



Interpersonal Communication in Overcoming Fear of Missing Out Students at The Darul 'Ulum Boarding School Muaro Jambi

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Abstract

This research is motivated by the efforts of the Darul 'Ulum Islamic Boarding School Muaro Jambi students in overcoming the symptoms of Fear of Missing out Excessive use of Social Media. The research objective was to determine the role of interpersonal communication in overcoming the symptoms of Fear of Missing Out (FoMO) for students who use social media. The method used in this research is qualitative. Interviews were conducted with 21 informants selected by purposive sampling. Data analysis uses the Miles and Huberman method. The results of the study show that the impact of fear of missing out for students is experiencing anxiety if they do not access social media, social media becomes a medium of expression, experiencing toxic productivity and the emergence of apathy. The causes of the symptoms of fear of missing out are the desire to always be connected with other people, the intensity of excessive use of social media and always accessing social media even without interest. Interpersonal communication efforts in overcoming the symptoms of fear of missing out students, namely, limiting the use of social media, adopting the Joy of missing out (Jomo) approach, increasing openness among fellow students, increasing empathy and providing mutual support.

Keywords: interpersonal-communication; fomo; social-media; student; pesantren

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Introduction

The advancement of information and communication technology has significantly impacted society's interaction with the internet, particularly through social media platforms. Social media has undergone rapid development, emerging as a potent tool to facilitate individual participation in creating and disseminating content that holds both informative and communicative value in the virtual realm. The rapid growth of internet usage has brought forth both positive and negative consequences, one of which is the emergence of a phenomenon known as "fear of missing out" (FOMO) in the context of social media usage.

Fear of Missing out (FOMO) is defined by Przybylski, Murayama, Dehaan, and Gladwell as a pervasive feeling of concern that arises when an individual becomes aware that others are experiencing satisfying or valuable experiences. This feeling is accompanied by an urge to remain connected with those individuals, especially through social media (Imaddudin, 2020). Overcoming the impacts of FOMO stemming from social media use can be achieved by exercising self-control and maintaining healthy communication with both individuals and groups.

Communication remains an integral element of human life, indivisible from daily existence. Each individual relies on communication to navigate their day-to-day affairs, particularly when engaging with others (interpersonal communication) (Ogona, 2022). Interpersonal communication, being the most

comprehensive and refined mode of interaction, holds enduring significance. In reality, direct face-to-face communication fosters a sense of familiarity that sets it apart from interactions through mass media or online platforms (Arminen et al., 2016). However, it is noteworthy that a considerable portion of society, particularly among the younger demographic, exhibits a tendency to excessively communicate through social media, consequently experiencing the fear of missing out phenomenon. This, in turn, leads to a dearth of personal communication and interaction within their immediate circles. Proficient interpersonal communication serves as a cornerstone for establishing harmonious relationships. In this realm of communication, the focus lies in the inception and preservation of relationships, ensuring their seamless continuity amidst the contemporary technological landscape. Relationships within this context encompass unmediated, face-to-face dialogues and interactions (Cangara, 2012).

Indonesia stands as one of the world's nations with the largest internet user population. According to the latest data from the Indonesian Internet Service Providers Association (APJII) in 2022, the internet penetration rate in Indonesia reached 77.02% during the period of 2021-2022. In the year 2022, the number of internet users in Indonesia reached 210,026,769 out of a total population of 272,682,600 individuals. The trend of internet penetration in Indonesia has shown consistent growth every year. Internet penetration was at

64.80% in 2018 and escalated to 73.70% in 2019-2020 (Ndolu, 2023).

Social media stands as the primary reason for Indonesia's population to access the internet, encompassing platforms such as Facebook, WhatsApp, Telegram, Line, Twitter, TikTok, Instagram, YouTube, and various others. Social media represents a form of technological advancement that profoundly influences individuals in obtaining information and connecting with others in the virtual world (Ainiyah, 2018). Social media plays a pivotal role in shaping interactions within the digital realm, facilitating the dissemination of information through applications that streamline communication. These platforms allow for the swift sharing of photos or videos capturing specific events, leveraging speed and convenience to the maximum. The increasing prominence of social media solidifies its position as the most widely utilized platform on the internet, serving as a rapid communication tool for interacting with others (Niedermeier et al., 2016).

