



## ORIGINAL RESEARCH

# Mental Health in a Digital World: How Problematic Cell Phone Use and Personality Predict Fear of Missing Out (FoMO) in Gen Z University Students from Türkiye and the U.S.

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## Abstract

**Objective:** The authors sought to examine the association between Fear of Missing Out (FoMO), mental health, personality traits, and social media use among Turkish and U.S. university students, belonging to Generation Z (Gen Z), born between 1997 and 2012, a cohort deeply immersed in technology and social media from an early age.

**Methods:** The present online survey study included 637 university students aged 18-25 (20.09% male, 78.65% female, 1.26% other) from Türkiye (86.03%) and the US (14.97%). Participants completed 19 sociodemographic questions, a 17-item FoMO Scale, and a 44-item Personality Inventory. The study analyzed the relationship between FoMO, mental health, personality traits, and social media use across different platforms.

**Results:** Findings revealed that frequent cell phone use and higher FoMO scores were significantly associated with problematic social media use. TikTok users reported higher FoMO compared to non-users. Additionally, there was a positive correlation between the number of social media platforms used and FoMO. Social media use driven by boredom and passive observation further increased FoMO. Associations between FoMO and personality traits highlighted the role of individual differences in social media behaviors.

**Conclusion:** The study highlights the need for tailored interventions that address both social media usage patterns and personality traits to reduce the negative impact of FoMO on mental health. While Gen Z are digital natives, they need to become digital experts to navigate the mental health challenges exacerbated by curated content and the prevalence of FoMO on social media. Universities play a crucial role in raising awareness and supporting students in managing these psychological pressures by promoting balanced digital behaviors. A deeper understanding of the interplay between digital behaviors, personality traits, and cultural contexts can inform future interventions aimed at reducing FoMO and enhancing the well-being of young people in an increasingly interconnected world.

**Keywords:** FoMO in University Students, Mental Health in Gen Z University Students, Youth Mental Health, FoMO and Personality in Young Adults, Campus Health

## INTRODUCTION

The transition from adolescence to adulthood represents a critical developmental stage, particularly for university students who must navigate the demands of higher education while managing the challenges posed by a rapidly evolving digital landscape. This phase is especially significant for Generation Z (Gen Z), born between 1997 and 2012, a cohort deeply immersed in technology and social media from an early age. While often referred to as “digital natives,” particularly in WEIRD (Western, Educated, Industrialized, Rich, and

Democratic) cultures, Gen Z may not necessarily be adept at navigating the curated and often misleading nature of social media worlds (Przybylski et al., 2013; Boyd, 2014). This distinction is crucial, as the pervasive nature of social media has been increasingly linked to negative mental health outcomes. The constant exposure to idealized digital content contributes to excessive screen time, which research has associated with rising levels of anxiety, depression, and other psychological challenges (Keles et al., 2020; Hunt et al., 2018). A comprehensive

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meta-analysis by Huang (2022) further underscores this connection, demonstrating that problematic social media use correlates strongly with increased symptoms of depression, anxiety, and stress, with Fear of Missing Out (FoMO) serving as a key mediating factor. Despite their technical fluency, many Gen Z individuals remain vulnerable to these psychological pressures, highlighting an urgent need for digital literacy initiatives that extend beyond basic technological competence to include mental health awareness and responsible screen-time management (e.g., Elhai et al., 2017).

As these digital tools become central to Gen Z's academic, professional, and personal lives, they offer opportunities for growth but also introduce challenges to mental well-being. One such challenge is the psychological phenomenon known as Fear of Missing Out (FoMO), which has garnered substantial attention in contemporary psychological and sociological research. FoMO, as conceptualized by Przybylski et al. (2013), refers to the persistent concern that others are engaging in rewarding experiences without one's participation. This anxiety is intensified by social media platforms, which offer constant streams of curated snapshots of others' lives, fostering social comparison and contributing to negative emotional outcomes. Gen Z's dependence on social media makes them particularly vulnerable to FoMO and its associated psychological effects, including elevated stress, anxiety, and depressive symptoms (Alutaybi et al., 2020).

