

RESEARCH TRENDS IN FEAR OF MISSING OUT (FOMO) AND MENTAL HEALTH: A BIBLIOMETRIC ANALYSIS (2016-2026)

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Abstract: *Fear of Missing Out, or FoMO, has become an emerging topic in academic circles, especially because of its strong ties to social media and its negative impact on mental health. Even though there has been a surge in research on this subject, it still lacks a thorough overview of the global research landscape, collaboration patterns, and the key themes surrounding FoMO and mental health. Therefore, this bibliometric analysis focuses on the growth of publications, international collaborations, and the main research themes. A total of 79 documents sourced from the Scopus database were identified and published between 2016 and 2026 using a structured screening process. VOSviewer was utilized to examine publication trends, co-authorship networks among countries, and patterns of keyword co-occurrence. The results show consistent and significant rise in publications about FoMO and mental health during the study period, indicating a growing academic interest in this area. The co-authorship analysis across 50 countries revealed 16 nations that met the minimum publication threshold, showcasing active international collaboration. The United States, China, India, Canada, and the United Kingdom stood out as key contributors. The keyword co-occurrence analysis identified 55 high-frequency keywords, which were organized into three main clusters, with “fear of missing out” being the most prominent term. Other notable keywords included social media, anxiety, depression, addiction, adolescent, adult, psychology, and young adult, underscoring the close relationship between FoMO, social media usage, addictive behaviours, and mental health outcomes. The findings highlight the pivotal role of social media use and*

addiction in shaping FoMO experiences and psychological health, while also revealing some gaps in methodology and geography within the literature.

Keywords: *FoMO, Fear of Missing Out, Bibliometric analysis, Mental Health, Intellectual Structure*

Introduction

The pervasive presence of digital technologies and social media platforms has led to the emergence of novel psychological phenomena, among which the "Fear of Missing Out" has drawn substantial scholarly interest owing to its clear repercussions on mental health (Liu et al., 2023). Platforms including Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and TikTok have become intricately integrated into individuals' daily lives, shaping the modalities through which people engage, cultivate relationships, and consume content (Anish et al., 2024). There existed approximately 4.62 billion social media users globally, constituting 58.4% of the worldwide population, thereby underscoring the pervasiveness of these platforms (Jaseel & Singh, 2026). In a similar vein, Emre, İ. E., & Köse (2025) discovered that there are 5.18 billion internet users globally, accounting for 64.6 percent of the global populace. Of this demographic, 4.8 billion, equivalent to 59.9 percent of the world's population, are social media users (Petrosyan, 2023). Ayaz (2024) further argued that FoMO is not merely a behavioural outcome of excessive social media usage, but also a psychologically reinforcing mechanism that sustains compulsive checking behaviours and emotional dependency on digital platforms. This suggests that FoMO functions as both a consequence and a driver of problematic social media engagement, thereby warranting deeper scholarly attention. Likewise, Emre and Köse (2025) highlighted the unprecedented global penetration of internet and social media usage, implying that FoMO has evolved into a widespread psychosocial phenomenon transcending geographical and demographic boundaries. However, their discussion primarily focused on statistical trends and usage prevalence, with limited emphasis on the intellectual development and thematic evolution of FoMO scholarship itself. Particularly, this scenario has engendered a heightened fear of missing significant developments among individuals belonging to the post-1990s generation (Wang et al., 2021).

While these platforms have conferred numerous advantages, including augmented connectivity and access to information, they have concurrently introduced novel challenges, particularly those associated with excessive usage and addiction (Pellegrino et al., 2022; Al-Samarraie et al., 2022). The phenomenon of social media addiction has emerged as a prominent area of apprehension, inciting extensive academic inquiry aimed at elucidating its underlying causes, ramifications, and prospective remedies. Numerous investigations have also examined the correlation between augmented social media engagement and various mental health afflictions, such as depressive disorders (McCrae et al., 2017), concerns regarding body image and disordered eating patterns (Holland & Tiggemann, 2016), as well as externalizing behavioral problems.

There's been a significant grow in academic interest surrounding FoMO (Kovan & Gülbahçe, 2026), but the research scene is still quite complex and a bit all over the place. Early studies primarily focused on mapping out the links between social media usage and FoMO experiences. However, recent work from 2024 and 2025 indicates that the field has made some impressive strides. Researchers are now digging deeper, moving past mere correlations to explore the underlying mechanisms at play. Current investigations are looking into how platforms like

TikTok and Instagram foster unique patterns of compulsive use (Covelli et al., 2025; Yüksel et al., 2025), as well as how issues like irrational procrastination and media multitasking can heighten online social anxiety (Wu et al., 2025). The methods used in research have also progressed, with scholars employing symptom-network analyses to uncover links between nomophobia and addiction, rather than just relying on overall scores (Zhang et al., 2025).

Despite this growing body of work, existing bibliometric studies on FoMO have largely remained descriptive in nature, primarily focusing on publication trends, citation patterns, and general thematic distributions without sufficiently capturing the evolving conceptual structure and emerging interdisciplinary linkages within the field. Furthermore, prior analyses have commonly aggregated findings across broad timeframes, thereby overlooking recent paradigm shifts shaped by platform-specific dynamics such as TikTok-driven engagement, post-pandemic behavioural changes, and the adoption of advanced analytical methodologies. Although several studies such as Utomo et al (2021), Celik et al (2023) and Martin et al (2024) have utilised VOSviewer to visualise research trends and keyword networks, these investigations have generally emphasised surface-level mapping rather than critically examining thematic evolution, intellectual structures, and collaborative research patterns within FoMO scholarship. Consequently, there remains a critical need for a more refined and up-to-date bibliometric investigation that not only maps the intellectual structure of FoMO research but also identifies emerging research fronts, methodological innovations, and underexplored thematic domains. Therefore, this study addresses these gaps by providing a comprehensive and temporally sensitive bibliometric analysis using VOSviewer visualisation techniques, offering deeper insights into the trajectory, transformation, and future directions of FoMO scholarship.

Therefore, the objectives of this study are to:

1. Identify the growth of FoMO and mental health research over the past decade.
2. Map the intellectual structure by identifying the most influential sources, authors, and collaborative networks globally.
3. Identify emerging research themes, specifically the shift toward platform-specific analysis and physiological outcomes of FoMO
4. Highlight research gaps to guide future empirical studies and clinical interventions.