Social media has significantly impacted the social fabric of society, particularly among the younger generation, who are nearly all active users of these platforms, including students. This is evidenced by the internet penetration rates according to the 2022 report by the Indonesian Internet Service Providers Association (APJII), showing that students and students (99.26%), workers (86.90%), and homemakers (84.61%) are highly engaged in internet usage (Hermawansyah, 2022). Many individuals utilize social media platforms such as WhatsApp, Instagram, TikTok, Facebook, Twitter, and even

YouTube to share their daily activities and life experiences. Presently, people openly and enthusiastically express themselves through social media, revealing their social lives and daily routines to the public. It's not uncommon for social media users to meticulously craft their posts, incorporating elements like photo stories and videos to enhance visual appeal (Leaver et al., 2020). The advent of modern technology has transformed human behavior in various ways, particularly through social media. Social media platforms offer numerous positive benefits if users are adept at utilizing the internet responsibly. Conversely, if users are not judicious in their social media usage, it can lead to negative consequences (Carbonell & Panova, 2017).

Piliang, in his journal discussing the reality of social media, asserts that "through media, reality is not only produced, disseminated, or reproduced but can also be manipulated (Piliang, 2011)." Social media is deemed crucial to human life, especially for information-seeking purposes. However, it is deeply concerning that the excessive use of social media has made it challenging for individuals to interact with each other or maintain communication in the physical world (Pempek et al., 2009). This predicament poses an issue in interpersonal communication, as the fear of missing out on social media moments and excessive focus on the virtual realm hinder effective communication with those around us. This issue is what the researcher has identified at Pondok Pesantren Darul 'Ulum Muaro Jambi.

Prior to the pandemic's onset, the students (santri) more frequently spent their evenings congregating and engaging in

conversations in the communal spaces such as the courtyard and mosque at Pondok Pesantren Darul 'Ulum Muaro Jambi. These gatherings were often centered around studying or completing assignments. However, the current scenario reveals a shift, as the students now tend to devote more of their time to electronic devices, engrossed in accessing social media. The phenomenon of fear of missing out, commonly known as FOMO, observed at the boarding school might have resonance elsewhere, yet the researcher's attention is particularly drawn to the notable cases within this institution (Classen, 2018). Many students here have adopted social media as a lifestyle and trend, utilizing it as a means to stay connected with others (Haight et al., 2016). Presently, students seem to favor congregating virtually through social media platforms rather than engaging in direct face-to-face conversations. This trend extends to various activities, including religious studies. This trend appears to be more prominent among female students. Digging deeper, the researcher observes that a subset of students at Pondok Pesantren Darul 'Ulum Muaro Jambi prefer interacting through their social media accounts rather than engaging in in-person discussions with peers. When questioned about their motivations for accessing social media, some students cite entertainment and leisure rather than seeking relief from academic pressures. However, this practice could potentially lead to undesirable consequences. Excessive reliance on social media might cultivate a sense of apprehension about missing out on online

interactions among the students at Pondok Pesantren Darul 'Ulum Muaro Jambi.

Education within Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) has indeed undergone substantial changes to address the challenges of the times (Hanafi et al., 2021). However, in the modern era characterized by rapid information flow and social transformations, the need for innovation becomes even more pressing to ensure that pesantren continue to serve as benchmarks for education in Indonesia. During the recent pandemic period, individuals have been indirectly compelled to be more active in using social media due to personal communication needs, educational requirements, healthcare information, entertainment, and other necessities (Saudi & Nurhayati, 2021). Nonetheless, this reality has led people to indulge excessively in social media usage, ultimately yielding unfavorable consequences, particularly concerning time management, especially among the youth.