### Stress Among University Students

University life often introduces a wide array of psychological challenges, ranging from academic pressures to financial concerns, all of which contribute to rising stress levels (Halfon et al., 2018). While research on U.S. college students indicates that 45% report higher-than-average stress levels (Bouchrika, 2024), similar trends are observed among Turkish university students. Studies by Yildirim and Tanriverdi (2022) highlight that economic instability and high unemployment rates among recent graduates exacerbate stress levels in Türkiye, making financial anxiety a central concern for students. Additionally, Öztürk and Demir (2021) found that familial expectations, particularly in collectivist cultures, intensify academic stress, as students strive to meet both personal and social obligations. Further, comparative data suggests that Turkish students report higher levels of stress related to financial instability and family expectations, whereas U.S. students experience more stress due to academic competitiveness and future

career uncertainty (Conley et al., 2013; ACHA, 2019). This contrast highlights the importance of culturally tailored stress-management interventions for university students in different socio-economic and cultural environments.

One anonymous student in an introductory psychology course poignantly described this modern dilemma, see excerpt (1) below:

#### Excerpt 1

*“The challenge of the 21st century is that we are being completely pulled apart—to an unprecedented extent—by all the things that we feel the need to be for so many different people, in so many different circumstances. This fragmentation is counter to our longing for wholeness and authenticity.”*

This reflection highlights the immense pressure students feel to meet various societal and personal expectations, often leading to a sense of disconnection. Similarly, another anonymous student shares the weight of navigating higher education as a first-generation college student from an immigrant background, see excerpt (2) below:

#### Excerpt 2

*“Being a daughter of immigrant parents and a college student in the 21st century is like I need to have my life planned out for the next ten years. The hustle, follow-through, and pressure to succeed are immense. There's a high chance I will be seen as a failure if I don't have a degree, which feels unfair considering the harshness previous generations endured.”*

The student reflections in both excerpts (1) and (2) echo findings from Bennion et al. (2018), who emphasize the multifaceted challenges of adjusting to university life, often leading to psychological distress. The American College Health Association (ACHA, 2019) similarly identifies stress and anxiety as significant barriers to academic performance. Students face heightened stress as they progress through their academic journeys, influenced by external factors such as family dynamics, financial security, and social relationships (Lian, 2018). Research by Conley et al. (2013) shows that stress levels among university students often mirror those of working adults, with 24% of U.S. students expressing concern about their professional futures (ACHA, 2019).

In addition to stress, boredom—often caused by unengaging academic material or limited social interaction—also significantly impacts student mental health. Wolniewicz et al. (2020) found that boredom

prone to mediate the relationship between depressive symptoms and problematic smartphone use, exacerbating feelings of FoMO. The combination of boredom, disengagement, and dependence on technology amplifies the psychological challenges students face. To effectively address these issues, universities must adopt holistic mental health support systems that target the various factors contributing to student stress. Programs should aim to build psychological resilience, reduce academic and social pressures, and create supportive environments that promote both mental well-being and academic achievement.

### Fear of Missing Out (FoMO)

First introduced in 2004, Fear of Missing Out (FoMO) has become a key focus in the study of digital communication and psychological responses to social media. FoMO is defined as the anxiety that others might be enjoying rewarding experiences without one's involvement, driving individuals to stay constantly connected to social activities (Przybylski et al., 2013). In today's digital age, where social media platforms offer idealized portrayals of others' lives, FoMO has intensified, often leading to feelings of exclusion and comparison (e.g., Tanhan et al., 2022).

Self-Determination Theory (SDT) provides a framework for understanding FoMO, emphasizing the importance of fulfilling intrinsic psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Kim et al., 2020). When these needs, particularly for social connectedness, are unmet, individuals are more likely to experience FoMO. This unmet need drives them to engage in behaviors aimed at reestablishing social bonds, which can result in negative emotional consequences if these behaviors are motivated by external pressures rather than internal satisfaction (Kim et al., 2020).

