



Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) and Burnout: exploring the relationship between them and the
roles of remote working, quantitative workload and self-efficacy

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Master Thesis Social, Health and Organisational Psychology

Track: Work and Organisational Psychology

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Date: June 26, 2023

Word count: 9000

May be made publicly accessible

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to examine the possible relationship between workplace Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) and burnout. Furthermore, the role of workplace FOMO in the relationships between remote working, quantitative workload and burnout was investigated. In addition, the role of self-efficacy in the relationship between workplace FOMO and burnout was tested. The research involved 162 employees from different countries. The results of the investigation confirmed the positive relationship between workplace FOMO and burnout. Contrary to what was expected, the indirect effect of remote working to burnout through workplace FOMO was not confirmed. Nevertheless, the indirect effect of quantitative workload to burnout through workplace FOMO was supported. Finally, according to the results, the moderating role of self-efficacy to the relationship between workplace FOMO and burnout was not confirmed for the hypothesized direction, indicating a positive moderation effect instead of a negative. These findings contribute to the existing literature on the relationship between workplace FOMO and burnout, and further enhance the understanding of the influence of quantitative workload and self-efficacy on this relationship.

Key words: workplace Fear of Missing Out, burnout, remote working, quantitative workload, self-efficacy.

Introduction

As technological advancements continue to unfold, there is a growing imperative for individuals to remain well-informed and abreast of the latest developments. However, this constant need to stay updated can have adverse effects on individuals' mental and physical well-being (Baker et al., 2016). The Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) manifests as distress when individuals perceive social disconnection, rejection, or exclusion, and it can be particularly pronounced in the face of technological advancements (Budnick et al., 2020). In the realm of work, employees experience a similar compulsion to remain well-informed, actively participate in social activities, and engage in decision-making processes. This drive to avoid missing out on opportunities can give rise to heightened stress levels and an overwhelming sense of obligation (Budnick et al., 2020). Striking a balance between staying informed and nurturing one's well-being becomes essential in maintaining a healthy integration of work and personal life.

The increasing need of employees to stay updated has profound implications for employees' well-being, especially after COVID-19 pandemic, which has completely affected the working environment (Hayran & Anik, 2021). The pandemic-induced isolation, has compelled people to seek innovative ways of living and working, allowing them to regain a sense of autonomy and control over their lives. Numerous transformations have taken place, beginning with the advent of remote work, which has redefined traditional work structures and introduced new challenges and opportunities too (Battisti et al., 2022). Individuals now possess the capability to partake in meetings remotely and communicate with co-workers and clients from the comfort of their own residences. Although remote working helped on the regular procedures, the workload has increased, because of the adding effect of technological advancements (Rousseau et al., 2016).

Examining the phenomenon of Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) during the COVID-19 period becomes crucial for several compelling reasons. First of all, the specific period has significantly impacted the social dynamics and introduced unprecedented changes in work and social settings. The restrictions and disruptions caused by the pandemic have significantly altered the ways in which individuals connect, interact and engage with their work and social networks (Battisti et al., 2022). Furthermore, while the detrimental effects of burnout on employees have been established (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017), it is crucial to investigate the extent to which the association between job demands and burnout is influenced by workplace FOMO. As a result,

the FOMO on important information, social experiences or professional opportunities may be heightened during this period.

This study focuses on the investigation of workplace FOMO and burnout, while also examining the influential factors that might impact this potential relationship. Specifically, the primary objective of this study is to examine if the workplace FOMO affect positively burnout. To investigate this matter, the revised Job Demands-Resources model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017) will be used to illustrate the functioning of job demands. Moreover, the potential influence of remote working and quantitative workload to the workplace FOMO and burnout will be examined. The core reason of this research inquiry is to analyze whether the emerging reality has induced changes in the psychological well-being of employees. Finally, the function of self-efficacy as personal resource in the relationship between workplace FOMO and burnout will be researched with the broader aim to examine a potential factor of mitigating workplace FOMO and burnout.

The function of Workplace FOMO

In a general sense, FOMO reflects individuals' desire to stay updated with advancements and participate in social gatherings (Przybylski et al., 2013). According to Deci and Ryan (2000), all human beings have psychological basic needs, such as the need to feel competent (White, 1959), related or belonging, which enhances individuals' motivation (Baumeister & Leary, 1995) and autonomous (De Charms, 1968). Self-determination theory (SDT) is based on the premise that humans have an inherent inclination and drive toward psychological growth, internalization, and well-being (Deci & Ryan, 2000). SDT suggests that individuals interact with their environment, both influencing and being influenced by it, which can either support or impede their natural progression toward fulfillment (Deci & Ryan, 2000). The imperative to remain abreast of progress and stay informed about emerging opportunities can generate heightened stress and fatigue, both mentally and physically, while depleting energy resources; consequently, this can have detrimental effects on individuals, as evidenced by Budnick et al. (2016).

In addition to its relevance in social circumstances, the idea of FOMO is equally applicable in the context of work. In a rapidly evolving world, it is essential for employees to maintain currency and engage in ongoing professional development (Da Fonseca et al., 2019). Workplace FOMO pertains to employees' apprehension about missing out on opportunities

within the working environment, such as establishing professional connections, acquiring valuable information, and participating in crucial organizational decisions and projects (Budnick et al., 2020). According to the research conducted by Budnick et al. (2020), workplace FOMO is associated with two distinct forms of exclusion. The first form is relational exclusion, which encompasses the fear among employees that missed networking opportunities, and the inability to sustain business relationships, which may negatively impact their professional connections. The second form is informational exclusion, which encompasses employees' concerns about being uninformed regarding pertinent social or task-related information within a group.

The persistent fear of missing out on specific experiences in the working environment necessitates a heightened effort from the employees to stay abreast of ongoing developments. This effort often leads to depletion of energy and consequently exhaustion (Budnick et al., 2020). This absence of energy represents one of the dimensions of burnout (Schaufeli & Taris, 2005). According to the Job Demands-Resources Model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017), job demands encompass aspects of work that necessitate consistent physical and psychological effort, which are associated with certain costs, such as burnout (Demerouti et al., 2001). The continuous exertion of keeping up with the advancements experienced by employees can be considered as job demand and result in exhaustion. Conversely, job resources encompass physical, psychological, social or organizational elements of work that (1) help mitigate the associated physical and psychological costs of work demands, (2) contribute to the attainment of work objectives, and (3) foster personal and professional growth, development and learning (Demerouti & Bakker, 2011).

