

# Fear of Missing Out Therapy According to Al-Qusyairi: An Analysis of Healing Based on Syukur

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**Abstract:** Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) is a psychological phenomenon characterized by anxiety over being left out of others' experiences, particularly through social media. This condition affects mental health, social anxiety, and overall quality of life. This study aims to analyze the relevance of the concept of *Shukr* (gratitude) from the perspective of Al-Qusyairi as an alternative therapy for FOMO and to explain its application in modern psychology. The method used is qualitative research through a literature review, analyzing Al-Qusyairi's works such as *Risalah Al-Qusyairiyyah*, along with related psychology journals and books. The findings show: (1) FOMO arises from spiritual emptiness and digital social pressure; (2) *Shukr*, according to Al-Qusyairi, encompasses the dimensions of the heart, speech, and action; (3) Integrating *Shukr* into psychotherapy helps shift focus from deficiency toward acceptance; (4) Practicing *Shukr* has been proven to improve mental health and reduce FOMO symptoms. In conclusion, a gratitude-based approach has the potential as a holistic therapy that addresses both psychological and spiritual dimensions.

**Keywords:** *Gratitude, FOMO, Psychotherapy, Al-Qusyairi, Digitalization.*

## Introduction

In a digitally connected world, Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) has given rise to a highly influential socio-psychological phenomenon (*WHAT IS FOMO Marketing Trading and Investment (Akshat Singh Bisht) (Z-Library)*, n.d., p. 3). Data from 2022 shows that there are approximately 4.59 billion social media users, a number that continues to skyrocket and is estimated to increase to 5.42 billion by 2025 (Groenestein et al., 2024, p. 2). The influence of modern materialism affects individuals' standards of living by emphasizing worldly achievements and social friendships as measures of their success in life. The primary driver of this phenomenon is digital technology, which is ubiquitous and accessible at all times, and has become an integral part of everyday life in society (Arroisi, 2021, p. 92).

Several studies have shown that FoMo is exacerbated by social media use, where frequent comparisons with peers can lead to feelings of inadequacy and loneliness. For example, Reer et al.

highlight how FoMo is influenced by social comparison orientation and envy, suggesting that classical psychological theories can provide valuable insights into its mechanisms (Reer et al., 2019, p. 1486). Additionally, Wu et al. demonstrate a correlation between high levels of FoMo and increased online social anxiety, reinforcing the view that those who fear missing out may be more anxious about their online social interactions (Wu et al., 2025, p. 84). This relationship suggests that individuals from different social and age backgrounds experience FoMo differently based on their media consumption patterns and social environments. Furthermore, studies such as those conducted by Nair et al. confirm that personality traits, including extroversion, predict higher levels of social media engagement and, consequently, FoMo, suggesting that social stratification has an impact (Nithya B Nair et al., 2022, p. 445). Therefore, further research is needed to deepen our understanding of FoMo, its impact on social behavior, and the psychological well-being of

diverse groups in the era of social media dominance (Bono et al., 2023, p. 12; Halleyda & Japar, 2023, p. 2; Man & Jing, 2025, p. 6).

In this context, various approaches have been developed, such as *mindfulness* therapy and cognitive therapy, to address FoMO (Sofia et al., 2023, p. 733). However, to address the root of the problem, these approaches have not fully touched on the spiritual root. In this context, researchers have found that gratitude can be a relevant solution in holistic healing (Bono et al., 2023, p. 13; Wright, 2002, p. 118). However, research on the effectiveness of gratitude therapy in the context of FoMO remains very limited, necessitating further in-depth study of this issue.

In this case, researchers adopt the perspective of classical Sufism, as presented in the works of Al-Qusyairi, with a specific focus on his concept of gratitude. In Al-Qusyairi's view, gratitude is not just a verbal expression; it is a deep awareness of Allah's blessings, reflected in the heart, words, and deeds (Abu Karim al-Qushayri, 465 C.E., p. 465). Building on this, gratitude is presented as a relevant response to FoMO. Al-Qusyairi emphasizes that gratitude leads to inner and spiritual peace, which enhances psychological well-being and strengthens social ties. Therefore, gratitude-based therapy is explored as a spiritual approach to help individuals cope with the emptiness caused by FoMO. This study will analyze the relevance of Al-Qusyairi's concept of gratitude as an alternative therapy for FOMO and explain its potential application in modern psychotherapy.

