

THE EFFECT OF SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCE AND FEAR OF MISSING OUT ON
CUSTOMER BUYING INTENTIONS IN ONLINE SHOPPING

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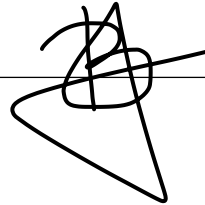
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ABSTRACT

THE EFFECT OF SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCE AND FEAR OF MISSING OUT ON CUSTOMER BUYING INTENTIONS IN ONLINE SHOPPING

Ashish Pal
2026

The increasing penetration of social media has significantly reshaped consumer behavior, particularly in the way individuals interact with brands, process information, and make purchase decisions. Among the psychological outcomes of heavy social media usage is the phenomenon of FOMO, which has emerged as a crucial driver of consumer attitudes and behaviors in digital marketplaces. This thesis investigates the combined influence of social media and FOMO on customer buying intentions in the context of online shopping.

The study adopts a descriptive research design and a quantitative research approach, employing a structured questionnaire administered to 395 respondents in the Delhi NCR region. Constructs such as social media influence, FOMO, and consumer purchase intentions were measured using validated scales from prior literature, ensuring reliability and validity. Data were analyzed through descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and regression analysis to explore the relationships among variables and to test the proposed hypotheses.

The findings highlight three major insights. First, social media has a significant direct influence on consumers' buying intentions, demonstrating its role as a persuasive medium for product exposure and peer-driven recommendations. Second, FOMO plays a critical role in shaping purchase behavior, as consumers experiencing higher levels of FOMO tend to display stronger intentions to engage in online shopping. Third, a strong positive relationship exists between social media use and FOMO, suggesting that increased digital engagement heightens psychological anxieties about missing opportunities, which in turn accelerates consumer decision-making.

The research contributes to academic literature by integrating the psychological construct of FOMO with traditional consumer behavior models, offering a more comprehensive understanding of decision-making in online environments. Practically, the study provides valuable insights for marketers and businesses to design strategies that leverage social influence, peer visibility, and scarcity-driven campaigns to encourage online purchases. Limitations and recommendations for future research are also outlined, paving the way for further exploration of evolving consumer behavior in digital ecosystems.

Key Words: Social Media, FOMO, Buying Intention, Online Shopping, Consumer Behavior

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 RELEVANT BACKGROUND

The rise of social media has significantly transformed traditional business and marketing practices, making digital engagement an essential part of modern strategies (Nambisan and Baron, 2007; Habib et al., 2022). Social media has gained the status of the powerful medium with which people are connected through communication with the help of content (Alalwan et al., 2017). Customers today have become active participants on these platforms of social media and thus influence their behaviors and preferences regarding purchases (Kim and Kim, 2018). The space created by these platforms for individuals, organizations, and governments to interact, articulate, and offer their related services and products demonstrates its wide-ranging applications in commercial, educational, political, and social reasons (Gutierrez et al., 2023). This change is something that has compelled many organizations at different parts of the world to strategically use social media to attract and retain customers (Usher et al., 2014). There is targeted marketing through personalized content while exploiting interactive engagements to build and develop strong relations with the audience. Such an effort helps businesses sell globally, gain real-time feedback, and build communities around the product or service (Rathore et al., 2016). With such proper engagement, organizations will attract increased awareness, conversion, and feedback-enhanced sales level while at the same time develop long-lasting profitable relationships with customers (Zhu and Chen, 2015).

The relationships and conversations with customers have grown even more important as a result of the proliferation of social media networks. Subsequently through communities in which customers may participate and engage, activities on social media platforms make it possible for brands to develop either directly through company profiles and marketing or through an indirect way using these communities (Wang, 2021). Through increasing user interactions, social media serves as a platform for brands to advance their interests. These activities highlight the interactive dimension of social media, adopting the customer-brand

interaction that strengthens bonds between customers and brands. It is then apparent that interaction has been recognized as an imperative parameter in supporting the customer and brand relationship (Gutierrez et al., 2023).

Marketing communication is something that customers heavily engage in, and the whole avenue of change detours from the former paths of traditional marketing into the modern trend of digital marketing. This change has compelled firms to tweak their marketing-oriented activities by taking full advantage of the internet, which has the qualities of distance spread, easy access, and cost-effectiveness (Karunasingha and Abeysekera, 2022). Digital marketing, one of the biggest boons afforded by such a shift, has allowed shopping to ease into a whole new paradigm of providing the customer with comfortable and efficient purchasing experiences. With online purchasing, the customer is not bound to physical presence-the customer can shop anytime, anywhere (Al-Debei & Akroush, 2015). Furthermore, online shopping generally has a different cost structure making it more economical in terms of eliminating movement for purchasing and giving more insight into discounts and price comparisons (Huseynov & Yildirim, 2016). The ease of checking product reviews, comparing prices, and accessing promotional offers with a few clicks on digital platforms enhances customer convenience. That flexibility in shopping on desktops, tablets, and smart devices further adds to the appeal for modern customers toward e-commerce (Abd Aziz & Abd Wahid, 2018). Consequently, businesses must dedicate time to refining their digital marketing strategies to keep in line with the ongoing transformations of customer behaviors and expectations (Huseynov & Yildirim, 2016).

Owing to the growth of social media and brand community culture, individuals are increasingly seeking information about the products and services the companies promote and sharing their insights about them in the online world (Zollo et al., 2020). With the advancement of the digitalized world, organizations have better opportunities to interact with potential customers using a highly customized approach towards marketing (Barlow et al., 2004). The companies use a host of digital marketing tools including SEO, content marketing, and social media tapping into tools that have been incredibly effective and efficient (Kim et al., 2019). Marketing on social media platforms has become more

widespread as businesses seek to deliver customer value in a clear and more cosmopolitan manner via digital media. Furthermore, social interaction across social media has enhanced communication, allowing customers to directly engage with brands seamlessly (Balakrishnan & Yi, 2014).

Nowadays, organizations are focusing more on digital world to facilitate their advertisement and marketing campaigns since customers spend time on social media, participating in discussions or sharing experiences with other customers (Moslehpour et al., 2021). Social media marketing strategies offer both opportunities and challenges for businesses to increase customers' purchase intentions (Ismail, 2017). According to Hinz et al. (2011), in purchasing decisions, customers depend heavily upon the recommendations and reviews from their social networks.

A widely recognized and important concept in the field of customer behavior, especially concerning social media marketing is "Fear Of Missing Out" (FOMO). Previous studies have reported that the FOMO is a psychological phenomenon induced by interacting with social media sites (Przybylski et al. 2013). While originally restricted to the online spaces, current evidence seems to indicate that FOMO also has offline effects (Kang et al., 2019) as well as on online behaviours (Beyens et al., 2016). It is a great motivating factor for customers where this aspect is important in purchase decision-making (Hodkinson, 2019), mostly regarding social networking sites influenced by influencer marketing. In digital world, "if a genuine fear of missing out is engendered by a FOMO-appeal, then reactive individuals will tend to be driven to take up the offer rather than to reject it (avoid)" (Hodkinson, 2019, p. 68). FOMO is used by social comparison over social media to encourage followers to upscale themselves through consumption of the products recommended by their favorite influencers on various social media sites (Bläse et al., 2024). Furthermore, the unpleasant feeling of FOMO fuels the need to seize all possible opportunities, particularly those believed to be distinctive from others.

Traditionally, buying intention of the customers has been understood as their willingness to pay for a good or service (Yüksel, 2016). With so many products available in the globalised market of today, marketers find it increasingly difficult to capture and hold the

interest of customers. Without constant modification of plans to involve customers and keep their interest, long-term survival and growth will always remain elusive for any organization. Consumer behavior has changed significantly with the emergence of social media as the most important communication tool. For instance, many businesses have opened official accounts on the various social networking sites to reach their target markets better, improve their brands' images, and nurture better relationships with their customers (Hutter et al., 2013). Advertisements mostly invite consumers to seek additional information, compare their alternatives, and deliberate on the value of a particular brand before deciding what to buy. This makes social media a very powerful and cost-effective marketing communication tool for reaching consumers directly, affecting their purchasing behavior, and building loyal customers through personalized campaigns and individualized contacts (Hanaysha, 2022). Khang and Ki (2012) argued that a shift in social media trends affect the customer behavior purchases. Likewise, Muthiah and Kannan (2015) observed that the time spent by the customer browsing on social networking websites is directly associated with that person's intention of buying a product.

To summarize, organizations are focusing on engaging their customers with more personalized content, interactions through brand communities and pages as well as through influencers in this competitive scenario. This has resulted in a huge transformation in online retail due to the presence and introduction of digital spaces for the customers. Using social media platforms have many positive features including accessibility and cost effectiveness that will favour the organizations to increase sales as well as the revenue. Another important parameter that creates an urge in the customers for impulsive buying is FOMO which arises due to social comparison specifically in case of time-bound deals and influencer marketing. Studies have also claimed that the concept of FOMO has been used by the organizations for their sales and profits but it can also have a negative impact in the form of anxiety and obsessive purchase behaviours. Therefore, it is important for the businesses to use digital technologies with an emphasis on efficient use of digital technologies and personalized services to sustain in the competitive environment.

Businesses should also focus on relevance of their brand to build a loyal customer base that can affect the customer buying intentions.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

In the digital economy, online shopping has been integrated into the consumer world, made possible through technological advances and the growth of internet access. Among the many factors affecting customer purchase behavior, social media influence and FOMO have emerged as two significant psychological and social factors. Social media platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and Facebook are not only modes of communication but also serve as powerful marketing platforms that contribute to the shaping of consumer perceptions and behaviors by brands, influencers, and peer groups. Through curated content, endorsements, and targeted advertising, social media builds aspirations, wants, and trends that strongly influence buying intentions.

At the same time, FOMO involves anxiety about missing rewarding experiences that others are perceived to be enjoying. This is another psychological attribute that has become more common among online consumers. Brands and marketers usually exploit FOMO by creating urgency through limited-time offers, exclusive deals, and social proof (“Only 2 left in stock”, “5 people are viewing this item now”).

Despite the obvious prominence of social media influence and FOMO in online consumer behavior, the understanding of their intersection and the joint influence on customer buying intentions is still vague. Much of the present work has tended to look at social media influences and FOMO as two separate entities, ignoring the possible amplification or moderation of consumer decision-making processes by their interaction. Next, there is a need to identify which social media influences (trust in influencers, perceived authenticity, peer influence, informational content, etc.) are most correlated with FOMO-based buying intentions.

This understanding would substantiate much-needed academic thrusts in consumer behavior, marketing, and digital media studies and provide useful insights for marketers, brand managers, and e-commerce platforms in formulating efficient marketing strategies

that ethically engage these psychological factors. This study hence sets forth the following core problem for investigation: How do social media and FOMO affect customer buying intentions in the context of online shopping? Do they exert influence alone or interactively? Furthermore, exploring this problem is critical because consumer decisions in the digital environment are often made in real time and under strong social influence, making them highly susceptible to both positive and negative outcomes. These decisions thus are highly visible on either side of the spectrum: positive or negative. While social media and FOMO create sales and brand presence in brighter avenues, they simultaneously cause the consumer compulsive shopping behaviors, stress, and diminished satisfaction in cases where marketers overuse them; therefore, finding this balance between utilizing social tools for positioning yet positioning this toward consumer well-being is an important pursuit both from academic and practice perspectives. The current investigation seeks not only to address a gap in literature but to provide a foundation upon which to shape a sustainable, consumer-centric marketing approach within the fast-growing digital marketplace.

1.3 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The significance of this study is to advance academic research and provide practical insights into consumer behavior in the digital landscape. Academically, the research can contribute much to the existing literature on consumer psychology, and digital communication. Its focus on the critical factors of social media and FOMO in influencing customer buying intentions is important. Prior studies revealed social media as a very powerful driver of consumer decision making (Alalwan et al., 2017) and the role of FOMO in the formation of behavioral and psychological responses to stimuli from marketing (Przybylski et al., 2013; Hodgkinson, 2019). However, most of the studies treat the two factors separately. This study will fill this gap by investigating their joint influence thereby offering a more holistic framework of how social interactions and psychological motivations converge to influence purchase decisions in the context of online shopping. Such an integrative approach contributes to the academic discourse bridging marketing and

behavioral psychology to provide scholars with new insight on the interactional dynamics of consumption in the digital world.

From a practical standpoint, it is highly relevant to businesses, marketers, and e-commerce platforms that are making use of digital tools to persuade and preserve customers. Today, Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok have become virtual marketplaces where businesses can get closer to consumers by influencer marketing, focusing advertising strategies, and engaging them through peer interaction (Hanaysha, 2022). FOMO is widely used as a marketing strategy through time lapses, exclusivity, and real engagement, generating urgency and spurring sales by creating quick purchase decisions. This empirical analysis of both factors, therefore, translates to actionable recommendations for organizations on how to develop marketing strategies that optimize effectiveness “while ensuring ethical responsibility”. It uses the idea that, FOMO-based appeals might enhance sales, yet too much use of them could trigger adverse consumer outcomes such as stress, compulsive buying, or anxiety (Kang et al., 2019; Hodgkinson, 2019). Therefore, to encourage consumers to maintain sustainable relations with them, businesses must strike a balance between persuasive techniques and authentic communication.

Businesses can develop integrated digital marketing tactics that improve the effectiveness of online strategies in propagating campaigns and most importantly impact on the profit-volume ratio. At a time when businesses have to contend with severe online competition and fragmentation in consumer attention, it is imperative to base campaign planning on evidence-based insights into consumers’ perceptions and motivations. Social media and FOMO inform how organizations can personalize their campaigns, engage customers’ attention, and drive conversion and buying behavior. These developments will also assist businesses in achieving trust and loyalty through more experiences focused on value as opposed to purely transactional conditions. According to Zhu and Chen (2015), organizations making maximum use of digital engagement develop better chances of sustaining profitable relationships with customers in the long term.

In short, this study is significant because it bridges theory and practice. It would enrich the scholarly understanding of online consumer behavior yet, at the same time, provide

practical approaches to organizations that seek to benefit without compromising the ethics and effectiveness of social media and FOMO. This dual contribution ensures that the findings are valuable to both the academic researchers who seek to advance theoretical models and the practitioners aiming to improve business performance in a competitive digital marketplace.

1.4 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES AND QUESTIONS

The rapid proliferation of digital technologies has fundamentally transformed the retail landscape, making online shopping a dominant mode of consumption across the globe. In this evolving landscape, social media has turned into one of the most important platforms not only for communication and entertainment but also for forming opinions, perceptions, and preferences along with decision-making on purchases. Contribution to a regular stream of information, reviews, and endorsements affects various campaigns directly with how customers form their buying attitudes for brands, influencers, and everyday people. E-commerce features blended within social media shall remove spaces between social interaction and shopping behavior, which indicates how strong holds are by social media over decisions made by consumers.

Rise of another psychological phenomenon affecting consumer behavior as well as creating a significant effect through various means includes the FOMO along with saddle-free socializing.

Growing attention has been paid on the field of individual effects of social media influence and FOMO onto consumer online behavioral types. However, there has been little research on a combination of these traits and how it affects behavior. This holds a considerable window of opportunities in the literature for understanding better psychological to socio-mechanisms motivating online purchasing behavior, especially in a time where digital engagement is nearly omnipresent. In response to this need, the present study is structured around four key objectives:

1. To examine the impact of social media on customer buying intentions in online shopping.

2. To analyze the role of FOMO in influencing customer buying intentions.
3. To explore the combined effect of social media, FOMO on customer buying intentions in online shopping.
4. To provide strategic recommendations for businesses on leveraging social media and FOMO-driven marketing to enhance online sales.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Research questions form an important part of any research study; they keep directing the entire study. They come from the objectives of the study and provide the basis for exploring the relationships among variables. Research questions guide the narrowing down of the study scope to ensure structuring of the analysis according to the purpose of the research. The study questions were framed under the current study to assess the effects of social media and FOMO on customer buying intention concerning online shopping. In addition to that, they hope to measure interaction between both factors and draw conclusions about the application of the results in the creation of methods for strengthening the digital marketing efforts of companies towards increasing online sales. The research questions for the present study are as follows:

1. What is the impact of social media on customer buying intentions in online shopping?
2. How does FOMO influence customer buying intentions in online shopping?
3. What is the combined effect of social media and FOMO on customer buying intentions in online shopping?
4. What strategic recommendations can be developed for businesses to effectively leverage social media and FOMO-driven marketing to enhance online sales?

1.5 LIMITATIONS AND DELIMITATIONS

Limitations

Every research may have some boundaries and constraints that are important in determining how that particular research will scope and outcome. Limitations can be

described as the weaknesses or constraints that are beyond the control of the researcher and may affect the generalization or interpretation of findings, such as sample size, geographic area, or method application.

- **Geographical Limitations**

The limitations of this study are confined to the Delhi NCR region. Although this major e-commerce center has a large and diverse consumer base, the results may not be applicable to customers elsewhere in India or in any other country. There are often significant differences in consumer preference and digital engagement across cultures and markets, making it difficult sometimes to generalize from results.

- **Sample Size Limitation**

The study uses a sample of 395 respondents, which is statistically sufficient, but may not be fully representative of the diverse group of online shoppers. Differences in age, gender, income levels, and digital literacy could influence buying intentions; hence a larger sample could yield more substantive and generalizable findings.

- **Cross-Sectional Design Limitation**

The research follows a cross-sectional design since it takes a one-time measurement. This makes it difficult to infer causality between social media use, FOMO, and buy intentions. Due to dynamism in consumer behavior, longitudinal studies could provide more convincing evidence about cause-and-effect relationships.

- **Self-Reported Data Limitation**

The study refers to responses that participants provided themselves. This type of method is open to potential response biases such as over-reporting or underreporting, along with social desirability influences. Also subject to respondents' personal interpretation are constructs such as FOMO. Hence, they would remain ambiguous based on the respondent's mood or situation.

- **Scope of Variables Limitation**

This study exclusively considers social media influence and FOMO as predictors of purchasing intentions. Other factors that could act as predictors- such as online trust, perceived product quality, pricing tactics, risks, and customer service-also relevant have not been taken into account. Hence the model lacks comprehensiveness in determining consumer behavior.

Delimitations

Delimitations define the bounds set by a researcher purposely limiting the scope of a study. Thus, its understanding should be given to limitations as well as delimitations since it will provide clarity on their scope, allow transparency, and guide any future researchers wanting to build upon the studies, with a firm conclusion about their context. The following delimitations are defined in the current research:

- **Geographical Focus**

The study does narrow its scope to the Delhi NCR. This has been deliberate so that it can be manageable in terms of data collection and for having a region that is a hot spot for activity of online shopping with diverse population active on social media. However, the research results will not be intended for generalizing beyond this area without further studies that are comparative.

- **Target Sample Size and Population**

The research sample is limited to 395 respondents who actively engage in online shopping. Although this sample size is statistically significant, it excludes those who do not do their shopping online and those who do not visit social media extensively. Thus, the study focuses specifically on people who are already part of the digital shopping ecosystem.

- **Variables under Study**

This study focuses solely on social media impact and FOMO as top determiners of intentions by consumers buying. There are other considerations like worry on consumers' trust, website designs, service quality, delivery reliability, or cultural attitudes that fall out of range or off this study. Therefore, this delimitation places sharper focus on the psychological and social dimensions of online buying behavior.

- **Methodology**

The study adopts a quantitative survey method using structured questionnaires. This excludes qualitative methods such as “interviews or focus groups” that could provide more in-depth understanding of what motivates consumers. This was done to allow for statistical analysis of measurable relationships between variables.

- **Time Frame**

Data was collected at a single point in time and reflects the consumer behaviors and digital marketing trends during that time. Rapid technological changes on social media platforms and changing preferences among consumers could render the findings obsolete with the passing of time.

1.6 DEFINITIONS OF KEY TERMS

Social Media

“Social media engagement refers to the extent to which users interact with and participate in activities on social media platforms, such as liking, sharing, commenting, following, and creating content. It reflects the depth of users' involvement with online communities and brand-related content” (Barger et al., 2016).

According to Brodie et al. (2011), social media engagement is “a psychological state that occurs by virtue of interactive, co-creative customer experiences with a focal agent/object (e.g., a brand) in focal service relationships.”

Social media usage can be understood as the “degree of an individual’s active participation in social networking sites for information, entertainment, communication, and relationship-building” (Quan-Haase & Young, 2010).

Dessart et al. (2016) describe “social media engagement as a multidimensional construct involving cognitive (attention, absorption), emotional (enthusiasm, enjoyment), and behavioral (sharing, commenting, liking) aspects that connect customers to brands and other consumers in online communities”.

Calder et al. (2009) describe engagement as “a state of connection that goes beyond exposure and involves active interaction with media content, characterized by enthusiasm, attention, and participation.”

Social media engagement is defined as “the level of a user’s cognitive, emotional, and behavioral investment in specific online communities and brand-related interactions” (Hollebeek et al., 2014).

Pempek et al. (2009) define social media usage as “the amount of time and effort spent on social networking sites, reflected in user activity such as profile updates, messaging, browsing, and participating in online communities.”

According to Kuss and Griffiths (2011), social media usage refers to “the repetitive and sustained activity of accessing social networking sites as a means of fulfilling social, informational, and psychological needs.”

Fear of Missing Out (FoMO)

Przybylski et al. (2013) define FOMO as “a pervasive apprehension that others might be having rewarding experiences from which one is absent, characterized by the desire to stay continually connected with what others are doing.”

Abel et al. (2016) describe FOMO as “a social anxiety arising from the perception that one is missing opportunities for social interaction, experiences, or satisfying events, often heightened by social media exposure.”

Hodkinson (2019) explains FOMO as “a consumer psychology construct where the fear of exclusion or missed opportunities compels individuals to engage in behaviors such as impulse buying, social media use, and event participation.”

