

## ORIGINAL RESEARCH

# ***FEAR OF MISSING OUT (FOMO), INSTAGRAM USE, AND THE DYNAMICS OF SELF-ESTEEM AMONG STUDENTS AT ISLAMIC RELIGIOUS UNIVERSITIES***

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Article Info	Abstract
<p>Article History: Received: 29 May 2026 Accepted: 15 June 2026 Published: 19 June 2026</p> <p><b>Keywords:</b> <i>Fear of Missing Out; Instagram Use; Self-Esteem; Students</i></p> <p><b>Corresponding Author:</b> Norheni Aulia Email: <a href="mailto:norheniaulia2311110002@uin-palangkaraya.ac.id">norheniaulia2311110002@uin-palangkaraya.ac.id</a></p>	<p>The rapid development of social media has influenced the psychological dynamics of students, particularly related to Fear of Missing Out (FoMO) and the formation of self-esteem. Instagram is one of the most widely used platforms among students and facilitates social comparison that may influence individual self-evaluation. This study aims to analyze the influence of FoMO and Instagram usage on the self-esteem of students at Islamic religious universities. This research employed a quantitative approach with a correlational design. The participants consisted of 82 students from the State Islamic University of Palangka Raya who were selected through purposive sampling with the criterion of actively using Instagram. Data were collected using a questionnaire with a Likert scale measuring FoMO, Instagram usage, and self-esteem. Instrument validity was tested using Pearson Product Moment correlation, while reliability was examined using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient. The data were analyzed using multiple linear regression analysis. The results showed that the regression model was significant (<math>F = 11.657</math>; <math>p &lt; 0.05</math>) with a coefficient of determination (<math>R^2 = 0.229</math>), indicating that 22.9% of the variance in self-esteem could be explained by FoMO and Instagram usage. Partial testing showed that FoMO had a negative and significant effect on self-esteem (<math>t = -3.173</math>; <math>p = 0.002</math>), whereas Instagram usage did not significantly affect self-esteem (<math>t = -1.258</math>; <math>p = 0.211</math>). These findings indicate that digital social anxiety such as FoMO plays an important role in shaping students' self-esteem in the social media era.</p>

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## 1. Introduction

The development of digital technology has changed the patterns of social interaction among communities, especially among students (Sarifah & Surawan, 2025). The internet no longer serves only as a means of obtaining information, but also as a space for individuals to communicate, build social relationships, and express their identity in the digital public sphere (Juliana et al., 2023; Rahayu & Widiansyah, 2025). The internet not only serves as a means of accessing information, but also as a primary space for individuals to build social relationships, express themselves, and shape their personal identities in the digital public sphere (Lisa & Irma, 2025; Agma, 2025; Hamandia & Ajisaka, 2025). In this context, social media has become highly influential in shaping how individuals perceive themselves and their position in the social environment (Suwardi & Winayanti, 2025). These changes have a huge psychological impact, especially in terms of a person's (*Self-Esteem*) (Septian & Sapitri, 2025).

This phenomenon is increasingly evident through the increased intensity of social media use among students in Indonesia (Puspitasari et al., 2025). Among the various social media platforms that are currently growing, Instagram has become one of the most widely used applications by students. Instagram emphasizes visual content such as photos and videos that allow users to share their activities, experiences, and personal achievements with the public (Santoso et al., 2025; Darmawan & Andreas, 2025; Fauzan & Harahap, 2025). The use of Instagram based on the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) developed by Icek Ajzen. According to Ajzen (1991) Individual behavior is the result of a planned cognitive process, in which behavioral intention is a direct determinant of the emergence of a behavior. For students, presence and activity on Instagram are often perceived as indicators of social engagement, so that if someone rarely posts on social media or has minimal activity, it can be interpreted as social isolation (Yusuf, 2025).

Students tend to compare themselves to standards set by social media, even though these are often unrealistic because they have undergone a process of selection and aestheticization (Setiawati, 2020). This process has the potential to cause dissatisfaction with oneself, especially when individuals feel left behind or less successful than others (Nanaz et al., 2025). FoMO is understood as a feeling of worry or anxiety when individuals feel left out of enjoyable experiences that others may be having. Przybylski et al (2013) explains that FoMO arises when individuals feel that their needs are not being met, leading to an urge to constantly monitor the activities of others through social media. This urge is not only aimed at increasing the intensity of Instagram use, but also makes individuals increasingly dependent on external validation such as the number of likes, comments, and other social responses.

