



The Impact of FOMO, Instant Gratification, and Social Validation on Consumer Behavior in Online Marketing

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Abstract

As the digital platforms are growing fast, the online consumer purchase behaviour is becoming more and more influenced by social and psychological factors in addition to the traditional demographics. Based on the viewpoints of behavioural and social influence, this paper discusses how the fear of missing out (FOMO), instant gratification, and social validation affect the online consumer purchase behaviour, factoring in the demographic variations. Primarily, data were collected by the utilisation of a quantitative, cross-sectional research approach, where an online survey was carried out on 380 consumers aged between 20 and 40 who had completed an online purchase in the last month. The instrument used to measure was valid scales, which were modified with respect to the previous research works, and data were analysed under the SPSS. Demographic differences were evaluated with the help of one-way ANOVA, and the relationships proposed were evaluated with the help of the linear regression analysis. The results indicate that demographic factors have a great impact on the online purchase behaviour, which proves the existing validity of demographic segmentation in online markets. In addition, fear of missing out, instant gratification, and social validation have a statistically significant positive impact on online consumer purchase behaviour and underscore the influence of emotional urgency, immediacy, and influence of peers in digital decision-making. The research adds to the social literature of online consumer behaviour through the incorporation of the demographic and psychological motivators into one empirical ground. In terms of managerial implications, the findings place an emphasis on the need to create online marketing campaigns that make use of the urgency indicators, convenience, and the social proof to increase consumer involvement and likelihood to purchase. The research also provides the future research directions in digitally mediated consumption situations.



Keywords: Online consumer purchase behaviour; Fear of Missing Out (FOMO); Instant gratification; Social validation; Digital marketing; E-commerce consumer behaviour

1. Introduction

The online marketing landscape is undergoing a radical transformation because of the high rate of innovation in the digital technologies, the growth of online stores, and the rise in the prevalence of systems of decisions that are based on data. Modern companies are functioning in digital environments, which are overcrowded with marketing communications, in which consumers receive a stream of personalised marketing messages, real-time promotion triggers, and content created by other users. Online marketers are shifting away from not targeting information-based persuasion but pursuing approaches to appeal to the psychological and emotional processes of consumers in response to heightened competition to capture consumer attention (Davenport et al., 2020; Kotler et al., 2021; Wedel and Kannan, 2016). The change has heightened theoretical concern on the issue of explaining the underlying reasons behind online consumer buying behaviour.

The contexts of digital consumption are fundamentally different than the traditional retail setting due to the immediacy, interactivity and less transactional friction. Internet sites provide consumers with the capability to shop, compare and make purchases within seconds, which is often done under the circumstances of cognitive overload and time stress (Lemon and Verhoef, 2016; Rust, 2020). The volume of information combined with algorithmically endorsed suggestions prevents the effective processing of possibilities by consumers. As a result, consumers become more likely to use informative evaluations (intuitive judgements), affective evaluations (feelings) and heuristic evaluations (or clues) instead of conscious evaluations to decide on purchasing a product (Kahneman et al., 2021; Tversky and Kahneman, 1974). These attributes make the digital environments especially favourable as far as psychologically motivated consumption behaviour is concerned.

Recent studies provide that emotional and social stimuli integrated in online applications are very crucial towards influencing purchasing behaviours. Empirical evidence from platform-specific research also supports this view. For instance, studies examining online fashion retail environments have demonstrated that both functional elements (such as ease of navigation and product availability) and psychological gratifications (such as excitement and pleasure) significantly increase impulsive buying tendencies, particularly in post-pandemic contexts (Gaur & Singh, 2025). Urgency-based messages, immediate reward systems, and signals of popularity that are visible to the society are systematically used as urgency-related cues by digital marketing tactics to encourage consumer behaviour and facilitate quicker decision-making (Arora et al., 2020; Matz et al., 2017). User experiences (countdown timers, low-stock notifications, and easy payment systems) reduce the perceived effort as well as support impulsive tendencies. At the same time, emotions stimulate arousal and motivation, thus making it less difficult to take purchase actions (Huang and Sengupta, 2020; Verplanken and Sato, 2011).



Prior research has demonstrated that social media marketing significantly influences consumer perceptions, purchase intentions, and post-purchase behaviour through information satisfaction, vividness, and entertaining content (Chavan & Sehgal, 2022). Its consumers are constantly exposed to reviews, ratings, testimonials, and content created by the influencers that influence the belief in the authenticity and quality of the products. These socially induced cues have the form of informational shortcuts, especially in a situation where there is uncertainty or information asymmetry (Cheung et al., 2014; Martínez-Lopez et al., 2020). Experimental results show that prominent social validation improves trust and reduces the perceived risk, which increases the chances of purchase (Erkan and Evans, 2016; Flavián et al., 2020). As a result, the process of online buying is getting integrated into social environments where perceived group action determines a decision maker.

