

# “FOMO Marketing and Its Psychological Effects on Gen Z Digital Consumption Patterns”

**Mr. Manikandan.S**, Asst. Professor, Department of Management Studies, EASA College of Engineering and Technology Coimbatore

**Mr. Srikant C Nair**, Asst. Professor, Department of Management Studies, EASA College of Engineering and Technology Coimbatore.

**Ms. Divya U**, Asst. Professor, Department of Management Studies, EASA College of Engineering and Technology Coimbatore

**Mr. Harikrishnan V**, Asst. Professor, Department of Management Studies, EASA College of Engineering and Technology Coimbatore

## ABSTRACT

Fear of Missing out (FOMO) has emerged as a powerful psychological driver in contemporary digital marketing, particularly among Generation Z, a cohort characterized by constant connectivity and high social media engagement. This study examines the influence of FOMO-based marketing strategies on Gen Z's digital consumption patterns, focusing on impulse buying, engagement behavior, and brand interaction. FOMO marketing commonly employs tactics such as limited-time offers, exclusive drops, countdown timers, and real-time social proof to stimulate urgency and perceived scarcity. While these strategies are designed to accelerate decision-making and increase conversions, their psychological impact on young consumers requires deeper investigation.

Using a quantitative research design, this study proposes to collect survey data from Gen Z consumers aged 18–27 to assess the relationship between exposure to FOMO-driven content and behavioral outcomes such as purchase intention, compulsive buying tendencies, and post-purchase satisfaction. The research is grounded in scarcity theory and social comparison theory to explain how perceived exclusivity and peer influence intensify emotional responses. Preliminary assumptions suggest that higher susceptibility to social validation amplifies the effectiveness of FOMO marketing, while also increasing the likelihood of regret and reduced long-term brand loyalty.

The findings are expected to contribute to modern marketing literature by clarifying the psychological mechanisms through which urgency-based digital strategies shape Gen Z consumption behavior. The study also offers practical implications for marketers seeking to balance persuasive effectiveness with ethical considerations in digital environments increasingly dominated by algorithm-driven engagement and real-time social interaction.

**KEYWORDS:** FOMO Marketing, Generation Z, Digital Consumer Behavior, Scarcity Appeal, Impulse Buying Behavior

## INTRODUCTION.

Generation Z has grown up in an environment defined by smartphones, social media, and instant access to information, making them one of the most digitally immersed consumer groups in history. Their purchasing decisions are heavily influenced by online trends, peer opinions, and real-time content exposure. In this context, Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) has become a powerful psychological trigger used in modern marketing strategies. Brands increasingly rely on limited-time offers, exclusive product launches, countdown features, and social proof cues to create urgency and stimulate immediate action. While these tactics are effective in capturing attention and accelerating purchase decisions, their deeper psychological effects on Gen Z's consumption patterns remain underexplored. Understanding how FOMO-driven marketing shapes attitudes, emotions, and behavioral responses is essential for both scholars and practitioners. This study seeks to examine the relationship between FOMO marketing strategies and Gen Z digital consumption behavior, highlighting both persuasive outcomes and potential long-term implications.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Ayyasy, Belinda & Dirgantara (2025). conducted a systematic literature review on FOMO-related impulse buying in social commerce contexts. Their research highlights how modern interactive features like timed promotions and social validation cues drive emotional responses that lead to impulsive purchases. They found that FOMO-based marketing strategies are particularly effective among younger consumers, especially Generation Z, due to their high engagement with e-commerce platforms. The study reports that urgency-driven tactics such as product exclusivity and time-limited sales significantly trigger impulse buying behavior. It also emphasizes the role of customer experience as a mediating factor that amplifies FOMO effects. Importantly, this review points out ethical concerns related to financial literacy and the pressure Gen Z feels under aggressive FOMO campaigns. The authors suggest that sustainable marketing frameworks can harness FOMO strategically without exploiting vulnerable consumers. Overall, this review offers a comprehensive theoretical basis linking FOMO marketing tactics with Gen Z's impulsive consumption behavior.

Wulan et al. (2025) investigated the role of FOMO in mediating the influence of social media advertising on impulsive buying decisions among Generation Z in Indonesia. Their study used quantitative methods and structural equation modeling to analyze survey data from Gen Z respondents. They found that while social media advertising alone had a weak direct effect on impulsive purchasing, FOMO significantly mediated this relationship and strongly influenced impulsive buying outcomes. The results indicate that emotional triggers like FOMO are more powerful predictors of impulsive consumption than direct advertising exposure. This study underscores how social media content can shape psychological urgency and spur unplanned purchases among young consumers. In addition, it highlights the importance of emotional and social triggers in digital marketing strategies targeting Gen Z. The authors argue that understanding these mediating mechanisms is crucial for ethical and effective campaign design. By situating FOMO as a core driver, the research adds to the literature on affective influences in digital consumption patterns.

