



## Investigating the relationship between fear of missing out and teacher education students' school engagement in physical education

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### ABSTRACT

**Background:** Notably, there is a scarcity of papers that focus on deepening the relationship between fear of missing out (FoMO) and school engagement for undergraduate students, most especially in a university setting in Indonesia and the Philippines. **Research Objectives:** In this regard, this study aims to deepen the relationship between the FoMO and school engagement. **Methods:** In this research, a correlational method was adopted. The respondents for the study were undergraduate students currently taking the Bachelor of Physical Education degree at the College of Teacher Training and Education Pasundan (Indonesia) and the University in Region III (Philippines). Instrument FoMO used the Fear of Missing Out scale (FoMOS), and the involvement used UWES-9. Pearson-R analysis was used to analyse the relationship between FoMO and school engagement. **Finding/Results:** After obtaining data from 100 teacher education students taking the degree in Bachelor of Physical Education, it was observed that there is no significant relationship between overall FoMO and school engagement ( $r(98) = .190, p = .059$ ). Additionally, no significant relationship was found between the FoMO-Private Factor ( $r(98) = .145, p = .147$ ), the FoMO-Social Factor ( $r(98) = .173, p = .085$ ), and school engagement. **Conclusion:** Thus, we confirm that students' engagement in their studies is not significantly influenced by FoMO. This research contributes information to teachers and students regarding the relationship between FoMO and school engagement in physical education.

**Keywords:** Fear of missing out; school engagement; physical education; teacher education

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## INTRODUCTION

The Fear of Missing Out (FoMO) personality trait manifests itself in an excessive preoccupation with the actions and thoughts of others (Avci & Kula, 2022; Kim et al., 2020; Qutishat & Sharour, 2019). Most importantly, when a person misses out on rewarding and advantageous developments and possibilities, they are likely to experience

feelings of anger, worry, and inadequacy (Mazlum & Atalay, 2022). This is known as the “feeling of being inadequate.” In this sense, impacted individuals do not prefer to be kept in the dark about current events; nonetheless, social rejection at the hands of others can lead to either physical or mental anguish (Jones, 2014; Sturgeon & Zautra, 2016). Research conducted on the subject has found a correlation between FoMO and low levels of motivation (Alt, 2015; Li et al., 2021) and sleep deprivation (Adams et al., 2017), as well as unhealthy alcohol-related behaviours (Elhai et al., 2016), anxiety, stress (Dam et al., 2023) and depressive symptoms (Gao et al., 2023), and destitution (Lee et al., 2018; Hayran & Anik, 2021). Herman (2000) originally coined the term “fear of missing out” in the context of consumer behaviour and advertising. Consequently, the success of niche businesses is tied to the expansion of consumers’ product options. Consumers are more likely to buy in bulk or buy on impulse when they have a restricted number of options available to them and worry about missing out on something good. FoMO is the anxiety caused by the thought that an individual won’t be able to fully take advantage of all the opportunities that are presented to them. Hodkinson (2019) claims that the youth market is creating instruments to capitalise on the apprehension and internal uncertainty that young people project.

In the study of psychology, the concept of FoMO, which is described as the worry and anxiety that individuals might feel from not being in contact with the experiences in their big social circles (Deniz, 2021), has found a wide application area, particularly in terms of investigating the usage of social media (Alinejad et al., 2022; Alutaybi et al., 2020; D’Lima & Higgins, 2021; Tandon et al., 2021). According to Hetz et al. (2015), FoMO is the anxiety that an individual feels when they believe that other people have something that they themselves do not have or that other people are experiencing something that they themselves desire to experience. According to Riordan et al. (2020), FoMO is an uncomfortable and frequently all-consuming feeling that occurs when “friends or others” are experiencing rewarding experiences but the individual in question is not. It is characterised by the feeling that an individual has when they believe that they are not a part of something that is taking place in social networks (Akbari et al., 2021). According to a definition that is related to the usage of social media, FoMO is the intense urge that individuals have to remain online and follow what is happening in their virtual world, with the assumption that others have more rewarding experiences than they do (Alt, 2015). A study conducted by Abel et al. (2016) found that people’s experiences of fear of missing out, which are characterised by feelings of anxiety, anger, and inadequacy, tend to become more severe whenever they check in to their social media accounts. In the published paper of Zhang et al. (2020), it was mentioned that FoMO is subdivided into two categories: private FoMO and social FoMO. The private self is an individual’s assessment of how they feel about themselves, whereas the public (social) self is an individual’s appraisal of how they feel other people feel about them (Reisenwitz & Fowler, 2023). At this moment in time, the FoMO has only ever been connected to the worry that results from threats to one’s public self.

