

Fear of Missing Out on Social Networking Sites: Associations with Life Satisfaction, Problematic Social Media Use, Depressive Symptoms and Phubbing in Young Adulthood

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INTRODUCTION: Social networking sites have become an integral part of everyday life. Their use is closely linked to the phenomena of FoMO (fear of missing out), phubbing, depressive symptoms, life satisfaction and problematic social media use. The main aims of this research project were to examine factors associated with the FoMO and to explore how FoMO relates to social networking site use among young adults in the Czech Republic. **METHODS:** Online data were collected from 892 Czech participants in young adulthood aged 18–35 years using self-assessment methods: the Fear of Missing Out Scale (FoMOs), the Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS), the Bergen Social Media Addiction Scale (BSMAS), the Phubbing Scale (PS) and the Scale of Depresivity (SDDSS). Group differences were examined using Mann–Whitney U tests, with effect sizes calculated as area under the curve (AUC). Relationships between variables were analysed using Spearman's rank correlation, with 95% confidence intervals reported

for the correlation coefficients. **RESULTS:** Significant positive associations were observed between FoMO and phubbing ($p < 0.001$, $r = 0.34$), FoMO and problematic social media use ($p < 0.001$, $r = 0.52$), FoMO and depresivity ($p < 0.001$, $r = 0.34$). In contrast, a significant negative association was observed between FoMO and life satisfaction ($p < 0.001$, $r = -0.60$). A relationship was also identified between FoMO and the intensity of social networking site use. Higher FoMO was associated with an earlier onset of use, a greater number of profiles, and more time spent on social networking sites.

CONCLUSIONS: Overall, the findings of the present study highlight the importance of cautious and mindful use of social networking sites. Further active research in this area is recommended in order to expand the current evidence base.

Keywords | Social networking sites – Fear of Missing Out – Phubbing – Young adulthood – Cyberpsychology

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1 INTRODUCTION

Social networking sites have become an integral part of the everyday lives of billions of people worldwide (Oberl, 2022). They are platforms whose use can influence individuals' psychological functioning in both positive and negative ways (Ulvi et al., 2022, Yang & Feng, 2024). Recent evidence suggests that the associations between social media use and psychological well-being may differ between the pandemic and post pandemic periods (Zhang et al., 2026). On one hand, they can be used for communication, social connection, education and entertainment (Gudka et al., 2023; Roberts & David, 2020). On the other hand, the scholarly literature has expressed increasing concern about potential adverse effects associated with addictive patterns of social networking site use (Kopecký & Krejčí, 2023; Suchá et al., 2024b) and with well-being (Yang & Feng, 2024).

Fear of missing out (FoMO) is one phenomenon associated with negative impacts on individuals. FoMO is defined as a form of social anxiety arising from the perception that others are having rewarding experiences from which one is absent (Przybylski et al., 2013). Individuals who experience FoMO often feel a strong need to remain constantly connected to social networking sites so that they do not miss updates about their peers' activities (Tanhan et al., 2022). According to Wan and Zhou (2025), FoMO can affect almost anyone. International studies have reported associations between FoMO and excessive social networking site use (Kılınçel et al., 2025), anxiety (Desai, 2023), depression (Sommantico et al., 2023), poorer social relationships (Patani & Kiran, 2023), loneliness (Kılınçel et al., 2025), increased substance use (Crawford et al., 2024) and lower self-esteem (Servidio et al., 2024).

Social networking sites provide constant access to information and opportunities, which may reinforce FoMO by increasing individuals' awareness of experiences in which they are not participating (David & Roberts, 2023). Excessive social networking site use may represent a maladaptive coping strategy through which individuals attempt to regulate negative emotions associated with FoMO (Flack et al., 2024). In the long term, however, excessive use has been linked to problematic patterns of social media use and addiction-like behaviours (Brailovskaia et al., 2023). Problematic social media use has also been linked to problematic mobile phone use and the phenomenon of phubbing. Phubbing refers to behaviour in which an individual, rather than fully engaging in face-to-face social interaction, directs their attention to their mobile phone, thereby disrupting the natural flow of communication (Karadağ et al., 2015). Recent research has identified fear of missing out and problematic smartphone use as important predictors of phubbing behaviour (Paul, 2024).