Some questions were used during conducting the bibliometric analysis such as the following:

1. What is the publication trend of Fear of Missing Out (FoMO)-related mental health research from 2016 to 2026?
2. Which countries and institutions have produced the highest number of articles on Fear of Missing Out (FoMO)-related mental health research?
 1. Who are the authors that are most prolific and have the highest citation counts in Fear of Missing Out (FoMO)-related mental health research?
3. Which subject areas dominate the studies on Fear of Missing Out (FoMO)-related mental health research?
4. What are the trends in co-authorship and keywords in Fear of Missing Out (FoMO)-related mental health research?

Literature Review

Fear of Missing Out and Mental Health

The Fear of Missing Out has recently been conceptualized as a subject of investigation within the social sciences (Ayaz, 2024). Ayaz (2024) further emphasized that FoMO should not be interpreted solely as a temporary emotional reaction, but rather as a multidimensional psychological construct closely associated with digital dependency, social comparison, and emotional insecurity in online environments. This perspective broadens the conceptual understanding of FoMO beyond simple social anxiety and positions it as a central construct within contemporary digital behaviour studies. The Fear of Missing Out can be described as the perception of lacking certain experiences while witnessing that others engage in more pleasurable endeavours. Individuals who manifest a pronounced fear of missing out may harbour beliefs that others possess superior careers and partners and derive greater enjoyment from life than they themselves do. Consequently, this concept can also be delineated as a state of anxiety and apprehension induced by the perception of missing out on experiences (Duman and Ozkara, 2021; Bailey et al., 2018; Hodkinson, 2019). Although previous studies have extensively discussed the psychological consequences of FoMO, limited attention has been given to understanding how the FoMO research landscape itself has evolved over time (Liu et al., 2025; Thakur et al., 2025). Existing reviews are predominantly narrative in nature and lack comprehensive bibliometric mapping capable of identifying major thematic concentrations, influential publications, and emerging scholarly directions. Hence, this study addresses this gap by employing bibliometric and VOSviewer analyses to systematically evaluate the intellectual development of FoMO research.

The construct of FoMO, which emerged in the early 2000s and has been referenced in academic literature since that time, has evolved into a widely adopted term to characterize a phenomenon prevalent on social networking sites since 2010 (Gupta & Sharma, 2021), and it is typically associated with the engagement patterns of social media users (Przybylski et al., 2013). The FoMO concept is defined as “a pervasive apprehension that others might be having rewarding experiences from which one is absent” (Przybylski et al., 2013; Fioravanti et al., 2021). Research on FoMO has highlighted positive correlations with loneliness and depressive symptoms (Reer et al., 2019). FoMO is also linked to anxiety, with higher levels associated with increased anxiety severity (Dempsey et al., 2019; Elhai et al., 2019). Furthermore, FoMO negatively affects sleep habits (Scott & Woods, 2018) and is positively associated with increased alcohol consumption and related negative consequences among college students (Riordan et al., 2015). According to Self-Determination Theory (SDT), FoMO arises from unmet needs for competence, relatedness, and autonomy (Deci & Ryan, 1985). When these needs are not satisfied, maladaptive behaviors, like FoMO, can develop, especially in social media environments (Przybylski et al., 2013). Individuals with anxious attachment, due to unmet needs for affiliation or autonomy, are more likely to experience FoMO, which is linked to problematic social media use, including Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp (Błachnio & Przepiórka, 2025; Tandon et al., 2021). Recent studies by Boustead and Flack (2021) have explored how FoMO mediates the relationship between anxious attachment and problematic social media use and confirming FoMO’s mediating role (Liu & Ma, 2019).

Bibliometric Analysis

Bibliometric mapping has emerged as a crucial tool for diving into extensive research datasets, helping to uncover patterns and connections within specific fields. This method sheds light on trends in the knowledge base and evaluates the influence and interconnections of research. As

academic research continues to evolve, bibliometric analysis provides valuable insights into the scope, direction, and impact of scholarly work in various areas (Gupta et al., 2022; Alfouzan et al., 2023). Ayaz (2024) points out that bibliometrics measures author productivity, journal influence, geographic distribution of research, institutional contributions, and gaps in the literature across different fields. While traditional systematic reviews focus on synthesizing research findings, bibliometric analysis maps out the structural features of a field through a quantitative examination of publication metadata. This approach has proven especially effective for analyzing academic journal articles (Cao et al., 2021). Yi and Wen (2023) highlight that bibliometric methods rigorously investigate scientific data to track trends and spotlight emerging developments. Chen et al. (2024) further note that bibliometric analysis provides a systematic way to pinpoint prevailing trends, central themes, and key questions within specific research domains.

Unlike traditional qualitative reviews, bibliometric methods facilitate data-driven analysis that reveals research patterns, knowledge structures, collaboration networks, and emerging topics, offering theoretical insights that can steer the future growth of the field. This approach enables the visualization of research clusters, identification of influential authors and countries, and detection of keywords that signal future directions. By examining the trajectory of FoMO research from its conceptual roots to its current focus on network analysis, sleep quality in high-stress populations (Oliveira et al., 2024), and targeted interventions, this study aims to create a comprehensive roadmap of the domain.

Therefore, this bibliometric analysis aims to systematically map the evolution of research concerning FOMO and mental health, elucidating key trends, prominent themes, and the intellectual structure underpinning this interdisciplinary field (Azizan, 2024). As a subset of systematic literature reviews, bibliometric reviews need to develop, implement, and publish a rigorous and transparent review process (Paul et al., 2021). To achieve this, this study will employ a robust methodology involving an extensive review of scholarly articles, allowing for the identification of influential authors, pivotal publications, and emerging research fronts (Abas et al., 2023). This comprehensive approach intended to investigate the conceptual and disciplinary links between FOMO and mental health outcomes, thereby highlighting critical gaps and prospective directions for future investigations (Samsura & Rufaidah, 2025). Despite the proliferation of studies on FOMO since its conceptualization, a fragmented understanding of its antecedents, consequences, and theoretical underpinnings persists within the extant literature (Groenestein et al., 2024). This bibliometric analysis seeks to synthesize the scattered research to provide a coherent overview of the field, thereby offering a foundational resource for researchers and practitioners alike (UTOMO et al., 2021). Specifically, this study undertakes a comprehensive examination of publication trends, co-authorship networks, and keyword co-occurrence patterns to delineate the intellectual landscape of FOMO research as it intersects with mental health.

By analysing the historical trajectory of publications, this study will illuminate how the discourse around FOMO and mental health has evolved, identifying shifts in research focus and the emergence of new theoretical perspectives (Azizan, 2024). Furthermore, the identification of prominent authors and institutions will highlight key contributors and their collaborative networks, showcasing the collaborative nature of this research domain (Abas et al., 2023). Moreover, an in-depth analysis of keyword co-occurrence will reveal the thematic clusters and intellectual linkages that define the core concepts and methodologies employed in studying FOMO within the context of mental health.