Stead and Bibby (2017) define FOMO as “a form of negative affect that results from the perception of being excluded from enjoyable collective experiences, often manifested in technology-driven environments.”

Dossey (2014) defines FOMO as “a form of social anxiety characterized by a compulsive concern that one might miss an opportunity for social interaction, a novel experience, or a rewarding event.”

Alt (2015) describes FOMO as “a compulsive concern of missing rewarding experiences, often linked to constant checking of online social platforms to stay updated about others’ activities.”

Buglass et al. (2017) define FOMO as “a negative emotional state arising from unmet social needs, whereby individuals feel compelled to remain continuously engaged with social media to avoid exclusion.”

Balta et al. (2020) explain FOMO as “an irrational fear of being left out of social experiences, resulting in stress and compulsive behaviors, particularly in digital communication settings.”

Customer Buying Intentions

Kotler and Keller (2016) define customer buying intention as “an individual’s anticipated or planned future behavior toward purchasing a good or service, influenced by perceptions, preferences, and external marketing factors.”

Spears and Singh (2004) describe purchase intention as “an individual’s conscious plan to make an effort to purchase a brand or product in the future.”

Fishbein and Ajzen (1977) define buying intention as “a person’s subjective probability that he or she will perform a certain behavior, such as purchasing a product.”

Morwitz (2014) defined buying intention as “a consumer’s stated likelihood of engaging in a purchase behavior, which serves as a key predictor of actual buying behavior.”

Dodds, et al. (1991) state that purchase intention represents “the likelihood that a consumer will buy a product based on their perceptions of quality, value, and price.”

Ha et al. (2010) explain purchase intention as “the likelihood that a consumer will buy a product based on the perceived benefits and value derived from it.”

Assael (1992) defines purchase intention as “the predisposition of a consumer to buy a product or service in a specific situation.”

Bagozzi et al. (1989) describe purchase intention as “a motivational state of mind that drives the consumer to perform a purchase behavior.”

Hellier et al. (2003) defined buying intentions as “a consumer’s self-reported likelihood of purchasing a product or service in the future.”

Blackwell, et al. (1995) define buying intention as “the consumer’s plan to purchase a product, formed after evaluating available information and personal needs.”

Zeithaml (1988) defines buying intention as “the consumer’s willingness to purchase a product based on their perceptions of value, benefits, and sacrifices.”

Wu, Yeh, and Hsiao (2011) state that buying intention is “the possibility that consumers will buy a product depending on their satisfaction, trust, and perceived value.”

Pavlou and Fygenon (2006) define it as “a consumer’s conscious plan to engage in purchasing behavior, influenced by trust, perceived risk, and online usability.”

Laroche et al. (1996) state that purchase intention is “a measure of a consumer’s likelihood to buy a product, reflecting their attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control.”

1.7 SUMMARY

This chapter builds the framework for analyzing the influences of social media and FOMO on buying intentions in online shopping. Social media, from the viewpoint of the introduction, is increasingly gaining ground as both a communication tool and a marketing platform, transforming customer perceptions, behaviors, and decision-making, along with the growing rise of FOMO as a less-than-spectacular psychological driver of impulsive and urgency sales. The problem statement expresses a severe gap in research, given that the

majority of studies have analyzed social media influences and FOMO separately, ignoring their potential interactive effects on consumer buying behavior. The chapter has underscored that the study is thus very significant from an academic and practical viewpoint, as it merges pathways in marketing and psychology literature, while at the same time offering recommendations for the companies to design ethical and intelligible marketing strategies, leveraging digital engagement without triggering negative consumer outcomes. The study's goals and objectives are clearly established to evaluate the specific and joint roles of FOMO and social media, offering insights on improving online sales utilizing those two. Finally, the limitations of the study-addressing the limited sample size, geography, which is only the Delhi NCR area with only 395 respondents, and the methodology-are acknowledged; on the other hand, delimitations clearly establish the boundaries of the study along the lines of scope and interest. Overall, this chapter provides an extremely detailed background, justification, and direction for the study and sets the groundwork for deeper investigations into the interaction between social media, FOMO, and consumer buying intentions.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter covers the available literature concerning buyer intents and factors that shape consumer choices and guide them towards buying behavior. Consumer buying intentions are related to actual purchases, as intentions usually act as forerunner consumer actions. Similar to all other consumer behavior traits undergoing rapid changes due to technology, the present chapter deals with the aspects of buying intentions in the new digital environments. In comparison to traditional sources of information that help people familiarize themselves with organizations and companies, recent digital sources tend to provide consumers with enhanced public access to information on peer experiences and a transformed decision-making process that is markedly more collaborative and dynamic. This chapter discusses conventional theories of purchasing behavior and the new trends emerging in consumer decision-making in the context of digital reality. It reviews a wide array of literature on the subject, hence giving depth to new knowledge on the changing consumer-buying intentions, including how firms can rapidly adopt such insights to improve consumer engagement, optimize marketing strategies, and model purchasing actions in an increasingly interconnected world. Through a critical analysis of past and recent literature, this chapter emphasizes how the intersection of psychology, technology, and marketing is redefining consumer buying intentions in an interconnected digital marketplace. The definition of the subject may become broader from the study of traditional frameworks to contemporary trends of understanding how consumer decision-making has evolved and given insights as how firms can strategically respond to these changes. This may start enlightening businesses in developing a stronger engagement with consumers, creating personalized marketing and modeling consumer buying in this competitive online marketplace.

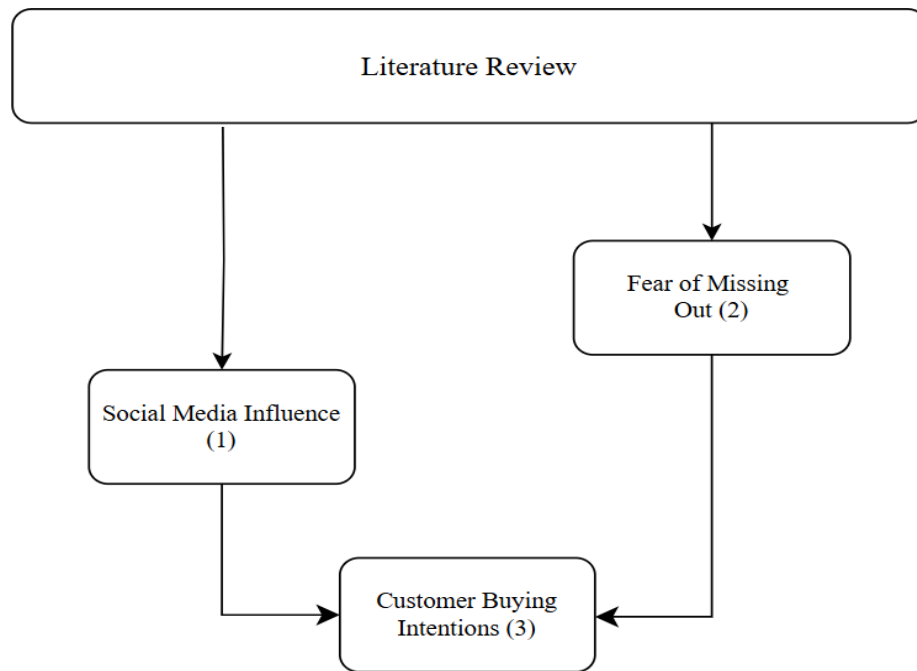


Figure 1. Showing the Schema of Literature Review (Developed by the Researcher)

Theoretical Framework

This study is grounded in well-established behavioral and psychological theories to explain how social media and FOMO influence customer buying intentions. Drawing upon the “Theory of Planned Behavior” (Ajzen, 1991), shows that social media created attitudes, social norms, and perceived control on intent to buy. Moreover, this complements Social Comparison Theory (Festinger, 1954) mentioned earlier, as exposing individuals with peers and influencers on the digital platform creates upward comparisons, which could cause the feeling of missing-out and incite buying with great motivation. Besides, one can also take from the “Stimulus–Organism–Response (S–O–R) framework” (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974): social media cues serve as stimuli; FOMO manifests as the internal psychological state; and buying intention occurs as a behavioral response. Altogether, these theories provide a strong framework within which social media and FOMO can jointly

drive consumer purchase decisions in the online shopping environment through psychological and social mechanisms.

Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB)

The “Theory of Planned Behavior” (Ajzen, 1991) holds an enviable place in consumer behavior research for one important reason-it emphasizes intention as the most proximal predictor of actual behavior. According to the TPB, three sets of variables shape purchase intention: “attitude toward behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control (PBC)”. Engagement in social media may have a positive impact on all three criteria in this study. Favorable attitudes toward products could be formed via a positive social media flow of product reviews, influencer endorsements, and advertisements. Social pressure to conform with trends can be created by their constant visibility of peers and influencers in purchasing or endorsing items. These two dimensions- subjective norms and the last dimension of perceived behavioral control-would be positively affected through enhancing pathways such as ease of online shopping, secure payment systems, and fast delivery options. In all of this, FOMO acts as a catalyst; it extenuates the emotional weight of attitudes (“I will regret not buying this”) and subjective norms (“everyone else is already buying”). Together, these dimensions indicate how social media and FOMO work together to enhance customer buying intention.

Social Comparison Theory

“Social Comparison Theory states that individuals evaluate themselves by comparing their behaviors, possessions, and achievements with those of others” (Festinger, 1954). It allows yet another avenue for comparison in online shopping, where social media provides comparison opportunities for influencer product showcases, peer reviews, and user-generated content. This visibility of other consumption creates upward comparisons, whereby consumers feel they miss experiences or benefits shared by their peers. These comparisons trigger FOMO, in that people fear being out of the loop about some social trend or shared experiences. Users develop a sense of urgency and anticipatory regret on missing out whenever they see their peers and influencers flaunting limited-edition items

or exclusive deals. Heightened FOMO retains his purchases in good standing, as an antidote to the oppressive feeling of “lost opportunity.” In this fashion, social comparison becomes an important mechanism linking social media engagement, FOMO, and ultimately customer-buying intention.

Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) Model

The “Stimulus-Organism-Response (SO-R) model” elucidates consumer behavior by treating the environment as a stimulus (S) that influences internal psychological states (organism, O) that are responsible for behavior outcomes (response R). Applied to this study, social media cues such as scarcity messages (“Only 2 left”), limited-time offers, peer endorsements, and influencer promotions act as stimuli to attract attention and generate psychological arousal. The organism component in the present case would be represented by FOMO, which mixes emotional apprehension with cognitive expectations of regret. The strength of buying motivation will raise once FOMO is triggered and purchasing is perceived as the fastest relief from not carrying out the behavior. Thus, this paradigm spatially conveys the urgency behind the emotion pertaining to digital marketing as well as how situational stimuli through social media turn into internal psychological states that affect purchase intention. By placing FOMO at the center of the organism, the S-O-R framework complements the rational path outlined by the “Theory of Planned Behavior” and the social influence mechanism outlined by “Social Comparison Theory”.

2.2 SOCIAL MEDIA

According to Kaplan and Haenlein (2010), the term “social media” refers to “a collection of internet-based applications that facilitate the creation and exchange of user-generated content” (Kusumasondjaja, 2018). Such applications commonly include sharing insights and information related to some products or services within a certain market (Prasad et al., 2017). Marketer becomes more definite in using social media as an indicator of that intensified use as an avenue for advertising and interacting with consumers. Most importantly, social media use for marketers includes purposes such as the enhancement of both brand awareness and brand loyalty (Zhou et al. 2012). The platforms have transformed

the way customers interact in real time across several communities and, at the same time, act as a forum for users to express their ideas as well as share information within a particular market about various products and services. The impending mass availability of social media presence is affecting innumerable aspects of modern life (Moslehpour et al., 2021).

Apart from that, the services are also significantly beneficial and supportive in different spheres such as education, entertainment, business, and communication. Social media is used by the business world for marketing and advertising, which has proven to be an effective medium through which the target audience can be reached, brand awareness can be created, and customer engagement can be done more effectively (Alalwan et al., 2017). With the advent of this paradigm shift, old marketing strategies have been turned upside down since these technologies empower businesses to personalize their content, analyze behavior, and construct continuing associations with their clienteles (Hajli, 2014).

With the adoption of social media today, the consumer-brand role has completely changed, making social media the most important avenue for purchase decision-making. Unlike traditional media, consumers do not have to rely solely on traditional forms of communication to learn about brands but can directly engage brands in a back-and-forth way real-time. With that form of interaction, feelings add deep emotional connections or intensify the effect of purchase decisions on customers. According to Bilgin (2018), social media marketing activities such as “entertainment, customization, and trendiness” have a significantly positive effect on brand awareness, image, and eventual purchase intention. Alalwan et al. (2017) also highlighted that perceived informativeness, credibility, and creativity of social media advertisements lead to positive attitude formation toward both content and brand-in contrast with traditional advertisements-hence intentions toward the buying behavior.

Therefore, it is suggested that such attitudes motivate consumers to purchase. If the consumer finds it so easy to access information regarding a product or compares it and reads peer reviews on social media platforms, he becomes quite confident about making the decision to purchase. They also include marketing processes. However, social

interaction and trust from interactive social networks would also critically affect what consumers would do. Hajli (2015) states that constructs of social commerce such as user-generated content, community participation, and recommendation systems impact greatly on consumer trust and buying intention. They increasingly tend to rely on fellow peers' opinions and influencer endorsements to affirm their purchase decisions, particularly in the case of online shopping.

According to research, social media have been able to change how people relate, act, communicate, and share digital content globally (Aral et al., 2013). Social media becomes a two-way channel, unlike the traditional media that mainly focused on one-way communications from businesses to consumers. In addition, it becomes a platform not just for broadcasting messages but also for dialogue, engagement, and co-creation. This makes consumers active participants rather than mere recipients of information along with sharing opinions and influencing other consumers into creating their own narratives about brands. This significantly changes consumer behavior in all phases of the buying process—from search to post-purchase evaluation (Mangold & Faulds, 2009). With immediate access to reviews, recommendations, and even user-generated contents, consumers are now well informed and are more confident about their decisions. Businesses equally benefit from a close association with their audiences and thus a more personal and responsive marketing process with them (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).

What characterizes social media is that it's participatory. According to Mayfield (2008), it is based on openness, conversation, community, and connectedness. It provides users with means to collaborate and share insights in a way that would not have been supported using traditional media concerning all types of socialization. Last but not least is how social connectivity builds trust, which is the foundation of decision making with respect to purchase behavior. Consumers tend to take what they hear on social media—even if coming from a peer or influencer—in a much more genuine and trustworthy way than from classic advertisements (Rosen, 2006). Marketers need to reconsider some of their strategies. Instead of only broadcasting messages, they will have to start listening to what consumers are saying about them. To do that, marketers will have to respond to such conversations

meaningfully and co-create value with the customers. This horizontal flow of information does complicate and develop the otherwise simple model, where consumers influence each other rather than just by the brand itself.

To capture the new reality, firms have boosted their presence on the social media platforms at a lightning speed in order to compete alongside others in relevance (Barnes & Mattson, 2008). Apart from using the platforms for dissemination, a firm can handle reputation management, customer services, monitor the brand, conduct market research, and so on. Such is the new trend built by consumers because they expect brands to be reachable and responsive in these channels much of the time. According to Hanna et al. (2011), consumers appreciate such things as introducing them to brand interactions and allowing them an ear or a voice. This expectation of participation has accordingly placed the consumer into a more empowered role regarding implications for feedback, suggestion, or complaints posted on social media for companies.

When companies open up to consumers online, it serves to protect their image (Lee & Youn, 2009) and also induce more engagement and online sales (Tsimonis & Dimitriadis, 2014). Creating communities around the brands would empower businesses with loyalty, insights, and better, more relevant offerings (Gummerus et al., 2012). In a nutshell, social media no longer stands as a mere tool-an anathema indeed that one finds desolate when only conceptualized; this has become a strategic asset to terne effective longelihoods relationships with customers in a highly connected world.

2.3 FEAR OF MISSING OUT (FOMO)

Przybylski et al. (2013) defined FOMO as “the all-consuming drive to monitor what others are doing.” Associated with most situations of social anxiety and an urge for social acceptance, FOMO starts when one realizes that others are enjoying rewarding moments from which one is excluded (Alt, 2015). Social media create an environment where everyone’s personal experiences are evaluated against the highlights of others’ lives, fostering envy of those seemingly more rewarding. FOMO, as viewed in studies including Przybylski et al. (2013), correlates with low life-satisfaction and high stress perceived by

those who impatiently keep checking their smartphones or social media to remain informed. This can even translate to obsessive behavior, like excessive use of social media, adversely affecting psychological health (Wegmann et al. 2017). It is the anxiety of one being not included in social activities or the ownership. This feeling develops within individuals when they see what friends are having fun doing, which social media exacerbates by constantly emphasizing others' highlights (Alt & boniel-Nissim, 2018).

Related to lower self-worth and image (Dutot, 2020), those suffering from social anxiety (Zhang et al., 2020) are more inclined toward FOMO. The strong desire for belongingness makes one more prone to being served by FOMO (Wang et al., 2019), and this often leads to compulsive use of social media as a way of keeping up-to-date (Beyens et al., 2016). It drives a concern of missing social events and significant experiences (Przybylski et al., 2013) and fosters a worry of lagging behind in life. This can compromise the overall well-being by causing psychological distress, disappointment, and a state of tension FOMO also shapes decisions, which frequently results in impulsive decision making (Dinh et al., 2023). Maintaining a better attitude involves meditation, awareness of oneself, and limiting social media exposure.

FOMO is a psychological reaction arising from a person's desire to belong, become accepted, and remain socially relevant. In an FOMO situation, individuals feel that others are partaking in rewarding experiences that they are not part of, creating feelings of anxiety, discontentment, and an urgent wish to join. As explored by Przybylski et al. in 2013, FOMO is also aptly recognized in today's hyperconnected world, where the constant exposure to curated lifestyles through social media exacerbates it. Holte and Ferraro emphasized in 2020 that FOMO arises not only from the real desire to partake in shared experiences but also, more importantly, from the belief that others are leading more gratifying lives; this downward comparison can obliterate self-esteem and trigger impulsive behavioral permutations. Marketers have cleverly wielded FOMO for their gain, using it as an overtly deliberate weapon to sway consumer behavior. The most common way they do this is by amplifying the external signs of scarcity; for instance, by using

phrases like ‘only a few are left’ and ‘limited edition’ to instill feelings of exclusivity and time-sensitivity, as Zhang et al. (2020).

Another way is to create urgency, whereby consumers are invited to make snap decisions due to countdowns, flash sales, or buzzard phrases such as ‘offer ends soon’, as supported by Higham’s evidence in 2022. Social proof is another way for marketers to stimulate FOMO by indicating how many people have recently purchased an item. This is an indication of collective approval and encourages a follow-along behavior, as supported in research by Abbott et al. (2023). FOMO has been widely researched through mobile technology and social media platforms, which reinforce the need to act quickly with constant updates and notifications (Bui et al. ,2022; Xi et al., 2022).

There has been a insufficient exploration of how FOMO is operated intentionally in traditional advertising. Importantly, Good and Hyman commenced an investigation of the specific language, imagery, and messaging strategies within advertising that actively invoke FOMO, which cause unreflected reactions in consumers influenced emotionally by factors like anxiety, envy, or fear of being excluded. FOMO tactics, certainly depending on external validation and our inherent fear of being left behind, make these undeniably effective conduits for promoting impulse buying and short-term engagement (Chetioui & El Bouzidi, 2023). The sense of urgency that such messages create nudges consumers into rapidly making decisions that favor immediate rewards over thoughtful deliberation; thus, FOMO rightly is one of the strongest psychological weapons for modern marketers.

FOMO is a state of mind that is characterized by a feeling of being uneasy and anxious about the possibility that others are enjoying particular experiences, opportunities, or benefits that one is missing. It embodies an intrinsic fear of being excluded and an anxiety about opportunities slipping from one’s hands, be it socially or experientially. Riordan et al. (2015) define FOMO as a negative emotional response brought about by observing others partake in rewarding activities. Symptoms are generally associated with stress, dissatisfaction and a yearning to catch up with or to join those who are supposedly enjoying their lives. It could be said that social media is a prime contributor to the exacerbation of FOMO. Through providing a constant stream of status updates about what their peers are

doing, buying, and experiencing in real time, platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and Facebook create an atmosphere of an ongoing comparison where users measure their lives against the heavily edited and often idealized portrayals of others. Zhang et al. (2020) and Buglass et al. (2017) affirm that this endemic exposure nourishes the very perception of missing out that fuels feelings of inadequacy or social detachment.

The psychological mechanism that explains FOMO can be understood in terms of the Self-Determination Theory (SDT), which was asserted by Deci and Ryan (1985) and later, by Przybylski et al. (2013), to describe FOMO under modern digital circumstances. It posits that human well-being is a consequence of the satisfaction of three innate psychological needs: competence (feeling capable and effective), autonomy (a sense of control over actions), and relatedness (feeling that one is connected with, respected, and accepted by others). Some ideas are that FOMO occurs when one or more of these needs become threatened or unmet, especially relatedness. That is, when social experiences are compromised by feelings of exclusion, then that sense of belonging will be attacked. Social media further worsens this by creating scenarios where people are constantly bombarded with pictures or updates showing others forming connection with others, going to events, visiting places, or enjoying products-in short, where users feel under-involvement or validation with social networks. This pushes some individuals to engage in social media even more so as to restore such feelings of connection or to fend off being excluded from similar gatherings in future. Therefore, FOMO is a vicious cycle; the more the feeling of exclusion, the more people jump to social platforms that trigger more FOMO by showing them stuff they shouldn't be missing out on.

