

Buy Now or Miss Out: The Impact of FOMO Marketing on Impulse Buying Behaviour

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Abstract - In today's digital world, social media and online shopping platforms have significantly changed consumer buying behaviour. Businesses are increasingly using emotional and psychological marketing strategies to attract consumers and improve sales. One of the most popular strategies used in modern marketing is FOMO marketing. FOMO, which stands for "Fear of Missing Out," refers to the feeling of anxiety or pressure consumers experience when they believe they may miss exciting opportunities, discounts, trends, or experiences that others are enjoying. Companies use marketing techniques such as flash sales, limited-time offers, scarcity messages, influencer promotions, and countdown timers to create urgency among consumers.

The present study focuses on understanding the concept of FOMO marketing and analysing its impact on impulse buying behaviour. The study is completely based on secondary data collected from research journals, books, articles, websites, and previously published studies related to consumer behaviour and digital marketing. The research highlights the important role of social media platforms, influencer marketing, and online shopping trends in influencing consumer emotions and purchasing decisions. The findings of the study reveal that FOMO marketing strongly affects consumer behaviour, especially among young consumers and active social media users. Consumers often make impulsive purchasing decisions because they fear missing discounts, limited offers, trending products, or social experiences. The study also found that scarcity-based marketing strategies and influencer promotions increase emotional buying behaviour and encourage unplanned purchases. However, excessive exposure to FOMO marketing may also create stress, dissatisfaction, regret, and unnecessary spending among consumers. The study concludes that although FOMO marketing is highly effective in increasing sales and customer engagement, businesses should use such strategies ethically and responsibly. Transparent communication, honest advertising practices, and consumer awareness are essential for maintaining long-term customer trust and healthy purchasing behaviour.

Key Words: FOMO Marketing, Impulse Buying Behaviour, Consumer Behaviour, Social Media Marketing, Digital Marketing, Online Shopping, Influencer Marketing, Emotional Buying Behaviour

1. INTRODUCTION

In the modern digital era, businesses are increasingly using emotional and psychological marketing strategies to attract consumers and increase sales. The rapid growth of social media platforms and online shopping applications has completely changed consumer buying behaviour. Consumers today spend a significant amount of time on digital platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, and e-commerce websites where they are continuously exposed to advertisements, influencer promotions, flash sales, and trending products. These marketing activities often create emotional pressure among consumers to purchase products quickly. One of the most effective psychological marketing strategies used today is FOMO marketing.

FOMO stands for "Fear of Missing Out." It refers to the feeling of anxiety or concern people experience when they believe they may miss rewarding experiences, opportunities, trends, or products that others are enjoying. According to Przybylski et al. (2013), FOMO is strongly connected with social media usage because individuals constantly compare themselves with others online. Businesses have recognised the importance of this psychological behaviour and now use FOMO marketing to influence consumer purchasing decisions and improve sales performance.

Companies create urgency through promotional messages such as "Limited Stock Available," "Sale Ends Tonight," "Only Few Items Left," and "Exclusive Deal." These marketing techniques encourage consumers to make quick purchasing decisions without proper planning (Good and Hyman, 2020). As a result, consumers often make emotional and impulsive purchases rather than rational buying decisions based on actual needs.

Impulse buying behaviour refers to sudden and unplanned purchasing decisions made without prior intention (Rook, 1987). Impulse buying is generally influenced by emotions, excitement, urgency, and external marketing stimuli. In today's digital world, FOMO marketing has become one of the major factors contributing to impulse buying behaviour, especially among young consumers and active social media users.

Social media influencers also play an important role in creating FOMO among consumers. Influencers often promote products by displaying luxurious lifestyles, fashion trends, travel experiences, and exclusive products, which creates pressure among followers to purchase similar items. Djafarova and Rushworth (2017) found that influencer marketing strongly affects the purchasing decisions of young consumers because

followers often trust influencers more than traditional advertisements.

The growth of online shopping platforms has further strengthened FOMO marketing strategies. E-commerce websites frequently use countdown timers, flash sales, scarcity messages, and limited-time offers to encourage immediate purchasing decisions. Aggarwal, Jun, and Huh (2011) explained that scarcity marketing strategies increase consumer excitement and urgency, leading to higher impulse buying behaviour.