Research Methodology

Design

This study aimed to analyze and assess literature published in the field of FoMO and mental health that was published between 2016 and 2026. The study's main goals are to assess fear of missing out and its association with mental health research and greatly expand the corpus of already published works. The Scopus database was used to retrieve articles in this topic. The year 2016-2026 was chosen as the study period as the issue of fear of missing out start emerge on 2014. VOSviewer was employed to visualize the data. Using common bibliometric measures, the growth of publications, citation analysis, and research output were displayed. This study provides valuable insights into the evolving context of FoMO and mental health research by examining highly cited papers, identifying countries with significant productivity in this topic research, identifying influential journals, highlighting research areas, tracking annual data, and identifying prolific authors in the field. Future researchers will find it useful in comprehending the research area and in determining the best areas to focus their efforts.

Eligibility criteria

The criteria for including and excluding research papers for the systematic review are presented in Table 1. Research studies have only been included if these conditions are met. Thus, from Table 1, it can infer that the articles and documents relating to the field of social sciences, business, management and accounting, and arts, and humanities are in the final study.

Bibliographic database

This analysis is centered on publications from 2016 to 2026, aiming to reflect the latest developments in this topic. The articles were collected in January 2026 from the Scopus database, which features research papers published between 2016 and 2026. Data on the fear of missing out and mental health were sourced from Scopus, a bibliographic database that includes around 426 titles across various fields such as psychology, social science, medicine, computer science, arts, and humanities. Additionally, Scopus is the largest database compared to PubMed or Web of Science, making it a popular choice among researchers (Schotten et al., 2017; Montoya et al., 2018; Hosseiniara, 2023). Table 1 itemized the final articles (79 articles) that meet the requirements from the initial results of 426 prior the requirements that set by the authors.

Table 1. Criteria for Selecting Research Paper

Access type	Document type	Subject area	Publication year	Number of publications
Open access	Article	Social Sciences	2016	1
		Business, Management and Accounting	2017	0
			2018	1
			2019	1
		Arts and humanities	2020	6
			2021	4
			2022	10
			2023	15
			2024	11
			2025	29
		2026	1	

Source: Authors (2026)

Search strategy and validity

One method used to find journal publications was to search for them using the term “FOMO” or “FoMO” in the author’s keywords or the title abstract. Since not all publications in the field of mental health could be found in this manner, the second strategy was employed. Four terms or acronyms most frequently used to refer to “the mental health” are stress, depression, anxiety or psychological distress (WHO, 2011). In this review, however, the terms employed were expanded to include “stress” OR “depression” OR “anxiety” OR “psychological distress”. The time frame for each strategy was established between 2016 and 2026, and the sources should only be journal papers. To get the most articles returned, the "OR" operator was applied. In this method, any documents that might contain the terms we utilized were searched to guarantee a thorough examination along with a word related to any area of health while adhering to the guidelines for analysis and conclusions provided by the preferred reporting items for systematic reviews and meta-analyses (PRISMA) statement as shown in Figure 1.

(TITLE-ABS-KEY(("FOMO" OR "FoMO" AND "Mental health" OR "stress" OR "depression" OR "anxiety" OR "psychological distress")) AND PUBYEAR > 2014 AND PUBYEAR < 2026 AND (LIMIT-TO (DOCTYPE,"ar")) AND (LIMIT-TO (PUBSTAGE,"final")) AND (LIMIT-TO (OA,"all")))

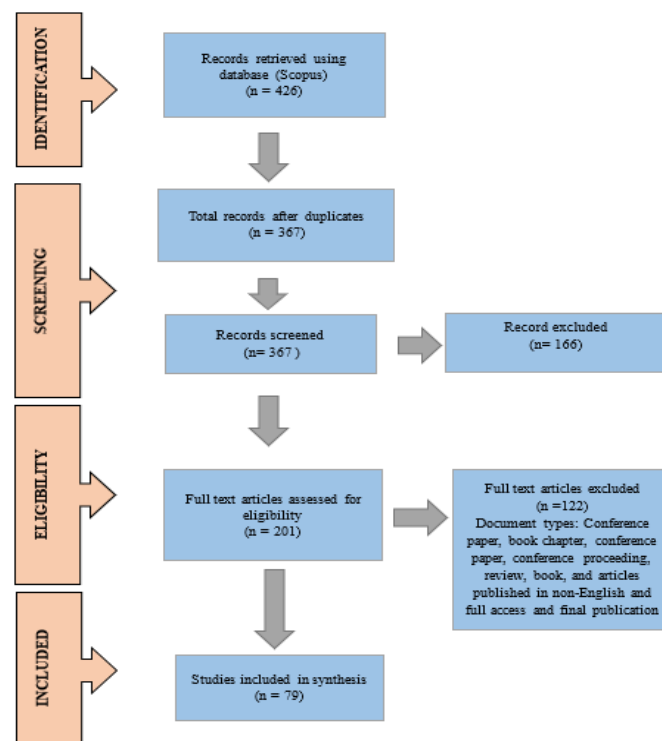


Figure 1. PRISMA Flowchart

Results and Discussion

What is the publication trend of Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) and mental health research from 2016 to 2026?

The findings presented in Figure 2 indicate that scholarly output during the initial phase of the study period was minimal. Between 2016 and 2019, publication activity remained very low, with only one publication recorded in 2016, 2018, and 2019, and no publications in 2017. A noticeable increase emerged in 2020, with six publications, signalling the beginning of growing academic interest in the topic. Although a slight decline was observed in 2021 (four publications), research output increased substantially thereafter. From 2022 to 2023, the number of publications rose steadily from 10 to 15, reflecting a phase of consistent growth and expanding scholarly engagement. While a moderate decrease occurred in 2024 (11 publications), the overall upward trend continued, culminating in a pronounced surge in 2025, which recorded the highest number of publications (29). This peak suggests heightened relevance and intensified research attention, potentially driven by emerging academic priorities or external societal and technological developments. The apparent decline in 2026, with only one publication recorded, is likely attributable to the incomplete publication cycle for the year rather than a genuine reduction in research activity. Overall, the publication trend demonstrates a clear growth trajectory, particularly from 2020 onwards, underscoring the increasing recognition and sustained academic interest in the research topic.

