



# The Role Of Fear Of Missing Out (Fomo) In Mediating The Effect Of Scarcity Perception On Impulse Buying

Putu Ayu Trisna Febrianty <sup>1</sup>, Ni Putu Dera Yanthi <sup>2</sup>, I Gst. Ayu P. Jesika Sita Devi N <sup>3</sup>, Ni Made Intan Kusumasari <sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Department of Economic and Business, Universitas Pendidikan Nasional, Bali, Indonesia:

[trisnafebrianty@undiknas.ac.id](mailto:trisnafebrianty@undiknas.ac.id)

<sup>2</sup> Department of Economic and Business, Universitas Pendidikan Nasional, Bali, Indonesia:

[derayanthi@undiknas.ac.id](mailto:derayanthi@undiknas.ac.id)

<sup>3</sup> Department of Economic and Business, Universitas Pendidikan Nasional, Bali, Indonesia:

[jesikasita@undiknas.ac.id](mailto:jesikasita@undiknas.ac.id)

<sup>4</sup> Department of Economic and Business, Universitas Pendidikan Nasional, Bali, Indonesia:

[intankusumasari@undiknas.ac.id](mailto:intankusumasari@undiknas.ac.id)

**Abstract:** The digital age has introduced a new paradigm where global connectivity and instant information access are integral to everyday life. Advancements in digital technology have reshaped various aspects of human activities, including communication, work, education, and shopping. This study explores how consumers' fear of missing out (FOMO) functions as an intermediary in the interaction between perceived scarcity and impulsive purchasing behavior. The study involved 200 respondents, who were e-commerce consumers of Shopee in Denpasar. Purposive sampling was used in data collection through questionnaires. The analysis was carried out using SEM PLS 3.0. The test results reveal that scarcity perception does not have a significant influence on impulse buying. However, FOMO has a notable effect on impulse buying and serves as a mediator in the relationship between scarcity perception and impulse buying. This study is expected to enrich the literature and provide practical insights for companies in formulating marketing strategies.

**Keywords:** Scarcity Perception; FOMO; Impulse Buying.

## 1. Introduction

In the modern era, technology is developing at a rapid pace. The technology and information revolution has changed the way humans engage in daily life activities (Hamizar et al., 2024). The digital era has brought a new paradigm, where global connectivity and quick access to information have become central to daily routines. The advancement of digital technology has led to transformations in nearly every aspect of life, such as how humans interact, work, learn, and shop. Commerce has experienced a profound evolution, highlighted by the emergence of e-commerce platforms (Rachman et al., 2024). These platforms have become key channels for buying and selling activities, offering unmatched convenience and a wide variety of products to consumers. As reported by the Indonesian Internet Service Providers Association (APJII), "in 2024, internet users in Indonesia reached 221,563,479 individuals out of a total population of 278,696,200, an increase of 1.4% from the previous year." This significant growth in internet users reflects a major shift in consumer shopping behavior in Indonesia, emphasizing the importance of e-commerce in the rapidly developing digital economy compared to the previous year.

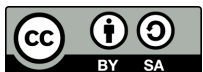
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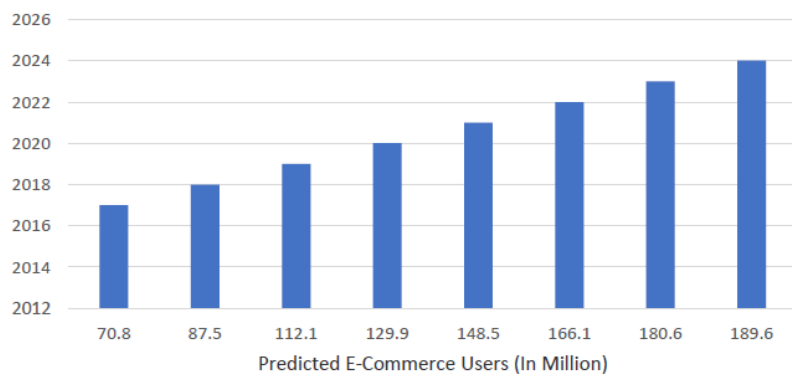
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**Figure 1.** E-Commerce User in Indonesia

Source : statista.com

Figure 1 illustrates the increased use of e-commerce in Indonesia from 2017 to 2024. A significant growth trend in the usage of e-commerce platforms can be observed. This indicates a shift in consumer behavior, from fulfilling their needs and desires through offline shopping to online shopping.

