

FOMO in Digital Consumer Behavior: A Systematic Review of Theories, Strategies, and Psychological Outcomes (2010–2024)

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Abstract

This study aims to regularly review the development of FOMO related research from 2010 to 2024, focusing on its theoretical foundations, strategic marketing implications, and psychological outcomes. Utilizing the PRISMA method, 27 high-quality articles were selected from the Scopus database within the domains of business, management, and psychology. The review reveals that FOMO is primarily rooted in Social Comparison Theory, Self-Determination Theory, and the Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) model. FOMO serves as both a mediator and trigger for digital behaviors such as impulsive buying, excessive social media engagement, and emotional decision-making. The analysis also highlights the strategic use of FOMO in digital marketing tactics, including limited time offers, live streaming, and influencer endorsements. Furthermore, the findings point to the need for ethical considerations in leveraging FOMO to avoid consumer distress and overconsumption. This study contributes to the understanding of FOMO's multifaceted role in digital consumer psychology and provides a theoretical and managerial framework for future research and practice.

Keywords: *Fear of Missing Out (FOMO), Digital Consumer Behavior, Impulsive Buying, Social Media Marketing, Psychological Outcomes.*

INTRODUCTION

The digital era has transformed the way consumers interact, make decisions, and experience satisfaction in the marketplace. One psychological phenomenon that has gained increasing attention in recent years is the fear of missing out (FOMO) (Rozgonjuk et al. 2021), a pervasive concern that others might be having a rewarding experience without you (Alutaybi et al. 2020). Originating in social psychology, FOMO has evolved into a key

construct in digital consumer behavior, influencing decision-making processes in areas such as social media usage, online shopping, and livestream commerce (Hodkinson 2019).

In digital markets, FOMO is often triggered by real-time cues, scarcity messages, and social-stimulus proof mechanisms that exploit consumers' psychological vulnerabilities (Riastyanto, Muljono, and Amanah 2021). Through the lens of the stimulus-organism-response (SOR) model, FOMO is an internal emotional state that mediates the relationship between external marketing stimuli and behavioral responses such as impulse buying (Luo et al. 2019). Other theoretical frameworks have also been applied to explain how autonomy, competence, and relatedness shape susceptibility to FOMO in digital contexts, such as the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) (Pundir, Devi, and Nath 2021) and Self-Determination Theory (SDT) (Bok et al., 2025).

Recent studies have shown that FOMO is positively associated with higher purchase intention frequency, particularly in e-commerce environments with limited-time offers and influencer promotions (Alfina, Hartini, and Mardhiyah 2023). This marketing tactic leverages FOMO to create a sense of urgency and perceived value (Santoso, Widyasari, and Soliha 2021), which can lead to emotionally driven and sometimes regretted purchases (Triyasari, Tamami, and Pangestu 2022). Furthermore, FOMO has been linked to increased anxiety, lower life satisfaction, and addictive behaviors in digital consumers (Darmayanti, Arifin, and Inayah 2023); (Alfiah and Maslihah 2023). This raises ethical concerns about its widespread use as a marketing strategy (Hajli 2018).

Despite growing interest in this topic, there is a lack of a comprehensive synthesis of the theoretical underpinnings, strategic applications, and psychological impacts of FOMO in digital consumer environments (Akbar et al. 2019); (Pratiwi, Susilo, and Amelia 2022). Existing literature tends to focus on specific platforms or behaviors, limiting our understanding of how FOMO operates across diverse digital ecosystems (Wu et al. 2024); (Tandon et al. 2021). Therefore, this study conducted a systematic literature review (SLR) of peer-reviewed research from 2010 to 2024 to map the conceptual landscape of FOMO in digital consumer behavior, identify research trends, and highlight emerging theoretical and practical insights.

To address this gap, this study will conduct a systematic literature review of peer-reviewed and open-access journal articles published between 2010 and 2024. Specifically, this study aims to answer the following research questions: RQ1: What theoretical frameworks

are most frequently used to explain Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) in digital consumer behavior research between 2010 and 2024? RQ2: What marketing strategies have been developed or adapted to leverage FOMO in influencing digital consumer decision-making? RQ3: What are the documented psychological outcomes of FOMO in the context of digital consumer behavior? By answering these questions, this study aims to provide a comprehensive map of FOMO-related research and offer vital details about the emotional mechanisms that shape modern consumer behavior in the digital environment.

