



Original Research

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FEAR OF MISSING OUT (FOMO) AND SELF-ESTEEM IN MIDDLE ADOLESCENTS

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Middle adolescents are closer to their peers as part of their search for identity, so they are easily influenced by social trends, including the use of social media. High intensity of use can trigger fear of missing out (FoMO). FoMO encourages negative social comparisons that lead to decreased self-esteem, especially when adolescents feel that their lives are less ideal than others. This has an impact on the mental health, self-confidence, and social relations of adolescents. This study aims to determine the relationship between FoMO and self-esteem in middle adolescents at Senior High School 2 of Jember.

Method: This research uses a correlational quantitative design with a cross-sectional approach. The sampling technique used was total sampling, totaling 1083 students. The instruments used were the FoMOs questionnaire and the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES). Data were analyzed univariately and bivariately with the Kendall Tau-c correlation test.

Results: Bivariate analysis shows the value of $\rho = 0.000 < 0.05$, indicating a significant relationship between fear of missing out (FoMO) and self-esteem in middle adolescents at Senior High School 2 of Jember with a negative correlation direction.

Conclusions: FoMO triggers a decrease in self-esteem in middle adolescents through upward social comparison of ideal content on social media. The important role of families, schools, and health workers, especially nurses, in helping teenagers manage stress due to FoMO, strengthen self-regulation, and increase self-esteem through digital education and emotional support.

Keyword: digital behavior; fear of Missing Out; FoMO; middle adolescence; self-esteem; social media

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1. INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is a transitional period between childhood and adulthood, marked by distinct developmental milestones, including the quest for self-identity and increased interaction with peers (Rizki & Keliat, 2021). In middle adolescence, relationships with peers become

closer than with parents, as adolescents begin to strive for social and emotional independence (de Goede et al., 2009; Branje et al., 2021). Peer feedback plays a crucial role in shaping adolescents' self-perception and identity in this context (Branje, 2022). Adolescents also tend to

follow emerging trends within their social groups to be accepted within their social circles (González-Delgado et al., 2024). One such trend is the increasing use of smartphones and social media (Xu et al., 2023).

Adolescents comprise the majority of smartphone and social media users, particularly following the COVID-19 pandemic (APJII, 2022). Data from APJII (2022) indicate that 99.16% of adolescents aged 13-18 years access the internet, with the majority actively using social media due to the implementation of distance learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. Thirteen-year-olds are known to check their social media at least six times a day (57%), even though they do not post anything (Christina et al., 2019). Adolescents in the Bajo Tribe of Wakatobi Regency, Indonesia, spend 5-12 hours on social media every day (Chaidirman, 2019). High intensity of social media use can result in increased FoMO in adolescents (Anwar et al., 2020). As many as 64.6% of Indonesian adolescents experience FoMO, with 67.7% fearing missing out (Kaloeti dkk., 2021). Furthermore, 61.8% of adolescents at Senior High School 1 of Wawotobi, Indonesia, who experience social media addiction also have low self-esteem (Pongdatu et al., 2023).

Fear of missing out (FoMO) is one of the negative impacts of technology use that affects adolescent mental health (Sachiyati et al., 2023). Adolescents with a high intensity of social media use tend to experience a constant desire to know what others are doing, as a means to avoid feeling left behind (Anwar et al., 2020; Aisafitri & Yusriyah, 2020). FoMO can affect adolescents' self-esteem when they feel they are not comparable to others, especially when other people's lives are more ideal, attractive, or successful than their own (Aziz et al., 2021). FoMO also triggers negative social comparison, anxiety, and an inability to adapt to the social environment, which leads to low self-confidence if they do not follow trends (Chyquitita, 2024). Adolescents with low self-confidence generally have a negative self-concept and lack confidence in their abilities, which leads to withdrawal from their surroundings (Novitasari, 2021).