This trend in online shopping has contributed to emergence of many e-commerce platforms such as Zalora, Lazada, Tokopedia, and Shopee. One e-commerce platform that has experienced rapid growth in Indonesia is Shopee. Shopee has emerged as a leading platform, characterized by innovative marketing strategies and an extensive range of products. With innovative features like flash sales, exclusive discounts, and gamification systems, Shopee has successfully attracted consumer attention and driven an increase in online transactions. In September 2023, Shopee recorded over 200 million visits, far surpassing its competitors. Shopee has effectively utilized targeted marketing strategies to reach consumer psychology, thereby encouraging impulse buying behavior.

According to Wu et al. (2021), impulse buying is defined as an unpremeditated and swift purchase made without prior deliberation. It denotes a purchasing behavior that takes place spontaneously without prior planning. This phenomenon is increasingly prevalent in e-commerce, driven by aggressive marketing strategies such as sudden discounts and time-limited promotions. Consumers are often driven to make impulse purchases due to exposure to advertisements and emotional impulses when they perceive limited opportunities. Impulsive buying behavior can occur in three forms. First, when a user sees a product photo on an e-commerce platform, realizes that the product is nearly out of stock, and then purchases it, which is commonly referred to as reminder impulse buying. Second, when a user browses product photos or content and eventually decides to make a purchase, this is known as pure impulse buying. Third, when a user explores various product catalogs on an e-commerce platform with a wish list but then makes an impulsive purchase, this is called planned impulse buying (Mohapatra et al., 2024). Impulse buying can be impacted by various factors, one of which is scarcity perception (Feng et al., 2024).

Scarcity perception denotes the consumer's perception that a product is in restricted supply. Items with constrained availability are often interpreted as scarce within the realm of marketing (Chen et al., 2021; Zhang et al., 2021). Online consumers can see real-time updates regarding the reduction in supply and experience time pressure when marketers display countdown timers for shopping time (Wu et al., 2021). When a product is limited in quantity or availability, consumers may perceive it as a symbol of exclusivity or a competitive advantage with other consumers to obtain the same product (Hengkel et al., 2022). Scarcity is a signal or information indicating that a product is limited and difficult to obtain (Dahmiri et al., 2023). The scarcity perception created by a brand may lead consumers to forfeit their control over the purchasing decision and adopt a competitive stance in acquiring the product (Cengiz et al., 2023). Scarcity conveys to consumers that the demand for a product surpasses its supply, thereby suggesting its worth, quality, and uniqueness (Feng et al., 2024). This strategy is often used by e-commerce platforms like Shopee to create urgency in purchase decision-making. For example, labels such as "limited stock" or "only 5 products left" can increase consumers' desire to purchase immediately before the product runs out. This perception of scarcity has been demonstrated to contribute to enhancing impulse buying, as consumers Fear Of Missing Out (FOMO) on the opportunity to own the desired product. Previous studies have stated

that scarcity significantly influences impulse buying behavior (Hajar & Musadik, 2021; Li et al., 2021; Redine et al., 2023; Dahmiri et al., 2023). Nevertheless, research by Sutrisno et al. (2022) concluded that scarcity does not exert a substantial influence on online impulse purchasing. Khairunnisa and Evanita (2024) stated that scarcity does not impact e-impulse buying.