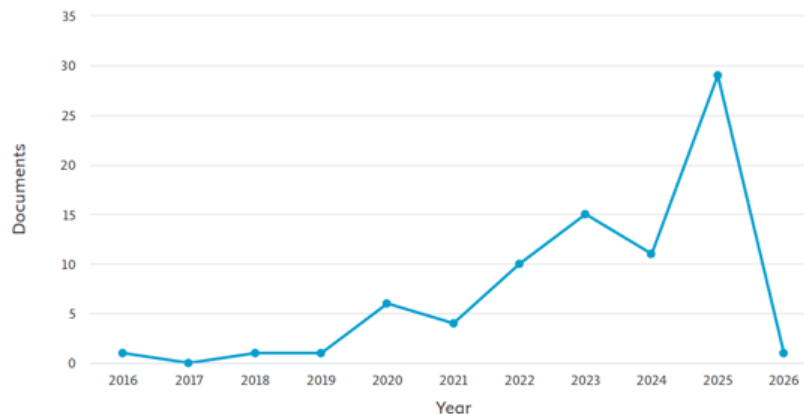


Figure 2. Publication Trend from 2016 To 2026

Source: Scopus (2026)

Which countries and institutions have produced the highest number of articles on Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) and mental health?

The analysis shows that research on FoMo and mental health has been carried out in various countries, highlighting a growing global interest in this area. As illustrated in Figure 3/Table 2, the United States stands out as the top contributor with 19 publications, followed closely by China with 15. This trend indicates that countries with advanced research infrastructures and high engagement in digital and social media are increasingly recognizing the mental health issues related to FoMo. India and Indonesia follow, each with eight publications, which points to a rising academic focus on FoMo and mental health in rapidly digitizing societies. Norway and Thailand are not far behind, each contributing five publications, suggesting a steady, if moderate, level of research activity in these regions. Australia, Canada, and the United Kingdom each added four publications, reflecting consistent scholarly engagement from established research centers. Finland and Malaysia round out the list with three and two publications, respectively.

Overall, the publication distribution reveals that a small group of countries, mainly from North America, Asia, and Europe, dominate FoMO-related mental health research. The involvement of both developed and developing nations among the top contributors highlights the global significance of FoMO as a mental health issue. This pattern emphasizes the need for more extensive cross-national and cross-cultural studies to better understand the varied psychological effects of FoMO in different sociocultural and technological settings.

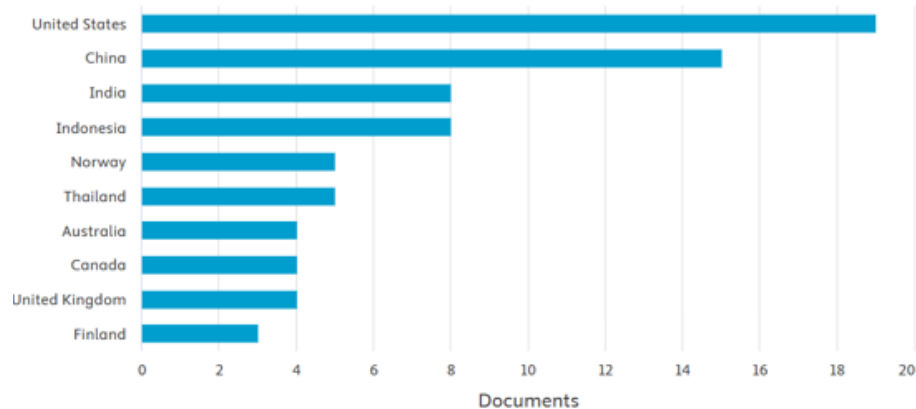


Figure 3. Most Productive Countries on FoMO-Related Mental Health Research

Source: Scopus (2026)

Table 2. Most Productive Countries on FoMO-Related Mental Health Research

Rank	Country	Publications
1	United States	19
2	China	15
3	India	8
4	Indonesia	8
5	Norway	5
6	Thailand	5
7	Australia	4
8	Canada	4

Source: Authors (2026)

The results presented in Figure 4 and Table 3 indicate that FoMO-related mental health research is distributed across a diverse range of institutions from different geographical regions. As shown in Table 3, the College of Medicine and Life Sciences and The University of Toledo (United States) emerged as the most productive institutions, each contributing four publications. This reflects active institutional engagement in advancing research on FoMO and its mental health implications. Beijing Normal University (China) and Universitetet i Bergen (Norway) followed, each recording three publications, highlighting meaningful contributions from Asian and European institutions. Several other universities demonstrated comparable levels of research output, with two publications each, including Nottingham Trent University (United Kingdom), Prince of Songkla University and Thammasat University (Thailand), Turun yliopisto (Finland), Universität Ulm (Germany), and Folkehelseinstituttet (Norway). Overall, the top contributing institutions account for a notable proportion of the total research output, although publication activity is relatively evenly distributed, with no single institution dominating the field. The wide geographical spread of these institutions underscores the international and multidisciplinary nature of FoMO-related mental health research. This

diversity suggests that scholarly inquiry into FoMO extends beyond regional boundaries and benefits from cross-institutional and cross-cultural perspective.

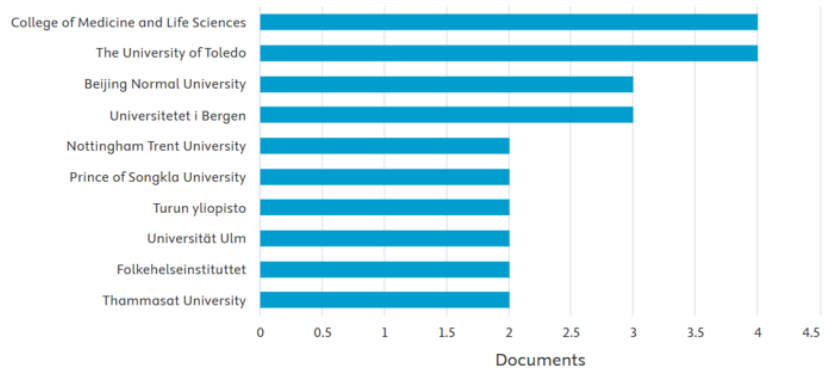


Figure 4. Most Productive Universities

Source: Scopus (2026)

Table 3. Most Productive Universities

Rank	Universities	Publications
1	College of Medicine and Life Sciences, United States	4
2	The University of Toledo, United States	4
3	Beijing Normal University, China	3
4	Universitetet i Bergen, Norway	3
5	Nottingham Trent University, United Kingdom	2
6	Prince of Songkla University, Thailand	2
7	Turun yliopisto, Finland	2
8	Universität Ulm, Germany	2
9	Folkehelseinstituttet, Norway	2
10	Thammasat University, Thailand	2

Source: Authors (2026)

The distribution of FoMO-related mental health publications across journals is illustrated in Figure 5 and complemented by detailed information in Table 4. The results indicate that research in this area is disseminated across a wide range of journals, reflecting the interdisciplinary nature of FoMO scholarship. Behavioral Sciences (MDPI) emerged as the most productive journal, publishing nine articles, underscoring the strong emphasis on psychological and behavioral dimensions of FoMO research. Acta Psychologica (Elsevier) ranked second with five publications, further highlighting the contribution of established psychology journals to advancing understanding of FoMO and its mental health implications. Cyberpsychology (Masaryk University) followed with three publications, indicating focused scholarly attention on the intersection between digital media use and psychological outcomes. Several journals recorded comparable levels of output, each contributing two publications.