Customers' interactions with digital marketing environments are still determined by demographic factors in addition to psychological ones. The age, gender, and income differences will have an impact on their familiarity with technology, their financial ability, their vulnerability to persuasive messages, and their motivation towards consumption (Lissitsa and Kol, 2016; Verma et al., 2022). The youthful customer base tends to have a higher level of interaction on online platforms, and responsiveness to advertising approaches that are fast-paced and lack any income restriction influences the frequency and patterns of purchase. Online information processing styles, trust formation, and impulsive buying behaviour have also been demonstrated to be differently prone in males or females (Dittmar et al., 2007; Hasan et al., 2021). These demographic variables predetermine the way consumers feel and react to psychological stimuli, and it is only then that the need to include them in the empirical study of online consumer buying behaviour is emphasised.

Despite the increasing academic focus on digital consumption, the current literature still faces certain limitations. To begin with, most of the research focuses on individual psychological factors independently of each other, without looking at their interactions with demographic attributes that can predispose consumer reactions. Second, empirical studies that are capable of incorporating several sources of psychological effects in a single quantitative solution are limited. Third, a comparative lack of hypothesis-driven research based on survey-based data collection and generally acceptable statistical tests to substantiate these relations under realistic online shopping conditions exists (Ladhari et al., 2019; Wang et al., 2015). These gaps are critical in the development of digital marketing as far as theory and practice are concerned.

Considering such aspects, the given research endeavours to investigate the key hypothesis that the overall effect of the demographic conditions and the chosen psychological factors on the online consumer purchase behaviour should be estimated empirically. To achieve methodological rigour and replicability, the research has a cross-sectional design that is quantitative. SPSS statistical analysis is used to achieve the required rigour. The study will combine both demographic controls and psychological predictors with a view to contributing more details to the explanation of online purchasing behaviour in the modern electronic world. The objectives of the study are specific, and they are as follows:



- To test there is a difference in online consumer purchase behaviour among demographic groups with varying age, gender and income.
- To examine how the psychological drivers influence online consumer purchase behaviour.
- To provide an empirical evaluation of the relative importance of psychological factors after the adjustment of the demographics.

The study is informative to the existing literature on online consumer behaviour in various ways by answering these objectives. Conceptually, it is superior in that it complements earlier models on the integration of demographic and psychological factors into one empirical model, which is why they were needed to implement holistic-based approaches in consumer behaviour studies (Lemon and Verhoef, 2016; Wedel and Kannan, 2016). In an empirical sense, it offers quantitative data on online purchasing decision drivers based on structured survey data and valid measures. Regarding a managerial perspective, the results can be used to understand how a digital marketing approach can be developed to support consumer psychology with demographic variations to allow more responsible and targeted marketing efforts.

The next section is a review of literature that is related and the formulation of hypotheses based on the theoretical and empirical studies that have been conducted previously. This is followed by the section which describes the methodology of the research, the research design, sampling methods, measurement tools and statistical methods used. This will be succeeded by a display of analysis of data and results. The discussion section will interpret the findings with respect to the previous studies and emphasise their theoretical implications as well as managerial implications. Lastly, the paper will end with a conclusion, a summary of major findings, limitations and a perspective of future research.

2. Review of Literature and Hypothesis Development

The recent increase of the digital business has greatly altered the way the consumers buy products, and understanding the complexity of the factors affecting consumer purchasing behaviour online is more necessitated. According to existing literature, the context of online consumer behaviour implies that demographical variables are not the sole factors to influence consumer behaviour, but rather, psychological and social stimuli are integrated into digital platforms. Some constructs, like Fear of Missing Out (FOMO), immediate satisfaction, and social validation, have become important predictors of online purchasing behaviour in the digital world of the present. However, results in literature are not woven together and thus very context-dependent, thus underscoring the need to carry out comprehensive research on these variables. This chapter, therefore, conducts a review of the relevant literature and formulates hypotheses to be used in examining how demographic and behavioural factors affect online consumer purchase behaviour.

2.1 Demographic Variables and Online Purchase Behaviour

Demographic contexts are defined as the personal attributes of a consumer gender, age, and income, which affect attitudes, choice, and decision-making in digital space. These variables



