

FOMO BUYING BEHAVIOR AMONG CONSUMERS: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY ON THE INFLUENCE OF FEAR OF MISSING OUT ON PURCHASE DECISIONS

***Mr. Lawrence G**

Assistant Professor, PG & Research Department of Management Studies, Sacred Heart College (Autonomous), Tirupattur - 635 601, Mail Id: lawrence.gkl@gmail.com, Mob. No: 8939153896

****Dr. Alexzander R**

Associate Professor, Department of Management, Silicon City College (Autonomous), Bengaluru, Mail Id: alexkclency@gmail.com, Mob. No: 9786609320

ABSTRACT: *The rapid growth of digital marketing, social media platforms, and e-commerce has significantly altered consumer buying behavior. One of the emerging psychological phenomena influencing consumer purchasing decisions is Fear of Missing Out (FOMO). FOMO refers to the apprehension that others may be experiencing rewarding events, products, or opportunities from which an individual is absent. This study examines the impact of FOMO on consumer buying behavior and investigates the relationship between social media influence, scarcity perception, peer influence, and impulsive purchase intention. Data were collected from 150 respondents through a structured questionnaire using convenience sampling. Statistical analyses including correlation and regression were conducted using SPSS. The findings reveal a significant positive relationship between FOMO and buying behavior. Social media influence and perceived scarcity emerged as the strongest predictors of purchase intention. The regression model explained 62.4% of the variance in buying behavior, indicating substantial predictive power. The study highlights how marketers leverage limited-time offers, flash sales, influencer marketing, and social proof to trigger FOMO-driven purchases. The results contribute to consumer behavior literature by providing empirical evidence on psychological triggers affecting purchasing decisions in the digital marketplace. The study offers practical implications for marketers, e-commerce firms, and brand managers seeking to design effective promotional strategies while also encouraging consumers to make rational purchase decisions. Future research may examine demographic differences, cultural influences, and longitudinal effects of FOMO on consumer behavior.*

Keywords

Fear of Missing Out (FOMO), Consumer Buying Behavior, Social Media Influence, Impulse Buying, Scarcity Marketing, Purchase Intention

1. INTRODUCTION

Consumer buying behavior has undergone a significant transformation due to the widespread adoption of social media and digital commerce platforms. Consumers today are constantly exposed to product recommendations, influencer endorsements, flash sales, and peer-generated content that shape their purchase decisions. Among the psychological drivers influencing these decisions, Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) has emerged as a critical factor. FOMO refers to the anxiety or concern that others may be obtaining valuable experiences, products, or opportunities while one is being left behind. This psychological phenomenon encourages consumers to make immediate purchases to avoid regret and social exclusion.

The increasing prevalence of social networking sites such as Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, and TikTok has amplified FOMO among consumers. Marketers strategically employ scarcity messages, countdown timers, limited-edition products, and influencer promotions to create urgency and stimulate purchasing behavior. Consequently, consumers often engage in impulsive buying, sometimes overlooking rational evaluation of product necessity and financial implications. Understanding the influence of FOMO on buying behavior is therefore essential for marketers, policymakers, and researchers interested in consumer psychology and digital marketing effectiveness.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Numerous studies have investigated the role of FOMO in shaping consumer behavior. Przybylski et al. (2013) introduced the concept of FOMO and identified it as a psychological phenomenon linked to social connectedness and anxiety. Good and Hyman (2020) found that social media exposure significantly increases consumers' purchase intentions by creating a perception of social pressure and exclusivity. Kaur et al. (2020) reported that limited-time promotional offers trigger FOMO, resulting in increased impulsive buying among online shoppers. Similarly, Hodkinson (2019) observed that consumers experiencing higher levels of FOMO are more likely to make unplanned purchases.

Research by Zhang et al. (2021) demonstrated that scarcity-based marketing strategies positively influence purchase intention through FOMO activation. Ahmed and Ting (2022) found that peer influence and social comparison significantly contribute to FOMO-driven buying behavior among young adults. Moreover, Gupta and Sharma (2023) concluded that influencer marketing creates stronger emotional engagement, thereby increasing the likelihood of impulsive purchases. These studies collectively suggest that FOMO acts as a mediating psychological mechanism connecting social media engagement, scarcity perception, and consumer buying decisions.

3. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The increasing use of social media and digital marketing techniques has intensified consumers' exposure to promotional messages designed to create urgency and exclusivity. Consequently, consumers frequently experience Fear of Missing Out (FOMO), leading to impulsive and often irrational purchase decisions. Despite growing interest in this phenomenon, limited empirical research has examined the extent to which FOMO influences buying behavior among consumers in the contemporary digital marketplace. Therefore, this study seeks to investigate the relationship between FOMO and consumer buying behavior and identify the factors contributing to FOMO-induced purchase decisions.

4. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. To examine the relationship between Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) and consumer buying behavior.
2. To analyze the influence of social media exposure, peer influence, and scarcity perception on FOMO.
3. To determine the impact of FOMO on consumers' purchase intention.

5. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Correlations

Variables	FOMO	Social Media Influence	Scarcity Perception	Peer Influence	Buying Behavior
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FOMO	1				
Social Media Influence	.712**	1			
Scarcity Perception	.689**	.624**	1		
Peer Influence	.641**	.598**	.587**	1	
Buying Behavior	.774**	.682**	.719**	.653**	1

Correlation is significant at 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Interpretation

The correlation analysis reveals a strong positive relationship between FOMO and buying behavior ($r = 0.774$, $p < 0.01$). Social media influence ($r = 0.682$), scarcity perception ($r = 0.719$), and peer influence ($r = 0.653$) are also significantly associated with buying behavior. The results indicate that higher levels of FOMO correspond with stronger purchase intentions and impulsive buying tendencies among consumers.

Regression Analysis

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error
1	0.79	0.624	0.614	0.412

Interpretation

The model explains 62.4% of the variance in buying behavior ($R^2 = 0.624$), indicating that FOMO, social media influence, scarcity perception, and peer influence significantly contribute to consumer purchase decisions.

ANOVA Table

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	42.611	4	10.653	61.248	0
Residual	25.201	145	0.174		
Total	67.812	149			

Interpretation

The ANOVA results indicate that the regression model is statistically significant ($F = 61.248$, $p < 0.001$). Therefore, the independent variables collectively explain significant variation in buying behavior.

Coefficients Table

Variables	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
Constant	0.542	0.281		1.929	0.056
FOMO	0.412	0.071	0.438	5.803	0
Social Media Influence	0.231	0.067	0.259	3.448	0.001
Scarcity Perception	0.289	0.063	0.311	4.587	0
Peer Influence	0.173	0.058	0.181	2.983	0.004

Interpretation

FOMO has the strongest impact on buying behavior ($\beta = .438$, $p < .001$), followed by scarcity perception ($\beta = .311$, $p < .001$), social media influence ($\beta = .259$, $p < .001$), and peer

influence ($\beta = .181, p < .01$). The results indicate that consumers experiencing higher levels of FOMO are significantly more likely to engage in purchasing behavior.

6. FINDINGS

The study reveals that Fear of Missing Out is a significant determinant of consumer buying behavior. The correlation analysis indicates strong positive relationships between FOMO, social media influence, scarcity perception, peer influence, and purchase decisions. Consumers exposed to limited-time offers, influencer recommendations, and peer-generated content tend to exhibit stronger intentions to purchase products.

The regression analysis confirms that FOMO is the strongest predictor of buying behavior. The model explains 62.4% of the variance in purchase decisions, suggesting that psychological and social factors play a substantial role in shaping consumer actions. Scarcity perception and social media influence further amplify the impact of FOMO, encouraging impulsive buying behavior.

7. SUGGESTIONS

Organizations should adopt ethical marketing practices while utilizing FOMO-based strategies. Marketers can effectively use limited-time promotions and influencer campaigns; however, excessive pressure tactics may negatively affect consumer trust. Consumer awareness programs should also educate buyers about rational decision-making and responsible spending habits to reduce unnecessary impulsive purchases.

8. MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

The findings provide valuable insights for marketers, e-commerce platforms, and brand managers. Businesses can strategically design promotional campaigns using scarcity messages, social proof, and influencer marketing to enhance consumer engagement and sales. Understanding FOMO-driven purchasing behavior enables managers to create targeted marketing initiatives that maximize conversion rates while maintaining long-term customer relationships and brand credibility.

9. FUTURE SCOPE FOR FURTHER STUDY

Future studies may examine demographic differences in FOMO buying behavior across age groups, gender, and income levels. Researchers can also investigate the moderating effects of personality traits, self-control, and financial literacy. Longitudinal studies may provide deeper insights into the long-term consequences of FOMO on consumer spending patterns and financial well-being.

10. CONCLUSION

Fear of Missing Out has become a prominent psychological driver of consumer buying behavior in the digital era. The study demonstrates that FOMO significantly influences purchase intentions and impulsive buying decisions. Social media exposure, scarcity perception, and peer influence further strengthen this relationship. The findings highlight the importance of understanding consumer psychology in developing effective marketing strategies while encouraging responsible consumption practices. As digital commerce continues to evolve, FOMO will remain an influential factor shaping consumer behavior and marketing effectiveness.

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