iJRASET
International Journal For Research in Applied Science and Engineering Technology



INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL FOR RESEARCH

IN APPLIED SCIENCE & ENGINEERING TECHNOLOGY

Volume: 14 **Issue:** I **Month of publication:** January 2026

DOI: https://doi.org/10.22214/ijraset.2026.76865

www.ijraset.com

Call: 08813907089 | E-mail ID: ijraset@gmail.com

International Journal for Research in Applied Science & Engineering Technology (IJRASET)
ISSN: 2321-9653; IC Value: 45.98; SJ Impact Factor: 7.538
Volume 14 Issue I Jan 2026- Available at www.ijraset.com

Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) Vs. Joy of Missing Out (JOMO) in Consumer Behavior: A Dual-Emotion Behavioral Investigation

Aqsa Khalid
Assistant Professor, KIMS, Affiliated to AKTU Lucknow

Abstract: ***The digital marketplace has amplified emotional decision-making, especially through persuasive interfaces and real-time social comparison. Two counteracting emotional states—Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) and Joy of Missing Out (JOMO)—profoundly shape consumer motivations, urgency, impulsivity, and post-purchase evaluation. This research article conducts a dual-emotion behavioral investigation enriched by contemporary case studies from e-commerce, social media, travel, gaming, sustainability, and lifestyle consumption. By integrating affective psychology, self-determination theory, and dual-process models, this study proposes a comprehensive theoretical framework explaining how FOMO accelerates impulsive purchasing while JOMO fosters mindful, autonomous consumption. Three case studies are included: (1) flash-sale e-commerce, (2) travel and experience marketing, and (3) digital detox and minimalist lifestyle brands. The findings illuminate the growing tension between anxiety-driven participation and autonomy-driven withdrawal in consumer culture. Implications are provided for marketers, policymakers, and consumer well-being researchers.***

Keywords: Fear of Missing Out (FOMO), Joy of Missing Out (JOMO), Consumer behavior, Digital consumer psychology.

I. INTRODUCTION

Digital marketplaces, social media platforms, and real-time retail ecosystems have created an environment where consumers are constantly informed about what others are buying, attending, or experiencing. In this hyper connected context, Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) has emerged as a powerful emotional driver that triggers rapid decision-making, impulsive spending, and heightened attention to social cues. However, a counter-emotion—Joy of Missing Out (JOMO)—is gaining prominence. JOMO reflects a sense of peace and autonomy in opting out of digital noise, excessive consumption, or social comparison. This emotional state is increasingly visible in sustainable consumption, digital wellness trends, and minimalist lifestyle choices.

Despite the prevalence of both emotions, research has rarely examined FOMO and JOMO as dual and opposing forces within consumer decision-making. This paper bridges that gap through theoretical development, empirical propositions, and three real-world case studies that illustrate how these emotions manifest in practical consumption contexts.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Fear of Missing Out (FOMO)

Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) refers to a persistent concern that valuable social or consumption-related experiences are occurring without one's participation (Przybylski et al., 2013). In consumer behavior, FOMO manifests as increased impulsivity, particularly in response to flash sales and limited-time deals, heightened sensitivity to scarcity cues, and buying driven by social comparison, such as influencer recommendations or lifestyle posts. It is also associated with heightened emotional arousal and anxiety, often leading to lower post-purchase satisfaction and increased regret. FOMO is further intensified by digital triggers like push notifications, countdown timers, "Only 2 left!" prompts, and social proof indicators, all of which create a sense of urgency and pressure to act immediately.

B. Joy of Missing Out (JOMO)

In contrast, the Joy of Missing Out (JOMO) describes a positive emotional state in which individuals derive satisfaction and a sense of autonomy by deliberately disengaging from social or consumption pressures (Scott, 2020). Consumers experiencing JOMO tend to engage in higher reflective processing, exhibit reduced susceptibility to persuasive marketing tactics, demonstrate better financial self-regulation, and report higher satisfaction with their purchases.

©IJRASET: All Rights are Reserved

Their consumption patterns are often values-driven, prioritizing sustainability, wellness, and minimalism. By embracing JOMO, individuals practice mindful shopping and frequently reject manipulative digital strategies, choosing instead to focus on intentional and meaningful experiences.