Research has linked FoMO to various maladaptive behaviors. Riordan et al. (2015) found that students with higher levels of FoMO are more likely to engage in excessive alcohol consumption, leading to negative outcomes such as poor academic performance and more severe hangover symptoms. Moreover, students with elevated FoMO levels are more prone to use alcohol as a coping mechanism for emotional distress. FoMO has also been closely associated with Problematic Social Media Use (PSMU). Kirik et al. (2021) demonstrated that individuals with high FoMO levels tend to spend more time on social media to avoid missing out on social interactions, further reinforcing the cycle of social comparison and dependence on digital platforms, which intensifies feelings of anxiety and inadequacy.

### Problematic Social Media Use for Social Connection

The growing reliance on social media has sparked concerns over Problematic Social Media Use (PSMU), particularly as individuals increasingly prioritize online interactions over face-to-face relationships. Excessive social media use can erode in-person connections and foster a sense of isolation. However, passive social media users—those who consume content without actively engaging—may exhibit a lower need for direct social connectedness, using these platforms to maintain indirect relationships (Fuster et al., 2017).

Social connectedness plays a critical role in mental well-being, as high levels of connection are associated with lower rates of anxiety, depression, and other mental health issues (Tanhan et al., 2022). This sense of belonging often originates from early familial support systems, which provide a foundation for emotional stability throughout life.

Cultural factors also shape how social connectedness is experienced. In collectivist cultures like Türkiye, identity is closely tied to family and community bonds, emphasizing social harmony and interdependence (Hamamura, 2012). In contrast, individualistic cultures such as the United States prioritize personal autonomy and achievement, leading to different patterns of social interaction and connection.

Modern technology has reshaped social structures, with digital platforms increasingly facilitating social networks across geographic distances (Tariq & Khan, 2021). While these platforms can foster a sense of belonging, they also present challenges, such as FoMO. Feelings of boredom and social isolation contribute to problematic smartphone use, mediating the relationship between psychological distress and digital behavior (Wolniewicz et al., 2020). A deeper understanding of the psychological drivers and cultural context surrounding social media use is essential for addressing its mental health impacts.

### The Role of Cultural Context in FoMO and Social Media Use

The psychological and behavioral effects of FoMO vary across cultural contexts. In collectivist societies like Türkiye, where social harmony and group cohesion are highly valued, FoMO may be driven by concerns about maintaining group ties and fulfilling social obligations. Individuals in these cultures often derive their sense of identity and belonging from familial and community relationships, which may intensify the psychological impact of FoMO as individuals feel compelled to stay connected with their in-groups (Hamamura, 2012).

Conversely, in individualistic cultures such as the United States, personal autonomy, self-expression, and achievement are highly emphasized. In these contexts, FoMO may stem more from competitive social comparisons, with individuals using social media to showcase personal accomplishments and milestones. This focus on individual achievement may lead to FoMO being linked more closely to competitive anxiety than group-based social exclusion.

These contrasting cultural dynamics mean that FoMO manifests differently across contexts. In Türkiye, it may heighten fears of exclusion from close-knit groups, whereas in the U.S., it could fuel competitive anxieties over personal success. Recognizing these cultural distinctions is crucial for developing culturally sensitive interventions to mitigate FoMO's negative effects on mental health.

### Objectives and Hypotheses

Given the widespread use of digital platforms and social media among Gen Z university students, a complex set of psychological challenges has emerged, with Fear of Missing Out (FoMO) standing out as a critical issue. This study aims to explore the intricate relationships between FoMO, social media usage patterns, mental health outcomes, personality traits, and cultural contexts, comparing university students from Türkiye and the United States.

The primary objective was to examine the association between social media engagement—both passive and active—and the prevalence of FoMO. With platforms like Instagram and TikTok central to the social lives of Gen Z, understanding how different engagement patterns (e.g., passive scrolling vs. active participation) influence FoMO is essential for addressing its negative consequences. A secondary objective is to assess the moderating role of personality traits—specifically neuroticism, extraversion, conscientiousness, agreeableness, and openness to experience—on the relationship between FoMO and mental health. Drawing on the Five-Factor Model of personality, this study evaluates how these traits impact susceptibility to FoMO and related emotional distress. Finally, the tertiary objective focuses on the cultural differences between Türkiye and the United States in shaping the experience and consequences of FoMO. The study hypothesizes that the collectivist values in Türkiye may amplify the psychological impact of FoMO compared to the more individualistic values in the U.S., where personal autonomy and success are prioritized.