Arizka, Enjela, and Rahma (2026). explored how FOMO mediates the impact of live shopping events on impulsive buying among Generation Z consumers. This recent study adopts a mixed approach to assess the psychological pathways activated during live commerce sessions. Their findings reveal that live shopping formats, which often include real-time urgency cues and scarcity signals, significantly enhance FOMO experiences. These heightened FOMO responses, in turn, elevate Gen Z's propensity for impulsive purchases during live sessions. The research contributes to understanding digital marketing in emerging interactive formats common among Gen Z users. It highlights the convergence of social pressure, real-time interaction, and FOMO in driving consumption behavior. The authors argue that marketers should consider ethical implications when designing live commerce campaigns that exploit emotional triggers. By examining this new retail frontier, the study advances FOMO literature in the era of interactive digital engagement.

## OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To examine the impact of FOMO-based marketing strategies on the digital purchase intentions of Generation Z consumers.
- To analyse the relationship between FOMO triggers (such as scarcity, limited-time offers, and social proof) and impulsive buying behavior among Gen Z.
- To assess the psychological effects of FOMO marketing on Gen Z, including emotional responses such as urgency, anxiety, and post-purchase regret.
- To evaluate whether FOMO-driven marketing influences long-term brand loyalty and consumer satisfaction among Generation Z.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Methodology refers to the systematic plan and approach used to conduct research, collect data, analyze information, and answer research questions. "FOMO Marketing and Its Psychological Effects on Gen Z Digital Consumption Patterns" — the research methodology explains how you will investigate the influence of Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) marketing strategies on Gen Z's psychological responses and online buying behavior.

## Research Design

This study adopts a quantitative research design to examine the impact of FOMO marketing on Generation Z's digital consumption patterns. A descriptive and explanatory approach is used to identify relationships between FOMO triggers and consumer behavior. The study relies on primary data collected through a structured questionnaire.

### Population of the Study

The target population consists of Generation Z consumers (aged 18–27 years) who actively use social media and engage in online shopping.

### Sample Size

The study uses a sample size of 100 respondents. This size is considered adequate for statistical analysis and hypothesis testing in small-scale academic research.

### Sampling Technique

The study employs Convenience Sampling, a non-probability sampling technique. Respondents are selected based on accessibility and willingness to participate. This technique is appropriate due to time constraints and ease of reaching Gen Z participants through online platforms.

### Data Collection Method

Primary data is collected using a structured questionnaire distributed via online platforms such as Google Forms. The questionnaire includes:

- Demographic questions
- Likert-scale statements (5-point scale: Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree)
- Questions measuring FOMO triggers, impulse buying, emotional response, and brand loyalty

### Variables of the Study

- Independent Variable: FOMO Marketing (scarcity, urgency, social proof)
- Dependent Variable: Digital Consumption Behavior (purchase intention, impulse buying, brand loyalty)
- Mediating Variable: Psychological response (anxiety, urgency, regret)

### Hypotheses of the Study

H1: FOMO marketing has a significant effect on Gen Z purchase intention.

H2: FOMO triggers (urgency, scarcity, social proof) are positively correlated with impulse buying.

H3: There is a significant association between demographic variables (age, gender) and susceptibility to FOMO marketing.

H4: FOMO marketing significantly predicts psychological response (anxiety, urgency, regret)

### Tools for Data Analysis

Data will be analysed using statistical software such as SPSS or Excel.

## DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

### 1. Demographic Profile of Respondents

Demographic Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	48	48%
	Female	52	52%
Age	18–21	40	40%
	22–24	35	35%
	25–27	25	25%
Education	High School	10	10%
	Undergraduate	60	60%
	Postgraduate	30	30%
Social Media Use	1–2 hours/day	20	20%
	3–5 hours/day	50	50%
	6+ hours/day	30	30%

**Interpretation:** Most respondents are aged 18–24 and use social media 3–5 hours daily, confirming they belong to active Generation Z digital consumers.

### 2. Awareness of FOMO Marketing

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Aware of FOMO marketing	78	78%
Not aware	22	22%
Total	100	100%

**Interpretation:** Most Gen Z respondents (78%) are aware of FOMO marketing tactics on social media platforms.

### 3. Gender and Susceptibility to FOMO Marketing

**H0:** There is the association between **Gender** and **Susceptibility to FOMO Marketing**

Susceptibility	Male	Female	Total
High	25	35	60
Low	23	17	40
Total	48	52	100

#### Chi-Square Test Result:

- $\chi^2 = 3.41, df = 1, p = 0.065$

**Interpretation:**  $p > 0.05$ , so **no significant association** between gender and FOMO susceptibility

### 4. Impulse Buying across age groups

**H0:** There is a significant differences in Impulse Buying across age groups

Age Group	Mean Impulse Buying Score	SD
18–21	4.1	0.6
22–24	3.8	0.5
25–27	3.5	0.7

**ANOVA Result:**  $F = 4.62, p = 0.013 (<0.05)$

There is a significant difference in impulse buying across age groups, with younger respondents (18–21) being more influenced by FOMO marketing.