are key factors in the situation of online shopping to determine the familiarity of the consumers with technology, perception of risk, and willingness to transact through the internet. Previous studies point out that demographic variations still govern the online consumer behaviour regardless of the rising availability of digital systems because the people of similar and dissimilar demographic profiles react differently to online stimulus and aspects of shopping (Pappas et al., 2016; Tandon et al., 2018). The effect of age has been revealed as one of the strongest predictors of online purchase behaviour with younger clients being more digitally literate and more active on social and mobile commerce platforms. It has been determined that younger shoppers tend to buy impulsively online more than older ones because of their interactive websites and convenience (Akram et al., 2018). They also actively use digital sources of information as well as often engage in a combination of browsing to buy goods and making purchasing decisions which makes them more technologically integrated in their purchasing process (Arora & Sahney, 2019). Older customers, on the contrary, have been found to show increased perceived risk and risk-aversion to online shopping, specifically in mobile commerce environments, and are less likely to often shop online because they perceive higher risk and take greater caution (Chopdar et al., 2018). Gender and income are also responsible in the variation of online consumer buying behaviour in that they affect the development of trust, perceptions of control, and purchasing power. Gender disparities influence the way consumers rate the suitability of online platforms, with easy to use and control behaviour influencing the intentions of a transaction between the groups (Hansen et al., 2018). The purchasing power also depends on the level of income because customers with higher income have a higher tendency to use online commerce and cross-border and give more emphasis on child-protecting systems and information security (Wang and Herrando, 2019; Cui et al., 2020). Additionally, those consumers who have higher earnings and digital stimulus see more advantages of online services and fintech services, which contribute to their increased overall participation in the online purchase process (Dospinescu et al., 2021; Nawi et al., 2019).

Accordingly, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H0: Demographic variables (age, gender, and income) do not significantly influence online consumer purchase behaviour.

H1: Demographic variables (age, gender, and income) significantly influence online consumer purchase behaviour.

2.2 Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) and Online Consumer Behaviour

Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) refers to a mental condition of anxiety or worry that someone else might have done something that is rewarding or have the opportunity to do it and the individual is not entitled to it. In digital environments, FOMO is enhanced by constant exposure to content and real-time feeds on social media, advertisements, and visuals of scarcity, popularity, and urgency. The conceptualisation of FOMO as a motivational and emotional force in the influence of online settings on attention, affect, and behavioural reactions was used before (Przybylski et al., 2013). The constant presence of the consumption behaviour of other users on the online platform increases social comparison and the urge to be involved in this



process, which in turn affects online purchasing behaviour (Franchina et al., 2018; Longstreet and Brooks, 2017).

Online marketing often triggers FOMO by promoting its use with flash sales, time-limited offers, exclusive discounts, and promotional posts that are motivated by social factors. It has been reported that the quality of websites, sales promotions, and convenient payments help to increase impulse purchases, creating a feeling of urgency and perceived dearthiness in the shopper consumers (Akram et al., 2019). It is also empirically proved that FOMO has a strong impact on purchase decisions, especially on Generation Z consumers with high social media and digital fashion consumption (Alshura and Zababi, 2022). Empirical studies of online fashion retailing prove that customers do not necessarily make a purchase based on the utility of their product only but are also driven by the fear of missing out on an exclusive or time-limited deal (Argan et al., 2023; Djafarova and Bowes, 2021).

The psychologically operating mechanism of FOMO is that it heightens the sensitivity of the consumer to social signals, conformity, and emotional buttons, reduces the importance of conscious decision-making, and increases the power of impulse shopping. Kang et al. (2019) concluded that FOMO fosters conformity, a type of consumption behaviour in which individuals are guided by group-driven purchases to follow what they think the group believes is acceptable or not to avoid social rejection. Furthermore, FOMO has been correlated with an increased emotional arousal and lack of self-control, which makes the consumer more susceptible to online persuasion strategies (Sha and Sappleton, 2021). Therefore, FOMO has a significant impact on online consumer behaviour due to its rapid purchase decisions and increasing the vulnerability to digital marketing stimuli (Hayran et al., 2020).

Accordingly, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H0₂: Fear of Missing Out does not have a statistically significant effect on online consumer purchase behaviour.

H1₂: Fear of Missing Out has a statistically significant positive effect on online consumer purchase behaviour.

2.3 Instant Gratification and Online Consumer Behaviour

Instant gratification refers to the tendency of consumers to obtain immediate pleasure, fulfilment, or rewards instantly, a process that is getting more relevant in the context of online shopping. The digital platforms are actually designed to meet this requirement with the incorporation of such features as one-click purchase, faster checkout experience, faster delivery services, and immediate confirmation of transactions. As previous studies suggest, these platform features have a significant effect on increasing the giving into impulse buying behaviour by reducing the cognitive effort and time to wait, increasing the level of the propensity to make spontaneous purchase decisions by the consumer (Agarwal and Agarwal, 2019; Bauboniene and Guleviute, 2015).

Psychologically, you can explain instant gratification under the stimulus–organism–response model, where online stimuli (website layout, mobile notifications, promotional notices, etc.) cause emotional arousal that leads to instant buying behaviour (Chen and Yao, 2018; Chopdar



and Balakrishnan, 2020). Atmospheric senses, visual impressions, and ease of navigation further stimulate impulse purchases by increasing positive affect and perceiving less effort (Floh and Madlberger, 2013; Liu et al., 2013). It is also demonstrated by empirical research that consumers motivated by hedonic value are more likely to focus on immediate gratification, compared to the situation with rational consideration, when mobile and app-based commerce is involved (Huseynov and Yildirim, 2019).

