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Fear of Missing Out on Social Media and Well-Being: The Role of Emotion Regulation

Sosyal Medyada Gelişmeleri Kaçırma Korkusu ve Psikolojik İyi Oluş İlişkisi: Duygu Düzenlemenin Rolü

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the relationship between fear of missing out (FoMO) in the context of social media and psychological well-being, as well as the mediating role of emotion regulation skills in this relationship. Using a cross-sectional correlational design, the research draws on data collected from 272 adults aged 18 and above through online self-report measures. The findings revealed that FoMO was negatively associated with psychological well-being, with higher FoMO levels linked to lower psychological well-being. Including emotion regulation skills in the model reduced the direct effect of FoMO on psychological well-being, indicating partial mediation. Overall, the results highlight the importance of enhancing emotion regulation skills in understanding and mitigating the adverse effects of FoMO.

Keywords: Fear of missing out on social media, emotion regulation, psychological well-being, FoMO

ÖZ

Bu çalışma, sosyal medya bağlamında “gelişmeleri kaçırma korkusu” (fear of missing out [FoMO]) ile psikolojik iyi oluş arasındaki ilişkiyi ve bu ilişkide duygu düzenleme becerilerinin aracılık rolünü incelemektedir. Kesitsel ve korelasyonel desende yürütülen araştırma, 18 yaş ve üzeri 272 yetişkinin çevrimiçi ölçek doldurarak elde edilen verilerine dayanmaktadır. Bulgular, FoMO’nun psikolojik iyi oluş ile negatif yönde ilişkili olduğunu, FoMO düzeyi arttıkça psikolojik iyi oluşun azaldığını göstermiştir. Duygu düzenleme becerilerinin modele eklenmesi FoMO’nun psikolojik iyi oluş üzerindeki doğrudan etkisini zayıflatmış ve kısmi aracılık rolüne işaret etmiştir. Sonuçlar, FoMO’nun olumsuz etkilerinin anlaşılması ve bu etkileri azaltmaya yönelik müdahalelerde duygu düzenleme becerilerinin geliştirilmesinin önemini vurgulamaktadır.

Anahtar kelimeler: Sosyal medyada gelişmeleri kaçırma korkusu, duygu düzenleme, psikolojik iyi oluş, FoMO



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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

The rise of social media has transformed how people connect and monitor each other, yet it also introduces psychological challenges, including the fear of missing out (FoMO). FoMO refers to the persistent worry that others are experiencing rewarding events without one's participation, accompanied by a desire to stay continually connected (Przybylski et al., 2013). This can harm mental health by promoting social comparison and exposure to curated portrayals of peers' lives. Psychological well-being depends on the satisfaction of basic needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Ryan & Deci, 2000). FoMO may threaten these needs, inducing feelings of inadequacy or exclusion, and is associated with compulsive social media use that can worsen negative emotions. Emotion regulation, the ability to manage emotional experiences and expressions, plays a central role in this process (Gross, 1998). Adaptive strategies such as cognitive reappraisal help manage negative emotions, whereas maladaptive strategies such as rumination can intensify distress. For individuals with heightened FoMO-related anxiety and exclusion, emotion regulation becomes crucial in moderating its impact on well-being.

This study examined the relationship between FoMO, psychological well-being, and emotion regulation skills, aiming to determine whether emotion regulation mediates the association between FoMO and well-being. A cross-sectional design was employed, and participants were recruited through social media platforms. The sample consisted of 272 adults aged 18 and above (mean [M] = 27.4, standard deviation [SD] = 6.8) from various regions of Türkiye. Data were collected via an online survey comprising validated measures for each key variable.

FoMO was assessed using a culturally adapted version of the scale developed by Przybylski et al. (2013), which measures both cognitive and behavioral aspects of FoMO, including worry about missing social experiences and the urge to monitor others' activities constantly. Psychological well-being was evaluated through a composite measure that included life satisfaction, positive affect, and negative affect. Life satisfaction was measured with self-report items asking participants to rate their overall satisfaction with life on a Likert-type scale. Emotion regulation skills were assessed using a self-report inventory that evaluates emotional awareness, clarity, and the application of adaptive strategies to manage emotions effectively. This instrument addresses both general competence in emotion management and specific strategies used in response to difficult emotional situations.