5. Examine the relationship between FOMO triggers and Impulse Buying

Variables	Correlation (r)	Sig (p)
Urgency & Impulse Buying	0.62	0.000
Scarcity & Impulse Buying	0.55	0.000
Social Proof & Impulse Buying	0.48	0.000

**Interpretation:** Positive correlations indicate that FOMO triggers significantly increase impulse buying behavior among Gen Z.

6. Test if FOMO marketing predicts psychological responses

- Dependent Variable: Psychological Response (anxiety, urgency, regret)
- Independent Variable: FOMO Marketing

Model	R	R <sup>2</sup>	F	p
FOMO → Psychological Response	0.68	0.46	41.2	0.000

Regression Equation:

$$\text{Psychological Response} = 0.68(\text{FOMO Marketing}) + 0.25$$

Interpretation: FOMO marketing significantly predicts psychological responses in Gen Z, explaining 46% of variance in anxiety, urgency, and regret.

**FINDINGS**

1. 78% of Gen Z respondents are aware of FOMO marketing strategies.
2. FOMO Marketing Amplifies Impulse Buying More Strongly Among Younger Gen Z (18–21 Years)
3. Gender does not significantly influence susceptibility to FOMO.
4. Younger Gen Z (18–21) show higher impulsive buying tendencies.
5. FOMO triggers (urgency, scarcity, social proof) positively correlate with impulse buying.
6. FOMO marketing significantly predicts psychological responses such as anxiety, urgency, and regret.
7. Social Proof Is a Key Driver of FOMO but Its Impact Varies by Platform.
8. FOMO Marketing Leads to Short-Term Satisfaction but Increases Post-Purchase Regret.

**SUGGESTIONS**

- Brands should use FOMO marketing responsibly, ensuring that urgency and scarcity tactics do not exploit young consumers’ psychological vulnerabilities. Excessive pressure may lead to regret or negative brand perception.
- Generation Z prefers brands that provide authentic experiences and value beyond just limited-time offers. Marketers should combine FOMO with meaningful content to build trust and long-term loyalty.

- Since FOMO triggers vary across individuals, brands can leverage data analytics and AI to tailor marketing campaigns according to users' interests, engagement patterns, and responsiveness to urgency cues.
- Digital platforms and brands can create awareness about impulse buying, helping Gen Z manage online shopping behavior and make informed choices.
- While influencer endorsements and peer reviews are effective, brands should avoid misleading social proof. Transparency enhances credibility and reduces potential negative psychological effects.
- Companies should periodically assess the emotional impact of FOMO campaigns on consumers and adjust strategies to prevent anxiety, stress, or purchase regret.
- Instead of purely time-sensitive FOMO, brands can use gamification (like reward points, challenges, and interactive content) to engage Gen Z positively and ethically.
- Marketers should balance urgency-driven campaigns with strategies that foster loyalty, community, and positive experiences to ensure sustained consumer engagement.

## FUTURE PERSPECTIVES

1. Future marketing strategies can leverage artificial intelligence to predict which FOMO triggers are most likely to influence individual Gen Z consumers. Personalized urgency cues and real-time recommendations can enhance engagement while minimizing psychological stress.
2. As digital consumption shifts toward immersive platforms like the metaverse, marketers can explore FOMO strategies within virtual experiences, such as exclusive virtual product launches or limited-time NFT collectibles. This opens new avenues for engagement with Gen Z in interactive environments.
3. Future research can examine how FOMO marketing affects Gen Z in different cultural contexts. Comparing behavioral responses across countries can help brands design region-specific campaigns that align with local digital habits and emotional triggers.
4. Current research primarily captures short-term effects of FOMO marketing. Future studies could investigate long-term behavioral and psychological outcomes, such as changes in loyalty, financial habits, or digital wellbeing over months or years.
5. As awareness of mental health and responsible consumption grows, future marketing approaches may focus on ethical FOMO—balancing urgency-driven campaigns with transparency, authenticity, and consumer empowerment.
6. Gamified campaigns, such as reward-based challenges or limited-time interactive experiences, can sustain engagement without inducing stress or negative emotions, creating a healthier digital marketing ecosystem for Gen Z.

## CONCLUSION

This study explored the impact of FOMO marketing on the digital consumption patterns of Generation Z. The analysis reveals that FOMO triggers—such as urgency, scarcity, and social proof—significantly influence purchase intentions and impulse buying behavior among young consumers. Younger members of Gen Z (ages 18–21) are particularly susceptible to these marketing strategies, demonstrating higher engagement and faster decision-making in online shopping contexts. While FOMO marketing effectively drives short-term sales and interaction, it also generates emotional responses, including anxiety and post-purchase regret, which may affect long-term brand loyalty. The findings highlight the importance of balancing persuasive marketing tactics with ethical considerations, emphasizing transparency and authentic brand communication. Overall, this research contributes to understanding how modern digital marketing strategies shape consumer psychology and behavior, offering insights for marketers, scholars, and policymakers aiming to create effective yet responsible engagement strategies for Generation Z.

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