*Self-esteem* is an individual's subjective evaluation of their own value and worth. According to Morris Rosenberg, self-esteem is influenced by social experiences and how individuals interpret the environment's response to them. Students with low self-esteem tend to be more sensitive to social judgment, easily influenced by trends, and prone to conformity in social behavior, including in their use of social media (Rosenberg, 1965) Thus, it can be understood that individuals who experience FoMO and have a high intensity of Instagram use are considered more vulnerable to experiencing a decline *self-esteem*.

Several previous studies have examined the relationship between FoMO, social media use, and *self-esteem*. Research by (Sari et al., 2025) found that among students who use Instagram, the variable *self-esteem* plays a significant role in influencing FoMO levels, which indicates a psychological link between self-esteem and digital social anxiety in the context of intensive Instagram use. Another study by (Fitri et al., 2024) assessing the impact *self-esteem* and *self-control* towards FoMO among Instagram-using students. Furthermore, research by (Agustine et al., 2025) The results of the study indicate an effect

*self-esteem* towards FoMO, so that the higher the level *self-esteem* then the lower the level of FoMO, and vice versa.

Most previous studies have used *self-esteem* as a variable that influences FoMO, so that other studies have focused more on the direction of the relationship in part. Previous studies still place *self-esteem* as factors that influence FoMO and examine these variables separately, so that the dynamics of the role of FoMO and the intensity of Instagram use on the formation of *self-esteem* has not been widely explained. By viewing FoMO and Instagram use as psychosocial experiences that interact in shaping the self-evaluation of Islamic college students, this study expands our understanding of how social media engagement and digital social anxiety contribute to the dynamics of *self-esteem* in a specific academic and religious context.

Based on these research gaps, this study aims to analyze the impact of *Fear of Missing Out* (FoMO) and the use of Instagram on dynamics *self-esteem* students at Islamic universities. This study aims to analyze the influence of *Fear of Missing Out* (FoMO) and the use of Instagram on the *self-esteem* of students at Islamic religious universities. This study is expected to contribute to the development of social psychology and educational psychology studies, particularly in understanding the psychological dynamics of students in the era of social media.

## 2. Method

### 2.1 Research Design

This study uses a quantitative approach with a multiple correlational design. This approach was chosen to examine the relationship and influence *Fear of Missing Out* (FoMO) and the use of Instagram on *self-esteem* students simultaneously (Adil et al., 2023). Quantitative research is based on a positivist paradigm that emphasizes objective measurement, hypothesis testing, and statistical data analysis to obtain empirical conclusions. (Risnita, 2024).

### 2.2 Settings and Samples

This research was conducted in February 2026 by distributing questionnaires to students who were respondents related to FoMO, Instagram use, and *self-esteem* as indicators in the study. The population of this study consisted of active students at Islamic religious universities, particularly Universitas Islam Negeri Palangka Raya, who used Instagram as one of their social media platforms. The sample consisted of 82 active undergraduate students selected through purposive sampling techniques. The inclusion criteria were students who had an Instagram account and actively used the platform in their daily activities. These criteria were established because the study specifically examined Fear of Missing Out (FoMO), Instagram use, and self-esteem. Therefore, respondents who were actively engaged with Instagram were considered the most appropriate participants for providing information relevant to the research objectives. The selected participants represented students who regularly interacted within digital social environments and were potentially exposed to FoMO experiences.

### 2.3 Measurement and data collection

The research instrument used a closed questionnaire with a four-point Likert scale to measure the variables of Fear of Missing Out (FoMO), intensity of Instagram use, and self-esteem. The self-esteem variable was measured using the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES) developed by Rosenberg (1965), consisting of 10 items. The FoMO scale consisted of 5 items adapted from the concept proposed by Przybylski et al. (2013), while Instagram usage was measured through 5 items assessing frequency of access, duration of use, and engagement in Instagram-related activities.

## 2.4 Data analysis

The research instruments were first tested for validity and reliability. Validity was tested using *Pearson Product Moment correlation*. Reliability was tested using *Cronbach's Alpha coefficient*. The research data was analyzed using the latest version of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) program with multiple linear regression analysis techniques to determine the effect of FoMO and Instagram use on students' *self-esteem*.

## 2.5 Ethical considerations

This study was conducted in accordance with the principles of health research ethics, namely respect for autonomy, beneficence, non-maleficence, and justice. Before the study was conducted, participants were given an explanation of the objectives, procedures, benefits, and risks of the study. Participation was voluntary, and participants signed an *informed consent* form before data collection.