These include Computers in Human Behavior (Elsevier), Human Behavior and Emerging Technologies (John Wiley & Sons), Journal of Technology in Behavioral Science (Springer Nature), Jurnal Komunikasi: Malaysian Journal of Communication (Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia Press), Knowledge Management and E-Learning, Social Media + Society (SAGE), and Societies (MDPI). The presence of these journals reflects the growing integration of

perspectives from psychology, communication studies, education, and technology-oriented research. Overall, the dispersion of publications across multiple journals suggests that FoMO-related mental health research is inherently interdisciplinary, spanning behavioral science, psychology, communication, and digital technology domains. The prominence of reputable psychology and social science journals further indicates increasing academic recognition of FoMO as a significant psychological phenomenon with important implications for mental health and well-being.

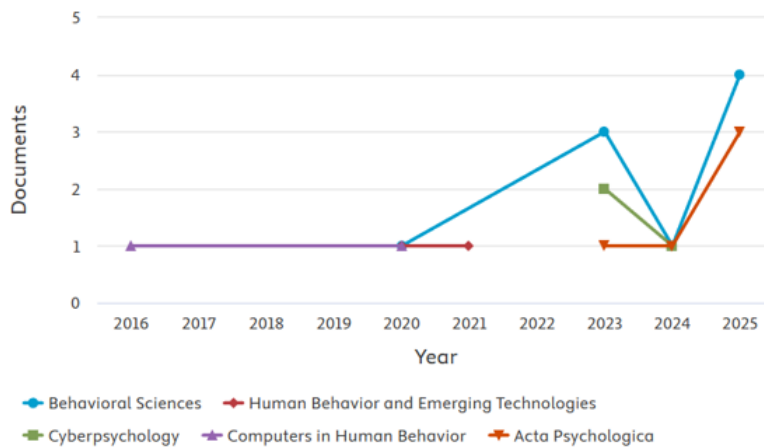


Figure 5. Publication by Top Journal by Year

Source: Scopus (2026)

Table 4. Publication by Top Journal by Year

Rank	Journals	Publications
1	Behavioral Sciences-Multidisciplinary Digital Publishing Institute (MDPI)	9
2	Acta Psychologica-Elsevier	5
3	Cyberpsychology-Masaryk University	3
4	Computers in Human Behavior-Elsevier	2
5	Human Behavior and Emerging Technologies-John Wiley & Sons	2
6	Journal of Technology in Behavioral Science-Springer Nature	2
7	Jurnal Komunikasi Malaysian Journal of Communication-Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia Press	2
8	Knowledge Management and E Learning-Hong Kong Bao Long Accounting and Secretarial Limited	2
9	Social Media and Society-SAGE	2
10	Societies-Multidisciplinary Digital Publishing Institute (MDPI)	2

Source: Authors (2026)

Who are the authors that are most prolific and have the highest citation counts in Fear of Missing Out (FoMO) and mental health research?

The analysis of author productivity in FoMO-related mental health research, as presented in Table 5, reveals a relatively concentrated yet collaborative authorship structure. Elhai, J.D. emerged as the most prolific author, contributing four publications, indicating sustained scholarly engagement in examining the psychological dimensions of FoMO and related digital behaviors. Dhir, A. and Tandon, A. followed with three publications each, reflecting consistent research involvement and recurring contributions to the FoMO literature. Several authors

recorded two publications each, including Dhammasaccakarn, W., Kaur, P., Kim, Y., Laeheem, K., Montag, C., Mäntymäki, M., and Rinthaisong, I. The distribution of publications suggests that while a small group of authors demonstrates higher productivity, the field is characterised by a broader network of researchers contributing intermittently, indicative of a developing and interdisciplinary research domain.

In terms of scholarly influence, Table 6 highlights the most highly cited publications within the field. The study by Beyens, Frison, and Eggermont (2016), titled *"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*, stands out as the most influential work, receiving 577 citations. This seminal article has played a foundational role in shaping subsequent FoMO-related mental health research.

More recent highly cited studies further demonstrate the field's evolution and relevance. Liu et al. (2021) received 289 citations for their work on COVID-19 information overload and social media discontinuance, reflecting heightened research attention during the pandemic period. Tandon et al. (2020) and Wolniewicz et al. (2020) garnered 156 and 138 citations, respectively, highlighting strong scholarly interest in the relationships between FoMO, sleep problems, anxiety, depression, and problematic smartphone use. Additional influential contributions include studies by Tandon et al. (2022), Pontes et al. (2018), and Elhai et al. (2021), each exceeding 90 citations, indicating sustained academic engagement with FoMO's behavioral, psychological, and health-related consequences. More recent publications, such as those by Jabeen et al. (2023), Zaman et al. (2022), and Lyngdoh et al. (2023), have also attracted notable citation counts, suggested continued momentum and expanded thematic diversity within the field.

Overall, the findings indicate a clear distinction between author productivity and citation impact. While a limited number of authors account for higher publication output, scholarly influence is driven largely by a set of highly cited foundational and theoretically significant studies. This pattern reflects a maturing research field in which early conceptual works continue to shape ongoing empirical investigations into FoMO and mental health.