Several research have shown that FoMO plays a role in social media use and can impact adolescents' self-esteem (Oberst, U., Wegmann, E., Stodt, B., Brand, M., & Chamarro, A., 2017; Tomczyk, Ł., & Selmanagic-Lizde, E., 2018). Alt, D., & Boniel-Nissim, M (2018) stated that FoMO can play a role in communication between parents and adolescents, which can impact

adolescents' self-esteem. Similar research conducted on adolescents in Indonesia showed similar results, indicating that self-esteem plays an important role in influencing FoMO in adolescents (Siddik, Mafaza, & Sembiring, 2020; Fikriyah, D., 2022).

Although research on FoMO and self-esteem has been extensively studied, there are still several scientific reasons that make researchers interested in studying this phenomenon, including that the national prevalence of depression in Indonesia is still relatively high, namely 1.4%, where depression is closely related to low self-esteem. The prevalence of low self-esteem among adolescents in Indonesia is two percent higher than in other Asian regions, according to the 2021 National Commission for Child Protection (Efri Widiyanti et al., 2021). Rapid technological developments, such as social media, can influence how people continue to experience FoMO, which can impact self-esteem. The impact of low self-esteem on adolescents is significant and diverse, including poor mental health, decreased academic performance, difficulties in social relationships, and risky behavior (Gerrard & Sargent, 2010). Without adaptive stress coping strategies, this condition can develop into anxiety and depression. The most fatal impact of low self-esteem is the risk of suicide, which occurs in 5-10% of adolescents within 15 years of experiencing major depression (Stuart, 2016).

Thus, research on FoMO and self-esteem is still relevant and important to conduct to understand this phenomenon further. Based on the problems described, the author is interested in conducting a study entitled "The Relationship between *Fear of Missing Out* (FoMO) with Self-Esteem in Middle Adolescence".

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

2.1 Design

This study used a descriptive correlational design with a cross-sectional approach. The independent variable was FoMO, while the dependent variable was self esteem.

2.2 Population and Sampling

The study population consisted of all active students in grades X, XI, and XII at Senior High School in Jember. Data collection was carried out for 1 month. The sampling technique used was total sampling with a sample size of 1,083 students. The inclusion criteria for this study included: active high school students, high

school students aged 16-18, high school students who are active and have access to social media, high school students who use social media for at least one hour per day, and those who are willing to participate in the study. Meanwhile, the exclusion criteria in this study were high school students who did not attend school due to a particular reason during the data collection process.

2.3 Data Collection Process

The study population comprised first-, second, and third-year senior high school students. A purposive sampling strategy was employed to select participants who met the established inclusion criteria. Permission to conduct the research was obtained from the school administration. Before participation, information sheets and consent/assent forms were provided to both students and their parents or guardians. Participation was entirely voluntary, and participants had the right to withdraw at any point without facing any penalties. Data were collected using structured questionnaires administered within the classroom setting.

2.4 Instrument

The FoMO instrument utilised the Indonesian version of the Fear of Missing Out Scale (FoMOs), which Jauharyah (2022) had previously validated in research. The study reported an r table value of 0.138 and a calculated r ranging from 0.409 to 0.649, along with a reliability test result of $\alpha = 0.712$. The instrument consisted of 10 favorable questions with two indicators: unfulfilled psychological needs for relatedness and unfulfilled psychological needs for self. This instrument used a Likert scale (1-4) with interpretation levels *Fear of Missing Out* (FoMO) as follows: high FoMO if the score is > 31 , moderate FoMO if the score is in the range of 16-31, and low FoMO if the score is < 16 .

Researchers chose to use the Indonesian version of the FoMO instrument over the original instrument developed overseas, considering that some questions were not entirely relevant to the Indonesian cultural context. Modifying the instrument can help ensure its appropriateness to the local cultural context. Modifying the instrument can also help improve the validity and reliability of the research instrument, resulting in more accurate and reliable results (Jauharyah, 2022).

The self-esteem instrument utilises the Indonesian version of the Rosenberg Self-

Esteem Scale (RSES), with a correlation coefficient (r) of 0.2335, a calculated r value ranging from 0.415 to 0.703, and a reliability test result of $\alpha = 0.858$ (Azwar, 2009). The instrument consists of 5 questions *favorable* and 5 questions *unfavorable* with 4 indicators, namely strength, significance, virtue, ability. This instrument uses a Likert scale (1-5) with the interpretation of self-esteem levels as follows: high self-esteem if the score is ≥ 32 and low self-esteem if the score is < 32 .