Data analysis included descriptive statistics, correlation analyses, and mediation testing conducted with Hayes's PROCESS macro (Model 4) using 5,000 bootstrap resamples. FoMO served as the independent variable, psychological well-being as the dependent variable, and emotion regulation skills as the mediator.

Results showed that FoMO was negatively associated with both psychological well-being and emotion regulation skills. Higher emotion regulation skills were positively associated with psychological well-being. Mediation analysis indicated that FoMO predicted lower emotion regulation skills, which in turn predicted lower well-being. The direct effect of FoMO on psychological well-being remained significant but was reduced when emotion regulation was included, confirming partial mediation. The indirect effect was statistically significant, demonstrating that emotion regulation skills account for part of the pathway through which FoMO influences well-being.

These findings reveal that FoMO impairs emotion regulation, which subsequently undermines psychological well-being. The results align with Gross's (1998) process model of emotion regulation and with self-determination theory, according to which FoMO thwarts basic psychological needs and consequent emotion regulation difficulties amplify its negative impact (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

From a practical perspective, the results suggest that interventions designed to strengthen emotion regulation skills may attenuate the adverse effects of FoMO on psychological well-being. Such interventions could incorporate mindfulness practices, cognitive-behavioral techniques, and training in emotional awareness and adaptive coping. Improving emotion regulation capacity may enable individuals to engage with social media in healthier ways and reduce how FoMO diminishes well-being.

In conclusion, this study demonstrates that FoMO negatively affects psychological well-being and that emotion regulation skills partially mediate this relationship. By assessing FoMO through self-reported cognitive and behavioral indicators, measuring well-being via life satisfaction and affective components, and examining emotion regulation with a comprehensive inventory, the study clarifies key underlying mechanisms. The findings emphasize the value of fostering emotion regulation to safeguard well-being in digital contexts and lay the groundwork for future longitudinal and culturally nuanced investigations.

Introduction

Przybylski et al. (2013) conceptualized fear of missing out (FoMO) as a pervasive apprehension that others are having rewarding experiences from which one is absent. This apprehension can generate anxiety over the perceived inability to remain connected with others' lives (Eitan & Gazit, 2024; Tanhan et al., 2022). Furthermore, individuals with high FoMO frequently experience ambivalent emotions, encountering both positive and negative affect simultaneously during social media use (Connidis, 2015; Przybylski et al., 2013).

The literature indicates that FoMO is associated with various physical and psychological difficulties. Beyens et al. (2016) identified a significant association between FoMO and stress related to social exclusion on Facebook among adolescents; higher FoMO was linked to greater stress arising from feelings of not belonging. Participants with elevated FoMO have also reported lower mood and reduced life satisfaction (Przybylski et al., 2013). Baker et al. (2016) found that higher FoMO correlated with increased depressive and somatic symptoms and with lower mindfulness. Similarly, Savitri (2019) observed, in a sample of emerging adults aged 18–29, that greater FoMO was associated with lower psychological well-being, suggesting that habitual or unconscious social media use during this developmental period may produce adverse outcomes partly through FoMO.

Although most studies link FoMO to diminished psychological well-being (Przybylski et al., 2013; Savitri, 2019), some evidence suggests otherwise. Roberts and David (2020) reported that higher FoMO increased social media engagement and social networking, which in turn could enhance psychological well-being. This inconsistency may stem from differing conceptualizations of psychological well-being across studies. Some researchers have adopted a positive approach, emphasizing outcomes such as life satisfaction (Roberts & David, 2020), whereas others have focused on negative indicators including depression and anxiety (Przybylski et al., 2013). Hartanto et al. (2024), for example, operationalized emotional well-being through depressive symptoms, negative affect, and anxiety, finding that well-being was lower on days with higher FoMO. In contrast, the present study adopts a positive perspective, examining whether FoMO impairs psychological well-being by reducing life satisfaction and positive affect rather than solely by increasing negative emotional states. This approach complements existing research and aims to provide a broader understanding of how FoMO relates to well-being.

Psychological Well-Being from Positive Perspective

According to Ryff (1995) and Keyes et al. (2002), psychological well-being represents a state of positive functioning characterized by self-acceptance, autonomy, environmental mastery, meaningful relationships, purpose in life, and personal growth.

