



Social Interaction, Social Recognition, and Fear of Missing Out among Beginner Climbers on Mount Sibayak

Sarah Nadia Hsb¹; Yummy Jumiati Marsa²

^{1,2}Universitas Islam Negeri Sumatera Utara, Medan, Indonesia

*Corresponding author: sarah0309222076@uinsu.ac.id

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Abstract: This study examines social interactions among climbers, the dynamics of social recognition, and the influence of *Fear of Missing Out* (FOMO) on novice climbers' decision-making in participating in climbing activities at Mount Sibayak. Mountain climbing has developed not only as a recreational and sporting activity but also as a space for social interaction and identity formation within climbing communities. This study employed a qualitative approach using a case study method. The participants consisted of ten novice climbers, comprising six females and four males, who were selected through purposive sampling. Data were collected through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation and analyzed through data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing. The findings indicate that social interaction among novice climbers is formed through communication, information exchange, cooperation, mutual assistance, and participation in collective activities. These interactions facilitate adaptation, social acceptance, and the development of a sense of belonging within the climbing community. Social media also plays an important role by providing exposure to climbing experiences, encouraging social comparison, and facilitating the pursuit of social recognition through digital responses. Such conditions contribute to the emergence of FOMO, particularly when novice climbers perceive themselves as being left behind by their peers' activities and experiences. Furthermore, FOMO influences decision-making by encouraging novice climbers to participate in climbing activities in order to maintain social involvement, obtain similar experiences, and avoid feelings of exclusion. The study concludes that FOMO among novice climbers is not solely associated with social media use but also emerges from the interaction between digital experiences, social recognition, social comparison, and direct involvement in the climbing community. Therefore, participation decisions should remain grounded in physical preparedness, adequate planning, and safety considerations.

Keywords: Social Interaction, Social Recognition, *Fear Of Missing Out*, Social Media, Beginner Hikers.

Abstrak: Penelitian ini mengkaji interaksi sosial antarpendaki, dinamika pengakuan sosial, serta pengaruh perilaku *Fear of Missing Out* (FOMO) terhadap pengambilan keputusan pendaki pemula dalam mengikuti kegiatan pendakian di Gunung Sibayak. Aktivitas pendakian gunung tidak hanya berkembang sebagai kegiatan olahraga dan rekreasi, tetapi juga menjadi ruang interaksi sosial dan pembentukan identitas dalam komunitas pendaki. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan metode studi kasus. Informan penelitian berjumlah sepuluh pendaki pemula yang terdiri atas enam perempuan dan empat laki-laki, yang dipilih menggunakan teknik purposive sampling. Data dikumpulkan melalui observasi, wawancara mendalam, dan dokumentasi, kemudian dianalisis melalui tahap kondensasi data, penyajian data, dan penarikan kesimpulan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa interaksi sosial pendaki pemula terbentuk melalui komunikasi, pertukaran informasi, kerja sama, saling membantu, dan keterlibatan dalam kegiatan bersama. Interaksi tersebut mendorong proses penyesuaian diri, penerimaan sosial, dan terbentuknya rasa memiliki terhadap komunitas pendaki. Media sosial juga memiliki peran penting melalui paparan pengalaman pendakian, perbandingan sosial, serta pencarian pengakuan melalui respons digital. Kondisi tersebut berkontribusi terhadap munculnya perilaku FOMO, terutama ketika pendaki pemula merasa tertinggal dari aktivitas dan pengalaman teman atau anggota komunitas lainnya. Selanjutnya, FOMO memengaruhi pengambilan keputusan dengan mendorong pendaki pemula untuk mengikuti kegiatan pendakian demi mempertahankan keterlibatan sosial, memperoleh pengalaman yang serupa, dan menghindari perasaan tertinggal. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa FOMO pada pendaki pemula tidak hanya berkaitan dengan penggunaan media sosial, tetapi juga terbentuk melalui hubungan antara pengalaman digital, pengakuan sosial, perbandingan sosial, dan keterlibatan langsung dalam komunitas pendaki. Oleh karena itu, keputusan untuk mengikuti kegiatan pendakian harus tetap didasarkan pada kesiapan fisik, perencanaan yang matang, dan pertimbangan keselamatan.

Kata Kunci: Interaksi Sosial, Pengakuan Sosial, Takut Ketinggalan, Media Sosial, Pendaki Pemula.