Although FOMO marketing helps businesses improve sales and customer engagement, excessive use of such strategies may negatively affect consumers. Many consumers later regret unnecessary purchases made under emotional pressure. Dhir et al. (2018) stated that continuous exposure to social media and pressure to follow trends may increase stress, anxiety, dissatisfaction, and emotional exhaustion among individuals.

The present study is completely based on secondary data collected from research journals, books, articles, websites, and published studies related to FOMO marketing and impulse buying behaviour. The study aims to understand the concept of FOMO marketing and analyse its influence on consumer purchasing behaviour in the digital age.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Modern marketing strategies increasingly focus on consumer psychology and emotional behaviour. Businesses today use emotional marketing techniques to influence purchasing decisions and increase customer engagement. FOMO marketing has become one of the most effective digital marketing strategies because it creates urgency and fear among consumers regarding missed opportunities and trends.

Przybylski et al. (2013) explained that FOMO is a psychological feeling where individuals fear missing rewarding experiences that others are enjoying. The study revealed that people who spend more time on social media platforms often compare their lifestyles, achievements, and possessions with others, which increases feelings of anxiety and social pressure.

Impulse buying behaviour has significantly increased with the growth of digital marketing and online shopping platforms. According to Verplanken and Herabadi (2001), impulse buying refers to spontaneous and unplanned purchasing behaviour mainly driven by emotions rather than logical decision-making. Consumers often make quick purchasing decisions due to excitement, urgency, or attractive marketing offers.

Tuten and Solomon (2017) stated that social media marketing strongly influences consumer perceptions,

purchasing decisions, and brand engagement because consumers are continuously exposed to promotional content and influencer recommendations online. Social media platforms create an environment where consumers constantly observe trends, lifestyles, and product promotions, increasing emotional buying behaviour.

Influencer marketing has become one of the most powerful marketing tools in the digital age. Djafarova and Rushworth (2017) found that social media influencers strongly affect the buying behaviour of young consumers because followers often trust influencers' opinions, recommendations, and lifestyles. Consumers frequently purchase products promoted by influencers in order to remain socially connected and updated with current trends.

Scarcity marketing strategies such as flash sales, countdown timers, and limited-time offers are commonly used to create FOMO among consumers. Aggarwal, Jun, and Huh (2011) explained that scarcity messages increase consumer excitement and urgency, encouraging faster purchasing decisions. Consumers often believe that delaying purchases may result in losing valuable opportunities.

Good and Hyman (2020) highlighted that FOMO marketing significantly affects emotional decision-making and increases purchase likelihood among consumers. The study revealed that urgency-based advertisements encourage consumers to buy products impulsively because they fear missing exclusive offers or social trends.

Muruganatham and Bhakat (2013) stated that impulse buying behaviour is influenced by psychological, emotional, and situational factors. Attractive advertisements, online discounts, peer influence, and social media trends are some of the major factors contributing to impulsive purchasing decisions among consumers.

Research studies have also identified the negative effects of FOMO marketing and excessive social media exposure. Dhir et al. (2018) explained that constant pressure to follow trends and remain socially active online may increase stress, anxiety, dissatisfaction, and emotional exhaustion among individuals. Consumers may later regret purchases made under emotional pressure or urgency.

Sharma, Sivakumaran, and Marshall (2010) found that emotional excitement and shopping environment significantly influence impulse buying behaviour. Online shopping platforms create attractive digital environments that encourage consumers to make unplanned purchases.