### Materials and Methods

This study is based on an interpretive paradigm, which views reality as a social construct that can be interpreted through subjective understanding and cultural context. This paradigm is relevant because Al-Qusyairi's concept of gratitude contains spiritual and metaphysical dimensions that require in-depth interpretation in an epistemological and ontological context (Faqih Nidzom, 2025, p. 122). This study, which uses qualitative methods with a literature review approach, was conducted by exploring in depth the concept of Fear of Missing Out (FoMO) therapy from a Sufi perspective (Suyitno, 2021, p.

80). Through this approach, researchers can access a range of theoretical and empirical sources to analyze the FoMO phenomenon more comprehensively and in-depth, without being limited by space and time. Data processing emphasizes important phenomena, events, and social symptoms, including their underlying meanings (Suyitno, 2021, p. 120).

Primary data refers to the works of Al-Qusyairi, such as the book *Risalah Al-Qusyairiyah*. Meanwhile, secondary data is sourced from psychology books, scientific journals, or articles relevant to the discussion of this study (Nilamsari, 2014, p. 178). Through a descriptive analysis research model by examining objects based on a scientific background. Before strong evidence is obtained, researchers conduct analyses with questions, comparisons, and postponement of conclusions (Dr. H. Zuchri Abdussamad & Dr. Patta Rapanna, 2021, p. 48). The analysis was conducted using *content* analysis to examine Al-Qusyairi's thoughts on *gratitude* and its connection to the phenomenon of *fear of missing out*. In summary, the researcher attempted to make valid and replicable inferences by analyzing the content based on its context (Krippendorff, 2019). Furthermore, after obtaining strong evidence, the researcher established his hypothesis and drew general conclusions that were linked to Al-Qusyairi's idea of gratitude as a therapy for the FoMO phenomenon.

### Results and Discussion

#### A. The Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) Phenomenon

Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) is a form of anxiety experienced by someone who feels left behind in terms of information, experiences, or activities happening in their social environment. Those who experience FOMO have a strong desire to stay connected with others and keep up with developments so they don't feel like they are missing out on something important (Fitri et al., 2025, p. 347). This condition can be exacerbated by intensive use of social media, where individuals constantly monitor the activities of others in order to remain socially involved and relevant (Fitri et al., 2025, p. 348). This phenomenon has gained

popularity in recent years, particularly among young adults and active social media users. In this case, it impacts individual behavior, emotional health, and social interactions.

Feeling compelled to stay connected and constantly update information about friends' activities on social media is a primary characteristic of FoMO. This compulsive behavior drives individuals to use social media problematically, creating a cycle in which they engage more with social media to alleviate their fear of missing out (Fani Apriliani Darusman & Utami Sumaryanti, 2022). Additionally, individuals with FoMO often prioritize virtual connections over real-life interactions, which negatively impacts their presence in the physical world (Sulastrri & Sylvia, 2022). In an effort to establish social relationships, some people rely entirely on social media connectivity. This dependence can trigger maladaptive behavior, leading to unhealthy social media use, particularly among individuals with high levels of loneliness (Yuldani & Hanggoro, n.d., p. 77). This dynamic highlights the psychological basis of FoMO, suggesting that interventions focused on boosting self-esteem may help mitigate its effects.

According to psychology, FOMO itself describes a syndrome where people fear, feel anxious, or worry about missing out on social opportunities they consider valuable (Fitri et al., 2025, p. 348). When people can easily obtain information from around the world, they may experience both positive and negative effects, depending on how they adopt it. High exposure to social media and digital promotions contributes to this phenomenon, as narratives of exclusivity and achievements displayed by others drive people to participate instantly (Graham & Lewis, 2025, p. 11). Based on this, FOMO arises as people struggle to fulfill their basic psychological needs, particularly the need for social connection. Even when they satisfy these needs, people tend to compensate through consumptive behavior or spontaneous participation in trends.

In addition, FoMO has been linked to various behavioral outcomes, which affect social interactions and mental health. Individuals with high levels of FoMO may struggle to maintain

meaningful interpersonal relationships, as constant engagement with social media often supplants face-to-face communication (Agustin & Nurfadillah, 2024). This disorder can cause significant emotional stress, including feelings of isolation and anxiety. In severe cases, FoMO can manifest in maladaptive behaviors, such as self-harm, as individuals struggle to cope with their mental health challenges (Agustin & Nurfadillah, 2024, p. 13).