The phenomenon of FoMO is currently one of the key factors examined in relation to excessive social networking site use (Kılınçel et al., 2025; Servidio et al., 2022). It is an increasingly widespread phenomenon and has become the focus of numerous international studies (Brailovskaia et al., 2023). Research has also addressed other constructs that are related to FoMO, including the above-mentioned excessive use of social networking sites (Šmahaj et al., 2022), phubbing (Arenz & Schnauber-Stockmann, 2024), depressive symptoms (Li et al., 2023), life

satisfaction (Ansari et al., 2024) and many others. Although these phenomena have been extensively investigated internationally, far fewer empirical studies are available in the Czech Republic.

An example of research focusing on the online environment is the study by Suchá et al. (2024a), which examines problematic internet use among adolescents in the Czech Republic and Slovakia. The findings show that more than 40% of Czech respondents exhibit at least a mild form of internet addiction. Nevertheless, both internationally and in the Czech Republic, there remains a lack of sustained, systematic research that would track the relationships among the above-mentioned phenomena in cyberspace.

Few of the studies mentioned also focus on young adults, even though they represent the largest user group on social networking sites (MediaGuru, 2023) and are therefore among the groups most at risk of excessive social media use (Shannon et al., 2022). This cohort has grown up in an environment characterised by the widespread availability of information and communication technologies, making digital technologies an integral part of their everyday lives (Huang et al., 2023).

As noted above, the present study focuses specifically on young adults in the Czech Republic, an important and highly engaged group of social networking site users. It examines both selected factors (FoMO, phubbing, depression and life satisfaction) and individuals' user habits on social networking sites. By exploring the relationships between FoMO, several psychological and behavioural variables, and selected characteristics of social networking site use, the study contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of FoMO among young adults in the Czech Republic. It is hoped that the findings will inspire further research in this area.

2 METHODS

2.1 Instruments

Data were collected using an online questionnaire survey Vyplňto.cz between 8 October 2024 and 1 January 2025. Participants were recruited through convenience sampling (i.e. self-selection) via social networking sites, namely Instagram, Facebook, Facebook Messenger, WhatsApp and Twitter. The streaming platform Twitch was also used for recruitment. Additional participants may also have been recruited through snowball sampling, as respondents were encouraged to share the questionnaire with others. The test battery included a questionnaire assessing the intensity of social networking site use and the following standardised self-assessment questionnaires:

- **Fear of Missing Out Scale (FoMOs) (Przybylski et al., 2013)**

This is a 10-item self-assessment scale measuring various aspects of FoMO using a five-point Likert-type response format, where 1 = strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree. The items reflect common situations related to fear of missing out. Item

scores range from 1 to 5, with higher scores indicating higher levels of experienced FoMO. The Czech version used in the present study was based on the translation by Lištiaková (2023), which in turn drew on an earlier Czech translation by Glaser (2018). The scale demonstrates high internal consistency, with Cronbach's alpha reported to range from 0.82 to 0.90 (Przybylski et al., 2013). The scale was selected because it directly assesses individual differences in FoMO, the central construct examined in the present study.

● **Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS) (Diener, 1985; Pavot & Diener, 2008)**

The primary purpose of the scale is to provide a simple and quick measure of an individual's subjective well-being (Diener, 1985). The SWLS comprises five statements rated on a seven-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree. The items are designed to capture overall satisfaction with one's life rather than satisfaction with specific life domains. The total score is calculated by summing responses across all five items; higher scores indicate greater life satisfaction (Hanzlová & Roudenská, 2024). The SWLS was selected to assess global life satisfaction as an indicator of subjective well-being in relation to FoMO.

● **Bergen Social Media Addiction Scale (BSMAS) (Andreassen et al., 2016)**

The Bergen Social Media Addiction Scale (BSMAS) was developed on the basis of the Bergen Facebook Addiction Scale (BFAS) (Andreassen et al., 2016). It is grounded in six core symptoms of behavioural addictions as delineated by Griffiths (2005). The scale is used to assess problematic social media use over the previous 12 months. The BSMAS comprises six items rated on a five-point Likert-type scale, where 1 = very rarely and 5 = very often. Total scores range from 6 to 30, with higher scores indicating a greater degree of problematic social media use. A Czech adaptation of the BSMAS was evaluated by Suchá et al. (2024) in a sample of 783 Czech adolescents and demonstrated good internal consistency, with Cronbach's alpha reported as 0.85. The BSMAS was selected because it specifically assesses problematic social media use, one of the key behavioural factors examined in the present study.