FOMO expresses failure of unmet psychological needs and also self-concept - the way an individual sees him- or herself. Rosenberg (1979) defines self-concept as self-perceptions, values, and sense of identity. The self-concept, then, becomes the pivotal focus of all consumer behaviour that in Ward and Broniarczyk (2011), Onkvisit and Shaw (1987). As people perceive a social or cultural event exclusion- missed event, absence of a trending purchase, or even a limited offer-the images of the self that they aspire to create are misaligned with their positive behaviors. The inconsistency between the two creates

psychological discomfort known as FOMO. According to Chang (2010) and Zhang et al. (2020), the self cannot exist independently but is defined in relation to others; hence, people see themselves against the social environment. Consequently, even when associating personal satisfaction, people still consider social identity in consumption.

Further, Reed (2002) argues that consumers use brands and products to communicate their belongingness to a group or culture. Missing out on such experiences may cause an individual to feel mismatched with their social identity, thus creating greater emotional tension fueling the fire of FOMO. Ultimately, it's a fear of social disconnection, erosion of identity, or personal inadequacy that makes the danger in missing participation seem much greater than merely missing something fun to do. In this way, FOMO becomes one of the biggest guns for marketing and digital culture as it draws on emotional and social triggers to make a person consume something.

2.4 CUSTOMER BUYING INTENTIONS

Buying intention has been regarded as one of the topmost researched concept in the field of marketing. It was defined as “an individual’s conscious plan to make an effort to purchase a brand” (Spears and Singh, 2004; p. 56). Kim and Ko (2010) defined buying intentions “as the customers’ perceived probability of purchasing a product or of making a purchase during a given period of time in the future”. Just before making a decision, consumers search for substantial information concerning the quality, characteristics, and overall worth of the product (Liu et al., 2019). Besides first-hand experience and evidence from communication with personal contacts, such as friends and family, second-hand information is also collected, like social media reviews, endorsements by influencers, and communication by the brands (Wu et al., 2011). By accessing and analyzing this knowledge, consumers are able to form a well-informed opinion of the product, which creates the grounds for their consumer behavior regarding its purchase. A good evaluation will increase the likelihood of purchasing it, while negative feedback may prevent the customer from completing the sale of that product (Kim and Ko, 2010).

The another key element of consumer behavior is how consumers develop and implement their decision strategies during their own buying processes (Moon, 2004). In order to go much deeper into the purchase process, the firm studies all the stages: how consumers learn about the products, the evaluation of alternatives, the choice, actual use, and ultimately, disposal (Kotler & Keller, 2009). A panoramic view of the whole process allows the business to fit its offerings tightly to customer expectations. The last few years saw development in ICT; the exponential growth of social media gave immense power to change ways of consumers' buying decisions. Nowadays, consumers have access to a plethora of information at their disposal through a number of online and social platforms wherein they muster insight, compare alternatives, and ask for recommendations from peers at almost every step of the decision-making process. Henceforth, it becomes vital for enterprises to adapt to this change by studying how customer behavior changes on the digital landscape. With an understanding of such changes, organizations can create personalized and engaging strategies that allow for joint value delivery to the company and the consumer in using social media effectively (Akayleh, 2021).

Customer buying intent may be defined as a consumer's conscious plan or readiness to purchase a particular product or service in the near future. Understanding consumer intentions is indispensable in the consumer behavior context since these often precede actual purchasing decisions and help in predicting future sales trends. Ajzen (1991) proposed that the three core factors which shape intentions consist of attitudes towards the behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. This means a consumer is more likely to intend to buy something when the consumer has a favorable attitude toward the object, the consumer believes that others approve of the purchase, and the consumer has the confidence to make the purchase. These psychological factors enable marketers to predict whether consumers' interests will indeed be put into action.

In the digital market, however, customer buying intentions consider other external stimuli such as online reviews, conversations on various social media, reps by influencers, and ads. Given that product-related information anywhere and anytime via digital media enables the consumers to make the most informed choices at every step of the purchase process

(Cheung & Thadani, 2012); often, peer-generated information would influence intent much more than the information given out by the brands, simply because it really feels real. When consumers notice other users sharing positive experiences, then their own intention to purchase is bound to increase, especially in high-involvement and unfamiliar product categories (Park, Lee, & Han 2007). Accordingly, this emphasizes how a good online presence and reputation matter.

There are emotional and psychological factors that greatly contribute to the formation of buying intentions. For example, elements such as trust, satisfaction, and perceived value greatly affect the purchase behavior of the consumer ((Kim, Ferrin, & Rao, 2008). Trust may perhaps be the most important factor in e-commerce, considering that consumers cannot examine products physically. Businesses that offer consistent value, transparent communication, and positive post-purchase experience engender trust, leading to the intention to repurchase. Besides, brand loyalty and customer engagement developed over time by satisfying interactions are very powerful predictors of future intentions (Chinomona, 2013).

Understanding the customer buying intentions is important for designing appropriate marketing strategies, resource allocation, and forecasting sales. Identifying behavioral, social, and emotional processes that affect consumer decision-making will help businesses align communication, product offerings, and digital engagement with customer expectations. In the face of increasingly competitive markets and medically informed consumers, the impetus given by consumer-oriented buying intention research will increasingly place the company in a better position to drive growth, satisfaction, and loyalty.

2.5 SOCIAL MEDIA AND CUSTOMER BUYING INTENTIONS

Koay and Lim (2025) found that the decisions that customers make regarding purchases are highly impacted by social media, particularly through the use of influencers. When customers have a sense of connection to influencers, they take their recommendations more

seriously, which results in an increase in impulsive purchases. Live shopping, limited-time specials, and unique discounts are examples of features that generate a sense of urgency, which in turn drives rapid purchases. Their focus is to increase sales for the business and take consumer engagement to the next level through the association with influencers and their products about how aspirational relationships with the audience are going to be developed.

Using the “Stimulus-Organism-Response framework”, Safeer (2024) investigates the impact of social media usage on instinct buying intentions among customers. The study found that such aspects of dynamic social media content trigger that stimulus-psychological and emotional reaction, which lead to an impulse purchase directed toward impetuous buying decisions. Elements like persuasive messaging, attraction to the sight, and engagement play major roles concerning consumer behavior. The findings highlight the necessity for businesses to construct excellent online social media campaigns efficaciously that motivate online impulsive buying customers.

Nyagadza et al. (2023) evaluated social media-generated electronic word-of-mouth towards FMCG firms have an impact on the customers. Results show that specific variables like quality, credibility, and utility of information as well as the adoption of information were really significant predictors of customers’ purchasing intentions. Particularly, the fact that the study advances the frontiers of digital marketing and food marketing by offering insights illuminating how social media can promote the FMCG sector makes it even more stimulating. These factors have influenced customer buying behaviour to be redefined into adopting radically transformed interactions between customers and markets due to the increased progress and revolution of social media in the recent past. (Li et al., 2023).

Song et al. (2021) attempt to examine the connection between eWOM and young consumers’ buying intention in terms of travel social networking sites. The study analyzes aspects such as argument quality, source credibility, information volume, and emotional appeal based on an extended Information Adoption Model. As reported by the young Malaysian hotel patrons surveyed, these elements amplify eWOM’s perceived value, which drives information acceptance and subsequently strengthens purchase intentions.

Issues raised by the results are how important eWOM content quality and credibility are in the decisions young people make regarding travel-related purchases.

As Sun and Wang (2020) said, “social media marketing generates subjective norms, product knowledge, and perceived consumer effectiveness, which eventually have a positive impact on consumers’ purchase intention of green products”. Stronger purchase motivation provoked by awareness that social media causes, and generating a positive attitude, also decreases price sensitivity by accepting that the price will not hinder people from spending money for green products.

Zhao et al. (2019) studied how social media influences customers’ intentions to purchase green apparel. The study found out that media exposure had some effect on consumer perceptions regarding sustainable fashion in terms of increasing awareness on environmental issues. Apart from this, WeChat was used as the most influencing among the purchase intention elements in addition to various other platforms. It was claimed that social media will affect even more in encouraging sustainable behavior, and it is also interactive with consumer habits toward an environment-friendly product among customers.

Erkan and Evans (2016) analyzed the impact of eWOM in social media in comparison to shopping websites on how eWOM affects online purchase intention of consumers. This study was focused on how decision-making processes are affected by reviews, recommendations, and expressions available on the digital platform. In that regard, research reveals how significantly eWOM on social media enhances intentions to buy by influencing engagements, trusts, and authorizations. Websites for shopping purposes are better organized than social media and deliver product-specific information, a different aspect that plays a role in decision-making about e-retail.

In 2009, Mangold and Faulds were the first researchers to mention the scale of social media under marketing. They argued that social media was hybrid communication instead of a conventional platform, meaning it enabled user participation in what was once a controlled message by an organization. This way of dual communication-from a company that promotes a brand to a consumer who can disallow or bring in his own experiences-is

supposed to shape purchase intentions of other users. Indeed, the better engaged and informed the consumer feels through social media, the closer the end consumer will be to the company's purchasing decisions.

Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) elaborated upon it into an analysis of interactivity in social media such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube, describing how the interactivity of the former encourages a two-way conversation with consumers-as opposed to that peculiar marketing world of TV and print-where real-time comments and responses are added into the interaction. These social interactions go a long way in creating emotional attachments of the consumers towards companies where they are highly related to positive attitudes and thus with much intention for purchase. The conclusions of their works re-emphasized that companies that carry active engagement are more likely to behave differently in terms of consumer behavior.

Hajli's (2014) introduction to social commerce and, with it, trust in online environments cater for his study on the effects of features such as user reviews, recommendations, forums, and ratings in getting consumers to feel a sense of trust and community among each other. He argued that once customers trust the opinions of others within their social networks or online communities, they tend to act on those opinions when it comes to buying decisions. The peer interaction is more likely to translate into greater purchase intention than limited exposure to traditional marketing messages.

The above-mentioned findings reflect upon the notion derived for the perception that non-celebrity influencers are quite effective evangelists influencing buying intentions as perceived people often consider them as everyday persons. Djafarova and Rushworth (2017) point further tack in research on the actualization of much more social media marketers- in particular, the younger portion of audience; research indicated that the domains least penetrate by even today's style icons would be transformed by even non-celebrity persuaders or those dubbed just "ordinary people" into some of their most effective marketers.

Lou and Yuan (2019) Expound for example this by evolving a research design that captures the psychological construct of influencer marketing. They briefly found through survey or

experiment findings that the perceived expertise and credibility of the influencer, as well as the emotional attachment that he attaches to his followers, impact attributes and purchase intention. Consumers then become parasocial (having a kind of personal connection) with the influencer and value more the endorsement. The better that relationship, the stronger the effectiveness of the influencer to make consumers praise and encourage their purchase. Godey et al. (2016) explored how social media marketing impacts brand equity and purchase intentions with special reference to luxury brands. They found that exciting posts, interaction content, and emotional narration significantly improve consumer perceptions regarding the brand in consideration to social media activities. All these elements develop a much richer brand experience that cultivates emotional loyalty and this so-called emotional loyalty is the key towards the prediction of future buying behavior. This leads to the conclusion of their work whereby effective social media presence can improve the face of a brand but directly makes the intention of an average consumer inclined towards buying.

Majeed et al. (2021) investigated the effect of social media on consumer purchase intentions while considering brand equity as a mediator on focused grounds. The study, conducted in the context of fashion in Ghana, established that some social media activities- in, particular sharing of information and financial rewards, positively influenced brand equity and then increased purchase intentions. However, while social interaction and entertainment were considered interestingly, their impact on brand equity was insignificant. It means that different social media engagements have different effect when it comes to consumers; informed and valuable engagement much impacts more.

Poturak and Softić (2019) have generated some empirical evidence on how social media content, in both firm and user generation, shrinks the scope of purchase intention through brand equity. Their survey of 300 consumers in Bosnia and Herzegovina found out that brand equity fully mediates the relationship between eWOM and purchase intention. The conclusions of the study hold that properly managed communication on channels like social media enhances perceptions of brands and thus results in stronger purchasing intent

on the consumers' side, enforcing the belief that the most effective way to be leveraged at full marketing potential through social media building is by using brand equity building. Wei et al. (2023) researched the role of communication through social media during the COVID-19 pandemic, demonstrating how user-generated and firm-generated content affects consumer-based brand equity and purchase intent. The study found that in times of crisis, consumers are more attracted to messages that are empathetic and informative as it builds trust and reassurance. Therefore, readjusting social media strategies to fit better with the context through which consumers connect with the brand, especially in times of unease or elevated stress, is paramount.

A study by Alfeel and Ansari (2019) was conducted to understand the relationship between social media marketing and consumers' purchase intentions. The study used 121 participants and revealed how social media marketing accounts for as much as 92.4% of customer purchase intention. The conclusion of the study indicates that consumers in this market respond greatly to their digital marketing strategies such as targeted advertising, influencer endorsement, and campaigns, which therefore proves that social media is forceful and dominant in their purchase decision formation.

Jha (2019) analyzed how social media contacts motivate online purchase intentions for financial products in the financial services sector. He also differentiated between firm-created and user-generated content to discover their contributions to influencing consumers in both areas. The findings also revealed that consumers were reassured with content that was clear, credible, and engaging on these platforms, since this is vital for high-involvement sectors such as finance, where trust is a significant determinant of purchase behavior.

Khan et al. (2023) investigated the influence of eWOM on consumer purchase intentions, examining the mediating role of brand equity among Indian consumers of branded apparel. The findings indicated that eWOM positively affects both brand equity and purchase intention and that brand equity partially mediates the relationship between eWOM and purchase intentions. This suggests that eWOM creates better brand perceptions that translate into consumers' purchasing decisions.

Moreover, Efendioglu and Durmaz (2022) examined the understanding of Generation Y Instagram users regarding social media advertisements and their effects on advertising value, brand awareness, and brand associations. The study also proved that consumer perceptions of Instagram advertisements have a significant impact on advertising value and brand awareness, indicating that social media advertising could be crafted in a manner that improves brand recognition and positively influences consumer attitudes toward the brand. As mobile public relations or electronic word of mouth becomes more reliable in its relation to purchasing intention in young consumers, Sardar et al. (2021) examined the e-WOM information using it as a mediator for understanding the online purchase intentions of young consumers. Evidence from the research indicated that the mediation role of adopting e-WOM information could be significantly linked to predicting consumer purchase intentions based on e-WOM. This emphasizes further research on understanding how consumers adopt and use e-WOM to inform their purchase behavior.

Hussain and Chimhundu (2023) explored social media marketing effects on consumer purchase intentions in Australia's retail space while factoring brand equity as a moderating factor. The outcome testifies that there is a positive relationship through social media marketing on consumer purchase intentions; hence brand equity moderated the relationship. This means that when a brand has strong equity, social media marketing efforts can be more effective in triggering consumer purchases.

Cuong (2024) analyzed the influence of eWOM information on clients' purchase intentions on e-commerce platforms, concentrating on the moderating role of perceived risk. Research has found that quality, credibility, and attitudes towards information positively affect the usefulness and acceptance of eWOM, which will, in turn, influence purchase intentions. Also, perceived risk negatively moderates the influence of information usefulness with acceptance and acceptance with purchase intentions, suggesting that high perceived risk reduces eWOM's positive effects on purchasing decisions.

Liu and Qureshi (2023) sought to examine the extent to which social media marketing affects consumer purchase intention in the apparel sector of Pakistan. Their findings establish that social media platforms will hold significant sway over consumers' attitudes

toward the companies and brands they promote through advertising. It was speculated that brand image mediates the relationship between social media marketing and purchase intention. In other words, if social media marketing converts the perception of the brand into a strong positive one via creative posts, storytelling, or influencer participation, consumers tend to trust and take an interest in these brands, which will then lead to a higher chance of purchase. Hence, advertisement strategists really need to remember both personality and credibility of the brand while carrying out marketing via social media platforms, as opposed to just working for visibility.

Niu (2024) undertook the study of e-commerce platforms to see how certain social media features affect consumer purchasing behavior. The study identified five determinants that have a significant influence on whether a user intends to make purchase: searchability, commenting exchanges, sharing functions, information richness, and professionalism. The reasoning for all this has to do with how consumers process online information, wherein, giving the consumers ease of searching for and verifying product information, reading reviews, and having discussions, would make them feel in control and trusted. Therefore, such trust would minimize their perceived risk during online purchasing processes leading to a considerable intention toward purchasing. Hence, the emphasis given by results in this study argues that the structure and interactivity of a social media platform keep equal pace with the promotional content in regard to driving consumer decisions.

Hosain and Mamun (2023) have studied how social media advertising (SMA) functions in influencing customer purchase intentions in South Asian countries such as Bangladesh, India, and Pakistan. The mediating concept they introduced is that of “brand consciousness,” which denotes a greater likelihood of purchase by individuals when such consciousness exists, coupled with an emotional connection to the brand. Attractive ads, with a high degree of emotionality and/or that are culturally relevant, build brand consciousness. Heightened consciousness then builds brand trust and triggers purchase intent. This study is particularly relevant to culturally diverse markets where localized and emotionally meaningful ads can sharply improve effectiveness.

Singh et al. (2025) focused on lifestyle products and how social media communication-not only advertising, but any interaction with the brand-influences attitudes and purchase intentions. Employing recent modeling techniques, the study concluded that brands that engage “actively, rather than passively, with their audiences using likes, comments, reposts, and personal replies,” improve consumers’ perceptions of the brand. Therefore, this positive perception (or attitude) translates directly into an increased willingness from the consumer to buy. Essentially, this study supports that mere promotion is insufficient; there must be a bilateral social conversation, which builds authentic brand-consumer relationships, thus affecting purchase behavior.

Ho et al. (2024) focused on examining the Malaysian real estate sector and how social media marketing can influence large-scale buying decisions, including property purchases. It was found that captivating social media contents such as virtual tours, interactive Q&A sessions, and testimonials can significantly enhance consumers’ confidence in a property brand. The trust engendered by continued and transparent communication over social media platforms mitigates seemingly high risks involving purchases with significant inherent involvement. This study highlights the emerging importance of digital social interaction in the buyer journey, even in the conventional offline domains such as real estate. On the basis of over discussion, the study posits the hypothesis as follows:

H1: There is a significant impact of social media influence on customer buying intentions in online shopping.

2.6 FOMO AND CUSTOMER BUYING INTENTIONS

Morsi et al. (2025) anticipate into how consumers who are particularly vulnerable to FOMO respond to marketing techniques that use this fear. Although FOMO-based appeals are often used to increase engagement and sales, studies show that for consumers with high degrees of FOMO, such strategies can backfire. These people might suffer more anxiety and tension instead of inspiring quick purchases, which would cause them to disengage or completely skip the buying process.

Flecha Ortiz et al. (2024) conducted a study to examine how psychological elements affect customer purchase behaviour. It emphasises how FOMO greatly raises purchase intentions when people worry about missing chances or events that social media presents. The research advises companies to deliberately apply the strategies such time-sensitive offers and special bargains to inspire faster customer buying.

Tan et al. (2024) found that customer emotions and attitudes towards buying determine the attractiveness of marketing through FOMO. FOMO appeals appear to elicit satisfaction in consumers, thus enhancing their intentions to purchase the advertised goods. Young consumers are found to exhibit this effect strongly alongside the peer-comparison ones. Particularly among peer-comparison-oriented groups and younger audiences, the study proposes that marketers can leverage FOMO-based strategies to foster customer engagement and drive sales.

The relationship between FOMO and compulsive shopping was assessed by Hussain et al. (2023), with a special focus on mindfulness as a moderator in this relationship. Their findings suggested that higher levels of FOMO were associated with compulsive shopping behaviour. Conversely, higher levels of mindfulness had a mitigating effect, meaning it might protect against negative influences from FOMO on how much customers spend.

Explored the way FOMO influences consumers' behaviour towards social media influencers by Dinh and Lee (2022). The above conclusions demonstrate that FOMO intensifies an influencer's impact by increasing desire in followers to imitate them and thus facilitates material impulsive behaviours. That is why people high in FOMO are more likely to buy things recommended by influencers, to be part of the trend or social happenings. The study stresses how marketers can improve buyer engagement and increase sales through use of tactics like limited edition product launches and exclusive access to entices susceptible to FOMO.

Good and Hyman's (2020) focus was on FOMO constituents and manifested the intensity to purchase that a customer will experience. As per their findings, comparatively more chances show that a customer is likely to have the effects of FOMO if he has the propensity toward social comparisons and higher participation in social media activities.

According to Przybylski et al. (2013), FOMO can be conceptualized and operationalized as an anxiety-provoking psychological condition wherein one feels that others may be having rewarding experiences that one is absent from. This is explained through “Self-Determination Theory”, which states how FOMO arises when one does not satisfy the needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness. The study could not directly tie it to consumer behaviour but built its argument theoretical for how FOMO can move decision-making across various life arenas, including the internet and consumption-related arenas. The work set the stage for future studies into how emotional triggers like FOMO could influence consumer choice in marketing, especially in digital environments.

The most detailed conceptual model regarding FOMO in connection with marketing and advertising was presented by Hodgkinson (2019). FOMO-based appeals such as time-limited offers, exclusive access, and limited-stock messages were analyzed in the study as bases through which marketers are supposed to instill urgency in consumers and fully enhance their purchase intention. It stated that FOMO created spontaneous buying because it fed their emotional needs for inclusion and immediacy. However, it also warned that an overreliance on FOMO tactics could dampen consumer enthusiasm or brand trust if they are not regarded as ethical. This study is vital in underlining the promise as well as the dangers of including FOMO in marketing strategies.