The influence of Workplace FOMO on Burnout

Burnout constitutes the work-related psychological condition, fact that sets it apart from depression (Aydemir & Icelli, 2013). It encompasses three distinct components, (1) emotional exhaustion, the depletion of one's mental resources at work; (2) cynicism, a detached attitude toward one's employment and people who are related on the working environment; and (3) reduced professional efficacy, a lack of achievement and productivity at work (Maslach & Jackson, 1981). Additionally, in accordance with the existing burnout literature, it is assumed that burnout can contribute to various health issues such as depression, cardiovascular disease, or psychosomatic complaints (Melamed et al., 2006). Prior studies have substantiated the link between burnout and various health issues such as sleep disorders, depression, and obesity

(Salvagioni et al., 2017). Furthermore, it exerts detrimental impacts on organizations too, including increased rates of absenteeism, reduced productivity, and early retirement (Chullen, 2014; Russel, 2014). Given the multitude of issues induced by burnout, it is imperative to elucidate the potential factors contributing to its occurrence.

In alignment with the revised Job Demands-Resources model (JD-R), burnout is posited to stem from high job demands and insufficient job resources, with a shift toward treating burnout as a single construct rather than a two-dimensional one (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). Thus, burnout is expected to serve as a mediating factor between job demands and employees' health and well-being, partially explaining this relationship through the gradual depletion of mental resources. This process is known as the "energetic" or "health impairment" pathway within the revised JD-R model and it posits that the prolonged exposure to high levels of job demands increases the risk of burnout, which has an impact on employees' health (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). This study aims to examine the influence of workplace FOMO on burnout and explore its potential role as a job demand that could contribute to burnout development.

According to Budnick et al., (2020), individuals with higher levels of workplace FOMO may be more susceptible to perceiving heightened social demands within their work environment due to their aversion to missing out. Consequently, they are more inclined to expend mental effort contemplating the social aspects of work, thereby lacking sufficient recovery time to disengage from work-related thoughts or tasks, ultimately leading to increased experiences of burnout. Furthermore, in accordance with the Job Demands-Resources Model (Bakker et al., 2004) suggests that the job demands can deplete mental and psychological resources, thus contributing to the development of burnout. The presence of FOMO can exhaust these resources, as employees make considerable efforts to stay informed across various domains, e.g. social activities (Baker et al., 2016). Therefore, a potential connection can be inferred between workplace FOMO as a job demand and the occurrence of burnout. The present study extends its investigation to include the examination of remote working and quantitative workload, specifically exploring how these factors directly, and indirectly through their association with FOMO influence burnout.

Hypothesis 1: Workplace Fear of Missing Out is positively related to burnout of employees, in such a way that the levels of burnout are increased when the levels of workplace FOMO are higher.

The impact of the Workplace FOMO on the relationship between Remote Working, Quantitative Workload and Burnout

As a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic, individuals had to explore alternative approaches of working. A considerable proportion of employees have shifted to remote working in recent years in order to remain productive and connected (Battisti et al., 2022; Ozimek, 2020). In response to the need for remote working, some individuals opted to work solely from home, while others adopted a hybrid model, splitting their work hours between the home and the office. Such arrangements have been associated with various challenges and drawbacks, including decreased face to face collaboration and communication among team members, reduced work-life balance, and potential feelings of isolation and disconnection from the workplace.

Furthermore, the physical strain of prolonged computer usage and the psychological effects of being isolated from regular interactions with coworkers make remote working a substantial job demand (Crawford et al., 2010). Job demands, according to Demerouti et al. (2001), are the distinctive physical, social, or organizational components of the work that require persistent physical or cognitive effort and are hence connected with burnout. According to Lazarus & Folkman (1984), job demands can be distinguished in two categories: challenge and hindrance. Challenge demands can serve as a motivating factor for employees' growth, and facilitate an active way of working. Conversely, hindrance demands impede personal growth and promote a passive coping style in relation to job tasks. Remote working could be conceptualized as a hindrance demand due to the potential physical strain and isolation it can induce. Based on the health impairment process of Job Demands-Resources model, job demands increase the risk of burnout, when they are present in high amounts for a prolonged time (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004).

This job demand experienced during remote working may also challenges individuals' inherent need for social belonging and their desire to stay updated with relevant developments. This can be attributed to the fact that remote working arrangements may not allow for in-person meetings between colleagues, leading to an increase fear of missing out on crucial conversations or developments. Drawing from the principles of the SDT, the difficulty on fulfillment of the social belonging need contributes to the amplification of workplace FOMO and stress among employees (Baumeister & Tice, 1990). In conclusion, the influence of the challenges associated

with the remote working, and the heightened FOMO could elevate the susceptibility to burnout among individuals in the workforce.

Hypothesis 2: The positive relationship between remote working and burnout is partially explained by workplace FOMO, in such a way that high levels of remote working will increase the levels of workplace FOMO, which in turn will contribute to higher levels of burnout (mediation effect).

Furthermore, in relation to the remote working, particular attention should be given to the aspect of quantitative workload. According to Demerouti et al. (2001), quantitative workload pertains to the excessive burden placed on employees and it is categorized as a job demand. It constitutes a recognized factor that contributes to the development of burnout (Demerouti et al., 2001). Moreover, recent studies have highlighted that the quantitative workload experienced by the employees is not only associated with higher levels of stress and burnout, but it is also significantly linked to FOMO; in a recent study by Hoşgör et al. (2021), it was discovered that higher levels of perceived work overload among nurses were positively linked to elevated levels of FOMO. The relationship between these factors is likely to be amplified due to the workplace transformations resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic and remote working.