By addressing these objectives, the current study aims to contribute to a more nuanced understanding of how social media use, personality traits, and cultural factors interact to influence the experience of FoMO, offering insights into targeted interventions that can mitigate its negative effects.

## METHODS

### Participants

The study sample comprised 637 university students aged 18 to 25 years, with 20.09% identifying as male, 78.65% as female, and 1.26% as other genders. The majority of participants were from Türkiye (86.03%), while a smaller proportion came from the United States (14.97%). The inclusion criteria required that participants be currently enrolled in a university program and fall within the specified age range, ensuring a diverse representation of students from both countries. No exclusions were made based on gender, socio-economic status, or academic discipline, maintaining inclusivity in the participant selection process.

### Ethical Considerations

The study adhered to ethical guidelines and was approved by the Institutional Research Committees of the participating universities in both Türkiye and the United States. Informed consent was obtained from all participants before data collection, and they were informed of their right to withdraw at any time without consequences. The procedures followed the ethical standards outlined in the Declaration of Helsinki, ensuring confidentiality and the protection of participants' personal data throughout the research process.

### Study Design and Measures

The research employed a cross-sectional survey design, utilizing an online questionnaire administered through the Qualtrics platform. The survey was distributed via official university communication channels at two urban universities in Türkiye and the United States. To accommodate language differences and ensure clarity, the survey was made available in both Turkish and English.

### Measures

**Sociodemographic Information:** Participants answered 19 sociodemographic questions, providing details about

their online and offline behaviors, clinical diagnoses, and personal background. Participants responded to the question, “Have you ever been diagnosed with any of the following psychological or psychiatric conditions?” and were provided with a multiple-choice list including: Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Anxiety Disorder, Depression, Bipolar Disorder, Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD), Eating Disorder, Borderline Personality Disorder, and ‘Other.’ These diagnoses were self-reported and not confirmed through medical records, which represents a limitation of the study. Future research could benefit from including clinical diagnostic validation. This section aimed to gather comprehensive information that would allow for an in-depth analysis of FoMO in relation to individual characteristics.

**FoMO Scale:** The study employed the widely used 17-item FoMO Scale developed by Przybylski et al. (2013), with the Turkish version adapted by Gökler et al. (2016) for the Turkish participants. The internal consistency of the scale was confirmed with a Cronbach’s alpha coefficient of 0.913, indicating strong reliability.

**Personality Inventory:** Participants’ personality traits were assessed using a 44-item inventory based on the Five-Factor Model of Personality (Goldberg, 1993). This inventory measured levels of neuroticism, extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, and openness to experience. While the inventory was originally developed for English-speaking populations, a translated version was used for Turkish participants. A pilot test was conducted to ensure linguistic and conceptual equivalence, and the Cronbach’s alpha reliability analysis (0.703) confirmed acceptable internal consistency.

### Statistical Analysis

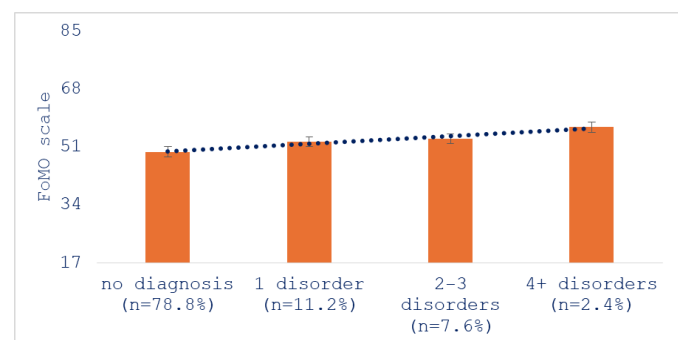
Statistical analyses were performed using SPSS software (IBM Corp., Armonk, NY, USA). Descriptive statistics were used to summarize demographic variables, and Pearson’s correlation coefficient assessed the relationships between FoMO, personality traits, and social media usage. Regression analyses were conducted to examine the moderating effects of cultural context on FoMO and mental health outcomes, with significance set at  $p < 0.05$ .