Similarly, Bright and Logan (2018) considered the social media-based behavior of FOMO as being instrumental in inducing consumer fatigue and digital burnout. Findings indicated that FOMO increased impulsive buying, especially among millennials, due to high social comparison and exposure to lifestyle content on digital channels. The feeling of pressure comes when images of peers enjoying products or experiences bombard the users; thus, members feel compelled to purchase similar items. But the study also cautioned against this against the downside of it as psychological damage, such as social media fatigue and poor enjoyment of the goods bought. This serves to highlight some of the emotional costs attached to FOMO as a marketing device.

Djafarova and Trofimenko (2019) assessed the contributions of social media influences where micro-influencers- usually have a smaller but highly engaged following- in creating

FOMO among their audiences. In addition, followers believe that the endorsements by such influencers are more trustworthy as they appear to be quite authentic, which is definitely true in product endorsement. When such influencers use a product such as through a special or time-limited offer, an intense phenomenon of being left out is often generated, leading to active purchasing intentions among consumers. It thus opens up ways to explain how FOMO works through parasocial relations and credibility of influencers in the growing literature on effectiveness in influencer marketing.

Mollen and Wilson (2010) touched the essential bases for future understanding of the social aspect of digital consumer engagement. They focused on how interactive content and user-generated experience could impact consumer perceptions and behavior. The study was not concerned about FOMO itself, but how observing others with the products or services (from online reviews or testimonials or through social media) could induce an effect on potential purchasers made a way for social observation to become a recognized mechanism through which FOMO operates-by peer validation and an urge to comply with the likewise popular trend.

Rosen et al. (2013) studied the psychological effects of FOMO in digital life, especially on mental health. The results indicated that those who checked social media updates would generally feel stress, required low sleep quality, and were not satisfied with their life with regard to others. This, in the consumer context, means that purchases made under the influence of FOMO may at the worst be guilt-ridden, regretted, or displayed in effect as unfavorable customer perception. Ethical debates are raised concerning such an application of FOMO in digital marketing between persuasion and well-being of the consumer.

Focus shifted to the college students in Alt (2015) aimed to see how FOMO, which results from connectedness with digital media, affects their academic motivation and involvement with media. It did not directly look at consumption but was quite significant in understanding how FOMO would impinge on behavioral modification in terms of generation cohort differences since it largely captured Gen Z or millennials. Findings suggest that people with high FOMO usually indulge with content on digital devices or

networks and are more drawn in by emotionally charged marketing messages that would incite impulsive concerns or social conformity.

This research explores the relationship between sensation seeking, conspicuous consumption, and FOMO in the context of event-based activities. Therefore, the study concludes that high sensation seekers have a high likelihood of conspicuous consumption in events by the aspect of the FOMO. This offers a new perspective, where FOMO acts as a mediator: it drives persons to participate in conspicuous consumption as a means proving their need to seek out sensations when not partaking in unique experiences. This line of research is new regarding consumer behavior in the events and the psychological factors driving conspicuous consumption.

Meanwhile, Lee et al. (2021) explicate to the consumer happiness cum influence of SMIs' engagement through FOMO. Through self-administered questionnaires given to 604 respondents, the researchers observed an interesting relationship with the influence of FOMO on the extent of overall contact with the profiles of the SMIs. Other findings included its relation to susceptibility to purchasing products recommended by these influencers; both activities increased in association to well-being (heightened happiness), suggesting that contact with them on social media suffices certain needs and enhances well-being. Their study highlights the complexity of interaction between FOMO, the engagement of individuals in social media, consumer behavior, and subjectivity of happiness.

Notably, Harrison-Walker and Mead (2024) investigates the role of FOMO in developing relationships between customers in service contexts, especially at the university. Those students who were found to be more FOMO had a higher information and inclusion need, which made them engage more with informal peers, get more involved on campus, and had a higher level of engagement with campus media. Such students evidenced a positive correlation with their satisfaction, connection to the university, and future participation in any alumni activities. Thus, this research demonstrates how service organizations can utilize FOMO to create social and structural ties with the customer.

The study by Kao and Huang (2024) discusses the influence of FOMO on inaction inertia and live streaming purchase intentions. They evaluate using Structural Equation Modeling to investigate how consumers' purchasing intention may depend on the extent to which immersive experiences and social presence are available during live streaming engagement. The results reveal FOMO-elevating consumer purchases in live streamed environments.

The results indicate that on occasions when they cannot obtain or gain access to a limited time offer, consumers are most likely to exhibit lower degrees of resistance for making a purchase. This study highlights strategies by which such elements might be effectively integrated into live streaming marketing efforts to counter inertia and spur purchasing activity in the online environment.

The interrelations of the virtual world environment, FOMO experience, and impulsive buying behavior are examined in Tabari and Ding (2024). The study finds that the immersion and interactivity that virtual environments provide can enhance consumers' FOMO, especially in conjunction with dynamic social media influences from celebrities and brand influencers. The authors contend that such augmented FOMO reduces consumers' impulsiveness thresholds and allows rapid purchase decisions characterized by little deliberation. The study illustrates how engaging virtual platforms blended with strategic influencer endorsements could significantly fuel consumers' emotional reactivity, culminating in spontaneous buying behavior. All in all, these aspects lead to calls among marketers to take cognizance of and exploit such psychological triggers in virtual environments to stir impulsive purchasing behavior meaningfully.

H2: There is a significant impact of FOMO on customer buying intentions in online shopping.

2.7 SOCIAL MEDIA, FOMO AND CUSTOMER BUYING INTENTIONS

In the past decade, social media has gone from a broadcasting channel to an always-on, interactive marketplace where products are discovered, evaluated, and ultimately purchased by consumers. FOMO is a recurring mechanism converting social exposure into

social action; FOMO is defined as the aversive feeling that one is missing out on rewarding experiences in the possession of others (Przybylski et al., 2013). Social media's social proof, visibility, and time pressure in combination with the urgency of FOMO typically increase consumer purchase intention.

This review synthesizes evidence on the compounded effect of these two processes on consumer decision-making. In so doing, the authors try to delineate between situations when social affordances (eWOM, influencer endorsement, live streaming, limited-time drops) amplify FOMO into stronger purchase intention and outline triggers and other risk factors.

Foundational social commerce research maintains that user-generated content and community cues serve to shape intentions to purchase by stimulating trust and easing uncertainty. Hajli (2015) had shown that social commerce constructs: reviews, ratings, recommendations, and forums, a significant boost for trust and intentions. Erkan and Evans (2016) extended Information Adoption Model into a social media setting, further confirming that eWOM quality, eWOM credibility, and eWOM usefulness are able to predict purchasing intentions.

With respect to luxury brands, Godey et al. (2015) clearly shows instructional content of some form boosts benefit in a downward spiral of brand equity, then in turn extended to brand equity and future intentions. To reflect on these studies, social media could be classified as a vehicle to inspire willingness; on top of that, educated consumers know that in many cases it is FOMO that sets off their favorable attitude toward the purchase event. Influencers, parasocial ties, and FOMO triggers. Influential loops magnify FOMO by connecting social proofs with scarcity and trend velocity. Depending on their authenticity, Djafarova and Rushworth (2017) seemed to support Instagram's leading figures in generating purchase interest everywhere from the consumer electronics world by means of product endorsements making the product look both authentic and socially approved. While releasing influencer messages, Lou and Yuan (2019) discussed that messages high in perceived value and credibility were building trust and had a direct positive influence on intentions.

Hence, newer research would place all types of followers for whom FOMO is a strong word before all kinds of influencer acceptance: Lee et al. (2021) found that FOMO pushed people in this high quadrant to concerted work with influencers by driving either visits to their profiles, initiation of their products from endorser promotions on Instagram, and a subsequent boost in subjective happiness. Good and Hyman (2020) said that predicted emotions (elation, envy) are the antecedent for FOMO to increase hesitant buying.

In short, while influencers are supplying social signals, it is FOMO that furnishes an urge that compels materializing the intention instantly.

Live shopping is a meeting place for interactivity (chat and reactions), social presence, and only-in-time propositions. Kao and Huang (2024) applied FOMO-induced by the expedited craze at live streams- to undercut inaction inertia i.e., the propensity to delay once an opportunity has passed, and looked forward to consignment selling. This should ideally blend with the countdowns, limited-stock badges, and one-time specials that elevate perceptions of scarcity and time pressure (Hodkinson, 2019), the latter being two classic markers of FOMO. Live marketing can be assumed by its very nature as a fertile bed for the combined incidents: interactive live streams give room for social existence; limited-time hints touch on FOMO; both create mania and generate sales.

FOMO studies on mobile commerce for future cohorts shed light on how platform rhythms (especially flash sales and drops) might bring buying to the before. The work of Bright and Logan (2018) highlights the possible negative consequence from the continuous exposure: people are apprehensive of social media fatigue that might erode further engagement. As such, these findings voice for the existence of a descriptive nonlinear: The FOMO triggers short-term intent; however, indulgence can impair concerns for disillusionment.

While many studies suggest that the relationship from social media to intention is adverse by brand equity and perceived risk, some studies have shown that brand equity and perceived risk mediate the effects on intention. Evidence from Poturak and Softić (2019) and Majeed et al. (2021) indicates that firm-generated and problematic content elevate brand equity, further affecting intention—and implying stronger FOMO triggers on brands with asset-based equity. However, Cuong (2024) observed how perceived risk in e-

commerce would probably dampen the positive effect of eWOM on intention, thus balancing off FOMO-driven urgency. Thus, context specific options such as brand equity and risk cue are likely to multiply or diminish the combined effect.

At the psychological level, FOMO connects to needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness unmet needs and social comparison tendencies (Przybylski et al., 2013). Personality research indicates that individuals with high neuroticism or low self-esteem report the most significant FOMO and react most strongly to social cues (Blackwell, Leaman, Trampusch, Osborne, & Liss, 2017). Interestingly, cultural work suggests that consumers in collectivist contexts might be especially sensitive to social conformity signals often embedded in FOMO appeals, which would magnify the impact of social media on their intention. For practitioners, such differences also point to FOMO segmentation as a means to enhance effectiveness—also ethically—of campaign design.

While strong, the joint impact of social media and FOMO on purchase intention has its caveats. Rosen et al. (2013) and Bright and Logan (2018) demonstrated that high exposure to FOMO is associated with stress and fatigue. Another point to consider is that aggressive scarcity strategies can erode trust when considered to be manipulative. Strategically, the literature favors the manipulation of urgency against value: combine time-limited prompts with real value, ensure open communication regarding stock availability and timelines, and promote post-purchase satisfaction in order to minimize any feeling of regret. FOMO should then act as a nudge instead of a pressure tactic.

Across contexts-influencer feeds, live-stream commerce, mobile flash sales-a stable pattern emerges: media affordances → FOMO → greater purchase intention. This pathway is enhanced through brand equity and social presence and diminished through perceived risk and fatigue. Future research needs to fill three gaps. First, longitudinal studies should test whether intentions from FOMO truly translate into repeat purchase and loyalty rather than only into one-time conversions. Second, experimental designs should separate instances of legitimate scarcity from those of false urgency while also examining downstream trust.

Finally, research should focus on protective design: conversely, platforms offering urgency may want to consider ethical implications against consumer welfare. Understanding these nuances will help in the task of marketers in harnessing FOMO for motivation while not compromising on long-standing relationships. Based on the above discussion, the study postulates the hypothesis as follows:

H3: There is a significant positive relationship between social media influence and FOMO among online shoppers.

2.8 PROPOSED CONCEPTUAL FRAMWORK

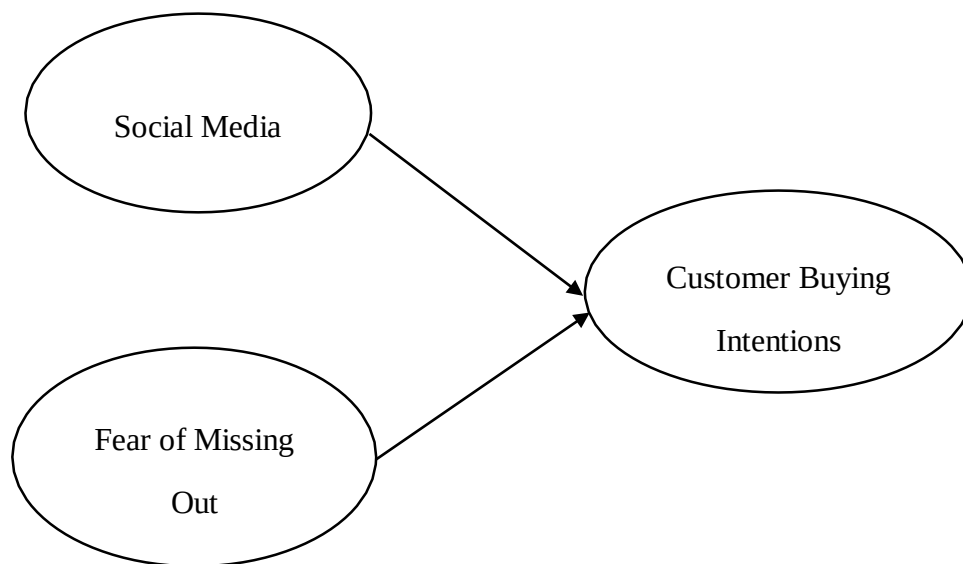


Figure 2.2 Proposed Conceptual Framework

The study is an attempt to illustrate how FOMO and social media interact with customer buying intentions. By maximizing exposure over product information, peer reviews, influencer endorsements, and time-bound offers, social media brought forth a great amount

of trust onto consumers for making the purchase decision. On the other hand, social media content usually instills FOMO into a consumer by featuring scarcity or urgency or shares experiences of consumption by peers, thus creating anxiety of being social in their absence; these feelings force a consumer to act in a fast and impulsive way, thus securing their intention to buy. FOMO also mediates social media and buying intentions in a way that while social media can instigate the purchase, its stimulation of FOMO could act as a more potent force in doing so. In essence, the framework outlines the dual role of social media as a vehicle for promotional marketing and psychological motivation that works on FOMO to enhance customer buying intentions.

2.9 SUMMARY

Thus understanding customer buying intentions is central to the forecasting and influencing of consumer behavior, especially in the dynamic and digital market we all find ourselves in today. The reviewed literature indicates that customer purchasing decisions result from a complex interplay between psychological, emotional, and social phenomena. Traditional consumer behavior models, such as “Theory of Planned Behavior”, provide some basic insight quite obviously into how attitudes, perceived norms, and perceptions of control influence buying intentions. In contrast, the tide of digital media and social networking has brought a plethora of other variables to the table: peer influence, online reviews, and so on; vastly relevant to consumer decision-making. As consumers use digital means more and more for gathering their information, interacting with brands, and sharing their experience, it should also be agreed that digital becomes a large driving force in the shaping and directing consumer purchasing behavior. The discussion in this chapter emphasizes the pressing need for adapting the business perspective to embrace not only digital but also meaningful customer engagement. The rising talent for companies to personalize marketing, trust-building, and community-centric approaches dictates that future research should look into how precisely companies create personalized experiences that enhance purchase intentions and even better, build customer relationships. Based on these insights,

the knowledge gained in understanding customer buying intentions can serve as a tool in ensuring that organizations remain competitive and meet the ever-changing expectations of today's informed and socially connected consumers.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Research methodology underpins any academic inquiry. It provides that rigor to the systematic investigation of complex questions. This chapter, then, described the design and approach sampling plan, data source questionnaire construction, data collection, and analysis used in this study looking at the impact of social media and FOMO on consumer buying intention. Each of these methodology components is custom-fit to the objective of the research to ensure validity, reliability, and an opportunity for meaningful insight. The study aims to provide empirical evidence on how psychological and behavioral constructs interact in the light of digital consumer behavior by way of a descriptive design, a quantitative approach, and the usefulness of tools such as structured questionnaires and statistical analyses.

3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

A framework that often guides a researcher in “systematically resolving a research problem and achieving the objectives of the study” is referred to as research design. It is a blueprint that describes in detail what data will be collected, how these data will be measured and analyzed to answer specific research questions, and to test hypotheses (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Good research design serves to guarantee scientific vigor, to foster validity and reliability in the study, and to be reproducible by others, allowing the researcher to reach reliable conclusions. A research design provides coherence among the research objectives, methods, and analyses, reducing any biases or errors. In the social sciences, particularly in consumer behavior research, the importance of research design is challenging because it determines the operationalization of complex psychological and behavioral constructs like social media, FOMO, and purchase intentions. Without a good design, the results may remain vague, imprecise, and of little applicability. Therefore,

deciding on an appropriate research design is one of the most important methodological issues at stake for any researcher undertaking the thesis.

Determining the choice of design involves several considerations: the research paradigm, nature of research questions, types of data needed, and the expected outcome of the study. For example, a causal design would best suit an endeavor to establish cause-and-effect relationships, while exploratory designs would be adopted where there is little advance knowledge about the phenomenon. Conversely, in describing the characteristics, attitudes, or behavioral patterns of the population, the descriptive research design is highly suitable. In studies examining the effects of social media and FOMO on customer purchasing intentions, descriptive research design offers a systematic way through which consumer behavior can be measured, to what extent these factors influence consumer behavior, and does so without the manipulation of the research setting.

Descriptive research design emphasizes the systematic description of a phenomenon or behavior as found in its naturally occurring environment. Contrary to experimental designs, which manipulate variables and measure their effects, descriptive research observes and measures variables for their validity as representations of reality (Sekaran & Bougie, 2019). This approach is especially beneficial to consumer behavior research, which is aimed in large part at understanding how individuals think and feel and act to marketing stimuli. That allows the researchers to quantify patterns of social media use, the prevalence of FOMO, and how these psychological and behavioral factors affect buying inferences. The emphasis is not on establishing causality but on painting a detailed picture of existing conditions and relationships among variables.

With respect to a thesis investigating social media, FOMO, and buying intentions, the descriptive research design empowers the researcher to measure the frequency of social media interactions, the extent of consumers' FOMO experiences, and intentions to buy products or services. In this procedure, structured surveys or questionnaires are distributed among a sample of respondents, deemed representative of the larger target population. For instance, standard instruments such as Przybylski et al.'s (2013) FOMO scale and Dodds et al.'s (1991) measures of purchase intentions can be utilized to garner reliable and valid

data. Afterward, the responses will be subjected to statistical analysis, which can describe mean values of FOMO, social media exposure, and purchase intention and explore associations among those constructs. Such an approach enables researchers to identify whether higher levels of FOMO go with stronger buying intentions, even if causality cannot be firmly established.

An advantage of the descriptive research design that deserves recognition is that it allows researchers to work with larger and more varied samples, thus enhancing the ability to generalize findings. For instance, by surveying hundreds of social media users with participants from different demographics, the researcher will be able to describe how FOMO-driven buying intentions might differ from one age group, gender, or income to another, thus providing useful knowledge for marketers and academics alike. Another good thing is that it is relatively cheap, less time-consuming to conduct, and practical for studies in which manipulation of the variables would either be unethical or practically impossible, such as triggering FOMO in a truly experimental setup. Instead, it measures the naturally occurring variations in psychological states and behaviors.

In conclusion, a descriptive research design is robust and conveniently applicable for studies exploring the combined impact of social media and FOMO on consumer buying intentions. It enables the researcher to measure and analyze patterns of behavior and psychological states without changing the participants' natural environment. With the aid of structured instruments and statistical analysis, descriptive research can highlight interactions in consumer behavior that ground a strong basis for explanatory and causal studies.

3.3 RESEARCH APPROACH

Research approaches direct and formulate the global plan in which a researcher intends to collect, analyze, and interpret the data in order to answer certain research questions and satisfy certain study objectives. It speaks to the philosophical assumptions underlying the study and guides the researcher into deciding upon a “qualitative, quantitative, or mixed-methods approach” (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Hence, it can be said that research

approaches indicate how knowledge will be created and validated, giving shape from hypothesis formulation to result interpretation. For instance, qualitative approaches are often better suited for live experience or in-depth meaning exploration, whereas quantitative approaches emphasize measurement, testing, and generalization. On the other hand, mixed methods incorporate aspects of both in order to create trust on both sides.

An array of elements informs the choice of research approach: the nature of the research problem, the type of data required, and the expected level of analysis. In a consumer behavior study, especially into the likes of social media influence, FOMO, and purchase intentions, the nature of the relationships often involved is such that they can be translated into measurable variables, which cast the whole research into the quantitative research approach. It allows for testing hypotheses and also helps the researcher examine the pattern and measure the strength of associations and generalize their findings to large populations.

Quantitative Research Approach

“A quantitative research approach refers to the systematic identification and analysis of numerical systems to explain, predict, or control empirical phenomena of interest” (Bryman & Bell, 2011). In other words, it rests upon the basis of the positivist assumptions whereby reality is seen as objective, measurable, and independent of the researcher. This method typically involves structured tools such as surveys or questionnaires, and uses statistical techniques for analyzing data. Its main emphasis is testing of hypotheses, establishing relationships among variables, and producing findings that would be generalized to the larger population.

In this research, the quantitative approach has been opted for as these constructs can be operationalized and measured using standardized scales. For instance, frequency and duration of social media use can be measured, while FOMO may be operationalized using Przybylski et al.’s (2013) FOMO scale and purchase intentions with adapted Likert-scale items from Dodds et al. (1991). Thereby, these methods reveal to what extent and in what direction the variables correlate, and also shed light on whether FOMO and social media have a significant impact on customers’ buying intentions.

One of the most important strengths that quantitative research has is producing generalizable results to wider populations if the sample used is representative. This would default to the social behavior types of research where marketers and organizations are looking for those insights from their investigations to make strategic decisions on a larger scale. Statistical methods also ensure that objectivity, precision, and replicability were maintained, thus ensuring more credible and valid results (Cohen et al., 2002). For example, using regression analysis, the researcher can assess the power of prediction of purchase intentions by FOMO, while SEM can be used to test a more complex model with direct and indirect effects.

