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The Relationship between Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) and Consumptive Behavior among High School Students in West Palu District

Ade Avriliani MY. Mastura¹, **Dian Fitriani**^{2*}, Hasan³, Nurwahyuni⁴
^{1,2,3,4} Bimbingan dan Konseling, Universitas Tadulako, Palu, Indonesia

Abstract. The widespread use of digital platforms among secondary school students has led to the emergence of Fear of Missing Out (FOMO), a social anxiety characterised by feelings of exclusion from enjoyable activities experienced by others. Social media features, such as daily stories and live streams on platforms like Instagram and YouTube, encourage students to follow trends. High levels of FOMO are associated with consumerist behaviour, where students purchase items they do not truly need simply to align with lifestyle trends or popular phenomena. This study aims to determine the correlation between FOMO and consumptive behavior among high school students in West Palu District. A total of 300 students were selected using purposive sampling, and the data were analyzed descriptively and inferentially through classical assumption tests (normality and linearity) and product moment correlation. The results showed that 68.66% of students experienced high FOMO, and 52.33% exhibited high consumptive behavior. Pearson's correlation analysis yielded r = 0.767 with p < 0.05, which is greater than the table r of 0.113, thus rejecting the null hypothesis and accepting the alternative hypothesis. These findings serve as a reference for counselors through classical guidance to explain the influence of social media algorithms and influencers, as well as through group counseling services for students with excessive impulsive tendencies. These services can help students shift from FOMO (Fear of Missing Out) to JOMO (Joy of Missing Out) in order to be wiser in their use of social media and consumption patterns.

Keywords: Fear Of Missing Out, Consumptive Behavior, Student.

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Introduction

Technological developments have made the internet an integral part of modern life. The massive use of smartphones and social media has accelerated the dissemination of information and expanded social interaction (Mardatilla et al., 2025). According to Hermila et al (2023) the Indonesian population actively uses social media, reinforcing the dominance of digital media in people's lives. Various popular social media platforms such as Instagram, YouTube, and similar platforms have become online interaction tools that allow users to share their daily activities directly through features such as stories or live broadcasts (Syahran

et al., 2025). Exposure to such content encourages users to continuously follow the social activities of others, which ultimately contributes to the emergence of FOMO (Nadzirah et al., 2022). FOMO is a feeling of fear or anxiety that arises from feeling left out of meaningful moments or positive activities enjoyed by others (Przybylski et al., 2013; Sachiyati et al., 2023). FOMO can increase social pressure, especially when someone has difficulty adapting to the latest lifestyle trends or topics that are widely discussed on various digital platforms.

According to Przybylski et al (2013), Self-Determination Theory (SDT) developed by Deci and Ryan in 1985 can be used as a framework for understanding the FOMO phenomenon. This theory states that an individual's psychological well-being is highly dependent on the fulfillment of three basic human needs: competence (the drive to feel capable and effective), autonomy (the desire to direct oneself), and social connection (the longing for belonging and deep relationships). Failure to fulfill one or more of these basic needs can lead to psychological dissatisfaction, anxiety, frustration, or despair. For example, the inability to form social relationships can trigger social anxiety (Taswiyah, 2022). Meanwhile, a lack of self-confidence or autonomy can trigger feelings of insecurity or loss of control over one's life (Rasido et al., 2025). These conditions often encourage people to seek social validation through the internet in an effort to reduce their dissatisfaction (Putri et al., 2024)

Therefore, FOMO is not only interpreted as ordinary anxiety, but as an individual's defensive effort to overcome the failure to fulfil the need for social connectedness (relatedness). The psychological dissatisfaction that arises then triggers individuals to seek validation and massive involvement through social media, which in turn can manifest as consumptive behaviour driven by social pressure (Wirasukessa & Sanica, 2023).

Globally, research confirms that adolescents are a vulnerable group. Research Nguyen & Duy (2025) found that FOMO had a positive effect on impulsive buying among 236 teenagers in Vietnam, with the main factors being the appeal of live broadcasts, the quality of information, and interaction. Meanwhile, Liu et al (2023) at Tianjin University, China, reported that FOMO among university students is influenced by social avoidance and loneliness, while positive solitude and eccentricity do not affect mental health related to FOMO. Bloemen & Coninck (2020) studied 841 adolescents in Belgium and found that adolescents from stable families had higher levels of FOMO than those from unstable families, while high-quality relationships with parents were associated with lower levels of FOMO. The FOMO phenomenon aligns with the situation in Indonesia, where FOMO among adolescents reaches 50%, a proportion twice as high as that of adults, which is around 25%. These findings indicate that high school students are a group vulnerable to the influence of FOMO. This is reinforced by the results of a study by Alfitri & Widiatrilupi (Wahyuningtyas & Hambali, 2025), which shows that the 15 to 24 age group dominates as internet users in Indonesia, reaching around 80%. Internet use is dominated by social media activities, with most of this age group being high school students. The Australian Psychological Society (APS) reports that teenagers spend an average of 2.7 hours per day on social media (Akbar et al., 2019).