## RESULTS

### FoMO and Psychopathology in Turkish and U.S. Gen Z Students

The study found no significant differences in overall

FoMO scores between Turkish and U.S. participants ( $p = .793$ ). However, U.S. students were more likely to report a clinical diagnosis ( $p < .001$ ). Among both Turkish and U.S. students, FoMO scores increased in relation to the number of clinical diagnoses, highlighting a significant association between FoMO and mental health challenges. 78.8% of TR and US participants reported to have no clinical diagnosis. 21.2% of the participants reported at least one clinical diagnosis. FoMO increased with the number of clinical diagnoses,  $\eta^2 = .020$ ,  $F(6, 630) = 2.16$ ,  $p = .046$ . see Figure 1.



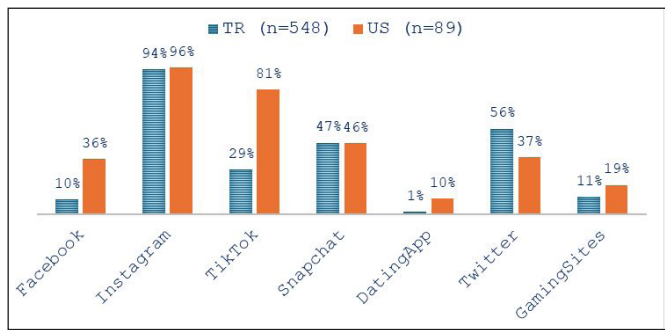
**Figure 1.** Mean scores in FoMO among Turkish and US university students (N=637) as a function of self-reported clinical disorders

### FoMO and Social Media Usage Patterns

Frequent mobile phone use and passive social media engagement were strongly associated with higher FoMO scores among Gen Z students ( $p < .001$ ). In particular, TikTok users were more likely to have higher mean scores in FoMO ( $M = 51.99$ ,  $SD = 12.77$ ) than non-TikTok users ( $M = 49.27$ ,  $SD = 11.86$ ),  $R^2 = .009$ ,  $F(1,636) = 6.91$ ,  $p = .009$ . No significant associations were found for using other social media platforms; the increased number of using various platforms was positively correlated with FoMO,  $r(637) = .124$ ,  $p = .002$ .

Participants who used social media due to boredom had higher mean scores in FoMO ( $M = 52.07$ ,  $SD = 12.23$ ) than participants who did not use social media for boredom ( $M = 45.35$ ,  $SD = 12.46$ ),  $\eta^2 = .056$ ,  $F(1,636) = 37.41$ ,  $p < .001$ .

Participants who passively observed feeds from others were more likely to have higher mean scores in FoMO ( $M = 53.83$ ,  $SD = 11.74$  vs.  $M = 48.82$ ,  $SD = 12.72$ ),  $\eta^2 = .032$ ,  $F(1,636) = 21.13$ ,  $p < .001$ .



**Figure 2.** Comparison of social media platform usage among TR and US college students (N=637); \*two-sided  $p$  value < 0.05 with the unequal variances  $t$ -test for Facebook, TikTok, DatingApp, and GamingSites

### FoMO and Personality Traits

Personality type had a significant effect on FoMO,  $R^2=.15$ ,  $F(5, 631)=22.97$ ,  $p<.001$ . FoMO displayed a significant positive correlation with neuroticism,  $r(637)=.353$ ,  $p<.001$ . FoMO was negatively correlated with conscientiousness,  $r(637)=-.248$ ,  $p<.001$ , extraversion,  $r(637)=-.116$ ,  $p=.03$ , and agreeableness,  $r(637)=-.083$ ,  $p=.036$ . Yet, FoMO was not significantly associated with openness,  $r(637)=-.083$ ,  $p=.036$ .