This study systematically explores three main dimensions in response to the following research questions. First, to answer RQ1, this study identifies and categorizes the dominant theoretical frameworks that have been used to explain FOMO in the context of digital consumer behavior. These theoretical frameworks include the Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) Model (Roessler et al. 2022);(Dahmiri, Bhayangkari, and Patricia 2023); Self-Determination Theory (Bok et al., 2025); and the Theory of Planned Behavior (Pundir et al., 2021). These models help explain how psychological mechanisms, such as anxiety, social comparison, and autonomy, influence FOMO-driven decisions. Second, related to RQ2, this review analyzes marketing strategies designed to activate FOMO and influence consumer behavior in digital environments. These strategies include scarcity promotions, limited-time offers, social proof cues, and real-time engagement through livestreams and influencer endorsements (Kang et al., 2021; Huang & Yang, 2022;(Bright and Logan 2018). Third, in response to RQ3, this study synthesizes empirical findings on the psychological impact of FOMO. These findings highlight both positive effects, such as increased engagement and purchase intentions, and negative consequences, such as anxiety, compulsive buying, and digital fatigue (Witarso 2023); (Ahmed, Ng, and Bee 2023); (Al-Busaidi, Dauletova, and Al-Wahaibi 2023). These findings highlight FOMO's dual role as a powerful marketing tool and a potential psychological burden for consumers.

METHOD

This study adopted the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) method to rigorously identify, evaluate, and synthesize scientific literature addressing the concept of Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) in digital marketing and consumer behavior. This method enabled researchers to uncover dominant themes, theoretical perspectives, and behavioral insights by systematically examining a large body of existing research.

To ensure transparency and replicability, the study procedures followed the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) framework (Moher et al., 2009). The PRISMA protocol is widely recognized in academic research as the standard for conducting comprehensive and unbiased literature reviews.

Search Strategy and Data Sources

The search process begins with a keyword-based search using the terms "fear of missing out" and "FOMO" in the title, abstract, or keywords of the publication. The search is limited to:

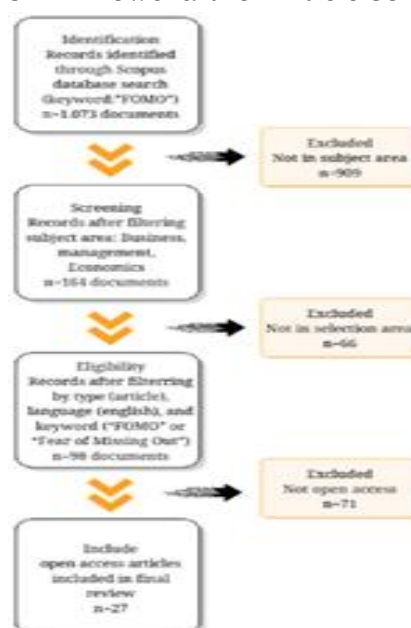
1. Publication language: English
2. Publication year range: 2010-2024
3. Document type: Peer-reviewed journal article
4. Subject areas: Business, Management, and Accounting

The purpose of this screening was to ensure that the selected articles were methodologically sound and contextually relevant to the field of marketing and consumer behavior. This approach is similar to previous research on digital psychological triggers (Tandon et al., 2021; Hattath et al., 2022), ensuring a focus on rigor and relevance.

Screening and Selection Criteria

The literature selection process follows four main stages, according to the PRISMA protocol, as visualized in Figure 1:

Figure 1
PRISMA Flowchart for Article Selection



Identification

A total of 1,073 documents were initially retrieved based on keyword matches. This broad search ensured inclusiveness from the outset.

Filtering

Articles were filtered by subject area, leaving only those categorized as Business, Management, and Accounting. This narrowed the selection to 164 articles, eliminating 909 irrelevant studies (e.g., health, computer science, education).

Eligibility

The next screening phase involved document type (journal article), language (English), and content relevance (must explicitly address FOMO in the title, abstract, or content). After this stage, 98 studies remained.

Inclusion

To ensure accessibility and in-depth thematic coding, only open-access articles were retained. This resulted in a final inclusion of 27 articles, all of which were downloaded and analyzed in full.

This approach ensures that the selected articles meet strict inclusion standards, thereby increasing the credibility and transparency of the review (Schillebeeckx et al., 2024; Su et al., 2025).