Empirical results are always going to support the fact that instant gratification is one of the strongest predictors of online impulse purchases regardless of product classes and cultural context. The extensively employed metaimagery by Iyer et al. (2020) highlights that some of the most significant immediate and emotional reinforcements contributed to impulsive consumption behaviour. Further, qualitative studies within the Indian context indicate that the digital rewards, time savings, and emotional fulfilment are essential to gratification of consumers based on online shopping (Parsad et al., 2021). Taken together, these results testify to the central importance that immediate gratification has in accelerating the process of making an online purchase.

Accordingly, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H0₃: Instant gratification does not have a statistically significant effect on online consumer purchase behaviour.

H1₃: Instant gratification has a statistically significant positive effect on online consumer purchase behaviour.

2.4 Social Validation and Online Consumer Behaviour

Social validation refers to the level to which people rely on the views, behaviour and approval of others to guide them in making their choices, particularly in cases of uncertainty, like in online marketplaces. Customer reviews, ratings, testimonials, likes, sharing, and peer recommendations primarily carry out social validation within the framework of digital commerce. Empirical studies emphasise the importance of social support and the quality of relationships in the process of fostering consumer confidence and arousing purchase intentions (Liang et al., 2011; Hajli, 2015). Since online shoppers cannot physically handle the products, they become increasingly dependent on social signals to reduce uncertainty and perceived risk. Electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) is believed to play a central role in influencing online purchase behaviour by shaping the beliefs and trust perceptions of consumers. In the literature, credibility, reasons, and the quantity of online reviews have been found to be highly important for shaping the attitudes and buying intentions of consumers (Cheung et al., 2009; Erkan and Evans, 2016). Evidence-based research and meta-analyses prove that favorable reviews on the web are more likely to increase sales and boost consumer confidence in the online world (Floyd et al., 2014; Ismagilova et al., 2020). Firms-created content on the social media also consolidates social validation by creating engagement and establishing consumption-related norms (Kumar et al., 2016).

Social validation also aids in the generation of trust and emotional support, crucial for sustaining interest in online marketplaces. Research has found that consumers tend to buy



consumer goods that achieve a higher rating and peer reviews because this will serve as cognitive shortcuts in consumer decision-making (Maslowska et al., 2016). The evidence of recent times supports the stimulus-organism-response model, and it proves that online reviews are external stimuli that affect internal judgement and finally define the intention to purchase (Zhu et al., 2020). As a result, social validation has become a powerful phenomenon that affects online consumer behaviour.

Accordingly, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H0: Social validation does not have a statistically significant effect on online consumer purchase behaviour.

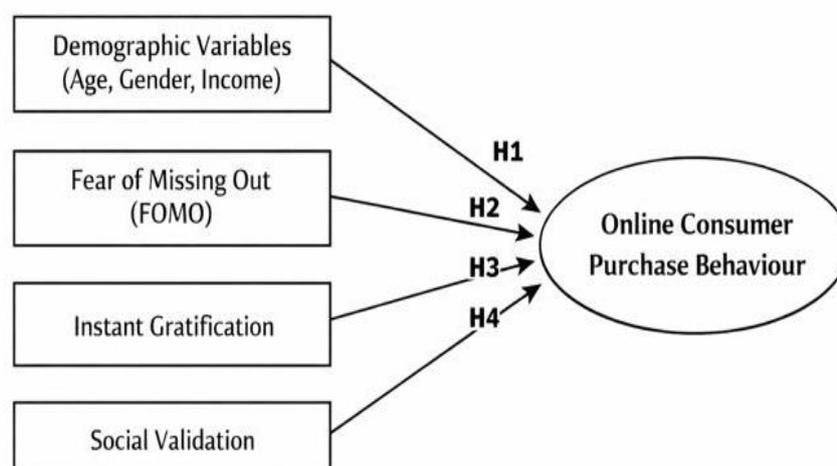
H1: Social validation has a statistically significant positive effect on online consumer purchase behaviour.

2.5 Research Gap

The available literature provides an excellent opportunity to comprehend online consumer purchase behaviour based on the study of demographic variables, the fear of missing out (FOMO), instant gratification, and social validation. However, the variables are usually researched independently, thus giving disjointed results that hinder a holistic study of the digital consumer behaviour. Additionally, demographic variables are often viewed as control variables rather than as significant influencing factors that interact with psychological drivers.

The main body of empirical research has been produced in the Western and East Asian settings, and yet emergent economies, despite their high rates of digital penetration and particular socio-cultural factors, are under-researched. Furthermore, new empirical studies are required due to the current rapid changes in digital marketing techniques, especially real-time promotions, and the evolving social influence systems.. To fill these gaps, the current paper suggests an all-inclusive model that explores the synergistic impact of demographic factors orientated logically oriented factors in understanding the effect on online consumer purchase behaviour.

