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**Examining The Effects of FoMO, Age, and Gender on Social Media Screen Time**

Jessica Toale

N00212420

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Research Supervisor:

Dr. Nicola Fox-Hamilton

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Table of Contents

[Abstract 1](#_Toc195267067)

[1. Introduction 2](#_Toc195267068)

[1.1 Self-determination Theory and FoMO 2](#_Toc195267069)

[1.2 The Dual Nature of FoMO and its Connection to Screen Time and Social Media 2](#_Toc195267070)

[1.3 FoMO as a Motivator of Social Media Screen Time 3](#_Toc195267071)

[1.4 Age and Gender Variations in FoMO and Social Media Use 4](#_Toc195267072)

[1.5 Current Study 5](#_Toc195267073)

[1.6 Research Question 5](#_Toc195267074)

[1.7 Hypotheses 6](#_Toc195267075)

[2. Methodology 7](#_Toc195267076)

[2.1 Design 7](#_Toc195267077)

[2.2 Participants 7](#_Toc195267078)

[2.3 Pilot Study 8](#_Toc195267079)

[2.4 Materials 8](#_Toc195267080)

[2.5 Procedure 9](#_Toc195267081)

[3. Results 11](#_Toc195267082)

[3.1 Overview of Results 11](#_Toc195267083)

[3.2 Descriptive Statistics 11](#_Toc195267084)

[3.3 Assumptions 12](#_Toc195267085)

[3.4 Inferential Statistics 12](#_Toc195267086)

[4. Discussion 14](#_Toc195267087)

[4.1 Overview of Findings 14](#_Toc195267088)

[4.2 Practical Implications and Theoretical Implications of The Study 16](#_Toc195267089)

[4.3 Future Research 16](#_Toc195267090)

[4.4 Strengths and Limitations 16](#_Toc195267091)

[4.5 Conclusion 18](#_Toc195267092)

[5. References 19](#_Toc195267093)

[6. Appendices 23](#_Toc195267094)

[Appendix A – Information Sheet 23](#_Toc195267095)

[Appendix B – Consent Form 25](#_Toc195267096)

[Appendix C – Debrief Form 26](#_Toc195267097)

[Appendix D – FoMO Scale 27](#_Toc195267098)

[Appendix E – iPhone Social Media Screen Time Instructions 28](#_Toc195267099)

[Appendix F – Android Social Media Screen Time Instructions and Questions 29](#_Toc195267100)

[Appendix G – Mean-Split Groupings 32](#_Toc195267101)

[Appendix H – Normality Tests 33](#_Toc195267102)

[Appendix I – Levene's Test and Outliers 34](#_Toc195267103)

[Appendix J – Reliability 36](#_Toc195267104)

[Appendix K – 3-way Anova SPSS Output 37](#_Toc195267105)

[Appendix L – G\*Power 39](#_Toc195267106)

Abstract

Previous research has linked fear of missing out (FoMO) with increased social media use. This study examined the effects of FoMO, age groups (< 23 and >23), and gender on social media screen time. Using a cross-sectional between-groups design, data was collected from a sample consisting of both students and older adults. Participants reported their weekly average social media usage using logged app-based tracking from their smartphone settings and then indicated their FoMO levels using Przybylski et al’s scale. A three-way ANOVA was conducted to analyse the data. Results indicated that there was a significant effect of FoMO on time spent on social media, where higher FoMO scores related to higher social media time. However, no other main or interaction effects were significant. These findings suggest that gender, age, and FoMO together do not significantly impact time spent on social media. The significant effect of FoMO supports previous literature, reinforcing the self-determination framework for understanding FoMO. Limitations include differences in how smartphone operating systems (Android/iOS) record social media use. Future research could explore qualitative approaches to understand the complexity between FoMO and social media use, particularly in understanding the motivations of individuals who use social media and their experiences of FoMO.

1. Introduction

The emergence of smartphones has revolutionised human behaviour and interaction, offering unprecedented opportunities to gratify social needs. This study explores the relationship between social media screen time, fear of missing out (FoMO), age, and gender, aiming to uncover how these variables interact and impact individuals across different demographics. The term *fear of missing out* (FoMO) refers to the perception that others are engaging in more rewarding or enjoyable experiences in your absence (Roberts & David, 2019).

This concept was first introduced by marketing strategist Dan Herman in 1996, who used the acronym to describe consumers sense of anxiety about missing out on new products or experiences (Rahmah et al., 2024). In recent years, FoMO has garnered significant attention in academic research, with Przybylski et al. (2013) popularising the term through their systematic study of FoMO within the context of social media. Gupta and Sharma (2021) identified two distinct processes within FoMO: 1. perceiving that one is missing out and 2. engaging in compulsive behaviours to maintain social connections.

1.1 Self-determination Theory and FoMO

Self-determination theory (SDT) is a psychological framework that highlights the role of intrinsic motivation in driving human behaviour, supporting well-being and life satisfaction (Ryan & Deci, 2022). The theory identifies three basic psychological needs essential for psychological health. Autonomy, referring to a sense of control over one’s actions and decisions. Competence, the capability to effectively act on one’s pursuits, and Relatedness, feeling connected and valued in relationships (Manninen et al., 2022). This framework offers insights into how social media use can either fulfil or diminish basic psychological needs. Deficits in need satisfaction may drive individuals to use social media to address unmet needs, such as building social connections. These unfulfilled needs can also heighten sensitivity to FoMO, further increasing social media engagement.

