Full length article

"I don't want to miss a thing": Adolescents' fear of missing out and its relationship to adolescents' social needs, Facebook use, and Facebook related stress

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ABSTRACT

This survey study among adolescents (N = 402) investigates an integrative model that examines (1) the mediating role of adolescents' fear of missing out (FoMO) in the relationships of adolescents' need to belong and need for popularity with adolescents' Facebook use and (2) the relationships of adolescents' FoMO with adolescents' perceived stress related to the use of Facebook. Structural equation modeling results indicated that an increased need to belong and an increased need for popularity were associated with an increased use of Facebook. These relationships were mediated by FoMO. Increased FoMO was associated with increased stress related to Facebook use. These results emphasize the important role that FoMO plays in adolescents' media use and well-being.

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1. Introduction

Social networking sites (SNSs) are highly integrated in many adolescents' lives (e.g., Lenhart, 2015; Sampasa-Kanyinga & Lewis, 2015) and are considered important channels to seek and maintain social connections (e.g., Shapiro & Margolin, 2013). A recent American report revealed that Facebook is the most popular and widely used online social network among adolescents; more than 71% of 13- to 17-year-olds uses Facebook (Lenhart, 2015). The popularity of Facebook among adolescents raises questions about what motivates them to use Facebook. In this respect, social needs may be important, as scholars (e.g., Lee & Chiou, 2013) argue that individuals are becoming increasingly dependent on SNSs to gratify their social needs. In particular, the need to belong (i.e., the need to develop and maintain significant and stable interpersonal relationships; Baumeister & Leary, 1995) and the need for popularity (i.e., the need to do certain things aimed at increasing one's popularity; Santor, Messervey, & Kusumakar, 2000) may be

important motivations for adolescents' Facebook use in particular, since these are key concerns in adolescence (Santor et al., 2000).

Although previous studies confirmed this suggestion (e.g., Utz, Tanis, & Vermeulen, 2012), our understanding of potential underlying mechanisms that could explain this relationship is still limited. However, given the potential harmful outcomes of using Facebook for young people's well-being (e.g., Kross et al., 2013), scholars agree that it is important to better understand how certain factors relate to adolescents' Facebook use. Przybylski, Murayama, DeHaan, and Gladwell (2013) recently proposed that fear of missing out (FoMO) or "a pervasive apprehension that others might be having rewarding experiences from which one is absent", may be an important explanatory mechanism. They suggest, in line with self-determination theory (SDT; Deci & Ryan, 1985; Ryan & Deci, 2000), that deficits in psychological needs may increase people's sensitivity to fear missing out on things, which in turn may drive people towards social media, as social media may provide individuals an effective self-regulation tool to satisfy their psychological needs (Przybylski et al., 2013). Therefore, the first aim of the present study is to investigate the mediating role of FoMO in the association between adolescents' social needs (i.e., need to belong and need for popularity) and Facebook use.

Recently, studies reported associations between FoMO and

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perceived stress (e.g., Jones, 2014). At the same time, scholars argued that SNSs may function as a new setting for perceiving stress (e.g., Fox & Moreland, 2015), as peer interactions increasingly take place in an online setting (e.g., Shapiro & Margolin, 2013) and are often accompanied by peer-related or interpersonal stress (e.g., Byrne, Davenport, & Mazanov, 2007). Because Facebook may be a new stress-inducing platform for teens (e.g., Fox & Moreland, 2015) and given the harmful correlates of perceived peer-related stress in adolescence (e.g., Sontag & Graber, 2010), it is critical to determine potential risk factors of perceived stress related to new settings for peer interactions, such as Facebook. Therefore, the second aim of the present study is to examine whether FoMO may predict increases in adolescents' perceived stress related to a Facebook setting.

In sum, the present study aims to test an integrative model that examines (1) the mediating role of FoMO in the relationships between need to belong and need for popularity and adolescents' Facebook use and (2) the relationships between FoMO and adolescents' perceived stress related to the use of Facebook. We integrate these closely related needs in an integrative model as this allows us to control for the need for popularity when examining the relationship between the need to belong and adolescents' Facebook use, and vice versa, and as this enables a more comprehensive understanding of the relationships between adolescents' social needs and their Facebook use than considering single needs alone.

