

## **CHAPTER II**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

This section presents several points supporting the focus of this study to be more specific. It comprises theoretical description, theoretical framework, and previous studies.

#### **A. Theoretical Description**

##### **1. Fear of Missing Out (FoMO)**

Fear of Missing Out (FoMO) has become a widespread phenomenon within the advanced development of digital technology. FoMO refers to a psychological and social condition when individuals feel discomfort when seeing what others have, achieve, or experience. Przybylski et al. (2013) states that FoMO as when individual feel they missing out experiences that others might have. This leads a person to often check social media to stay connected with what others are experiencing and to avoid feeling left out. Przybylski et al. (2013) state that Self-Determination Theory (SDT), developed by Ryan and Deci (1985) is one of the factors leading to FoMO. This theory is related to human motivation to rely on social connection, which is influenced by three basic psychological needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness. When these needs are not fully satisfied, individuals may seek connection and validation through online platforms.

As a result, social media have become the strongest cause of FoMO. Several studies have examined the relationship between social media and FoMO, and Piko et al. (2025) show that social media is the main factor that triggers FoMO because it provides a platform for social comparison with others. Study from Tandon et al. (2021) supports this finding, suggesting that social media usage not only encourages social comparison but also intensifies the psychological pressure to stay updated. According to Festinger (1954) social comparison occurs when people evaluate themselves by looking at others because there is no clear or objective standard to measure themselves. In this situation, individuals use others as reference points, which leads to two possible directions: upward comparison, when they compare themselves to those, they see as better, and downward comparison, when they compare themselves to those, they see as worse.

Researchers have identified several contributing factors of FoMO, particularly within the context of social media use. Piko et al. (2025) says that social comparison is a dominant contributor to FoMO, while social media addiction, loneliness, and perfectionism function as mediators in the link between them. Yildirimer and Yentür (2024) supports the ones of the factors that causes FoMO which is social media addiction, in his study he says that digital addiction can be defined as the production of constant access and use of the online world and social media platforms. FOMO, or the fear of missing out, has been described as anxiety about being left behind in experiences you could be having.

After identifying the factors that contribute to the emergence of FoMO, it is also essential to understand its psychological and behavioral impacts. FoMO has been associated with low self-esteem, anxiety, depression, decreased self-confidence, and compulsive social media checking driven by the desire to stay updated and avoid social exclusion (Chakrabarti, 2024; Milyavskaya et al., 2018). This indicates that FoMO is not merely a fear of missing information, but also a fear of being left out socially.

Therefore, FoMO does not function as a single construct, but operates across both individual and social dimensions. Therefore, FoMO can be understood as consisting of two types: personal FoMO and social FoMO. Zhang et al. (2020) explain that personal FoMO refers to the fear of missing out on experiences that are meaningful for one's personal interests, development, or achievements. In contrast, social FoMO refers to the fear of missing out on experiences that others are currently enjoying, particularly those involving social interaction and group activities.

This social dimension of FoMO is closely related to the concept of social exclusion, as individuals who experience FoMO may become increasingly concerned about their position within a group and their level of participation. Buss (1990) defines social exclusion as a condition in which individuals feel excluded from a group because they are perceived as not contributing to it. A study by Gao et al. (2023) supports this finding, showing that FoMO is also caused by social media, which can lead to social exclusion.

This experience of exclusion is closely tied to the need to belong, Baumeister and Tice (1990); Buss, (1990) stated that the *need to belong* is related to social exclusion, which is a basic human need and when individuals feel excluded, they develop a stronger desire to reconnect and be accepted by others. This condition can also lead to Personal FoMO, where individuals internally fear losing emotional connections and shared experiences that shape their sense of self and social identity. Supporting this, Hidayatul and Utami (2023) found that in today's world, people conduct research through social media by checking the latest news and current trends so they can fit into a group; as a result, individuals tend to feel anxious if they do not follow a trend or fall behind it. This creates a cycle where the fear of social exclusion heightens the need to belong, ultimately manifesting as FoMO in the digital age. Because of this, they often try to stay connected and involved, which can make their social FoMO even stronger.