1.2 The Dual Nature of FoMO and its Connection to Screen Time and Social Media

Previous studies have linked FoMO with increased social media use (Roberts & David, 2019; Li et al., 2024). Social media platforms often serve as a primary context of fulfilling the basic psychological needs. For example, social media can enhance relatedness by fostering connection through interactions, such as likes, comments, and direct messages (Stsiampkouskaya et al., 2021). However, it can simultaneously create a comparative environment where users perceive others as living more fulfilling or exciting lives, leading to feelings of inadequacy (Dhir et al., 2018). These dynamics are particularly relevant to FoMO, as social media provides a constant stream of real-time updates that may emphasise what individuals are missing out on, intensifying sensitivity to unmet psychological needs. This, in turn, drives habitual engagement with smartphones and social media, perpetuating a cycle where the promise of need satisfaction may fall short, amplifying FoMO further.

Despite the well-documented negative effects of social media on an individual’s general well-being, there is evidence suggesting that social media engagement can have the opposite effect, particularly in relation to FoMO. Kim and Kim (2017) explored how social media usage influences college students' involvement in various social networks and how their participation in these groups relates to satisfaction and well-being. The findings indicate that social media use is positively associated with an expanded social network, which is correspondingly linked to higher levels of social capital and psychological well-being. This suggests that, for some individuals, active social media engagement may alleviate FoMO by enhancing their sense of connection and belonging, potentially leading to greater happiness and life satisfaction.

Literature highlights that FoMO may contribute to social media and smartphone dependency, particularly in the context of phubbing – the act of disregarding one’s physical companion to focus on a phone or other mobile device (Chatterjee, 2020; Ostic et al., 2021). However, some researchers argue that such claims oversimplify the complex interplay between FoMO and social media use. For instance, opposing views suggest that not all instances of phubbing stem from FoMO, as other factors, such as a need for social inclusion, obligations, and habitual checking behaviours, may also play a role (David & Roberts, 2017).

1.3 FoMO as a Motivator of Social Media Screen Time

The growing use of communication technologies and social media platforms appears to play a role in the rising prevalence of FoMO, which has been linked to frequent and maladaptive smartphone use (Elhai et al., 2018). Fear of missing out (FoMO) is a key motivator for social media use in today’s culture. Many people feel a constant need to know what others are doing, driving their frequent and often excessive engagement with social media (Lee et al., 2021). The latest data calls attention to the global reach of smartphones, with 5.22 billion users worldwide. Among these, smartphone usage is most prevalent among younger adults, with 96% of those aged 18 to 29 and 92% of those aged 30 to 49 actively using these devices (Machado et al., 2023). In 2023, internet usage in Ireland revealed that nearly all (96%) users accessed the internet via smartphones or mobile phones, with significant variations across other devices. Usage remained high across age groups, including 92% of those aged 60–74 years (Central Statistics Office, 2023).

Recent research highlights the growing positive benefits of smartphone use as a tool for communication, with regular engagement linked to greater psychological well-being (Roos & Wrzus, 2023). Song and Kim (2022) discovered a positive association between social media use, FoMO, and increased smartphone screen time, highlighting the significant role FoMO plays in driving prolonged engagement with digital devices. Przybylski et al. (2013) found that FoMO is significantly associated with high social media engagement, particularly among younger individuals, and is negatively correlated with mood and life satisfaction. However, it remains unclear whether FoMO stems primarily from generational differences or individual variability. The present study explores potential age-related differences in FoMO. Notably, FoMO can also foster social connection through social media use (Roberts & David, 2019), potentially driving increased smartphone screen time through communication apps like WhatsApp, as people strive to strengthen social bonds and a sense of belonging.

1.4 Age and Gender Variations in FoMO and Social Media Use

Alshakshi et al. (2023) highlight the role of FoMO in mediating problematic social media use (PSMU), with gender and age influencing these patterns differently across cultural contexts. These findings reinforce the importance of considering both individual differences like age and gender and the attention-capturing design of social media platforms when examining the relationship between smartphone screen time and FoMO in the current study.

Barry and Wong's (2020) findings suggest that FoMO may not differ significantly across age cohorts or between genders, which challenges assumptions of demographic-based variability in FoMO. However, the association between high FoMO, low self-esteem, loneliness, and elevated social media activity highlights the importance of focusing on psychological factors rather than demographic characteristics alone. Emphasising the importance of exploring how individual psychological traits, in conjunction with age and gender, interact with social media use and smartphone screen time to shape the experience of FoMO.

Reer et al. (2019) examined the psychosocial well-being of German internet users aged 14–39 years, focusing on the interplay between social media use, FoMO, and social comparison orientation (SCO). Rather than solely exploring the direct relationships between social media use and decreases in well-being, the study analysed FoMO and SCO as key mediators. Their findings revealed that higher levels of loneliness, depression, and anxiety were associated with increased social media use, emphasising the role of FoMO and social comparison in amplifying these effects.

Hodes and Thomas (2021) suggested that smartphone use tends to increase during weekends and times of sociopolitical or environmental upheaval, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, with screen time influenced by individual differences. Moreover, smartphone attachment mediates the relationship between screen time and depression but not anxiety. In the current study these findings assert the significance of considering both individual and contextual factors, when examining the relationship between smartphone use, FoMO, and social media use across different age groups and genders.

