

FEAR OF MISSING OUT, WECHAT USE INTENSITY, ANXIETY AND DEPRESSION ARE RELATED TO EXCESSIVE USE OF WECHAT

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As the most popular social network software (SNS) and one mobile phone based messaging and social networking platform in China, WeChat has gained increasing popularity worldwide for youth, but it has also been shown that excessive use of WeChat is an important public health challenge and is linked with negative psychological outcomes. However, there has been minimal research into the excessive use of this application and little is known about the mechanisms that maintain this behavior.

To fill these two gaps, we analyze the role of fear of missing out (FoMO) and WeChat use intensity for explaining the link between negative emotions and excessive use of WeChat. In an online survey, a total of 952 young adults in China was recruited.

The results show that: (1) Excessive WeChat use was most correlated with depression, anxiety, WeChat use intensity and FoMO; (2) Depression and mediating variable FoMO and WeChat use intensity had a direct effect on WeChat excessive use; (3) Both FoMO and WeChat use intensity mediated the link between negative emotions and excessive use of WeChat.

Results demonstrate the importance of FoMO and WeChat use intensity as critical mechanisms that can explain excessive use of WeChat and its association with depression and anxiety.