FOMO is the anxiety or fear of missing out on an experience or opportunity that others are having. FOMO is the fear or anxiety that arises when someone feels they are missing out on an exciting experience or information that others are experiencing (Tanhan et al., 2022). FOMO can arise when someone perceives the necessity to be involved and avoid missing out on a valuable prospect (Dahmiri et al., 2023). The expansion and increasing digital connectivity have accelerated the growth of FOMO in individuals, both as consumers and as people (Holte, 2023). The fear of losing opportunities and chances is further exacerbated by the presence of social media (Amelia & Kilay, 2023). In the context of e-commerce, FOMO may occur when consumers see many others purchasing a particular product or reading positive reviews from other buyers. Features such as the number of people currently viewing a product, the number of transactions that have occurred, and promotions that are only being accessible for a restricted period can intensify consumers' sense of FOMO. As a result, consumers are driven to make a purchase immediately to avoid missing out on the opportunity. FOMO can create psychological pressure that encourages individuals to engage in impulsive or compulsive behaviors, including purchasing (Hamizar et al., 2024). FOMO can have a significant and positive impact on impulse buying (Dahmiri et al., 2023; Hamizar et al., 2024). Empirical evidence has also substantiated the role of FOMO in bridging the connection between scarcity and impulse buying (Zhang et al., 2021, 2022).

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Impulse Buying

Impulsive buying is a psychological phenomenon that involves unplanned purchases motivated by emotional drives rather than rational considerations (Nagadeepa et al., 2021). Impulse buying is an unanticipated purchase made without prior planning before (Musadik, 2021). Impulsive purchases can be triggered by internal factors such as emotions and personality traits, as well as external factors such as store layouts, sales promotions, and appealing visual elements (Mattia et al., 2021). Marketers capitalize on consumers' emotional responses, thereby increasing the likelihood of impulsive purchases through emotional contagion (Herdiana & Supriyono, 2023). Impulse buying causes by two factors. External factor are the emergence of market, display, and availability of money and time. Internal factor comes from person's personality, failure of self control and personal pleasure (Harahap et al., 2023). Users are visually influenced by various product photographs published on e-commerce platforms, which strategically aim to stimulate purchases (Mohapatra et al., 2024). Impulsive purchases frequently occur when individuals experience a sudden and compelling sense of urgency, which is highly appealing to consumers (Ibrahim et al., 2025).

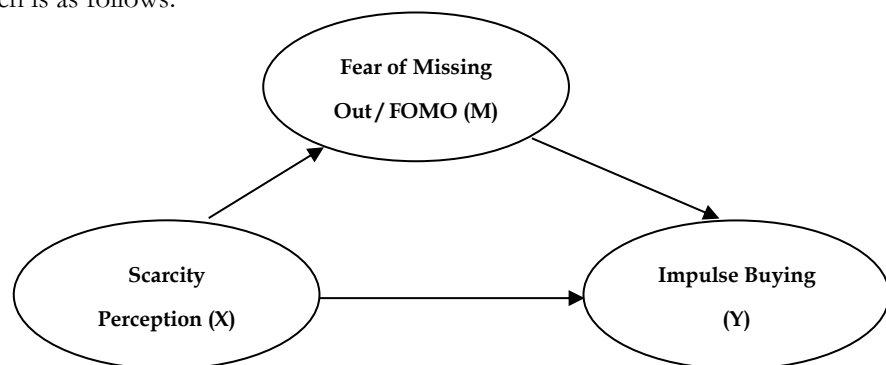
### 2.2 Scarcity Perception

Consumers online can see timely updates regarding supply shortages and experience time pressure when marketers display countdown timers for remaining shopping time (Wu et al., 2021). When products is limited in quantity or availability, consumers may perceive it as a marker of exclusivity or a competitive edge with other consumers to obtain the same product (Hengkel et al., 2022). The signal of scarcity is a sign indicating that something is limited and hard to obtain (Dahmiri et al., 2023). The scarcity theory posits that cognitive and behavioral shifts occur in individuals when confronted with the limited availability of a particular resource (Huang et al., 2023). The sense of scarcity generated by brands have the potential to cause consumers to forfeit control over their purchasing decisions and adopt a competitive mindset to acquire the product (Cengiz et al., 2023). Often, consumers lack the capacity to discern whether a perceived scarcity is authentic or merely a marketing tactic (Tuncer et al., 2023). Scarcity signals to consumers that the demand for a product outweighs its supply, thereby suggesting its exclusivity. Consumers will perceive a product as rare, thus stimulating purchasing behavior (Feng et al., 2024).