1.5 Current Study

The present study aims to address a gap in the literature by investigating how social media screen time connects to the experience of fear of missing out (FoMO) across different genders and age groups. While much of the existing research focuses on younger populations, this study explores age-related differences in greater depth. The following research question guides the study:

1.6 Research Question

How does social media screen time relate to the experience of fear of missing out (FoMO) across different genders and age groups?

Based on the literature review, the study proposes the following hypotheses:

1.7 Hypotheses

**H1:** There will be a difference in the main effect of age group on social media screen time, younger participants will report higher social media time compared to older participants.

**H2:** There will be a difference in the main effect of gender on social media screen time, with differences across gender groups.

**H3:** There will be a difference in the main effect of FoMO level on social media screen time, individuals with higher FoMO will report greater social time than those with lower FoMO.

**H4:** There will be a difference in the interaction between age group and gender, the effect of age on social media screen time will differ based on gender.

**H5:** There will be a difference in the interaction between age groups and FoMO, the relationship between FoMO and social media screen time will vary across age groups.

**H6:** There will be a difference in the interaction between gender and FoMO, the effect of FoMO on social media screen time will be different depending on gender.

**H7:** There will be an interaction between age group, gender, and FoMO, the combined effect of these variables will influence social media screen time.

1. Methodology

2.1 Design

This study employed a quantitative cross-sectional between-groups design to examine the effect of fear of missing out (FoMO), age, and gender based on social media screen time. The independent variable, fear of missing out (FoMO), is measured using the FoMO scale developed by Przybylski et al. (2013). The independent variables age and gender were answered as demographic questions by participants on the survey. The dependent variable social media use is measured through logged app-based tracking on a smartphone device’s settings to report the weekly average (in hours) for time spent on social media. A three-way between participants ANOVA was utilised, where IV1 (age) has two levels (*k*= 2, younger < 23 years/older ≥ 23 years), IV2 (gender) has two levels (*k=* 2, male/female), and IV3 (FoMO) has two levels (*k*=2, low/high). A priori analysis was conducted using G\*Power which was used to estimate the required sample for power at 0.80 size, the analysis indicated a required sample size of *N*= 237.

2.2 Participants

In total, 110 responses were received on the survey. Five participants requested to withdraw their data from the study and six of the participants identified as non-binary – however, this number was not sufficient to include in the three-way ANOVA data analysis due to insufficient size for statistical significance. As a result, these responses were removed. The final sample for the current study consisted of 99 participants, recruited through IADT and social media platforms, including Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn. This approach ensured access to a diverse audience of individuals actively engaged with social media use and given that the participants are social media users, recruiting them using social networking sites was appropriate. Participants ranged from 18 – 57 years of age (*M*= 28.21 years, *SD*= 9.66), 64 (64.6%) of the participants were female and 35 (35.4%) were male. Participants were selected using convenience sampling and snowball sampling, whereby individuals who complete the study may refer friends or acquaintances interested in participating. Participants were treated in accordance with the ethical standards of the Psychological Society of Ireland (PSI). The study was approved by the Psychology Ethics Committee (PEC) at IADT.

2.3 Pilot Study

A pilot study with two participants was carried out to evaluate the feasibility of the study and estimate the completion time for the online survey. Both participants indicated that completing the questionnaires took roughly seven minutes and reported no challenges during the process. However, one participant suggested that the social media screen time question could be clearer. Initially, the survey question asked, “How much time do you spend using social media?”. This was revised to explicitly instruct participants to input their screen time hours and minutes, as the original wording was unclear. Feedback from the pilot study was valuable in refining the clarity of the social media use question.

2.4 Materials

*Information Sheet*

Materials for the present study included an online Microsoft Forms survey used to collect participants' data as advertised on social media. An information sheet (Appendix A) for the survey was used to outline the study’s purpose, how the data would be used, and the benefits and potential drawbacks of participation.

*Consent Form*

A consent form (Appendix B) was provided to obtain participants' permission to use their data for the study.

*Demographics*

Demographic questions were transcribed to the survey. Participants were asked to input their age in number, and to input their gender.

*Debrief Form*

Finally, a debrief form (Appendix C) was used to provide the researcher’s contact details and information on how to withdraw from the study. Additional resources were provided including links to mental health services in the event that participation caused any distress. Participants were also thanked for their valuable contribution to the research.

*Measures*

Fear of Missing Out Scale (Appendix D)

FoMO was measured using Przybylski’s ten-item FoMO scale (Przybylski et al., 2013). This five-point Likert scale evaluates individuals' levels of fear of missing out based on their daily experiences (e.g., I fear others have more rewarding experiences than me) and (e.g., I get anxious when I don’t know what my friends are up to). The scale is measured using a five-point Likert from zero to five, with one representing “Not at all true of me” and five representing “Extremely true of me”. The scale has demonstrated good internal consistency and reliability with Cronbach’s α = 0.89 (Przybylski et al., 2013). The current study found a Cronbach’s alpha of .907. The scale is scored by computing individual scores and averaging the responses to all ten items. Scores can range from 10 to 50, with higher scores indicating higher FoMO (Chashmi et al., 2023).