Alongside the merits, quantitative research also offers some disadvantages. It simplifies very complex psychological and social phenomena into vastly measurable variables, failing to account for some deeper meanings and contexts. For instance, while quantitative data would tell that higher FOMO scores correlate stronger with purchase intentions, the understanding perhaps misses emotional or cultural subtlety behind this behavior. Other biases, including social desirability or poor recall, could influence the response data, as the data is largely self-reported. Nevertheless, in a study wishing to test hypotheses, relate variables, and generate generalized learns on social media, FOMO, and buying intentions, it could be rightly argued that the quantitative research approach is not just pertinent but also crucial.

To sum up, the research approach frames the study in philosophy and methods and assists in the choice of tools, techniques, and analytical strategies. For this dissertation, the quantitative methodology is best suited because it measures the variable with an appropriate degree of accuracy, statistically tests the interrelationship between them, and thereby allows the generalization of findings. In this way, the study would be able to provide trustworthy and empirically grounded insight into the joint influence of social media and FOMO on customer buying intentions.

3.4 SAMPLING PLAN

Sampling is an integral part of research since data cannot be collected from a huge population due to impractical considerations, costs, or even impossibilities. Instead, researchers take a smaller group of individuals and on the basis of their findings assume that the larger population will behave in the same manner. The sampling strategy is determined by research objectives, resources available, and the nature of the population being studied. In this thesis, social media usage coupled with FOMO on customer buying intentions is being explored. For this purpose, sampling shall be carried out by a non-probability method, with convenience sampling as the tool.

Non-probability sampling doesn't give an equal chance to every individual in the population to be selected unlike probability sampling. Participants were selected based on convenience and willingness to participate. The convenience sampling technique is best applied to this study in a manner that the researcher would be able to easily and quickly gather data from respondents who happen to be easily accessible, viewed on the social media platforms, and willing too. Such an approach is, of course, convenient when studying consumer behavior especially due to large metropolitan regions like Delhi NCR where the size of the population is large and very heterogeneous. Moreover, most prior studies undertaken with regard to social media-imbibed purchase behavior have applied convenience sampling quite successfully since it mostly aims at patterns of behavior and not exact population estimates (Etikan et al., 2016).

Though convenience sampling does enjoy its shortcomings, including sampling bias and poor generalizability, it still remains a rather viable method for exploratory and descriptive research in consumer studies. The choice of this sampling will thus enable the timely execution of research within the resource constraints of a thesis and still provide worthwhile, valid, and reliable results about how social media and FOMO shape purchase intentions. Again, the convenience sampling approach is just, proper, and pragmatic since the study intends to look into psychological and behavioral constructs rather than representing a demographic.

Sample size determination

Determining the right sample size is a critical aspect of research design because an inadequate or excessively large sample may compromise the reliability, validity, and efficiency of the study. A sample that is too small creates greater chances for the sampling error, which denies reliable results, while one that is too large tends to consume time and resources without increasing further the results' accuracy. To avoid such situations, this study adopted sample-size calculation as per the Cochran formula (1977), which is a widely accepted sample-size determination formula for large or unknown populations and, thus can be used for studies requiring precision.

Cochran's formula is expressed as:

$$n_0 = Z^2 \cdot p \cdot q / e^2$$

Where:

- n_0 = sample size,
- Z^2 = Z-value (standard normal deviation at the desired confidence level, i.e., 1.96 for 95%),
- p = estimated proportion of the population with the desired characteristic (0.5 assumed for maximum variability),
- $q = 1 - p$ (thus 0.5),
- e^2 = margin of error (set at 5% or 0.05).

Substituting the values:

$$n_0 = (1.96)^2 \cdot (0.5) \cdot (0.5) / (0.05)^2$$

$$n_0 = 3.8416 \cdot 0.25 / 0.0025$$

$$n_0 = 384.16$$

Thus, the calculated minimum required sample size comes out to be 384 respondents. However, to allow for possible problems such as incomplete responses, missing data, or invalid submissions, it is suggested to aim for a slightly higher number of respondents in the range of 420-450 so that the final usable dataset meets the threshold. This adjustment will cover the dropouts and add more strength to the robustness of the final results. The

size of the preferred sample being between 384 and higher is statistically justified for consumer behavior studies, hence ensuring reliable insights with 95% confidence level and 5% margin of error, the most widely used criteria in behavioral and marketing research (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Sample area

The research is geographically targeted to the Delhi NCR (National Capital Region) which is also one of the largest and most diverse metropolitan areas in India. Delhi NCR comprises Delhi and neighboring cities such as Noida, Gurgaon, Ghaziabad, and Faridabad forming a vast urban cluster with a heterogeneous population. The ambience here has been selected since they are representative for a cosmopolitan region with considerable digital adoption, internet penetration, and use of smartphones which are factors suitably studied in consumer behavior under the influence of social media.

Delhi NCR consists of a very large youth population and a sizable section of working professionals that make use of social media platforms for communication, entertainment, shopping, and decision-making. The dynamic lifestyle of the region and exposure to global trends have amplified FOMO-driven behavior in this region, especially considering that these individuals are constantly fed with updates, advertisements, and peer activities on Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube. Also, this region boasts of the purchasing power of consumers rather higher, as compared to a lot of other areas across India, which makes them more amenable to marketing strategies based on scarcity, urgency, and social comparison.

The diversity of Delhi NCR also ensures that the study captures consumers' responses from across different demographic groups in terms of age, gender, education, and income levels to present a wider consumer behavioral pattern in an urban Indian context. Even though this allows for less than perfect representativeness due to the use of convenience sampling, selecting Delhi NCR as a sample area enhances the study through relevance, diversity, and inclusion of a digitally active population. All these characteristics make Delhi NCR not

just appropriate but also strategic for the different quarters interrogated regarding social media, FOMO, and consumer purchase intentions.

3.5 SOURCES OF DATA

Data collection is one of the most critical aspects of research methodology, as the accuracy and reliability of findings depend largely on the quality and relevance of data gathered. This study, social media and the influence of FOMO in shaping buying intention for customers, is based on both primary and secondary data. The principle behind combining both of these two sources is to make research findings comprehensive, validated, and grounded in both new field evidence and existing knowledge.

Primary Data

Primary data, in other words, includes information collected specifically for this study directly from respondents. In this case, primary data will be collected via a structured questionnaire administered to consumers in the Delhi NCR region. The questionnaire has both closed- and Likert-scale items, which seeks to assess different aspects of social media usage pattern and FOMO levels, as well as tendencies over purchase decision making.

In this context, primary data collection holds high relevance as it provides firsthand consumer perceptions and behaviors for analysis of psychological and behavioral impacts of social media marketing. Moreover, since a convenience sampling method has been applied, the sample was entirely constituted of respondents easily accessible and actively engaged with digital platforms. The primary data collection gives more originality to the study, as it reflects participants' views directly in terms of the study objectives.

Secondary Data

Secondary data are all the information collected and/or published by somebody else. It is being utilized to supplement the study. Secondary data have been accumulated from the following sources for this research: several academic journals articles/books/industry reports/online databases. They theoretically and empirically grounded the study by referring to social media influencing consumers' behaviors, psychological mechanisms

involved in the feeling of missing out (FOMO), and previous evidence and knowledge concerning purchase intentions within digital commerce. This includes published research papers as well as market research reports (like Statista or Deloitte). The value of this secondary data lies in supporting the construction of the research framework by identifying and filling gaps in the literature that this study seeks to address.

When combined, these primary and secondary data sources provide a balanced view: primary data contribution providing context specific insights while the secondary data will put the findings within broader academic industry discourses.

By employing these different sources, the validity, reliability, and applicability of research outcomes are enhanced.

3.6 QUESTIONNAIRE DEVELOPMENT

Developing a questionnaire requires grounding the items in established literature, ensuring both validity and reliability. The present study utilizes three major constructs: FOMO, social media interactions and brand buying intentions. Each construct was measured using multiple-item scales adopted and adapted from previously validated studies. For measuring FOMO, the present study administered the 10-item scale developed by Przybylski et al. (2013) to ascertain individuals' worry about whether others may be having a more rewarding experience than themselves in social and digital contexts. Some of the example items are "I fear my friends have more rewarding experiences than me" and "I get anxious when I do not know what my friends are up to." The fact that FOMO is seen to motivate online engagement and social connectivity gives relevance to the questionnaire to investigate how psychological factors affect consumer behavior in digital spaces.

"Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with each statement on a five-point Likert Scale from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree)".

Social media brand interaction was measured using the 12-item scale developed by Enginkaya and Yılmaz (2014). This construct is about consumers' motivations for following brands and interacting with them on social media, which include lifestyle congruence, aspirational consumption, promotions, convenience, and trust in information

shared online. Example items are “I generally follow brands on social media which are congruent with my lifestyle” and “Following brands on social media helps me to get information about new offerings.” These items were included in the questionnaire as they provide useful information about how consumers interact with brands digitally and how such engagement can shape perceptions and intentions.

Responses were taken on a five-point Likert scale.

Customer buying intentions were assessed by a 8-item scale adapted from Kim and Johnson (2016) and Pavlou and Fygenson (2006). This construct measures the degree of likelihood a consumer would actually make a purchase by having come across certain content on social media. It specifically refers to the influence of trends, peer influence, influencer recommendations, and visibility of products on such platforms: “I intend to purchase products that I see promoted on social media platforms,” and “I often buy products online to avoid missing out on trends I see on social media.” By adopting these items for the present research context, the questionnaire captures how social media informs and indeed drives consumer decision-making. As was the case for the other constructs, respondents’ answers were recorded on a five-point Likert scale.

Pilot study

A research pilot study is anything that can be considered small-scale and very preliminary to actually is intended to test. Pilot studies usually look at feasibility, reliability, and validity of the research instruments and procedures. Within this thesis on social media and FOMO as drivers for customer buying intentions, a pilot study aids in refining the design of a structured questionnaire and ensuring it is administered appropriately to respondents. The researcher intends to run the questionnaire on a small sample (about 10%-20% of the intended sample size) drawn from the target population in Delhi NCR to identify any possible areas in the wording of questions that might be ambiguous and give a test of clarity in the instructions and check whether the response scales measure the constructs purportedly intended for them.

Furthermore, the pilot study serves to assess the reliability of the measurement scales themselves, for example, via Cronbach’s alpha for internal consistency, while providing

an initial sense for whether or not the questions will address the research objectives. Additionally, it provides the researcher an opportunity to see the entire data collection process: the time it took to complete the questionnaire, the appropriateness of the online distribution method (i.e., Google Forms), and the willingness of the subjects to respond to this mode of questioning. Any feedback from the pilot subjects would be used in tailoring and fine-tuning the questionnaire prior to full-scale administration; this significantly promises to enhance the accuracy and efficiency of undertaking this research work. Running the pilot study will thus limit sources of error while also improving data quality and strengthening the credibility of research findings.

3.7 DATA COLLECTION

The data was generated through a structured self-administered questionnaire designed on the previous validated scales. This questionnaire was split into four parts, demographic under-failure of missing out (FOMO) constructs, the construct of social media brand engagement, and buying intentions of customers. The five-point Likert scale was applied from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree) for all items pertinent to constructs under study, ensuring consistency and comparability across responses. The study's focus is digital consumer behavior, hence it was distributed online through email, WhatsApp, and social media channels. To obtain a pool of diverse participants, along with feasibility, convenience sampling technique were included. The target respondents were active users of social media who follow at least one brand on digital platforms, ensuring relevance to the study's objectives.

Reliability

Reliability in research refers to “the consistency and stability of a measurement instrument, meaning that it yields similar results under consistent conditions”. A reliable scale ensures that the data retrieved is dependable and not tainted by random error. Cronbach's alpha (α) is the most commonly used measure of internal consistency. It assesses how closely related a set of items are as a scale, essentially checking whether they measure the same underlying construct. Cronbach's Alpha values range somewhere between 0 and 1, with a higher score

reflecting greater reliability. Broadly speaking, an alpha value of 0.7 or above is deemed acceptable for social science research; above 0.8 reflects good reliability. This makes Cronbach's alpha an extremely important tool for making research instruments both valid and trustworthy.

Table 3.1 Reliability Statistics

Reliability Statistics		
Construct	No of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Social Media	12	0.925
Fear of Missing Out	10	0.919
Consumer Buying Intentions	8	0.902
Overall Scale	30	0.945

3.8 DATA ANALYSIS

The data collected through the questionnaire were analyzed using descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and regression analysis to address the study objectives. SPSS was used to perform the data analysis

Descriptive analysis

Descriptive analysis is one of the most essential techniques in statistics, as it provides a systematic way to summarize and present data so that it becomes easier to interpret. The main purpose of this form of statistical analysis is that it describes the basic characteristics of a dataset by transforming raw data into informative data. Measures used in descriptive analysis, including those of mean (average), range (minimum and maximum values), standard deviation (variability), and frequency distributions, present a clear picture of how the responses vary across variables for the researcher. Unlike those of inferential statistics, which make predictions or test hypotheses, descriptive statistics do not generalize beyond the sample; instead, descriptive statistics provide a detailed snapshot of the data collected.

It is an essential step in research because it lays the groundwork for the further analysis of trends, consistency, and irregularities in the dataset. Thereby, descriptive analysis ensures that the outcomes are presented in organized forms such as tables, charts, and graphs in order to present simple and comprehensible structures for understanding even the largest and most complex datasets, thus making it an essential tool in academic and applied research.

Correlation

Correlation analysis was carried out to “examine the strength and direction of the relationships among the three major constructs: FOMO, social media brand interaction, and customer buying intentions”. For accessing this product-moment correlation by Pearson method, the data should be normal and adequate for interval measurements. Correlation coefficients range from minus one to plus one. The positive values mean direct relationship; negative ones - indirect relationship, and values closer to zero suggest weak or no association. Results of correlation analysis would show whether individuals with higher levels of FOMO were likely to interact more with brands via social media, and whether this was positively related to customer buying intentions. Statistical significance of these coefficients ($p < 0.05$) was checked for the evaluation of reliability regarding those relations. The correlation analysis provided some preliminary evidence in favor of the hypothesized model and indicated the potential predictive power of FOMO and brand interaction regarding buying intentions by examining inter-construct relationships.

Regression

Regression analysis was used to accomplish the other hypotheses, and to determine the predictive force of FOMO and social media on customers’ buying intentions. In this model, customers’ buying intention served as the dependent variable while FOMO and social media were considered independent variables. The regression analysis not only figured out the statistical significance about every predictor but also presented every predictor’s proportion in explaining variations among purchase intentions.

The really useful predictor would be those with regression coefficients (β) interpreted to assess the amount of contribution that every predictor made relative to others. Higher standardized beta coefficient indicated stronger influence of predictor variable on dependent variable. The model fit was determined as a portion of the total variance in customer buying intentions accounted for by FOMO and brand interaction, represented by the coefficient of determination (R^2). The model had an adjusted R^2 also to account for the number of predictors in the model. The overall significance of the regression model was confirmed by F-test in ANOVA table.

Psychological values like FOMO and behavioral things, such as engaging with those brands, would contribute towards mainstream information on the access consumers avail against online purchase decisions because of the possibility that these two variables can qualify as determinants.

3.9 SUMMARY

In sum, the research methodology provides a coherent framework to explore the relationship between social media usage, FOMO, and consumer purchase intentions. The descriptive design observes patterns in a natural setting non-manipulatively, while the quantitative way leads to objectivity and generalizable results. The sampling plan is Delhi NCR centered and convenience sampled such that it is pragmatic within the constraints of resources; the use of validated scales in questionnaire development adds to its reliability and credibility. Both primary and secondary data play their part towards a balanced outlook, with descriptive statistics, correlation, and regression used as tools toward drawing meaningful conclusions. Thus, this methodology equips the study to generate credible, replicable, and insightful findings regarding consumer behavior in the digital age.

CHAPTER IV

DATA ANALYSIS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The data analysis chapter includes results from interpreting data collected by a structured questionnaire from respondents in the Delhi NCR region. This part of the research is about converting raw data into insights to answer the main objectives concerning the role of social media usage and FOMO, as those variables pertain to consumer purchase intention. A combination of descriptive statistics, correlation, and regression was utilized to summarize the data, examine relationships among the variables, and test their predictive ability. This chapter thus constitutes an extensive statistical overview of the dataset, putting in perspective patterns, relationships, and the degree of influence exerted by FOMO and social media interaction on buying behavior.

4.2 DEMOGRPAHIC PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS

Collecting demographic information from the respondents provide insights regarding the background of the subjects as well as the need for contextualizing the study. This section provides information about gender and age, educational qualification and occupation, monthly incomes, time spent on social media platforms, and prescriptive social media channels preferred. Understanding these characteristics help in bringing clarity regarding the sample and, therefore, to interpret the findings in the context of the socio-economic and digital usage profile of respondents.

Table 4.2.1 Classification of Gender basis

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	210	53.16
Female	185	46.84
Total	395	100.00

The gender composition indicates that out of the 395 respondents, 210 were males (53.16%) and 185 were females (46.84%). The sample seems fairly balanced, with just a slight edge held by the male respondents. Such a close-to-equal representation ensures that views from both genders are adequately covered in the research.

Table 4.2.2 Classification of Age basis

Age Group	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Below 20 years	45	11.39
21 – 30 years	185	46.84
31 – 40 years	100	25.32
41 – 50 years	45	11.39
Above 50 years	20	5.06
Total	395	100.00

The age profile shows that most of the respondents (46.84%) were mostly in the 21–30 age brackets, followed by 25.32% in the 31–40 age bracket. Meanwhile, a small number of respondents were in the below 20 (11.39%) and 41–50 years categories, while only 5.06% were above 50 years. This means that the study mainly represents young adult and early middle-aged consumers who are also the most active social media users.

Table 4.2.3 Classification of Education basis

Education Level	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Undergraduate	120	30.38
Graduate	170	43.04
Post Graduate	85	21.52
Others	20	5.06

Total	395	100.00
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With respect to educational qualifications, the largest group comprises graduates (43.04%), followed by undergraduates (30.38%) and then postgraduates (21.52%). A negligible section (5.06%) of respondents has some other qualifications. The data indicates that a large proportion of the sample consists of educated individuals, which is important, as higher education has been linked with greater exposure to digital platforms and online shopping behavior.

Table 4.2.4 Classification of Occupation basis

Occupation	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Student	130	32.91
Working Professional	180	45.57
Business/Entrepreneur	55	13.92
Others	30	7.59
Total	395	100.00

The occupational distribution reflects that working professionals occupy over half of the segment at 45.57%, with students coming in second at 32.91%. About 13.92% are business owners/entrepreneurs while 7.59% fall in the others category. Hence, the sample predominantly comprises economically active individuals who are both consumers and decision-makers in the marketplace.

Table 4.2.5 Classification of Income basis

Monthly Income	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Below ₹50,000	121	30.63
₹50,001 – 1,00,000	149	37.72

₹1,00,001 – 1,50,000	80	20.25
More than ₹1,50,000	45	11.39
Total	395	100.00

Only 37.72% claimed to earn between ₹50,001 and ₹1,00,000, establishing the income bracket as the most frequent. Approximately 30.63% claimed to have drawn below ₹50,000, while 20.25% earned between ₹1,00,001 and ₹1,50,000. Lesser earners (11.39%) were found above the ₹1,50,000. This dispersion is a rather distinct income base but has majority concentration in the middle-income group, an important segment in consumer behavioral studies.

Table 4.2.6 Classification of Social Media usage basis

Time Spent	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Less than 1 hour	40	10.13
1–2 hours	110	27.85
2–4 hours	165	41.77
More than 4 hours	80	20.25
Total	395	100.00

When asked about the average time per day, most respondents (41.77%) say they spend 2-4 hours per day on social media. About 27.85% reported spending between 1 and 2 hours, and 20.25% reported spending more than 4 hours on the platform. Just 10.13% said they spent less than 1 hour. The vast majority of respondents being active social media users make them particularly relevant for a study on social media influence and FOMO.

Table 4.2.7 Classification of Social Media Platform basis

Platform	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Instagram	190	48.10
Facebook	80	20.25
Twitter	35	8.86
YouTube	65	16.46
Others	25	6.33
Total	395	100.00

The platform rankings indicate that Instagram is preferred, with 48.10% of respondents claiming it is the dominant platform. Facebook comes after this with 20.25% preference, while YouTube counts for 16.46%, and Twitter 8.86%. Lesser respondents (6.33%) preferred the other outlier platforms. This outcome points to Instagram's fertile ground in influencing digital engagement and buying behavior, particularly among the youth.

4.3 DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

Table 4.3.1 Descriptive Statistics of Social Media

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
SM1	395	1	5	3.94	0.975
SM2	395	1	5	3.98	0.898
SM3	395	1	5	3.70	1.116
SM4	395	1	5	3.57	1.145
SM5	395	1	5	3.51	1.154
SM6	395	1	5	3.63	1.124
SM7	395	1	5	3.56	1.096

SM8	395	1	5	3.62	1.210
SM9	395	1	5	3.71	1.075
SM10	395	1	5	3.89	1.064
SM11	395	1	5	3.64	1.089
SM12	395	1	5	3.58	1.064
Valid N	395				

Descriptive statistics of the social media-related statements (SM1 to SM12) provide insight into the perception and level of engagement that participants have about social media using a sample size of 395. Each item was rated on a “5-point Likert scale with values ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree)”. The mean score across the twelve statements ranged from 3.51 to 3.98, indicating a moderately high level of agreement overall. SM2 recorded the highest mean score (3.98), suggesting that respondents mostly inclined to this statement either reflect a strong belief to or a positive attitude toward that aspect of social media. In contrast, SM5 reveals the lowest mean score (3.51), which may indicate relatively less agreement or a more neutral stance on the idea it conveys.