According to Rousseau et al. (2016) the workload is still high and perhaps at increased rates, because of the more time and energy, that needs to coordinate a task, take the confirmation from the manager and complete a task without office technology. Additionally, it is important to recognize that the notion of the digital workplace transcends its conventional understanding as a continuously evolving collection of workplace technology. It encompasses a synergetic combination of physical, cultural, and digital components in the workplace (Dery et al., 2017), that reshape work practices and redefine the nature of work itself (Baptista et al., 2020; Wajcman and Rose, 2011), making it more complicated and the communication between employees more difficult.

In summary, while the detrimental effects of burnout on employees have been well-established (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017), it is crucial to explore the extent to which the association between workload and burnout is influenced by the presence of workplace FOMO, particularly within the context, which pandemic COVID-19 caused.

Hypothesis 3: The positive relationship between quantitative workload and burnout is partially explained by workplace FOMO in such a way that higher levels of

quantitative workload will increase the levels of workplace FOMO, which in turn will contribute to higher levels of burnout (mediation effect).

The role of Self-efficacy in the relationship between Workplace FOMO and Burnout

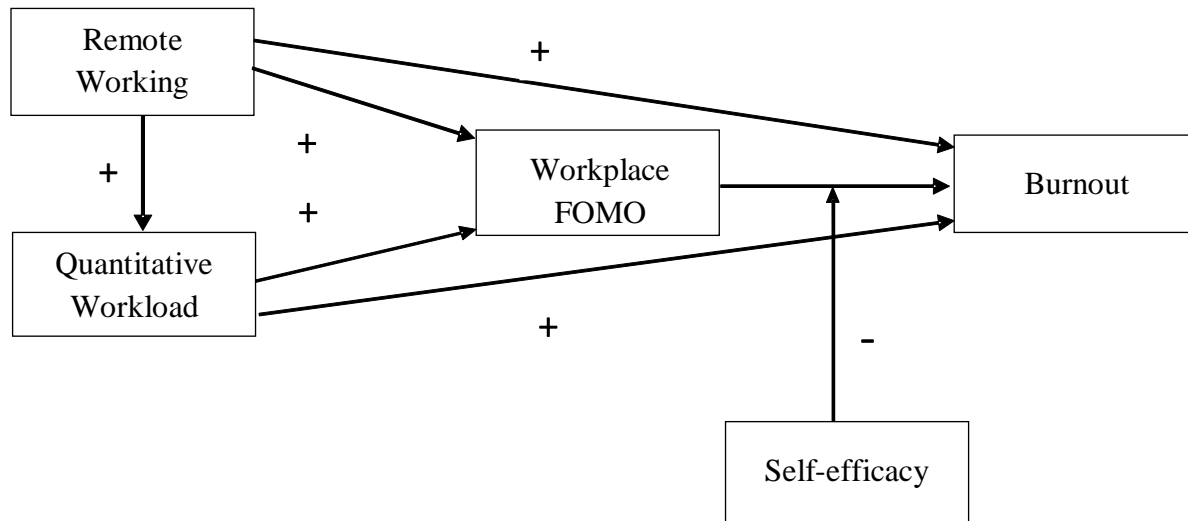
The Job Demands-Resources Model (JD-R) acknowledges the importance of personal resources in mitigating the negative impact of contextual factors, such as job demands (Demerouti et al., 2001). Personal resources have a functional role in achieving work-related objectives while fostering personal growth and development (Schaufeli & Taris, 2014). Self-efficacy constitutes one such personal resource, which represents a personal attribute influencing an individual's belief in their capability to carry out a plan of action in potentially challenging circumstances (Bandura, 1997). In the occupational context, self-efficacy pertains to an individual's confidence in their ability to utilize the necessary skills for completing job-specific tasks, effectively dealing with job-related challenges and stress, and managing the associated outcomes (Shoji et al., 2016).

According to Jerusalem & Schwarzer (1992) self-efficacy is considered as a personal resource that mitigates the impact of demanding environmental factors in the process of stress appraisal. Experiencing workplace FOMO represents one of the stressful circumstances in the workplace (Budnick et al., 2020). Self-efficacy can be seen as motivator for the individuals in effectively handling work demands and specifically the stress that is caused due to FOMO (Xanthopoulou et al., 2007). In accordance with the Conservation of Resources theory it is crucial for employees to preserve their resources in order to effectively manage and navigate stressful circumstances (Hobfoll, 2002). One potential source of stress can arise from elevated levels of workplace FOMO as well as burnout symptoms. Summarizing, the presence of self-efficacy, as a personal resource, has the potential to attenuate the association between FOMO and burnout.

Hypothesis 4: Self-efficacy moderates the relationship between workplace FOMO and Burnout in such a way that the relationship gets stronger for employees scoring low on self-efficacy and weaker for employees scoring high on self-efficacy (moderation effect).

Figure 1

Hypothesized Research Model of the Relationship between Remote Working, Quantitative Workload, Workplace FOMO, Self-efficacy, and Burnout



Method

Participants

The data collection involved employees from various sectors, comprising both remote and non-remote workers. Participants were eligible to complete the survey, if they met the inclusion criteria of reading and understanding English, being above 18 years old and working in an organization for at least 12 hours per week.

The initial number of participants was 302 individuals. A total of 139 participants were excluded from the analysis due to incomplete questionnaires. An outlier was excluded, with the ultimate objective of preserving the integrity of the results. Ultimately, a total of 162 participants were included in the analysis. Among them, 63 were working remotely or hybrid and 99 were only working at the office. The distribution of gender revealed that out of the total participants, 88 were females (54%), 71 males (44%), 2 participants were non-binary/third gender (1%) and 1 of them preferred not to say (almost 1%). In terms of working sector, 22% of them were working in Healthcare (N = 35), 9% were working in Computer and Technology sector (N = 15), almost 9% were working in Education (N = 14) and 60% were working in other sectors (N = 36). The age range spanned from 20 till 64 years old (M= 33, SD= 13).