The existing literature clearly shows that FOMO marketing strongly influences consumer emotions, purchasing decisions, and impulse buying behaviour. Social media platforms, influencer marketing, scarcity-based strategies, and online shopping trends are major factors contributing to the increasing use of emotional marketing techniques in modern business practices.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To understand the concept of FOMO marketing.
2. To examine the impact of FOMO marketing on impulse buying behaviour.
3. To analyse the role of social media in creating FOMO among consumers.
4. To study the influence of scarcity-based marketing strategies on consumer purchasing behaviour.
5. To suggest ethical and responsible marketing practices for businesses.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The present study focuses on understanding FOMO marketing and its influence on impulse buying behaviour among consumers. The research mainly examines how businesses use digital marketing strategies such as social media advertising, influencer marketing, flash sales, scarcity messages, and limited-time offers to create urgency among consumers. The study is completely based on secondary data collected from research papers, books, articles, journals, websites, and previously published studies related to consumer behaviour and digital marketing. The research analyses consumer behaviour associated with online shopping and emotional purchasing decisions, especially among young consumers and active social media users. The study also highlights both positive and negative aspects of FOMO marketing. While FOMO marketing may increase sales and customer engagement for businesses, it may also encourage unnecessary spending, emotional pressure, stress, and dissatisfaction among consumers. The study is limited to analysing existing literature and published research related to FOMO marketing and impulse buying behaviour.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research methodology refers to the systematic process used to collect, analyze, and interpret information related to a research problem. The present study is entirely based on secondary data and focuses on understanding the impact of FOMO marketing on impulse buying behaviour among consumers.

Research Design

The study is based on descriptive research design. Descriptive research helps in understanding and explaining consumer behaviour, emotional reactions, and purchasing patterns related to FOMO marketing. The design was selected because it allows detailed analysis of existing studies and theoretical concepts related to digital marketing and impulse buying behaviour.

Nature of the Study

The study is analytical and explanatory in nature. It analyses how FOMO marketing strategies influence consumer emotions and impulse buying behaviour. The study also explains the psychological relationship between social media exposure, urgency-based marketing, and emotional purchasing decisions.

Sources of Data

The present research is completely based on secondary data. No primary data has been collected for this study. Secondary data was collected from various reliable and published sources such as:

- Research journals
- Books and academic articles
- Online databases and websites
- Published research papers
- Marketing reports and consumer behaviour studies
- E-commerce and digital marketing studies

The use of secondary data helped in understanding theoretical concepts, previous findings, and existing research related to FOMO marketing and impulse buying behaviour.

Data Collection Method

Data for the study was collected through detailed review and analysis of existing literature related to consumer behaviour, digital marketing, social media influence, and impulse buying behaviour. Relevant information from journals, books, websites, and published studies was systematically organised and interpreted.

Data Analysis Technique

The collected secondary data was analysed using qualitative and descriptive analysis. The analysis focused on identifying common findings, consumer behaviour patterns, and major themes related to FOMO marketing and impulse buying behaviour.

The study mainly analysed:

- Consumer emotions related to FOMO
- Influence of social media on purchasing decisions
- Impact of scarcity marketing strategies
- Role of influencer marketing
- Emotional and psychological factors behind impulse buying
- Positive and negative effects of FOMO marketing

Limitations of the Study

1. The study is entirely based on secondary data and published research.
2. The findings depend on the accuracy and reliability of previously published studies.
3. The study does not include direct consumer responses or primary surveys.
4. Consumer behaviour may differ across regions, cultures, and age groups.
5. Time limitations restricted analysis of a larger number of studies.

DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

The analysis of secondary data and previous research studies clearly shows that FOMO marketing has a strong influence on impulse buying behaviour among consumers. The major findings of the study are discussed below.

Growing Influence of Social Media

The study found that social media platforms play a major role in creating FOMO among consumers.

Platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube continuously expose users to advertisements, influencer promotions, lifestyle content, and trending products. Tuten and Solomon (2017) stated that social media marketing strongly influences consumer engagement and purchasing decisions because consumers are constantly connected with digital content.

Consumers often compare themselves with others online, which creates emotional pressure to purchase trending products and remain socially connected. Przybylski et al. (2013) explained that excessive social media exposure increases feelings of anxiety and fear of missing experiences or opportunities enjoyed by others.

Influence of Scarcity Marketing Strategies

The analysis revealed that scarcity-based marketing techniques such as flash sales, countdown timers, and limited-time offers strongly influence consumer purchasing behaviour. Businesses use urgency messages like “Only Few Items Left” and “Sale Ending Soon” to encourage immediate purchases. Aggarwal, Jun, and Huh (2011) found that scarcity messages increase excitement and urgency among consumers, leading to faster and more impulsive purchasing decisions.