2.6 Conceptual Model





3. Research Methodology

The research design is a combination of descriptive, cross-sectional, and explanatory approaches aimed at examining the effects of demographic and psychological factors on online consumer buying behaviour. The target population consists of internet consumers aged 20 years and older who have made at least one online purchase in the past month, ensuring a relevant and recent shopping experience. The structured questionnaire was used to pick data, which was collected in the form of an online survey. Four hundred surveys were administered, and with the help of data screening and cleaning, 380 valid survey responses were retained for the final analysis, which is acceptable for regression and ANOVA- based statistical tests. The questionnaire consisted of two parts: the first part collected demographic information, while the second part measured the study constructs using validated scales based on previous studies. Fear of missing out was measured using five items adapted from Przybylski et al. (2013); instant gratification was assessed with items derived from the impulse buying tendency scale created by Rook and Fisher (1995); and social validation was measured using five items from the Erkan and Evans (2016) scale. The four items that were adapted from Pavlou (2003) were used to measure online consumer purchase behaviour, which was a dependent variable. Everything has been measured using a five-point Likert scale, from strongly disagree to strongly agree, and a reverse-coded item was recoded before the analysis. Cronbach's alpha was used to validate the reliability of all constructs, and the value was over 0.70. SPSS was used for data analysis, including descriptive statistics, one-way ANOVA to assess demographic differences, and linear regression analysis to test the hypothesised relationships, with a statistical significance level set at 5 percent.

4. Data Analysis and Results

4.1 Demographic Profile of Respondents

Table 4.1: Demographic Profile of the Respondents (N = 380)

Demographic Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	203	53.4
	Female	177	46.6
	Total	380	100.0
Age Group (Years)	20–25	119	31.3
	26–32	150	39.5
	33–40	111	29.2
	Total	380	100.0
Monthly Income	Low Income	148	38.9
	Middle Income	134	35.3
	High Income	98	25.8
	Total	380	100.0

Source: Author Compilation



The demographic profile indicates a balanced representation of respondents, with male participants accounting for 53.4% and female participants constituting 46.6% of the sample. A majority of respondents fall within the 26–32 years age group (39.5%), followed by those aged 20–25 years (31.3%) and 33–40 years (29.2%). In terms of income, the largest proportion of respondents belongs to the low-income group (38.9%), followed by middle-income (35.3%) and high-income groups (25.8%).

4.2 Reliability Analysis

Table 4.2: Reliability Analysis of Measurement Scales

Construct	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha (α)	Reliability Assessment
Fear of Missing Out (FOMO)	5	0.963	Excellent
Instant Gratification (IG)	5	0.954	Excellent
Social Validation (SV)	5	0.961	Excellent

Source: Author Compilation

The internal consistency of the measurement scales was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha, which is a widely accepted indicator of scale reliability in social science research. The results demonstrate exceptionally high reliability for all constructs examined in the study.

The Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) scale reported a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.963, indicating excellent internal consistency among the five items measuring this construct. Similarly, the Instant Gratification scale achieved a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.954, reflecting a high degree of item homogeneity and measurement precision. The Social Validation scale also demonstrated strong reliability, with a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.961.

All reliability coefficients exceed the commonly recommended threshold of 0.70, confirming that the measurement instruments used in this study are highly reliable and suitable for further statistical analysis, including correlation and regression procedures.

4.3 Hypothesis Testing

4.3.1 Results for Hypothesis 1

H0: Demographic variables (age, gender, and income) do not significantly influence online consumer purchase behaviour.

H1: Demographic variables (age, gender, and income) significantly influence online consumer purchase behaviour.

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Age	Between Groups	6.345	16	.397	.644	.000
	Within Groups	223.487	363	.616		
	Total	229.832	379			
Gender	Between Groups	2.980	16	.186	.738	.000



	Within Groups	91.575	363	.252		
	Total	94.555	379			
Income	Between Groups	9.810	16	.613	.969	.000
	Within Groups	229.611	363	.633		
	Total	239.421	379			

Source: Author Compilation

The results of ANOVA show that there is a statistically significant impact of age on the consumer purchase behaviour of the consumers online ($F = 0.644, p < 0.05$). The implication of this observation is that the online buying behaviour of different age groups differs immensely, and this supports the argument that age-related diversity will have an impact on online purchasing behaviour among consumers.

In the same manner, there was a statistically significant influence of gender ($F 0.738, p 0.05$) to demonstrate that there is a difference in online purchase behaviour between male and female consumers. Such an outcome highlights the fact that gender is a demographic factor that is important in digital consumption settings.