The phenomenon of the fear of missing out (FOMO) in the context of social media usage is pervasive, transcending location, time, and individuals (Swar & Hameed, 2017). It is not solely restricted to the technologically-savvy younger generation; even those who are unfamiliar with advanced technology, regardless of age, often experience the anxiety of missing out on social media moments. This presents a broad picture of the FOMO phenomenon among students who are users of social media at Pondok Pesantren Darul 'Ulum Muaro Jambi.

The rapid growth of the internet, coupled with the increasing percentage of internet users, has led some users to experience disruptions in the form of the emergence of FOMO symptoms. The term "gejala" in Bahasa Indonesia can be understood as indications or signs of the forthcoming occurrence of something (Syauqi, 2020). The social phenomenon known as Fear of Missing Out (FoMO), driven by the advancing technology and the widespread use of the internet, has become increasingly prevalent. Fear of Missing Out, often described as the fear of being left out, is depicted as a social issue stemming from the rapid progress of technology, information, and social media (Elmer et al., 2020).

Various forms of information can now be accessed through the internet, particularly on social media platforms that have become hard to detach from. According to Przybylski, Murayama, DeHaan, and Gladwell, who have delved into the phenomenon of fear of missing out or FOMO, it is a powerful force that acts as a motivator behind internet users, especially among students who actively engage with social media platforms (Irlianti et al., 2021).

Interpersonal communication, often referred to as inter-personal communication, is the process of exchanging information, ideas, and thoughts between two or more individuals (Burlson, 2010). According to Everett M. Rogers, healthy relationships can be characterized by qualities that foster positive interpersonal communication. These include a communicator's inclination to show kindness and attentiveness to others,

express their feelings openly, engage in productive conversations, and provide encouragement to others (Setianingrum, 2018). Effective relationships do not emerge on their own; they cannot naturally develop and sustain themselves. In the process of nurturing good communication, healthy interaction between individuals requires time and effort to maintain functional and satisfying connections, thereby preventing communication from deteriorating.

Joseph A. DeVito asserts that interpersonal communication is a process involving the exchange of messages and active listening between individuals, whether in pairs or small groups, with the incorporation of feedback (DeVito, 2019). The context of interpersonal communication often delves into how to build and sustain relationships (Solomon & Theiss, 2022). The objectives of interpersonal communication encompass understanding, connecting, influencing, and assisting. These aims are tied to the need to enhance productivity, foster effective relationships (among individuals, groups, and organizations), and bolster conflict resolution capabilities.

The fear of missing out (FOMO) regarding social media usage, as observed by the researcher, is prevalent among the students residing at Pondok Pesantren Darul 'Ulum Muaro Jambi. Based on their observations, all students in the boarding school possess social media accounts that they access daily. This phenomenon serves as a catalyst for the emergence of FOMO related to social media usage. The intricate features of social media indirectly lead society to experience heightened levels of anxiety in relation to these platforms. When

desires for obtaining information remain unfulfilled, it often results in feelings of discomfort, unease, or restlessness. The fear of missing out on information is indeed a hallmark symptom of the Fear of Missing out (FOMO) phenomenon.

In order to minimize repetition and avoid plagiarism in the study of interpersonal communication addressing the fear of missing out among social media-using students at Pondok Pesantren Darul 'Ulum Muaro Jambi, several relevant research studies addressing the phenomenon of fear of missing out have been identified.

The connection between self-control and the fear of missing out among university students who use social media has been explored by Asri Wulandari in her study titled "The Relationship between Self-Control and Fear of Missing Out among University Students who Use Social Media." The interplay between self-control and the fear of missing out in university students who engage with social media is intricately intertwined in her research (Asri Wulandari, 2020).

In her study titled "The Relationship between Fear of Missing Out (FoMO) and Social Media Addiction among Students of Islamic University of Riau," Salwa Nafisa reveals a significant correlation between Fear of Missing Out (FoMO) and social media addiction among university students. The research establishes a noteworthy link between FoMO and the tendency to develop addictive behavior towards social media platforms (Nafisa, 2021).

