

# Psychoeducation on FoMo for Gen Z: Enhancing Digital Awareness and Mental Health in the Social Media Era

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## ABSTRACT

Amidst an interconnected digital era, Fear of Missing Out (FoMo) is one of the psychological issues that will be most often discussed, especially in Generation Z, who are very familiar with the dynamics of technology and information. For this reason, a psychoeducational activity was held to increase the understanding and awareness of five Generation Z participants about FoMo, its impact on daily life and mental health, and effective ways to overcome it. The psychoeducation activities were successfully conducted through face-to-face interactive lectures, group discussions, reflective games, and case studies, resulting in positive changes. Participants showed a significant increase in understanding, a change in perspective towards social media engagement, and a commitment to implement FoMo management strategies such as digital detox, reflecting on personal values, and developing a Joy of Missing Out (JoMO) attitude. Overall, this psychoeducation made a tangible contribution in equipping some young people with awareness and skills in managing psychological dynamics, enabling them to lead mentally healthy lives amidst social media-driven existential pressures.

## Introduction

In an increasingly connected digital age, FoMo (Fear of Missing Out) has become an increasingly relevant issue, especially among the younger generation. FoMo refers to the anxiety that arises from seeing others enjoying experiences, information, or important moments that we do not experience ourselves. FoMo (Fear of Missing Out) is the fear and anxiety experienced by someone who feels that a fun moment is happening or about to happen somewhere else. This feeling triggers a strong urge to participate in the event without being left out. FoMo is characterized by an intense need to stay connected with others and follow their activities (Przybylski et al., 2013).

The proliferation of social media such as Instagram, TikTok, and Twitter reinforces this condition, where everyone is encouraged always to be involved, exist, and follow emerging trends. The lives shown on social media are often just the best snippets or highlight reels, but they can create intense psychological pressure for users. FoMo is a psychological phenomenon commonly experienced by Generation Z, a generation that grew up exposed to social media. Research by Herawati et al. (2022) confirms that social media use significantly correlates with FoMo in Generation Z and is one of their main characteristics. FoMo affects emotional aspects, such as stress, sleep disturbances, and low self-esteem, and shapes a new consumptive and impulsive lifestyle. The emergence of lifestyle trends based on digital presence, such as the purchase of viral goods, participation in popular events, or using "Buy Now, Pay Later" (BNPL) services, shows how FoMo has transformed into a social culture. This is particularly prominent in the lives of urban Indonesians, especially Generation Z and millennials, who are increasingly driven to "be present" in every trend for social recognition. This phenomenon is also closely related to existential anxiety, where individuals feel that their self-worth depends on engagement in digital social life. In response to this pressure, alternative approaches such as JoMo (Joy of Missing Out), which is the conscious acceptance of absence from a trend, have emerged. Events are a form of self-control and inner calm. Recent studies have shown that consciously reducing the intensity of social media use can reduce anxiety levels, improve sleep, and strengthen self-confidence. With the growing impact of FoMo on society's social and psychological dynamics, this module invites readers to understand the root of the problem, realize its influence on lifestyle, and explore strategies to balance self-existence with better mental health. Local approaches integrating cultural values, spirituality, and mindfulness practices are also important to build a more authentic and meaningful lifestyle amid changing trends.

The phenomenon of Fear of Missing Out (FoMo) was extensively examined by Przybylski et al. (2013) through the lens of Self-Determination Theory (SDT). This psychological framework emphasizes the role of innate human needs in motivation and well-being. According to SDT, every individual has three fundamental psychological needs: competence, or the feeling of being practical and capable in dealing with one's environment; autonomy, which refers to the sense of having control over one's actions and decisions; and relatedness, the experience of feeling connected to and accepted by others. When these essential needs are not sufficiently fulfilled, individuals may develop FoMo as a psychological response, a form of social compensation in which they seek constant connection and social

comparison. In this context, FoMo can be understood as a crisis of self-regulation, where individuals are driven to stay continually engaged with others' activities in pursuit of social validation and a sense of existential presence. Given this dynamic, psychoeducation plays a crucial role in helping individuals, especially digital-native youth, understand the root causes of FoMo, recognize its psychological impacts, and learn practical strategies to fulfill their basic psychological needs in healthier, more autonomous ways.