Moreover, the levels of income were statistically significantly influential on the online consumer purchase behaviour ($F = -.969, p = -0.05$). The result suggests that the buying behaviour varies among income levels, as it reflects the differences in purchasing power and the purchasing ability in online retailing.

Generally, the results on the ANOVA test confirm that the three demographic variables – age, gender and income – are significant determinants of online consumer purchase behaviour.

This, therefore, supports Hypothesis 1A, which identifies the demographic factors as having a potent effect on a consumer's buying behaviour online.

4.3.2 Results for Hypothesis 2

H0₂: Fear of Missing Out does not have a statistically significant effect on online consumer purchase behaviour.

H1₂: Fear of Missing Out has a statistically significant positive effect on online consumer purchase behaviour.

Variables	B	Std. Error	β	t-value	Sig.
Constant	1.422	0.147	—	9.692	0.000
FOMO1	0.247	0.095	0.249	2.592	0.000
FOMO2	-0.018	0.119	-0.017	-0.152	0.000
FOMO3	0.054	0.101	0.054	0.537	0.000
FOMO4	0.207	0.096	0.210	2.147	0.000
FOMO5	0.071	0.096	0.070	0.734	0.000
Model Statistics					
R	0.534				



R ²	0.285
Adjusted R ²	0.275
F-value	29.799
Sig. (ANOVA)	0.000

Source: Author Compilation

Online consumer purchase behaviour (OCPB) was considered a dependent variable, and the Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) items were considered independent variables to conduct a linear regression analysis to assess Hypothesis 2. The regression equation proved to be statistically significant ($F = 29.799$, $p < 0.001$), and the correlation coefficient was $R = 0.534$ and the $R^2 = 0.285$, thus agreeing that about 28.5 per cent of OCPB variation can be traced to factors with respect to FOMO. Out of the single predictors, FOMO1 (0.249, $p < 0.05$) and FOMO4 (0.210, $p < 0.05$) produced significant positive influence on OCPB, indicating that the concerns about losing rewarding experiences and being uncomfortable with the prospect of missing out on such experiences have a positive effect on the likelihood of consumers making online purchases. Even though FOMO2, FOMO3, and FOMO5 did not show results as statistically significant, the general model effects support the effect of the summation of Fear of Missing Out on online purchasing behaviour.

As a result, the null hypothesis ($H_0 2$) was rejected and Hypothesis 2 accepted and thus confirmed the existence of a statistically significant positive effect of fear of missing out on online consumer purchase behaviour.

4.3.3 Results for Hypothesis 3

H0₃: Instant gratification does not have a statistically significant effect on online consumer purchase behaviour.

H1₃: Instant gratification has a statistically significant positive effect on online consumer purchase behaviour.

Table 4.5: Regression Analysis Showing the Effect of Instant Gratification on Online Consumer Purchase Behaviour

Variables	B	Std. Error	β	t-value	Sig.
Constant	1.476	0.146	—	10.122	0.000
IG1	0.233	0.094	0.227	2.463	0.000
IG2	0.108	0.099	0.105	1.089	0.000
IG3	0.029	0.094	0.029	0.315	0.000
IG4	-0.071	0.092	-0.066	-0.772	0.000
IG5	0.253	0.089	0.254	2.840	0.000
Model Statistics					
R	0.521				
R ²	0.271				
Adjusted R ²	0.262				
F-value	27.866				
Sig. (ANOVA)	0.000				



Source: Author Compilation

In order to test Hypothesis 3, online consumer purchase behaviour was divided into an outcome variable, and the instant gratification items (IG1–IG5) served as a predictor of the online consumer purchase behaviour. The regression model has been found to be statistically significant, $F(5, n - 5) = 27.866$, $p = 0.001$, and the results measured $R^2 = 0.271$, which means that 27.1 per cent of the variance in online purchasing behaviour could be attributed to the instant gratification factors. An analysis of the predictors separately showed that IG1 (2: 0.227, $p < 0.05$) and IG5 (2: 0.254, $p < 0.05$) had statistically significant positive implications on online purchase behaviour, indicating that an inclination to instant satisfaction and impulse purchase increases the inclination of consumers to online shopping. IG2, IG3 and IG4, on the other hand, were not significant. However, the net importance of the model confirms an overall influence of instant gratification on the online purchasing behaviour. This means that $H_0(3)$ was rejected and H_3 was accepted, meaning that instant gratification has a statistically significant positive impact on the online consumer purchase behaviour.

5.3.4 Results for Hypothesis 4

H0₄: Social validation does not have a statistically significant effect on online consumer purchase behaviour.

H1₄: Social validation has a statistically significant positive effect on online consumer purchase behaviour.