It cannot be denied that in this digital age, social media serves as a platform that triggers and exacerbates feelings of FoMO. Research shows that constant connectivity through social media can make individuals feel pressured to keep up with everything that is happening, ultimately leading to social media fatigue (Aisafitri & Yusriyah, 2021, p. 88). This excessive use of social media is often linked to changes in how people evaluate life satisfaction, where individuals with high levels of FoMO are more likely to experience dissatisfaction and a crisis of meaning (Margaretha, 2023, p. 690). A crisis of meaning arises when individuals feel they have lost value or purpose in their lives as a result of frequent social comparisons made through social media. A series of studies shows that increased social media use can trigger greater feelings of anxiety and dissatisfaction, as individuals tend to compare themselves to others who appear more successful or happier on these platforms (Liu et al., 2023). With increased feelings of FoMO, individuals may become more socially isolated despite being virtually connected, further worsening their mental state and potentially leading to negative consequences in daily life (Wang et al., 2024, p. 810). In short, proper management of FoMO, including self-awareness and regulation of social media use, can help individuals find more positive and satisfying meaning in their lives, as the essence of this disorder stems from unmet spiritual needs (Zarkasyi & Arroisi, 2020, p. 5). Thus, researchers found that gratitude can help individuals find meaning and improve mental health.

## **B. The Concept of Gratitude in the Treatise Al-Qusyairiyah**

Abu al-Qasim al-Qusyairi was an important figure in the history of Sufism, born at the end of the 10th century in Nishapur, Persia, and died in 465H/1073

AD (Arroisi, 2020, p. 39). He was known as a Sufi, theologian, and writer, and was the author of scholarly works, particularly "Risalah Al-Qusyairiyyah," which became one of the basic texts in the study of Sufism (Aly Mashar, 2023, p. 40).

Through his works, al-Qusyairi has left a lasting legacy in the history of Islamic thought, which continues to be studied and applied by subsequent generations.

The Aspect of Gratitude	Definition According to Al-Qusyairi	Implementation in FoMO Therapy
Heart	Sincere awareness of God's blessings, both material and spiritual	Training individuals to recognize the positive things in their lives every day
Verbal	Expressions of praise and prayer as a form of acknowledging blessings	Encouraging individuals to write or say daily affirmations of gratitude
Action	Using blessings in accordance with God's commands and practicing His teachings	Encouraging individuals to utilize time and resources for productive purposes, not merely for social media consumption

**Table 1.** The Concept of Gratitude According to Al-Qusyairi and Its Implementation in FoMO Therapy

Based on the table above, in "Risalah Al-Qusyairiyyah," al-Qusyairi describes the spiritual journey towards Allah and the importance of understanding the relationship between sharia and reality. One of the key concepts introduced by al-Qusyairi is the concept of gratitude, a fundamental theme that reflects the spiritual and ethical depth in the life of a Sufi. Al-Qusyairi emphasizes that gratitude must involve the heart, tongue, and actions. Gratitude with the heart reflects sincere gratitude and awareness of the existence of blessings, both material and spiritual, such as understanding, wisdom, and inner peace (Abu Karim al-Qushayri, 465 C.E., p. 311). In this context, gratitude is not merely an expression of thanks to Allah, but an integral part of the appreciation and practice of Sufism (Subair, 2020, p. 99).

Gratitude expressed verbally is seen in expressions of praise and prayer directed toward God, which is a form of acknowledgment of His blessings. Meanwhile, gratitude through actions includes a commitment to live according to God's commands and practice His teachings as a tangible expression of gratitude (Tohari & Tohari, 2022, p. 80). Thus, it can be understood that gratitude is not only an expression, but a way of life that reflects a servant's commitment to God's will and honor in every step of his life.

In the ontological dimension, gratitude reflects the relationship between servants and God. In this case, gratitude reveals a servant's awareness of their

dependence on and relationship with the Creator, highlighting the essence of human existence as beings created to worship (Abu Karim al-Qushayri, 465 C.E., p. 312). Gratitude also holds profound significance in spiritual experiences. In this context, gratitude is not just a ritual practice, but a deep appreciation that strengthens an individual's closeness to Allah. In the spiritual world, gratitude becomes a connection that allows a servant to feel the presence of Allah in every aspect of his life (Khoirul Anwar, 2021, p. 55). And ultimately, through gratitude, individuals can reach a higher level of consciousness, where they begin to understand that every blessing, both visible and invisible, is a manifestation of Allah's love and wisdom.

