribusi berupa model intervensi praktis berbasis psikoedukasi kelompok yang terstruktur dan aktif untuk menangani kecemasan terkait media sosial pada siswa sekolah menengah pertama.

Kata Kunci: FoMO; kesehatan mental; konsep diri; psikoedukasi; remaja

Introduction

The rapid advancement of digital technology has significantly influenced adolescents' social interaction patterns. Social media has become a central medium for youth to build relationships and establish their identities. However, beyond its advantages, social media has also triggered the emergence of a psychological phenomenon known as the Fear of Missing Out (FoMO). It refers to the anxiety that arises from the feeling of being left out of others' social experiences. This symptom is often reinforced by exposure to social media content that displays attractive and engaging activities of peers, resulting in psychological pressure to stay constantly connected and keep up with trends (Przybylski et al., 2013; Milyavskaya et al., 2018).

It is not merely a mild psychological phenomenon. Numerous studies have indicated that FoMO has a serious impact on adolescents' emotional well-being, including increased anxiety, stress, difficulty concentrating, and decreased academic motivation (Alt, 2015; Elhai et al., 2017; Elhai et al., 2020). This is reinforced by studies showing that FoMO not only correlates with increased anxiety and stress but also mediates the relationship between social media overuse and emotional distress (Beyens et al., 2016; Reer et al., 2019). Adolescents are particularly vulnerable because they are undergoing a developmental period marked by identity exploration and sensitivity to peer feedback (Santrock, 2019). One of the core contributing factors to FoMO is a low self-concept. Adolescents with a low self-concept tend to feel unworthy, lack self-confidence, and frequently compare themselves to others. Conversely, those who possess a positive self-concept are better able to accept themselves, demonstrate stronger psychological resilience, and resist social pressures (Rosenberg, 1979; Bandura, 1997).

In line with these findings, several previous studies have emphasized that strengthening a positive self-concept can serve as a protective factor that reduces FoMO tendencies (Fabris et al., 2020; Cahyani & Putrianti, 2021). Research has also shown that psychoeducational interventions are promising tools for enhancing adolescents' coping strategies, emotional regulation, and self-concept clarity (Chaplin & Aldao, 2013; Dempsey et al., 2019). Psychoeducation is widely applied in school settings to promote mental health literacy, emotional awareness and resilience. Unlike clinical therapy, psychoeducational approaches focus on structured group-based learning that fosters insight, skill building, and social connection (Schunk, 2012). These characteristics make psychoeducation highly relevant for addressing internal challenges, such as FoMO, among adolescents.

Nevertheless, studies that specifically integrate self-concept-based psychoeducation within the context of FoMO prevention remain limited, especially among junior high school populations. Few empirical studies have evaluated the direct effect of structured psychoeducational programs on reducing FoMO through measurable emotional and behavioral changes. Most existing programs focus on general mental health or self-esteem without specifically targeting the mechanisms underlying FoMO in adolescents.

Based on the aforementioned background, this study aimed to analyze the effectiveness of a structured psychoeducational intervention in reducing FoMO tendencies among junior high school students. We hypothesized that the intervention would lead to a statistically significant decrease in FoMO levels. This study is novel in that it applies a brief, structured, and group-based psychoeducational approach specifically focused on FoMO prevention, an area rarely explored in adolescent populations. The findings are expected to contribute to school-based preventive mental health strategies, particularly in managing the psychological challenges arising from excessive digital engagement.

Method

This study employed a quantitative approach with a quasi-experimental design, specifically utilizing a one-group pre-test and post-test method to evaluate the effectiveness of a psychoeducational intervention in reducing Fear of Missing Out (FoMO) among students. The intervention consisted of six sequential phases designed to enhance students' self-awareness, confidence, and coping skills. Each phase was structured to build on the previous one, ensuring a comprehensive and progressive learning experience. The research was conducted through a structured program aimed at fostering positive behavioral changes and emotional regulation.

Sample or Population

The participants were 22 junior high school students (13 females and 9 males) selected through purposive sampling based on referrals from guidance and counseling teachers. The participants' age range was between 13 and 15 years ($M = 13.9$ years), a developmental period in which individuals experience identity versus role confusion, a core psychosocial conflict described in Erikson's theory (Santrock, 2019). During this

stage, adolescents are particularly sensitive to peer comparisons and social influences, making them more vulnerable to FoMO symptoms.

Of the 22 students initially enrolled, 20 completed the full intervention process and participated in both the pre- and post-test assessments. Two participants were unable to complete the entire course of the intervention; one was a child with special needs, and the other had to terminate their participation early due to other obligations. These participants were excluded from the final analysis to ensure consistency in the evaluation of the intervention outcomes.

Procedure

The intervention was delivered through a structured program lasting 165 minutes, divided into six sequential stages. Each stage was designed to engage students cognitively, affectively, and reflectively to strengthen their positive self-concept and reduce their FoMO tendencies.