C. Emotional Ambivalence in Modern Consumption

The digital age has intensified an emotional ambivalence in consumer behavior, where FOMO generates urgency, anxiety, and peer pressure, while JOMO fosters calm, autonomy, and alignment with personal values.

These opposing emotional forces operate not as isolated constructs but as dual and interdependent drivers of modern consumption, influencing how individuals make decisions, respond to marketing, and navigate digital and social pressures.

III. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

A. Dual-Emotion Consumer Pathway Model

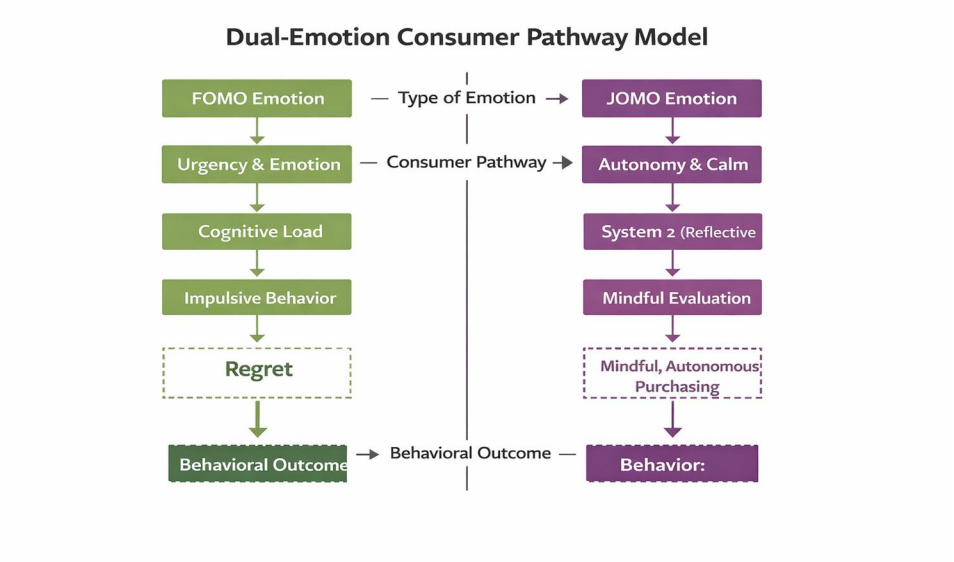
This model proposes two competing pathways:

Path 1: FOMO → System 1 Processing → Impulsive Behavior

- High emotional arousal
- Scarcity-induced urgency
- Reduced cognitive evaluation
- Social-comparison pressure
- Higher regret likelihood

Path 2: JOMO → System 2 Processing → Mindful, Autonomous Consumption

- Calm decision-making
- Value alignment
- Higher evaluation of long-term utility
- Higher satisfaction and low regret



IV. METHODOLOGY

A. Study 1: Qualitative Case-Study Interviews

To complement the experimental design and provide deeper contextual insight, semi-structured qualitative interviews were conducted with consumers who reported prior experiences relevant to the study's emotional focus. Interview participants discussed instances of regret following flash-sale purchases, travel decisions influenced by social media exposure, and episodes of intentional disengagement associated with digital detox or JOMO-oriented behavior. These interviews allowed for exploration of emotional triggers, decision rationales, and post-consumption reflections that are not easily captured through experimental measures alone.