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Introduction

Mountain climbing is currently viewed not only as a form of sport and recreation but also as a space for social interaction among its enthusiasts. Through climbing activities, individuals can build relationships, share experiences, and construct their identities as members of a group or climbing community (Kala, Chaubey, & Al-Adwan, 2025). The development of social media has further reinforced this phenomenon, as climbing experiences are frequently documented and shared with wider audiences. Consequently, climbing activities have acquired social value associated with acceptance and recognition from others.

Mount Sibayak is one of the popular climbing destinations, particularly among novice climbers. Within the Mount Sibayak climbing community, interactions occur among individuals with diverse backgrounds and varying levels of experience. Novice climbers undergo a process of adapting to the social environment of the community, including understanding established practices, developing communication, and participating in various collective activities (Meradaputhi, Nadhirah, & Saripah, 2023). These interactions constitute an important aspect of shaping social experiences and fostering a sense of belonging within the community.

In community life, social recognition plays an important role for individuals. Novice climbers generally have a desire to be accepted, appreciated, and regarded as part of the group. Such recognition may be attained through involvement in climbing activities, relationships with fellow members, and participation in various community activities (Ekinci, et al., 2025). However, the need to gain acceptance may also encourage individuals to continuously participate in group activities to avoid feelings of social isolation or being left behind.

This condition is closely related to the phenomenon of Fear of Missing Out (FOMO), which refers to feelings of anxiety or concern about missing experiences and activities in which others are participating. In the context of mountain climbing, FOMO may arise when novice climbers feel compelled to participate in activities because their friends or other community members are also involved. The desire to gain similar experiences, maintain engagement within the group, and obtain social recognition may constitute factors influencing the emergence of this phenomenon (Eitan & Naor, 2025).

The phenomenon of FOMO among novice climbers is particularly important to examine because decisions to participate in mountain climbing should take into account physical and

mental preparedness, knowledge, and safety considerations. However, social pressure and the desire not to be left behind may influence individuals' decisions to continue participating in certain activities. In addition to direct interpersonal interactions, social media may further intensify these feelings through various posts depicting climbing experiences, achievements, and activities undertaken by members of the community.

Based on the foregoing discussion, research on Inter-Climber Interaction and the Dynamics of Social Recognition: A Study of FOMO among Novice Climbers in the Mount Sibayak Community is important to better understand the relationship between social interaction, the need for recognition, and the emergence of Fear of Missing Out (FOMO). This study is expected to provide an overview of the social experiences of novice climbers in developing relationships within the community, as well as the factors that encourage their involvement in climbing activities. Thus, this research may contribute to the study of social interaction and individual behavior within communities based on shared interests and collective activities.

Research on Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) has generally focused on social media use and individuals' psychological needs. (Nafi'a, 2026) explains FOMO as a concern that others may be having enjoyable experiences without one's participation. The study by (Saputra, Imawan, & Rahmayanti, 2025) also associates FOMO with social needs and social media use, while more recent studies continue to predominantly position FOMO within the context of digital behavior and psychological well-being.

The research gap addressed in this study lies in the limited examination of FOMO within the context of mountain-climbing communities. Previous research by (Torres & Ulayao, 2025) examined FOMO in digital settings, whereas the relationship between direct interpersonal interaction, the need for acceptance, and social recognition within climbing communities remains underexplored. This condition indicates an opportunity for further research to understand FOMO as a phenomenon that may also be shaped through the dynamics of direct social relationships.

The novelty of this study lies in its integration of inter-climber interactions, the dynamics of social recognition, and FOMO, with a particular focus on novice climbers in the Mount Sibayak community. This study offers the perspective that FOMO is influenced not only by social media but may also emerge through processes of social acceptance, social comparison, and the desire to obtain recognition within a climbing community. With this focus, the study is expected to provide new

insights into the social dynamics experienced by novice climbers.

Method

This study employed a qualitative approach using a case study method to gain an in-depth understanding of inter-climber interactions, the dynamics of social recognition, and the phenomenon of Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) among novice climbers in the Mount Sibayak community. A qualitative approach was adopted because the study focuses on the experiences, perspectives, and social meanings constructed by individuals within a community environment (Creswell, 2018).

The study was conducted within a climbing community engaged in climbing activities in the Mount Sibayak area. The research focused on the social experiences of novice climbers in interacting with fellow climbers, as well as the dynamics that emerge during the process of gaining acceptance and recognition within the community environment.