Teenagers who experience FOMO tend to engage in consumptive behavior, which is consumer behavior that is more influenced by emotional factors than clear planning or needs

(Eka et al., 2022). According to Putri et al (2023), there are three main forms of consumerism: unplanned or spontaneous purchases (impulsive buying), excessive spending on less important items (extravagant buying), and purchasing decisions that are not based on rational considerations (non-rational buying). Teenagers who experience FOMO tend to engage in consumptive behavior among teenagers. Suhartini & Maharani (2023) explain that fear of missing out (FOMO) causes stress and encourages people to buy goods without considering their needs. Apolo & Kurniawati (2023) also note that individuals with high levels of FOMO tend to buy items that are not actually necessary, just to follow current lifestyle trends or popular phenomena. However, there are varying findings that show a negative influence between FOMO and consumerism behavior. Other studies prove that social pressure has a significant influence on consumptive behavior. Subagyo & Dwiridotjahjono (2021) prove that social pressure conformity has a positive and significant influence on consumptive behavior. The differences in these findings highlight the complexity of the relationship between FOMO caused by social pressure and consumer behavior, making it an interesting area for further research. This is reinforced by a preliminary study in Bandung which shows that 30% of high school students experience high levels of FOMO (Yosep et al., 2024).

Method

Research Design

This study employed a quantitative correlational design. The approach was selected to examine the strength and direction of the relationship between Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) and students' consumptive behavior in Palu City.

Participants

The participants in the study consisted of 300 eleventh-grade students from SMA Negeri 4 Palu, SMA Negeri 8 Palu, and MAN 1 Palu City.

Participant Recruitment Procedure

The sample selection was conducted using purposive sampling. This technique was chosen to enable researchers to obtain participants who met the criteria, so that they could accurately describe the relationship between FOMO and consumptive behavior among students. However, this technique has the potential for bias because the research results cannot be generalized to the entire student population, but only represent the group of students who meet the specific inclusion criteria set. The criteria are as follows: (a) students who actively use social media for at least five hours per day, according to Gezgin's findings Putri et al (2023) that individuals with FOMO tendencies generally access social media for 5 to 7 hours or more; (b) have at least two active social media accounts; and (c) show FOMO tendencies and consumptive behavior according to observations by guidance counselors

Guidance counselors identify students through direct observation notes and information from homeroom teachers, particularly regarding behaviors that reflect aspects of Self (difficulty putting down cell phones while at school, urge to follow trends) and Relatedness (need for recognition from peers), as well as signs of consumptive behavior such

as following the latest fashions or buying items for social status. Respondents who are unwilling to participate are replaced with other students who meet the inclusion criteria.

Research Instruments

FOMO was measured using the Fear of Missing Out Scale (FOMOs) developed by Przybylski et al (2013) with a Likert scale covering two aspects, namely Self (competence and autonomy) and Relatedness (social connectedness). Of the 25 items, 20 were declared valid with correlation values ranging from 0.368r to 0.798, and the reliability coefficient (Cronbach's Alpha) was 0.883.

Consumptive behavior was measured using a Likert scale based on the theory developed by Engel, Blackwell & Miniard in (Putri et al., 2023). covering three aspects: wasteful buying, impulsive buying, and non-rational buying. Of the 30 items, 27 were declared valid with correlation values ranging from 0.330 to 0.685, and the reliability coefficient (Cronbach's Alpha) was 0.863.

Data Analysis

This correlational study was analyzed descriptively and inferentially using SPSS version 25. Quantitative research, as defined by Creswell (Sumbodo et al., 2024), is a structured and objective approach aimed at collecting and analyzing numerical data to obtain valid and reliable information about a phenomenon. The inferential analysis included Pearson's Product Moment correlation test, which met the assumptions of normality and linearity.

Results

The descriptive statistics for the FOMO variable and the consumptive behavior variable

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
FOMO	300	42	84	65.60	8.758
Consumptive Behaviour	300	47	92	73.04	9.320
Valid N (listwise)	300				

Table 1. Results of Descriptive Statistics Test

The descriptive analysis results show that students' FOMO scores and consumptive behavior have average values at a moderate level with relatively stable data distribution. To facilitate interpretation, respondents' scores are grouped into categories based on value intervals, as presented in the following table:

Table 2. FOMO Category Scale

Score Interval	Categories	Frequency	%
75% - 100%	Very High	62	17.33
56% - 74%	High	206	68.66
41% - 55%	Low	42	14
≤ 40%	Very Low	0	0
Total		300	100

The results show that FOMO is highly prevalent among students, with the majority (68.66%) falling into the high category and only a small fraction (2%) in the low category. Following the overall categorization, the next analysis focused on the mean scores for the

two FOMO aspects self and relatedness to identify which dimension was more dominant among the students.