B. Study 2: Exploratory Survey

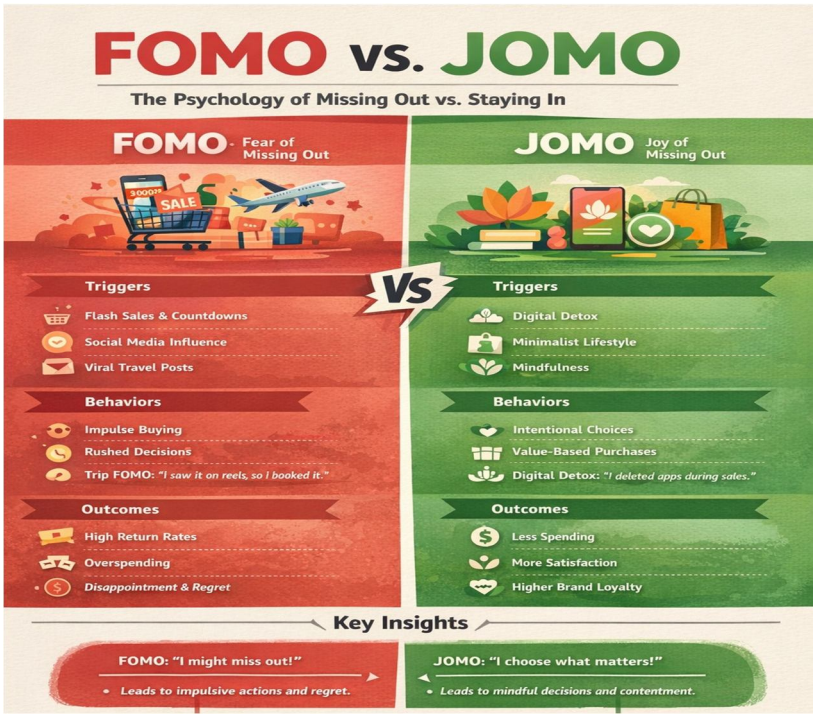
An exploratory survey was administered to a small sample of participants (n = 7) to capture self-reported experiences related to urgency, regret, perceived autonomy, and satisfaction during recent digital consumption episodes. Survey items were designed to reflect key dimensions of FOMO and JOMO identified in prior literature. Due to the limited sample size, the survey data were analyzed descriptively and used to support qualitative patterns rather than to test hypotheses or draw inferential conclusions.

V. CASE STUDIES

1) Case Study 1: Flash-Sale E-Commerce (FOMO in Action) – Platforms like Myntra Big Billion Days and Amazon Lightning Deals use high scarcity cues and heavy social media promotion to drive urgency. Consumers often purchased items without assessing whether they actually needed them, with 41% reporting feeling "panicked" or "rushed" in interviews. FOMO-driven purchases contributed to high return rates of 15–30%. Countdown timers triggered loss aversion by creating the fear of missing out, while social proof messages such as "8,500 people bought this today" intensified social comparison. Post-purchase regret was common, with many admitting, "I bought it because others seemed to buy it… later I realized I didn't need it." This case highlights how FOMO can override rational decision-making, prompting impulsive purchases even when unnecessary.

2) Case Study 2: Travel & Experience Marketing (Social Media FOMO) – Instagram and TikTok travel influencers frequently promote destinations like Bali, Dubai, Goa, and Iceland through user-generated content, driving young adults to book trips primarily based on others' experiences. Hotels reported significant booking spikes following viral posts, with many consumers stating, "I saw it on reels, so I booked it." However, this often led to disappointment, as expectations were inflated. Social comparison amplified anticipated regret, with thoughts like "If I don't go, I'll fall behind socially" or "I won't have exciting stories to post." The negative outcomes included over budget trips, vacation fatigue, and lower overall satisfaction. This case illustrates how FOMO in travel is socially constructed and reinforced through peer visibility and content virality.

3) Case Study 3: Digital Detox & Minimalist Branding (JOMO in Action) – Brands such as Calm, Headspace, Muji, and various minimalist influencers cater to consumers increasingly resistant to high-pressure digital culture. Many reported relief when disconnecting from trends and social media pressures, and minimalist brands benefited from smaller, high-quality, value-aligned purchases. JOMO-driven consumers also demonstrated lower return rates and higher brand loyalty. Consumer reflections included statements like "I enjoy not following every trend," "Not buying gives me a sense of control," and "I deleted apps during sales—I didn't want to be overwhelmed." JOMO, or the Joy of Missing Out, serves as a psychological safeguard that reduces impulsive spending, enhances well-being, and encourages intentional decision-making. This case demonstrates how consumers reclaim autonomy and satisfaction by embracing JOMO.



ISSN: 2321-9653; IC Value: 45.98; SJ Impact Factor: 7.538
Volume 14 Issue I Jan 2026- Available at www.ijraset.com

VI. FINDINGS

The present study examined the influence of Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) and Joy of Missing Out (JOMO) on consumer behavior in digital environments. Responses revealed clear patterns in emotional reactions, decision-making processes, and post-purchase evaluations.