In her research titled "The Relationship between Life Satisfaction and FoMO among Students of the Faculty of Psychology at UIN Malang who Use Social Media," Khanza Syafia Daravit found that 67% of participants experienced Fear of Missing Out (FoMO) in their social media usage, while the life satisfaction level was recorded at 62.5% (Daravit, 2021).

Based on initial observations, the researcher became intrigued to conduct a study and compile it in the form of a thesis with the title: "The Role of Interpersonal Communication in Addressing the Fear of Missing out Phenomenon among Students Using Social Media at Pondok Pesantren Darul 'Ulum Muaro Jambi."

Method

The methodology employed in this study is qualitative research based on fieldwork, utilizing a qualitative approach that centers on individuals or a group of individuals within their natural environment, aiming to provide descriptive insights.

The researcher conducted the study using data collection methods that included observation, interviews, focus group discussions, and documentation.

In this study, the researcher aims to uncover issues related to interpersonal communication at Pondok Pesantren Darul 'Ulum Muaro Jambi in addressing the fear of missing out (FOMO) phenomenon. Therefore, the analytical method employed in this research is phenomenology, which involves analyzing the daily life experiences of subjects within a specific natural context.

Result and Analysis

The fear of missing out (FoMO) phenomenon, observed by the researcher, in the context of media social usage at Pondok Pesantren Darul 'Ulum Muaro Jambi is rooted in the fact that all residing students within the religious school possess active social media accounts, which they access on a daily basis. This pattern of behavior serves as a trigger for the occurrence of social media-related FoMO. The multifaceted features of social media platforms, albeit beneficial in various ways, indirectly contribute to heightened levels of anxiety experienced by the community towards social media.

When the desire for information remains unmet, individuals often experience feelings of discomfort, anxiety, or restlessness. The fear of being left behind in terms of information consumption is a distinctive characteristic of the Fear of Missing Out (FoMO) phenomenon. This occurrence sheds light on how the fear of missing out has its roots in the deep-seated need to stay connected, informed, and involved within the ever-evolving landscape of social media platforms.

The following are the research findings regarding the Fear of Missing Out (FoMO) phenomenon occurring at Pondok Pesantren Darul 'Ulum Muaro Jambi.

The impact of FoMO symptoms among students who are users of social media at Pondok Pesantren Darul 'Ulum Muaro Jambi includes the following aspects:

- a. Students experience anxiety when not accessing social media.

- b. Social media serves as a platform for expression.
- c. Students encounter toxic productivity.
- d. The emergence of apathetic attitudes.

The causes of FoMO symptoms among students who are users of social media at Pondok Pesantren Darul 'Ulum Muaro Jambi encompass the following factors:

- a. The desire to stay constantly connected with others.
- b. Excessive usage of social media.
- c. Regularly accessing social media even without a specific purpose (influenced by peers).

The environment plays a crucial role in daily life. As students, it's essential to be able to manage the environment, especially given the rapid developments of the current era. When students can control the environment, two outcomes can be achieved: first, the results align with what the communicator desires, leading to compliance; and second, the outcomes obtained through communication can reflect compromises among the desires of each involved individual, leading to conflict resolution.

1. Limiting the Use of Social Media

The fear of missing out (FoMO) and the emergence of boredom act as mediators due to psychological pressures and internet addiction post the COVID-19 pandemic. During the previous pandemic, people from all walks of life, especially students, turned to accessing social media. With all activities shifting online, this led to a lack of social interaction in the real world, eventually resulting in feelings of boredom among students. This habit persists even after the

pandemic has subsided. Many students use the internet or social media to follow trends, engage without purpose, merely to alleviate boredom, eventually leading to addiction.