Social Media Screen Time

The dependent variable, social media screen time, was measured in hours per week using logged app-based tracking, providing a more accurate and reliable method of assessing the variable compared to relying on self-reported estimates of social media usage (Parry et al., 2021). Due to the differences in the smartphone settings operating systems, participants were given instructions depending on the type of smartphone they had. For iPhone users, participants were asked to follow the instructions listed in the questionnaire (Appendix E) and then input their weekly average social media screen time in hours and minutes. For Android users, participants were asked to follow the listed instructions (Appendix F) and to then input their average time in hours and minutes on each social media app (e.g., Facebook, Instagram, Messenger, WhatsApp, etc.). The hours and minutes were then calculated to get the full scope of time spent on social media. The questions were slightly longer for Android users as the screen time settings on Android do not provide a full weekly overview of time spent using social media.

2.5 Procedure

After obtaining ethical approval and completing a pilot study, the Microsoft Forms questionnaire was published online. The survey link was advertised on social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn. After reviewing the information sheet and consent form, participants were asked to create an anonymised participant ID. This ID would allow their data to be identified if they chose to withdraw from the study. Following this, participants were prompted to answer two demographic questions regarding their age and gender, they were then instructed to input their weekly average for social media use, they were then asked to complete the questions for the FoMO scale and then agree that their data can be used in the study. Finally, participants were debriefed, with support resources provided.

1. Results

3.1 Overview of Results

A three-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted using IBM SPSS Statistics (Version 29). The independent variables were age (*k*= 2, younger < 23 years, older ≥ 23 years), gender (*k*=2, male, female), and FoMO (*k=*2, low, high). With time spent on social media as the dependent variable. This section will present an overview of the key descriptive and inferential statistical findings.

3.2 Descriptive Statistics

A total of 99 participants took part in the study, categorised by gender, age, and FoMO level. The sample was evenly distributed by age, with 51.5% (N = 51) classified as younger (≤ 23 years) and 48.5% (N = 48) classified as older (> 23 years). Regarding gender, the majority of participants identified as female (64.6%, N= 64), followed by male participants (35.4%, N= 35). The sample was evenly distributed in terms of FoMO levels, with 51 participants (51.5%) categorised as having low FoMO and 48 participants (48.5%) classified as having high FoMO. The total mean (M) and standard deviations (SD) for each variable for the participants are outlined in Table 1.

Participants were divided into two levels for each of the independent variables age group and FoMO level using a Median Split approach. For age group participants were categorised as either younger (≤ 23 years) or older (>23 years) based on the median value calculated from the age distribution. For FoMO level, participants were classified as having low or high FoMO using the same method, with the median score serving as the cutoff point. Frequencies and percentiles were examined to determine the median values for each variable.

**Table 1: Descriptive Statistics for Social Media Use by Gender, Age Group, and FoMO Level**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
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| |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | **Group** | **N** | **M** | **SD** | **Min** | **Max** | | Gender: Male | 35 | 900.14 | 864.150 | 70 | 3600 | | Gender: Female | 64 | 1043.23 | 827.44 | 47 | 3610 | | Low FoMO | 51 | 848.84 | 759.58 | 76 | 3608 | | High FoMO | 48 | 1145.44 | 899.199 | 47 | 3610 | | Younger (≤ 23) | 51 | 1048.29 | 841.528 | 57 | 3610 | | Older (> 23) | 48 | 933.2 | 841.121 | 47 | 3608 | | **Total** | 99 | 992.5 | 843.43 | 47 | 3610 | |

*Note.* M = Mean; SD = Standard Deviation.

3.3 Assumptions

Assumptions for a three-way between-groups ANOVA were tested. The assumption of normality was tested using the Shapiro-Wilk test across each combination of the three independent variables. Results indicated that the assumption of normality was violated for all groups (*p* ≤ .001). Given that ANOVA is robust to moderate violations of normality, particularly when sizes across groups are relatively balanced, the analysis proceeded. The Levene’s test showed that the variances of the groups were unequal (*F* (7, 91) = 2.411, *p* = .026), indicating that the assumption of homogeneity of variance was violated. Boxplots were inspected to assess the presence of outliers. A small number of outliers were identified (e.g., cases 1, 74, and 92), they were not extreme and retained for the analysis as an ANOVA is generally robust to mild deviations of normality.

3.4 Inferential Statistics

A three-way 2×2×2 factorial ANOVA was conducted to examine the effects of age group, gender, and FoMO level on social media screen time. The results showed that the main effect of gender was not significant, (*F* (1, 91) = 0.002, *p* = .968, partial ***η*²= .000**). Similarly, the main effect of age group was not significant, (*F* (1, 91) = 0.172, *p* = .679, partial ***η*²= .002**). However, the main effect of FoMO level was significant, (*F* (1, 91) = 5.092, *p* = .026, partial ***η*²**= .053). Estimated Marginal Means showed that participants with high FoMO reported significantly higher social media screen time (*M=* 1242.73, *SE*= 142.84) than those with low FoMO (*M=* 813.57, *SE=* 125. 58). The Bonferroni-adjusted pairwise comparison verified this difference was statistically significant, (*M=* 429.16, *p=* .026, 95% CI [51.38, 806.94].

Regarding interaction effects, the interaction between gender and age group was not significant, (*F* (1, 91) = 1.229, *p* = .271, partial ***η*²= .013**), neither was the interaction between age group and FoMO level, (*F* (1, 91) = 0.830, *p* = .365, partial ***η*²= .009**). The interaction between gender and FoMO level approached significance, (*F* (1, 91) = 3.678, *p* = .058, partial ***η*²= .039**). The three-way interaction between gender, age group, and FoMO level was not significant, (*F* (1, 91) = 1.659, *p* = .201, partial ***η*²= .018**). These results indicate that gender, age, and FoMO do not significantly impact social media screen time. No strong interactions were found between gender, age, and FoMO. The overall model explained only 8.7% of the variation in social media use, suggesting that other factors may play a larger role.