A. FOMO-Driven Consumer Responses

The findings indicate that a substantial proportion of participants experienced moderate to high levels of FOMO while browsing online platforms. Urgency cues such as limited-time offers, scarcity messages, and promotional countdowns were reported as significant triggers of impulsive purchasing behavior. Many respondents acknowledged making purchase decisions primarily due to fear of missing a deal rather than actual necessity. Furthermore, FOMO-driven purchases were frequently associated with post-purchase regret, suggesting that emotionally driven decisions often lacked long-term satisfaction. The results demonstrate that FOMO acts as a strong emotional stimulus that can override rational evaluation, leading consumers toward short-term gratification at the expense of reflective decision-making.

B. JOMO-Oriented Behavioral Patterns

In contrast, a notable number of respondents reported engaging in JOMO-related behaviors, including deliberately opting out of trends, delaying purchases, or disengaging from certain digital platforms. Participants cited mental well-being, financial discipline, and a desire for minimalism as primary motivations for such behavior. The emotional responses associated with JOMO were predominantly positive. Respondents described feelings of relief, calmness, and increased control after opting out of unnecessary purchases or digital engagement. These results suggest that JOMO functions as a self-regulatory mechanism, enabling consumers to resist external pressures and make more intentional choices.

C. Comparative Emotional Outcomes

A comparison of emotional outcomes revealed a clear distinction between FOMO- and JOMO-driven decisions. While FOMO-based actions were more likely to result in regret and dissatisfaction, JOMO-based decisions were linked to higher levels of contentment and emotional stability. Participants expressed greater satisfaction when purchases aligned with personal needs and long-term value rather than impulsive urges.

D. Awareness of Digital Influence

The results also indicate growing consumer awareness of persuasive and manipulative design strategies employed by digital platforms. Many respondents recognized the role of notifications, artificial scarcity, and social proof in shaping their behavior. This awareness appeared to contribute to the adoption of JOMO practices, as consumers actively sought to minimize exposure to pressure-inducing elements. The results demonstrate that although FOMO remains a prevalent driver of online consumer behavior, there is an emerging shift toward JOMO-oriented decision-making. Consumers increasingly value mindful consumption, emotional well-being, and autonomy over constant participation and impulsive purchasing.

Case Study	*Platform or Brand*	*Context*	*Observed Behaviors*	*Behavioral Triggers / Insights*	*Outcomes*
Flash-Sale E-Commerce (FOMO)	Myntra Big Billion Days, Amazon Lightning Deals	High scarcity cues, heavy social media promotion	• Impulse purchases without assessing need • 41% felt panicked/rushed • High return rates (15–30%)	• Countdown timers → loss aversion • Social proof → social comparison • Post-purchase regret	• Impulsive buying • Returns & regret • Short-term satisfaction

©IJRASET: All Rights are Reserved

Travel & Experience Marketing (Social Media FOMO)	Instagram/TikTok influencers	Viral travel content (Bali, Dubai, Goa, Iceland)	• Trip bookings influenced by others' experiences • Spikes in hotel bookings after viral posts • Higher expectations	• Social comparison → anticipated regret • "Fear of missing out on stories or social status"	• Overbudget trips • Vacation fatigue • Lower satisfaction
Digital Detox & Minimalist Branding (JOMO)	Calm, Headspace, Muji, Minimalist influencers	Resistance to digital overload	• Relief from disconnecting • Smaller, intentional purchases • Lower return rates	• Joy of Missing Out → reduces pressure and impulsivity- • Enhances control and well-being	• Reduced spending • Increased satisfaction • Higher brand loyalty

VII. TABLES AND FIGURES

Table 1: Conceptual Comparison of Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) and Joy of Missing Out (JOMO)

Dimension	FOMO	JOMO
Emotional state	Anxiety, urgency	Calm, contentment
Decision speed	Rapid, impulsive	Slow, deliberate
Primary motivation	Social comparison and fear of loss	Personal values and autonomy
Cognitive processing	Heuristic-based (System 1)	Reflective (System 2)
Post-purchase outcome	Higher regret and dissatisfaction	Higher satisfaction and confidence

Table 2: Summary of Case Study Insights across Consumption Contexts

Consumption context	Dominant emotional orientation	Key behavioral outcomes
Flash-sale e-commerce	FOMO	Impulsive purchasing, high return rates
Social media–driven travel marketing	FOMO	Overbudget travel, unmet expectations
Digital detox and minimalist brands	JOMO	Intentional purchasing, higher brand loyalty

VIII. DISCUSSION

This study positions Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) and Joy of Missing Out (JOMO) as enduring emotional orientations that shape consumer behavior within digitally mediated marketplaces. Rather than treating these constructs as transient emotional responses, the findings suggest that FOMO and JOMO function as stable psychological lenses through which consumers interpret consumption opportunities, social cues, and decision outcomes.