● **Phubbing Scale (PS) (Karadağ et al., 2015)**

The Phubbing Scale (PS) comprises 10 items rated on a five-point Likert-type scale, where 1 = never and 5 = always. Higher total scores indicate higher levels of phubbing (Karadağ et al., 2016). As no Czech version of the Phubbing Scale was available, the original English version was translated into Czech. The translation was reviewed by six individuals with C2-level proficiency in English and subsequently compared with the original version, with minor wording adjustments made where necessary. The Czech version was then pilot tested to assess the clarity and appropriateness of the item wording. Cronbach's alpha was 0.76, indicating good internal consistency. The scale was selected because it directly assesses phubbing behaviour, one of the behavioural factors examined in relation to FoMO in the present study.

● **Scale of Depresivity by Dolejš, Skopal and Suchá (SDDSS) (Dolejš et al., 2018)**

This scale is a self-assessment instrument designed to evaluate an individual's current psychological state rather than a stable personality trait. It comprises 20 items focusing on how the respondent feels. Responses are rated on a four-point Likert-type scale, where 1 = strongly disagree and 4 = strongly agree. Total scores range from 20 to 80, with higher scores indicating higher levels of depressive symptoms. The scale demonstrates high internal consistency, with Cronbach's alpha reported to range from 0.87 to 0.93, supporting the instrument's reliability (Dolejš et al., 2018). The SDDSS was selected because it assesses current depressive symptomatology, making it well suited to examining the relationship between FoMO and depressive symptoms in the present study.

2.2 Participants

Although social networking sites are used by people across almost all age groups (Zědo et al., 2020), young adults constitute the most highly represented user group (MediaGuru, 2023; Statista, 2024b, 2024c, 2024d). For this reason, one inclusion criterion was that respondents fell within the 18–35 age range. A further key criterion was that respondents were active users of social networking sites, reflecting the nature of the phenomena under investigation. Eligibility was automatically verified at the beginning of the online questionnaire using branching logic, which prevented respondents who did not meet the age criterion or were not active social site users from completing the survey.

The final sample consisted of 892 respondents aged 18–35 years. The mean age was 24.9 years (SD ±4.9), with the largest proportion of respondents aged 20–24 years. The sample consisted predominantly of women (73%, $n = 651$), while men accounted for approximately one quarter of respondents (27%, $n = 241$). Students were the largest subgroup (50.5%, $n = 451$), followed by employed participants (41.5%, $n = 371$).

As participants were recruited using a convenience sampling, the sample cannot be considered fully representative of the general population of young adults in the Czech Republic. In particular, women and students were overrepresented, which should be taken into account when interpreting the findings. Moreover, the voluntary nature of participation and recruitment through social networking sites may have introduced self-selection bias, potentially limiting the generalisability of the findings.

The study was conducted in accordance with the ethical standards and principles set out in the ethical code issued by the European Federation of Psychologists' Associations (EFPA, 2005); the rules of the Czech-Moravian Psychological Society (ČMPS, 2017) were also followed. Before completing the test battery, respondents were informed about the aims of the research, the voluntary nature of participation, and the processing of personal data in accordance with Regulation (EU) 2016/679. Participants were also informed about the approximate completion time, the anonymous nature of the survey, and their right to withdraw from the study at any point without providing a reason. By pro-

ceeding to the questionnaire, participants were considered to have provided informed consent. Given the nature of the questionnaire survey, respondents were not exposed to any foreseeable risks. They were also offered the opportunity to contact the research team with any questions, comments or feedback.

2.3 Data Analysis

Data were collected over a four-month period, yielding a total of 965 completed responses. During data cleaning, 73 respondents were excluded due to failure to meet the inclusion criteria, substantial item non-response, or deliberately invalid answers. An effort was made to retain as many responses as possible; therefore, the total number of respondents differs slightly across the individual measures. These differences arose because not all respondents completed the full test battery. If a respondent failed to answer a single item within a given measure, mean imputation was applied based on that respondent's average score on the remaining items of the same measure. This approach is consistent with the recommendation of Petrúška (2015), who notes that imputing missing data helps preserve as much information as possible and reduces bias in the analyses compared with listwise deletion.

