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Exploring the role of positive metacognitions in explaining the association between the fear of missing out and social media addiction

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Title of the manuscript: Exploring the role of positive metacognitions in explaining the association between the fear of missing out and social media addiction

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Abstract

The present study aimed to investigate: a) the contribution of the fear of missing out (FoMO) in explaining social media problematic use taking also into account the fear of being negatively evaluated and the perception of low self-presentational skills; b) the mediating role of positive metacognitions about social media use in the relationship between FoMO and social media problematic use. A sample of 579 undergraduates was recruited (54.6% F; mean age = 22.39 $\pm$ 2.82). Among females, the assessed structural model produced good fit to the data [χ^2= 101.11, *df*= 52, $p < 0.001$; *RMSEA* =.05 (*90% C.I.* =.04–.07), *CFI* = .98, *SRMR* = .05]. FoMO and self-presentational skills were both directly and indirectly associated with social media problematic use through the mediation of positive metacognitions. Fear of negative evaluation was not associated with social media problematic use. Among males, FoMO had both a direct and an indirect effect on social media problematic use mediated by positive metacognitions. The fear of negative evaluation and self-presentational skills were only indirectly associated with social media problematic use through positive metacognitions. The assessed structural model produced good fit to the data [χ^2= 98.02, *df*= 55, $p < 0.001$; *RMSEA* =.05 (*90% C.I.* =.04–.07), *CFI* = .98, *SRMR* = .07]. The present study confirmed the role of FoMO with respect to social media problematic use and highlighted for the first time the mediating role of positive metacognitions in this relationship.

Keywords: metacognitions; fear of missing out; fear of negative evaluation; self-presentational skills; social media addiction

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