The study contributes to consumer behavior literature in three important ways. First, it extends existing FOMO research by moving beyond impulsive purchasing outcomes to highlight the emotional consequences of FOMO-driven consumption, particularly post-purchase regret, emotional exhaustion, and dissatisfaction. This broader framing emphasizes that FOMO not only accelerates consumption but also undermines long-term consumer well-being.

Second, the study advances the conceptualization of JOMO as an active and intentional form of self-regulation rather than passive disengagement. JOMO-oriented consumers do not simply withdraw from consumption; instead, they consciously evaluate digital pressures, resist social comparison, and align their decisions with personal values. This positions JOMO as a psychologically adaptive response to persistent digital overload.

Third, by integrating dual-process theory, the study offers a structured explanation of how emotional orientations translate into distinct cognitive pathways. FOMO aligns with heuristic-based System 1 processing characterized by urgency, emotional arousal, and reliance on external cues, whereas JOMO aligns with reflective System 2 processing involving deliberation, value alignment, and long-term utility assessment. This integration strengthens theoretical understanding of how emotions shape both the speed and quality of consumer decision-making. The exploratory findings indicate that FOMO-driven consumption is largely triggered by digitally embedded mechanisms such as scarcity cues, time pressure, and social proof. These features amplify perceived opportunity costs and anticipated regret, encouraging rapid decision-making that often bypasses rational evaluation. As a result, consumers frequently experience dissatisfaction once the emotional urgency subsides. In contrast, JOMO-oriented behaviors are associated with intentional delay, selective disengagement, and conscious opting out of consumption opportunities. These behaviors generate feelings of calmness, perceived control, and emotional relief, contributing to higher satisfaction and reduced regret. Importantly, the findings suggest that growing awareness of persuasive digital design plays a key role in enabling consumers to transition from FOMO-dominated responses toward JOMO-oriented consumption patterns. Collectively, these insights reveal a fundamental tension within contemporary digital consumer culture: the pressure to remain constantly engaged versus the desire to reclaim autonomy and psychological well-being through selective withdrawal.

IX. PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

The findings of this study offer several implications for stakeholders across the digital consumption ecosystem.

For marketers, the results underscore the importance of adopting ethically responsible persuasion strategies that balance commercial objectives with consumer well-being. While scarcity cues and urgency-based messaging can be effective, their use should avoid emotional manipulation that undermines consumer autonomy. Segmenting audiences based on emotional orientation—such as consumers who are more susceptible to FOMO versus those who value JOMO-driven intentionality—can enable more respectful and effective targeting. Additionally, incorporating elements of “calm marketing,” including opt-out notification features and no-rush decision prompts may foster trust and longer-term brand relationships.

For policymakers, the study highlights the need for greater regulatory attention to manipulative digital design practices, particularly within flash-sale and limited-time promotion environments. Clear standards regarding the transparency and legitimacy of scarcity claims may help reduce consumer deception and emotional exploitation in online markets. From a consumer perspective, increased awareness of emotional triggers embedded in digital platforms can support more deliberate and self-regulated purchasing behavior. Practices such as periodic digital disengagement or intentional reduction of promotional exposure may help restore a sense of autonomy, reduce post-purchase regret, and enhance clarity in consumption-related decision-making.

X. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

A. Limitations

The reliance on qualitative case studies and a small, descriptive survey sample was appropriate for theory development but limits the generalizability of the results across cultural, demographic, and market contexts. As the methodology emphasizes depth and contextual understanding rather than statistical inference, consumer responses to FOMO- and JOMO-related cues may vary in settings characterized by different norms of social comparison, digital engagement, and consumption practices.