The data matrix was then transferred to Statistica 14.0, where the measures were analysed first, followed by the analysis of results. For all measures, reliability was assessed by calculating Cronbach's alpha (Cronbach, 1951). George and Mallery (2016) state that Cronbach's alpha values of ≥ 0.90 are considered excellent, 0.80–0.89 good, and 0.70–0.79 acceptable. The results indicated that all scales demonstrated acceptable reliability. The FoMOs ($\alpha = 0.74$), BSMAS ($\alpha = 0.79$) and PS ($\alpha = 0.76$) showed acceptable reliability in line with common psychometric standards. The SWLS ($\alpha = 0.87$) achieved higher with good internal consistency. The highest value was observed for the SDDSS ($\alpha = 0.91$), indicating excellent reliability. These values are presented in Table 1.

Table 1 | Descriptive statistics and internal consistency of the study measures

	FOMOs	BSMAS	PS	SWLS	SDDSS
N (completed)	892	892	891	882	873
Mean	28.66	14.28	25.83	21.92	38.9
Median	29	14	26	23	38
Minimum	10	6	11	5	20
Maximum	48	30	50	35	74
Variance	47.88	24.18	36.57	39.02	125.01
SD	6.92	4.92	6.05	6.25	11.18
Skewness	0.02	0.49	0.23	-0.43	0.41
Kurtosis	-0.37	-0.17	0.28	-0.3	-0.34
Cronbach's alpha	0.74	0.79	0.76	0.87	0.91

Deviations from normality were assessed using the Shapiro–Wilk test, the Kolmogorov–Smirnov test, and the Lilliefors test (Shapiro & Wilk, 1965; Lilliefors, 1967). Given the distributional characteristics of the data, non-parametric procedures were

used for subsequent analyses. The distributional characteristics of the measures are reported in Table 2. The relevant scoring manuals were then consulted to evaluate the measures. None of the instruments contained reverse-coded items. Correlations between the total scores of the individual scales were calculated using Spearman's correlation coefficient (Spearman, 1904). In addition, Mann–Whitney U tests (Mann & Whitney, 1947) were used to compare differences in the number of social media accounts, the age at which respondents created their first social networking site account, and time spent on social networking sites on workdays and non-workdays.

Table 2 | Tests of normality for study measures

	Shapiro-Wilk W	Shapiro-Wilk p	K-S d	K-S p	Lilliefors p
FoMOs	0.99	<0.01	0.05	<0.05	<0.01
BSMAS	0.97	<0.01	0.08	<0.01	<0.01
PS	0.99	<0.01	0.05	<0.05	<0.01
SDDSS	0.98	<0.01	0.07	<0.01	<0.01
SWLS	0.98	<0.01	0.09	<0.01	<0.01

The analyses were exploratory in nature and were conducted to examine associations between FoMO and selected psychological and behavioural factors, as well as characteristics of social networking site use. Given the exploratory aim of the study, no correction for multiple comparisons was applied. The results should therefore be interpreted with caution.

3 RESULTS

3.1 Social networking site use in relation to FoMO

The results in this section describe patterns of social networking site use. The largest proportion of respondents created their first social media profile at the age of 13 years (22.5%); however, a substantial share (30.6%) began using social networking sites even earlier, with the age of first use ranging from 6 to 26 years. On average, respondents reported being registered on 5.3 social networking sites. The most frequently used platforms were Facebook/Messenger (over 98% of respondents), Instagram, WhatsApp and YouTube, whereas Snapchat, TikTok and X were less commonly used. On weekdays, respondents spent an average of 2 hours and 44 minutes on social networking sites (range: 0–9 hours), while on non-working days the mean time increased to 3 hours and 30 minutes (range: 0–12 hours per day).

A statistically significant difference in FoMO scores was found between the number of social networking sites used and FoMO ($p < 0.001$), with users who had more profiles reporting higher FoMO. However, the effect was small ($AUC = 0.2525$), likely also due to the marked imbalance in the sizes of the groups compared, which limits its practical significance.