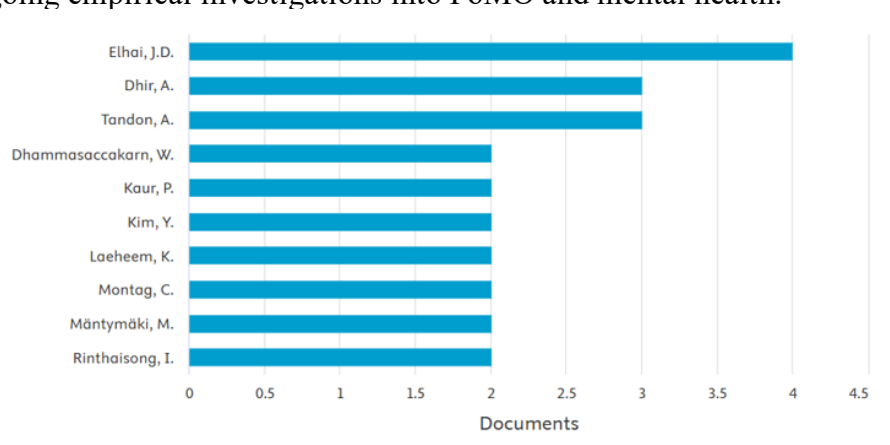


Figure 6. Most Prolific Authors on FoMO-Related Mental Health

Source: Scopus (2026)

Table 5. Most Prolific Authors on FoMO-Related Mental Health

Rank	Author	Publications
1	Elhai, J.D.	4
2	Dhir, A.	3
3	Tandon, A.	3
4	Dhammasaccakarn, W.	2
5	Kaur, P.	2
6	Kim, Y.	2
7	Laeheem, K.	2
8	Montag, C.	2
9	Mäntymäki, M.	2
10	Rinthaisong, I.	2

Source: Authors (2026)

Table 6. Most Cited Publications and Authors

Authors	Title	Year	Source title	Cited by
Beyens, I.; Frison, E.; Eggermont, S.	"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	2016	Computers in Human Behavior	577
Liu, H.; Liu, W.; Yoganathan, V.; Osburg, V.-S.	COVID-19 information overload and generation Z's social media discontinuance intention during the pandemic lockdown	2021	Computers in Human Behavior	289
Tandon, A.; Kaur, P.; Dhir, A.; Mäntymäki, M.	Sleepless due to social media? Investigating problematic sleep due to social media and social media sleep hygiene	2020	Computers in Human Behavior	156
Wolniewicz, C.A.; Rozgonjuk, D.; Elhai, J.D.	Boredom proneness and fear of missing out mediate relations between depression and anxiety with problematic smartphone use	2020	Computers in Human Behavior	138
Tandon, A.; Dhir, A.; Talwar, S.; Kaur, P.; Mäntymäki, M.	Social media induced fear of missing out (FoMO) and phubbing: Behavioural, relational and psychological outcomes	2022	Computers in Human Behavior	129
Pontes, H.M.; Taylor, M.; Stavropoulos, V.	Beyond "facebook Addiction": The Role of Cognitive-Related Factors and Psychiatric Distress in Social Networking Site Addiction	2018	Computers in Human Behavior	114
Elhai, J.D.; McKay, D.; Yang, H.; Minaya, C.; Montag, C.; Asmundson, G.J.G.	Health anxiety related to problematic smartphone use and gaming disorder severity during COVID-19: Fear of missing out as a mediator	2021	Computers in Human Behavior	99

Jabeen, F.; Tandon, A.; Sithipolvanichgul, J.; Srivastava, S.; Dhir, A.	Social media-induced fear of missing out (FoMO) and social media fatigue: The role of narcissism, comparison and disclosure	2023	Computers in Human Behavior	82
Zaman, U.; Koo, I.; Abbasi, S.; Raza, S.H.; Qureshi, M.G.	Meet Your Digital Twin in Space? Profiling International Expat's Readiness for Metaverse Space Travel, Tech-Savviness, COVID-19 Travel Anxiety, and Travel Fear of Missing Out	2022	Computers in Human Behavior	79
Lyngdoh, T.; El- Manstrly, D.; Jeesha, K.	Social isolation and social anxiety as drivers of generation Z's willingness to share personal information on social media	2023	Computers in Human Behavior	73

Source: Authors (2026)

Which subject areas dominate the studies on Fear of Missing Out (FOMO)-related mental health research?

This bibliometric analysis presented in Table 7 and Figure 7 takes a closer look at how publications are spread across different subject areas in the realm of mobile health research. There were no limits set on the subject areas included, but the analysis shines a light on the fields that are making the biggest contributions to the literature. The data shows that Social Sciences lead the pack, with 61 articles (31.0%), which reflects a strong emphasis on the societal and behavioral dimensions of mobile health. Following closely is Psychology, the second most represented field, with 39 publications (19.8%), underscoring the importance of mental health and behavioral studies in this area.

The third tier of contributions is shared between Arts and Humanities and Computer Science, each with 17 publications (8.6%), indicating a growing interest in technological applications and interdisciplinary viewpoints. Business, Management, and Accounting add 14 publications (7.1%), highlighting an increasing awareness of the organizational and managerial aspects of mobile health. Other significant areas include Neuroscience (10 publications, 5.1%), Agricultural and Biological Sciences (9 publications, 4.6%), Biochemistry, Genetics, and Molecular Biology (9 publications, 4.6%), Medicine (7 publications, 3.6%), and Decision Sciences (3 publications, 1.5%). Additionally, 5.6% of the publications fall under miscellaneous or other disciplines.

These findings suggest that while research on FoMO and mental health is primarily rooted in the social sciences and psychology, there's still a lot of room for growth in fields like medicine, computer science, arts and humanities, and decision sciences. The distribution highlights the interdisciplinary nature of FoMO-related mental health research and points to opportunities for future studies to connect the dots across less represented fields.

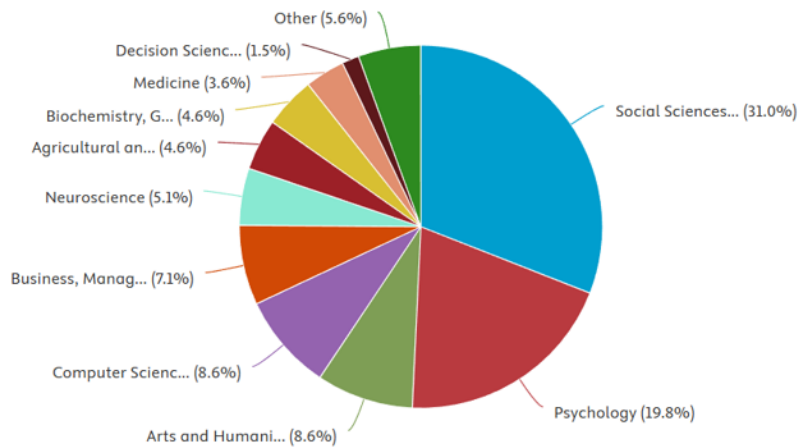


Figure 7. Most Influential Publication on Subject Area

Source: Scopus (2026)

Table 7. Most Influential Publication on Subject Area

Rank	Subject Area	Publications
1	Social Sciences	61
2	Psychology	39
3	Arts and Humanities	17
4	Computer Science	17
5	Business, Management and Accounting	14
6	Neuroscience	10
7	Agricultural and Biological Sciences	9
8	Biochemistry, Genetics and Molecular Biology	9
9	Medicine	7
10	Decision Sciences	3

Source: Authors (2026)

What are the trends in co-authorship and keywords in Fear of Missing Out (FoMO)-related mental health research?