## **Method**

The method of implementing this psychoeducation activity was carried out in several stages. In the initial stage, the participants were given a pretest to determine their knowledge before participating. Furthermore, psychoeducation activities were carried out using discussion methods, interactive presentations, quizzes, and role plays to increase understanding and active participant involvement. This activity was carried out on July 7, 2025, at the residence of Dukuh Karanglo, with a particular duration that had been scheduled. Five participants from Generation Z attended this activity.

The psychoeducational material presented about FoMo includes: 1) pretest as an initial step to recognize the participants' level of understanding about FoMo, 2) understanding FoMo as a psychological condition where a person feels afraid of missing out on information or experiences experienced by others, 3) causes of FoMo, adverse impacts that can be caused such as anxiety and stress, and factors that affect the intensity of FoMo in individuals, 4) ice breaking activities that aim to break the atmosphere and prepare participants to be more focused on receiving material, 5) strategies for dealing with FoMo and participants' reflections on their experiences related to FoMo, and 6) post-test to measure the increase in understanding and changes in participants' attitudes towards FoMo after participating in psychoeducation sessions. This pretest and post-test were completed by completing a questionnaire distributed by the psychoeducation team to participants before and after the activity. The use of questionnaires as a measurement tool is also supported by research conducted by Supriyanto et al. (2022), who successfully developed and validated a reliable FoMo measurement tool for the context of adolescents in Indonesia, where the use of social media and smartphones significantly triggers FoMo.

## **Results and Discussion**

On July 7, 2025, a psychoeducational activity was held to increase participants' understanding of the Fear of Missing Out (FoMo) phenomenon. This activity was carried out

through lectures, discussions, roleplays, and interactive delivery of ideas. The session began with the opening and implementation of the pretest, followed by material on the definition of FoMo, the factors that cause it, and its impacts. In between the delivery of the material, a FoMo-themed bingo game was conducted to break the ice and increase participant engagement. Furthermore, participants received material on FoMo handling strategies that were delivered in an applicable manner and were then asked to make presentations and reflect on them to strengthen their understanding. The activity ended with the implementation of a post-test to measure the effectiveness of the psychoeducation that had been provided. These findings are supported by other studies showing similar results, such as those found by Hanifah et al. (2025), which also confirmed the effectiveness of psychoeducational interventions in reducing FoMO and improving positive self-concept among students.

### 3.1. Session 1 Opening and Rapport Building Activities

In the first session of psychoeducation activities entitled *"Between Existence and Anxiety: FoMo and Lifestyle Trends"*, the learning series began with opening and building rapport. The moderator opened the activity offline by greeting participants, explaining the purpose of the education, and building an atmosphere conducive to the learning process. This initial agenda focused on introducing the facilitator to the participants and providing an initial understanding of the direction of the activities. Next, participants were invited to take a pretest through the digital link provided. This pretest contains questions that describe behaviors that indicate FoMo tendencies, aiming to map the initial condition of participants' understanding and experience before receiving the core material.



### Figure 1: Opening of the FoMo psychoeducation session

The opening activity lasted about 10-13 minutes, with the support of a laptop and a slide presentation showing the complete psychoeducation agenda. The atmosphere during this process was quite active and warm, where participants showed enthusiasm in answering greetings and listening to the moderator's explanation. Photo documentation taken during the activity shows moments of interaction between the moderator and participants, the atmosphere of the pretest, and the expressions of participants focused on understanding the initial instructions.

The results obtained from this session include several benefits, including increasing participants' understanding of the educational objectives, creating a familiar atmosphere between participants and facilitators, and the availability of initial data from the pretest, which can be used as a baseline for evaluating the effectiveness of the activity. The pretest data also showed variations in participants' level of awareness related to the FoMo phenomenon, which later became a reference in the preparation of counseling strategies in subsequent sessions.

### 3.2. Activity Session 2 Exposure to the Basic Concepts of FoMo

The second session in this psychoeducation series focused on explaining the basic concepts of Fear of Missing Out (FoMo). This term describes the phenomenon of social anxiety that is now increasingly experienced by the younger generation, especially in the era of fast-paced and connected social media. The session began with an introduction from the facilitator that opened a space for relaxed and reflective dialogue, so that participants felt comfortable sharing their views and personal experiences related to the topic. FoMo is a feeling of fear or anxiety that someone else may enjoy fun or valuable experiences without our participation. This phenomenon comes with increased exposure to other people's lives through digital platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and Twitter (X), making it easy for us to see what others are doing instantly and seamlessly.