Design and procedure

The survey was launched by a team of three researchers, focusing on the same main topic, FOMO. Qualtrics was used for the creation and sharing the questionnaire. The approval for this study has been granted by the Faculty Ethics Review Board after the research project was registered at the Utrecht University Student Ethics Review & Registration Site (UU-SER) with reference number 23-0785. The Faculty Ethics Review Board concerned ethical aspects, as well as data management and privacy issues (including the GDPR). The survey was conducted online, with WhatsApp and LinkedIn served as the primary platforms for sharing the questionnaire. Additionally, colleagues, friends and family were approached, aiming the variety of the sample. The survey's purpose was stated at the beginning of the questionnaire. Furthermore, there were some inquiries (age, English and at least 12 hours working per week) in order eligibility for the participation would be checked. The survey had a duration of approximately 10-12 minutes, and the participation was anonymous and confidential. The participants could terminate the survey at any point, without providing a reason or facing additional consequences.

Measures

Data were collected by means of an online survey. The whole questionnaire was consisted of the following areas: (1) sociodemographic characteristics, (2) workplace FOMO, (3) burnout, (4) quantitative workload, (5) remote working, and (6) self-efficacy. These scales were further explained in Appendix A.

Sociodemographic characteristics

To determine participants' eligibility for the research, inquiries were made regarding their age, English language comprehension, and employment status within an organization for a minimum of 12 hours per week. In addition, the participants were asked about the gender, the country of residence and the education level.

Workplace FOMO

In order to measure the workplace FOMO, the scale of Budnick et al. (2020) was used. This scale was consisted of 10 items and it was rated on a six-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (6). Two examples of the items were "I worry that I might miss out on valuable work-related information" and "I worry that I will not know what is happening at work". In the present survey, the scale was reliable ($\alpha = .92$).

Burnout

To assess Burnout, the Burnout Assessment Tool (BAT)-scale (Schaufeli et al., 2019) was utilized. The specific scale was consisted of 13 items, which were rated on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from never (1) to always (5). Higher values in this scale indicated high burnout symptoms. Two examples of the questionnaire were “At work, I feel mentally exhausted” and “Everything I do at work requires a great deal of effort”. In the present study, the scale was reliable ($\alpha = .84$).

Remote Working

The time spent in remote working was assessed by the following questions: “How many hours do you work in total per week?”, “How many hours do you work remotely per week?” and “For how long are you working partially or fully remotely?”. For the analysis, only the question “How many hours do you work remotely per week?” was utilized, while the remaining questions were considered exploratory.

Quantitative Workload

Quantitative workload, which referred to the amount of work that employees are required to perform (Spector & Jex, 1998), was assessed by using the scale of Llorens-Serrano et al. (2020), which consisted of 11 items. It measured all the directions of workload and it was rated on a five-point scale ranging from hardly ever (1) to always (5). In the analysis of this study, only four of the items were used to measure the quantitative workload. An example was “Is your workload unevenly distributed so it piles up?”. One of those items had to be reversed. In the present study, the scale with the four items focusing on quantitative workload, was reliable ($\alpha = .72$).

Self-efficacy

To evaluate self-efficacy, the Generalized Self Efficacy scale (Schwarzer, 1992) was used. It is consisted of 10 items. It was a four-point scale extending from not at all true (1) to exactly true (4). Two examples of the scale were: “I can always manage to solve difficult problems if I try hard enough” and “I can solve most problems if I invest the necessary effort”. In the current study the scale was reliable ($\alpha = .87$).

Statistical Analysis

All the analyses conducted by using SPSS and Process Models 4 and 1 (Hayes, 2022). Furthermore, to test the correlations, multiple linear regression analysis was conducted. The difficulty with the Process Models 4 was that it did not involve a second independent variable, which in this study was important. In order to tackle this problem, the Process Model 4 was run two times, separately for every independent variable (remote working and quantitative workload). It was important to highlight the function of every variable within the study. Burnout was the dependent variable of the study; workplace FOMO had the role of the mediator between the two independent variables (remote working and quantitative workload) and burnout. Finally, self-efficacy was the moderator of the relationship between workplace FOMO (independent variable) and burnout (dependent variable).

Results

Descriptive Statistics & Pearson Correlations

The means, standard deviations and correlations between the variables of the study were presented in the Table 1. The direct effect (hypothesis 1), the mediation effects (hypotheses 2 and 3) and the moderation effect (hypothesis 4) were tested. Results of the Pearson Correlations indicated the direct effects of the variables. Workplace FOMO and burnout were significantly related ($r = .28, p < .01$). Furthermore, workplace FOMO and quantitative workload were positively related ($r = .27, p < .01$). Moreover, a statistically significant relationship found between quantitative workload and burnout ($r = .38, p < .01$). Lastly, the relationship between self-efficacy and burnout was statistically significant ($r = -.17, p < .01$). The results of the analyses of the indirect effects (mediations and moderation) are listed below.

Table 1*Means, SDs and Pearson correlations of study variables*

Variable	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5
1. Remote Working	13.33	22.58	-				
2. Quantitative Workload	9.86	3.07	.062	-			
3. Self-efficacy	30.52	4.7	.052	-.09	-		
4. wFOMO	26.92	9.2	.102	.269**	.002	-	
5. Burnout	28.1	7.28	.08	.384**	-.175*	.280**	-

Note: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$; wFOMO = workplace Fear of Missing Out

Assumptions

Prior to conducting the PROCESS MODEL analyses, an evaluation was preformed to assess the assumptions underlying the statistical models. The assumptions of the multiple linear regression model were examined to ensure the validity of the analysis.

Regarding the analysis of the linearity assumption, which stated that a linear relationship existed between each predictor variable and the response variables, the analyses showed that there was a standardized linear relationship between the independent variables of remote working, quantitative workload and self-efficacy and the dependent variable of burnout. The standardized coefficients of the independent variables with burnout were: remote working ($b = .01, p = .89$), quantitative workload ($b = .31, p < 0.001$), workplace FOMO ($b = .19, p = .01$), and self-efficacy ($b = -.14, p = .05$). Consequently, the assumption of linearity was met.

The assumption of independence posited that the observations were independent and it was crucial for the validity of the statistical tests. The Durbin-Watson statistic indicated that the residuals values were all around 2. Therefore, the assumption of independence was met too.