The six stages included: (1) introduction of facilitators and explanation of objectives, followed by pre-test administration; (2) self-efficacy development through personal strength identification and discussion; (3) fostering social equality perceptions through group reflection and mutual appreciation activities; (4) enhancing openness to feedback and self-reflection using guided role-play scenarios; (5) post-test administration and reflective journaling; and (6) follow-up through informal teacher observation and student interviews conducted two weeks later to explore post-intervention outcomes.

Although the intervention was conducted within a relatively brief timeframe, it was intentionally designed to be intensive, interactive and emotionally engaging. Previous studies have shown that brief, focused psychoeducational interventions can yield meaningful psychological outcomes when implemented using reflective and experiential methods (Chaplin & Aldao, 2013; Dempsey et al., 2019). The strength of this intervention lies in its experiential format and thematic focus on core aspects of self-concept relevant to the challenges faced by adolescents in the digital age.

Data Measurement

Two instruments were used in this study. The first was the Fear of Missing Out (FoMO) Scale developed by Przybylski et al. (2013) and adapted into Indonesian by Wicaksono and Hadiyati (2018). The Indonesian version consists of 10 items rated on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree) and measures anxiety related to missing out on social experiences, including comparison with friends, feelings of being left out, missed experiences, and compulsion to attend social events. This adaptation demonstrated acceptable internal consistency, with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.774. The total score ranges from 10 to 50, with the following interpretation: scores from 10 to 23 indicate low FoMO, 24 to 37 indicate moderate FoMO, and 38 to 50 indicate high FoMO. This categorization was used to interpret the participants' FoMO tendencies before and after the intervention.

The second instrument was a Self-Concept Knowledge Test developed by the researchers, comprising five open-ended questions designed to evaluate students' understanding of key concepts introduced during the intervention, namely self-efficacy, social equality, self-acceptance, and self-reflection. Both instruments were administered before and after the intervention to assess changes in the participants' FoMO tendencies and conceptual understanding.

Data Analysis

Quantitative data from the FoMO Scale were analyzed using paired sample t-tests to examine differences between pre- and post-intervention scores, following tests of normality and homogeneity to ensure the appropriateness of the analysis. All statistical analyses were conducted using IBM SPSS Statistics (version 24). In addition, responses from the Self-Concept Knowledge Test were reviewed to ensure participants' basic comprehension of the key psychoeducational concepts delivered during the intervention. These responses were examined descriptively and served to support the interpretation of the changes observed in the FoMO scores.

Result

The results of this study are presented in various forms, such as participant descriptions, distribution of pre- and post-test scores, categorization of FoMO levels, and statistical analysis.

A total of 20 students participated in both the pre- and post-test assessments. The sample consisted of 13 female students (65%) and 7 male students (35%), with ages ranging from 13 to 15 years ($M = 13.9$ years). All participants were enrolled in junior high school at the time of the study.

Descriptive Statistics

This table presents the mean and standard deviation of the participants' FoMO scores before and after the intervention. Participants' scores were categorized into three levels: low (10–23), moderate (24–37), and high (38–50). Most participants were in the moderate FoMO category before the intervention and shifted toward the low category after the intervention, indicating a general reduction in FoMO tendencies.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics and Categorical Distribution of Participants' FoMO Scores Before and After the Intervention

Measurement	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Interpretation
Pre-Test	20	24.83	6.98	Moderate FoMO
Post-Test	20	21.92	5.76	Low FoMO

Inferential Analysis

A paired-sample t-test was conducted to examine the effect of the psychoeducational intervention on FoMO scores. The analysis revealed a statistically significant decrease in FoMO levels from pre-test to post-test, with a p-value of 0.015 ($p < 0.05$), indicating that the intervention had a measurable impact on reducing students' FoMO.

Table 3. Paired Sample Test Results

		Paired Differences							
					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				Sig. (2- tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Lower	Upper	t	df	
Pair 1	PRE - POST	1.750	2.936	.656	.376	3.124	2.666	19	

*)Significant ($p < 0.05$)

These results support the hypothesis that the psychoeducational intervention was effective in reducing FoMO tendencies among participants. The observed decline in FoMO scores suggests that the structured training, which focused on reinforcing aspects of a positive self-concept such as self-awareness, self-efficacy, and acceptance, contributed to alleviating students' anxiety related to peer comparison and social exclusion.

Discussion

The findings of this study indicate that a psychoeducational intervention designed to strengthen positive self-concept effectively reduced Fear of Missing Out (FoMO) tendencies among junior high school students. The statistically significant decrease in FoMO scores suggests that the intervention contributed to improved emotional regulation and reduced anxiety related to social media use. This is particularly relevant for early adolescents (aged 13–15 years), a developmental period marked by identity exploration and heightened sensitivity to peer acceptance (Santrock, 2019). This developmental vulnerability may explain their responsiveness to interventions focused on self-efficacy, self-awareness, and acceptance.