The facilitator then explained that FoMo is not just ordinary curiosity, but a form of anxiety that can have a profound impact on mental health. Some of the hallmarks of FoMo include excessive checking of social media for no apparent purpose, feelings of anxiety if not 'online', and a tendency to compare oneself to the achievements or lifestyles of others. Participants were invited to reflect and assess whether they had experienced these signs and when they last felt them. Through small group discussions and experience sharing,

participants realized that feeling left behind by trends or information is not unusual but familiar in everyday digital interactions.

Furthermore, the facilitator led participants to recognize how social media can magnify the effects of FoMo, through exposure to other people's lives that appear happier, more successful, or more enjoyable, when often these are just the best "highlights". By doing so, participants begin to understand that FoMo is not simply due to a lack of personal achievement, but rather social pressure and the illusion of life formed in cyberspace. This session provided ample space for participants to reflect on the relationship between existential needs and digital presence. It sparked the realization that not all trends should be followed, and that it is okay to lag for inner peace.



Figure 2: FoMo psychoeducation exercise

To conclude, the facilitator asked participants to think of one small step they could take to reduce the effects of FoMo in their daily lives. Examples include limiting time on social media, adjusting notifications, or unfollowing accounts that trigger feelings of inadequacy. With an educational and reflective approach, this session will equip participants with a strong initial understanding of FoMo as a foundation for subsequent sessions that will delve deeper into its impact, causes, and management strategies.

### 3.3. Activity Session 3 A Deeper Exploration of the FoMo Concept

The session began with an opening stage by the facilitator, who continued the material from the previous session by recalling the basic understanding of FoMo, its characteristics, and examples. To build initial engagement and explore participants' understanding, the



facilitator invited them to do a brief reflection by giving a rating from a scale of 1-5 regarding the level of FoMo they feel in everyday situations, such as when they see friends studying at a coffee shop or when they miss information about the latest movie that is being talked about. As an initial discussion starter, some participants were allowed to answer and explain their reasons.

After that, the facilitator explained the leading causes of FoMo based on the theory of Przybylski et al. (2013), which states that FoMo arises when three basic psychological needs are unmet: relatedness, autonomy, and competence. Furthermore, the facilitator explained the various negative impacts of FoMo, ranging from excessive anxiety and stress, social media addiction, phubbing, sleep disorders, and decreased productivity. Not only that, it also explained how FoMo can cause mental fatigue, low self-esteem, consumptive behavior, and difficulty building authentic relationships. After understanding the impacts, the facilitator invited participants to examine the factors that influence FoMo, both from internal and external aspects. Internal factors include the need for social recognition, low self-esteem, and a tendency towards social perfectionism.



Figure 3. More in-depth FoMo psychoeducation

To close the session and deepen participants' reflection, the facilitator played a short video titled "Overcoming FoMo" by Arne Troches, which invited participants to revisit the importance of being selective in responding to social pressure. Through this show, participants were invited to understand that not following everything is not a failure. However, self-awareness is required to live more authentically and focus on the things that matter to you. Things that are truly important to oneself. After the video, the facilitator

delivered the closing remarks, thanked the participants for their involvement, and ended the session.

### 3.4. Activity Session 4 Games and Ice Breaking

The session began with the facilitator giving brief directions to participants to prepare stationery and listen to the rules of the game that would be explained. The facilitator introduced a game called Bingo FoMo, a simple yet reflective game designed to help participants realize their FoMo tendencies in their daily lives. With enthusiasm and a relaxed atmosphere, the facilitator said that this game will make participants think: "Am I FoMo or not?", thus encouraging positive initial engagement from all participants.

Afterward, the facilitator distributed papers containing a list of daily activities commonly indicated as triggers for FoMo, such as checking social media before going to bed, feeling jealous of seeing friends' stories, or following trends for fear of being left behind. The facilitator explained the game's rules, where participants were asked to circle the activities they often, very often, or even always do. Suppose they make a straight line from the circled activities horizontally, vertically, or diagonally. In that case, they get Bingo, and in the context of this game, it is considered "losing" because it indicates that they have many FoMo tendencies.