Well-being is generally examined through two primary perspectives: subjective well-being (hedonic) and psychological well-being (eudaimonic) (Brandel et al., 2017). The hedonic approach focuses on subjective happiness and evaluates well-being according to individuals' experiences of pleasure versus dissatisfaction, shaped by personal preferences (Ryan & Deci, 2001). Conversely, the eudaimonic perspective posits that true well-being derives not only from pleasure but also from pursuing meaningful goals and realizing one's potential (Ryan & Deci, 2001). The present study adopts the eudaimonic view of psychological well-being and hypothesizes that higher FoMO is associated with reduced eudaimonic well-being, consistent with earlier research (Przybylski et al., 2013; Savitri, 2019). To date, however, the specific association between FoMO and eudaimonic well-being remains underexplored. Accordingly, this study seeks to extend the literature by investigating the effects of FoMO on emotion regulation skills and, in turn, on eudaimonic psychological well-being.

Social psychology theories further suggest that FoMO impairs psychological well-being by undermining positive self-regard. Self-Determination Theory proposes that well-being depends on the satisfaction of needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Ryan & Deci, 2000); FoMO threatens autonomy and relatedness by compelling constant connection and reducing the depth of genuine social interactions. From the perspective of Social Comparison Theory, exposure to idealized social media content encourages upward comparisons that generate feelings of inadequacy (Festinger, 1954). Thus, FoMO not only heightens negative emotions such as anxiety and low mood but also erodes positive dimensions of well-being, including self-acceptance, life satisfaction, and personal growth among them. When these frameworks are considered together, FoMO's influence on psychological well-being clearly extends beyond the amplification of negative states: it also disrupts the cultivation and sustenance of positive psychological functioning by compromising autonomy, belonging, and self-worth. Research on the psychological consequences of FoMO should therefore examine its effects on positive aspects of well-being as well, thereby providing a more complete account of its impact.

Emotion Regulation as a Link Between FoMO on Social Media and Psychological Well-Being

Emotion regulation is proposed as a central mediator because it directly shapes how individuals handle the emotional reactions elicited by social media use and by FoMO-related anxiety. Extending the work of Hartanto et al. (2024), the present study investigates how general emotion regulation skills mediate the association between FoMO and the positive dimensions of psychological well-being.

Emotion regulation is the process of managing emotional experiences in oneself or others (Gross & Levenson, 1993); it

is particularly relevant in social media environments. Zsido et al. (2021) demonstrated that maladaptive strategies, such as rumination, catastrophizing, and self-blame, mediated the relationship between social anxiety and problematic social networking site and smartphone use, indicating that anxious individuals may rely on these platforms to escape negative affect. In contrast, effective emotion regulation skills, including cognitive reappraisal and emotional awareness, are associated with better psychological outcomes, such as greater life satisfaction and more positive relationships (Berking, et al., 2010; Gross, 1998). Conversely, reliance on suppression or rumination has been linked to reduced well-being (Gross & John, 2003).

Given that FoMO generates negative emotional states, including anxiety, stress, and dissatisfaction (Tanhan et al., 2022; Przybylski et al., 2013), its influence on emotion regulation warrants close examination. FoMO may lead individuals to adopt maladaptive regulation strategies, such as rumination and catastrophizing, particularly when confronted with perceived exclusion or disconnection. These strategies can intensify emotional distress and hinder adaptive emotional management. Prior research suggests that poorer emotion regulation is associated with increased psychological distress and diminished well-being (Gross & John, 2003).

Current Study

The present study aims to examine the effect of FoMO on psychological well-being, with specific emphasis on the mediating role of emotion regulation skills. FoMO is treated as the independent variable, emotion regulation skills as the mediator, and psychological well-being as the dependent variable. The primary hypothesis is that FoMO impairs emotion regulation skills, leading to lower psychological well-being.

Method

Research Design and Participants

The study employed a cross-sectional survey design. Participants were adults aged 18 and older. Following Hartanto et al. (2024), who reported an effect size of $d = .07$, a power analysis conducted with G*Power 3.1 (Erdfelder et al., 1996) determined that 224 participants were required ($\alpha = .05$, power = .95). Data were collected from 276 individuals; after removing four cases due to consent withdrawal, underage status, or excessive missing data, the final sample comprised 272 participants.

The participants' mean age was 32.23 (SD = 12.78); 69.9% were female, 28.6% male, and 0.4% other. Most (63.7%) were in a relationship, and 40.9% had children. Regarding education, 51.4% held primary, 0.4% secondary, 18.5% high school, 72.5% undergraduate, and 6.5% graduate degrees.