2.5 Data Analysis

The data were then analysed using the Chi-Square correlation test to examine the relationship between the characteristic variables and the self-esteem variable, and the Kendall Tau-c test to investigate the relationship between the fear of missing out (FoMO) variable and the self-esteem variable.

2.6 Ethical Clearance

The implementation of the research has obtained research ethics permission from the Health Research Commission of the Faculty of Nursing, University of Jember, with ethical eligibility number 390/UN25.1.14/KEPK/2024.

3. RESULT

A summary of the 560 respondents is shown in Table 1. Participants, aged 16 to 18 and all in grade 12, were predominantly male. Most accessed the internet via mobile phones, and all actively engaged on social media; WhatsApp was the most popular platform. Respondents accessed social media over six times daily, spending more than six hours online, often starting their activities within the first 10 minutes of waking up by checking chats and notifications. Common health issues included eye muscle tension and musculoskeletal pain in the neck, shoulders, and back due to extended device use. Most participants had a normal body mass index (BMI), and many engaged in online gaming, especially males, with gaming occurring 2 to 5 days a week for 1 to 2 hours each session. Additionally, many teenagers reported a lack of parental supervision when using social media.

A frequency analysis revealed that most respondents experienced a moderate level of fear of missing out (FoMO), with 325 adolescents (58%) identified in this category (see Table 2). In examining self-esteem levels at Senior High School 2 of Jember, the median scores

Table 1 Characteristics of Middle Adolescents (n=560)

Respondent characteristics	Min-Max	Median	p
Age (years)	16-18	17	0,761
Respondent characteristics	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)	p
Gender			
Man	296	52,9	0,002
Woman	264	47,1	
Class			
Grade 10	126	22,5	0,473
Grade 11	210	37,5	
Grade 12	224	40,0	
Digital devices used			
Mobile phone	560	100,0	
Laptop/computer	355	63,4	
Tablet	87	15,5	
Sosial media activity			
Active	560	100,0	
Passive	0	0	
Sosial media used			
WhatsApp	560	100,0	
Instagram	536	95,7	
Facebook	87	15,5	
TikTok	465	83,0	
Telegram	172	30,7	
X (Twitter)	263	47,0	
Snack Video	5	0,9	
Disscord	161	28,7	
Frequency of viewing social media in a day			
1-3 times	55	9,8	0,306
4-6 times	159	28,4	
>6 times	346	61,8	
Total time spent using social media in a day			
≤ 2 hours	46	8,2	0,007
3-4 hours	102	18,2	
5-6 hours	135	24,1	
>6 hours	277	49,5	
The first 10 minutes of activities after waking up			
Check chat, phone, or other notifications	560	100,0	
Activities on social media			
Check chat, phone, or other notifications	560	100,0	
Upload images, videos, music, quotes, etc.	411	73,4	
Commenting on other people's posts	296	52,9	
Reading comments on your own and other people's social media accounts	369	65,9	
Shopping online	184	32,9	
Play online game	384	68,6	
Having eye problems			
Yes	319	57,0	0,049
No	241	43,0	
Eye problems			
No eye problems	241	43,0	
Dry eyes	158	28,2	
Eye muscles feel tense	160	28,6	
Temporary blurred vision	64	11,4	
Eyes feel uncomfortable or sore when exposed to bright light	132	23,6	
Myopia	96	17,1	

Next Table 1 Characteristics of Middle Adolescents (n=560)