### 2.3 Fear Of Missing Out (FOMO)

FOMO is the fear or anxiety that arises when someone feels they are missing out on an exciting experience or information that others are experiencing (Tanhan, et al., 2022). FOMO is the uneasy feeling and sometimes allconsuming feels peers or in possession (Good et al., 2020). The increase and widespread digital connections have accelerated the growth of FOMO in individuals, both as individuals and as consumers (Holte, 2023). FOMO on opportunities and chances is further exacerbated by the presence of social media (Amelia and Kilay, 2023). FOMO is recognized as an emotional response, a psychological state, and an affective shift that can lead in a ripple effect in purchasing behavior (Widodo, 2023). FOMO examines the behavior of consumers when they fear missing out on exclusive offers or programs that are currently being offered (Rachman et al., 2024).

Grounded in the theoretical and background studies, the conceptual framework of this research is as follows:



**Figure 2.** Conceptual Framework

- H1: "Scarcity has a positive and significant impact on impulse buying."  
 H2: "Scarcity has a positive and significant impact on Fear of Missing Out (FOMO)."  
 H3: "Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) has a positive and significant impact on impulse buying."  
 H4: "Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) mediates the relationship between scarcity perception and impulse buying."

### 3. Method

The purpose of this study is to examine how the mediating variable of customer satisfaction impacts connection between augmented reality and eWOM on repurchase intention. Data collection was conducted using a questionnaire measured with a Likert scale. Validity and reliability tests were performed, and the results indicated that the instruments were valid and reliable. The validity test is considered valid if the correlation value is  $> 0.3$ , as shown in Table 1. In the reliability assessment, the research instrument is deemed dependable if the Cronbach's Alpha  $> 0.6$ , as shown in Table 1. The sample size for this study was 180 respondents. The sampling method applied in this study is a non-probability sampling technique, specifically purposive sampling with certain criteria. Data analysis was conducted using the SEM method based on PLS.

This study uses composite reliability and discriminant validity to analyze the validity and reliability of the research instruments. Research indicators are considered valid if the correlation value for each variable is  $> 0.70$ . The outcomes of the validity assessment of the instrument are depicted in Table 1 below.

**Tabel 1.** Measurement Model Analysis

Variabel	Indikator	Outer Loading
Scarcity Perception (X)	X1	0.843
	X2	0.850
	X3	0.869
	X4	0.866
	X5	0.718

Fear of missing out/FOMO (M)	M1	0.825
	M2	0.898
	M3	0.864
	M4	0.840
Impulse Buying (Y)	Y1	0.843
	Y2	0.853
	Y3	0.795
	Y4	0.785

Source: primary data processed (2025)

The findings from the testing reveal that all instruments utilized in this study exhibit correlation  $> 0.70$ . This means that all the indicators in this research are valid or meet the convergent validity standard. The reliability test was conducted using the Fornell-Larcker technique, through the comparison of the square root of each AVE (Average Variance Extracted) correlation, which must surpass that of other constructs.

**Table 2.** Fornell-Lacker Result Test

	M	Y	X
M	0.807		
Y	0.513	0.820	
X	0.506	0.506	0.859

Source: primary data processed (2025)

**Table 3.** Construct Reliability

	Cronbach's alpha (CA)	Composite reliability (CR)
M	0.810	0.880
X	0.882	0.919
Y	0.839	0.891

Source: primary data processed (2025)

Table 2 indicates that the Fornell-Larcker test shows the square root of the AVE values to be higher than those of other constructs, meaning that this criterion approach is considered valid. Table 3 indicates that the results of CA and CR  $> 0.70$ . This indicates that the variables in this study are reliable.

## 4. Results and Discussion

### 4.1 Results

This study was conducted by distributing an online questionnaire. The results of the descriptive statistical test show that there is a diverse range of respondent characteristics or identities. Table 4 further illustrates the attributes of the respondents based on their occupation, gender, and age.