Procedure

This study was approved by the Anadolu University Social and Human Sciences Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Committee (approval number: 813201, dated: 26.11.2024). All participants provided written informed consent before participation. All materials and data are openly available at: https://osf.io/vgp87/files/osfstorage?view_only=d4c1cbe3f68e4cd58bf51f44b13e7a11

Measures

Demographic Information Form

The form collected age, gender, education level, relationship status, parental status, frequency of social media checking, and average daily social media use, in line with variables included in the Turkish adaptation of the FoMO scale (Çelik & Özkara, 2022).

FoMO on Social Media Scale

FoMO on Social Media scale, developed by Zhang et al. (2020) and adapted into Turkish by Çelik and Özkara (2022), was used to measure FoMO in the context of social media. The scale consists of two sub-dimensions: Personal FoMO (e.g., “When I am not active on social media, I feel anxious about myself,” “When I am not active on social media, I feel incomplete compared to others around me”) and Social FoMO (e.g., “When I am not active on social media, I think the social group I belong to sees me as unimportant,” “When I am not active on social media, I feel excluded by my social group”). The scale comprises a total of 9 items, with 5 items belonging to the Personal FoMO subdimension and 4 items to the Social FoMO sub-dimension. Participants responded to the items on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree*).

The scale's creator, Zhang et al. (2020), recommended combining these two subscales into a single, unified scale. The correlation between Personal FoMO and Social FoMO was found to be .592 ($p < .001$), so they were merged for the current study. Cronbach's alpha for the FoMO scale was .923, indicating excellent internal consistency.

Psychological Well-Being Scale

The Psychological Well-Being Scale, developed by Ryff (1995), assesses eudaimonic well-being. The version employed in this study comprises 18 items from the short form, which was translated into Turkish and used by Yılmaz et al. (2022). The scale covers six sub-dimensions: autonomy (e.g., “I am not afraid to express my own thoughts even if they contradict the views of most people”), personal growth (e.g., “I think it is important for a person to have new experiences that challenge his view of himself and the world”), purpose in life (e.g., “Some people spend their lives aimlessly, but I am not one of them”),

positive relationships with others (e.g., “People will say that I am someone who does not hesitate to give time to others”), self-acceptance (e.g., “Looking back, I am satisfied with the way events in my life have turned out”), and environmental mastery (e.g., “I usually feel that the situations I find myself in are under my control”). Participants responded on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree*), and scores from the six subscales were averaged to obtain the total psychological well-being score. Cronbach’s alpha for the scale was .714, indicating acceptable reliability for measuring eudaimonic well-being.

Emotion Regulation Skills Scale

The Emotion Regulation Skills Scale, developed by Berking and Znoj (2008) to evaluate individuals’ emotion regulation abilities, was adapted into Turkish by Vatan and Oruçular Kahya (2018). The version used here contains 27 items, such as “I was able to consciously pay attention to what I was feeling” and “I was able to name my feelings.” Participants rated each item on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree*). Cronbach’s alpha for the scale was .957, reflecting high reliability for assessing emotion regulation skills. Higher mean scores indicate greater emotion regulation abilities.

Statistical Analysis

Descriptive statistics and correlational analyses for the main variables were conducted using International Business Machines Corporation (IBM) Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 24. Mediation analysis examining the role of emotion regulation skills in the relationship between FoMO and psychological well-being. The SPSS PROCESS macro was used for mediation analysis with 5000 bootstrapped samples. Bias-corrected 95% confidence intervals were generated for the indirect effect.

Results

Missing Values

Following the exclusions described in the Participants section, the proportion of missing data ranged from 10.7% for both FoMO on social media and psychological well-being to 16.2% for emotion regulation skills. Little’s (1988) missing completely at random (MCAR) test was conducted using IBM SPSS version 24 to examine the pattern of missing data (Acock, 2005; Bennett, 2001). The result indicated that the data were MCAR, $\chi^2 = 6.170$, $p = .72$, indicating that the likelihood of missing data was not systematically linked to unobserved values (Baraldi & Enders, 2010; Schlomer et al., 2010). Since missing data classified as MCAR are typically regarded as ignorable in empirical research (Graham & Hofer, 2000; Heitjan & Basu, 1996; Little, 1988), the analyses in the present study were conducted by imputing the mean values of the respective variables in place of missing data.