The informants in this study consisted of 10 novice climbers, including 6 women and 4 men. The informants were selected using a purposive sampling technique based on the following criteria: individuals who were still categorized as novice climbers, had previously climbed Mount Sibayak, and had been involved in interactions or activities within a climbing community. This technique was employed to obtain informants who were relevant to the focus of the study (Arikunto, 2021).

Data were collected through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. Observation was used to examine patterns of interaction among climbers, while in-depth interviews were conducted to explore the informants' experiences regarding social acceptance, the need for recognition, and their fear of missing out on community activities. Documentation was used as supporting data to complement the information obtained from observations and interviews (Moleong, 2024).

The data were analyzed through the stages of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2024). Data trustworthiness was strengthened through source and methodological triangulation by comparing information obtained from interviews, observations, and documentation. The concept of FOMO in this study refers to individuals' concerns when they perceive that others are having valuable experiences without their participation.

Results and Discussion

Results

The Reality of Social Interaction and the Dynamics of Social Recognition among Novice Climbers at Mount Sibayak

Based on the observational findings, social interactions among novice climbers at Mount Sibayak occur from the preparation stage through the implementation of the climbing activity. Climbers exchange information regarding climbing routes, equipment, and travel conditions. Interactions are also reflected in cooperation, mutual assistance, and the provision of encouragement when facing challenging terrain.

Novice climbers appear to undergo a process of adaptation to the community environment. They tend to observe the experiences and behaviors of more experienced climbers, follow their guidance, and make efforts to engage in conversations and collective activities. This process demonstrates an effort to build relationships and gain acceptance within the group.

The dynamics of social recognition are reflected through various forms of attention, such as invitations to join, the provision of assistance, praise, and opportunities to participate in community activities. Novice climbers who actively engage in social interactions tend to develop closer relationships with other members more easily. Such recognition subsequently fosters a sense of belonging and strengthens individuals' identities as members of the climbing community. The observational findings are also consistent with the interview findings, which are presented below.

Table 1. Interview Findings on the Reality of Social Interaction and the Dynamics of Social Recognition among Novice Climbers at Mount Sibayak

Informant	Interview Findings
Informant 1 (Female)	<i>"Before we start climbing, we usually ask each other questions, such as what the route is like, what equipment we need to bring, and what the weather conditions are like at higher elevations. So, from the very beginning, there is already communication with other climbers."</i>
Informant 2 (Male)	<i>"During the journey, we often help one another. If someone becomes tired, the others usually stop for a while and offer encouragement so that the person can continue."</i>

Informant	Interview Findings
Informant 3 (Female)	<i>"Because I am still a novice, I tend to pay more attention to climbers who are already experienced. I follow their guidance so that I know what I should do during the climb."</i>
Informant 4 (Male)	<i>"At first, I felt somewhat shy about joining conversations because I did not know many people. However, over time, because we spent a lot of time together during the journey, I gradually became accustomed to it and started interacting more."</i>
Informant 5 (Female)	<i>"In my opinion, if we actively participate in conversations and help others, the other climbers also become more open toward us. It feels more comfortable because we are regarded as part of the group."</i>
Informant 6 (Female)	<i>"I am happy when I am invited to join a climb or participate in collective activities. For me, such an invitation is a sign that they accept me as part of the group."</i>
Informant 7 (Male)	<i>"Sometimes, more experienced climbers offer praise or tell us that we have done well by making it to the destination. Simple things like that make me feel more confident."</i>
Informant 8 (Female)	<i>"I often observe the experiences of other climbers and become motivated to be like them. When they actively participate in climbing activities, I also want to join more often so that I can gain similar experiences."</i>
Informant 9 (Male)	<i>"After participating in several activities together, I feel that I have developed closer relationships with the others. Therefore, climbing is not only about going up a mountain but also about gaining new friends and becoming part of a new social environment."</i>
Informant 10 (Female)	<i>"In my opinion, it is important to socialize and integrate with others within the community. If we actively participate in activities and interact with others, it becomes easier for people to know us, and we begin to feel that we are part of the community."</i>

Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that social interaction among novice

climbers at Mount Sibayak is formed through communication, cooperation, mutual assistance, and participation in collective activities. These processes encourage novice climbers to adapt to the community environment, gain acceptance, and obtain social recognition, which ultimately strengthens their sense of belonging and identity as members of the climbing community.