1.1. The relationships of adolescents' social needs with adolescents' Facebook use

Adolescence is a critical developmental period, marked by an increased importance of the peer group (Brown & Larson, 2009; Pombeni, Kirchler, & Palmonari, 1990). During this stage of life, adolescents rely more and more on their peers and less on their parents. Peer networks expand and interactions with peers become more intimate (Steinberg, 2005). As a result, peers become primary sources of social support (Bokhorst, Sumter, & Westenberg, 2010). Adolescents in particular feel a strong need to affiliate with their peers and belong to their peers, as well as to feel popular among their peers. According to SDT (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Ryan & Deci, 2000), adolescents, and people more generally, seek to gratify their need to feel socially connected with others. In this vein, scholars have suggested that SNSs may be excellent tools for adolescents to gratify their need to belong (Nadkarni & Hofmann, 2012) and their need for popularity (Utz et al., 2012). This is very likely, since media connect adolescents to their peers and contribute to their socialization with peers (Arnett, 1995; Suoninen, 2001).

First, indications exist that young people's need to belong is associated with an increased use of Facebook. More specifically, studies found empirical support for a link between individuals' need to belong and willingness to join a SNS (Gangadharbatla, 2008), the preference for passive browsing on SNSs (Reich & Vorderer, 2013), and the disclosure of more intimate information in status updates (Winter et al., 2014). Second, indications exist that adolescents' need for popularity is associated with an increased Facebook use. In particular, research reported a positive relationship between individuals' need for popularity and online self-disclosure (Christofides, Muise, & Desmarais, 2009; Utz et al., 2012) as well as with various SNS behaviors, including socializing behaviors on SNSs and routine SNS use (Utz et al., 2012). Based on SDT (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Ryan & Deci, 2000) and evidence from previous studies (Utz et al., 2012; Winter et al., 2014), we hypothesize that:

H1: Adolescents' need to belong is positively associated with

adolescents' Facebook use.

H2: Adolescents' need for popularity is positively associated with adolescents' Facebook use.

1.2. The mediating role of adolescents' fear of missing out

One of the mechanisms that has been proposed to link individuals' social needs with their engagement on SNSs is individuals' fear of missing out (FoMO; Przybylski et al., 2013). Individuals who fear to miss out on social opportunities want to stay continually connected with others and updated about what others are doing (Przybylski et al., 2013). Based on SDT (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Ryan & Deci, 2000), Przybylski et al. (2013) argue that deficits in psychological need satisfaction may predict a fear of missing out. Adolescents' fear to miss out on events, in turn, likely drives their Facebook use, as Facebook enables adolescents to stay continually connected with their peers (Shapiro & Margolin, 2013).

In line with these assumptions, studies have found empirical evidence for the role of FoMO as the mediating mechanism that explains the relationships of adults' and college students' needs with their engagement in social media (Alt, 2015; Przybylski et al., 2013). For instance, in a sample of adults, Przybylski et al. (2013) found that FoMO was the mechanism linking adults' need satisfaction with social media engagement. More specifically, adults who experienced less need satisfaction experienced higher overall levels of FoMO, which, in turn, was associated with seeking out social media engagement. More recently, Alt (2015) confirmed the evidence for the mediating role of FoMO, as she found support for a mediating role of FoMO in the relationship between college students' academic motivations and social media engagement.

In line with the premises of SDT (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Ryan & Deci, 2000) and based on evidence accumulated by previous studies (Alt, 2015; Przybylski et al., 2013), it can be assumed that FoMO mediates the relationships between adolescents' social needs and Facebook use. Therefore, we hypothesize that:

H3: Adolescents' fear of missing out (FoMO) mediates the relationships of need to belong and need for popularity with Facebook use.

1.3. The relationships of adolescents' fear of missing out with adolescents' Facebook related stress

According to the social selection hypothesis (Hurst, 2007), emotional problems negatively affect individuals' social position or factors associated with one's social position, including stressful life events. In line with this hypothesis, Kim, Conger, Elder, and Lorenz (2011) found that anxiety symptoms predicted higher levels of stressful life events among adolescents. Based on the premises of the social selection hypothesis (Hurst, 2007) and empirical evidence (e.g., Kim et al., 2011), we expect that FoMO may predict higher levels of perceived stress related to Facebook use among adolescents.

First, anxiety is an important component of FoMO, as FoMO refers to fears, worries, and anxieties people have about missing out (Przybylski et al., 2013). In this respect, Rosen, Whaling, Carrier, Cheever, and Rokkum (2013) found support for a relationship between anxiety and not being able to check in with various technologies. In addition, Cheever, Rosen, Carrier, and Chavez (2014) found an association between anxiety and not being able to use wireless mobile devices. Because FoMO is closely related to anxiety and anxiety is often associated with feelings of stress among adolescents (e.g., Kim et al., 2011), it is very likely that adolescents'