Preliminary Analysis

Means and SDs for each of the main variables and age, educational level, frequency of social media checking, and duration of daily usage of social media as well as zero-order correlations among these variables are presented in Table 1. FoMO was negatively correlated with both emotion regulation skills and psychological well-being, whereas a positive relationship was observed between emotion regulation skills and psychological well-being. Furthermore, higher levels of FoMO were associated with more frequent checking of social media and longer daily usage durations. Conversely, these patterns of social media use were linked to reduced emotion regulation skills. Additionally, age showed a negative association with FoMO, frequency of social media use, and duration of daily engagement with social media platforms. Educational level was not significantly associated with any of the main variables.

Ms and SDs broken down by gender, relationship status, and parental status are presented in Table 2. Women exhibited

Table 1. Correlation matrix, means, range, and SDs for age, educational level, the frequency of social media checking, duration of daily usage of social media, FoMO, emotion regulation skills, psychological well-being

Measures	2	3	4	5	6	7	Range	M	SD
Age	-.36***	-.31***	-.43**	-.29***	.08	.02	18-77	32.07	12.69
Educational level	-	.06	.63***	-.00	.07	.10	1-5	3.83	.61
The frequency of social media checking		-	.63***	.38***	-.17**	.11	1-5	3.86	.81
Duration of daily usage of social media			-	.30***	-.14**	-.15*	0-11	3.31	2.11
FoMO				-	-.24***	-.29***	1-7	1.99	1.10
Emotion regulation skills					-	-.47***	1-7	5.15	1.05
Psychological well-being						-	1-7	4.98	.67

Range of scores displayed is observed range for age, educational level, the frequency of social media checking, and duration of daily usage of social media. Range of scores displayed is possible range not observed range for FoMO, emotional regulation skill, and psychological well-being. The answer categories for educational level: 1 = primary school graduate, 2 = middle school graduate, 3 = high school graduate, 4 = undergraduate, 5 = having a master’s degree or higher. * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

Table 2. Means and SDs for FoMO, emotion regulation skill, psychological well-being by gender, relationship status, and parental status

	FoMO, M (SD)	Emotion regulation skills, M (SD)	Psychological well-being, M (SD)
Gender			
Female	2.15 (1.18)	5.14 (1.03)	4.99 (.68)
Male	1.53 (.62)	5.19 (1.08)	4.99 (.65)
Relationship status			
In a relationship	1.72 (.92)	5.27 (1.05)	5.03 (.64)
Single	2.16 (1.06)	5.06 (1.10)	4.93 (.72)
Parental status			
Have a child/children	1.67 (.93)	5.25 (1.04)	5.06 (.64)
Not having a child	2.21 (1.04)	5.09 (1.05)	4.94 (.69)

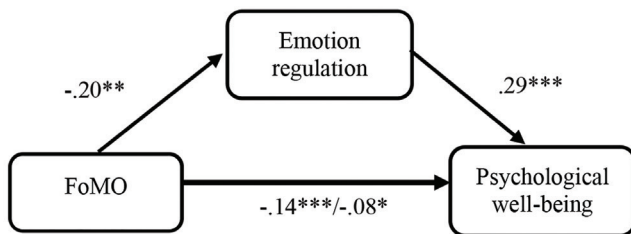


Figure 1. Mediation model with FoMO predicting psychological well-being through emotional regulation skill. All values are presented as standardized regression coefficients. In the path from FoMO to psychological well-being, the first value indicates the coefficient before emotion regulation skill is entered into model while the second value indicates the coefficient after. * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

significantly higher FoMO levels than men ($t_{(239)} = 3.98$, $p < .001$, 95% confidence interval [CI] [.31, .93]). However, no significant gender differences were observed in emotion regulation skills ($t_{(224)} = -.37$, $p = .71$, 95% CI [-.35, .24]) or psychological well-being ($t_{(239)} = -.02$, $p = .98$, 95% CI [-.19, .19]). FoMO was significantly higher among single individuals than among those who were married ($t_{(193)} = -2.91$, $p < .01$, 95% CI [-.73, -.14]). Nevertheless, no significant differences emerged between single and married individuals in emotion regulation skills ($t_{(180)} = -.18$, $p = .20$, 95% CI [-.10, .53]) or psychological well-being ($t_{(191)} = 1.10$, $p = .27$, 95% CI [-.09, .30]). Participants without children reported significantly higher FoMO than those with children ($t_{(240)} = -3.79$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [-.82, -.26]). Consistent with gender and relationship status findings, no significant differences were found in emotion regulation skills ($t_{(225)} = 1.12$, $p = .27$, 95% CI [-.12, .44]) or psychological well-being ($t_{(250)} = 1.33$, $p = .19$, 95% CI [-.06, .29]) according to parental status.