The standard deviations across all items ranged from 0.898 (SM2) to 1.210 (SM8), indicating levels of dispersion from item to item. With the lowest standard deviation, SM2 would therefore suggest relative consistency in perspective among participants. On the contrary, the higher standard deviation attributed to SM8 indicates that opinion varies substantially on that statement. This variance could arise from differing personal experiences or exposure to the particular type of social media behavior or outcome denoted. However, given that average values remain above the midpoint (3.00) for all items, it shows an overall positive tendency of respondents toward social media, even though most items have standard deviations exceeding 1.0, indicating a broad scope of perceptions.

Table 4.3.2 Descriptive Statistics of Fear of Missing Out

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
F1	395	1	5	3.52	1.072
F2	395	1	5	3.66	1.212
F3	395	1	5	3.69	1.184
F4	395	1	5	3.67	1.18
F5	395	1	5	3.68	1.078
F6	395	1	5	3.65	1.027
F7	395	1	5	3.57	1.089
F8	395	1	5	3.60	1.001
F9	395	2	5	3.81	0.953
F10	395	1	5	3.75	1.074
Valid N	395				

Given that the statements F1 to F10 are related to the FOMO), the descriptive statistics provide valuable insight into the prevalence and intensity of FoMO among the 395 respondents. As stated, the mean scores across the ten FoMO-related statements ranged from 3.52 (F1) to 3.81 (F9) on a 5-point Likert scale, with scores indicating an agreement level somewhere between moderate to high. That F9 showed the highest mean score of 3.81 suggests that statement resonated with respondents more than the others—possibly due to the common experience of feeling left out of events or activities when not attending in person or online. The relatively low standard deviation for F9 (0.953) points to a greater level of consistency in responses, indicating a general agreement across the sample population.

Conversely, F1 has a low mean score of 3.52 suggesting agreement, albeit on the lower side; this could imply that the specific behaviour or emotion FoMO described by F1 is

somewhat lesser expressed or less universally experienced. The standard deviations across items varied from 0.953 to 1.212, implying moderate variability in the experience or perception of FoMO under various aspects. However, it was F2 (1.212) with the highest standard deviation, denoting a maximum divergence of responses among the respondents and suggesting that the influence of the FoMO element described by this item may vary considerably from one respondent to another based on their personal, contextual, or psychological factors.

Overall, the findings indicate that FoMO was a relevant and moderately widespread concern among the sample, with most means being greater than the neutral midpoint. The differential standard deviations suggest that while FoMO is a broadly experienced phenomenon, the dimensions and intensity of its experience differ from one person to another.

Table 4.3.3 Descriptive Statistics of Customer Buying Intentions

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
CB1	395	1	5	3.51	1.033
CB2	395	1	5	3.62	1.082
CB3	395	1	5	3.48	1.125
CB4	395	1	5	3.66	1.159
CB5	395	1	5	3.69	1.032
CB6	395	1	5	3.70	1.037
CB7	395	1	5	3.49	0.962
CB8	395	1	5	3.63	1.008
Valid N	395				

The statements are supported by descriptive statistics concerning the customer buying intention revealed by what the participants would or would not associate with purchasing behaviors probably influenced by social media, cues designed for marketing, and/or personal motivations. Based on responses from the sampled population of 395 individuals treated using a 5-point Likert scale, the mean scores range from a low of 3.48 (CB3) to a high of 3.70 (CB6), thereby suggesting an overall moderately positive tendency toward buying intentions.

The highest-mean observation found in CB6 (3.70) indicates that the respondents agreed or expressed the strongest intent regarding the behavior or belief in question that may imply a high degree of readiness to consider or commit to a purchase. Following closely above the neutral score of 3.00, CB5 (3.69) and CB4 (3.66) also reflect relatively favorable responses, implying respondents showed intent. On the other hand, lower mean scores were posted in CB3 (3.48) and CB1 (3.51), which reflect a slight hesitation accompanied by a more neutral position on some specific aspects to those buying behaviors mentioned in the concerned items. The standard deviations vary between 0.962 (CB7) and 1.159 (CB4), showing moderate variation in the responses to the different items with no extreme dispersion. With the highest standard deviation, CB4 could probably refer to a more subjective or situation-dependent dimension of buying intention that warrants diverse responses from the individual differences or contextual influences concerning the matter. In contrast, the smallest standard deviation, CB7, signifies a measure of agreement among the respondents along this dimension.

4.4 FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION TABLES

Frequency Tables of Social Media Statements

Table 4.4.1 Frequency Table of SM1

SM1		
Response	Frequency	Percent

SD	3	0.8
D	41	10.4
N	59	14.9
A	166	42.0
SA	126	31.9
Total	395	100.0

From the frequency distribution of SM1, it can be seen that a majority of the respondents had a positive perspective around the statement; 42.0% of them agreed while 31.9% strongly agreed, constituting 73.9% of the total sample. Whereas a small number stayed neutral (14.9%), only 10.4% disagreed, and 0.8% strongly disagreed with the statement. These values reflect a strong inclination of agreement toward the SM statement, suggesting that most participants strongly share that idea or behavior described in SM1.

Table 4.4.2 Frequency Table of SM2

SM2		
Response	Frequency	Percent
SD	2	0.5
D	26	6.6
N	73	18.5
A	171	43.3
SA	123	31.1
Total	395	100.0

For SM2, the proportions turned out to be very similar. If we consider those who agreed at all with the statement, adding up the percentages produces a total of 74.4% (43.3% agreed,

31.1% strongly agreed). Neutral responses appeared in 18.5% of the present sample, a bit higher than SM1. Under 10% disagreed with the statements, and almost no one strongly disagreed, indicating a clear trend in consensus for the statement given in SM2.

Table 4.4.3 Frequency Table of SM3

SM3		
Response	Frequency	Percent
SD	12	3.0
D	60	15.2
N	71	18.0
A	144	36.5
SA	108	27.3
Total	395	100.0

Agreement for SM3 shows some decline as compared with SM1 and SM2. A majority of respondents still agreed (36.5% agree, 27.3% strongly agree), with a total agreement of 63.8%. The number of neutral votes went up to 18.0%, whereas the number of disagreeing respondents increased considerably: 15.2% disagreed and 3.0% strongly disagreed. This shift indicates that respondents may have been divided or somewhat uncertain on the statement in case of SM3, potentially because it was more complex or much personally relevant.

Table 4.4.4 Frequency Table of SM4

SM4		
Response	Frequency	Percent
SD	14	3.5
D	80	20.3

N	54	13.7
A	159	40.3
SA	88	22.3
Total	395	100.0

A mixed pattern is observable for SM4 as well. The total in favor, 62.6%, includes those agreeing (40.3%) and strongly agreeing (22.3%), while 20.3% disagreed and 3.5% strongly disagreed. This indicates a somewhat polarized response, with a fair-sized population not agreeing with the sentiment expressed in the statement. 13.7% neutral responses additionally somehow reinforce that part of the surveyed population remained indecisive.

Table 4.4.5 Frequency Table of SM5

SM5		
Response	Frequency	Percent
SD	16	4.1
D	88	22.3
N	45	11.4
A	169	42.8
SA	77	19.5
Total	395	100.0

Responses in SM5 become even more spread out. Nevertheless, while most respondents agreed (42.8%) or strongly agreed (19.5%), total agreement (62.3%) was less than in previous items. A relatively large part of the sample disagreed (22.3%) and strongly disagreed (4.1%), indicating an increase in disagreement with the social media statement. Here, the neutral group (11.4%) was relatively small, reinforcing the idea that respondents were evidently highly opinionated, whether positively or negatively.

Table 4.4.6 Frequency Table of SM6

SM6		
Response	Frequency	Percent
SD	14	3.5
D	67	17.0
N	64	16.2
A	156	39.5
SA	94	23.8
Total	395	100.0

The data for SM6 present a contrasting rise in agreement levels, with 39.5% agreeing and 23.8% strongly agreeing for a total of 63.3% overall agreement. However, it should be noted that 17.0% disagreed and 3.5% strongly disagreed, giving 20.5% in disagreement. Neutral responses were moderate at 16.2%, suggesting that although the majority were favorable toward the statement, a sizable proportion remained in doubt or outright disagreed. In conclusion, the overall distribution indicates a somewhat favorable attitude toward the behavior or belief cited in SM6.

Table 4.4.7 Frequency Table of SM7

SM7		
Response	Frequency	Percent
SD	11	2.8
D	81	20.5
N	54	13.7
A	175	44.3

SA	74	18.7
Total	395	100.0

While the general response was positive on SM7 (3–4), there was not that much strong feedback. While 44.3% of the respondents agreed, 18.7% strongly agreed. On the other hand, a higher number of participants disagreed, with 20.5% disagreeing and 2.8% strongly disagreeing. Neutral responses followed this, with 13.7% which indicates a notable presence in the indecisive side.

Table 4.4.8 Frequency Table of SM8

SM8		
Response	Frequency	Percent
SD	23	5.8
D	61	15.4
N	70	17.7
A	129	32.7
SA	112	28.4
Total	395	100.0

There were mixed reactions to say the least on statement 8 (SM8). The number of people who responded towards agreement (32.7% agree, 28.4% strongly agree) effectively, constituting a large majority in support. Yet, 15.4% disagreed, and 5.8% agreed strongly, combining 21.2% who disagreed, or more than a fifth, higher than on many others. On top of it, 17.7% remained neutral, therefore indicating some disagreement for the majority on approval.

Table 4.4.9 Frequency Table of SM9

SM9		
Response	Frequency	Percent
SD	8	2.0
D	63	15.9
N	65	16.5
A	159	40.3
SA	100	25.3
Total	395	100.0

SM9 saw over 40% in agreement and 25.3% who strongly agreed on this statement, which came to close to 65.6%. A much lesser number, then, expressed their disagreement (15.9% total without strong disagreement), amounting to 17.9% against the statement. Neutral responses were gathered at 16.5%, suggesting the majority had little consideration one way or the other, a neutral endorsement.

Table 4.4.10 Frequency Table of SM10

SM10		
Response	Frequency	Percent
SD	10	2.5
D	40	10.1
N	67	17.0
A	144	36.5
SA	134	33.9
Total	395	100.0

SM10 was an additional version very much appreciated, with 36.5% of respondents agreeing and 33.9% strongly agreeing to it, a sum of 70.4% agreeing. Disagreed responses measured at 10.1% and strong disagreement at only 2.5%, for a total of 12.6%. Neutral responses were primary at 17.0%. This indicates that for the majority of respondents, the sentiments fell under an idea for which there was public support.

Table 4.4.11 Frequency Table of SM11

SM11		
Response	Frequency	Percent
SD	8	2.0
D	74	18.7
N	62	15.7
A	161	40.8
SA	90	22.8
Total	395	100.0

The response against the statement was 63.6%, whereas 40.8% agreed and 22.8% strongly agreed to the statement. The disagreements were 18.7% and 2% in the strong and weak form, respectively. Still, the general agreement reveals that more than half favored it. The neutral responses were 15.7%. While overall sentiment remains favorable, the relatively higher disagreement suggests some level of divergence or differing interpretations among respondents.

Table 4.4.12 Frequency Table of SM12

SM12		
Response	Frequency	Percent
SD	9	2.3

D	74	18.7
N	65	16.5
A	173	43.8
SA	74	18.7
Total	395	100.0

The totals on SM12, reflect a 43.8% agreement rate, to which 18.7% contributed their strong agreement, with a total of 62.5%. A stronger number of consideration regarded the 18.7% disagreement that signed additionally with the 2.3% of strong disagreement and materialized at a stronger 21% of disapproval towards the statement. The neutral responses (16.5%), again, reflected a moderate form of consideration.

Frequency Tables of FOMO Statements

Table 4.4.13 Frequency Table of F1

F1		
Response	Frequency	Percent
SD	6	1.52
D	87	22.03
N	71	17.97
A	159	40.25
SA	72	18.23
Total	395	100

F1 responses indicate moderate levels of agreement with the statement about FOMO. A combined 58.48% of the respondents either agreed (40.25%) or strongly agreed (18.23%), indicating a reasonable level of resonance towards F1. On the contrary, 22.03% disagreed

with the statement, while 1.52% strongly disagreed, meaning that almost one-fourth of the respondents do not resonate with this aspect of FOMO. The remaining respondents (17.97%) answered neutrally, suggesting that this experience may not resonate equally for all participants.

Table 4.4.14 Frequency Table of F2

F2		
Response	Frequency	Percent
SD	30	7.6
D	44	11.1
N	67	17.0
A	143	36.2
SA	111	28.1
Total	395	100

F2 shows a stronger tilt toward agreement, with 36.2% agreeing and 28.1% strongly agreeing, totaling 64.3% in favor. Disagreement is notably lower (11.1% disagree, 7.6% strongly disagree) while 17.0% remained neutral. This distribution exhibits a more similar recognition of the FOMO aspect presented, as fewer respondents outright rejected the statement.

Table 4.4.15 Frequency Table of F3

F3		
Response	Frequency	Percent
SD	18	4.6
D	59	14.9

N	71	18.0
A	126	31.9
SA	121	30.6
Total	395	100

Agreement with F3 has a relatively high standing at 62.5% (31.9% agree, 30.6% strongly agree). Disagreement seems to be slightly lower: 14.9% disagree and 4.6% strongly disagree, while 18.0% were neutral. The equal proportion of individuals responding “agree” versus “strongly agree” highlights the strong resonance this statement has with individuals identifying with it, thus possibly referring to one of the main emotional drivers of FOMO.

Table 4.4.16 Frequency Table of F4

F4		
Response	Frequency	Percent
SD	22	5.6
D	56	14.2
N	62	15.7
A	145	36.7
SA	110	27.8
Total	395	100

In F4, greater familiarity with the FOMO dynamics characterizes the majority, with 64.5% total agreement (36.7% agree, 27.8% strongly agree). Disagreement (14.2% disagree, 5.6% strongly disagree) represents less than one-fifth of responses while becoming 15.7% neutral. Hence, results imply a uniform identification across the FOMO behavior spectrum,

although with this minority group that expresses the absence of anything that even resembles FOMO.

Table 4.4.17 Frequency Table of F5

F5		
Response	Frequency	Percent
SD	11	2.8
D	57	14.4
N	76	19.2
A	155	39.2
SA	96	24.3
Total	395	100

In response to F5, 63.5% (39.2% agree, 24.3% strongly agree) thus reveals a strong FOMO experience. Disagreement remained moderate (14.4% disagree, 2.8% strongly disagree), while neutral at 19.2% was somewhat higher than in other items, suggesting that perhaps not every participant finds this aspect equally relevant.

Table 4.4.18 Frequency Table of F6

F6		
Response	Frequency	Percent
SD	5	1.3
D	65	16.5
N	76	19.2
A	166	42.0
SA	83	21.0

Total	395	100
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F6 records the highest proportion of “agree” responses so far (42.0%) along with 21.0% strongly agree, totaling 63.0% agreement. Disagreement is relatively low (16.5% disagree, 1.3% strongly disagree), with the neutral response being fairly consistent with other items (19.2%). This suggests that the statement captures a common yet not global FOMO-related feeling.

Table 4.4.19 Frequency Table of F7

F7		
Response	Frequency	Percent
SD	17	4.3
D	54	13.7
N	91	23.0
A	153	38.7
SA	80	20.3
Total	395	100

In describing F7, the agreement rate stands at 59.0% (38.7% agree, 20.3% strongly agree) slightly lower than for preceding items. Disagreement for the statement accounts for 18.0% (13.7% disagree, 4.3% strongly disagree), with neutral choices at 23.0%, indicating this statement might be less relatable for some respondents.

Table 4.4.20 Frequency Table of F8

F8		
Response	Frequency	Percent
SD	6	1.5

D	52	13.2
N	117	29.6
A	140	35.4
SA	80	20.3
Total	395	100

F8 has one of the highest neutral response rates (29.6%), indicating either considerable uncertainty about or lack of personal connection to the statement. Agreement is at the moderate range (55.7%: 35.4% agree, 20.3% strongly agree), while disagreement is low (13.2% disagree, 1.5% strongly disagree). This is suggestive of a scenario where for many it resonates with FOMO.

Table 4.4.21 Frequency Table of F9

F9		
Response	Frequency	Percent
D	43	10.9
N	96	24.3
A	151	38.2
SA	105	26.6
Total	395	100

Results for F9 differ slightly in that the table allows no “disagree” response, only strongly disagree (10.9%), neutral (24.3%), agree (38.2%), and strongly agree (26.6%). This gives a total agreement rate of 64.8%, having the highest “strongly disagree” rate among all FOMO items, probably meaning that this statement seems more divisive or differently interpreted among respondents.

Table 4.4.22 Frequency Table of F10

F10		
Response	Frequency	Percent
SD	16	4.1
D	40	10.1
N	74	18.7
A	163	41.3
SA	102	25.8
Total	395	100

F10 showcases a strong agreement, at 67.1% (41.3% agree, 25.8% strongly agree), ranking among the highest overall. Disagreement was minor (10.1% disagree, 4.1% strongly disagree) while slightly more than one-fifth were neutral (18.7%). This would suggest that the idea expressed in F10 resonates widely with the whole sample and likely describes a commonly experienced FOMO trigger.

Frequency Tables of Customer Buying Intention Statements

Table 4.4.23 Frequency Table of CB1

CB1		
Response	Frequency	Percent
SD	8	2.0
D	73	18.5
N	89	22.5
A	161	40.8
SA	64	16.2
Total	395	100

In response to CB1, it is clearly seen that the responses show a moderate level of positive buying intention with 57.0% of the respondents agreeing (40.8%) or strongly agreeing (16.2%). A noticeable proportion of them (22.5%) remained neutral, indicating indecision or situational factors affecting the buying stance. On a no of respondents also disagree to the extent of 18.5% leaving 2.0% agreeing on a strong level meaning that while the general tendency is for agreement, it appears that a significant minority is hesitant to express intent to purchase.

Table 4.4.24 Frequency Table of CB2

CB2		
Response	Frequency	Percent
SD	15	3.8
D	54	13.7
N	82	20.8
A	159	40.3
SA	85	21.5
Total	395	100

In CB2, the overall agreement continues to be higher at 61.8% (40.3% agree, 21.5% strongly agree), which portrays a more striking tendency towards behaviour of purchasing. Neutral respondents remain at 20.8% and disagreement decreases as compared to CB1 (13.7% disagree and 3.8% strongly disagree). This pattern reflects CB2's statement having an affirmative impact with the respondents and thus being perceived as a stronger impetus to buy.

Table 4.4.25 Frequency Table of CB3

CB3

Response	Frequency	Percent
SD	13	3.3
D	88	22.3
N	65	16.5
A	156	39.5
SA	73	18.5
Total	395	100

Total agreements in CB3 accounted to 58.0% (39.5% agree, 18.5% strongly agree), but it also displayed one of the highest rates of disagreement: 22.3% among respondents disagreed, while 3.3% strongly disagreed. Neutral responses stood at 16.5%, which is slightly lower than that for some other items. Holds similar import: while most manifest buying interest, a significant part is resistant due to his personal preference towards the product.

Table 4.4.26 Frequency Table of CB4

CB4		
Response	Frequency	Percent
SD	24	6.1
D	48	12.2
N	68	17.2
A	155	39.2
SA	100	25.3
Total	395	100

The responses to CB4 reflect fairly strong buying intentions within a majority of 64.5% agreement (39.2% agree, 25.3% strongly agree). The oppositional category is lesser (12.2% disagree, 6.1% strongly disagree), with neutral respondents numbering 17.2%. This tends to indicate that the particular factor stated in CB4 holds considerable allure for most respondents, although the relatively higher percentage of “strongly disagree” may hint at a slightly smaller group having a very staunchly opposed position.

Table 4.4.27 Frequency Table of CB5

CB5		
Response	Frequency	Percent
SD	2	0.5
D	65	16.5
N	82	20.8
A	149	37.7
SA	97	24.6
Total	395	100

CB5 represents one of the top ratios of agreement where it is at 62.3%, 37.7% agrees, 24.6% highly agrees, and the level of “strongly disagree” is 0.5%. There are, however, respondents at an individual level with 16.5% disagreeing and 20.8% at neutral levels, which suggests little hesitation with a notable minority. The strong disagreement is low; hence, most respondents may not be totally convinced of their desire to make the purchase but readily qualify what they do want to consider.

Table 4.4.28 Frequency Table of CB6

CB6		
Response	Frequency	Percent

SD	9	2.3
D	54	13.7
N	74	18.7
A	169	42.8
SA	89	22.5
Total	395	100

CB6 indicates a total of 65.3% in agreement (42.8% agree, 22.5% strongly agree), thereby making it a strong contender as one of the keenest indicators of buying intention. Disagreement is fairly low, 13.7% disagree and 2.3% strongly disagree, and 18.7% are neutral meaning a little indecision. This pattern reflects the effectiveness of the statement, likely in tune with widely held consumer motivators.

Table 4.4.29 Frequency Table of CB7

CB7		
Response	Frequency	Percent
SD	7	1.8
D	65	16.5
N	97	24.6
A	179	45.3
SA	47	11.9
Total	395	100

CB7 attracts the highest level of agreement among all items, standing at 57.2% (45.3% in agreement, 11.9% strongly agree), but coupled with the highest neutral rate of the entire set at 24.6%. Disagreement rates moderately (16.5% disagree, 1.8% strongly disagree). This less “strongly agree” proportion means while there are many who tend towards

purchase, fewer are extremely dedicated, something that may mean conditional buying intentions.

Table 4.4.30 Frequency Table of CB8

CB8		
Response	Frequency	Percent
SD	8	2.0
D	57	14.4
N	82	20.8
A	175	44.3
SA	73	18.5
Total	395	100

CB8 registers a total proportion of 62.8% of agreement within neutral rates (20.8%) and quite low disagreement rates (14.4% disagree, 2.0% strongly disagree). Such values may directly display that overall tendency towards positive buying orientation and, generally, most respondents would be inclined to purchase.