## DISCUSSION

The findings of the current study contribute to the growing body of literature on Fear of Missing Out (FoMO), social media usage, personality traits, and cultural influences among Gen Z university students from Türkiye and the United States. This section explores the implications of these findings, addresses limitations, and suggests directions for future research.

### FoMO and Psychopathology

One of the most significant insights from this study is the association between FoMO and mental health, particularly the link to psychopathology. Participants who reported more clinical diagnoses also exhibited higher levels of FoMO, aligning with findings from Akyol et al. (2021) which highlight the vulnerability of individuals with mental health challenges to FoMO-driven social comparison. This bidirectional relationship implies that FoMO not only exacerbates pre-existing mental health issues like anxiety and depression but can also serve as a catalyst for these problems, reinforcing the cycle of social exclusion and emotional distress. Research by Doumit et al. (2023) adds that personality traits such as neuroticism play a crucial role in how

individuals respond to digital environments that promote comparison, further complicating the link between FoMO and mental health. Given these findings, mental health interventions must address the digital dimension of social stress. Newer approaches, such as integrating digital detox strategies (Reddy et al., 2023), combined with traditional cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) methods, could help students manage the emotional toll of social comparison on platforms like Instagram or TikTok. Furthermore, educational institutions should emphasize digital literacy programs to promote a more balanced and mindful engagement with social media, potentially reducing the harmful psychological effects of FoMO (Savci et al., 2020).

### Social Media Usage and FoMO

This study reinforces the established relationship between passive social media usage and elevated FoMO levels. Passive consumption, such as scrolling through feeds without active participation, fosters negative social comparisons, as previously documented by Rozgonjuk et al. (2020). The addictive nature of certain platforms like TikTok, which rely on algorithm-driven content that encourages constant engagement, was particularly associated with higher FoMO levels in this study. These findings align with Kil et al. (2021), who found that platforms designed to deliver rapid, visually appealing content foster a sense of missing out and escalate social pressures. The results indicate that interventions targeting FoMO should focus on reducing passive social media engagement while promoting mindful, intentional interactions. Encouraging students to be conscious of their time spent on social media and participate more actively in digital spaces can mitigate the negative effects of FoMO (Tariq et al., 2021). Implementing digital wellness initiatives—such as app timers, content filtering, and awareness campaigns on the psychological impacts of social media—could further help reduce FoMO-related stress.

### Personality Traits, FoMO, and Cultural Change

Personality traits play a significant role in moderating the effects of FoMO, with cultural factors shaping how these traits influence social media use and mental well-being. The current findings suggest that neuroticism is a key predictor of FoMO, particularly in individualistic cultures where social comparison is more pronounced. This aligns with previous research by Rozgonjuk et al. (2020), which found that individuals high in neuroticism are more likely to experience anxiety-driven social

media engagement, exacerbating FoMO and associated stress. In contrast, extraversion and conscientiousness were negatively correlated with FoMO, suggesting that individuals who are more socially engaged and organized may be less susceptible to the psychological distress linked to excessive digital consumption. A meta-analysis by Akbari et al. (2021) examined the relationship between FoMO and internet use, highlighting that certain personality traits, such as high neuroticism and low conscientiousness, are significant predictors of FoMO. These traits contribute to individuals' susceptibility to excessive internet use and associated negative outcomes.

Cultural differences also play a role in shaping these relationships. In Türkiye's collectivist society, agreeableness had a stronger correlation with FoMO than in the U.S., reflecting the emphasis on maintaining close social ties and group cohesion (Akyol et al., 2022). This suggests that individuals in collectivist cultures may experience heightened anxiety over social exclusion, making them more prone to FoMO when they perceive a lack of engagement with their peer groups. Meanwhile, in individualistic cultures such as the U.S., openness to experience was a stronger predictor of FoMO, as individuals with high openness tend to seek novel social interactions and are more likely to engage with diverse digital communities (Hamamura, 2012).