Table 3. Percentage of FOMO Aspects

FOMO Aspect	Categories	9/0
Self	High	65.55
Relatedness	High	65.66

The results show that both aspects of FOMO are in the high category, with the relatedness aspect slightly more dominant than the self-aspect.

Table 4. Consumptive Behavior Category Scale

Score Interval	Categories	Frequency	%
75% - 100%	Very High	62	17.33
56% - 74%	High	206	68.66
41% - 55%	Low	42	14
≤ 40%	Very Low	0	0
Total		300	100

The results showed that the majority of students fell into the high and very high consumptive behavior categories, while only a small proportion fell into the low category. After the categorization results were obtained, the analysis continued by

Table 5. Consumptive Behavior Category Scale

Consumptive Behavior Aspects	Categories	0/0
Implusive Buying	High	67
Non-Rational Buying	High	67
Wasteful Buying	High	69

The results in the table above show that all three aspects of consumptive behavior are in the high category, with wasteful purchasing being the most dominant aspect.

In this study, normality test were conducted to evaluate whether the collected data were normally distributed or not. These test used the *Kolmogorov-Smirnov* method and were assisted by the statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25 program

Table 6. Normality Test Result

One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test

		Unstandardized Residual
N		300
Normal Parameters ^{a,b}	Mean	.0000000
	Std. Deviation	5.97457926
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	.046
	Positive	.026
	Negative	046
Test Statistic		.046
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.200 ^{c,d}

The Kolmogorov-Smirnov normality test results show a significance value of 0.200 (> 0.05), indicating that the data is normally distributed. Linearity testing is performed to determine whether there is a linear relationship between variables X and Y. This relationship

is considered linear if the Linearity significance value is greater than 0.05, and conversely, it is considered non-linear if the value is less than 0.05

Table 7. Linearity Test Results

ANOVA Table

	Sum of Squares	F	Sig
	(Combined)	11.136	.000
Between Group	Linearity	414.922	.000
	Deviation from Linearity	.782	.821

Table 7 shows a linearity significance value of 0.000 (< 0.05) and a deviation from linearity of 0.821 (>0.05), indicating a linear relationship between FOMO and consumptive behavior. Thus, the analysis was continued using the Pearson Product Moment correlation test presented in the following table:

Table 8. Pearson Product Moment Correlation Test Results

		FOMO	Consumptive Behavious
	Pearson Correlation	1	.767**
FOMO		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	300	300
	Pearson Correlation	.767**	1
Consumptive Behaviour	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	300	300

^{**.} Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

The Pearson Product Moment correlation test shows a coefficient of 0.767 with a significance value of 0.000 (< 0.01), indicating a strong and statistically significant positive relationship between FOMO and students' consumptive behavior.

Discussion

The analysis revealed a significant relationship between FOMO and consumptive behavior according to the correlation test results obtained. Most students were in the high category with the self and Relatedness aspects showing the same percentage of 66%. This indicates that internal drives to keep up with developments and other needs are equally significant. The dominance of the self and relatedness aspects confirms the vulnerability of basic psychological needs through Self-Determination Theory (SDT) in the digital environment. Here, students' basic need for relatedness will be fulfilled through consumptive conformity, buying products to gain social recognition. At the same time, the need for autonomy becomes distorted, with students equating self-control and their abilities with the financial power to buy the latest trends. Thus, FOMO acts as an external trigger, forcing students to respond to social anxiety with impulsive purchases. This directly explains the findings of wasteful buying, as consumptive actions are driven by psychological pressure to alleviate FOMO anxiety, rather than functional needs. Students' consumptive behavior is also dominated by the high category, with the aspect of Wasteful Buying being the most

prominent. This shows that consumptive tendencies are more influenced by impulsive and irrational excessive purchasing behavior.

These results confirm that the influence of FOMO is not limited to psychological dimensions alone but also has an impact on actual consumptive behavior. When students feel less involved in the flow of information or social developments, they are driven to make purchases in order to maintain their existence in their social environment. This condition can trigger uncontrolled consumption behavior, especially among teenagers who are still in the process of forming their identity and emotional stability.