For the past years, academic papers focusing on school engagement have increased exponentially (Charkhabi et al., 2019; Fredricks et al., 2019; Kassab et al., 2023), especially studies that focus on the elementary and secondary levels (Bakadorova & Raufelder, 2017; Schnitzler et al., 2021). This particular concept can be viewed as a developmental process consisting of a student’s ideas, feelings, beliefs, and behaviours in relation to the context of his or her educational experience and his or her future path of lifelong learning (de Toro et al., 2023; Furlong & Rebelez-Ernst, 2014; Liu et al., 2021). Additionally, the strategy for visualising academic success also gained prominence and caught the curiosity of academics studying education (Ritoša et al., 2020). Different

students have different levels of focus, curiosity, enthusiasm, optimism, and desire when learning about a topic, such as the wide range of physical activities discussed in physical education classes. This specific construct consists of a variety of domains, including cognitive (investment in learning how to do something well and the ability to think creatively in order to solve problems), affective (qualities like belonging and enthusiasm for learning), and behavioural domains (such as the participation of students in school and the adoption of helpful techniques in educational settings) (Estévez et al., 2021; Stephenson et al., 2020). According to Jaya and Ariyanto (2021), school engagement as a construct is subdivided into three facets, including vigour (VI), dedication (DE), and absorption (AB). A student with tremendous drive, stamina, enthusiasm, and flexibility in their pursuit of greatness is said to have vigour (Assunção et al., 2020). This means that the student is maintaining an optimistic outlook despite the challenges they are facing as a result of the many demands and expectations that their academic work may entail. Meanwhile, those who are devoted to their studies are those who throw themselves into their work with great enthusiasm and focus, which is called dedication (Widlund et al., 2021). Lastly, a student who is participating in a wide range of academic pursuits is referred to as having an absorption level of activity (Pellas & Tzafilkou, 2023). A high level of confidence in one's own ability to learn the subject matter at hand is shown by this particular facet. One way to conceptualise this trait is as the experience of being so proficient and absorbed in one's studies that time seems to pass in a flash.

Previous research on FoMO has been well documented; for example, Kim et al. (2020) investigated the role of FoMO as a stimulating extrinsic motive for exercise. Other research was found examining the relationship of FoMO with quality of life and mental health (Dam et al., 2023). Meanwhile, current research on FoMO is linked to learning engagement in physical education. This research is important because it can reveal the relationship between FoMO and school engagement. The aim of this study was to investigate the relationship between FoMO and school engagement. The hypothesis in this study is: (i) H<sup>1</sup>: There is no significant relationship between FoMO and school engagement; (ii) H<sup>2</sup>: There is no significant relationship between FoMO-private factor and school engagement; (iii) H<sup>3</sup>: There is no significant relationship between FoMO-public factor and school engagement.

## **METHOD**

### **Participants**

The respondents for the study are undergraduate students currently taking the Bachelor of Physical Education degree at the College of Teacher Training and Education Pasundan (Indonesia, male: n = 30, female: n = 20) and the University in Region III, Pampanga (Philippines, male: n = 30, female: n = 20). The Purposive Sampling Technique was used to obtain the most reliable and accurate data for this investigation. It is a non-parametric sampling technique in which the researcher subjectively chooses the participants based on the needs of the ongoing investigation (Thomas, 2022). In this regard, a selection criterion was formulated to satisfy the needs of this present study: (i) Must be currently enrolled in the teacher education programme of the Bachelor of Physical Education; (ii) Either male or female; and (iii) Ages 19 and above.