International co-authorship is a key indicator of global scholarly collaboration and is widely used to assess the interconnectedness and influence of research communities. In bibliometric studies, co-authorship networks provide insights into collaboration patterns among researchers and countries, highlighting how knowledge and expertise are shared across geographical and disciplinary boundaries. VOSviewer, a widely used bibliometric visualization tool, was employed in this study to examine co-authorship patterns among countries publishing research on FoMO-related mental health research. The analysis included 50 countries, with 16 countries meeting the threshold of a minimum of three documents per country. The resulting network highlights 107 co-authorship links, indicating active international collaboration. The size of each node reflects the number of publications from that country, while the thickness of the connecting lines represents the strength of co-authorship links.

As shown in Figure 8, India, with 8 publications, exhibits the highest total link strength (16), suggesting extensive collaborative ties with other countries. Canada (4 documents, total link strength = 10) and the United States (19 documents, total link strength = 10) also demonstrate

strong international collaboration, followed by China (15 documents, total link strength = 9), Finland (3 documents, total link strength = 9), Norway (5 documents, total link strength = 9), Australia (4 documents, total link strength = 8), and the United Kingdom (4 documents, total link strength = 6). This co-authorship network underscores the prominent role of India, the United States, China, and Canada in fostering international collaborations within FoMO-related mental health research. While certain countries such as Finland and Norway show fewer publications, their high link strength indicates active participation in collaborative research networks. These patterns suggest that international partnerships are instrumental in enhancing research visibility, knowledge exchange, and scholarly impact in this domain.

Further cluster analysis revealed distinct collaboration groups among countries, reflecting thematic and regional linkages in FoMO and mental health research:

- Cluster 1: Finland, India, Norway, South Africa, Thailand, United Arab Emirates
- Cluster 2: Australia, Bahrain, Canada, Kuwait, Tunisia
- Cluster 3: China, France, Germany, Greece, United Kingdom
- Cluster 4: Estonia, Indonesia, Italy, United States
- Cluster 5: Belgium, Netherlands
- Cluster 6: Pakistan, South Korea

These clusters demonstrate that collaboration networks are not strictly dependent on the number of publications; rather, strategic partnerships often link countries across continents and research traditions. For instance, countries with fewer publications but strong link strength such as Finland and Norway play key roles in bridging collaborative networks. Overall, the co-authorship analysis highlights a growing trend toward international collaboration in FoMo and mental health research, which is expected to strengthen the global research network and enhance the dissemination and impact of scholarly outputs.

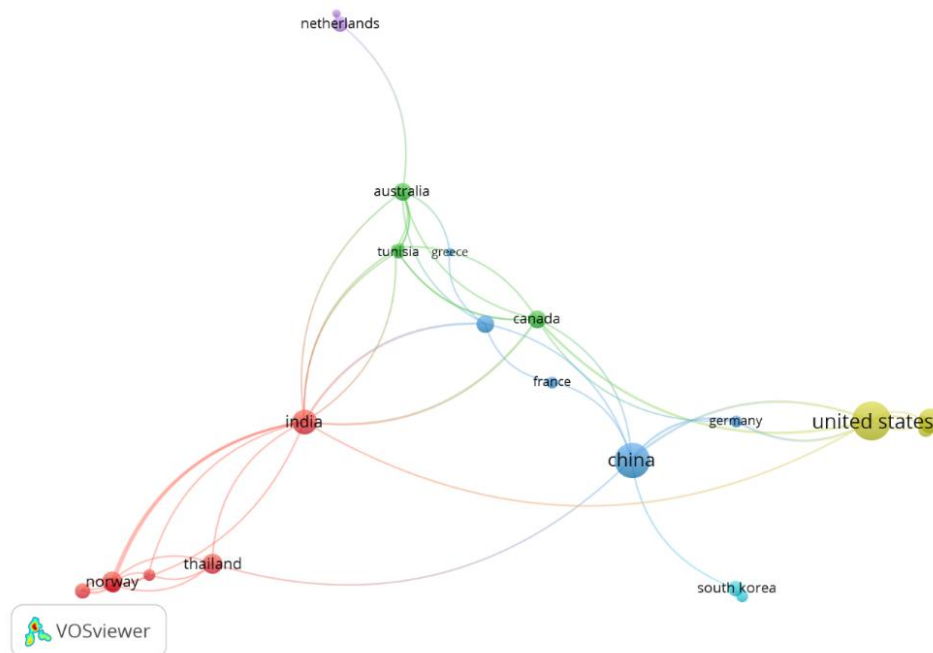


Figure 8. Co-Authorship and Country Analysis

Source: Scopus (2026)

Table 8. Top Co-Authorship and Country Total Link Strength

No.	Country	Documents	Citations	Total link strength
1	India	8	439	16
2	Canada	4	247	10
3	United States	19	477	10
4	China	15	476	9
5	Finland	3	367	9
6	Norway	5	388	9
7	Australia	4	209	8
8	United Kingdom	4	498	6
9	Bahrain	1	49	5
10	Germany	2	104	5

Source: Authors (2026)

Keyword analysis is a crucial bibliometric method that helps reveal the conceptual structure and emerging trends within a research field. Using VOSviewer, keywords that appear three or more times in the dataset were selected to examine the relationships and thematic clusters among documents. This approach clarifies the main topics and recurring themes in FOMO-related mental health research. From the Scopus database between 2013 and 2026, a total of 1,569 distinct keywords were identified. After applying the occurrence threshold, 55 keywords, organized into 3 main clusters, with 659 links and a total link strength of 1,683, met the selection criteria. In the visualization, each node represents a keyword, with its size proportional to its frequency, while the links between nodes indicate co-occurrence relationships and thematic connections between terms.

The most frequently occurring keyword is “fear of missing out”, reflecting the central focus of the research field, while social media appears prominently, indicating the growing interest in understanding its role in FOMO and mental health outcomes. Other recurring terms such as adolescent, adult, human, psychology, female, male, and young adult emphasize the demographic and psychological dimensions frequently studied.