The assumption of no multicollinearity posited that none of the predictors were highly correlated with each other. According to the results, the Collinearity Tolerance values of the independent variables were below 10. More specifically, the Collinearity Tolerance values for the remote working was .91, for the quantitative workload was .91 and for the self-efficacy was .98. Moreover, the statistics Variance Inflation Factors (VIF) were below 5 for all the variables.

Consequently, the assumption that there was no severe multicollinearity among the independent variables was met.

Finally, the assumption of homoscedasticity stated that the residuals of the model were normally distributed. According to the results of the Regression Model, the values of the variables were normally distributed. Consequently, the last assumption of homoscedasticity was met too.

Workplace FOMO and Burnout

To begin with, the first hypothesis stated that there was a positive relationship between workplace FOMO and burnout. Specifically, elevated levels of workplace FOMO could be associated with increased levels of burnout. The correlation of workplace FOMO and Burnout was tested.

The results provided in Table 1 showed that workplace FOMO had a significant positive effect on burnout ($r = .18, p < .001$). The correlation analysis suggested that higher levels of workplace FOMO were associated with higher levels of burnout among employees. Consequently, the Hypothesis 1 was supported.

Remote Working, Workplace FOMO, and Burnout

The mediation hypothesis proposed that the relationship between remote working and burnout was partially explained by workplace FOMO, in such a way that higher levels of remote working would increase the levels of workplace FOMO, which in turn would contribute to higher levels of burnout. However, the analysis showed non-significant results, indicating a lack of support for Hypothesis 2. Specifically, the direct effect of remote working to burnout was not significant ($b = .02, t = .68, p > .05, 95\% \text{ CI } [-.03, .07]$). Additionally, the direct effect of remote working to workplace FOMO was not statistically significant ($b = .04, t = 1.3, p > .05, 95\% \text{ CI } [-.02, .10]$). Therefore, there was not significant relationship between those variables and Hypothesis 2 was rejected.

The findings suggested that workplace FOMO did not have a mediating role in the relationship between remote working and burnout. Consequently, the findings suggested that remote working did not directly contribute to burnout nor did it induce burnout through workplace FOMO.

Quantitative Workload, Workplace FOMO, and Burnout

The mediation hypothesis proposed that workplace FOMO mediated the relationship between quantitative workload and burnout in such a way that the higher levels of quantitative workload would increase the levels of workplace FOMO which in turn would contribute to higher levels of burnout. Mediation analysis was performed to assess the mediating role of workplace FOMO in the relationship between quantitative workload and burnout. The results revealed a statistically significant direct effect of quantitative workload on burnout ($b = .79, t = 4.46, p < .001, 95\% \text{ CI } [.44, 1.14]$). Additionally, there was a significant relationship between quantitative workload and workplace FOMO ($b = .81, t = 3.53, p < .001, 95\% \text{ CI } [.36, 1.26]$). Moreover, the direct effect of workplace FOMO to burnout was supported in the main hypothesis. The indirect effect of workplace FOMO to the relationship between quantitative workload and burnout was tested too. The findings indicated that the lower and upper confidence intervals did not encompass zero, meaning workplace FOMO mediated the relationship between quantitative workload and burnout ($b = .12, 95\% \text{ CI } [.01, .29]$). Consequently, the results of the analysis supported the Hypothesis 3.

The findings suggested that workplace FOMO explained partially the relationship between quantitative workload and burnout. Specifically, it was indicated that the influence of quantitative workload on burnout was partially mediated by workplace FOMO. The proportion of the total effect of workplace FOMO in the relationship between quantitative workload and burnout was 13%. This implied that employees experiencing higher levels of quantitative workload might be more likely to experience burnout, partially due to the increased experience of workplace FOMO.

Self-efficacy, Workplace FOMO, and Burnout

Finally, the study examined the moderating effect of self-efficacy on the relationship between workplace FOMO and burnout. According to the hypothesis, self-efficacy moderated the relationship between workplace FOMO and burnout, in such a way that the relationship got stronger for employees scoring low on self-efficacy and weaker for employees scoring high on self-efficacy. In alternative terms, the relationship between workplace FOMO and burnout would be diminished when self-efficacy rates were high. The results showed that there was a statistically significant relationship between self-efficacy and burnout ($b = -.23, t = -2.01, p <$

.05, 95% CI [-.45, -.01]). Additionally, the regression analysis showed a statistically significant positive direct effect of workplace FOMO to burnout ($b = .19, t = 3.26, p = .001, 95\% \text{ CI } [.07, .30]$). The findings of the interaction between self-efficacy and workplace FOMO to burnout revealed a statistically significant positive indirect effect ($b = .04, t = 3.80, p < .001, 95\% \text{ CI } [.02, .07]$). Consequently, the moderation Hypothesis was rejected.

The findings demonstrated a significant positive relationship between self-efficacy and burnout, indicating that an increasing in self-efficacy was accompanied by an increase in burnout. Moreover, a positive direct relationship between workplace FOMO and burnout was observed, indicating that as workplace FOMO was increased, burnout was increased too (consistent with the previous hypotheses). Contrary to the initial hypothesis, the moderation analysis revealed that the relationship between workplace FOMO and burnout was moderated by self-efficacy positively, indicating that as self-efficacy increased, the relationship between workplace FOMO and burnout was increased too.

Discussion

The objective of this study was to investigate whether a positive relationship existed between FOMO at work place and employee burnout. Additionally, this study also explored the impact of workplace FOMO on the relationship between remote working, quantitative workload, and burnout. Finally, the investigation considered the potential impact of self-efficacy on the relationship between workplace FOMO and burnout.

The relationship between Workplace FOMO and Burnout

Based on the main hypothesis, it was expected that there was a positive relationship between workplace FOMO and burnout. Specifically, it was hypothesized that when workplace FOMO increased, burnout was elevated too. Validating the preliminary hypothesis, it was confirmed that a positive association existed between them. The results substantiated that individuals experiencing higher levels of workplace FOMO were prone to experiencing greater levels of burnout. These results can be explained by the potential role of the workplace FOMO as job demand.