Respondent characteristics	Min-Max	Median	p
Frequency of eye problems that occur except myopia			
Never	241	43,0	0,255
Rarely (1-2 days/week)	216	38,6	
Frequently (3-5 days/week)	96	17,1	
Always (6-7 days/week)	7	1,3	
Having posture problems			
Yes	382	68,2	0,063
No	178	31,8	
Body Mass Index (BMI)			
Less weight	127	22,7	0,082
Normal	385	68,8	
Overweight	48	8,6	
Online game playing habits			
Yes	384	68,6	<0,001
The frequency of playing online games for one week			
Never	176	31,4	<0,001
Rarely (1-2 days/week)	148	26,4	
Frequently (3-5 days/week)	164	29,3	
Always (6-7 days/week)	72	12,9	
Total time spent playing online games in a day			
Never	176	31,4	<0,001
< 1 hour	97	17,3	
1-2 hours	172	30,7	
> 2 hours	115	20,5	
Parental supervision			
Yes	227	40,5	<0,001
No	333	59,5	

Table 1 Fear of Missing Out (FoMO) in Middle Adolescents (n=560)

Variables	Frequency (f)	n (%)
<i>Fear of Missing Out</i>		
Low	98	17,5
Moderate	325	58
High	137	24,5
Aspect	Mean (SD)	Median (Min-Max)
<i>Fear of Missing Out in Middle Adolescents</i>		
Unfulfilled psychological needs will relatedness	17,93 ($\pm 5,813$)	17 (7-28)
Unfulfilled psychological needs will self	5,47 ($\pm 1,895$)	5 (3-12)
Variables	Frequency (f)	n (%)
<i>Self-Esteem</i>		
Low	287	51,2
High	273	48,8
Aspect	Mean (SD)	Median (Min-Max)
<i>Self-Esteem in Middle Adolescents</i>		
Power	5,06 ($\pm 1,480$)	5 (2-10)
Significance	10,21 ($\pm 2,279$)	10 (3-15)
Virtue	3,77 ($\pm 1,555$)	3 (2-9)
Competence	12,23 ($\pm 2,186$)	13 (3-15)

Source: Researcher's Primary Data, January 2025

Table 3 Relationship Analysis of Fear of Missing Out (FoMO) with Self-Esteem in Middle Adolescents (n=560)

Variable	p-value	r	Direction of correlation
<i>Fear of missing out</i> (FoMO) with self-esteem	0,000	-0,415	negative

Source: Researcher's Primary Data, January 2025

categorized 287 teenagers (51.2%) as having low self-esteem (Table 4).

An analysis of the relationship between FoMO and self-esteem, detailed in Table 6, showed a p-value of -0.415. This finding indicates a negative correlation, suggesting that as FoMO increases, self-esteem tends to decrease among these adolescents.

4. DISCUSSION

4.1 Age and Class

The study found that 40% of respondents were aged 16-18, a stage marked by heightened sensitivity to peer approval and social comparison, increasing susceptibility to Fear of Missing Out (FoMO) (Azizah, E., & Baharuddin, F., 2021),(Orben et al., 2020). During this phase, adolescents often self-explore to form their identities(Patel & Sharma, 2023).

The results showed no significant link between age or grade level and adolescent self-esteem, consistent with previous studies (Mauki & Marandu, 2019; Valibeygi & Kord, 2011), (Dervishi et al., 2020). Self-esteem in adolescents tends to develop gradually and is more influenced by factors like gender, overall well-being, family dynamics, peer relationships, and academic performance (Huang et al., 2022), (Ogihara & Kusumi, 2020; Singh, 2024). Thus, social interactions and personal experiences play a greater role in shaping self-esteem than age or grade.

4.2 Gender

The study found that more male adolescents have high self-esteem than females, with rates of 57.9% for males and 30.6% for females, according to Lalngaihawmi et al., (2024). Females are more sensitive to social acceptance, which can negatively impact their self-esteem, while males are less affected by social comparisons.

Body image issues are more prevalent among adolescent girls, who face teasing and negative comments about their appearance, leading to body dissatisfaction and unhealthy behaviors (Agam e al., 2015; Artigues-barberà et al., 2025). Adolescent boys also experience body image pressures but are more concerned with

muscularity, which tends to support positive self-evaluations (Agam et al., 2015; Artigues-barberà et al., 2025).