### **Instruments**

The newly developed and validated questionnaire, the Fear of Missing Out (FoMO) scale for university students by Mazlum & Atalay (2022), was utilised for this case. It is a 17-item survey questionnaire that measures two distinct features: private and social factors. The responses may be recorded on a 6-point Likert scale from 1 = "completely

disagree” to 6 = “completely agree.” Lastly, the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale for Students (UWES-9) by Carmona-Halty et al. (2019) was also used. It is a 9-item questionnaire that measures students’ overall engagement based on its three unique dimensions: vigour, dedication, and absorption. The answers may be recorded on a 6-point Likert scale from 1 = “strongly disagree” to 6 = “strongly agree.” Each item for both questionnaires used for this investigation is illustrated in Table 1.

**Table 1. Items for the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale for Students (UWES-9) and the Fear of Missing out Scale (FoMO)**

Instrument	Construct	Item	Source
The Utrecht Work Engagement Scale for Students (UWES-9)	Vigor	When I am doing my work as a student, I feel bursting with energy	(Carmona-Halty et al., 2019)
		I feel energetic and capable when I'm studying or going to class	
		When I get up in the morning, I feel like going to class	
	Dedication	I am enthusiastic about my studies	
		My studies inspire me	
		I am proud of my studies	
	Absorption	I feel happy when I am studying intensely	
		I am immersed in my studies	
		I get carried away when I am studying	
		I get anxious when I'm not aware of events/ opportunities	
		I feel sad for myself when I miss events/ opportunities	
		I feel lost when there are too many events	
		I feel uneasy when I do not notice the opportunities, I could take advantage of	
		When I decide on one of the attractive opportunities, I regret not choosing the others	
		I feel obsessed when I miss events/ opportunities	
I feel 'left behind' when I miss events/ opportunities			
Fear of Missing Out Scale (FoMO)	Private factor	I feel regretful when I miss events/ opportunities	(Mazlum & Atalay, 2022)
		I feel an inner guilt when I miss a social event, I was planning to attend	
		I feel deeply lonely when my friends attend a social event without me	
		I feel ignored/ forgotten by my friends when I miss a social event	
		I get anxious when I cannot keep up with my friends' plans and what they are doing	
		I get curious when I do not keep informed about the conversations between my friends	
		I eat my heart out when I think of my friends having a great time without me	
		It gets on my nerves when my friends share their experiences about a social event that I couldn't attend	
		I feel outcast from my social groups when I decline their invitation	
	Social factor	I feel embarrassed even if I decline an invitation due to compelling reasons	

## Ethical Approval

This research has been approved by the Bachelor of Physical Education at the Pasundan College of Teacher Training and Education (Indonesia) in December 2023 (N0: 559-LPPM/12/2023) and by the University of Region III, Pampanga, Philippines (12-2023).

## Research Procedure

This research was conducted at the Bachelor of Physical Education degree programme at the College of Teacher Training and Education Pasundan (Indonesia) and the University in Region III, Pampanga, Philippines, in December 2023. The Fear of Missing Out Scale and Engagement Scale for Students were distributed to students online or through email. Then the participants were given 40 minutes to fill in the question items contained in the Fear of Missing Out Scale and Engagement Scale for Students. After completing the form, the participants sent it back via email to the research team for analysis.

## Statistical Analysis

A test of normality for the data set obtained was performed. Based on the initial analysis, the overall skewness and kurtosis values of both FoMO and UWES-9 scales, and both factors under FoMO (personal and social factors), satisfied the threshold values of 2 and -2 [UWES-9 (-.8056), FoMO (-.0060), PF (-.4664), and -.1512 (SF)]. Hence, it can be confirmed that the data is normally distributed. In this regard, a parametric test is highly recommended as a statistical treatment for the data set. Specifically, Pearson-R analysis will be used for this study (Schober & Schwarte, 2018). In this particular investigation, the overall FoMO scale's composite scores and each factor of this construct will be correlated with school engagement.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Table 2 displays the demographic characteristics of the respondents according to gender and age group. As per the table, there are 100 respondents who answered the survey, and mostly female students volunteered to partake in the study compared to their counterparts (NFemale = 60 (60.00%), Male = 40 (40.00%). Lastly, most of the respondents are in the age range of 19–21 years old, followed by 22–24 years old and 25 years old and above, respectively (N19–21 years old = 86 (86.00%), N22–24 years old = 8 (8.00%), and N25 years old and above = 6 (6.00%).