In line with the SDT (Deci & Ryan, 2000), workplace FOMO signifies an important need of relatedness among employees. However, it can impose a significant burden, as employees are required to maintain constant vigilance, resulting to mental and physical exhaustion as well as

diminished energy resources (Budnick et al., 2016). Additionally, in the case that the need for belonging remains unfulfilled, employees may disengage from the working environment and feel less connected to the purpose of the organization, resulting to cynicism (Costin et al., 2023). Considering these factors and the JD-R model (Maslach & Jackson, 1981), workplace FOMO can potentially be perceived as a job demand, because it can lead to mental and physical exhaustion, and cynicism. Within the framework of the revised Job Demands-Resources model and “health impairment process” (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004), workplace FOMO as job demand can exacerbate burnout and subsequently result in health problems.

The results were in line with the study of Budnick et al. (2020), which stated that employees with a high need to be included in all the social and work-related activities of the company felt more exhausted, and lacked time for recovery. Consequently, the considerable proportion of job demands associated with the workplace FOMO and the decreased job resources such as time, could precipitate burnout.

Remote Working, Burnout, and Workplace FOMO as a mediator

Based on the mediation Hypothesis, it was anticipated that the post pandemic COVID-19 changes in work patterns would exacerbate employees’ health issues. Specifically, it was stated that remote working would intensify burnout levels by fostering the development of workplace FOMO. Contrary to what was expected, the relationship between remote working and workplace FOMO was not supported by the current study. The findings showed that there was not direct effect between remote working and burnout, neither indirect effect with workplace FOMO acting as a mediator in the relationship between remote working and burnout. Specifically, the findings did not provide evidence to support the notion that increasing levels of remote working corresponded to higher levels of burnout. Furthermore, the results did not indicate a significant relationship between elevated levels of workplace FOMO in the context of high remote working and subsequent increases in burnout.

Contrary to the anticipated hypothesis, the findings indicated that remote working did not function as a hindrance job demand and it did not directly impact burnout (Crawford et al., 2010). According to Lazarus & Folkman (1984), job demands can be categorized into challenge demands, which foster motivation and growth, and hindrance demands, which impede personal development. In this study, remote working was conceptualized as a hindrance demand due to its

potential to create obstacles and deplete energy resources, thereby impeding employees' goal attainment in a context characterized by reduced technological support and increased isolation. The findings of this study are also in contrast with the recent study conducted by Costin et al. (2023), which posited that remote working could contribute to burnout as a result of decreased connection with colleagues and the organization.

There might exist a few plausible explanations for the rejection of the relationship between remote working, workplace FOMO (mediator) and burnout. A plausible justification for the absence of significant findings in this study can be the interpretation of remote working, which could be reframed as a challenging demand (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984) which motivates employees and elicit positive emotions, such as excitement, through participation in novel work experiences, contrasting with the traditional office work of previous years. Furthermore, another potential explanation could be the fact that the results are related to the sample of the research. The employees who participated may have possessed additional protective resources that aided them in avoiding the adverse effects of the remote working and were not investigated on this study, such as autonomy.

Quantitative Workload, Burnout and Workplace FOMO as a mediator

The mediation hypothesis posited that the positive relationship between quantitative workload and burnout is partially mediated by workplace FOMO. Specifically, it was proposed that higher levels of quantitative workload would lead to increased levels of workplace FOMO, which, in turn, would contribute to elevated levels of burnout. Consistent with the expectations, the established association between quantitative workload and burnout was confirmed in this study too, with workplace FOMO emerging as a mediator in this relationship. Although the direct effect of quantitative workload on burnout was found to be significant, an amplification of this relationship was observed in the presence of workplace FOMO. Consequently, workplace FOMO mediated partially the relationship between quantitative workload and burnout.

The role of the workplace FOMO in the relationship between quantitative workload and burnout was to mediate it and increase it. Consistent with a previous study (Hoşgör et al., 2021), there is a significant relationship between quantitative workload and workplace FOMO, which was demonstrated in the present research too. This association can be attributed to the substantial proportion of working hours that restrict employees from actively engaging in desired social and

professional activities. In line with the study conducted by Demerouti et al. (2001), it can be observed that quantitative workload can be considered as a job demand, and its prolonged presence is linked to the emergence of burnout symptoms. Moreover, a previous study (Fridchay & Reizer, 2022) showed that FOMO was associated with burnout, indicating that workplace FOMO could also affect burnout levels. Consequently, the progression of the prior studies aligns with the findings of the current study, supporting the relationship between quantitative workload, burnout, and the mediating role of workplace FOMO.

The moderating effect of Self-efficacy

According to the last hypothesis, it was anticipated that self-efficacy would act as a moderator in the relationship between workplace FOMO and burnout. Specifically, it was hypothesized that higher levels of self-efficacy would weaken the link between workplace FOMO and burnout, indicating a negative relationship between those variables. Contrary to the hypothesis, the findings demonstrated that self-efficacy moderated positively the impact of workplace FOMO on burnout symptoms. This relationship was confirmed for moderate and higher levels of self-efficacy. This implies that individuals with moderate or high levels of self-efficacy were more prone to experiencing elevated levels of workplace FOMO and burnout.

The results were in contrast with the previous study of Jerusalem & Schwarzer (1992), which emphasized the role of personal resources in mitigating the adverse effects of high job demands, such as workplace FOMO. Self-efficacy was defined as an individual's belief in their own abilities to successfully perform job tasks (Shoji et al., 2016), and could be regarded as a personal resource. Although it was confirmed that self-efficacy can mitigate employee burnout, in the presence of workplace FOMO does not serve as a protective factor. Instead, it amplifies the impact of workplace FOMO on burnout.

There might exist a few plausible explanations for the rejection of the negative moderation effect of self-efficacy on workplace FOMO and burnout. A plausible justification for these results could be the presence of other variables, which affect the relationship between self-efficacy, workplace FOMO and burnout, such as objective job performance. Previous research has indicated that self-efficacy positively influences job performance (Lai & Chen, 2012). However, it is conceivable that excessive levels of workplace FOMO may undermine job performance (Fridchay & Reizer, 2022), thereby nullifying the positive impact of self-efficacy in

job performance, and consequently, on mitigating burnout. An alternative justification could be that the sample was unadjusted based on factors such as country of origin or occupation. This lack of adjustment could introduce bias, and therefore influence the results of the moderation.