4.5 Correlation Analysis

Correlation is a “statistical measure showing the strength and direction of the association between two variables. This measure displays how changes in one variable go with changes in a second variable without giving evidence for or against causality”. The correlation coefficient, represented by r , varies between -1 and +1. A positive value means that if one of the variables tends to increase, the other is usually tending toward this behavior as well, while in a negative value, an increase of a variable tends to lead to a decrease in the second variable. A value much closer to zero means that the two have very little or no linear relationship. The statistical significance (p-value) would help in checking whether this correlation observed is occurring by chance.

In the present research, correlation analysis was used to examine the strength and direction of the relationships between social media usage, FOMO, and customer buying intentions, providing insights into how these constructs are interlinked.

Table 4.5.1 Correlation Analysis

Correlations				
		Social Media	FOMO	Customer Buying Intentions
Social Media	Pearson Correlation	1	.550**	.691**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000	0.000
	N	395	395	395
FOMO	Pearson Correlation	.550**	1	.597**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000		0.000
	N	395	395	395
Customer Buying Intentions	Pearson Correlation	.691**	.597**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	
	N	395	395	395
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).				

The correlation analysis demonstrates a clear and statistically significant relationship between social media engagement, FOMO, and customer buying intentions, one of their mutually reinforcing dependencies in consumer behavior in a digital environment. The results indicate a moderate positive correlation of social media engagement to FOMO ($r = .550$, $p < .01$), meaning that people who are much more engaged in social networking sites are also exhibiting higher levels of FOMO. This is consistent with the theorization

that frequent exposure to others' activities, updates, and lifestyle portrayals raise one's alarm against exclusion from rewarding experiences.

Likewise, social media engagement has been strongly correlated with customer buying intentions ($r=.691$, $p < .01$), indicating that the increased activity with the content on social media greatly enhances the probability of consumers developing the intention to buy. Given this fact, it could be inferred that the interactive and immersive dimensions which are often associated with the promotions of products, peer endorsements, and trend-based contents on social media directly affect decision-making.

Along these lines, a positive correlation is also established between FOMO and customer buying intentions ($r=0.597$, $p<0.01$) which supports the assertion that FOMO provides psychological impetus to purchase motivation. The more people feel they will miss something important-as in trends, flash sales, or exclusive products-the more likely they will buy something to reduce that discomfort.

So far, it has been shown that social media serves as both a catalyst and medium for the amplification of FOMO and thus alters the buying intentions of the consumers. The interconnectedness of these variables supports the theoretical framework that emotional triggers, such as FOMO, and behavioral engagement, like using social media, together enhance purchase intentions at the digital marketplace. The items on the scale utilized in this study capture the behavioral, emotional, and decision-oriented aspects of this process, thus fleshing out this connection in relation to how exposure, emotional response, and intention produce measurable patterns of consumer behavior.

4.6 Regression Analysis

Regression analysis is "a statistical method to analyze the relationship between a dependent variable or more than one independent variable". It indicates the strength, magnitude, and significance of that relationship and eventually helps in predicting outcomes. Simple regression investigates the effect of a single predictor, whereas multiple regression deals with many predictors and assesses their mutual effects. Important outputs such as coefficients, R^2 , and significance values indicate the strength of influence the predictors

exert on the outcome and whether those relationships are meaningful. Thus, regression is an explanatory and predictive tool applied widely in research and decision-making.

Impact of Social Media on Customer buying Intentions

Table 4.6.1 Model Summary (SM and CB)

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.691	.477	.476	.658
a. Predictors: (Constant), Social Media				

The model summary indicates that correlation coefficient ($R = 0.691$) indicates that there is a strong positive relationship between the use of social media and customer buying intentions. The $R^2 = 0.477$ value describes that about 47.7% of changes in customer buying intentions can solely be explained by social media usage. The Adjusted R having a value of 0.476 indicates that this model is very explanatory in spite of variation for sample size. It indicates that customers' tendencies to buy products whether stimulated by trends, peer engagement or online promotions set in large part by their use of social media platforms.

Table 4.6.2 ANOVA Table (SM and CB)

ANOVA						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	155.306	1	155.306	358.604	0.000
	Residual	170.203	393	.433		
	Total	325.509	394			
a. Dependent Variable: Customer buying Intentions						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Social Media						

The ANOVA table indicates the overall regression model statistical significance ($F = 358.604$, $p < 0.001$). This very high F-value and low p-value confirm that this model significantly predicts customer buying intentions better than a model with no predictors. Practically, it means that activities in the social media such as product updates, brand storytelling and promotional campaigns also has meaningfully and systematically influencing customers purchase intention aside from any random chances.

Table 4.6.3 Coefficient Table (SM and CB)

Coefficients						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.100	.137		8.035	0.000
	Social Media	.684	.036	.691	18.937	0.000
a. Dependent Variable: Customer buying Intentions						

The coefficient table gives the insight of specificity from the view of predictive power of social media itself. The constant ($B = 1.100$, $p < 0.001$) refers to the level of customer buying intentions basing where social media influence is absent. The slope coefficient for social media ($B = 0.684$, $p < 0.001$) manifests that 1-unit increase in social media use registers expected increase in customer buying intention scores of 0.684 unit.

The standardized beta value ($\beta = 0.691$) affirms that social media is a very strong predictor. Therefore, the more customers interact with brand-related content (product reviews, influencer recommendations, and limited-time offers), the more likely they will purchase.

Impact of FOMO on Customer Buying Intentions

Table 4.6.4 Model Summary (FOMO and CB)

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.597	0.356	0.354	0.730
a. Predictors: (Constant), FOMO				

The model summary shows a moderate to strong positive relationship between FOMO and customer buying intentions ($R = 0.597$). The $R^2 = 0.356$ value shows how about 35.6% of the variance in customer buying intentions can be explained by the FOMO. The Adjusted $R^2 = 0.354$ confirms that this explanatory power is robust after taking sample size into account. This means that psychological pressure to not miss opportunities, deals, or shared consumption experiences among other people substantially influences customers' tendencies to go through with purchases.

Table 4.6.5 ANOVA Table (FOMO and CB)

ANOVA						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	115.888	1	115.888	217.267	0.000
	Residual	209.621	393	0.533		
	Total	325.509	394			
a. Dependent Variable: Customer buying Intentions						
b. Predictors: (Constant), FOMO						

The ANOVA results ($F=217.267$, $p<0.001$) point out a statistically significant regression equation whereby FOMO relates significantly to consumer purchase intention. It implies that the effectiveness of FOMO by consumers increases steadily and in a consistent, non-random manner when consumers express the of increased urgency or FOMO of trendy stock items or products for time-sensitive promotions.

Table 4.6.6 Coefficient Table (FOMO and CB)

Coefficients						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficient		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.411	0.154		9.162	0.000
	FOMO	0.596	0.040	0.597	14.740	0.000
a. Dependent Variable: Customer buying Intentions						

The unstandardized coefficient for FOMO ($B = 0.596$, $p < 0.001$) implies an almost one-unit increase in scores on customer buying intention whenever there is an increase of one unit in FOMO. This is further emphasized by the standardized beta value ($\beta = 0.597$) that vehemently punctuates FOMO as a significant predictor of buying intentions. The constant ($B = 1.411$, $p < 0.001$) holds the baseline level of purchase intention where there is no presence of FOMO. These findings prove that the behavioral motivators resident in FOMO, like urgency from limited-time offers, peer influence arising from seeing others buy certain items, and the appeal of exclusivity, strongly contribute to the decision on purchase.

Impact of Social Media and FOMO on Customer Buying Intentions

Table 4.6.7 Model Summary (SM, FOMO and CB)

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.858	.737	.736	.467
a. Predictors: (Constant), Social Media, FOMO				

The R-value is calculated at 0.858. The coefficient of determination is a measurement that shows that a joint 73.7% of variation in customer buying intentions is accounted for by the variances in social media stress and FOMO of individual subjects. The Adjusted $R^2 = 0.736$ sloughs aside the insurmountable impediment of sample size. This suggests that customers'

purchase decisions are heavily shaped when both social media interactions and the psychological pressure of missing out operate simultaneously amplifying urgency, desirability, and emotional connection with products or brands.

Table 4.6.8 ANOVA Table (SM, FOMO and CB)

ANOVA						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	239.814	1	239.814	1099.803	0.000
	Residual	85.694	393	.218		
	Total	325.509	394			
a. Dependent Variable: Customer buying Intentions						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Social Media, FOMO						

From the ANOVA results ($F = 1099.803$, $p < 0.001$) the present regression model above is excellent being significant. This means that the combined influence of social media and FOMO is not due to chance but represents a consistent pattern where higher levels of social media engagement, coupled with stronger feelings of missing out, lead to significantly greater purchase intentions. This could be linked to mechanisms such as exposure to promotional content, peer-driven consumption trends, and rapid decision-making triggered by online stimuli.

Table 4.6.9 Coefficient Table (SM, FOMO and CB)

Coefficients						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.389	.100		3.888	0.000

	Social Media, FOMO	.979	.030	.858	23.163	0.000
a. Dependent Variable: Customer buying Intentions						

The unstandardized coefficient ($B = 0.979$, $p < 0.001$) reveals that for every one-unit increase in the combined effect of social media and FOMO, customer buying intention scores rise by about 0.979 units. The standardized beta ($\beta=0.858$); hence, these variables together confirm an extremely high level of predictability. The constant ($B = 0.389$, $p < 0.001$) indicates the score of intention in the absence of both factors. Thus, we established that when consumers are highly engaged with social media, continuously exposed to product endorsements, influencer activities, and peer consumption, while simultaneously feeling the emotional pull of not wanting to miss out on opportunities, their tendency to decide to purchase shoots to the peak.

4.7 SUMMARY

To summarise, the findings of this analysis show significant relationships between social media interaction, FOMO, and consumer purchase intentions, thus supporting the hypothesized framework of the study. Descriptive statistics gave a thorough description of respondent behavior and attitudes, while correlation analysis confirmed positive interrelations between key constructs. Regression analysis emphasized the predictive role of FOMO and social media in determining buying intentions and thus provided empirical evidence supporting the research objectives. By and large, the data analysis validates the conceptual model and sets the stage for the discussion chapter, where the implications of the findings are critically evaluated in the context of the existing literature.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the findings of the investigation relating to its objectives and the existing literature. Moreover, it explains how social media influence and FOMO affect consumer purchase intentions in the context of online shopping through direct and indirect pathways. The theoretical insights into consumer behavior associated with empirical results provide further clarification on consumer behavior relevant to the digital age. The chapter also highlights what marketers, businesses, and policymakers can actually do, along with some recommendations for effective leveraging of social media strategies. Thus, this chapter bridges research outcomes with actionable insights, thus a link between the academic world and real-world applications.

5.2 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings of this study highlight the intertwined relationship between social media influence, FOMO and customer buying intentions in the context of online shopping.

Significant findings from the current research indicate that social media not only directly influences consumers' attitude and their decision-making but also establishes more psychological phenomenon like FOMO influencing customers toward making purchases. The authors of this study argue that on social media, product information, peer recommendations, and influencer endorsements increasingly create a central place for consumers to be. Previous studies have revealed that these digital interactions affect purchase intentions. For instance, Erkan and Evans (2016) have established that eWOM pretty much persuades a consumer's behavior, while Hajli (2015) gives emphasis to social proof and trust toward the online community. More recently, Cheung et al. (2021) and Kapoor et al. (2018) demonstrated again that trust in influencer and user-generated content increases consumer confidence and his/her willingness to purchase online. This indicates

that social media is no longer an entertainment medium at best but instead has become a potent tool for driving consumer decisions.

The psychological aspects of online shopping were illuminated as the study evidenced that FOMO strongly drives consumers. It has been established widely that FOMO is a by-product of social media usage: Przybylski et al. (2013) defined it as the constant fear that others are having rewarding experiences. It is, however, Abel et al. (2016) and Hodgkinson (2019) who connected it with impulsive consumer decisions, stating limited-time offers and exclusive deals on social platforms could create urgency and trigger unplanned purchases. In alignment with Riordan et al. (2015), individuals experiencing higher levels of FOMO are more susceptible to social media marketing tactics; therefore, have more tendency to undertake spontaneous buying. Current findings thus further substantiate existing literature by showing that FOMO is not just a social or emotional response, but also a powerful determinant of consumer purchase intentions.

Being a major contribution to this study, a very strong association was found to exist between social media influence and FOMO. This happens because it has become so frequent that engagement with social media provides avenues for lifestyle comparisons by curating images of one's peer possessions and experiences and hence would kindle the FOMO sensation. This association has been supported in the literature: Alt (2015) and Buglass et al. (2017) found that with higher levels of social media use, increased levels of FOMO are indeed correlated, while Dhir et al. (2018) discovered that continuous social media exposure enhances these feelings through updates and promotional content. In the area of consumer behavior, Dossey (2014) found that the great effectiveness of marketing strategies using FOMO, like flash sales and countdown deals, lies among their influences. This study confirms these, putting forward the double role of social media as a direct influencer and a trigger of FOMO that would indirectly drive buying intentions.

In general, from the viewpoint of the growing literature concerning consumer decisions made in this digital landscape, this study considers the multidimensional nature of the process depicted and influenced by information cues and psychological triggers. Linking the FOMO element to social media has made a better understanding of buying intentions

in online shoppers. From a theoretical angle, this research enhances pre-existing consumer behavior frameworks by aligning social influence with psychological constructs. From a practical viewpoint, this study reiterates that marketers should devise campaigns that not just instruct consumers but also give a unique sense of urgency, exclusivity, and social engagement when they wish to achieve maximum impact on purchase decisions.

5.2.1 Summary of demographics

The demographic analysis of the respondents provides valuable insights into the composition of the sample.

- The gender ratio was almost equally represented, with a few more males than females. A large number of respondents were young adults aged 21 to 30 years, who are the most active on social networking sites and are involved in online shopping activities.
- With regard to education, graduates and undergraduates account for most respondents, which means that the respondents were fairly educated.
- In terms of occupation, a majority of respondents were professionals, whereas the other peaks corresponded to students. Business owners and others represented minor segments.
- The majority of respondents classified their monthly income as between ₹50,001 and ₹1,00,000, which indicates that the sample was heavily weighted toward the middle-income group.
- The pattern of social media usage indicates that most respondents were spending about two to four hours on social media platforms-a confirmation of their high involvement.
- Among the platforms, Instagram was given utmost preference, while Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter were favored lesser, with fewer others being selected.

In summary, a demographic profile with a mix of diversity tilted toward mostly youth and digital engagement serves as a fitting cohort for analyzing the role of social media and FOMO in online buying intentions.

5.2.2 Results of hypotheses testing

Table 5.1 Results of hypotheses testing

Hypotheses	Statement	Results	Decision
H1	“There is a significant impact of social media influence on customer buying intentions in online shopping.”	R2= 47.7% Sig=0.000	Supported
H2	“There is a significant impact of Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) on customer buying intentions in online shopping.”	R2= 35.6% Sig=0.000	Supported
H3	“There is a significant positive relationship between social media influence and Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) among online shoppers.”	R2= 73.7% Sig=0.000	Supported

The research hypotheses were tested using regression analysis, and the findings are said to provide strong empirical evidence for the research framework proposed. Below follows the discussion for each hypothesis in-depth.

The analysis revealed social media influence accounting for 47.7% variance ($R^2 = 0.477$) in consumer buying intention with a very significant ($p = 0.000$). Thus it can be said that social media is central not just in shaping consumers’ opinion about but also in motivating them to engage actively in online shopping. Social media advertising, influencers, product reviews, and peer recommendation further work as persuasive cues in bolstering consumer confidence and likelihood of purchase. This finding is consistent with prior research, which emphasizes the effectiveness of social media as a marketing tool in driving consumer behavior as it relates with his finding.

FOMO thus accounts for 35.6% of variance ($R^2 = 0.356$) in understanding customer buying behavior, with a p-level of 0.000. This means that psychological triggers about missing out

on discounts, limited offers, or exclusive products can greatly affect consumer purchase decisions. Customers with FOMO are more suspected of impulsive buying, fearing to miss the opportunities offered through social media. This is in line with the existing studies that identified FOMO as hastening consumers' decision making, especially applicable in the digital marketplace with all its time-bound offers and viral trends.

The results claim a very strong relationship between social media influence and FOMO, with $R^2 = 73.7\%$ and $p = 0.000$. Hence, individuals are usually more inclined to experience FOMO the more they are subjected to social media influence via influencers, peers, or trending content. Social media magnifies everyone's lifestyle, purchases, and experiences, causing urgency and comparison among users. This strong linkage confirms that social media does not just influence consumer behavior in a direct manner but indirectly also intensifies psychological factors like FOMO that subsequently affect purchase intentions.

5.3 THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS

Theoretical implications shed light on the extent to which the findings of a study contribute to scholarly understanding and the refinement of existing theories. The theoretical implications highlight how the results would support, question, or augment current conceptual frameworks by giving rise to new paths for academic inquiry. By discussing the implications of the results in the light of established theories related to the study variables, for example, social influence theory, uses and gratifications theory, and theory of planned behavior, researchers are given the opportunity to showcase how their findings either strengthen or modify theoretical assumptions. Making the research results stronger in predictive power also helps steer future research, offering clear pathways for exploring constructs across different contexts, populations, or industries.

- **Understanding Digital Engagement through Uses and Gratifications**

The present study enriches Uses and Gratifications Theory (Katz, 1974) by showing that online engagement is not a passive act of media consumption but a purposive activity meeting several psychological needs. Participants' behaviour reveals the use of digital platforms for information seeking, entertainment, and social

connectedness, and these gratifications have a direct impact on purchase intentions. This corresponds to the main argument of the theory: that audiences actively choose media according to their own intrinsic needs and goals. In this regard, an important finding is that gratification derived from engagement is not solely intrinsic in nature; it also has instrumental empowerment for real consumer actions. In other words, social media does not merely gratify curiosity or provide amusement; it primes people for market engagement by intertwining hedonic and utilitarian motives. This further enhances theoretical insight by establishing a connection between gratification-seeking behaviours and commercial outcomes.

- **Identity Formation and Group Belonging**

The study also expands Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) by showing that, when structured online, identity construction affects consumption patterns. Online brand communities and peer groups create a shared identity among members, thus inducing conformity to the group norms in decisions about consumption. When individuals identify strongly with a digital community, they view behaviours associated with brands in terms of their social self-definition, aligning purchases with the expectations of the community. This provides support for the theoretical claim that individuals derive their self-concept from their group memberships and act to retain in-group approval. The current research deepens the discussion by articulating the way in which this identity alignment is magnified within the context of social media, where visibility and feedback loops offer constant reinforcement of shared values and tastes.

- **Information Processing and Persuasion Routes**

Good resonance with the Elaboration Likelihood Model (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986) is seen in these results, which demonstrate how consumers are persuaded through both central and peripheral routes when presented with online brand-related content. In circumstances in which content provides extensive and credible information, consumers are likely to analyze it through the central route resulting

in relatively stable and rationally derived attitudes. Conversely, aesthetically pleasing graphics, influencer endorsements, and high engagement statistics are peripheral cues that prime emotions and thereby impact decisions. This indicates that the online space is an inherently mixed mode of persuasion, wherein systematic and heuristic processing can coexist simultaneously. In theory, the study demonstrates how digital contexts encourage dual-route processing within a single exposure episode, thus contributing to online consumer decision-making sophistication.

- **Decision-Making under Perceived Risk**

The results support the application of Prospect Theory (Kahneman & Tversky, 1979) to digital consumer behavior in showing that individuals tend more to respond to the imagined threats of loss (i.e. possibility of missing out on a short-lived offer) than they do to comparable positive perceptions of gain. The loss aversion operates both literally and socially — missing a good deal, yes; but missing social opportunities such as the chance to be part of a trending discussion or to show off having an early product. The present study shows that within a social media context these perceived risks often outweigh traditional evaluation processes and encourage faster decision-making. Taking these findings into consideration will expand Prospect Theory to include socially anchored losses, where the cost is a depreciation of standing or belonging in a social group rather than simply an economic disadvantage.

- **Scarcity as a Motivator**

The findings substantiate the principle of scarcity and indicate that limited availability, whether in terms of quantity, duration, or exclusivity, could greatly increase customer urgency. The media thus provided for emphasis as the so-called “social proof” conspicuously amplified this effect; once the cues for scarcity are passed around, being socially approved as witnessed by others, their credibility and imminence grow. The joint effect of scarcity and social proof will unleash a strong

psychological trigger, accelerating consumers' decision-making features while undermining rational deliberation. This research advances the scope of this principle to the extent that scarcity cues need not necessarily be tied to the physical unavailability of a product; perceived access restrictions such as “invite-only” sales or influencer-exclusive promotions have comparable behavioural effects.

- **Autonomy, Competence, and Relatedness**

Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985) makes sense now in explaining why, in this study, participants are more likely to act on online purchase intentions. The findings suggest that messages that promote a sense of personal agency (autonomy), enhance skills or knowledge (competence), and foster social connection (relatedness) are more likely to lead to behavioral follow-through. This suggests that the theory contends that the satisfaction of these three psychological needs promotes intrinsically motivated behavior. In the digital marketplace, autonomy refers to users' choice to personalize options; competence is fostered through expert information and peer reviews; relatedness arises through participation in communities. Therefore, the findings show that the theory holds in the contemporary commercial context, in which such needs can be fulfilled through virtual as opposed to physical interaction.