A significant difference in FoMO scores was also observed between the age at which the first profile was created and FoMO ($p < 0.001$). Respondents who began using social networking sites

before the age of 13 reported higher FoMO, with a moderate group difference (AUC = 0.3898). This finding indicates that earlier initiation of social networking site use was associated with higher FoMO in the present sample.

It was further shown that the amount of time spent on social networking sites was associated with differences in FoMO, scores both on weekdays ($p < 0.001$; AUC = 0.4066) and on non-working days ($p < 0.001$; AUC = 0.3807). Individuals who spent four hours or more per day on social networking sites reported higher FoMO regardless of day type.

The effect of active content sharing was also statistically significant ($p = 0.031$), but the effect size was small (AUC = 0.4265). Active users therefore reported higher FoMO than passive users. However, the effect size was smaller than that observed for time spent on social networking sites, suggesting that, within the present sample, time spent on these platforms was more strongly associated with FoMO than active content sharing. These associations are presented in Table 3.

3.2 Correlational analysis of the measures

A further aim was to examine in greater depth the factors associated with fear of missing out among young adults, with a particular focus on phubbing, depressive symptoms, addictive social media use and overall life satisfaction. To analyse the relationships among these variables, Spearman's correlation coefficient was used. The correlation results for the individual measures, together with their 95% confidence intervals, are presented in Table 4.

A strong positive correlation was identified between FoMO and problematic social media use ($r = 0.52$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that greater problematic social media use was associated with higher levels of FoMO. The BSMAS was also strongly and positively correlated with phubbing ($r = 0.50$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that those who reported more problematic social media use also reported higher levels of phubbing.

A further significant finding was the negative association between FoMO and life satisfaction ($r = -0.22$, $p < 0.001$). This

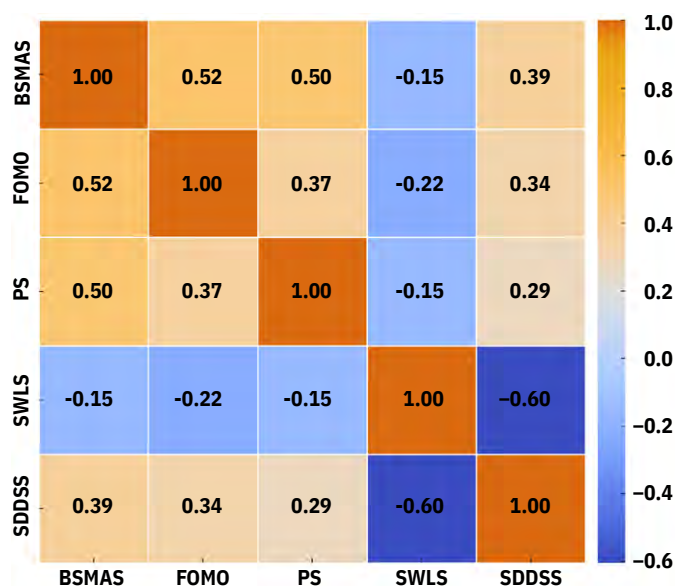
Table 3 | Mann–Whitney U tests for differences in FoMO by social networking site use characteristics

By number of social networking sites used					
	U	p	N ≥ 1	N < 1	AUC
FoMOs	5.467	<0.001	866	25	0.253
By age at which the first social networking site profile was created					
	U	p	N < 13	N ≥ 13	AUC
FoMOs	65,867.5	<0.001	273	619	0.390
By time spent on social networking sites on weekdays					
	U	p	N ≥ 4 hours	N < 4 hours	AUC
FoMOs	56,071.5	<0.001	199	693	0.407
By time spent on social networking sites on non-working days					
	U	p	N ≥ 4 hours	N < 4 hours	AUC
FoMOs	72.567	<0.001	355	537	0.381
By activity on social networking sites					
	U	p	N aktivní	N pasivní	AUC
FoMOs	20.297	0.031	57	835	0.427