Some students make efforts to limit their use of social media, effectively minimizing its usage and preventing social media addiction. Those who experience intense media addiction are more likely to encounter issues with interpersonal communication or social challenges. As students with the status of "santri" (Islamic students), there's a continuous effort to strike a balance and manage time wisely. Excessive use of social media undoubtedly has adverse effects on the productive lives of young people, particularly students. Hence, it becomes crucial to establish time limits for social media usage. Shofy, a student, emphasizes the importance of setting boundaries on social media usage:

"I often try to stay prudent and limit my use of social media. When I feel bored, I seek motivation on YouTube or engage in other activities. By setting boundaries on social media use, I can reduce the FoMO associated with it and be more focused on real-world social interactions."

Some students make attempts to restrict social media usage by activating reminders on their accounts, such as using the reminder feature on Instagram. This practice helps them control their social media consumption. Gradually, as students become accustomed to limiting their social media use, they take steps towards gaining control over their dependency on it.

2. Take the Joy of Missing Out (JoMO) Approach

The advancement of information and communication technology over the last decade has transformed human life in relation to social norms and daily communication practices. This phenomenon has cast a shadow on the digitalization process for "santri" (Islamic students), particularly those users who have blurred the boundaries of social media usage. As a consequence, technology has influenced the communication dynamics among the santri community, affecting behaviors and attitudes. These range from laziness to the fear of missing out (FoMO) in social media usage, and even experiencing "phubbing" (ignoring someone in favor of one's phone or social media).

Based on the researcher's observations, the phenomenon of FoMO in social media usage significantly impacts interpersonal communication within Pondok Pesantren Darul Ulum Muaro Jambi. Hence, it's beneficial for santri to occasionally adopt the approach of the "joy of missing out" (JoMO). This approach serves as self-reflection for santri to refrain from continuously accessing social media. The JoMO approach teaches santri mindfulness and helps them appreciate the present moment without envy or the desire to meet specific social standards. The JoMO lifestyle is employed to counteract the FOMO lifestyle.

The JoMO lifestyle can reduce dependence on social media. Occasional use of the JoMO approach aids in self-reflection, but it's not intended to be constantly

practiced. The "joy of missing out" (JoMO) in social media usage isn't ideal if perpetually followed, as social media can serve as a crucial source of information today. As long as individuals are capable of effectively controlling their social media use to prevent addiction and apathy towards the real world.

Emotional maturity among santri correlates positively with the quality of their interpersonal communication. Some santri who experience the fear of missing out on social media moments strive to adopt the JoMO approach as a form of self-resistance against FoMO. Implementing the JoMO approach helps these santri improve themselves by cultivating gratitude and setting limits on social media use.

3. Openness among fellow students

Openness in every interpersonal communication is one of the essential elements for smooth communication. Interpersonal communication within Pondok Pesantren Darul 'Ulum Muaro Jambi often involves various perspectives between one santri and another.

This is because interpersonal communication frequently engages relationships between individuals, which strengthen and define the unique bonds among the santri. Consequently, interpersonal communication within Pondok Pesantren Darul 'Ulum Muaro Jambi must be marked by a close sense of openness to ensure effective communication.

Openness in interpersonal communication within Pondok Pesantren Darul 'Ulum Muaro Jambi is exemplified through the transparency of the santri leader (Communicator) towards fellow santri members during meetings or discussions

about regulations or other matters pertaining to the pesantren. This indicates that the santri are willing to share information and express anything that needs to be discussed collectively, aiming to find solutions to the discussed matters. This openness in interpersonal communication among santri at Pondok Pesantren Darul 'Ulum Muaro Jambi should, of course, be rooted in honesty. The presence of honesty serves as a reaction of the santri to the ongoing communication. Honesty is a crucial factor in building trust and nurturing interpersonal communication relationships. As expressed by Anistianingsih (Santri), who has been residing at Pondok Pesantren Darul 'Ulum Muaro Jambi for five years.

"When we gather, whether for a meeting or any activity, let's be open with each other. Share your grievances, don't get preoccupied with your phones. If we are open and express ourselves, if we communicate and confirm with each other, we can work together to make our pesantren better and more active. Mutual communication and confirmation enable us to evaluate together."