Gender roles further influence self-esteem development. Boys are often encouraged to be assertive and confident, which boosts their self-esteem, while girls are taught to value emotional closeness and support—values that may not be equally supported by peers or in school. This disparity can hinder girls from fully expressing their self-confidence. Overall, gender influences adolescent self-esteem through cultural values related to social roles and beauty ideals.

4.3 Social Media Use

Gadgets are widely used by middle-aged adolescents, helping them stay connected with friends and providing access to information (Urbanova et al., 2023). They also facilitate digital learning and teacher communication (Sutisna et al., 2020). The psychological and social changes influence the integration of gadgets into daily life during this period (Azzahra et al., 2025). Harnimayanti & Rosida (2025) found that 98.7% of 11th-grade social studies students at Senior High School 1 of Godean used gadgets. Peer pressure and environmental factors drive gadget trends, which offer appealing features like social media and online games. These gadgets are entertainment tools that help reduce stress and provide comfort (Hablaini et al., 2020; Harnimayanti & Rosida, 2025).

This study identified a significant connection between daily social media usage and adolescent self-esteem. Research conducted by Fassi et al. (2025) found no notable relationship between age and self-esteem; however, adolescents who spend more than three hours a day on social media face a twofold increased risk of experiencing depression and anxiety. Excessive use can also lead to sleep disturbances and difficulty concentrating, further elevating stress levels and impairing cognitive function (Yale Medicine, 2024). Prolonged exposure to social media often subjects adolescents to idealized images and peer comparisons (Fassi dkk., 2025) potentially stimulating dopamine release that fosters

addictive behaviors and social withdrawal (Northwestern Medicine, 2023). In summary, as adolescents increasingly incorporate gadgets and social media into their daily routines, excessive use harms their self-esteem.

4.4 The Impact of Social Media Use on Middle Adolescents

The study found that many respondents reported eye issues, such as eye muscle strain, dry eyes, and discomfort from bright light. Additionally, 68.2% of adolescents experienced neck, shoulder, and back pain due to prolonged gadget use, although 68.8% had a normal body mass index (BMI).

Engaging in near-field activities on digital devices leads to Computer Vision Syndrome (CVS) symptoms, like eyestrain and blurred vision (Merhy et al., 2023). Research by Seresirikachorn et al. (2022) showed that 70.1% of students in Thailand experienced CVS, with symptoms worsening with increased device usage. There is a significant link between eye problems and self-esteem in adolescents ($p = 0.049$; $CI = 95\%$), which contrasts with Saleem et al. (2023), who found no such relationship. Those with eye issues are at a higher risk for anxiety, depression, and social avoidance (Saleem et al., 2023). Observations like wearing thick glasses can worsen body image and lead to bullying (Li et al., 2022). Adolescent girls are especially vulnerable to the psychological effects of visual impairments, and prolonged eye strain can disrupt learning and self-confidence (Almahmoud et al., 2025).

This study found no significant relationship between musculoskeletal issues, BMI, and self-esteem in adolescents, which aligns with the findings of Mark et al. (2012) (Mark et al., 2012; Biernat & Bąk-sosnowska, 2018). Mild and temporary pain generally does not interfere with daily activities or impact self-esteem. Additionally, Pollock et al. (2011) noted that neck and shoulder pain tends to correlate more with mood factors, such as fatigue or depressive symptoms, rather than self-esteem, unless it leads to considerable physical limitations. Furthermore, research by Nasrin et al., (2024), supports the notion that BMI does not significantly affect self-esteem, which is influenced more by body image perception and societal stigma. Negative weight-related experiences can diminish self-esteem (Papageorgiou et al., 2022), (Jebeile et al., 2022).

Lastly, the effect of social media on adolescents is multifaceted, impacting self-

perception, satisfaction, and susceptibility to social pressures, all of which, in turn, influence self-esteem.