Following the PRISMA screening process, 27 open access journal articles were selected from an initial pool of 1,073 documents identified using a keyword-based search. All articles were sourced from the Scopus indexed database, filtered under subject areas related to Business, Management, and Accounting, and published between 2010 and 2024. The selected articles were chosen based on their relevance to the concept of Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) in the context of digital marketing and consumer behavior.

The table below presents a detailed summary of the 27 selected articles, including author information, journal name, research title, research method, and theoretical framework applied in each study.

Table 1
Overview of Selected Studies Addressing FOMO and Consumer Behavior (2010-2024)

No	Author	Journal	Title	Method	Theory
1.	(Morsi et al., 2024)	Business Horizons	Walking away: Investigating	Critical Incident Technique	Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB)

			the adverse (CIT) impact of FOMO appeals on FOMO-prone consumers		
2.	(Khoa et al., 2025)	Qubah Academic Journal	Exploring the Impact of Fear of Missing Out (FoMO) on Youth Shopping Intentions in the Social Commerce Landscape	Quantitative Approach	Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB)
3.	(Bok et al., 2025)	Cogent Business and Management	The fear of missing out influences excitement-seeking and the thrill of a sale	Quantitative Approach	Self-Determination Theory (SDT)
4.	(Su et al., 2025)	Journal of Organizational and End User Computing	Understanding the Influence of Users' Fear of Missing Out on Charitable Crowdfunding	Quantitative Approach	Sense-Making Theory
5.	(Schillebeckx et al., 2024)	Digital Business	FOMO and the ICO: The changing salience of quality signals	Mixed Methods Quantitative and Qualitative	Signaling Theory

6.	(Biswakar ma et al., 2024)	Qubah Academic Journal	Nomophobia and University Business Students' Burnout in Online Learning: Mediating effect of Fear of Missing Out	Quantitative Approach	Behavioral Addiction Theory
7.	(Bläse et al., 2024)	Business Strategy and the Environme nt	Non- sustainable buying behavior: How the fear of missing out drives purchase intentions in the fast fashion industry	Quantitative Approach	Cognitive- Behavioral Models in Consumer Behavior
8.	(Anaza et al., 2024)	Psychology and Marketing	Is it FOMO or is it ME? The influence of personality traits on cryptocurren cy consumption	Quantitative Approach	Trait Theory
9.	(Djamhari et al., 2024)	Cogent Business and Manageme nt	Impulsive buying in the digital age: investigating the dynamics of sales promotion, FOMO, and	Quantitative Approach	Stimulus- Organism- Response (SOR)

			digital payment methods		
10.	(Sarabia-Sánchez et al., 2024)	European Journal of Management and Business Economics	Belonging and beliefs: how social influences drive the intention to purchase foods with health claims	Quantitative Approach	Social Influence Theory
11.	(Balasubramanian & Parayitam, 2023)	Central European Business Review	Fear of missing and its impact on consumer decision making in relation to product purchases in the metaverse	Quantitative Approach	Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)
12.	(Bodhi et al., 2023)	International Journal of Emerging Markets	Work-related social media use and employee-related outcomes: a moderated mediation model	Quantitative Approach	Social Cognitive Theory
13.	(Hargitai et al., 2023)	Management and Marketing	Hallyu in the Heart of Europe: The rise of the Korean Wave in the digital space	Quantitative Approach	Social Influence Theory

14.	(Rippé et al., 2023)	International Journal of Consumer Studies	A psychological examination of attachment insecurity, loneliness, and fear of missing out as drivers of retail patronage among emerging adults	Quantitative Approach	Attachment Theory
15.	(Jabeen et al., 2023)	Journal of Business Research	Social media-induced fear of missing out (FoMO) and social media fatigue: The role of narcissism, comparison and disclosure	Quantitative Approach	Narcissism Theory
16.	(Balasubramanian & Parayitam, 2023)	Knowledge Management and E-Learning	Fear of missing out, smartphone addiction and academic performance: Smartphone obstacles and positive affect as moderators	Quantitative Approach	Social Anxiety Theory
17.	(Nining & Ariefianto, 2023)	Journal of Systems and	Examining the Role of Attitude in	Quantitative Approach	Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB)