Strengths and Limitations

The present study contributes to the expand of the existing literature in many ways. First of all, it adds to knowledge about the relationship between FOMO and burnout and the role of the quantitative workload the years after COVID-19. Although we already know that burnout constitutes a serious issue for employees (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017) and quantitative workload is linked to this, it is important to know that the impact of this relationship is partially attributable to FOMO too. Furthermore, this study offers an insight on the role of self-efficacy. Although the moderating effect of self-efficacy on the relationship between workplace FOMO and burnout was not confirmed in the right direction (the results revealed positive instead of negative moderation), the findings showed that there is a relationship between self-efficacy and burnout, contributing to the existing literature. Overall, the results can function as inspiration for future research on resolving problems in similar situations in the future by overcoming the current limitations of the specific study.

This study has a few limitations that need to be mentioned. The first methodological limitation that could have affected the results is the type of the study. This cross-sectional study could offer insights by selecting data at a single time point and it is unable to determine causality, as longitudinal studies do. Due to the emerging nature of remote working as a contemporary reality, which has not yet become fully established in all countries, it remains uncertain whether a causal relationship can be established between remote work and burnout in subsequent periods. Another potential limitation could be the lack of standardization in the sample composition with respect to the country. The majority of participants were from Turkey (87.2%), which raises the possibility that the results may be influenced by the specific characteristics or context of this particular country. Furthermore, the sample size could impact the external validity of the study. The number of participants was 162, which might be considered as a small sample for the generalizability of the findings. The results may not be representative of the larger population.

Theoretical and Practical Implications

This research constitutes an attempt to comprehensively investigate the underlying factors associated with the relationship between workplace FOMO and burnout, striving to gain a deeper understanding of their intricate dynamics. Additionally, the examination of self-efficacy could provide valuable insights into the potential guidance that organizations can offer in order to decrease the adverse consequences of burnout. The results of this study carry significant theoretical and practical implications for organizations.

First of all, the results of the research significantly contributed to the theory development. In line with the JD-R Model, the study findings provided empirical evidence supporting the notion that workplace FOMO can function as a job demand, leading to elevated levels of employee burnout. Furthermore, it contributes to the existing literature, by providing empirical evidence regarding the influence of quantitative workload as job demand. Moreover, it offers valuable insights into the role of workplace FOMO as another job demand. The study provided evidence of the moderating role of high self-efficacy levels in the relationship between workplace FOMO and burnout, thereby proposing a significant association between these variables.

Following the theoretical implications, this study offers practical implications for addressing the issues of workplace FOMO and burnout in the working environment. It is important for organizations to provide regular psychological programs that act proactively, and prevent their occurrence. These programs could involve all the employees and focus on strategies in order to increase the inclusion of employees in social and working activities (e.g. weekly decision-making meetings which incorporate all the employees of a domain). In this manner, the employees would not feel excluded or that they are missing opportunities for growth or socializing. Another possible practical implication that can be used in the working environment could be teambuilding sessions among employees, in specific working hours, so everyone can participate.

Furthermore, the results showed that the extensive quantitative workload might be harmful for the employees, increasing the rates of workplace FOMO and consequently burnout. In contemporary times, the task of diminishing workload and recruiting workforce size poses significant challenges. As a result, it becomes crucial for organizations to adopt strategies that effectively alleviate the burden placed on employees. One of those strategies, as the JD-R Model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017; Demerouti et al., 2001) states, could be to enhance the allocation of

job resources to the employees. One of those resources could be autonomy, signifying the extent of employees' control over their own job responsibilities. In that way they would feel more capable to control their time and the tasks.

Another practical implication of this study could be the cultivation of self-efficacy in order to decrease burnout. It is crucial to invent precaution individual, online psychological seminars for the employees regarding to their self-efficacy levels and the importance of it. Moreover, the managers could report and reward employees often in order to show them that their efforts are appreciated.

Future Research

Further studies may explore other potential factors that could influence directly workplace FOMO and indirectly burnout. For instance, investigating alternative forms of workload and examining individual traits and characteristics could provide valuable insights in this domain. Furthermore, despite the apparent lack of impact on the connection between workplace FOMO and burnout observed in remote working conditions, it is plausible that a longitudinal study investigating the impact of remote working on workplace FOMO and burnout would overcome the limitation associated with the nascent nature of remote working and provide a more comprehensive understanding of the subject. Moreover, it is imperative to explore other contextual factors unique to the post-COVID-19 working environment, that could potentially exert an influence on this relationship. Finally, subsequent studies may further explore job performance or other personal characteristics that could mitigate the relationship between workplace FOMO and burnout, such as the characteristics of the Big Five Personality Traits, openness, neuroticism, conscientiousness, agreeableness and extraversion (Costa & McCrae, 1985). These attributes can contribute to mitigating the occurrence of burnout on the working environment.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study provides valuable insights into the complex dynamics of burnout in the context of workplace FOMO and shed light on the roles of remote working, quantitative workload and self-efficacy. The results demonstrated that the direct effect of workplace FOMO on burnout was confirmed, indicating that as workplace FOMO levels were higher, burnout levels were increased too. However, according to the analysis there was no significant link

between remote working, workplace FOMO and burnout, implying that other factors may be influencing the relationship between them. On the other hand, quantitative workload increased the workplace FOMO, which in turn increased the levels of burnout, highlighting the importance of considering workplace FOMO as a potential mechanism linking those variables. Finally, the results did not support the negative moderating role of self-efficacy on the relationship between workplace FOMO and burnout, revealing instead that the relationship between them is increased when the levels of self-efficacy are higher. This result highlights the importance of further investigation of the topic. In general, it is critical to continue investigating the components that can mitigate the impact of workplace FOMO and burnout in order to prevent challenges in the working environment.

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Appendix A

Information Letter

Thank you for your interest in our study! Before you participate, it is important that you understand why we do this study and what it involves. Please take the time to read this information. If anything is unclear, do not hesitate to contact our research team. We highly appreciate your participation!