1. Discussion

4.1 Overview of Findings

The aim of the present study was to investigate the connection between age, gender, and the experience of FoMO on social media screen time. FoMO was assessed using the validated FoMO scale (Przybylski et al., 2013), which measures participants’ agreement or disagreement with statements reflecting concerns about missing out on experiences. .Results indicated that there was a significant effect of FoMO on time spent on social media, where higher FoMO scores linked to higher social media time. However, no other main or interaction effects were significant. These findings suggest that gender, age, and FoMO together do not significantly impact time spent on social media.

Hypothesis one proposed that there would be a difference in the effect of age group based on social media screen time. However, this hypothesis was rejected, aligning with prior research on the connection between age and social media use (Barry & Wong, 2020; Groenestein et al., 2024). Groenestein et al. (2024) had relatively diverse spread of age (18-70 years), however, social media use was self-reported by participants which may account for inconsistent findings. However, this finding contradicts previous studies that observed a reverse effect (Kim & Kim, 2017; Song & Kim, 2022). This inconsistency suggests that the association between age and social media use may be more complex than previously understood. Future research with a larger sample size could help clarify this connection and account for potential confounding variables.

Hypothesis two was also not supported. This hypothesis stated that there would be a difference in the effect of gender on social media screen time. This finding is inconsistent with previous research, Servidio et al. (2024) reported that females scored higher than males on social media use on their study about FoMO and problematic social media use. However, females accounted for 74.4% of participants in the study, possibly influencing this result. Similarly, Alnjadat et al. (2019), discovered that males scored higher on social media use compared to females, highlighting the complexity of gender differences. This was attributed to cultural factors in the sample, where males in the Middle East are more inclined to build social connections online, while females are more likely to conceal their identity. However, the study refers to social media as an addiction, which is controversial, as it is not officially recognised by The World Health Organisation as an addiction.

Hypothesis three was supported, which stated that there would be a significant effect of FoMO level on social media screen time. This result aligns with previous research that has established a relationship between FoMO and increased social media engagement (Przybylski et al., 2013). The significant effect reported in this study suggests that individuals with higher FoMO levels may be more likely to use social media platforms in an attempt to stay connected and avoid feeling left out.

Hypothesis four was rejected, stating that there will be a significant interaction between age group and gender. This finding contradicts prior studies, which have suggested that age and gender may mutually influence social media use (Alshakhsi et al., 2023). The absence of an interaction in the present study may indicate that age and gender may not work together in determining social media use, or that other factors, like individual differences or cultural influences, which could pose greater insights than demographic variables alone. Notably, Alshakhsi et al. (2023) examined cultural differences and personality traits in their research, highlighting the potential for greater insights when considering other factors.

Hypothesis five was not supported, stating that there would be a significant interaction between age groups and FoMO. Although previous research has indicated that younger individuals are more prone to FoMO, prompting greater social media use (Brailovskaia & Margraf, 2024; Przybylski et al., 2013) the lack of an interaction in the current study may suggest that the relationship between age and FoMO may not be as prominent as anticipated. This may point to other variables such as personality traits that may play a more significant role in the development of FoMO across different age groups.

Hypothesis six was rejected, however, slightly approached significance. This hypothesis stated that there would be a significant interaction between gender and FoMO. While the interaction did not reach full significance, the observed trend suggests that gender may play a role in how FoMO influences social media use. However, since females comprised 64.6% of the sample in the present study, the results may be influenced by this imbalance. Future research with larger, more balanced samples is needed to further explore and confirm this trend.

Finally, the seventh hypothesis was not supported. It was hypothesised that there would be an interaction between age group, gender, and FoMO. However, the results from the current study indicated no significant interaction between these variables.

4.2 Practical Implications and Theoretical Implications of The Study

The present study contributes to the literature on how FoMO influences social media screen time across different demographics. Unlike previous research, the current study observed that age, gender, and FoMO do not significantly impact social media screen time. However, the significant effect of FoMO level supports previous literature and may suggest that FoMO is a motivational driver of social media engagement. Supporting the self-determination theory perspective and framework for understanding FoMO. In particular, the need for relatedness is perceived in online environments (e.g., social media works as a resource to deepen social bonds and keep in touch with others).

4.3 Future Research

There are several directions future research could take such as exploring platform-specific effects. This could yield more precise findings by investigating whether certain platforms (e.g., Instagram vs. LinkedIn) exacerbate or reduce FoMO. Additionally, incorporating qualitative approaches in the area of FoMO and social media use could provide deeper, more nuanced insights, particularly as the majority of existing research in this area relies on quantitative methods. Qualitative data could represent the lived experiences and motivations of individuals who use social media and their corresponding feelings of FoMO, which might be difficult to express through numerical data alone. Furthermore, employing a longitudinal design in the future could assist with determining causal relationships between social media use and FoMO. Finally, recruiting larger gender balanced samples to strengthen statistical power could enhance the findings and generalisability of future studies.