		Managem nt Sciences	Mediating the Influence of Social Media Influencers, Risk, Fear of Missing Out and Herd Behavior on Interest to Invest in Stocks		
18.	(Lyngdoh et al., 2023)	Psychology and Marketing	Social isolation and social anxiety as drivers of generation Z's willingness to share personal information on social media	Sequential multi-study design	Sociometer Theory
19.	(Hattingh et al., 2022)	Technologic al Forecasting and Social Change	Factors mediating social media- induced fear of missing out (FoMO) and social media fatigue: A comparative study among Instagram and Snapchat users	Cross- sectional design	Self- Determination Theory (SDT)
20.	(Gartner et al., al	Technologic al	The Role of Fear of	Quantitative Approach	Technology Acceptance

	2022)	Forecasting and Social Change	Missing and Experience in the Formation of SME Decision Makers' Intentions to Adopt New Manufacturing Technologies		Model (TAM)
21.	(Tandon et al., 2022)	Technological Forecasting and Social Change	Social media induced fear of missing out (FoMO) and phubbing: Behavioral, relational and psychological outcomes	Quantitative Approach	Theory of Compensatory Internet Use (TCIU)
22.	(Sabia et al., 2022)	Business Horizons	Big fish: Leveraging the fear of missing out in equity crowdfunding in the post-COVID-19 era	Qualitative	Self-Determination Theory (SDT)
23.	(Parveen et al., 2022)	Innovative Marketing	Buy now or regret later: Social media-induced panic buying of medical supplies during COVID-19	Quantitative Approach	Scarcity Theory

24.	(Tandon, Dhir, Islam, et al., 2021)	Journal of Business Research	Psychological and behavioral outcomes of social media-induced fear of missing out at the workplace	Quantitative Approach	Stressor–Strain–Outcome (SSO)
25.	(Tandon, Dhir, Talwar, et al., 2021)	Technological Forecasting and Social Change	Dark consequences of social media-induced fear of missing out (FoMO): Social media stalking, comparisons, and fatigue	Quantitative Approach	Social Comparison Theory
26.	(Pundir et al., 2021)	Management Research Review	Arresting fake news sharing on social media: a theory of planned behavior approach	Quantitative Approach	Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB)
27.	(Lemay et al., 2019)	Knowledge Management and E-Learning	Self-determination, loneliness, fear of missing out, and academic performance	Quantitative Approach	Self-Determination Theory (SDT)

Data Extraction and Analysis

Each of the 27 final articles was reviewed in detail. The following information was extracted:

1. Author and year of publication
2. Title and name of journal
3. Research objectives and hypotheses
4. Methodological design: quantitative, qualitative, or mixed methods
5. The theoretical framework used
6. FOMO-related findings: behavioral effects, emotional triggers, platform dynamics

Thematic analysis techniques were applied to group similar findings, identify recurring variables, and track conceptual developments. This method allows researchers to identify how FOMO influences consumers emotionally (e.g., anxiety, urgency) and behaviorally (e.g., impulse buying, platform engagement) across various digital contexts. Several theoretical models are often noted:

1. Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) (Khoa et al., 2025; Pundir et al., 2021)
2. Self Determination Theory (SDT) (Bok et al., 2025; Lemay et al., 2019)
3. Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) Model (Djamhari et al., 2024)
4. Social Comparison Theory (Tandon et al., 2021)
5. Behavioral Addiction Theory (Biswakarma et al., 2024)

This framework helps classify FOMO as an emotional stimulus and marketing tool with implications for impulsivity, loyalty, fatigue, and digital tru

Research Limitations

Although the SLR process applied here is methodologically very rigorous, there are still some limitations:

1. This review was limited to open access articles, which may have omitted some influential but paid research.
2. Only English-language articles were included, thus limiting the global and cultural diversity of the findings.
3. Other relevant disciplines such as psychology, education, or communication studies may not be included due to field of study filtering.

Despite these limitations, this SLR provides a reliable basis for understanding the role of FOMO in digital marketing. It follows the example of other established reviews (e.g.,

Parveen et al., 2022; Anaza et al., 2024) that use focused inclusion to maintain analytical depth and thematic clarity.