These patterns show that FoMO is not only a feeling but also a way of thinking that develops through constant exposure to other people's activities on social media. This idea helps explain how FoMO appears in *Ron's Gone Wrong*, especially through the movie's portrayal of technology, friendship, and relevance.

## **2. Roland Barthes' Semiotics**

Language can be anything that gives meaning. It can be words, pictures, symbols, logos, gestures, or other ways of communicating, including street signs. The term "semiotics" comes from the Greek word "*semeiotikos*," which means "the movement of interpreting signs."

Semiotics is the study of signs. This concept examines the relationship between the signified and the signifier to show the meanings they try to express. Saussure (1857–1913) is considered the father of this theory. According to Saussure, semiotics is made up of two parts: the signified and the signifier, which represent a concept, form, or image. For example, the letter “dog” is the signifier, while the signified is the mental image or concept of a dog that the letter represents. When viewed as a whole, this combination is understood as a “sign” (Behera, 2024). The meaning of a sign does not come naturally but rather from the social agreement shared by people who use the same language system.

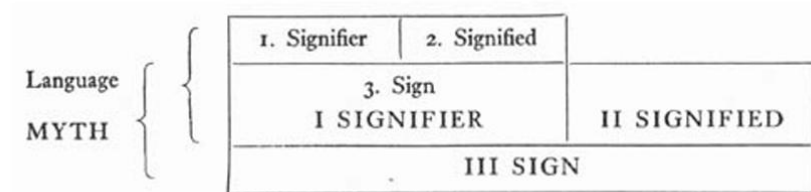
The semiotics that Saussure introduced was developed by Roland Barthes (1915-1980). Barthes developed semiotics not only texted but into wider aspect from fashion, picture, and moving picture into two parts too they are denotative, and connotative.

- a) Denotative is the literal meaning from the sign which produces explicit meaning which focuses on the direct, factual meaning of a word in the dictionary. According to Barthes (1964) this denotative sign consists of a signifier and a signified. For example, a rose simply refers to a type of flower (Rohmaniah, 2021).
- b) Connotative itself is the implicit meaning that has a different and specific meaning than the literal meaning. Connotation adds cultural, emotional, and associative values that come from shared social experiences. Barthes (1964) Explains that the signifiers at this connotative level, which he calls “connotators,” are actually made

up of the complete signs, namely the unity of signifier and signified, from the denotative system. For instance, a rose commonly connotes romance, affection, or passion. This shows how society attaches additional meanings to signs beyond what they literally represent. In Barthes' theory, this connotative level is essential because it shows how society attaches particular feelings, expectations, and assumptions to signs beyond their literal meaning. This concept also known as *Two Order of Signification* (Rohmaniah, 2021).

Barthes introduced the concept myth into semiology. This concept explained a cultural mechanism that shapes how people interpret reality. It transforms historical and social constructs into meanings that appear natural and unquestionable. Although myth simplifies certain aspects of reality, it is not necessarily wrong. Rather, it reflects how society collectively understands and accepts particular values as truth (Barus et al., 2025).

*Figure A. Barthes' Two-Order of Signification*



(Barthes, 1991)

The figure above illustrates Barthes' two-order of signification. The first level consists of the signifier and the signified, which together produce the denotative sign. When this denotative sign moves into the second level, it functions as the new signifier that produces connotative meaning. Myth turns social and historical ideas into something that appears normal,

common sense, and unquestioned within a community. Although myth simplifies complex realities, it reflects how culture shapes and stabilizes certain values as if they were universal facts (Barthes, 1991). For example, the widespread cultural belief that giving someone a rose is a symbol of expressing love becomes a myth because the gesture is treated as a natural, expected expression of affection, even though it is shaped by cultural convention (Barus et al., 2025).