## 3. Results

This section presents the results of data analysis regarding the influence of Fear of Missing Out (FoMO) and Instagram use on *self-esteem* among research respondents. The analysis was conducted using multiple linear regression tests with the help of statistical programs. The purpose of this analysis was to determine:

1. Whether FoMO affects *self-esteem*.
2. Whether Instagram usage affects *self-esteem*.
3. Whether FoMO and Instagram usage simultaneously affect *self-esteem*.

The data analyzed consisted of 82 respondents. Before the regression test was conducted, the data underwent processing and was deemed suitable for analysis. The regression test results included *R Square values*, *F tests (simultaneous)*, and *t tests (partial)*, which were presented in an SPSS-style table in the previous section:

### 3.1 Validity and Reliability Test

Before conducting hypothesis testing, the research instruments were tested for validity and reliability. The validity test was performed using Pearson Product Moment correlation to determine whether each item was capable of measuring the intended construct. The results indicated that all questionnaire items met the validity criteria and were therefore considered appropriate for data collection.

Reliability testing was conducted using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient to assess the internal consistency of the instruments. The results demonstrated that the research instruments achieved acceptable reliability coefficients, indicating that the items consistently measured the variables of Fear of Missing Out (FoMO), Instagram usage, and self-esteem. Therefore, the instruments were considered valid and reliable for further statistical analysis.

### 3.2 Assumption Testing

Prior to conducting multiple linear regression analysis, assumption tests were performed to ensure that the data met the requirements for regression analysis. The normality test was conducted to examine whether the residuals were normally distributed. The results indicated that the residual values followed a normal distribution pattern, suggesting that the data satisfied the normality assumption. Furthermore, a linearity test was conducted to determine whether a linear relationship existed between the independent variables (Fear of Missing Out and Instagram usage) and the dependent variable (self-esteem). The results demonstrated that the relationships between the variables were linear, indicating that the data fulfilled the linearity assumption required for multiple linear regression analysis. Based on the results of the normality and linearity tests, it can be concluded that the data met the assumptions necessary for further regression analysis.

**Tabel 1. Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted Square	R Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0,479	0,229	0,209	3,421

*Sumber: Data Primer 2026*

An R Square value of 0.229 indicates that 22.9% of the variation in self-esteem can be explained by FoMO and Instagram usage.

**Tabel 2. ANOVA (Uji F)**

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	272,841	2	136,420	11,657	0,000
Residual	924,336	79	11,703		
Total	1197,177	81			

*Sumber: Data Primer 2026*

A significance value of  $0.000 < 0.05$  indicates that FoMO and Instagram use simultaneously have a significant effect on self-esteem.

**Tabel 3. Coefficients (Uji t)**

Model	Variabel	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	28,114	2,876		9,776	0,000
	FoMO	-0,284	0,089	-0,361	-3,173	0,002
	Penggunaan Instagram	-0,102	0,081	-0,138	-1,258	0,211

*Sumber: Data Primer 2026*

FoMO has a negative and significant effect on self-esteem (Sig.  $0.002 < 0.05$ ), while Instagram usage has no significant effect (Sig.  $0.211 > 0.05$ ).

Based on the results of multiple linear regression analysis, it is known that the Fear of Missing Out (FoMO) variable has a negative and significant effect on students' self-esteem with a significance value of  $p < 0.05$ . A negative beta coefficient value indicates that the higher the level of FoMO experienced by students, the lower their level of self-esteem. This shows that an individual's tendency to feel left out of other people's experiences on social media can influence the way individuals assess themselves negatively.

Instagram usage did not show a significant effect on students' *self-esteem* with a significance value of  $p > 0.05$ . These results indicate that the intensity of Instagram usage alone does not directly determine the level of students' *self-esteem*. In other words, social media usage does not necessarily have a negative impact on *self-assessment* if it is not accompanied by feelings of FoMO. Simultaneously, the FoMO variable and Instagram usage have a significant effect on students' *self-esteem*. This is indicated by a coefficient of determination (R Square) value of 0.229 or 22.9%. This value shows that 22.9% of the variation in students' *self-esteem* can be explained by the FoMO variable and Instagram usage in this study. Meanwhile, the remaining 77.1% is influenced by other factors not examined in this study, such as social support, individual psychological conditions, friendship environment, and personality factors.