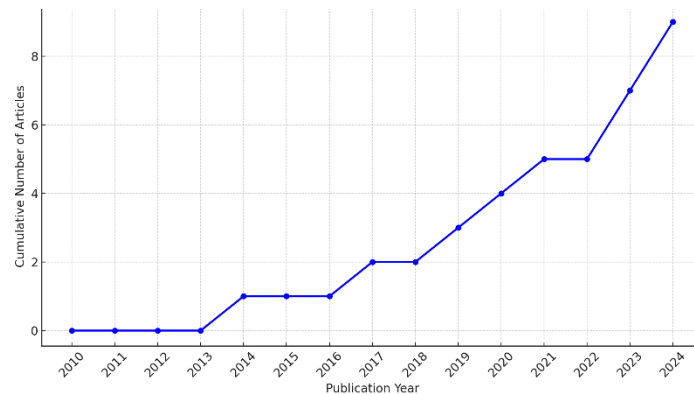
DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

This section presents the synthesized results of a systematic literature review based on 27 peer-reviewed journal articles published between 2010 and 2024. These articles were selected using a structured screening process and span a wide range of digital marketing and consumer behavior contexts, including social commerce, fast fashion, mobile shopping, online education, and digital finance (Bläse et al. 2024); Lestari, Dewi; (Sheldon, Antony, and Sykes 2021). The findings are organized into four core dimensions: (1) distribution and scope of selected studies, (2) theoretical frameworks applied in FOMO-related research, (3) methodological approaches used to investigate FOMO, and (4) key behavioral outcomes and psychological mechanisms influenced by FOMO, (5) Summary of Theories Used, (6) Overview. Each dimension is presented with a thematic summary, supporting tables, and visual illustrations to highlight consistent patterns and scientific consensus (Morsi et al., 2024; Djamhari et al., 2024). By consolidating empirical evidence from various domains, this section aims to map how FOMO operates not only as a psychological state but also as a strategic marketing construct that significantly influences digital engagement, consumer motivation, and purchase intention (Anaza et al. 2024); (Tandon et al. 2022).

Literature Coverage and Distribution

These studies span a wide range of sectors, demonstrating that FOMO is not limited to a single market, but is present across various digital touchpoints such as social commerce (Khoa et al., 2025), fast fashion (Bläse et al., 2024), digital currencies (Anaza et al., 2024), and charitable crowdfunding (Su et al., 2025). Temporal trends show a significant increase in research findings after 2020, primarily driven by the acceleration of digital interactions during the COVID-19 pandemic (Parveen et al. 2022); (Jabeen et al., 2023).

Figure 2
Number of Publications on FOMO (2010-2024)



As illustrated above, most of the studies were published between 2022 and 2024, indicating a high scientific interest in FOMO as a post-pandemic behavioral problem.

Theoretical Framework Used

The main focus of this SLR is to identify theoretical perspectives used to explain FOMO-induced behavior. Among the most frequently used theories, the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) is featured in five studies, demonstrating its strong explanatory power in predicting consumer intentions influenced by FOMO stimuli. For example, Morsi et al. (2024) and Khoa et al. (2025) used the TPB to explore how social pressure and perceived control guide young people's shopping intentions on social platforms.

Self-Determination Theory (SDT) was the second most common, found in four articles. This theory suggests that individuals experiencing FOMO may be responding to unmet psychological needs for autonomy, relatedness, or competence. Bok et al. (2025) argued that sensation seeking and promotional excitement satisfy temporary feelings of belonging but can reinforce dependence on external validation. Furthermore, the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) was used in research examining the adoption of new technologies in high-pressure environments such as the metaverse and mobile retail. Gartner et al. (2022) revealed that FOMO can amplify perceived usefulness and ease of use, often overriding rational risk assessment. Other important frameworks include Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR), which outlines how environmental cues such as limited-time offers lead to internal emotional arousal and behavioral reactions such as impulse buying. Social Comparison Theory and Signaling Theory are used to explain behavioral imitation and information asymmetry in online investing.

Methodological Approach

In terms of research design, the reviewed articles were predominantly quantitative. Of the 27 studies, 23 used structured surveys and statistical tools such as regression analysis and Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). This quantitative dominance indicates a preference for measuring FOMO as a construct using psychological scales, such as FOMO intensity, anxiety level, or impulsivity index.

Two studies used a mixed-methods approach, integrating surveys with interviews or content analysis, while only one study (Sabia et al., 2022) was entirely qualitative. This methodological gap suggests that the emotional and narrative aspects of FOMO remain underexplored. Thus, there is significant opportunity for future researchers to use ethnographic or longitudinal methods to track the evolving nature of FOMO in real time and context.