The game was interactive, and the facilitator read out each activity while interacting directly with participants. Once a participant who had earned a "Bingo" was found, the facilitator invited them to come forward and share their experience. Participants were asked to indicate which activities they do most often, when they usually do them, and what they feel when they do them. With empathy and warmth, the facilitator further explores whether participants realize these habits are related to FoMo, and how they feel and reflect on it.





Figure 4. Game and ice-breaking activity

In closing, after the sharing session, the facilitator emphasized that FoMo can arise from small and seemingly ordinary things in daily routines, but can significantly impact one's behavior and mental health. The facilitator emphasized that awareness of these simple things is the first step to understanding and managing FoMo more wisely. Finally, the facilitator thanked the participants and returned the session to the moderator to continue the next activity.

### 3.5. Activity Session 5 Exposure to Strategies in Dealing with FoMo and Case Studies

The fifth session was an important part of the psychoeducation series as it focused on providing concrete strategies to deal with Fear of Missing Out (FoMo) healthily and adaptively. Having understood the concept, causes, and effects of FoMo in the previous sessions, participants were now invited to be more active in recognizing their responses to the social pressures that arise due to the influence of digital media. The session began with a reflective introduction from the facilitator that invited participants to realize how exhausting it can be to "keep up" with popular trends or activities. In a warm and open atmosphere, participants were introduced to practical strategies to manage FoMo, such as recognizing triggers, reflecting on personal values, limiting exposure to social media (digital detox), and developing a more peaceful and mindful Joy of Missing Out (JoMO) mindset.

This activity was conducted by dividing the participants into two groups. Each group was given one sparking question to discuss together. The topics included (1) What is the form of FoMo in this case?, (2) What strategies can be used by Winda?, and (3) What would you do

if you were in Winda's position? The discussion results from each group can be seen in Table 1.

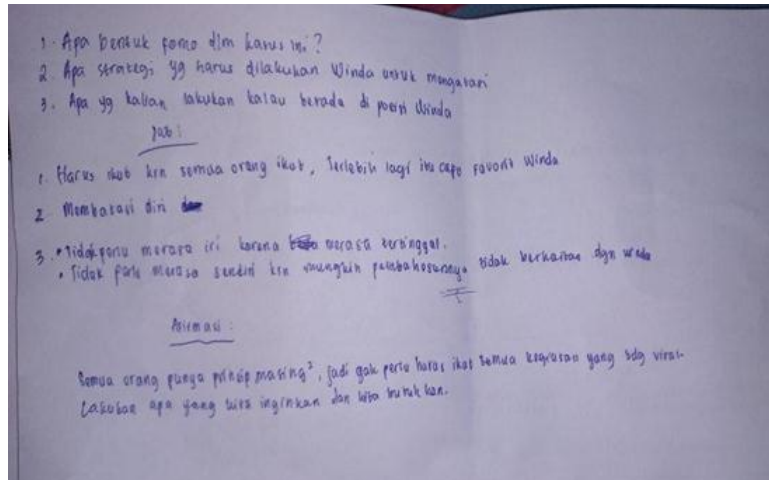


Figure 5. Discussion results

After the discussion, each group presented its thoughts to the other participants. The facilitator then provided feedback and further explanation of the phenomenon of FoMo behavior, which was adjusted to the findings and ideas from the results of each group's discussion. Through this activity, Generation Z gained a deeper understanding of FoMo and various strategies that can be applied to reduce the tendency of this behavior in everyday life.

Table 1. Group Discussion Results

Group	Question Trigger	Discussion Result
Male	1. What is the form of FoMo in this case? 2. What strategies can Winda use? 3. What would you do if you were in Winda's shoes?	1. Jealousy towards friends, she feels excluded because she is not invited to hangouts. 2. Recognize triggers, reduce, exposure to social media, and change thinking.
Woman	1. What is the form of FoMo in this case? 2. What strategies can Winda use? 3. What would you do if you were in Winda's shoes?	1. Joining something because everyone else is joining, especially Winda's favorite cafe. 2. Limiting yourself. 3. There is no need to feel jealous because you feel left behind or feel alone because the discussion might not be related to Winda.