The Influence of Social Media on Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) Behavior among Novice Climbers at Mount Sibayak

Based on the observational findings, social media plays a role in shaping novice climbers' interest in and engagement with climbing activities at Mount Sibayak. Various posts, including photographs, videos, travel stories, and the achievements of other climbers, serve as sources of information as well as references for novice climbers. Exposure to such activities stimulates curiosity and encourages the desire to gain similar experiences.

The observational findings also indicate that some novice climbers tend to follow developments related to climbing activities through social media. When they see friends or members of the community participating in climbing activities, a desire to take part may arise in order to avoid feeling left behind by the group's experiences. This condition reflects a tendency toward Fear of Missing Out (FOMO), namely a feeling of concern that arises when individuals perceive themselves as not being involved in activities considered interesting or important by their social environment.

In addition to serving as a source of information, social media also provides a space for obtaining social recognition. The documentation of climbing activities shared through social media enables climbers to demonstrate their experiences and involvement to others. Responses in the form of comments, likes, and other interactions may generate a sense of appreciation and encourage individuals to continue sharing their climbing activities. The observational findings are also consistent with the interview findings, which are presented below.

Table 2. Interview Findings on the Influence of Social Media on Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) Behavior among Novice Climbers at Mount Sibayak

Informant	Interview Findings
Informant 1 (Female)	<i>"I often see photographs and videos of climbing Mount Sibayak on social media. From there, I became</i>

Informant	Interview Findings
	interested and wanted to experience firsthand what they were showing."
Informant 2 (Male)	"When my friends upload posts showing that they are climbing, I sometimes feel that I want to join as well. Especially when many of them go together, it feels as though I am missing out if I do not participate."
Informant 3 (Female)	"Social media helps me find out about climbing activities. I usually see them through my friends' posts, which then makes me want to join the next activity."
Informant 4 (Male)	"I often watch videos of people reaching the summit. It makes me curious and gives me the desire to have the same experience, so I become motivated to go climbing."
Informant 5 (Female)	"Sometimes, when I see my friends going climbing without me, I feel regretful for not joining them. I start thinking that perhaps I have missed an exciting experience."
Informant 6 (Female)	"After climbing, I also like to share photographs. It feels enjoyable when my friends leave comments or give likes because it means that our experiences are being noticed."
Informant 7 (Male)	"In my opinion, climbing-related posts can make us want to keep participating. If I frequently see my friends going climbing, I do not want to stay away from climbing for too long because I am afraid of missing out on their stories and experiences."
Informant 8 (Female)	"I often compare my experiences with those of other climbers whom I see on social media. When I see that they climb frequently, I also want to become more active so that I can gain more experience."
Informant 9 (Male)	"Social media certainly makes information about climbing activities spread quickly. When a friend invites me or uploads a plan for a climbing trip, I usually become immediately interested in joining."
Informant 10 (Female)	"For me, social media makes climbing activities appear interesting. When my friends have already gone climbing

Informant	Interview Findings
	and I do not join them, I sometimes feel as though I have been left behind by their activities."

Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that social media influences the emergence of Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) behavior among novice climbers at Mount Sibayak. Exposure to photographs, videos, and the experiences of other climbers encourages individuals to participate in climbing activities in order to avoid feeling left behind. Furthermore, social responses in the form of comments and likes also encourage climbers to share their experiences and seek social recognition through social media.

The Influence of Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) Behavior on Novice Climbers' Decision-Making in Participating in Climbing Activities at Mount Sibayak

Based on the observational findings, *Fear of Missing Out* (FOMO) behavior appears to influence novice climbers' decision-making regarding participation in climbing activities at Mount Sibayak. Novice climbers tend to show greater interest in participating when they become aware that friends or other members of the community are planning a climbing trip. Their desire to participate is based not only on an interest in climbing activities but also on concerns about being left behind and missing out on experiences shared by the group.

The observational findings indicate that information regarding climbing plans, obtained through either direct communication or social media, may encourage novice climbers to make decisions more quickly. In some situations, the desire to remain involved in group activities becomes an important consideration in determining whether to participate. This condition demonstrates that novice climbers' decisions are not entirely individual in nature but are also influenced by the activities and social involvement of other members of the community.