Behavioral and Psychological Results

The reviewed literature reveals several recurring behavioral patterns among consumers affected by FOMO:

1. Impulsive buying behavior triggered by social media trends and flash sales (Djamhari et al., 2024; Bläse et al., 2024).
2. Increased engagement on the platform, often driven by peer comparisons and influencer content (Tandon et al., 2022; Su et al., 2025).
3. Reduced decision-making time, especially when consumers perceive scarcity or exclusivity (Parveen et al., 2022; Khoa et al., 2025).
4. Psychological outcomes such as anxiety, regret, and social fatigue, especially in younger consumers or heavy social media users (Jabeen et al. 2023), 2023; (Hattingh et al. 2022).

These results confirm that FOMO is more than just a momentary emotional reaction; it is a measurable, repeatable, and strategically activated mechanism of consumer behavior.

Summary of Theories Used

Below is a summary table presenting the distribution of theoretical frameworks across the reviewed articles:

Table 2
Summary table presenting the distribution of theoretical frameworks across the reviewed articles.

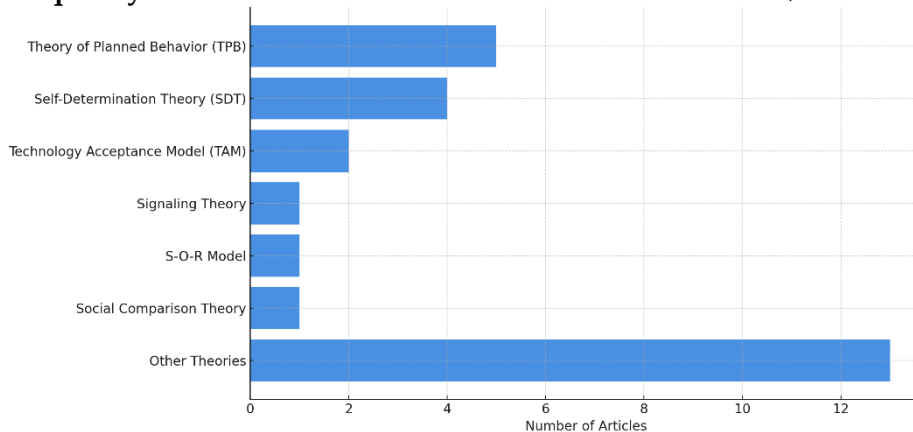
Theory	Number of Articles	Example Studies
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Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB)	5	Khoa et al., 2025; Morsi et al., 2024
Self-Determination Theory (SDT)	4	Bok et al., 2025; Hattingh et al., 2022
Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)	2	Gartner et al., 2022; Balasubramanian
Signaling Theory	1	Schillebeeckx et al., 2024
SOR Model	1	Djamhari et al., 2024
Social Comparison Theory	1	Tandon et al., 2021
Other Theories (eg, SCT, Attachment, etc.)	13	Various

Visual Review

Horizontal bar charts depicting the number of studies using each theory. TPB and SDT are the most dominant, reflecting the importance of psychological motivation and planned intentions in FOMO-based consumer behavior.

Figure 3
Frequency of Theoretical Frameworks in FOMO Research (2010–2024)



This visual confirms that FOMO research is firmly rooted in behavioral science and marketing psychology, but also demonstrates the need for expansion into interdisciplinary and cultural frameworks.

The findings of this systematic literature review highlight the multifaceted role of Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) as both a psychological phenomenon and an intentional marketing strategy in the digital consumer environment. Drawing from 27 peer-reviewed articles published between 2010 and 2024, this discussion explores how FOMO is

operationalized in various marketing contexts, the psychological effects it elicits on consumers, the theoretical lenses through which it has been studied, and the ethical and managerial implications arising from its use. By synthesizing these insights, this section offers a deeper understanding of the mechanisms and consequences of FOMO-driven engagement while identifying critical gaps and future research opportunities:

FOMO as a Strategic Marketing Tool

This study confirms that marketers intentionally use the fear of missing out (FOMO) to influence consumer behavior in digital environments. Tactics such as limited-time promotions, countdown timers, exclusive offers, and social media influencer endorsements are designed to create a sense of urgency and scarcity. These strategies accelerate decision-making and encourage impulse purchases because consumers fear missing out on offers, trends, or a sense of social belonging (Bläse et al., 2024; Bok et al., 2025). This behavioral urgency is not simply a byproduct of modern digital interactions; it is intentionally cultivated by marketing campaigns to shorten the consumer journey from awareness to action. These findings confirm that emotional urgency and time pressure effectively shape consumer responses, especially when reinforced by social proof mechanisms and real-time interactions (Djamhari et al., 2024; Khoa et al., 2025).