4.4 Strengths and Limitations

*Strengths*

One of the potential strengths of the present study is its measurement of social media screen time. Unlike self-reported estimates, which are susceptible to recall bias and social desirability effects (Parry et al., 2021) this study utilised screen-based tracking data, providing a more accurate and reliable assessment of participants' social media use. Another strength of the present study is the reliability of the FoMO scale, which scored high on reliability. Additionally, the study benefits from a wide age range among participants (18 to 57 years old), allowing for a more comprehensive examination of age-related differences in social media use and FoMO. Finally, the study contributes to the literature by investigating multiple demographic factors which have not been widely explored before, by analysing the interplay between age, gender, and FoMO, the study provides a more nuanced understanding of how these variables relate to social media use. The three-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) approach allows for the consideration of potential interaction effects that may not be captured in simpler models.

*Limitations*

One limitation of the present study is the presence of technology-based biases encountered during data collection. Since social media use was tracked digitally, differences in how smartphone operating systems (Android and iOS) record screen time affected the consistency of the data. Additionally, variations in how participants interact with different platforms may not be fully reflected in screen time measurements alone, potentially limiting the accuracy of social media usage assessment (e.g., passively scrolling on social media for an hour compared to actively engaging by commenting, messaging, and liking posts for the same duration). Due to these differences, measuring social media use through screen-time alone may not fully capture the quality or nature of engagement.

Another limitation of the study is its small sample size. Despite considerable recruitment efforts, the study did not reach the required power size of participants (N=237). A priori power analysis indicated that 237 participants were required to detect medium effects, the present study recruited 99 participants. This may have restricted the power of the analysis and reduced the possibility of detecting significant interaction effects. To ensure and maximise participation, the researcher actively engaged in multiple recruitment strategies, including attending the data collection fair held at IADT, reaching out to lecturers for permission to present the study in their classes, and sharing the survey link across various social networking platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn. While this facilitated broadening the outreach, the final sample size may limit the generalisability of the findings.

4.5 Conclusion

In conclusion, the present study examined the effect of age, gender, and FoMO based on social media screen time. Most of the hypotheses did not reach statistical significance at the .05 level, except for the effect of FoMO level on social media screen time, where higher FoMO scores were linked to higher social media screen time. Overall, the results highlight the complexity of social media use and highlight the need for future research to explore additional factors like individual differences, cultural influences, and platform-specific effects, which may contribute to social media use patterns.