Joy of Missing Out remains an emerging construct within consumer research; the cross-sectional nature of the present study does not capture how JOMO-oriented attitudes and behaviors may evolve over time. Longitudinal designs would be necessary to assess the stability, developmental trajectories, and long-term behavioral implications of JOMO as a sustained consumption orientation.

The study incorporates self-reported survey responses and retrospective consumer narratives, which, while valuable for capturing subjective emotional experiences, may not fully correspond to observed behavior in real-time consumption environments. Recall bias and socially desirable responding are therefore possible limitations inherent to the chosen methodological approach.

XI. FUTURE RESEARCH

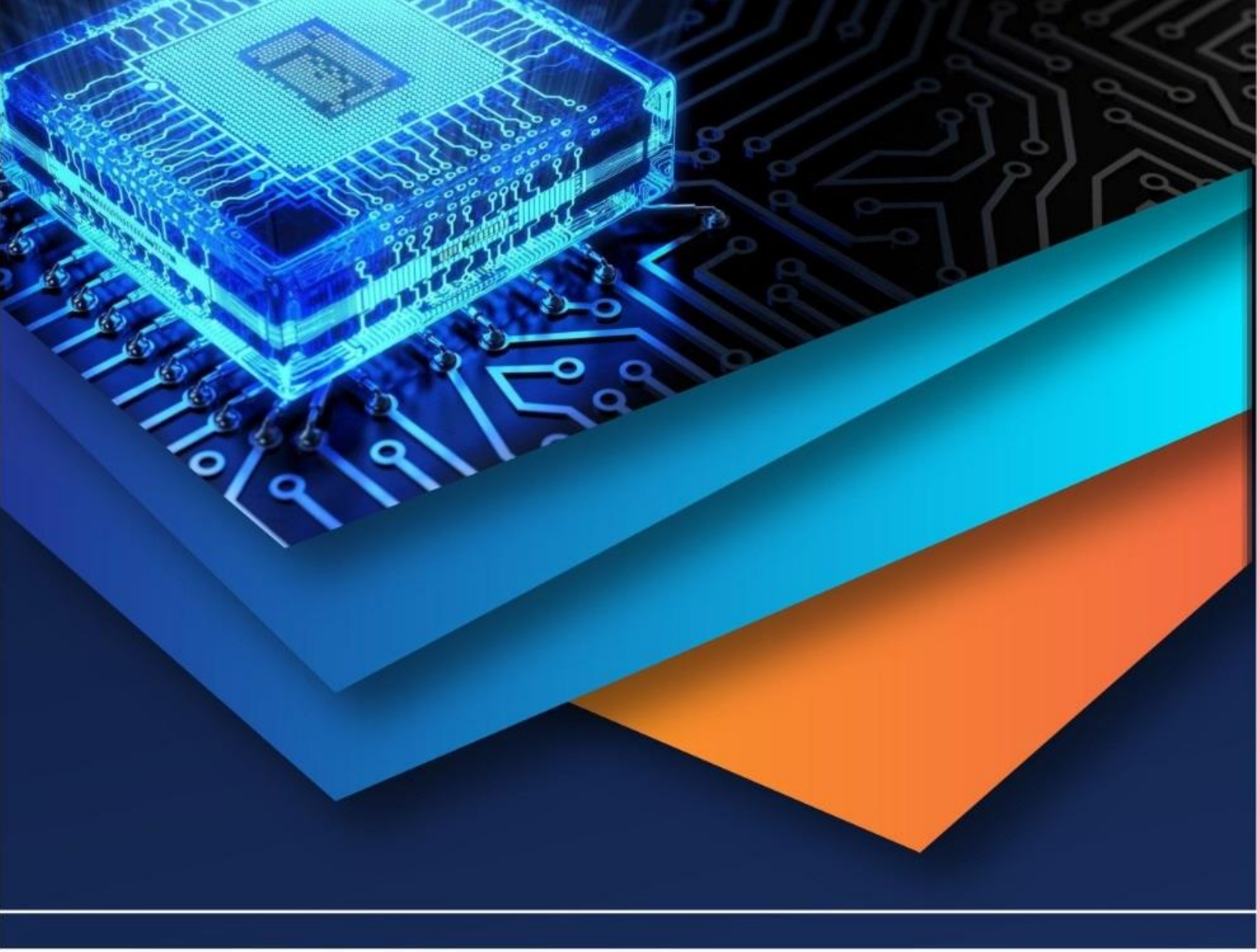
Future research can build on this exploratory foundation by employing complementary methods that extend beyond self-report and case-based analysis. Multidisciplinary approaches may offer deeper insight into the cognitive and emotional processes underlying FOMO and JOMO driven decision pathways. Cross-cultural comparative studies would further strengthen external validity by examining how emotional triggers and resistance mechanisms differ across societies. Artificial intelligence increasingly enables personalized and adaptive marketing systems, future research should investigate how such technologies interact with emotional susceptibility, consumer autonomy, and ethical boundaries within digitally mediated consumption contexts.