**Table 4.** Respondent Characteristics

Respondent Characteristics	Frequency	Percent
<b>Age</b>		
21st until 30th years old	126	28
31st until 40th years old	56	63
> 40th years old	18	9
Total	200	100
<b>Gender</b>		
Man	53	26.5
Woman	147	73.5
Total	200	100
<b>Occupation</b>		
Student	35	17.5
Privat Employeess	72	36
Civil servants	54	27

Entrepreneur	39	19.5
Total	200	100

Source: primary data processed (2025)

Table 4 shows that 63% of the respondents are aged between 21 and 30 years, 28 percent are aged between 31 and 40 years, and 9 percent of the respondents in this study are over 40 years old. The predominant age group of respondents falls within the range of 21 - 30 years. This is because young adults are very active in using social media and interacting online, and as a result, the majority make purchases online through the e-commerce platform Shopee. Respondents aged between 31 and 40 years are also technologically literate, which influences their online shopping behavior. In terms of gender, women constitute the majority of participants in this study, accounting for 73.5%, while men represent 26.5%. This indicates that women tend to fulfill their needs through the use of the Shopee e-commerce platform. Regarding their professional roles, most respondents are private-sector employees, making up 36% of the sample. Other respondents include government employees (54 percent), entrepreneurs (19.5%), and students (17.5%).

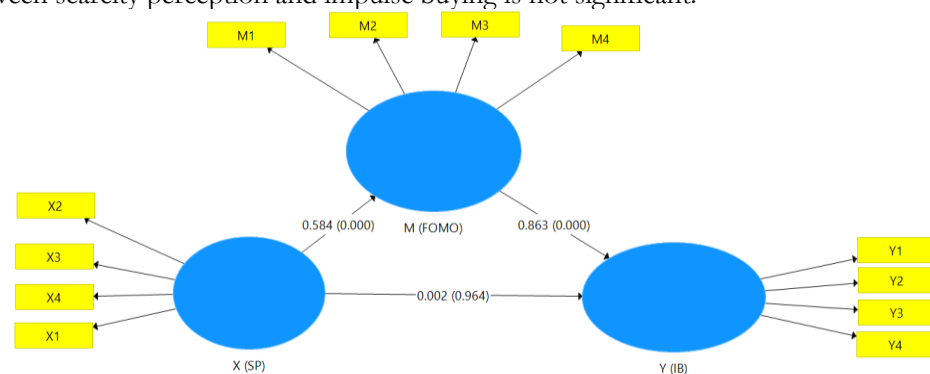
Hypothesis testing was carried out using the Partial Least Squares (PLS) method. The main purpose of this test is to assess how significant the impact of independent variables is on the dependent variables. The bootstrapping technique was applied to determine the significance level of each variable and indicator involved in this study. The results of the direct effect testing using bootstrapping with the SEM PLS approach are presented in the table below.

**Table 5.** Path Coefficients Result

	Original sample (O)	T statistics ( O/STDEV )	P values	Result
M -> Y	0.863	25,761	0.000	Accepted
X -> M	0.584	8,269	0.000	Accepted
X -> Y	0.002	0,045	0.964	Rejected

Source: primary data processed (2025)

As per the results of the testing, it was observed that the initial sample value for the variable "Fear of Missing Out" (FOMO) on impulse buying is 0.863 with a p-value  $0.000 < 0.050$  and a t-statistic  $25.761 > 1.653$ . For the relationship between scarcity perception and FOMO, the value is 0.584 with a sig.  $0.000 < 0.050$  and a t-statistic of  $8.269 > 1.653$ . These results indicate that direct associations between the variables are positive and significant. For the relationship between scarcity perception and impulse buying is 0.002 with a sig.  $0.964 > 0.050$ , and the t-statistic value is  $0.045 > 1.653$ . This indicates that the direct relationship between scarcity perception and impulse buying is not significant.



**Figure 3.** Statistic Inferensial

Source : Data processed (2025)

The testing of the indirect impact of the mediating variable regarding the role FOMO in mediating the relationship between scarcity perception and impulse buying was conducted through T-statistic analysis and p-value, as shown in Table 6.