In learning gratitude, individuals often develop empathy and a sense of connection with others. This contributes to better social relationships and reduces feelings of loneliness or isolation, which are often triggers for spiritual crises (Anwar, 2023, p. 213). Thus, gratitude has a positive impact on mental health and psychological well-being. Gratitude can reduce feelings of depression and anxiety, as well as increase happiness (Heryana et al., 2022, p. 55). Gratitude serves as a defense mechanism against daily disturbances that impact life satisfaction, making it a crucial determinant of mental health and well-being (Nugraha et al., n.d., p. 134). In the context of Sufism, gratitude serves as a spiritual support, creating space for individuals to reflect on the existence of Allah and focus on

goodness, which in turn leads to a reduction in spiritual emptiness.

Gratitude implies creating a calm state of mind. When someone is grateful, they begin to see their life in the context of God's gifts and blessings, which helps them respond to stress in a more constructive way (Saputri & Insani, 2023, p. 135). Therefore, gratitude can serve as a refuge from the pressures and anxieties prevalent in the modern world. Additionally, gratitude encourages individuals to recognize and understand that everything they face is part of their spiritual journey (Saepullah, 2021). This helps individuals adapt to undesirable circumstances, such as loss, failure, and life's challenges, with a more positive and hopeful attitude (Sakdullah, 2020).

The implementation of gratitude practices in daily life can be an effective way to improve an individual's mental and emotional well-being (Rahmilawati, 2024, p. 173). The concept of gratitude, derived from various cultural and religious traditions, plays a crucial role in shaping positive behavior and enhancing psychological well-being. There are many ways to cultivate gratitude, both individually and collectively, which are often reflected in traditions, social activities, and spiritual practices. One approach to internalizing the practice of gratitude is through education and counseling. The development of counseling modules that focus on gratitude and spirituality has been shown to enhance psychological well-being, particularly among individuals facing emotional challenges (Said et al., 2024, p. 8). This module teaches participants to better appreciate and be grateful for their life experiences, which directly impacts increased self-confidence and reduced stress.

In a social context, the practice of gratitude is evident in activities such as sharing and social responsibility. The values of gratitude and *ukhuwah* are reflected in the practice of social responsibility that individuals in society carry out. They practice social responsibility by protecting the environment as a form of gratitude for the blessings they have received (Hasanah et al., 2022, p. 520). In addition, the tradition of sea almsgiving practiced by coastal communities also reflects their gratitude to God for the blessings received through the sea,

which underscores the relationship between gratitude, culture, and the environment (Simanjuntak et al., 2019, p. 450).

Furthermore, the integration of gratitude with spiritual aspects is evident in various religious traditions. The emphasis on the importance of gratitude is found in the teachings of Islam, which are passed down through daily practices that teach children to be thankful to God for all His blessings (Rahma, 2024, p. 937). Additionally, in the Nyawen tradition of the Bingkeng community, the rituals performed are not merely a form of warding off evil, but also an expression of gratitude for the safety granted throughout the year (Andreani et al., 2022, p. 686). This demonstrates that the practice of gratitude can be a vital component of local culture, supporting mental health and social cohesion.

From a psychological perspective, gratitude has been proven to have a positive impact on mental well-being. A significant relationship exists between gratitude and mental health in adolescents, where gratitude serves as a buffer against stress and enhances optimism (Hardianti et al., 2021, p. 215). In addition, a culture of gratitude is also implemented through training activities in schools to foster a sense of belonging among students, as described in research by Prasetyaningrum and Nurhidayati, who identified gratitude training as a means to increase the sense of belonging (Prasetyaningrum & Nurhidayati, 2023, p. 90). Thus, the practice of gratitude in daily life can be implemented through various activities that support the positive development of individuals and society.

### **C. Integration of Sufism and Psychotherapy: Gratitude as Therapy for FOMO**

Psychotherapy is a popular psychology-based approach to addressing mental and emotional problems, but in this case, it can be integrated with Sufi spiritual practices to strengthen the therapy. Islamic psychotherapy focuses on the integration of psychological principles and Islamic teachings, resulting in a more comprehensive approach to treating mental health issues such as stress and depression (Rahmadhanty et al., 2023, p. 85). By utilizing the concept of gratitude in Sufism, psychotherapy can help individuals shift their attention away from feelings of emptiness and the

need for external validation, as experienced by those affected by FoMO.