©IJRASET: All Rights are Reserved | SJ Impact Factor 7.538 | ISRA Journal Impact Factor 7.894 |

REFERENCES

[1] Alt, D. (2015). College students' academic motivation, media engagement and fear of missing out. Computers in Human Behavior, 49, 111–119.
[2] Arli, D., Dylke, S., Burgess, R., Campus, S., & Soldo, E. (2018). The role of consumer mindfulness in reducing impulsive buying. Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services, 41, 68–75.
[3] Baker, Z. G., Krieger, H., & LeRoy, A. S. (2016). Fear of missing out: Relationships with depression, mindfulness, and physical symptoms. Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology, 35(10), 720–737.
[4] Baumeister, R. F. (2002). Yielding to temptation: Self-control failure. Personality and Social Psychology Review, 16(4), 351–384.
[5] Dixit, A., & Phau, I. (2022). Mindful consumption: A systematic literature review and future research agenda. Journal of Consumer Behaviour, 21(4), 733–750.
[6] Hodkinson, C. (2019). Fear of missing out (FOMO) marketing appeals: A conceptual model. Journal of Marketing Communications, 25(1), 65–88.
[7] Kahneman, D. (2011). Thinking, fast and slow. Farrar, Straus and Giroux.
[8] Kang, I., & Kim, J. (2020). The impact of perceived scarcity on consumer decision-making in online shopping. Journal of Business Research, 120, 386–397.
[9] Milyavskaya, M., Saffran, M., Hope, N., & Koestner, R. (2018). Fear of missing out: Prevalence, dynamics, and consequences of experiencing FOMO. Motivation and Emotion, 42(5), 725–737.
[10] Newport, C. (2019). Digital minimalism: Choosing a focused life in a noisy world. Portfolio.
[11] Przybylski, A. K., Murayama, K., DeHaan, C. R., & Gladwell, V. (2013). Motivational, emotional, and behavioral correlates of fear of missing out. Computers in Human Behavior, 29(4), 1841–1848.
[12] Reid, R., Li, S., & Chatterjee, P. (2020). The impact of social media marketing on consumer impulse buying: Evidence from Instagram and TikTok. Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services, 55, 102127.
[13] Riordan, B. C., Flett, J. A. M., & Conner, T. S. (2021). Fear of missing out (FOMO) and the joy of missing out (JOMO): The role of mindfulness and digital well-being. Computers in Human Behavior, 117, 106651.
[14] Scott, B. (2020). The rise of the digital detox consumer. Journal of Consumer Research, 47(6), 1024–1038.
[15] Sloman, S. A. (1996). The empirical case for two systems of reasoning. Psychological Bulletin, 119(1), 3–22.
[16] Sweeney, A., & Donovan, J. (2021). Joy of missing out (JOMO): Digital mindfulness and consumer autonomy. Journal of Digital Behavior Studies, 4(2), 55–72.
[17] Schwartz, B. (2004). The paradox of choice: Why more is less. HarperCollins.

©IJRASET: All Rights are Reserved | SJ Impact Factor 7.538 | ISRA Journal Impact Factor 7.894 |



10.22214/IJRASET

45.98

IMPACT FACTOR: 7.129

IMPACT FACTOR: 7.429

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL FOR RESEARCH

IN APPLIED SCIENCE & ENGINEERING TECHNOLOGY

Call : 08813907089 (24*7 Support on Whatsapp)