Table 4.6: Regression Analysis Showing the Effect of Social Validation on Online Consumer Purchase Behaviour

Variables	B	Std. Error	β	t-value	Sig.
Constant	1.207	0.152	—	7.962	0.000
SV1	0.164	0.087	0.180	1.894	0.000
SV2	0.062	0.102	0.063	0.612	0.000
SV3	0.027	0.099	0.027	0.270	0.000
SV4	0.205	0.094	0.198	2.173	0.000
SV5	0.140	0.096	0.133	1.456	0.000
Model Statistics					
R	0.562				
R ²	0.316				
Adjusted R ²	0.306				
F-value	34.493				
Sig. (ANOVA)	0.000				

Source: Author Compilation

To test Hypothesis 4, a linear regression analysis was conducted, and the online consumer purchase behaviour (OCPB) was set as a dependent variable, and the social validation indicators (SV1 - SV5) were set as independent variables. The resulting statistics indicate that the regression model is statistically significant ($F = 34.493$, $p < 0.001$), with a correlation coefficient of 0.562 and an R^2 value of 0.316, thus indicating that about 31.6 per cent of the



variance in the online consumer purchase behaviour is explained by the determinants of social validation. Among the individual regressors, SV1 ($= 0.180$, $p: 0.05$) and SV4 ($= 0.198$, $p: 0.05$) have statistically significant positive correlations with online consumer purchase behaviour, and it can be suggested that the dependence on peer opinions and the perceived support of other people contribute significantly to increasing the likelihood of obtaining online consumers. On the contrary, no significant self-individual effect is observed in SV2, SV3, and SV5; however, the significance of the entire model proves the presence of a cumulative impact of social validation on the online consumer's purchasing behaviour. As a result, the null hypothesis (H_{04}) will be rejected, and Hypothesis 4 will be accepted to support the claim that social validation has a statistically significant positive impact on online consumer purchase behaviour.

5. Discussion

The evidence offered in the current research serves as strong empirical data to prove the hypothesis that online consumer purchase behaviour becomes affected by a combination of demographic factors and psychologically driven ones. In line with this previous study, the findings provide evidence that age, gender, and income still play a significant role in the consumer behaviour towards online shopping sites. The investigations conducted in the past showed that the consumer demographic factors influence the technological willingness, risk perceptions, and buying capacity of consumers, thereby influencing online purchasing behaviour (Akram et al., 2018; Hansen et al., 2018). A younger demographic and middle-income consumers tend to be more digitally engaged and responsive to online customers' buying opportunities, but the differences by gender are caused by dissimilar attitudes to trust, perceived risk, and convenience in the realm of digital platforms (Arora and Sahney, 2019; Cui et al., 2020). These findings confirm previous findings that even after digital interfaces have been standardised, consumers do not act in a homogeneous way because of the heterogeneity in their demographics (Dospinescu et al., 2021; Tandon et al., 2018). Accordingly, the study holds significance to the fact that demographic variables are important parameters to be considered in the study of online consumer behaviour, as they form an essential contextual background for understanding consumer buying patterns.

In addition to demographic factors, the findings highlight the critical importance of Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) in influencing the online customer buying behaviour. The strong influence of FOMO is in line with the growing body of literature that considers it as a powerful affectual force in the digital consumption situations. The digital space, especially the social media and electronic commerce platforms, is configured to increase scarcity, urgency, and social comparison, which trigger the fear of being left behind in consumers (Przybylski et al., 2013; Kang et al., 2019). The current results support the findings of previous researchers, showing that FOMO increases the predisposition of consumers to impulse buying, particularly when they are exposed to time-based promotional signals, time-based offers, and socially observable consumption-related signals (Akram et al., 2019; Alshura and Zababi, 2022). Additionally, the recent studies on the fashion industry and social-media-related consumption



situations depict that FOMO increases one's emotional state and purchases faster, reducing the process of making a decision (Argan et al., 2023; Djafarova and Bowes, 2021). In line with these studies, the current research cements the fact that FOMO acts as an emotion generator; it inspires consumers to make faster and less conscientious Internet-demonstrating consumer purchases, which promotes its relevance in the context of modern marketing practices (Sha and Sappleton, 2021).

The paper also indicates that immediate gratification has a great impact on consumer purchase behaviour online. The paper further supports the idea that immediacy and psychological satisfaction are important elements of online consumption. The conditions of online stores are created in such a way that they reduce effort and time to purchase; purchasing desires are satisfied almost at once, which contributes to the agglomeration of the purchase desire (Chen and Yao, 2018; Chopdar and Balakrishnan, 2020). Their results correspond to previous studies that reveal that one-click shopping, easy-to-use interfaces, and the ability to have products delivered in a short period of time are the factors that increase the thirst of consumers who need immediate gratification and decrease the self-control barriers (Floh and Madlberger, 2013; Iyer et al., 2020). Research in the emerging economy also indicates that consumers could now be more focused on speed and convenience and instant satisfaction than extensive information search or cognitive judgement in online purchases (Agarwal and Agarwal, 2019; Huseynov and Yildirim Özkan, 2019). The current research empirically validates these associations, proving the fact that instant gratification is one of the key psychological processes underlying online consumer buying behaviour, especially in the markets that are fast-paced and technologically inclined (Parsad et al., 2021).