Table 2. Demographic Characteristics

Variables	Items	N(%)
Gender	Females	60(60.00%)
	Males	40(40.00%)
Age group	19-21 years old	86(86.00%)
	22-24 years old	8(8.00%)
	25 years old and above	6(6.00%)

Table 3 illustrates the findings on the relationship between fear of missing out (FoMO) and school engagement. Based on the findings, FoMO has no significant relationship with school engagement ( $r(98) = .190, p = .059$ ). Furthermore, no significant relationship was also found between the FoMO-Private Factor ( $r(98) = .145, p = .147$ ) and the FoMO-Social Factor ( $r(98) = .173, p = .085$ ) and school engagement.

**Table 3. Relationship between Fear of Missing Out (FoMO) and School Engagement**

		School Engagement	
Pearson-r	Fear of Missing Out	Correlation Coefficient	.190
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.059
		N	100
	Fear of Missing Out-Private factor	Correlation Coefficient	.145
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.147
		N	100
	Fear of Missing Out-Social factor	Correlation Coefficient	.173
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.085
		N	100

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

This present study is aimed at analysing the relationship between FoMO and SE as a preliminary. Based on the findings, it was observed that no relationship exists between the two variables. It can be construed that regardless of what teacher education students are currently experiencing in both their private and social lives, it does not correlate to their engagement in school. Additionally, it can be postulated that as long as they are highly engaged in their studies, their private and social lives are not regarded as highly important (Rozgonjuk, 2020). Meaning, missing an opportunity personally (e.g., events in school that are personally connected to the interests of the students) and socially (e.g., missing out on a social event with classmates or peers) does not mean that their vigour, dedication, and absorption towards their studies must be affected.

The findings of this study have been repudiated by various research studies (not related to educational studies) that were conducted in relation to engagement. For example, workplace FoMO has been found to be negatively correlated to engagement, in which employees are expected to facilitate higher work participation, particularly in the form of experiencing vigour, dedication, and absorption when working (Budnick et al., 2020). Furthermore, as we have discussed earlier, most of the studies that were conducted concerning FoMO are highly related to the social media use of students. In an outstanding paper published by Bloemen and De Coninck, (2020), it was found that the use of social media has a positive association with fear of missing out. There are also other studies conducted in relation to social media use and FoMO (Alutaybi et al., 2020; Bakioglu et al., 2022; Hattingh et al., 2022). On the other hand, the tool that was utilised for the purpose of this specific inquiry is centred on FoMO (a combination of private and social factors) which is comprehensive from a theoretical standpoint and incorporates a variety of ideas and concepts (remorse for past actions, choices, etc.) and emotions (experience of being lost and profoundly alone, an inner sense of remorse, the urge to eat one's heart out, and embarrassment) (Mazlum & Atalay, 2022).

Furthermore, the focus of the instrument is on university students in an educational setting. In this regard, this study can be treated as an initial investigation into deepening the relationship between the two variables. Additionally, this assumption may not be accurate. Since this study is relatively new, no empirical evidence was found in the current context. Therefore, this study has been able to achieve its ultimate goal by using its findings as the basis for further research directions.

## CONCLUSION

This initial investigation has been able to discover that the two constructs of FoMO (private and social factors) are not correlated to school engagement. Any missed opportunities on both a personal and social level cannot influence their school engagement. In this regard, it can be postulated that students' engagement in their

studies is not greatly affected by FoMO. This research comes with a number of important limitations that need to be taken into consideration. Only people who are currently enrolled in a Bachelor of Physical Education degree at the College of Teacher Training and Education Pasundan (Indonesia) and a university in Region III, Pampanga (Philippines) who are working towards a Teacher Education Degree with a concentration in Physical Education are eligible to take part in this study. The findings from this research suggest that additional variables, such as socioeconomic status (as a moderator or mediator), should be incorporated and investigated in future research. Furthermore, research studies on the validity and reliability of the scale can be conducted by using it with people of varying educational backgrounds.

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## CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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