A spiritual approach is used because it recognizes individuals as whole beings, encompassing biological, psychological, and spiritual aspects. Spiritually-based therapy can provide significant benefits in both physical and mental aspects in an easy, inexpensive, and efficient manner, especially in the context of health (Rosyanti et al., 2022, p. 99). This approach recognizes that spiritual strength can enhance an individual's mental and emotional resilience. Meanwhile, modern therapy often focuses more on psychological aspects without considering the spiritual dimension, and does not fully comprehend the concept of the whole human being (Arroisi, 2018, p. 344). By taking this into account, the spiritual approach provides an additional dimension that is not always present in modern therapy.

The application of gratitude as a therapeutic mechanism to overcome Fear of Missing Out (FoMO) shows significant potential in reducing psychological stress and improving individual well-being. In this context, gratitude emerges as an alternative therapy that can be integrated with modern psychotherapy approaches, offering profound spiritual and psychological benefits (Arroisi & Syamil, 2025, p. 740). The practice of gratitude in psychology is often considered an effective coping mechanism for overcoming feelings of anxiety and dissatisfaction, which are closely related to the phenomenon of FoMO. Research indicates that practicing gratitude can enhance mental health by altering individuals' perspectives on their circumstances (Currier et al., 2024, p. 293). By shifting focus from what is not owned or accessed to what is already owned, individuals can reduce anxiety arising from social comparisons that often occur on social media (Captari et al., 2022, p. 310). This has a direct impact on reducing FoMO symptoms and increasing overall life satisfaction.

The spiritual approach in therapy, which includes the practice of gratitude, is increasingly recognized in contemporary psychotherapy. Various studies show that when psychotherapy includes spiritual or religious dimensions, the results are often more positive than with secular

approaches alone (Schmidt & O'Connor, 2024, p. 67). This approach strengthens the connection between clients and their spiritual values, which can give deeper meaning to their life experiences. Therapy that integrates spiritual aspects not only addresses psychological issues but also helps individuals find purpose and meaning in life, which serves as an antidote to FoMO (Dimmick et al., 2022, p. 205).

Gratitude itself has a significant impact on FoMO, where the practice of gratitude can serve as a means to change one's mindset to a more positive one. By focusing on things to be grateful for, individuals can begin to see the world through a brighter lens, which helps reduce feelings of FoMO, where individuals feel that they are missing out on valuable experiences (Field et al., 2024, p. 210). Furthermore, gratitude often fosters deeper connections with others. When people are grateful for their interpersonal relationships, they can strengthen their social networks, which in turn reduces feelings of loneliness and isolation, which are often at the root of FoMO (Heřmánková et al., 2025, p. 37). This is consistent with the understanding that social support is key to overcoming feelings of anxiety and depression.

Not only that, but through the practice of gratitude, individuals learn to become more aware of their emotions and experiences. This increased self-awareness can enhance mental resilience, enabling individuals to cope with external pressures and mitigate the negative impact of FoMO (Pargament, 2022, p. 50). Even in therapy sessions, therapists can incorporate gratitude practices, such as asking clients to name three things they are grateful for from the previous session. This is a simple yet effective way to shift the client's focus from worry and feelings of loss to gratitude and recognition of the blessings in their life (Plante, 2024, p. 189). This approach, if applied consistently, has the potential to reduce FoMO symptoms by providing a routine that offers positive and healing experiences.

## Conclusions

The phenomenon of Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) has become a significant social and psychological problem, especially in the digital age, leading to anxiety, sleep disorders, and feelings of isolation. Although various therapeutic approaches, such as mindfulness and cognitive therapy, have been applied, they are often not effective enough in addressing the root causes related to spiritual emptiness and the need for connection. In this context, an approach based on gratitude, drawn from the teachings of Al-Qusyairi's *The Path of Spirituality*, shows great potential as an alternative solution. Gratitude, which encompasses ontological, moral, ethical, and spiritual dimensions, helps individuals improve psychological well-being, reduce anxiety, and increase life satisfaction. Integrating gratitude into psychotherapy can reduce FoMO symptoms and strengthen social relationships, making it an effective alternative for addressing the psychological impact of this phenomenon

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