**Table 6.** Indirect Effect

	Original sample (O)	T statistics ( O/STDEV )	P values
SP -> FOMO -> IB	0.504	7,664	0.000

Source: primary data processed (2025)

The testing of the indirect impact revealed that the mediating role of FOMO in the relationship between scarcity perception and impulse buying sig.  $0.000 < 0.050$ , with a t-statistic  $7.664 > 1.653$ . This indicates that FOMO is able to mediate the correlation between scarcity perception and impulse buying.

## 4.2 Discussion

### 4.2.1. The Impact of Scarcity Perception on Impulse Buying

The testing of the impact of scarcity perception on impulse buying showed that H1 was rejected and H0 was accepted. This means that scarcity perception does not have a significant and positive impact on impulse buying. Based on the results of this study, this may be understood as marketing strategies aimed at creating a fear among consumers that a product is a limited edition and will not be available again do not increase impulsive buying behavior. This could be influenced by other factors, such as discounts or references from other online stores found by consumers offering the same product. The results of this study align with those of prior research conducted by Sutrisno et al. (2022) and Kharunnisa and Evanita (2024), which stated that scarcity perception does not impact impulse buying. Impulse buying occur only when the time scarcity is very high (Hao and Huang, 2024). Scarcity strategy which limited quantity strategy does not impact on impulse buying (Suwinto and Susilowati, 2025).

### 4.2.2. The Impact of Scarcity Perception on FOMO

Scarcity perception was found to have an impact on FOMO, or a high desire among consumers to obtain and own a product. The results of the hypothesis testing showed that H1 was accepted and H0 was rejected. This indicates that scarcity perception has a significant impact on FOMO. Consumers recommend products they use online by leaving positive reviews. Outcomes of this research corroborate earlier studies which found scarcity perception impacts FOMO (Dahmiri et al., 2023; Phan, 2025).

### 4.2.3. The Impact of FOMO on Impulse Buying

The relationship between FOMO and impulsive buying behavior indicates a significant relationship. The outcomes of the hypothesis evaluation in this research demonstrated H1 was accepted and H0 was rejected, indicating that FOMO has a positive impact on impulse buying. This suggests that an increase in consumers to own a trending product while shopping through the Shopee e-commerce platform, the higher the intensity of impulse buying. If the FOMO interest of consumers is low, the intensity for impulse buying will also be low. Individuals have an intrinsic tendency to connect with social groups, understanding the behaviors of other members within the group and buy same things (Hussain et al., 2023). The findings align with those of previous studies on impulse buying (Dahmiri et al., 2023; Harahap et al., 2023; Widodo, 2023; Hamizar et al., 2024).

### 4.2.4. The Role of FOMO as a Mediator in the Relationship Between Scarcity Perception and Impulse Buying

This study was conducted to test the role of FOMO in mediating the relationship between scarcity perception and impulse buying. As per the hypothesis testing results, FOMO it was discovered to serve as a partial intermediary in the connection between scarcity perception and impulse buying. This means that when customers have a strong desire to own a product through the scarcity perception strategy implemented by Shopee e-commerce (such as product displays, product promotions, and limited shopping time), impulse buying activities among consumers will increase. When customers are satisfied, they will continue using Shopee to fulfill their product needs. The findings The findings study align with prior research

that demonstrated FOMO as an intermediary in the connection between scarcity perception and impulse buying (Dahmiri et al., 2023).

## 5. Kesimpulan

The conclusion of this study is that FOMO has significant and positive impact on impulse buying, while the correlation between scarcity perception and impulse buying does not have a significant impact. In terms of mediation, FOMO is able to act as an intermediary in the connection between scarcity perception and impulse buying. It is important for companies to leverage technology, particularly based on consumer behavior theories, to create unique shopping applications so that customers are willing to engage in impulse buying to increase product sales.

## Acknowledgment

This research was conducted only in Denpasar, so the findings cannot be generalized to other regions. In the future, it is hoped that this study can be conducted on a larger scale, contributing to the literature and serving as a reference for future research.

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