- **Intention–Behaviour Linkage in a Digital Scenario**

Research strongly supports the RPB (Ajzen, 1991) in that attitudes shaped by online exposure, perceived social norms, and perception of behavioural control jointly determine consumer purchase intention. In digital environments, subjective norms are intensified by the constant visibility of peers and public sharing of social factors such as likes, shares, and endorsements. Perceived behavioral control is similarly altered to suit online browsing comfort; payment options availability and instant product information are taken into account in the online environment. The results contribute to the theory and indicate that within the social media environment, the

weight of subjective norms can outweigh that of attitude toward determining intentions when interfaced with social comparison cues.

- **Applications of Stimulus–Organism–Response Attributes**

The Stimulus–Organism–Response (SOR) framework, as described by Mehrabian and Russell (1974), is a holistic model ideal for explaining consumer behavior in all contexts, whereby online content acts as the stimulus, the cognitive state coupled with emotions of the individual constitutes the organism, and purchase intention provides the eventual behavioral response. Being able to see the process from exposure to potential outcomes sets it in a best scenario for consideration for both types of processing: rationalisms and effectivities. Th’gcis creates premises asserting that an enriched nature of these social media stimuli such as aesthetic appeal, social validation, or interactivity will intensify the emotion with respect to consumer decision-making intent. The study also helps in extending SOR concepts in other fields; in digital commerce, the “Organism” stage is highly dynamic, affected not only by personal predispositions but also by social feedback loops that operate on the event level.

- **Extending Traditional Theories in Modern Media**

This study underscores the classical understanding that well-established behavior theories can also work in an explanation of consumer behaviors in the current epoch, but modification in the context of digital and social media settings is necessary. The interactivity, speed, and social visibility of such platforms amplify the psychological mechanisms of persuasion, identity formation, and decision-making; hence, this study will contribute to making this an ongoing attempt of scholars to integrate classical consumer behaviour theories with modern digital realities, thereby assuring their purpose in an ever-evolving market.

5.4 MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

Managerial implications translate research insights into practical strategies that can be employed within an organizational or industry context. Managerial implications would thus inform the fundamental requirements of evidence-based recommendations for policy, strategy, and operational enhancement, thereby bridging the gulf between academic research and business decision-making. For the present study, the managerial implications would emerge as an operational toolkit for the practitioners to the extent that its provisions posit actionable interventions to enhance marketing effectiveness, customer engagement, and behavioral influence in the marketplace. The managers would thus be able to use the findings in tailoring interventions through areas such as communication strategies, customer relationship management, and digital engagement practices, which can deliver enhanced performance, customer satisfaction, and loyalty in the long run.

- **Leveraging Social Media as an Immersive Consumer Experience**

The impact of findings demonstrates that consumer engagement in the social media arena transcends what is informational; it is experiential. They prefer something dynamic, attractive, and interactive in their space: something that sparks curiosity and a sense of connection. Therefore, the fact that managers are regarding social media just as a source of promotional channel involves a radical readjustment to also viewing it as more of an immersive brand touchpoint. The deployment of resources into such content formats will grab attention and involve more towards feeling like active participants in the brands' journey. within such deeper interactions, brands would ideally enhance emotional ties and consumer repeat visits, eventually making consumers more likely to respond to future purchase prompts. Ashley and Tuten (2015) have commented on the rich audience interaction that stimulated branded content could engage customers at an increased level.

- **Embedding Scarcity and Urgency to Drive Immediate Action**

The comments measuring FOMO suggest consumers may be more likely to act when they perceive some scarcity or limitation on time. Psychological triggers relating to exclusivity and urgency have the power of speeding up decision-making processes, especially in the ever-so-competitive world of online business. Flash deals, special early-bird discounts, countdown timers that keep on running for every product listed on e-commerce sites, or introducing “limited edition” product lines into the pipeline can be among the bests of effective measures taken. A case in point is that of a limited window of pre-order for a product advertised via social media stories containing live countdowns; this can whip up excitement and urgency. On the other hand, however, too much artificial scarcity risks sabotaging credibility, and scarcity cues should reflect actual availability (Hodkinson, 2019). These techniques can shorten the purchase decision cycle, moving the consumer from interest to transaction in compressed time.

- **Relying on Social Proof from Influencers and Peer Networks**

Repeatedly within the datasets is clear regarding the influence of seeing others most particularly towards relatable figures on endorsing a brand or product. Social proof continues to be one of the most potent motivators for consumer purchasing within a digital context. Partnering with like-minded influencers who share the same brand beliefs and target audience demographics, while prioritizing authenticity over follower count, goes a long way in guaranteeing credibility. User-generated content (UGC) will be significantly improved by encouraging current customers to submit user-generated content (UGC) based on hashtag campaigns, contests, or testimonial features. Influencer recommendation strikes when it impacts the brand perception and subsequent purchase intentions, but mostly relies on younger consumers, as Casaló et al. (2020) pointed out in their investigation. Thus understood, this is what makes people believe in proof yet creates a greater perceived legitimacy of the brand, especially for first-time buyers.

- **Real-time Marketing and Event-based Engagement**

Consumers like to be captured by content and offers that hang on current events, live moments, or topics that are currently trending. When brands manage to relate their activities to what is happening within the “now”, they go higher in terms of relevance, thus catching consumers’ heightened attention. Live product launches accompanied with real-time response to a trending hashtag, and moment marketing associated with culture or any seasonal events, could have very strong impact. For instance, a brand releasing a special edition product during a major sports event and promoting it through live updates can harness both excitement and relevance. This strengthens the perception of the brand as dynamic and culture-sensitive, especially appreciated by digitally active consumers.

- **Personalizing Offers Based on Behavioral Insights**

The scale items indicate that consumers are more inclined to purchase when offers seem personalized up to predilection or previous behavior. Reduced choice fatigue and carnal senses of being understood by the brand accompany personalized marketing. Social media analytics paired with customer relationship management data can be of great help in identifying patterns regarding behavior, more specifically, about products they frequently view, products looked at but never purchased, or wishlist items. Targeted messages, for instance: “Your favorite item is almost sold out” or “We picked this for you”. Personalization can lead to a major efficiency cut in digital marketing budgets for Lamberton and Stephen (2016). It also boosts relevancy and perceived value in both immediate and repeat purchases.

- **Cultivating Online Brand Communities**

The various research items all connect to the role of belonging towards consumer decision-making. Being part of a community connected to a brand influences loyalty and advocacy beyond mere transactions. Spaces that are exclusive and developed specifically for the online environment include private groups that use Facebook, brand ambassador programs, and forums accessible only to specific membership types that enable consumers to share experiences, receive early access

to information on and from brand representatives, and create deeper connections. Communities function as sustained channels of engagement, potentially converting an ad hoc buyer into a dedicated brand advocate. As per Muntinga et al. (2011), the community-driven brand interactions are such that continual long-term engagement is created.

- **Balancing Excitement with Ethical Responsibility**

While urgency and FOMO can powerfully trigger an emotional response, putting too much reliance on them can lead to consumer fatigue or become a potential cause for consumer skepticism. A long-term brand reputation is built through transparent, responsible messaging. Since urgency appeals are used selectively, and time-based or scarcity claims are verifiable, such practices safeguard credibility. Some of these forms go along with value-based message forms, which stress the quality of service and sustainability or social responsibility. Hodkinson (2019) warns that a false signal of urgency can jeopardize trust, further underscoring the necessity of moderation. This prevents over-exploitation of behavioral triggers for sales while still building brand trust.

- **Integrating Cross-Platform Consistency**

The resulting FOMO effect is amplified when social media influence has the same message across all digital touchpoints. Mixed messages can dilute the intended advertising psychological impact. The coordinated messaging for both marketing content and advertising offers on different platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, e-mail campaigns, and website banners helps ensure that the urgency cues, product images, and messages all support one another, thereby creating a singular consumer journey that enhances recollection and maximizes campaign impacts.

- **Embedding Data-Driven Feedback Loops**

Considering the measurable impact of social media and FOMO on buying choices, managers ought to view campaigns as something far from static. Instead, campaigns should be monitored in real-time and adjustments should occur depending on consumer feedback data. Some techniques that should be employed include: A/B testing of urgency cues, influencer partnerships and content types while actively monitoring selected metrics like engagement rate, click-through rate or conversion to assess effective approaches. This ultimately gifts the highest ROI possible by fine-tuning strategies that speak directly to consumer reactions.

- **Balancing Short-Term Activation with Long-Term Brand Equity**

While techniques such as urgency and FOMO drive immediate sales, sustainable growth requires balancing these with a regular dose of real value, storytelling, and brand authenticity. Intertwining one-off activities with more long-term narratives about a brand's purpose, quality of products, or innovation on such short-term campaigns (flash sales, limited offers) allows for a balanced approach whereby a strong brand identity can thrive during times of wandering consumer attention.

5.5 RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Improve Strategies for Progressive Social Media Engagement**

Results from the study show that social media is a very vibrant element that determines consumers' buying intentions and does not only serve as a communication tool but also as a psychological trigger in decision-making. Therefore, organizations should invest in creating interactive, relatable, and shareable content that is consistent with consumer interests and values. This is including brand storytelling, customer testimonials, and behind-the-scenes content that would humanize the brand. Additionally, engagement should go beyond messaging with the use of real-time responses to inquiries emerging from

consumers, proactive engagement in comment sections, and utilizing polls or quizzes. Research has proved that perceived interactivity in social media enhances trust and emotional connection, leading to more potent purchase intentions (Pletikosa Cvijikj & Michahelles, 2013).

- **Ethically exploit FOMO drives into campaigns**

The strongest impact of the result was attributed to the FOMO, meaning that this apparent deficiency and exclusiveness in the marketing approach is a major motivator to the audience. To employ a successful marketing strategy, it should encompass time-bound promotions, flash sales, and exclusives on member benefits to prompt customers to make an instant buying decision. If you overdo the technique, this may have the opposite effect and cause skepticism on the part of consumers or even “urgency fatigue” that gradually decreases the effectiveness. The solution here is to keep claims of scarcity real, transparency about offers, and limited numbers of such campaigns by brands. FOMO-based marketing has been proven the most effective when the urgency is perceived as authentic and highly relevant to the customer’s needs (Przybylski et al., 2013).

- **Combine Social Media and FOMO Tactics for Greater Impact**

The synergistic effect in terms of buying intention that has been pointed out by both social media influence and FOMO can be brought together for maximal results. Brands can, for example, launch their products live on Instagram or Facebook, show real-time updates of purchases, and indicate that the offer is limited at the same time. Emphasis can be added also by including countdown timers in the posts, telling fresh tales of customers who “just bought” the product, or otherwise creating an environment in e-commerce interfaces that could show remaining stock levels. This is also supported by the Social Influence Theory, which states that

informational and normative pressures fill individuals' minds to decide about an item or service purchase in a social context (Deutsch & Gerard, 1955).

- **Embrace Data-Driven Optimization of Campaign**

Given that both social media engagement and FOMO are dynamic factors, organizations should have a proper analytical system in place to track customer interactions with campaigns efficiently. Among metrics that can be monitored on a day-to-day basis are engagement rate, click-through rate, conversion rate, and time-to-purchase. Marketers will be able to optimize campaigns continuously, directing resources into those tactics that seem to yield optimum returns. Predictive analytics tools can help forecast customer responses to future campaigns, enabling a proactive adjustment of strategies. Evidence from marketing analytics literature shows that real time data optimization can increase campaign performance by 20-30% (Wedel and Kannan, 2016).

- **Build Emotional Connection through Authenticity**

Urgency tactics might bring instant results, but customer loyalty, which is to be long-term, is built on trust and authenticity long before marketing messages reach a consumer. This can be observed in making campaigns relevant to the values of a brand, being forthright about the limitations of a product, and not using manipulative tactics. Narratives that emotionally connect with consumers, such as sustainability, community impact, or customer success stories, continue to take effect over time as consumers increase their emotional bond with the ideal. Quite importantly, however, keeping up with authenticity strengthens the credibility of FOMO campaigns and makes them effective over time (Beverland & Farrelly, 2010).

- **Draw Guidelines for Ethical Digital Marketing**

As far as FOMO and social media strategies make a psychological appeal to motivators, ethical considerations become necessary. Guidelines such as acceptable urgency tactics while avoiding false scarcity claims and consumer well-being

should be developed by brands. Ethical principles in the marketing policy may save plenty of reputational damage and build the customer trust that the ethical marketing framework of Murphy et al. (2007) recommends, in which marketing influence on consumer behavior is honesty, fairness, and responsibility.

- **Train Marketing Teams in Consumer Psychology**

To effectively utilize social media and FOMO tactics, marketing teams should receive specialized training in consumer behavior theories such as the TPB (Ajzen, 1991) and Social Influence Theory. Understanding these broad frameworks would enable marketers to formulate campaigns that could utilize both rational and emotional routes to decision-making. For example, if it is known that perceived behavioral control affects intention, then marketers may want to make it easy and accessible to buy during the limited time campaign.

- **Conduct Controlled Campaign Testing**

Such variations in the dimension of urgency and social influence in communication are likely to produce different consumer reactions. Thus, A/B testing should be an organized experience that assesses effectivity of campaign formats in terms of messaging, tone, and urgency level. For example, is “Only 5 left” better than “Selling fast—don’t miss out”? The psychological trigger disaggregates with controlled experiments as marketers fine-tune campaigns, the cost and resource burden of ineffective ones minimized.

- **Develop Online Customer Communities**

To sustain customer engagement beyond short-term campaigns, brands need to invest in developing online communities where customers can communicate, share experiences, and access exclusive content. This includes brand-sponsored Facebook groups, Discord channels, or even the newly emerging membership-based platforms. Not only do these communities encourage loyalty, but they also prove to be good hunting grounds for FOMO-driven campaigns, as customers are

likelier to respond to exclusive offers inside the walls of reference groups they identify with (Muniz & O'Guinn, 2001).

- **Maintain Cross-Platform Consistency**

Timed for maximum reach and brand recall, campaigns should aim to take the same approach to messaging on different platforms while allowing for reasonable adaptations of content format. So, for instance, the introduction would include a blog post on a limited-time promotion that would be visually highlighted on Instagram and then re-reminded via a short Twitter shout-out, with a live YouTube Q&A session also on topic. Consistency adds to credibility, whereas difference of treatment ensures that the message resonates with the targeted audience types on each platform (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).

5.6 CONCLUSION

The importance of social media and FOMO in consumer purchase intention is stressed here because they are very significant issues in online shopping behavior today. Not only does such discussion endorse previous research, but it also expands current knowledge by exposing the interdependence of social influence and psychological triggers in shaping the decisions of a consumer. The implications narrated here elucidate strategic opportunities for business to leverage such insights within the development of marketing campaigns targeted to engage digital consumers. Finally, these recommendations create pathways for enhanced practices and research in the future so that both academia and industry can continue to reap the rewards of changing dynamics in digital consumer engagement.

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APPENDIX I
SURVEY COVER LETTER

Dear Participant,

My name is Ashish Pal and I am a Doctor of Business Administration student at Swiss School of Business and Management. I am conducting a study on “The effect of social media influence and fear of missing out on customer buying intentions in online shopping” as part of my thesis requirements. I am reaching out to invite you to participate in this research by completing a survey designed to gather insights on this topic.

The purpose of this study is to investigate the effect of social media influence and fear of missing out on customer buying intentions in online shopping. Your responses will be valuable in identifying trends and patterns that can contribute to advancements in this field of study. The survey will take approximately 10-15 minutes to complete.

Please be assured that your responses will remain confidential and anonymous. All data collected will be used solely for academic purposes and will be reported in an aggregated form, ensuring that no personally identifiable information is included. Participation is entirely voluntary, and you may choose to skip any question or stop participating at any time without any consequence.

While there are no direct benefits for participating, your insights will contribute to a broader understanding of the relationships between relationship marketing tactics and its impact on customer loyalty which may support future improvements and research in this field. Thank you very much for considering this request.

Sincerely,

Ashish Pal

Doctor of Business Administration

Swiss School of Business and Management, Geneva

APPENDIX B

QUESTIONNAIRE

I am undertaking a research to study the effect of social media influence and fear of missing out on customer buying intentions in online shopping. Your response is vital for this study. Please be assured that your responses are completely confidential and will be used for the academic purposes only.

Section A - Demographic Details

Please tick (✓) against your response.

- 1. Name.....**
- 2. E-mail ID (Optional).....**
- 3. Mobile No (Optional)**
- 4. Gender**
 - Male
 - Female
- 5. Age**
 - Below 20 years
 - In between 21 – 30 years
 - In between 31 – 40 years
 - In between 41 – 50 years
 - Above 50 years
- 6. Your Level of Education**
 - Undergraduate
 - Graduate
 - Post Graduate
 - Others Please specify
- 7. Occupation**

- Student
- Working professional
- Business/Entrepreneur
- Others Please Specify

8. Monthly Income

- Below Rs. 50,000
- Rs. 50,001-1,00,000
- Rs.1,00,001-150,000
- More than Rs.1,50, 000

9. Average Daily Time Spent on Social Media

- Less than 1 hour
- 1-2 hours
- 2-4 hours
- More than 4 hours

10. Preferred Social Media Platforms

- Instagram
- Facebook
- Twitter
- YouTube
- Others

Section B – Social Media

DIRECTION: *The following set of statement relates to your opinion about Social Media engagement during online shopping. Please give your response to show the extent in agreement/ disagreement with the statements by circling a number. Once again, circling a 5 means that you strongly agree with the statement, and circling a 1 means that you strongly disagree with the statement. You may circle any of the numbers in the middle that show how strong your opinions are. There are no right or wrong answers—all we*

are interested in is a number that best shows your opinion towards selected online retail store.

1	I generally follow the brands on social media (SM) which are congruent with my lifestyle.	SD					SA
		1	2	3	4	5	
2	On SM, I follow some brands that I fancy to buy in future, although I can't afford buying right now.	SD					SA
		1	2	3	4	5	
3	I follow the brands on SM which I consume and/or purchase often.	SD					SA
		1	2	3	4	5	
4	I think that my involvement with a brand on SM due to my satisfaction/dissatisfaction influences my friends in my social network.	SD					SA
		1	2	3	4	5	
5	Promotions and discount campaigns offered on SM by the brands generate financial benefits for the customers.	SD					SA
		1	2	3	4	5	
6	By following the SM pages of brands, I can be informed of the discounts and promotions without visiting any stores and/or shops.	SD					SA
		1	2	3	4	5	
7	Following brands on SM helps me to get information about new offerings.	SD					SA
		1	2	3	4	5	
8	To me, social media (SM) is a very convenient tool for the customers to transmit their complaints and suggestions to the brands.	SD					SA
		1	2	3	4	5	

9	I think it is possible to communicate instantly with brands on SM without any time and space boundaries.	SD					SA
		1	2	3	4	5	
10	Getting into contact with companies is easy through SM because it's simple and free.	SD					SA
		1	2	3	4	5	
11	I believe that the product-related information which can be gathered from SM is relatively reliable.	SD					SA
		1	2	3	4	5	
12	SM provides a reliable information resource by enabling a transparent integration between brands and consumers.	SD					SA
		1	2	3	4	5	

Section C – Fear of Missing out

DIRECTION: *The following set of statement relates to your opinion about Fear of Missing Out (FoMO) during online shopping. Please give your response to show the extent in agreement/ disagreement with the statements by circling a number. Once again, circling a 5 means that you strongly agree with the statement, and circling a 1 means that you strongly disagree with the statement. You may circle any of the numbers in the middle that show how strong your opinions are. There are no right or wrong answers—all we are interested in is a number that best shows your opinion towards selected online retail store.*

1	I fear others have more rewarding experiences than me	SD					SA
		1	2	3	4	5	
2	I fear my friends have more rewarding experiences than me	SD					SA
		1	2	3	4	5	

3	I get worried when I find out my friends are having fun without me	SD SA 1 2 3 4 5
4	I get anxious when I do not know what my friends are up to	SD SA 1 2 3 4 5
5	It is important that I understand my friends “in jokes”	SD SA 1 2 3 4 5
6	Sometimes I wonder if I spend too much time keeping up with what is going on	SD SA 1 2 3 4 5
7	It bothers me when I miss an opportunity to meet up with friends	SD SA 1 2 3 4 5
8	When I have a good time, it is important for me to share details online	SD SA 1 2 3 4 5
9	When I miss out on a planned get-together it bothers me	SD SA 1 2 3 4 5
10	When I go on vacation, I continue to keep tabs on what my friends are doing	SD SA 1 2 3 4 5

Section D – Customer Buying Intentions

DIRECTION: *The following set of statement relates to your feelings based on the buying intentions in online shopping. Please give your response to show the extent in agreement/ disagreement with the statements by circling a number. Once again, circling*

a 5 means that you strongly agree with the statement, and circling a 1 means that you strongly disagree with the statement. You may circle any of the numbers in the middle that show how strong your opinions are. There are no right or wrong answers—all we are interested in is a number that best shows your feelings towards selected online retail store.

1	I intend to purchase products that I see promoted on social media platforms.	SD					SA
		1	2	3	4	5	
2	I am likely to buy a product if it is trending or widely shared online.	SD					SA
		1	2	3	4	5	
3	I plan to make purchases online after seeing recommendations from influencers or content creators.	SD					SA
		1	2	3	4	5	
4	I feel a strong urge to buy when I see others enjoying or using a product online.	SD					SA
		1	2	3	4	5	
5	I often buy products online to avoid missing out on trends I see on social media.	SD					SA
		1	2	3	4	5	
6	I expect to continue shopping online based on content I view on social networks.	SD					SA
		1	2	3	4	5	
7	Social media increases my intention to buy products even if I didn't plan to originally.	SD					SA
		1	2	3	4	5	
8	I would consider buying a product if many people are talking about it online.	SD					SA
		1	2	3	4	5	

Any suggestions _____

Thanks for your time!