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Fear of missing out

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"FOMO" redirects here. For the album by Liam Finn, see FOMO (album).

Fear of missing out (**FOMO**) is a social anxiety[2] stemmed from the belief that others might be having fun while the person experiencing the anxiety is not present. It is characterized by a desire to stay continually connected with what others are doing.[3] FOMO is also defined as a fear of regret,[4] which may lead to concerns that one might miss an opportunity for social interaction, a novel experience or a profitable investment.[5] It is the fear that deciding not to participate is the wrong choice.[4][6]

Social networking creates many opportunities for FOMO. While it provides opportunities for social engagement,[3] it offers an endless stream of activities in which any given person is not involved. Psychological dependence on social networks can result in anxiety and can lead to FOMO[7] or even pathological Internet use.[8] FOMO is claimed to negatively influence psychological health and well-being.[4]

Smartphones enable people to remain in contact with their social and professional network continuously. This may result in compulsive checking for status updates and messages, for fear of missing an opportunity.[1]

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History [edit]

The phenomenon was first identified in 1996 by marketing strategist Dr. Dan Herman, who conducted research for Adam Bellouch and published the first academic paper on the topic in 2000 in *The Journal of Brand Management*.[9]

Author Patrick J. McGinnis coined the term FOMO[10] and popularized it in a 2004 op-ed in *The Harbus*, the magazine of Harvard Business School. The article was titled *McGinnis' Two FOs: Social Theory at HBS*, and also referred to another related condition, Fear of a Better Option (FoBO), and their role in the school's social life.[11][12][13] The origin of FOMO has also been traced to the 2004 *Harbus* article by academic Joseph Reagle.[14]

Definition [edit]

FOMO refers to the apprehension that one is either not in-the-know or is out of touch with social events, experiences, and interactions.[3] People who grapple with it may not know exactly what they are missing but can still fear that others are having a much better time or doing something better than they are, without them.[2] FOMO could result from not knowing about a conversation,[15] missing a TV show, not attending a wedding or party,[16] or hearing that others have discovered a new restaurant.[17]

Effects [edit]

A study by JWTIntelligence suggests that FOMO can influence the formation of long-term goals and self-perceptions.[2] In this study, around half of the respondents stated that they are overwhelmed by the amount of information needed to stay up-to-date, and that it's impossible to not miss out on something. The process of relative deprivation creates FOMO and dissatisfaction. It reduces psychological well-being.[3][4][18] FOMO led to negative social and emotional experiences, such as boredom and loneliness.[19] An 2013 study found that it negatively impacts mood and life satisfaction,[3] reducing self-esteem and affects mindfulness.[20]

According to John M. Grohol, founder and Editor-in-Chief of Psych Central, FOMO may lead to a constant search for new connections with others, abandoning current connections to do so. Moreover, the desire to stay in touch may endanger personal safety, e.g., while driving.[21]

A 2019 University of Glasgow study surveyed 467 adolescents, and found that the respondents felt societal pressure to always be available.[22]

FOMO-sufferers may increasingly seek access to others' social lives, and consume an escalating amount of real-time information.[23]

Causes [edit]

FOMO arises from situational or long-term deficits in psychological needs satisfaction, which are not a new phenomenon.[3] Before the Internet, a related phenomenon, "keeping up with the Jones'", was widely experienced. FOMO generalized and intensified this experience because so much more of people's lives became publicly documented and easily accessed. Further, a common tendency is to post about positive experiences (that great restaurant) rather than negative ones (bad first date).

Self-determination theory contends that an individual's psychological satisfaction in their competence, autonomy, and relatedness consists of three basic psychological needs for human beings.[24] Test subjects with lower levels of basic psychological satisfaction reported a higher level of FOMO. Basic psychological satisfaction and FOMO were positively correlated.[3] Four in ten young people reported FOMO sometimes or often.[2] FOMO was found to be negatively correlated with age, and men were more likely than women to report it.[3]

Social media platforms that are associated with FOMO include Snapchat[25], Facebook[26], Instagram[27], and Twitter.

Marketing technique [edit]

Advertising and marketing campaigns may seek to intensify FOMO within a marketing strategy. Examples include AT&T's "Don't be left behind" campaign, Duracell's Powermat "Stay in charge" campaign and Heineken's "Sunrise" campaign.[2] The "Sunrise" campaign, in particular, aimed to encourage responsible drinking by portraying excessive drinking as a way to miss the best parts of a party, rather than claiming that excessive drinking is a risk to personal health. Other brands attempt counter FOMO, such as Nescafé's "Wake up to life" campaign.[2]

Harnessing TV viewers' FOMO is also perceived to foster higher broadcast ratings. Real-time updates about status and major social events allow for a more engaging media consumption experience and faster dissemination of information.[2] Real-time tweets about the Super Bowl are considered to be correlated with higher TV ratings due to their appeal to FOMO and the prevalence of social media usage.[2]

See also [edit]

- Hyperbolic discounting
- Kiasu
- Loss aversion
- Missed connections
- Murray's system of needs
- Opportunity cost
- Relative deprivation
- Self-determination theory
- Social media
- Status anxiety
- Social proof

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v · t · e **Conformity** [hide]

Enforcement	Proscription	Enemy of the people · Enemy of the state · Ostracism · Outlaw (Civil death · Vogelfrei) · Public enemy
	Group pressure	Bandwagon effect · Collectivism · Coercive persuasion · Consensus reality · Deplatforming · Dogma · Contagion (Behavioral · Crime · Hysterical · Suicide) · **Fear of missing out** · Groupthink · Hazing · Herd mentality · Indoctrination · Invented tradition · Memory conformity · Milieu control · Mobbing · Nationalism · Normalization · Normative social influence · Patriotism · Peer pressure · Pluralistic ignorance · Propaganda · Rally 'round the flag effect · Right-wing authoritarianism · Scapegoating · Shunning · Social influence · Socialization · Spiral of silence · Teasing · Tyranny of the majority · Untouchability · Xeer
	Individual pressure	Authoritarian personality · Control freak · Obsessive–compulsive personality disorder
Conformity		Compliance · Countersignaling · Herd behavior · Internalization · Social proof · Obedience
Experiments		Asch conformity experiments · Breaching experiment · Milgram experiment · Stanford prison experiment
Counterconformity		Alternative media and journalism · Anti-authoritarianism · Antisocial tendencies · Auto-segregation · Civil disobedience · Cosmopolitanism · Counterculture · Culture jamming · Deviance · Devil's advocate · Dissent · Eclecticism · Eccentricity · Hermit · Idiosyncrasy · Individualism · Rebellion · Red team · Ritual clown · Satire · Shock value
	Counterconformists	Dissident · Outcast · Homo sacer · Persona non grata · Exile · Nonperson · Damnatio memoriae · Cagot

Categories: Advertising | Anxiety | Internet culture | Social media

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