The co-occurrence analysis also identified three distinct clusters:

- Cluster 1: adolescent, adult, article, cross-sectional study, fear, female, human, humans, psychology, young adult
- Cluster 2: addiction, COVID-19, FOMO, mental health, questionnaire, social media
- Cluster 3: anxiety, depression, fear of missing out, internet addiction, social media addiction

These clusters highlight several important insights: Cluster 1 emphasizes demographic and methodological aspects; Cluster 2 underscores the link between FOMO, mental health, social media use, and global events such as COVID-19; Cluster 3 focuses on mental health outcomes and addictive behaviours related to social media and internet use. The prominence of keywords related to social media use and addiction suggests that these topics are central to FoMO-related mental health research. This provides a strong rationale for future studies to explore the impact of social media engagement on psychological well-being among adults, university students, or other target populations, particularly in relation to FoMO, anxiety, and depression. By focusing on these themes, researchers can contribute to a deeper understanding of how digital behaviours influence mental health and inform interventions for healthier online engagement. Figure 9 illustrates the network visualization of co-author keywords occurrence from 2014-2026 and

Table 9 tabulated the top 10 keywords used by author in fomo-related mental health studies during the period of time.

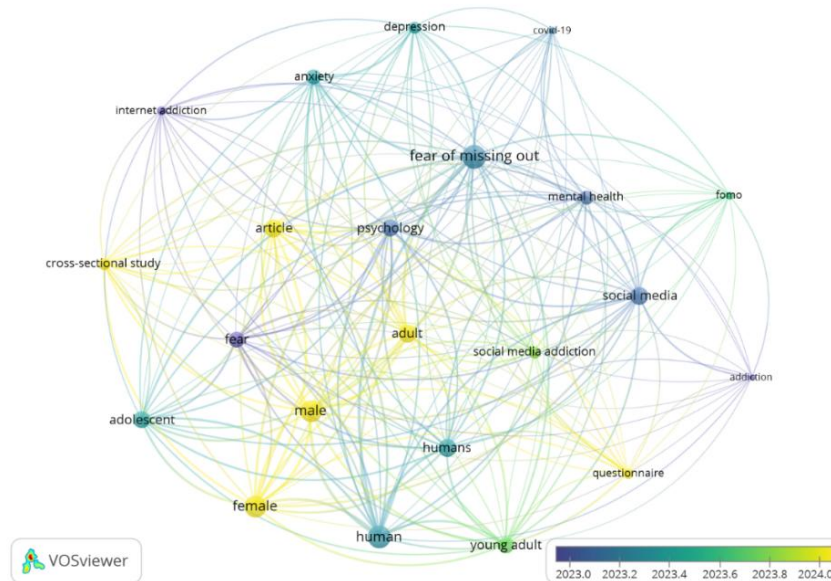


Figure 9. Network Visualization Co-Author Keywords Occurrence

Source: Scopus (2026)

Table 9. Top 10 Keywords Used by Author in Fomo-Related Mental Health Studies

No.	Keyword	Occurrence	Total Link Strength
1	Fear of missing out	36	134
2	Human	14	126
3	Female	11	114
4	Male	11	114
5	Adult	8	90
6	Social media	22	90
7	Article	9	89
8	Adolescent	8	88
9	Psychology	8	81
10	Young adult	8	77

Source: Authors (2026)

Implication

The findings of this study offer direct, actionable insights for mental health professionals, educators, and policymakers. Clinically, the strong correlation between FoMO, sleep disorders, and anxiety suggests that practitioners should routinely assess digital usage habits as a standard part of mental health evaluations, treating digital distress as a significant clinical factor rather than a mere lifestyle choice. Therapeutic interventions should incorporate digital literacy and self-regulation strategies, such as the "FoMO-R" method, to help patients manage the anxiety of disconnecting. Furthermore, given the high vulnerability of the post-1990s generation, schools and parents must prioritize digital well-being education to help adolescents distinguish between curated online content and reality. ultimately, these results also place an ethical responsibility on platform developers to mitigate addictive design features, such as infinite scrolling, which exacerbate the psychological pressure to remain constantly connected.

Conclusion

This bibliometric analysis provides a comprehensive mapping of the intellectual landscape regarding the "Fear of Missing Out" (FoMO) and its intersection with mental health from 2014 to 2026. The findings delineate a clear trajectory of academic interest, evolving from a niche psychological concept into a globally recognized phenomenon critical to understanding modern digital behavior.

The analysis reveals that while research activity was modest between 2016 and 2019, a pivotal surge occurred in 2020, likely catalyzed by the COVID-19 pandemic and the concomitant rise in global digitalization. The peak in 2025, with 29 publications, underscores that FoMO remains a highly relevant and expanding field of inquiry. Geographically, while the United States and China dominate the research output, there is a significant and growing contribution from developing nations such as India, Indonesia, and Thailand. This indicates that FoMO is not merely a Western construct but a global psychological challenge inherent to the digital age. Furthermore, the study identifies a robust interdisciplinary structure, with high-impact journals such as *Behavioral Sciences* and *Computers in Human Behavior* bridging the gap between psychology, technology, and communication studies. The intellectual core of the field, driven by prolific authors like J.D. Elhai and A. Dhir, has moved beyond establishing simple correlations between social media and anxiety. The field is now maturing toward investigating complex mediating mechanisms such as boredom proneness, sleep hygiene, and problematic smartphone use providing a more nuanced understanding of how digital deficits impact mental well-being.

Limitation and Future Research Directions

Despite the comprehensive insights provided by this bibliometric analysis, the study is limited by its exclusive reliance on the Scopus database, which may inadvertently exclude relevant studies indexed in other repositories or regional journals. To advance the field, future research needs to move beyond the current prevalence of cross-sectional surveys and adopt longitudinal and experimental designs to establish true causality between FoMO and mental health disorders. A significant limitation of the current literature is its heavy concentration on university students and the post-1990s generation; therefore, future inquiries should expand to include older adults and working professionals to determine if FoMO manifests differently across diverse life stages. Additionally, while research from Asia is growing, more comparative studies are needed to understand how cultural nuances specifically the difference between individualistic and collectivist societies alter the experience of FoMO. There is also a critical need to validate self-reported data with objective physiological markers, such as stress hormone levels or neuroimaging, to better understand the biological impact of digital anxiety. Finally, as technology evolves, scholars should expand their focus to investigate how the Metaverse and AI-driven content might create new forms of social exclusion and psychological distress.

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