These results align with Gupta and Sharma's (2021) finding that interventions promoting emotional resilience and self-understanding can mitigate FoMO-related distress. Casale et al. (2020) further emphasized that FoMO in adolescents often contributes to emotional problems through the stress of social media neglect and negative peer evaluation. In addition to the statistically significant reduction in FoMO scores, the descriptive data showed a categorical shift in participants' FoMO levels from predominantly moderate levels at pre-test to predominantly low levels at post-test. This suggests that the psychoeducational intervention not only reduced FoMO quantitatively but also helped move students into a psychologically healthier range than before. The shift from moderate to low FoMO may reflect improved self-concept and emotional resilience, enabling students to feel less dependent on social media for validation.

The participant composition, which was predominantly female, may also be relevant. Previous studies have shown that adolescent girls are more susceptible to social evaluation anxiety in online settings, making them more vulnerable to FoMO (Franchina et al., 2018). FoMO itself has also been shown to be closely related to individual traits such as neuroticism, attachment style, and extraversion, which may influence adolescents' tendency toward social media dependence (Blackwell et al., 2017). This may help explain the program's strong affective resonance, especially among female participants.

In addition to the quantitative findings, students' written reflections offered valuable insights into the emotional and behavioral impacts of the intervention. Many participants reported reduced anxiety when they were disconnected from social media, greater comfort with themselves, and increased recognition of their personal strengths. These responses reflect a positive shift in affective awareness and self-reflection, which are critical elements in adolescent self-concept development. As noted by Bandura (in Maddux, 2016), self-efficacy, or the belief in one's ability to manage actions and emotions, plays a vital role in helping adolescents adapt psychologically and make healthy decisions in complex social environments.

However, an analysis of the responses to the Self-Concept Knowledge Test revealed inconsistencies in the participants' ability to articulate theoretical concepts. While some students provided accurate descriptions of self-efficacy and social equality, others offered vague or incomplete explanations of the two concepts. This discrepancy highlights a pedagogical concern: that emotional engagement alone may not lead to deep conceptual understanding. Schunk (2020) emphasized that meaningful learning requires not only affective experience but also repetition, structured guidance, and instructional scaffolding. Similarly, Lourenço (2016), in his review of Piaget's theory, noted that early adolescents are still transitioning from concrete to formal operational thinking, which limits their ability to fully elaborate abstract psychological concepts without sustained educational support.

Therefore, while the brief psychoeducational intervention proved effective in enhancing emotional awareness and behavioral readiness, additional follow-up or extended programming may be necessary to strengthen participants' conceptual comprehension. Ongoing reinforcement or integration of reflective discussions into classroom activities could help bridge the gap between affective engagement and theoretical knowledge.

Overall, the findings affirm the value of a holistic psychoeducational approach that integrates cognitive, affective, and behavioral components. As emphasized in the digital identity development framework by Syed and Seiffge-Krenke (2020), adolescents' self-concept is increasingly shaped by online interactions, making structured school-based interventions particularly critical. This study contributes to the growing field of digital-era youth mental health by demonstrating that even short-format reflective psychoeducation can strengthen psychological resilience and promote healthier digital engagement when rooted in self-concept development.

Conclusion

This study concludes that a psychoeducational intervention based on the reinforcement of a positive self-concept is effective in reducing Fear of Missing Out (FoMO) tendencies among junior high school students. The intervention resulted in a statistically significant reduction in FoMO scores and contributed to improvements in emotional awareness, self-acceptance and psychological resilience. These outcomes support the idea that a well-developed self-concept can serve as a psychological buffer against social comparison and exclusion dynamics, often intensified by digital media use.

Despite these promising results, several limitations of this study must be acknowledged. The relatively small sample size and purposive sampling limit the generalizability of the findings. Furthermore, although the single-session format was designed to be intensive and engaging, it may have constrained the depth of the participants' conceptual understanding of self-concept theory. The open-ended questions used to explore students' understanding were exploratory in nature and were not intended as standardized cognitive assessments.

Future research should consider broader and more diverse samples, longer-term interventions with repeated sessions, and the use of validated tools to measure both emotional and cognitive changes. Longitudinal studies would also be beneficial for examining the sustainability of intervention outcomes and their influence on adolescents' psychological well-being in the context of digital media engagement.

Nonetheless, the observed emotional and behavioral improvements underscore the value of holistic psychoeducational approaches that extend beyond knowledge transfer to encompass self-reflection and attitude growth. The practical implication of this research is the need to embed self-concept-based psychoeducation into school counseling programmes as a proactive measure to address FoMO-related distress among adolescents. When implemented through structured, experiential, and reflective methods, such interventions can help students develop the internal resilience needed to navigate the psychological challenges of the digital era.

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