Figure 6. Discussion and role play

The session concluded with a personal reflection writing activity. Participants were asked to identify specific situations that trigger FoMo, choose one strategy to try shortly, and write one positive affirmation sentence as a form of self-commitment. For example: "I do not have to participate in everything to feel valuable." This activity aims to foster the realization that each individual has control over their emotional and social responses, and that limiting involvement is not a sign of weakness, but rather a wise form of self-protection. Through this session, participants are expected to understand FoMo from a theoretical perspective and have the fundamental tools to deal with digital pressures in a healthier, more balanced, and empowered way.

### 3.6. Session 6 Activities Conclusion, Post-Test, and Closing

The session began with the facilitator briefly and thoroughly summarizing the material on FoMo (Fear of Missing Out), reiterating the basic understanding of FoMo as anxiety that arises from feeling left behind in other people's social experiences. The facilitator reiterated various examples of FoMo behavior in daily life, as well as its negative impacts, such as excessive anxiety, decreased productivity, sleep disturbances, and damage to the quality of social relationships. In addition, several strategies to overcome FoMo were shared, such as limiting time on social media, focusing on real-life experiences, and realizing and sticking to personal priorities.

After the summary was presented, the facilitator invited participants to reflect and discuss interactively. Participants were asked to think about and share their personal experiences with FoMo, whether in the context of academics, friendships, or social media use.

This discussion also includes a discussion of the factors that trigger their FoMo and what strategies they may have tried or want to implement to manage these feelings. The facilitator facilitates the discussion in an open and supportive atmosphere, so participants feel safe sharing.

After the discussion, the session continued with the completion of the post-test by all participants. The post-test consisted of several short questions to measure participants' understanding of the material learned, including the concept of FoMo, its impact, and coping strategies. Completing the post-test is done individually, and time is limited to maintain efficiency. The results of this post-test will be used as evaluation material to assess the extent to which the learning objectives have been achieved.

To conclude, the facilitator invited participants to conduct a final reflection and develop personal commitments. Each participant was asked to write down one tangible strategy they will apply in their daily lives to manage FoMo, as well as one positive affirmation sentence for themselves, as a form of motivation and a first step in behavior change. The facilitator emphasized that although FoMo is a common occurrence, each individual has the control to respond to it healthily and wisely. The session was closed with a thank you to the participants for their active participation and an invitation to continue bringing this learning into real life.



**Figure 7: Closing the psychoeducation program**

To illustrate the concrete impact of the psychoeducation activities, a comparative table showing the participants' condition before and after the psychoeducation is presented. The

table below represents the results of the intervention, showing an increase in understanding, self-reflection, and commitment to applying the strategies learned during the activity.

**Table 2. Comparison Table**

No	Before Psychoeducation	After Psychoeducation
1	Most participants gave basic definitions such as "fear of missing the trend" or "following the trend"	Participants explained that FoMo is related to feelings of anxiety, dependency on social media, and the desire to always to keep up with viral things.
2	Participants explained the signs of someone experiencing FoMo such as: "following the trend", "following trend", "dependent on social media".	Participants began to mention more detailed and psychological signs, such as: "Frequent cell phone checking", "Anxiety about missing information", "Feelings of envy", and "Dependence on notifications"
3	Participants mentioned how to reduce FoMo with "less social media", "self-control", or "don't follow trends".	Participants were able to answer more reflectively and strategically, such as: "Recognize FoMo triggers", "Stop comparing yourself with others", "Reflect on personal self-worth", and "Be yourself"

## Conclusion

This psychoeducation activity successfully increased participants' understanding of FoMo, both the concept and its impact on individuals and their lives. Participants showed increased self-awareness, deep reflection, and enthusiasm in seeking healthy strategies to manage FoMo. The pretest and posttest results also showed a change in their mindset, from simply following trends to making more conscious and personal value-based decisions.

Participatory educational approaches have proven to be highly effective in reaching young people who are dealing with social pressures from digital media. This kind of psychoeducation should ideally be replicated more widely in schools, communities, or digital spaces, with adjustments to the cultural context and local needs. However, this activity has limitations due to the small number of participants and limited time coverage, so the generalizability of the results needs to be studied further. In the future, it is recommended that a long-term evaluation of participants' behavior change be conducted and that this program be integrated with digital literacy and mental health programs more systematically.



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