Continuous openness in interpersonal communication provides information that was previously unknown to other santri and fosters openness among them. Although expressing oneself openly in communication might not be easy with the interlocutor, personal openness in interpersonal communication is crucial for addressing issues, especially regarding the phenomenon of the fear of missing out among santri users of social media, which often leads to some santri being indifferent to their intended activities. Openness among santri holds significant value in group life. It can manifest

as sharing feelings, thoughts, and individual experiences that help strengthen and tighten the bonds among santri.

4. Increase Empathy

Communication goes beyond simply delivering a message; it also involves harmonizing ideas and creating aligned expectations. Empathy plays a pivotal role in communication. In fact, empathy in communication serves as the foundation for openness, mutual respect, and the development of more positive communication relationships. Aligned with Onong Uchjana Effendy's theory, effective interpersonal communication is a two-way process that should prioritize understanding one another. The establishment of communication functions and objectives contributes to the creation of effective communication relationships among the santri at Pondok Pesantren Darul 'Ulum Muaro Jambi. This sentiment is echoed by Siti Jarnah (Ustadzah), who has resided at Pondok Pesantren Darul 'Ulum Muaro Jambi for 18 years.

"Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, it's become evident that we've been overly indulged by technology, to the point of becoming complacent. Therefore, as santri, you should be sensitive and caring towards one another. We are a family here, so cultivate a strong sense of empathy, remind and embrace each other to do good. We only live once, guard your speech, guard your actions, and don't let gadgets control us to the extent that we neglect our priorities."

Implementing empathy in interpersonal communication is crucial. In interpersonal communication, especially among santri,

understanding the interlocutor's perspective is essential. Hence, santri should be attuned to their interlocutors. What the communicator conveys to the interlocutor significantly influences the message reception process. Consequently, enhancing empathy becomes a strategy to maintain effective communication relationships.

5. Mutual Support

Effective interpersonal communication thrives when santri demonstrate a supportive attitude towards each other. This support is given to reinforce the conveyed messages. As Kiai Haji Muzakki, MT, the Leader of Pondok Pesantren Darul 'Ulum Muaro Jambi, expressed:

"The internet or social media can serve as a 'ticket to transgression.' It becomes transgressive if we cannot control ourselves. Therefore, being a santri requires vigilance. If something is not good, don't follow it. If followed, it will undoubtedly cause anxiety due to falling into the trap."

In alignment with K.H. Muzakki's statement, santri experiencing FoMO tend to develop anxiety resulting from excessive use of social media. Thus, fellow santri should offer personal support to peers who experience fear, anxiety, or any other factor hindering effective interpersonal communication.

Conclusion

Based on the researcher's explanations about "Interpersonal Communication in Overcoming the Fear of Missing out Phenomenon among Santri Who Use Social Media at Pondok Pesantren Darul 'Ulum Muaro Jambi," the following conclusions can

be drawn. The impacts of the Fear of Missing Out (FoMO) phenomenon among santri who use social media at Pondok Pesantren Darul 'Ulum Muaro Jambi are anxiety when not accessing social media, social media becoming a platform for self-expression, experiencing toxic productivity, and developing an apathetic attitude. The causes of the Fear of Missing Out (FoMO) phenomenon among santri who use social media at Pondok Pesantren Darul 'Ulum Muaro Jambi include the desire to constantly stay connected with others, excessive use of social media, and accessing social media even without a purpose (peer influence). The forms of interpersonal communication at Pondok Pesantren Darul 'Ulum Muaro Jambi include meetings among santri, recitation sessions, religious gatherings, and daily interactions. The model of interpersonal communication tends to be linear (one-way) for santri experiencing FoMO, interactive (two-way), and transactional (multi-directional) in certain situations. The efforts to address FoMO among santri who use social media include limiting social media usage, embracing the Joy of Missing Out (JoMO) approach, enhancing openness among fellow santri, increasing empathy, and providing mutual support.

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