Cultural factors significantly influence the prevalence and experience of FoMO. A systematic review by Blackwell et al. (2017) found that individuals in collectivist cultures may experience higher levels of FoMO due to a greater emphasis on social harmony and community belonging. This cultural orientation can intensify the fear of missing social interactions and events. Additionally, research suggests that cultural shifts brought on by globalization and increasing digital interconnectedness may be altering traditional personality dynamics in different societies. For example, Keldal (2022) argues that younger generations in Türkiye are adopting more individualistic traits due to greater exposure to Westernized digital cultures, potentially affecting how personality traits interact with FoMO over time. Future studies should explore these evolving cultural dynamics to better understand their implications for mental health interventions.

These cross-cultural findings highlight the need for targeted mental health strategies that consider both individual personality differences and broader cultural influences when addressing FoMO and social media-driven anxiety. In Türkiye, for example, promoting group-based support networks and community-driven

mental health programs might reduce FoMO. In the U.S., strategies that reduce competitive social comparisons and encourage intrinsic self-worth could be more effective (Doumit et al., 2023; Karimkhan & Chapa, 2021).

The increasing globalization of digital cultures may be influencing the way FoMO is experienced across different cultural contexts. Traditional collectivist societies, such as Türkiye, have historically emphasized social harmony and group cohesion (Hamamura, 2012). However, younger generations are increasingly exposed to Western digital lifestyles, leading to a gradual shift toward more individualistic values (Keldal, 2022). This shift may explain why Turkish participants exhibited patterns of FoMO that align with both collectivist and individualistic tendencies. Future research should explore how digital globalization is shaping psychological phenomena like FoMO in historically collectivist societies.

### Limitations & Future Research Directions

Several limitations of this study must be acknowledged. The reliance on self-reported data, as noted by Keldal (2022), introduces potential biases, as participants may either underreport or exaggerate their experiences with FoMO, mental health issues, and social media use. The cross-sectional design also limits the ability to determine causality; longitudinal studies are needed to track how FoMO develops over time and its long-term impact on mental health (Doumit et al., 2023). Future research should explore the role of social media algorithms in driving FoMO and investigate the relationship between platform design features—such as content curation and the use of influencers—and user psychology. Additionally, expanding the sample to include more diverse cultural contexts would provide greater insight into how different societal values influence the FoMO experience. Investigating other psychological phenomena, such as loneliness, self-esteem, and digital addiction, across varying cultural frameworks would further elucidate FoMO's broader mental health implications (Wickramaratne et al., 2022).

### CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study underscores the widespread nature of Fear of Missing Out (FoMO) among Gen Z university students and its complex interplay with mental health, personality traits, and social media use. The findings reveal that FoMO is not only a global phenomenon but also deeply shaped by cultural and

individual factors. To address the negative effects of FoMO, universities must implement comprehensive mental health strategies that address both the psychological and digital dimensions of well-being. By encouraging balanced technology use, fostering real-world social connections, and providing personalized mental health support, higher education institutions can mitigate the harmful impacts of FoMO and support students in navigating their academic and social lives more successfully. Additionally, as social media continues to play an integral role in young adults' lives, future research should focus on understanding the evolving nature of FoMO and its long-term consequences on mental health. While Gen Z are digital natives, they need to become digital experts to navigate the mental health challenges exacerbated by curated content and the prevalence of FoMO on social media. Universities play a crucial role in raising awareness and supporting students in managing these psychological pressures by promoting balanced digital behaviors. A deeper understanding of the interplay between digital behaviors, personality traits, and cultural contexts can inform future interventions aimed at reducing FoMO and enhancing the well-being of young people in an increasingly interconnected world.

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**Conflicts of interest:** The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

**Ethics Committee Approval:** This study was approved by Ethics Committee ( Approval date April 14<sup>th</sup>, 2023)

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**Author Contributions:**

Research idea: PY, SA

Design of the study: PY, SA

Acquisition of data for the study: PY, SA

Analysis of data for the study: PY

Interpretation of data for the study: PY

Drafting the manuscript: PY

Revising it critically for important intellectual content: PY, SA, HH

Final approval of the version to be published: PY, SA, HH

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