Furthermore, novice climbers appear to have a tendency to compare their own experiences with those of other climbers. When they observe friends participating in climbing activities more frequently or gaining particular experiences, they may feel encouraged to engage in similar activities. Such comparisons can increase motivation to participate; however, they may also generate feelings of concern when individuals perceive themselves as falling behind the group's development or experiences. The observational findings are also consistent with the interview findings, which are presented below.

Table 3. Interview Findings on the Influence of Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) Behavior on Novice Climbers' Decision-Making in Participating in Climbing Activities at Mount Sibayak

Informant	Interview Findings
Informant 1 (Female)	"When I know that my friends are planning a climbing trip, I usually want to join immediately. I am afraid that they will have a shared experience while I am not part of it."
Informant 2 (Male)	"Sometimes, I am actually still hesitant about joining, but when many of my friends are going, I eventually decide to join as well because I do not want to be left behind."
Informant 3 (Female)	"When I see that my friends have already gone climbing and I did not join them, it feels as though I have missed something. That is what makes me want to participate in the next activity."
Informant 4 (Male)	"Information about climbing activities from group chats or social media considerably influences my decisions. When I see that many people are joining, I tend to decide more quickly to participate."
Informant 5 (Female)	"I sometimes compare my experiences with those of friends who climb more frequently. Because of that, I also want to participate so that I do not fall too far behind."
Informant 6 (Female)	"My decision to join is often influenced by my desire to remain together with my friends. When they go and I do not join them, I feel less involved in their stories and activities."
Informant 7 (Male)	"Seeing my friends reach the summit or gain new experiences makes me want to experience the same things. That motivates me to join climbing activities."
Informant 8 (Female)	"Sometimes, I decide to join spontaneously after seeing a post or receiving an invitation from a friend. I do not want to miss the opportunity when they are organizing a climbing trip."

Informant	Interview Findings
Informant 9 (Male)	"In my opinion, if we frequently do not participate in activities, we can feel left behind by our friends. Therefore, this also becomes one of the reasons I consider joining."
Informant 10 (Female)	"I want to remain actively involved in activities because I do not want to feel unfamiliar or excluded when my friends talk about climbing experiences in which I did not participate."

Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that *Fear of Missing Out* (FOMO) behavior influences novice climbers' decision-making in participating in climbing activities at Mount Sibayak. The desire not to be left behind by friends' experiences, to remain involved in group activities, and to obtain similar experiences constitutes an important factor influencing the decision to participate in climbing activities. Information and invitations communicated through both direct interpersonal interaction and social media further reinforce this motivation. Thus, novice climbers' decisions are based not only on personal interests but are also influenced by social comparison and the need to remain part of the community.

Discussion

The Reality of Social Interaction and the Dynamics of Social Recognition among Novice Climbers at Mount Sibayak

The findings of this study indicate that social interactions among novice climbers at Mount Sibayak are formed through communication, information exchange, cooperation, mutual assistance, and the provision of motivation. These findings suggest that climbing activities are not solely oriented toward achieving physical goals but also constitute a shared social experience. This finding is consistent with the study by (Dietze, 2025), which found that social support, shared experiences in natural environments, and community-related aspects constitute important components of individuals' participation in outdoor adventure activities. Thus, the interactions that occur during climbing activities at Mount Sibayak can be understood as forms of social relationships that support the continuity of individuals' engagement in climbing activities.

The findings also demonstrate that novice climbers undergo a process of adaptation by observing more experienced climbers, following

their guidance, and gradually engaging in conversations and group activities. This condition indicates that becoming part of a community requires learning about the norms and patterns of interaction that develop within the group. (Mayer & Lukács, 2021) found that newcomers actively build social relationships to understand the codes, expectations, and social norms within a community, while also seeking to demonstrate participation and contribution in order to gain acceptance. These findings are relevant to the experiences of novice climbers at Mount Sibayak, suggesting that active engagement constitutes one means of building closer relationships and establishing one's position as a member of the community.

Furthermore, the dynamics of social recognition identified in this study are reflected in invitations to join, the provision of assistance, praise, and opportunities to participate in collective activities. These forms of attention foster a sense of acceptance and strengthen novice climbers' sense of belonging to the group. This finding is consistent with the study by (Ng, 2026), which indicates that newcomers' sense of belonging is influenced by their participation in activities and their experiences within a social environment. In addition, (Reiss, 2021) demonstrated that processes of interpersonal status within outdoor activity groups may influence the dynamics of inclusion, exclusion, and group members' sense of belonging. Therefore, social recognition within climbing communities is not merely related to interpersonal relationships but also plays a role in determining the extent to which novice climbers feel accepted and perceive themselves as having a place within the group.