Consumer Reactions and Psychological Pressure

The impact of FOMO on the consumer psyche is profound. Reviewed studies consistently show that individuals experiencing FOMO report higher levels of engagement, faster purchase intentions, and increased psychological distress (Morsi et al., 2024; Jabeen et al., 2023). These findings align with research applying the Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) model, which explains how digital stimuli (e.g., scarcity or peer activity) influence internal emotional states (e.g., anxiety or fear), resulting in reactive behaviors (e.g., impulse buying). Furthermore, the psychological burden of FOMO can lead to decision fatigue, regret, or social comparison stress, especially on high-engagement platforms like TikTok, Instagram, and Shopee Live. Consumers respond not only to product scarcity but also to social visibility—the fear that others are enjoying something they are not.

Theoretical Reflection and Research Patterns

The prevalence of quantitative research designs in the 27 articles suggests a tendency to test behavioral models and statistically measure the impact of FOMO. Three main theoretical frameworks are generally used.

1. Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), which links intentions to actions, especially under social influence and perceived control (Khoa et al., 2025;(Nining and Ariefianto 2023);
2. Self-Determination Theory (SDT) suggests that FOMO stems from unmet psychological needs: autonomy, relatedness, and competence (Lemay et al., 2019).
3. The Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) framework was used to examine how digital stimuli influence internal affective states and behavioral outcomes (Djamhari et al., 2024).

While these theories provide valuable insights, they often originate from Western contexts and may not fully capture cultural variations in the perception and expression of FOMO. This indicates a research gap in developing local, culturally grounded theories to analyze FOMO more inclusively (Anaza et al., 2024).

Ethical and Managerial Implications

While FOMO is clearly effective in digital marketing, it also raises ethical concerns. Excessive use of FOMO-inducing techniques can lead to consumer fatigue, reduced trust, and negative brand associations in the long term (Jabeen et al., 2023). Marketers must balance urgency and transparency, ensuring that promotional messages are authentic and psychologically safe. Brands are encouraged to adopt ethical FOMO strategies, such as positive framing ("Be part of this exclusive experience" instead of "Hurry before it's gone") and inclusive messaging that encourages community rather than competition. The emotional nature of FOMO makes it particularly potent among vulnerable audiences, such as young people, heavy social media users, and individuals with high anxiety, requiring extra care in campaign design.

Future Research Directions:

There are still some gaps that need to be further explored:

1. Longitudinal studies are needed to understand the long-term psychological and behavioral consequences of repeated exposure to FOMO.
2. Qualitative research can enrich our understanding of the emotional complexities, motivations, and ethical dilemmas surrounding FOMO-driven marketing.
3. Cross-cultural analysis is underrepresented. Future research should explore how FOMO is shaped by cultural values, media habits, and social norms across regions.

Additionally, researchers should investigate how AI algorithms and personalized targeting inadvertently (or intentionally) reinforce FOMO, particularly through recommendation systems, predictive offers, and behavioral nudges.

CONCLUSION

This systematic review offers a comprehensive synthesis of the literature on fear of missing out (FOMO) within the framework of digital consumer behavior from 2010 to 2024. The findings reveal that FOMO has evolved from a psychological construct rooted in social anxiety and self-determination to a central element in digital marketing strategies and consumer decision-making models. Theoretical frameworks, such as the Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) model, the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), and Self-Determination Theory (SDT), have been widely used to conceptualize FOMO as a mediator between digital stimuli and behavioral responses. This analysis also highlights the strategic use of FOMO in digital marketing, particularly through scarcity-based promotions, real-time engagement (e.g., live streaming), and influencer marketing. These strategies significantly influence consumer behavior by increasing urgency and emotional arousal. Furthermore, psychological outcomes associated with FOMO include both positive outcomes, such as higher engagement and purchase intentions, and negative outcomes, such as anxiety, compulsive buying, and digital fatigue. This discussion maps the theoretical and practical dimensions of FOMO and identifies key research gaps, particularly the need for longitudinal, cross-cultural, and ethically grounded studies. Future research is encouraged to further explore FOMO in emerging technologies and platforms. Meanwhile, marketers and practitioners are encouraged to balance the effectiveness of FOMO-based strategies with ethical responsibilities.

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