4.5 Parental Supervision

Research indicates that many adolescents experience a lack of parental supervision while engaging with social media. According to the American Psychological Association (2024), approximately 60% of adolescents with minimal parental guidance report experiencing poor mental health. The study reveals a significant correlation between parental supervision and self-esteem, aligning with findings by Barry & Kim (2024), who also link online gaming habits to self-esteem. In the absence of parental oversight and communication, adolescents are exposed to heightened risks of loneliness, anxiety, depression, cyberbullying, social comparison, and peer pressure, all of which can adversely affect their emotional well-being. Additionally, inadequate parental understanding of social media dynamics makes adequate supervision more challenging (Davis & Hart, 2023). It can be concluded that parental supervision has a Therefore, parental involvement is essential for promoting positive social media interactions and improving adolescents' self-esteem and emotional health during middle adolescence.

4.5 Fear of Missing Out in Middle Adolescents

The study found that 58% of teenagers experience a moderate level of fear of missing out (FoMO). Those with moderate FoMO manage their anxiety effectively, experiencing some worry but remaining composed and less influenced by social media (Siregar et al., 2023).

Research by Azizah & Baharuddin (2021) shows that Fear of Missing Out (FoMO) is a key factor in social media addiction among adolescents, particularly on platforms like Instagram. Middle adolescents with moderate FoMO use social media to stay connected with peers and avoid exclusion, but this need can lead to anxiety and dissatisfaction. Social comparison on these platforms can harm their self-esteem as they seek validation. However, many can regulate social media use and emotional responses (Yosep et al., 2024). Family dynamics significantly influence how adolescents cope with FoMO; supportive parenting helps, while adverse environments increase vulnerability (Bloemen & De Coninck, 2020). Additionally, girls tend to report higher FoMO, likely due to

their greater sensitivity to social rejection (Brailovskaia et al., 2021).

Przybylski & Bowes (2022) indicates that moderate FoMO is linked to a 3-5% decline in average grades among adolescents who use social media for over 3 hours daily, affecting their academic performance due to distractions and mild procrastination (Al-Menayes, 2023). Chang et al., (2024) found that adolescents with moderate FoMO are 1.7 times more likely to experience insufficient sleep (<7 hours/night), often due to late-night scrolling that hampers sleep quality. Daytime sleepiness can be managed with light activity or caffeine (Gupta & Sharma, 2023). Additionally, Tafdila (2024) noted that adolescents who feel excluded from social activities face increased emotional distress, which can lower self-esteem and heighten social stress.

Further research on the fear of missing out (FoMO) reveals that the unfulfilled need for relatedness significantly impacts middle adolescents, with a mean score of 17.93. This need reflects their yearning for meaningful relationships, and FoMO often emerges from dissatisfaction in this area, particularly as social interactions shape their identity (Santika & Budiarto, 2025). Social media addresses this need, especially when face-to-face connections are limited (Brailovskaia & Teichert, 2020). Increased exposure to others' social activities can escalate feelings of FoMO, resulting in heightened loneliness (Gupta & Sharma, 2021).

FoMO entails managing the desire for social validation, with adolescents demonstrating moderate levels of FoMO generally better able to navigate the influence of social media compared to those with higher levels. To mitigate FoMO, teenagers are encouraged to limit phone usage, such as implementing a screen-free rule before bedtime and practicing mindfulness regarding their screen time. Parents can assist by supervising device usage and engaging in conversations about these emotions. Schools can further support this effort by fostering phone-free learning environments and integrating digital literacy and FoMO awareness into their counseling programs.

4.6 Middle Adolescent Self-Esteem

The study revealed that 287 middle-aged adolescents (51.2%) had low self-esteem, while 273 (48.8%) had high self-esteem, indicating a significant balance in self-perception among them. A notable number of adolescents with high

self-esteem reflect successful development of self-confidence and positive values, consistent with research by Shree (2022) dan Sinaj (2023), highlighting the importance of social support from peers, schools, and families in fostering positive self-esteem. However, the 51.2% of participants with low self-esteem warrants attention due to potential risks for psychological issues like low motivation and social anxiety, as noted by Gu et al. (2024) dan Zhou et al. (2020). Additionally, Caner et al. (2022) found that excessive social media use can negatively impact self-esteem, particularly through comparisons with others online.