The Mediating Role of Emotion Regulation Skill

To examine the main hypotheses, model 4 of the SPSS PROCESS macro was employed. In the model shown in Figure 1, FoMO was entered as the predictor, emotion regulation skills as the mediator, and psychological well-being as the outcome variable.

First, the negative association between FoMO and psychological well-being was statistically significant, $b = -.14$, standard error (SE) = .04, $p < .001$, 95% CI [-.23, -.06]. Moreover, FoMO significantly predicted lower emotion regulation skills, $b = -.20$, $SE = .06$, $p < .01$, 95% CI [-.32, -.07]. When emotion regulation skills were included alongside FoMO, the direct effect of FoMO on psychological well-being was reduced, $b = -.08$, $SE = .04$, $p < .05$, 95% CI [-.16, -.01]. Bootstrapping with 5000 samples confirmed a significant indirect effect (indirect effect: $-.06$, $SE = .02$, 95% CI [-.11, -.02]), indicating partial mediation by emotion regulation skills. The overall model was significant and accounted for 6% of the variance in psychological well-being, $F_{(1,195)} = 12.75$, $p < .001$, $R^2 = .06$.

Discussion

The current study examined the relationships among FoMO on social media and psychological well-being, and tested whether emotion regulation serves as a mediator in this relationship. As hypothesized, FoMO was negatively associated with both emotion regulation skills and psychological well-being, while emotion regulation was positively linked to well-being. Mediation analysis revealed that emotion regulation skills partially mediated the relationship between FoMO and psychological well-being, indicating that difficulties in regulating emotions may partly explain how FoMO negatively affects individuals' overall well-being.

These findings align with prior research demonstrating the detrimental effects of FoMO on psychological well-being (Przybylski et al., 2013; Roberts & David, 2020; Savitri, 2019). In particular, they echo the results of Çifçi and Kumcağız (2023), who found that FoMO increases feelings of loneliness, negatively affecting individuals' subjective well-being, as well as those of Hartanto et al. (2024), who showed that FoMO operates through various psychological mechanisms to diminish overall well-being. Collectively, these studies emphasize that the impact of FoMO extends beyond transient emotional discomfort, contributing to broader challenges in maintaining psychological health. The present study adds to this literature by shifting the focus toward the positive dimensions of psychological well-being, such as life satisfaction, rather than solely emphasizing negative outcomes like depression or anxiety. This focus is notable in social psychology, where well-being is understood not merely as the absence of negative experiences, but as encompassing positive psychological elements such as self-acceptance, satisfaction with life, and meaningful social relationships (Abbas et al., 2022; Baumeister et al., 2001; Huppert, 2009; Ryff, 1995; Taylor & Brown, 1988). While much research has concentrated on alleviating negative states, exploring positive aspects like purpose, resilience, and self-acceptance offers valuable insights into human flourishing. The findings of the current study suggest that aspects of digital life, such as FoMO, not only exacerbate negative dimensions of psychological well-being but also erode individuals' positive self-perceptions and deeper eudaimonic aspects of well-being, such as purpose and fulfillment, ultimately diminishing psychological health from several perspectives.

This study contributes to the literature by identifying FoMO as one such factor that may undermine the positive dimensions of psychological well-being. The findings revealed that FoMO accounted for approximately 6% of the variance in eudaimonic well-being. Although this percentage might appear modest, it represents a meaningful effect given the complex and multifaceted nature of psychological well-being, which is shaped by numerous variables, including social connections, workplace stress, and individual coping strategies (Huppert, 2009). The results also suggest that FoMO may impair individuals' emotion regulation skills, leaving them more susceptible to negative emotional experiences, which in turn can diminish their overall well-being.