The implications of the beta coefficient value show that FoMO is the variable that has the strongest contribution in influencing student *self-esteem* compared to Instagram

usage. Thus, psychological factors such as social anxiety in digital media play a greater role in influencing *self-esteem* than the mere frequency of social media use itself.

These results indicate that the main problem does not lie in social media use alone, but rather in how individuals interpret the social experiences they see on social media. Therefore, understanding the FoMO phenomenon is important in explaining the dynamics of student *self-esteem* in the social media era.

#### 4. Discussion

##### a. The Effect of *Fear of Missing Out (FoMO)* on *Self-Esteem*

The results of the study show that Fear of Missing Out (FoMO) has a negative and significant effect on students' *self-esteem*. These findings indicate that the higher the level of FoMO experienced by students, the lower their positive self-evaluation. This condition can be understood because FoMO is closely related to social anxiety and the need for social connection, which encourages individuals to constantly monitor the activities of others on social media.

FoMO triggers a tendency toward upward social comparison, which is comparing oneself with other individuals who are perceived to be more successful, more popular, or more attractive. This comparison process is often based on selectively curated representations of oneself on social media, which do not reflect reality as a whole. When students constantly make such comparisons, they develop feelings of worthlessness, incompetence, and dissatisfaction with themselves, which ultimately leads to a decline in *self-esteem*.

In the context of Islamic religious college students, the dynamics of FoMO become more complex because students face not only academic and social demands, but also moral and religious expectations (Aulia & Surawan, 2025). Social media can be a space for affirming religious identity, but it can also be a source of pressure when individuals feel that their spiritual, social, or academic achievements lag behind those of others.

##### b. The Effect of *FoMO* and Simultaneous Instagram Use on *Self-Esteem*

Instagram use does not have a significant effect, as simultaneous tests show that FoMO and Instagram use together have a significant effect on students' *self-esteem*. These findings indicate that Instagram use can be a context that reinforces the impact of FoMO on *self-esteem*, although it is not a primary factor on its own.

Instagram provides a digital environment rich in social stimuli, such as posts about achievements, lifestyles, and other people's social interactions. This environment can increase the tendency for FoMO in individuals who are highly sensitive to social connectedness. In such conditions, Instagram use serves as a medium that facilitates the emergence of FoMO, which then has an impact on decreased *self-esteem*.

The coefficient of determination (R Square) value of 0.229 indicates that FoMO and Instagram usage explain part of the dynamics of students' *self-esteem*, while the rest is influenced by other factors outside the research model, such as social support, personal religiosity, emotional regulation, and personality. This explains that *self-esteem* is a complex and multidimensional psychological construct.

These findings are in line with the results of research conducted by Safitri et al. (2025) which shows that high levels of FoMO are associated with low *self-esteem* among adolescents who use social media. The study explains that individuals who have a tendency toward FoMO will more often make social comparisons with others on digital media, thereby causing feelings of dissatisfaction with themselves.

However, the results of this study show that partial use of Instagram does not have a significant effect on *self-esteem*. These findings indicate that social media does not always have a direct impact on an individual's *self-esteem*. Psychological factors such as *self-regulation*, social support, and an individual's psychological condition can be other variables that mediate the relationship between social media use and *self-esteem*. These

findings suggest that Instagram itself is not inherently harmful to students' self-esteem. Rather, the psychological impact depends on how individuals interpret and respond to the content they encounter on the platform. Students who frequently engage in upward social comparison, seek validation from others, or experience anxiety about missing social experiences are more likely to report lower levels of self-esteem. Conversely, students who use Instagram as a medium for communication, learning, self-expression, and social interaction may not experience negative psychological consequences. Therefore, the findings indicate that the meaning individuals attach to their social media experiences is more influential than the mere intensity of Instagram use. This perspective helps explain why Instagram usage was not found to have a significant direct effect on self-esteem in the present study.

## 5. Conclusion

This study shows that Fear of Missing Out (FoMO) has a negative and significant effect on the *self-esteem* of students at Islamic religious universities. These findings indicate that the tendency of individuals to constantly follow the social activities of others through digital media can negatively affect *self-evaluation*. Meanwhile, partial use of Instagram does not show a significant effect on *self-esteem*, although simultaneously with FoMO it contributes to variations in students' *self-esteem*.

Theoretically, this study contributes to expanding research on the psychological dynamics of students in the digital age, particularly in understanding the relationship between digital social anxiety and the formation of *self-esteem*. Practically, the results of this study can serve as a basis for developing digital literacy programs and student counseling services to strengthen *self-regulation* skills in the use of social media.

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