The aim of this research is to gain insight into the relationship between workplace Fear Of Missing Out (FOMO) and well-being and performance at work. Workplace FOMO arises when employees perceive that they are missing out workplace opportunities when absent or not digitally connected with their colleagues. With this research, we want to gain more insights into the causes and consequences of this phenomenon.

In case you decide to participate, we will ask you to fill out an online questionnaire answering questions about your work experiences, personal characteristics, and motivations. You will also be asked to answer a few statements about the extent to which you experience Fear of Missing Out at work. On average, it takes about 15 minutes to complete the questionnaire. We would like to invite you to answer the questions honestly and intuitively, it is your first instinct that matters. Moreover, there are no right or wrong answers.

You can participate if you:

- Can read and understand English
- Are above 18 years old
- Work in an organization for at least 12 hours per week

Participating is voluntary. You are free to decide whether you take part in this study and can stop participating at any moment during the survey without giving a reason for doing so, and without consequences.

This research has been approved by the Ethical Review Committee of the Faculty of Social Sciences, Utrecht University. The collected data will be completely anonymized, so that answers cannot be traced back to people. The researchers will only have access to the completely anonymized versions of the data for the remainder of the study. The research data will be kept on a server for a minimum of 10 years after publication of the research. This is in accordance with the guidelines of the VSNU Association of Universities in the Netherlands. More information about privacy can be found at <https://autoriteitpersoonsgegevens.nl/nl/onderwerpen/avg->

[europese-privacylegislation.](#)

If at any time you have questions about this study, your participation, or the treatment of your data, you can send an email to g.memis@students.uu.nl, m.haafkes@students.uu.nl or c.m.zimianiti@students.uu.nl.

In addition, if, following the questionnaire, you feel the need to talk about your (work) situation, you can contact the students mentioned above. Comments and questions can also be emailed to our supervisor, Dr. Maria Peeters (m.peeters@uu.nl).

If you want to submit an official complaint about the research, you can do so via the complaints officer of the Faculty of Social Sciences of Utrecht University, via

klachtenfunctionarisfetsocwet@uu.nl.

Many thanks!

The research team: Gökçe Memiş, Mabel Haafkes and Chrysoula Maria Zimianiti

Utrecht University, Department of Psychology – Social, Health and Organisational Psychology

Appendix B
Research Consent Form

I have read the introduction above and have been fully informed about the purpose of the research and the way in which my data is handled. I know that taking part is completely voluntary. I understand that I can withdraw my consent at any time during the study, without giving reasons and without consequences.

If you would like to participate in the survey and agree to the above, please click 'I consent' below to continue with the survey. If you do not agree, you will unfortunately not be able to participate in this study. In that case, you will be redirected to the end of the survey.

- “I consent to participating in this study and to the storage and use of my data for research purposes. I have read and understood the information provided in the information letter and have had the opportunity to ask questions.”
- “No, based on the information provided to me I prefer not to participate in this study.” If you do not consent, thank you for your time but you cannot continue with the questionnaire.

Appendix C

Scales

Items for measuring “Workplace Fear of Missing Out” (Budnick et al., 2020)

Please indicate your agreement with each statement while thinking of how you typically feel or feel on average when away (e.g., off duty) or disconnected (e.g., not available via email, text, or instant messaging devices) from work. When I am absent or disconnected from work...

1. I worry that I might miss important work-related updates.
2. I worry that I might miss out on valuable work-related information.
3. I worry that I will miss out on important work-related news.
4. I worry that I will miss out on important information that is relevant to my job.
5. I worry that I will not know what is happening at work.
6. I get anxious that I will miss out on an opportunity to make important business connections.
7. I am constantly thinking that I might miss opportunities to strengthen business contacts.
8. I am constantly thinking that I might miss opportunities to make new business contacts.
9. I worry that I will miss out on networking opportunities that my coworkers will have.
10. I fear that my coworkers might make business contacts that I won't make.

Items had to be rated on a five-point Likert scale ranging from ‘Strongly disagree’ to ‘Strongly agree’.

Items for measuring “Burnout” (Schaufeli et al., 2019)

The following statements are related to your work situation and how you experience this situation. Please state how often each statement applies to you.

1. At work, I feel mentally exhausted
2. After a day at work, I find it hard to recover my energy
3. At work, I feel physically exhausted
4. I struggle to find any enthusiasm for my work
5. I feel a strong aversion towards my job
6. I'm cynical about what my work means to others
7. At work, I have trouble staying focused

8. When I'm working, I have trouble concentrating
9. I make mistakes in my work because I have my mind on other things
10. At work, I feel unable to control my emotions
11. I do not recognize myself in the way I react emotionally at work
12. At work I may overreact unintentionally

Items had to be rated on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 'Never' to 'Always'.

Items for measuring “Quantitative Workload” - COPSOQ III (Llorens et al., 2020)

Please consider each of the following statements and indicate how well the descriptions fit your situation at work.

1. Is your workload unevenly distributed so it piles up?
2. How often do you not have time to complete all your work tasks?
3. Do you get behind with your work?
4. Do you have enough time for your work tasks?

Items had to be rated on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 'Hardly ever' to 'Always'.

Items for measuring “Self-efficacy” (Schwarzer, 1992)

The following statements refer to the way of feeling about your efficacy. Please rate your answer from “Not at all true” to “Exactly true”.

1. I can always manage to solve difficult problems if I try hard enough.
2. If someone opposes me, I can find the means and ways to get what I want.
3. It is easy for me to stick to my aims and accomplish my goals.
4. I am confident that I could deal efficiently with unexpected events.
5. Thanks to my resourcefulness, I know how to handle unforeseen situations.
6. I can solve most problems if I invest the necessary effort.
7. I can remain calm when facing difficulties because I can rely on my coping abilities.
8. When I am confronted with a problem, I can usually find several solutions.
9. If I am in trouble, I can usually think of a solution.
10. I can usually handle whatever comes my way.

Items had to be rated on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 'Not all true' to 'Exactly true'.