This framework makes Barthes' semiotics suitable for analyzing *Ron's Gone Wrong* because the movie uses objects, character interactions, and digital technology as signs that communicate deeper cultural messages. The representation of FoMO in the movie appears not only at the literal level, which refers to what the characters directly do, but also at the level of connotation and myth where the movie reflects cultural ideas about social comparison, popularity, and the pressure to stay connected.

### **3. Cultural Representation Theory**

Representation is how a social event is portrayed through media, images, language, and symbols. According to Hall, (1997) representation explains how meaning and language are connected to culture. Hall, (1997) defines several approaches to uncover the meanings through language representation there are reflective, intentional, and constructionist.

1. Reflective: the reflective approach looks for meaning that already exists in the real world. In this view, language works like a mirror that shows the literal meaning of objects, events, and people. This

idea comes from the concept of *mimesis*, which means copying or imitating reality (Hall, 1997).

2. Intentional: this approach focuses on uncovering the meaning that the author intends through their choice of words. Although an author can use language to express personal ideas, they still must follow shared language rules so others can understand them, because language is a social system. This means that private thoughts must negotiate with the meanings already stored in the language, and using language will always activate those shared meanings (Hall, 1997).
3. Constructionist: The constructionist approach sees meaning as something that is socially created rather than fixed by objects or determined by the author. This approach argues that the material world exists, but it does not carry meaning by itself. Meaning is produced through the cultural concepts and representational systems that people use, such as language, images, and symbols. Because language is a social system, signs only make sense when they are interpreted through shared cultural codes. These codes guide how society understands and accepts certain meanings. In this view, social actors construct meaning by using the conceptual framework of their culture, which allows them to make sense of the world and communicate that understanding to others (Hall, 1997).

One of the examples from Wheatley, (2024) result is the *Black Panther* movie. The reflective approach appears in how the movie

represents African culture through accents, clothing, and rituals as they are. The intentional approach is shown when the filmmakers combine these traditions with futuristic elements to challenge long-standing stereotypes about Africa. The constructionist approach appears when the film sparks discussions about Afrofuturism, a genre that blends African culture with futuristic themes and providing a new narrative framework for thinking about Africa's future in global discourse.

In *Ron's Gone Wrong*, this theory helps explain how the movie shows FoMO, digital culture, and social pressure as cultural ideas. This theory will support the Barthes' theory in analysis of the data. The actual analysis uses Roland Barthes' semiotics consisting of denotation, connotation, and myth to examine how the movie builds and communicates those meanings through its signs. Representation theory provides the cultural background, while semiotics is the main tool used to analyze the scenes.

#### **4. *Ron's Gone Wrong* Movie**

*Ron's Gone Wrong* is an animated science fiction comedy movie released on October 15 2021 in the United States with the duration of 107 minutes. The movie is directed by Sarah Smith and Jean Philippe Vine with Octavio Rodriguez as co-director. It is produced by Julie Lockhart and Lara Breay and written by Sarah Smith and Peter Baynham. This movie features the voices of Jack Dylan Grazer Zach Galifianakis Ed Helms Olivia Colman Justice Smith Rob Delaney and Kylie Cantrall.

*Ron's Gone Wrong* was produced by Locksmith Animation and distributed by 20th Century Studios.

The story begins in a world where a large tech company introduces the B Bot a personal robot designed to be every child's best friend. These robots are programmed to learn about their owners connect to the internet and help children socialize. Barney Pudowski voiced by Jack Dylan Grazer is a socially awkward middle school student who becomes the only kid in his class without a B Bot which makes him feel left out. One day his father and grandmother finally manage to buy him a B Bot but the robot he receives named Ron turns out to be defective and unable to follow the programmed rules like other B Bots.

Barney and Ron's unexpected friendship leads to many challenges and adventures. Ron's unusual behavior brings trouble but also teaches Barney about real connection friendship and the value of being different. Along the way they encounter classmates school bullies and the tech company that tries to retrieve Ron due to his malfunction.