Table 4 | Spearman correlations between study variables

Variable pairing	n	Spearman's ρ	t(N-2)	p value	95% CI
FOMO & BSMAS	892	0.52	18.1235	<0.001	[0.47; 0.57]
FOMO & PS	891	0.38	12.0509	<0.001	[0.32; 0.44]
FOMO & SWLS	882	-0.22	-6.7098	<0.001	[-0.28; -0.16]
FOMO & SDDSS	873	0.34	10.7747	<0.001	[0.28; 0.40]
BSMAS & PS	891	0.50	17.3449	<0.001	[0.45; 0.55]
BSMAS & SWLS	882	-0.16	-4.6733	<0.001	[-0.22; -0.10]
BSMAS & SDDSS	873	0.39	12.6047	<0.001	[0.33; 0.45]
PS & SWLS	882	-0.15	-4.5904	<0.001	[-0.21; -0.09]
PS & SDDSS	873	0.29	9.0327	<0.001	[0.23; 0.35]
SDDSS & SWLS	873	-0.60	-22.6250	<0.001	[-0.64; -0.56]

Figure 1 | Spearman correlation matrix for the study variables (FoMOs, BSMAS, PS, SWLS and SDDSS)



indicates that individuals with higher levels of fear of missing out reported lower life satisfaction. However, the association is weak. Similarly, negative correlations were observed between problematic social media use and life satisfaction ($r = -0.16$, $p < 0.001$) and between phubbing and life satisfaction ($r = -0.15$, $p < 0.001$). Taken together, these findings indicate that FoMO, problematic social media use and phubbing were associated with lower reported life satisfaction. In each case, the associations were weak ($r < 0.30$).

FoMO and phubbing were also associated with higher levels of depressive symptoms. A positive, moderate correlation was found between FoMO and depressive symptoms ($r = 0.34$, $p < 0.001$). Phubbing was also positively correlated with depressive symptoms ($r = 0.29$, $p < 0.001$), although this association was weak. These findings indicate that higher levels of FoMO and phubbing were associated with more pronounced depressive symptoms. A strong negative correlation was observed between depressive symptoms and life satisfaction ($r = -0.60$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that higher levels of depressive symptoms were associated with lower life satisfaction.

The correlational analysis indicates that FoMO, phubbing and problematic social media use are closely interrelated and are associated with lower life satisfaction. The results also suggest that higher levels of FoMO and phubbing are linked to higher levels of depressive symptoms. To illustrate the relationships among the variables more clearly, a Spearman correlation matrix is provided as Figure 1.

4 DISCUSSION

Significant associations were identified between social networking site use and levels of FoMO. Higher FoMO was reported by individuals who began using social networking sites before the age of 13, as well as by those who had a larger number of so-

cial media accounts. Active content sharing was also associated with higher FoMO, although the effect was weaker. Overall, these findings suggest that earlier and more intensive social networking site use is associated with higher levels of FoMO. The stronger association with time spent on social networking sites than with active content sharing suggests that the overall intensity of engagement may be more closely related to FoMO than the specific type of online activity.

A strong association was also confirmed between time spent on social networking sites and levels of FoMO: respondents who spent four hours or more per day on social networking sites reported markedly higher FoMO, both on weekdays and at weekends. This finding is consistent with the study by Li and colleagues (2022), who report that greater intensity of social media use is associated with higher FoMO. The observed association is consistent with previous suggestions of a potentially bidirectional relationship between FoMO and intensive social media use. However, the cross-sectional design of the present study does not allow the directionality of this relationship to be determined. In the present study, a strong positive correlation was also observed between FoMO and problematic social media use ($r = 0.52$, $p < 0.001$). Together, these findings indicate a close association between FoMO and intensive or problematic social media use.

The study further identified a significant association between FoMO and phubbing ($p < 0.001$, $r = 0.38$). This finding is consistent with Paul (2024), who identified FoMO and smartphone addiction as significant predictors of phubbing behaviour. It is also supported by a meta-analysis by Ansari et al. (2024), which found a significant positive association between FoMO and phubbing across previous studies.

The analyses further indicated that FoMO was significantly associated with depressive symptoms ($p < 0.001$, $r = 0.34$). Individuals with higher levels of FoMO reported more pronounced depressive symptoms. Ibrahim and colleagues (2022) likewise reported a positive correlation between FoMO and depressive symptoms. Similarly, Chin and Xie (2025) found that higher FoMO was associated with more pronounced depressive symptoms.