The Pearson Product Moment correlation test shows a strong positive correlation between FOMO and consumer behavior, as indicated by a coefficient of 0.767 and significance of 0.000 (p < 0.05). This finding supports the hypothesis that an increase in FOMO correlates with an increase in consumptive tendencies. These results are consistent with studies by (Apolo & Kurniawati, 2023) and (Suhartini & Maharani, 2023), which state that FOMO encourages individuals to shop as a form of social engagement and a response to trend pressure. This is further supported by the findings of Subagyo & Dwiridotjahjono (2021), which indicate that conformity, as one form of social pressure, has a positive and significant influence on consumer behavior. A similar perspective Kartika et al (2025) also reveals that Generation Z individuals with high FOMO are more likely to make impulsive purchases due to the influence of social media and social pressure.

However, these findings are not entirely consistent with previous studies. According to Monopo et al (2024), there is a negative influence between FOMO and consumptive behavior, while Syahdana & Dhania (2024) found no significant relationship with impulsive behavior. These differences are likely due to variations in subject characteristics, such as education level, dominant social media platforms used, or self-control abilities. This difference can also be understood because high school students more frequently use social media such as TikTok and Instagram, which feature algorithm-based advertisements, influencer promotions, and "buy now" features that encourage impulsive purchases. Wardini & Dasalinda (2024) also emphasize that students' engagement in watching videos on TikTok triggers the desire to buy after seeing advertisements, making consumptive behavior easier to form. Alternative explanations to consider include the possibility of mediating or moderating factors such as self-control, social environment, or intrinsic motivation that may influence the strength of the relationship between FOMO and consumptive behavior. These inconsistent findings open up opportunities for further research to explore other factors in greater depth, thereby gaining a more comprehensive understanding of the relationship between FOMO and consumptive behavior in different population groups.

In the context of Palu, social, cultural, and economic factors further strengthen this relationship. Rizky et al (2025) shows that financial literacy is unable to moderate the influence of FOMO and impulsive buying, so that teenagers remain vulnerable even though they have financial knowledge. Rizqah et al (2025) emphasizes that Generation Z in Palu is very responsive to social trends and the fear of being left behind, which encourages consumptive behavior. Meanwhile, Fitrianingsih et al (2025) revealed that among Palu adolescents, content marketing on social media significantly increases FOMO, as engaging

content makes them feel compelled to follow trends. These findings confirm that in the context of Palu, social pressure, digital culture, and economic constraints reinforce the role of FOMO as the primary driver of students' consumptive behavior.

Novelty of the Research

This study highlights the relationship between FOMO and consumptive behaviour among high school students, focusing on the impact of social media on adolescent consumptive decisions. Using Self-Determination Theory (SDT), this study emphasizes how psychological pressure shapes consumption patterns, particularly impulsive and irrational ones, among students who are still in the transition to financial dependence. Most previous studies have focused on adolescents in large cities or advanced economic contexts, so the socio-economic context of adolescents in Palu presents different dynamics in the relationship between FOMO and consumptive behavior.

Implications and Contributions

This study adds to our understanding of the relationship between FOMO and consumptive behavior in adolescents, particularly high school students, while enriching the literature on adolescent psychology and consumer behavior. These findings can serve as a reference for further research exploring the psychological mechanisms influencing consumer habits in the digital age, as well as a basis for developing digital literacy programs and designing more effective counseling services for adolescents, whether through individual counseling, group counseling, or classroom-based counseling.

Research Limitations

Although this study involved 300 samples from three high schools that were representative of the adolescent population in the city of Palu, we are aware of several limitations. This study cannot conclusively determine whether cultural diversity or social environments, such as friendship circles or the dominance of certain social media platforms, are the main causes of consumptive behavior. This study is correlational in nature, meaning it only indicates the presence of a relationship and cannot definitively prove a cause-and-effect relationship. These factors open up opportunities for further exploration in the future, particularly through qualitative approaches or longitudinal studies.

Conclusion

The results of the analysis show a significant positive correlation between FOMO and students' consumptive behavior; the higher the FOMO, the greater the tendency to consume. These findings serve as a direct and actionable reference for school counselors and educators to implement specific interventions. Counselors can utilize classical guidance (a form of classroom-based counseling that includes digital literacy education) on how social media algorithms and influencers trigger FOMO. Additionally, group counseling services should be established for students with excessive impulsive tendencies to practice self-control and impulse management. These services can help students shift from FOMO (Fear of Missing Out) to JOMO (Joy of Missing Out), so that they can be wiser in their use of social media

and consumption patterns. Further research is recommended to explore factors that moderate this relationship, such as gender, social media platforms, social environment, cultural background, and financial conditions, to understand FOMO-based consumptive behavior more comprehensively

Author Contributions

A.A. conceived the study, developed the methodology, collected and analyzed the data, and drafted the manuscript. D.F. supervised the research process, validated the results, and provided substantial revisions to the manuscript. N. contributed to the validation of the findings, reviewed the manuscript, and approved the final version. H. contributed to the validation, suggested improvements, and approved the final version. All authors have read and approved the final manuscript.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The authors declare no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

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