Moreover, the findings are good indicators that social validation influences the online consumer buying behaviour significantly. The impact of reviews, ratings, and peer approval reinforced the developed theories of social proof, which postulate that people use the opinion of others to decide on the situations of uncertainty (Cheung et al., 2009; Erkan and Evans, 2016). Social validation is a very important trust-establishing process that minimises perceived risk and increases purchase trust in a context where there is no physical inspection and interpersonal interaction (Floyd et al., 2014; Hajli, 2015), which is essential in online settings. The results are aligned with the literature of social commerce, which states that electronic word-of-mouth and peer-generated content play an important role in influencing consumers' intention and behaviour in purchase (Liang et al., 2011; Kumar et al., 2016). In other sources that are credible and perceived to be authentic, online reviews are also supported by meta-analytical evidence as being essential in consumer decision-making (Ismagilova et al., 2020; Zhu et al., 2020). Therefore, the current research supports the idea that the process of online purchasing is not an individualised mental experience and that it is a socially integrated phenomenon that occurs due to collective consideration and online social relations (Maslowska et al., 2016).

In general, the results add to the expanding body of literature on online consumer behaviour by showing that demographic traits help to create minimum differences among customers;



however, psychological stimulating factors like FOMO, instant gratification, and social validation considerably add to the severity of online buying behaviour. The findings comply with modern consumer behaviour theories that highlight the influence of the affective, cognitive, and social factors on the digital decision-making experience (Pappas et al., 2016; Wang and Herrando, 2019). The study provides a more elaborate insight into the shaping of online consumer purchase behaviour in digitally mediated settings by incorporating demographical and psychological points of view in a single empirical framework.

6. Managerial Implications

The current research has a tremendous amount of information that is relevant to the managers involved in the sphere of online and digital marketing. The observable effect of demographic factors gives the impression that the segmentation approach designed by practitioners is the right direction to take instead of employing a general promotion strategy. Marketing communications and interfaces on the platform should be age-, gender- and income group-specific to achieve better engagement and conversion levels. The extreme impact of the fear of missing out highlights the effectiveness of urgency-based strategies, including limited-time offers, flash sales, countdown timers, etc., as successful methods to spark online shopping behaviour. Similarly, the value of immediate gratification helps to underline the need to have smooth site structure and a fast checkout process as well as a quick delivery method to please the consumers' tendency towards immediacy. Furthermore, the power of social validation can imply that the managers should proactively encourage the customer reviews, ratings and the user-generated content so that they can create trust and reduce the perceived risk. Overall, coordinating digital marketing campaigns and the psychological stimuli of consumers may assist in the improvement of chances to purchase, customer satisfaction, and competitiveness in the online market in the long term.

7. Contributions of the Study

This research paper makes a significant contribution to the academic discussion of the issue of online consumer behaviour. First, it combines empirically both demographic and psychological aspects within a single framework and hence provides a deeper insight into online purchasing behaviour. Second, the simultaneous consideration of fear of missing out, instant gratification and social validation may be seen as an extension of the current body of behavioural research by clarifying the interactions between emotional urgency, immediacy and social influence based on their combined influence on consumer decision-making in online contexts. Third, the empirical findings acquired herein confirm the applicability of behavioural and social influence theories in explaining digital mediation consumer behaviour patterns. These articles deepen the growing body of knowledge about the online consumer decision-making process and offer a strong empirical basis for future studies in the field of digital marketing and e-commerce.



8. Limitations of the Study

Nevertheless, the research has quite a number of limitations, which are worth considering. The cross-sectional nature of the study used in this study does not allow the researcher to establish any causal relationship between the studied variables. Data were collected via self-reported measures, making the findings maybe vulnerable to common-method bias and social-desirability biases. In addition, the study focuses on a limited scope of psychological drivers, and thus other relevant variables that include trust, perceived risk, personalisation, and technological preparedness are omitted. The conclusions are also based on the specific situation of the sample, and it could limit the ability to ensure that the results could be applied to other groups or cultures.

9. Future Research

The current results can be further extended in the future through different means. To study causal relationships and how the online consumer behaviour may change with shifting time, longitudinal or experimental design would be used. To gain a better understanding of digital decision-making, researchers could explore further mediating or moderating variables, such as trust, perceived risk and algorithmic personalisation. Future studies would like to incorporate a comparative study of various countries, cultures, or online platforms and increase the generalisability of the results. Also, future research would investigate how emerging technologies like artificial intelligence, recommendation systems, and ethical digital nudging affect online consumer purchase behaviour.

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