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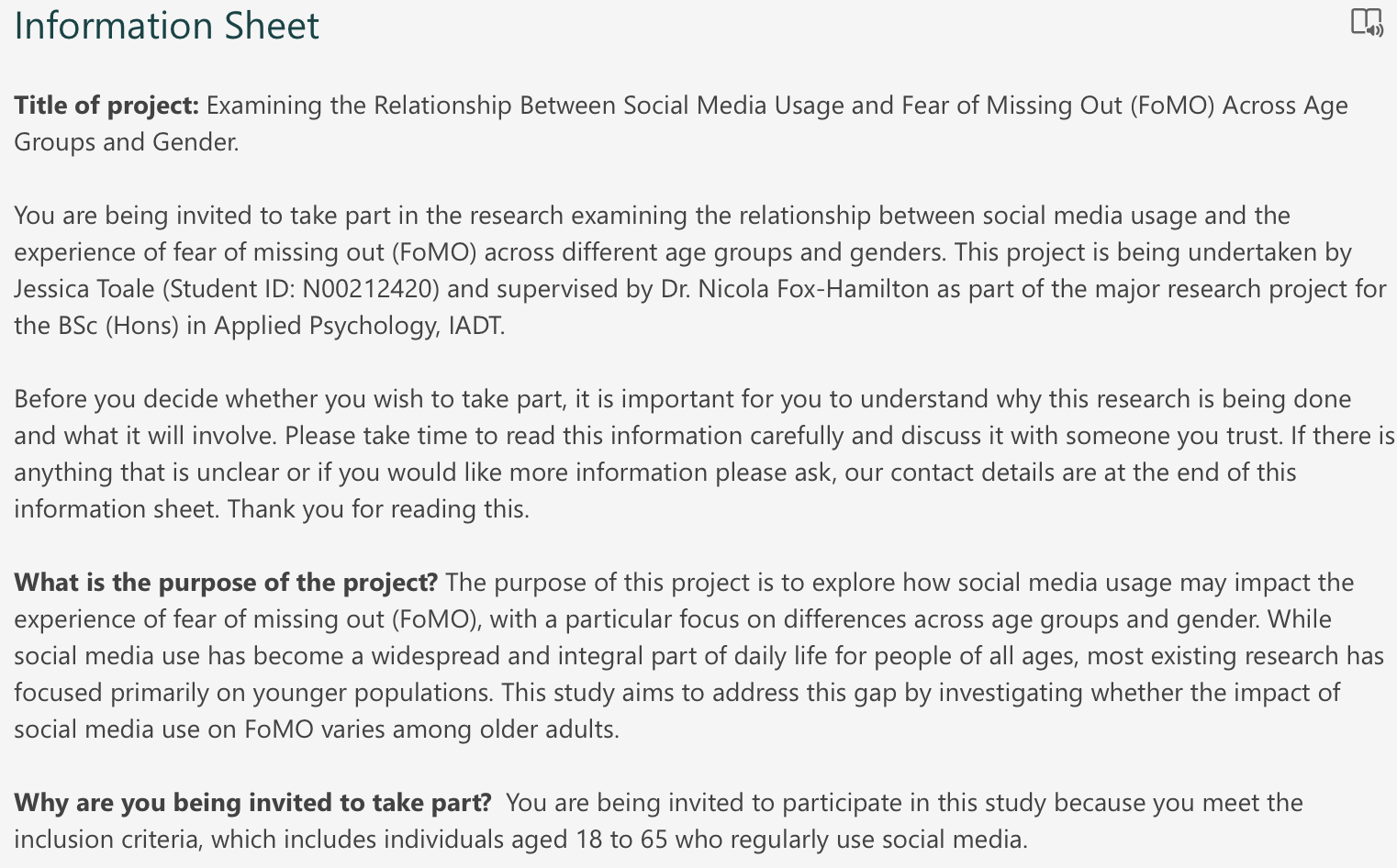
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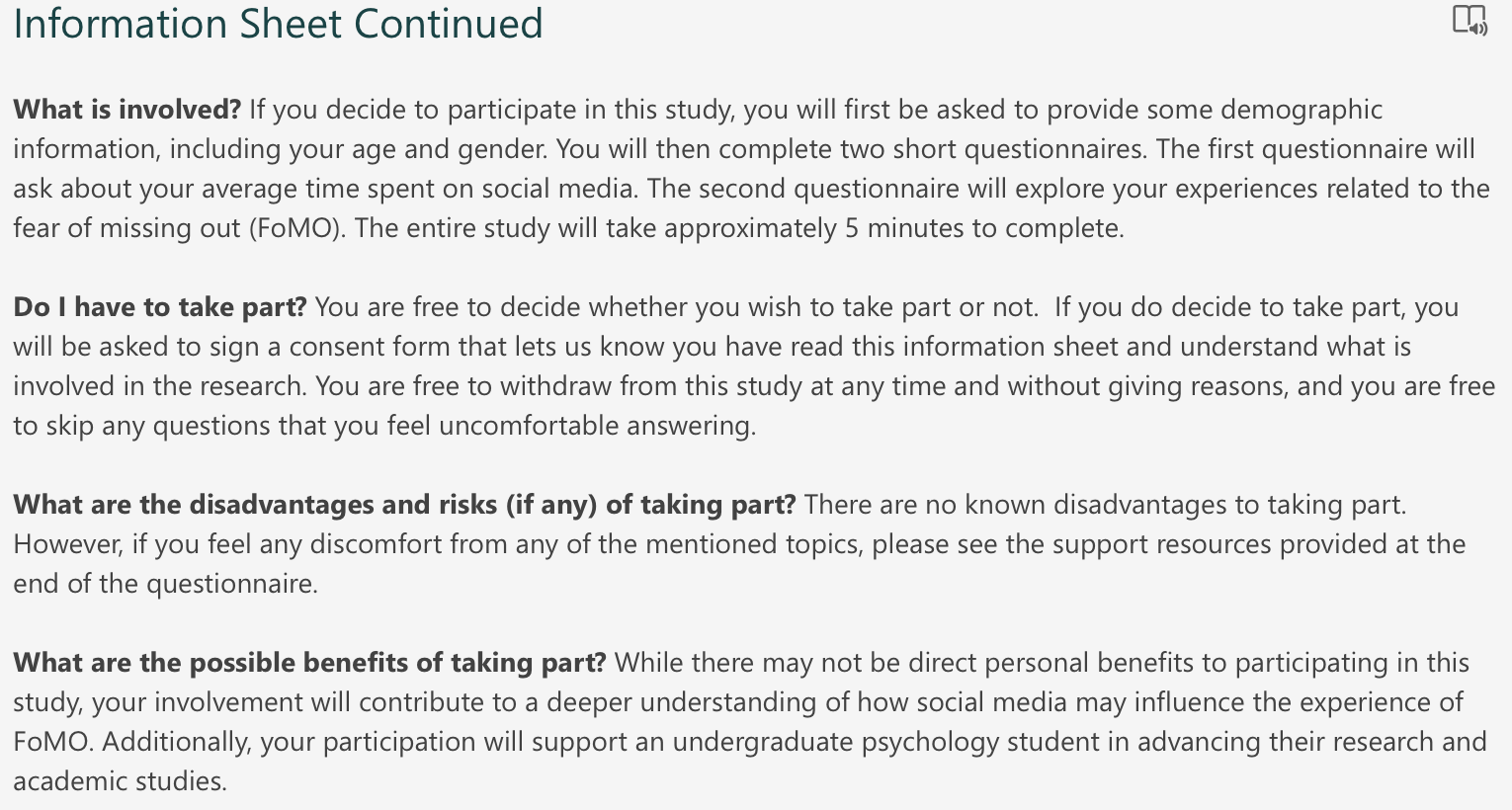
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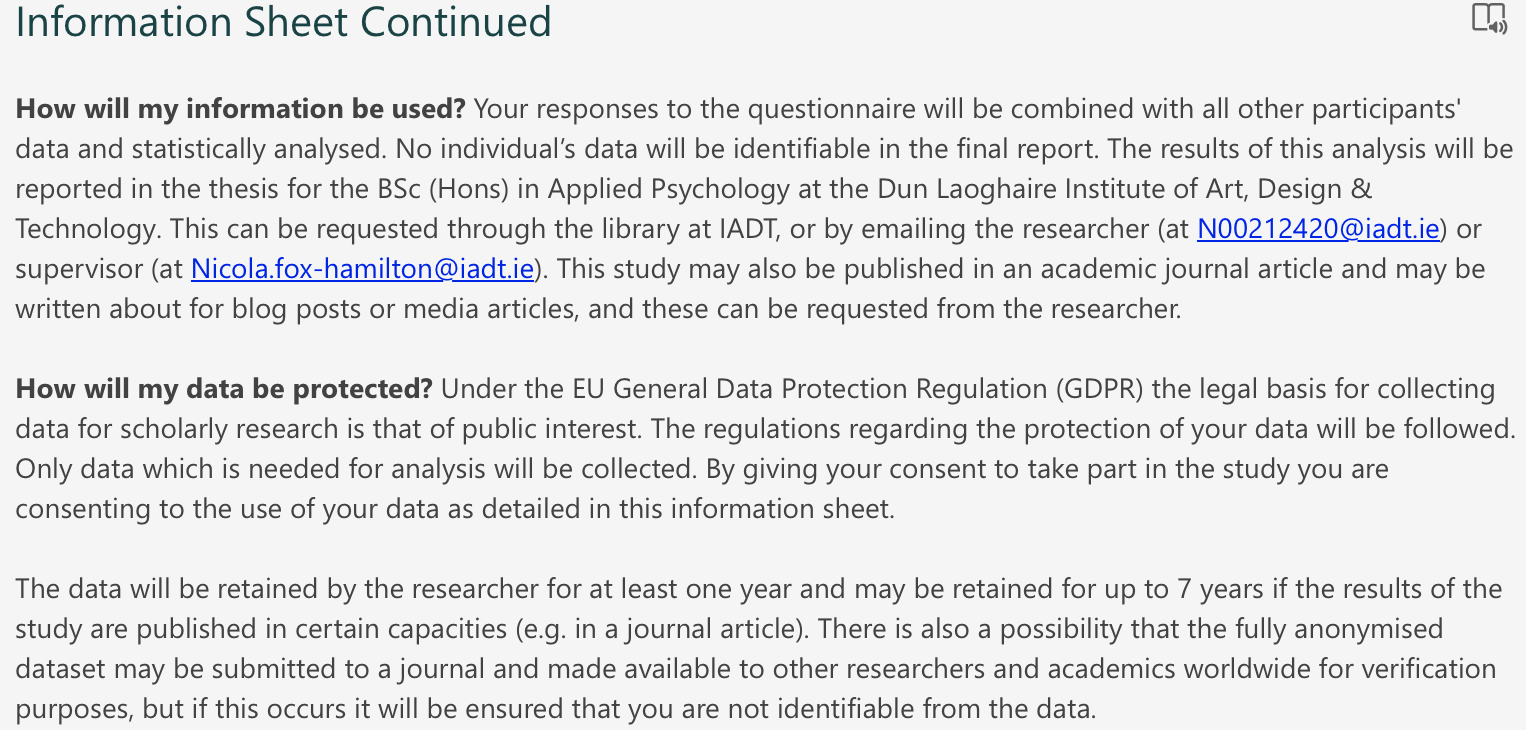
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6. Appendices

