

Abstract

This study applies Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985) to examine how fear of missing out (FOMO) is related to important emerging adult outcomes, namely life satisfaction and depression. We posit that relatedness satisfaction and relatedness frustration serve as the linking mechanisms.

Introduction

- Emerging adults place high value on peer and romantic relationships (Arnett, 2014).
- SDT conceptualizes relatedness as a basic psychological need. Research finds that feeling connected to and cared for by others is inextricably linked to personal well-being (Deci & Ryan, 2000).
- FOMO – or the worry that others are having rewarding experiences without you – is commonly considered a manifestation of insecure relationship attachments (Przybylski, Murayama, DeHaan, & Gladwell, 2013).
- FOMO has been linked to behavioral outcomes (Conlin, Billings, & Averset, 2016; Oberst et al., 2017; Riordan et al., 2015). It is anticipated that the impact extends to other important factors of life, including needs fulfillment and personal well- and ill-being.

Methods

Sample

- 575 emerging adult college students
- Primarily white (66.4%), female (84.2%), between the ages of 18-25 (91%, $M = 19.87$, $SD = 2.09$)

Measures

- Fear of Missing Out ($\alpha = .91$; Przybylski, Murayama, DeHaan, & Gladwell, 2013)
- Relatedness Satisfaction ($\alpha = .87$) and Frustration ($\alpha = .85$; Chen et al., 2015)
- Life Satisfaction ($\alpha = .93$; Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985)
- Depression ($\alpha = .82$; Irwin et al., 1999)

Analysis

- Structural equation modeling
- Direct and indirect path models were fit to examine the impact of the mediating variables
- Control variables were identified based on extant literature, theory, and significant relationships in current data

Results

Table 1
Correlation Table

	1	2	3	4
Fear of Missing Out (1)	-			
Relatedness Satisfaction (2)	-.255**	-		
Relatedness Frustration (3)	.415**	-.547**	-	
Life Satisfaction (4)	-.198**	.451**	-.344**	-
Depression (5)	.411**	-.372**	.409**	-.354**

Table 2
Sobel Tests

	z'	p -value
FOMO \rightarrow Relatedness Sat. \rightarrow Life Sat.	-5.294	<.001
FOMO \rightarrow Relatedness Sat. \rightarrow Depression	4.704	<.001
FOMO \rightarrow Relatedness Frust. \rightarrow Depression	5.786	<.001
FOMO \rightarrow Relatedness Frust. \rightarrow Life Sat.	-5.795	<.001

- FOMO was positively related to both depression and relatedness frustration, and negatively related to relatedness satisfaction.
- Relatedness satisfaction was positively related to life satisfaction and negatively related to depression.
- Relatedness frustration was positively related to depression and negatively related to life satisfaction.
- Sobel tests revealed that all mediation paths were significant.

Discussion

- Results indicate the importance of considering one's level of FOMO when investigating psychological well- and ill-being outcomes for emerging adults.
- This study provides evidence for the need to conceptualize need satisfaction and frustration as two distinct concepts
- Findings support the theoretical notion that insecure relationship attachments and the environment one chooses has implications for his or her well- and ill-being.

Clinical Implications

- Incorporating questions and techniques to understand the influence of FOMO and important relationships on emerging adults' decision-making motivations and well- or ill-being.
- Developing curriculum and intervention techniques that will foster healthy relationships and environments in which emerging adults will thrive.