The findings indicated that FoMO, problematic social media use and phubbing were associated with lower life satisfaction. This pattern is consistent with the results reported by Ozimek and colleagues (2024), who found that higher FoMO was associated with greater stress, which in turn was associated with lower life satisfaction. Overall, these findings further support an association between FoMO-related experiences and lower perceived life satisfaction.

Taken together, these findings contribute to a better understanding of FoMO and its associations with problematic social media use and psychological well-being among young adults in the Czech Republic. However, the rapidly evolving digital environment and differences across social networking sites should be considered when interpreting the findings. Future research should therefore examine whether these associations vary across specific platforms.

4.1 Limitations

Data were collected online via social networking sites, which entails both advantages and disadvantages. Distributing questionnaires through social media is fast and efficient, however, this approach may also result in lower response rates. Given the online setting, it was not possible to control important factors such as a quiet environment, sufficient time to complete the test battery, or reliable internet access. Participants also had no opportunity to ask questions about any unclear items while completing the questionnaires. If any uncertainties arose, comments could only be provided at the very end. It is therefore possible that misunderstanding of particular items contributed to premature discontinuation of the test battery.

All variables were measured using self-report questionnaires at a single time point. This design may be susceptible to common method variance and socially desirable responding, despite the anonymous and voluntary nature of participation. In addition, reported time spent on social networking sites and age at first use were based on self-report and retrospective recall, which may have resulted in inaccuracies and recall bias.

The use of voluntary convenience sampling and recruitment primarily through social networking sites may also have introduced self-selection bias, as individuals who were more active online or more interested in the topic may have been more likely to participate.

A further limitation was the unequal gender distribution in the sample, with substantially more women (73%, $n = 651$) than men (27%, $n = 241$). Although efforts were made to obtain a sufficiently large and broadly representative sample, this imbalance may have influenced the findings. Twenge and Martin (2020) concluded that women spend more time on social media than men. This may partly explain the higher proportion of female respondents, as women are likely to be more active on the social networking sites through which participants were recruited.

5 CONCLUSIONS

This study examined the phenomenon of FoMO in relation to social networking site use, depressive symptoms, phubbing, life satisfaction and problematic social media use. The aims were to examine these associations and to improve understanding of FoMO and to explore its associations among young adults in the Czech Republic.

The analyses indicated that social networking site use was significantly associated with FoMO. Higher scores on the FoMOs were reported by respondents who began using social networking sites earlier and used them more intensively. Factors such as an early age of first profile creation (< 13 years), having a higher number of profiles (> 1), and active content sharing were associated with FoMO. Time spent on social networking sites showed a similar pattern: respondents who spent four hours or more per day on social networking sites reported markedly higher FoMO scores than those who spent less time, both on weekdays and on non-working days.

Significant positive associations were observed between FoMO and phubbing, FoMO and problematic social media use (BSMAS), and FoMO and depressive symptoms (SDDSS). By contrast, a significant negative association was found between FoMO and life satisfaction (SWLS). Sherry Turkle (2017) describes this dynamic as a vicious circle: the higher the level of FoMO, the more intensive the use of social networking sites, which paradoxically increases feelings of loneliness and reduces overall life satisfaction. However, the cross-sectional design of the present study does not allow conclusions to be drawn about causal or directional relationships.

Overall, the findings highlight the importance of cautious use of social networking sites. They contribute to the evidence on FoMO and its associations with social networking site use and related psychological and behavioural factors among young adults in the Czech Republic. Further follow-up research and expansion of the evidence base are considered beneficial. The results of this project may be applied in preventive programmes, in psychological counselling, and within clinical psychology.

Ethics approval and consent to participate

Already in the manuscript

Informed consent

Already in the manuscript

Consent for publication

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Data availability

Not applicable.

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Competing interests

The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

Authors' contributions

Hrušková: Investigation; Formal Analysis; Data Curation; Writing – Original Draft; Project Administration; Visualization
Dolejš: Conceptualization; Methodology, Writing – Review & Editing; Supervision; Funding Acquisition
All authors reviewed and approved the final version of the manuscript.

Declaration of generative AI and AI-assisted technologies

During the preparation of this manuscript, the authors used DeepL for initial translation. The translated text was then subsequently thoroughly reviewed, edited, and revised by a professional translator.

Trial/study/review registration

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