Consumers often fear losing discounts or opportunities if they delay purchases, which increases emotional buying behaviour.

Impact of Influencer Marketing

The study found that influencer marketing significantly contributes to FOMO among consumers. Social media influencers promote products by displaying attractive lifestyles, fashion trends, travel experiences, and luxury items. Djafarova and Rushworth (2017) explained that young consumers are highly influenced by influencers because followers often trust their recommendations and opinions.

Consumers frequently purchase products promoted by influencers in order to follow trends, improve social image, and remain socially accepted among peers.

Emotional Buying Behaviour

The findings indicate that FOMO marketing strongly affects consumer emotions and psychological decision-

making. Good and Hyman (2020) stated that urgency-based advertisements increase emotional excitement and encourage consumers to make impulsive purchases without proper planning.

Impulse buying behaviour is often influenced by excitement, urgency, emotional pressure, and attractive marketing strategies rather than actual product needs. Rook (1987) also explained that impulse buying is highly emotional and spontaneous in nature.

Negative Effects of FOMO Marketing

The study also revealed several negative effects of FOMO marketing on consumers. Continuous exposure to social media trends and urgency-based marketing strategies may create stress, anxiety, dissatisfaction, and emotional exhaustion. Dhir et al. (2018) explained that excessive pressure to remain socially active and updated with trends may negatively affect emotional wellbeing.

Many consumers later regret impulsive purchases made under emotional pressure or urgency. Unnecessary spending and post-purchase dissatisfaction are common outcomes of emotional buying behaviour.

Overall Findings

The overall analysis clearly shows that FOMO marketing strongly influences consumer emotions, online shopping behaviour, and impulse buying decisions. Social media platforms, influencer marketing, scarcity strategies, and digital advertising are major factors contributing to emotional purchasing behaviour among consumers.

Although FOMO marketing helps businesses improve sales and customer engagement, excessive use of such strategies may negatively affect consumer wellbeing and financial behaviour. Ethical and responsible marketing practices are therefore important for maintaining long-term consumer trust and satisfaction.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Businesses should use FOMO marketing strategies ethically and responsibly to avoid creating unnecessary emotional pressure among consumers.
2. Companies should avoid misleading scarcity messages and false urgency because such

practices may reduce consumer trust and satisfaction.

3. Social media platforms and online shopping websites should promote transparent advertising practices and responsible digital marketing.
4. Consumers should become more aware of emotional marketing strategies and avoid making impulsive purchases based on urgency or peer pressure.
5. Educational campaigns should spread awareness regarding impulse buying behaviour and emotional spending habits.
6. Businesses should focus on long-term customer relationships and satisfaction rather than only increasing short-term sales through emotional pressure.
7. Influencer marketing should include honest product reviews and transparent communication to maintain consumer trust.
8. Consumers should compare products carefully and make rational purchasing decisions instead of emotionally driven decisions.

3. CONCLUSION

FOMO marketing has become one of the most effective digital marketing strategies used by businesses in the modern era. Companies use social media promotions, flash sales, scarcity messages, influencer marketing, and limited-time offers to create urgency among consumers and encourage immediate purchasing decisions. The study revealed that FOMO strongly affects consumer emotions and significantly increases impulse buying behaviour, especially among young consumers and active social media users. Good and Hyman (2020) stated that urgency-based marketing strategies increase emotional decision-making and purchase likelihood among consumers.

The study also highlighted that although FOMO marketing helps businesses improve sales and customer engagement, excessive use of emotional marketing strategies may negatively affect consumers by creating stress, regret, dissatisfaction, and unnecessary spending. Dhir et al. (2018) explained that continuous social media pressure and fear of missing trends may negatively affect emotional wellbeing and consumer satisfaction. Therefore, businesses should use FOMO marketing ethically and responsibly while consumers should become more aware of emotional buying triggers. Honest communication, transparency, and responsible marketing practices are essential for maintaining long-term consumer trust and healthy purchasing behaviour.

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