*Ron's Gone Wrong* presents humorous yet touching moments through its story about friendship individuality and the impact of technology on children's daily lives. The movie offers an entertaining blend of comedy and emotion making it suitable for children and teenagers. It received positive responses from audiences and achieved a 7.1 rating on IMDb

This movie was nominated for the VHS Awards in 2021 for Best Animated Film. It was also nominated in the IFJA Awards (Indiana Film Journalists Association) in 2021 for Best Animated Feature and Best Vocal/Motion Capture Performance. It received additional nominations at the London Critics Circle Film Awards in 2021. In 2022, the movie was nominated for the BFE Cut Above Award for Best Edited Single Animation, the Annie Award for Outstanding Achievement for Production Design on an Animated Feature Production, and the British Animation Awards for Best Writer and Best Design. It also won the Best Long Form category at the British Animation Awards in 2022 (IMDb, 2021; Wikipedia, 2025). The main plot in this movie is about friendship while the environment in this movie is surrounded by technology and the main character is experiencing the left out feeling since the main character does not have B-Bot.

## **B. Previous Study**

Previous studies on film representation and semiotic analysis have examined various themes across different genres and media contexts. These studies provide an overview of how signs, symbols, and narrative elements are interpreted to uncover deeper meanings within movies. Gender representation has been examined in several works. Wardah and Kusuma, (2022) found that the film *Raya and The Last Dragon* presents women as strong, dominant, and independent characters. Their findings align with Susanti et al., (2022) who identified six scenes in *Mulan* that represent feminist values while still showing traditional aspects of womanhood.

Similarly, Dewayani and Azwar, (2024) investigated gender equality in *Barbie* and found that women occupy influential roles in both government and professions typically dominated by men. The study also highlighted how the film challenges the stereotype that men should hide their emotions, suggesting that *Barbie* promotes a positive message about gender equality.

Cultural representation has also been explored. Liani et al. (2024) analyzed the Chinese cultural elements in *Over the Moon* and revealed that the film incorporates various cultural signs such as traditional food, festivals, folklore, family pets, decorations, and symbolic plants, all of which subtly portray Chinese cultural identity.

In terms of social class, Dianiya, (2020) examined *Parasite* and identified five key signs that illustrate class division: lifestyle differences, clothing choices, invisible social boundaries, body odor as a class marker, and the symbolic use of black and white. These findings show that *Parasite* effectively represents class inequality through visual cues and cultural codes rooted in everyday social realities.

Human values have been discussed in the study by Anggoro A. S. et al. (2023) on *The Giver*. Their research showed that the film depicts violations of basic human values and moral norms. Scenes such as the killing of an infant for failing to meet community standards illustrate the loss of humanity and ethical principles within the film's society.

Furthermore, in research on FoMO and social media, Piko et al. (2025). explored the contribution of FoMO among university students and

found that social comparison had the most significant correlation with FoMO. The study also showed that media addiction, perfectionism, and loneliness acted as mediators between social comparison and FoMO. Gao et al. (2023) study examined mobile social media in relation to FoMO and showed that mobile social media use is associated with FoMO, which leads to behaviors impact such as phubbing and lower self-control in mobile phone use, while social exclusion is an external factor that worsens these negative effects. Additionally, Tandon et al. explored FoMO and the dark side of social media, and the results showed that negative social media behaviors, such as social media stalking, strongly affected FoMO and social comparison.

Additionally, several previous studies have examined the representation of FoMO in media. A study by Kornelia C et al. (2024) analyzed a Samsung advertisement and found ten scenes representing FoMO using Roland Barthes' semiotic analysis. These were shown through denial, hallucination, and decision-making as ways to achieve a sense of comfort and peace.

Meanwhile, Hidayah Luthfi and Nur Lailah (2024) examined the representation of FoMO and its moral (*dakwah*) messages in the animated series *Ibra Episode 10* using Ferdinand de Saussure's semiotic approach. Their study found seven scenes representing FoMO, which also contained moral messages.

This creates a gap for further study, especially because this movie presents the issue of FoMO in a technology-based social environment. Therefore, a semiotic analysis is needed to understand how meanings about FoMO are constructed through visual and verbal signs.