Overall, the findings of this study emphasize that climbing activities at Mount Sibayak constitute a space for social interaction that shapes processes of adaptation and the pursuit of social recognition among novice climbers. Communication and cooperation serve as the foundation for the development of social relationships, while acceptance, appreciation, and opportunities for participation strengthen individuals' sense of belonging to the community. These findings are also supported by the study of (Arts, Fischer, Duckett, & Wal, 2021), which positions shared experiences and interactions within natural environments as important components of the climbing experience. Thus, the more opportunities novice climbers have to interact and participate, the greater the likelihood of developing a sense of acceptance, social closeness, and an identity as members of the climbing community.

The Influence of Social Media on Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) Behavior among Novice Climbers at Mount Sibayak

The findings of this study indicate that social media plays an important role in shaping novice climbers' interest in climbing activities at Mount Sibayak. Posts in the form of photographs, videos, and travel narratives serve as sources of information while also shaping individuals' perceptions of the climbing experiences they wish to obtain. This finding is consistent with the study by (Setyasari, Wahab, Puspatriani, & Kurniawan, 2026), which showed that engagement with social media can increase individuals' expectations and intentions to participate in outdoor recreational activities, particularly when they have strong social connections. In the context of this study, social media not only provides information about climbing activities but also encourages novice climbers to participate through exposure to positive experiences shared by friends or members of the community.

The findings also reveal a tendency toward Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) when novice climbers observe friends or members of the community participating in climbing activities without their involvement. This condition is reflected in the statements of several informants who reported feeling left behind or regretful when they were unable to participate in collective activities. This phenomenon is consistent with the study by (Puhakka, 2024), which explains that FOMO is associated with individuals' concerns that others are having enjoyable experiences without their presence. The study also identified a strong relationship between FOMO and high levels of social media engagement. Thus, the findings from Mount Sibayak demonstrate that social media expands novice climbers' access to information about the activities of others, thereby allowing the desire to share similar experiences to develop into a fear of being left behind.

In addition to encouraging the desire to participate in climbing activities, social media also serves as a space in which social comparison is formed. The informants in this study demonstrated a tendency to compare their climbing experiences with those of other climbers who appeared to be more active. This comparison may motivate individuals to increase their participation; however, it may also create social pressure to continuously engage in group activities. These findings are relevant to the study by (Kim, Baah, Lee, & Munhyang, 2022), which demonstrated that visual content, such as reels and short videos related to climbing, can increase individuals' motivation and interest in participating in hiking activities. Therefore, the appealing visualization of climbing experiences on social media may establish certain standards regarding the types of experiences perceived as attractive and worth pursuing by novice climbers.

Another aspect identified in this study is the use of social media as a means of obtaining social recognition. Novice climbers share documentation of their climbing activities and experience satisfaction when receiving comments, likes, or other positive responses from others. This finding is consistent with the study by (Gürer & Kural, 2024) on outdoor activity experiences on social media, which showed that sharing experiences in natural environments does not merely function as documentation but also contributes to identity construction and enables individuals to present themselves as active participants in outdoor activities. Furthermore, recent qualitative research on FOMO suggests that the need for validation and recognition through responses such as likes, comments, and views may encourage individuals to continuously share their activities.

Overall, the findings emphasize that the influence of social media on FOMO behavior among novice climbers at Mount Sibayak occurs through three main processes: exposure to information and visual representations of climbing experiences, social comparison with the activities of other climbers, and the pursuit of recognition through social responses in digital media. On the one hand, social media plays a positive role in increasing access to information, motivation, and interest in outdoor activities. On the other hand, continuous exposure to friends' activities may generate feelings of being left behind and create pressure to remain constantly involved. Therefore, FOMO among novice climbers cannot be understood solely as a consequence of social media use but should also be viewed as part of the broader dynamics of social relationships involving digital experiences, community engagement, and individuals' need to obtain social recognition.