The findings of a previous study (Popelkova et al., 2023) indicate a link between FoMO and reduced emotional awareness. Moreover, the data suggest a potentially reciprocal relationship, implying that difficulties in emotional regulation may lead to maladaptive coping strategies. One such strategy may involve turning to social media as a means of escape, where online interactions replace more direct emotional

processing and regulation. Therefore, the present findings offer valuable insights for both social psychological research and applied practice. Specifically, by demonstrating that emotion regulation skills partially mediate the association between FoMO and psychological well-being, this study highlights a key psychological pathway through which FoMO exerts its negative effects. This underscores the potential of interventions aimed at enhancing emotion regulation skills as effective approaches to reduce the adverse impact of FoMO.

In this regard, social support warrants consideration in future research. Within the social psychology literature, social support is recognized as a major predictor of positive psychological well-being (Deichert et al., 2019; Thoits, 1985; Turner, 1981). It would therefore be useful to examine whether social support moderates the negative effects of FoMO on emotion regulation and psychological health. Furthermore, exploring the role of digital social support, defined as support received from online communities or contacts (Rashid et al., 2022), could provide practical guidance for counteracting the negative consequences of FoMO in digital environments. Digital social support has been shown to reduce social isolation by promoting inclusion and a sense of belonging (Scharlach & Lehning, 2013).

Demographic factors such as gender, relationship status, and parental status revealed significant differences in FoMO levels, with higher FoMO reported by women, single individuals, and those without children. However, these demographic variables did not significantly affect emotion regulation skills or psychological well-being. Nevertheless, to fully understand the nature of FoMO and its consequences, demographic factors that may heighten susceptibility to this phenomenon must be examined. One particularly relevant factor is social identity, defined as an individual's sense of self derived from perceived membership in social groups (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Social identity influences how individuals define themselves in relation to others and plays a central role in shaping social behavior, emotional experiences, and well-being. Individuals who strongly identify with groups that emphasize social connectedness or status, such as peer groups highly active on social media, may experience greater FoMO due to pressure to remain continuously engaged and included. In contrast, those whose social identity is anchored in offline or less comparison-oriented communities may be less affected. Examining social identity as a moderating variable could therefore yield valuable insight into why certain individuals experience more intense FoMO and how this subsequently influences their psychological well-being. Such understanding could guide targeted interventions that strengthen emotional resilience while fostering healthier patterns of social identification.

The present findings showed that greater frequency and duration of social media use were associated with higher FoMO

and lower emotion regulation skills. Although the association between social media use and FoMO was expected, the link with emotion regulation warrants further investigation. For example, Roberts and David (2020) propose that FoMO can increase social networking behavior, which may in turn positively affect psychological well-being when engagement is driven by the desire to maintain connections. Nevertheless, it remains unclear whether time spent on social media consistently impairs emotion regulation and overall well-being. Consequently, future studies must directly assesses the emotional consequences of social media engagement beyond FoMO to clarify these associations. Additionally, age was negatively associated with FoMO and social media usage patterns, suggesting that younger individuals may be more vulnerable to these effects, whereas educational level showed no significant relation to any of the main variables.

Study Limitations

One limitation of the present study is its reliance on a single methodological approach; future studies must replicate the findings using diverse methods, including experimental designs. Although manipulating social media usage presents challenges, such efforts could provide important causal evidence. Moreover, employing longitudinal designs would offer greater insight into the dynamic interplay among FoMO, emotion regulation, and psychological well-being over time, given that changes in well-being typically unfold gradually (Bewick et al., 2010; Houben et al., 2015; Springer et al., 2011).

Conclusion

This study adds to the growing literature on the psychological consequences of FoMO concerning social media use. The results indicate that FoMO is negatively associated with psychological well-being and that emotion regulation skills partially mediate this association. These findings highlight the importance of developing and promoting effective emotion regulation strategies, particularly among individuals more susceptible to FoMO. As digital communication continues to shape social interaction, understanding the mechanisms by which FoMO affects mental health becomes increasingly vital. Future interventions designed to reduce FoMO and enhance well-being may therefore benefit from targeting media-use behaviors and internal coping resources, such as emotion regulation skills.

Ethical Statement

It is hereby declared that all rules specified in the *Higher Education Institutions Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Directive* were followed in this study.

Ethics Committee Approval

This study was approved by the Anadolu University Social and Human Sciences Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Committee (approval number: 813201, dated: 26.11.2024). All participants provided written informed consent before participation.

Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declare that they have no competing interests.

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