Zoning regulations in urban areas significantly influence middle adolescents' social and psychological experiences. Factors like community safety, access to amenities, and environmental quality affect self-esteem, with safe environments enhancing confidence. While urban diversity provides social opportunities, it can also pressure conformity (Sheng et al., 2024). Strengthening the ability aspect in adolescence is a key predictor of self-esteem stability in early adulthood, especially with increasing academic and social demands (Orth & Robins (2022). Significance ranks second at 33%, indicating that most middle adolescents feel valued by their peers. Those who see themselves as important in their social group tend to have more stable self-esteem (Liu et al., 2021).

In Jember, the area around Senior High School 2 is well-managed, offering public spaces that support mental health. Research shows that adolescents score highest in self-esteem's 'ability' aspect (mean of 12.23), indicating confidence in facing challenges. The 'significance' aspect ranked second at 33%, suggesting a sense of value in social groups. However, low scores in 'strength' (16%) and 'virtue' (12%) reveal feelings of powerlessness and moral inadequacy, which may undermine self-esteem and lead to identity crises (Goering et al., 2024).

The prevalence of low self-esteem among middle adolescents is a significant issue that requires attention, as it can lead to serious mental health problems like depression. Structured interventions from various stakeholders are essential. Adolescents should participate in activities that boost self-confidence, such as social skills training and peer counseling. Parents should adopt a supportive approach through open communication and emotional support. Schools can help by offering

counseling programs that build self-esteem and recognize student achievements. An integrated strategy is vital for helping adolescents with low self-esteem thrive while promoting stability among those with high self-esteem.

4.7 Relationship Between *Fear of Missing Out* (FoMO) and Self-Esteem in Middle Adolescents

The study found a negative relationship between Fear of Missing Out (FoMO) and self-esteem in middle adolescence, indicating that higher FoMO scores are linked to lower self-esteem in this age group. This finding is consistent with research by Al-Nasa'h & Shadid (2024) in Jordan, which also identified a significant negative correlation. In contrast, Eka Sri Handayani et al., (2022), reported a positive relationship in a different context, possibly due to variations in subjects and methodologies.

Social media trends compel adolescents to keep up with popular activities, fostering FoMO and related social anxiety, as they fear being excluded by peers (Damodar et al., 2022). These platforms often present idealized lifestyles, leading to upward comparisons (Burnell et al., 2024) and feelings of inadequacy, further diminishing self-esteem as adolescents struggle to align their self-concept with their ideal self (Liu et al., 2025).

FoMO can occur in real-life situations, such as avoiding social events or missing academic opportunities, leading to limitations in interactions with peers (Marengo et al., 2021). It creates a strong desire for closeness and belonging (Rooij et al., 2018). Adolescents often worry about missing group activities or inside jokes, which can cause anxiety when seeing others enjoying experiences without them (Marengo et al., 2021). This fear may lead to overcommitting to offline activities, causing emotional exhaustion (Hartanto et al., 2024).

Decreased self-esteem due to unfavorable social comparisons is associated with elevated anxiety levels (Mustafa et al., 2024). According to Stuart's (2016) stress adaptation theory, social comparison can disrupt the psychological balance of adolescents. Approximately 33.3% of adolescent anxiety cases are linked to low self-esteem stemming from unfavorable comparisons on social media (Thorisdottir et al., 2019), particularly among those who spend over four hours a day on these platforms (Aryal & Rajbhandari, 2024).

The researcher identifies a connection between Fear of Missing Out (FoMO) and self-esteem in middle adolescence. Adolescents with

maladaptive coping strategies may experience lower self-esteem as their FoMO increases. During this developmental phase, support from family members is crucial for fostering self-esteem, as adolescents seek identity and stability.

5. CONCLUSION

FoMO (Fear of Missing Out) negatively affects self-esteem during middle adolescence, as social media pressures and social comparisons can harm psychological well-being. This phenomenon can lead to feelings of inferiority and a distorted self-concept among adolescents who feel excluded from trends or activities. FoMO impacts both online and face-to-face interactions, potentially causing anxiety and stress, which can further lower self-esteem if not addressed with effective coping strategies.

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Conflict of interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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