The Influence of Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) Behavior on Novice Climbers' Decision-Making in Participating in Climbing Activities at Mount Sibayak

The findings of this study indicate that Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) behavior influences novice climbers' decision-making regarding participation in climbing activities at Mount Sibayak. The desire to participate is not solely based on personal interest but is also influenced by concerns about being left behind and missing experiences gained by friends or the group. This finding is consistent with the study by (Mykletun, Oma, & Aas, 2021), which explains FOMO as an individual's concern that others are having valuable or enjoyable experiences without their presence. FOMO is also associated with higher levels of social media engagement, as individuals can continuously access information about the various activities undertaken by others. In the context of

novice climbers at Mount Sibayak, this condition is evident when information regarding climbing plans and experiences encourages individuals to consider or accelerate their decisions to participate.

The findings of this study also demonstrate that novice climbers' decision-making is influenced by social relationships and engagement within the group. The informants expressed a desire to continue participating in activities in order to avoid feeling left behind or losing opportunities to share experiences with the community. These findings are relevant to the study by (Supandi, Imawan, & Rohida, 2026), which found that social media use can increase individuals' intentions to participate in outdoor recreational activities, particularly when individuals have strong social connections. This suggests that social connectedness can strengthen individuals' motivation to participate in activities undertaken by their group. Thus, among novice climbers, the decision to participate in climbing activities is not entirely an individual decision but is also influenced by the desire to maintain social engagement within the community.

The tendency of the informants to compare their own experiences with those of other climbers also highlights the importance of social comparison in the decision-making process. When novice climbers observe friends climbing more frequently, reaching summits, or gaining new experiences, they may feel encouraged to obtain similar experiences. This finding is consistent with the study by (Gu, Sun, Jiang, & Tao, 2026), which demonstrated a close relationship between FOMO and social comparison in the context of social media use. Social comparison can intensify individuals' attention to the activities of others and generate a desire not to be left behind. Therefore, novice climbers' motivation to participate in climbing activities may develop not only from an interest in climbing itself but also from standards of experience shaped by the activities of friends and the wider community.

The findings of this study are further supported by the research of (Susanto & Prawira, 2026), which found that exposure to climbing-related content on social media is positively associated with individuals' intentions to participate in hiking activities, with social connectedness further strengthening this relationship. Another study by (Galiakbarov, Mazbayev, Mutaliyeva, Filimonau, & Sezerel, 2024) also demonstrated that the use of social networking platforms in hiking activities has a strong social dimension. These findings support the results of the present study at Mount Sibayak, suggesting that information, social media posts, and social activities surrounding climbing can serve as stimuli that encourage individuals to make decisions to participate.

Overall, the findings of this study emphasize that FOMO functions as one of the socio-psychological factors influencing novice climbers' decisions to participate in climbing activities at Mount Sibayak. This process occurs through concerns about being left behind, the desire to obtain similar experiences, social comparison, and the need to remain engaged within the community. These findings indicate that FOMO may increase motivation to participate; however, it is also necessary to ensure that decisions to undertake climbing activities remain based on physical preparedness, proper planning, and safety considerations, rather than solely on the desire not to be left behind by the group.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that social interaction, the dynamics of social recognition, social media use, and Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) behavior are interconnected in influencing novice climbers' decisions to participate in climbing activities at Mount Sibayak. Interactions through communication, cooperation, mutual assistance, and participation in collective activities encourage novice climbers to adapt, gain acceptance, and develop a sense of belonging within the community. Social media further reinforces these phenomena through exposure to other climbers' experiences, social comparison, and the pursuit of recognition through digital responses, which may ultimately generate concerns about being left behind and encourage decisions to participate in climbing activities. These findings indicate that FOMO is not solely associated with digital behavior but is also related to the dynamics of social relationships within the community. Practically, the findings emphasize the importance of creating an inclusive community environment and increasing awareness that decisions to undertake climbing activities should continue to take into account physical preparedness, proper planning, and safety considerations. This study is limited by the number of informants and its focus on the context of novice climbers within the Mount Sibayak climbing community. Therefore, future research is recommended to involve more diverse participants and research locations and to employ a mixed-methods approach to examine more comprehensively the relationships among social media use, social comparison, social recognition, FOMO, and decision-making in climbing activities.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Author Contributions

The authors contributed to this research as follows: conceptualization, methodology, investigation, data curation, and formal analysis were carried out by the authors. The original draft was prepared by the authors, while writing, review, and editing were conducted collaboratively. All authors have read and approved the final version of the manuscript.

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