Appendix A – Information Sheet







A screenshot of a computer

AI-generated content may be incorrect.

Appendix B – Consent Form

**A screenshot of a computer

AI-generated content may be incorrect.**

Appendix C – Debrief Form

**A screenshot of a computer

AI-generated content may be incorrect.**

Appendix D – FoMO Scale

**A survey form with many circles

AI-generated content may be incorrect.**

**A white background with circles

AI-generated content may be incorrect.**

Appendix E – iPhone Social Media Screen Time Instructions

**A screenshot of a computer

AI-generated content may be incorrect.**

Appendix F – Android Social Media Screen Time Instructions and Questions

**A screenshot of a computer

AI-generated content may be incorrect.**

A screenshot of a chat

AI-generated content may be incorrect.

A screenshot of a chat

AI-generated content may be incorrect.

A screenshot of a phone

AI-generated content may be incorrect.

Appendix G – Mean-Split Groupings

**A screenshot of a report

AI-generated content may be incorrect.**

**A screenshot of a report

AI-generated content may be incorrect.**

Appendix H – Normality Tests

**A screenshot of a test results

AI-generated content may be incorrect.**

**A table with numbers and text

AI-generated content may be incorrect.**

**A screenshot of a test results

AI-generated content may be incorrect.**

Appendix I – Levene's Test and Outliers

**A screenshot of a test

AI-generated content may be incorrect.**

**A graph of blue and black boxes

AI-generated content may be incorrect.**

**A graph with blue squares and black lines

AI-generated content may be incorrect.**

**A graph with blue squares and black lines

AI-generated content may be incorrect.**

Appendix J – Reliability

**A close-up of a graph

AI-generated content may be incorrect.Fear of Missing Out**

**A table with numbers and text

AI-generated content may be incorrect.**

**A screenshot of a table

AI-generated content may be incorrect.**

Appendix K – 3-way Anova SPSS Output

**A table with numbers and text

AI-generated content may be incorrect.**

**A screenshot of a table

AI-generated content may be incorrect.**

**A screenshot of a data

AI-generated content may be incorrect.**

**A screenshot of a computer

AI-generated content may be incorrect.**

**A graph with a line

AI-generated content may be incorrect.**

Appendix L – G\*Power

**A screenshot of a computer

AI-generated content may be incorrect.**