



## Analysis Of Fomo Lifestyle and Consumer Behavior Of Gen Z Students Towards Viral Goods

Dewi Sinta Puspitasari <sup>1\*</sup>, Dynda Prista <sup>2</sup>, Sudarmiatain Sudarmiatain <sup>3</sup>

<sup>1-3</sup> Universitas Negeri Malang, Indonesia

Email: [dewi.sinta.2404138@students.um.ac.id](mailto:dewi.sinta.2404138@students.um.ac.id) <sup>1</sup>, [dynda.prista.2404138@students.um.ac.id](mailto:dynda.prista.2404138@students.um.ac.id) <sup>2</sup>,  
[sudarmiatin.fe@ac.um.id](mailto:sudarmiatin.fe@ac.um.id) <sup>3</sup>

Corresponding author: [dewi.sinta.2404138@students.um.ac.id](mailto:dewi.sinta.2404138@students.um.ac.id) \*

**Abstract,** The phenomenon of Fear of Missing Out (FoMo) has become more prevalent with the increasing use of social media among students. FoMo can drive individuals to follow the latest trends, including purchasing viral items. This study aims to analyze the influence of FoMo lifestyle on students' purchasing decisions of viral products in Malang City. The research uses a qualitative approach with case study interviews. The results show that FoMo lifestyle has a strong influence on purchasing decisions of viral products. The main factors affecting these decisions include social pressure, exposure to social media content, and the desire for social validation. Additionally, it was found that students with a higher level of FoMo tend to make impulsive purchases and give less consideration to the functional aspects of the items they buy.

**Keywords :** Consumptive Behavior, FOMO, Lifestyle

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Rapid technological advances make it easier for every consumer to reach every product. According to (Indah Sari et al., 2023) technological developments are needed to bring positive benefits to people's lives. Technology, especially in the digital and social media fields, has changed individual behavior in interacting with information, including in trends in the consumption of goods. According to (Azzaki, 2024), social media has two sides that can have both positive and negative impacts. One of the negative impacts that emerges is the Fear of Missing Out (FoMo) which is increasingly becoming part of a lifestyle, especially among students. According to (Intan Dewayani, 2024), FoMo is a feeling of anxiety or fear of being left behind by trends or social experiences experienced by others. With the increasingly massive use of social media, students are often encouraged to follow viral product trends so as not to feel left behind by their social environment (Rahardjo & Soetjningsih, 2022). With the existence of social media, it can facilitate access to information on popular products, thus encouraging students to participate in consumption trends even though the goods do not always match their needs.

The explanation from (Mahyundari et al., 2023) states that impulsive purchases are increasingly common in the digital era due to the increase in e-commerce. Impulse purchases occur when consumers automatically make decisions without planning. In Malang itself, it is considered one of the cities with a high student population, making it an interesting place to

research this phenomenon (Hakim, 2022). Many students in this city are active on various social media platforms, where viral item trends often emerge and receive widespread attention. Viral items, ranging from fashion products, food, to electronic goods, are often targeted by students who want to feel more connected to their peers and social environment (Karimale, 2025). The FoMo lifestyle encourages students to make impulsive purchases of viral items, often without considering their real needs. This can have an impact on the economic, psychological, and consumer behavior aspects of students (Dhania, 2024). Purchasing viral items that are not based on real needs can lead to excessive spending and potentially cause regret after the purchase is made (Arifianti, 2021).

Based on previous research, the Fear of Missing Out (FoMo) phenomenon has a significant influence on consumer behavior among students, especially those influenced by the digital world. Research by (Fitria, 2023) revealed that students with high levels of FoMo tend to fall into impulsive buying, get caught up in viral trends, and spend a lot of time on social media. Research was also conducted by (Safitri & Rinaldi, 2023) which highlighted how FoMo shapes students' behavior in buying discounted items on e-commerce platforms such as Shopee, which shows that the higher the level of FoMo, the greater their tendency to make impulsive purchases. Another study conducted by (Jenny Fernanda et al., 2023) showed that FoMo behavior greatly shapes the consumption habits of students at the University of Jember, especially in buying fashion products, such as branded shoes, which are triggered by the fear of missing out on the latest trends on social media. This analysis revealed that students are more likely to buy original goods, as a way to find their identity and strengthen their self-confidence. However, previous studies have revealed an interesting gap in how FoMo influences the influence of viral products, such as fashion items promoted through social media. These studies focus more on how FoMo shapes the consumption behavior of generation Z in a more dynamic scenario and is highly connected to the growing social media phenomenon.

This study aims to analyze how the FoMo lifestyle influences students' decisions in purchasing viral goods. With a qualitative approach, this study will explore the factors that encourage students to follow the trend of viral goods, as well as the impacts caused by this consumer behavior. The results of this study are expected to provide in-depth insight into the social and psychological dynamics of students in the context of consuming viral goods in the digital era. The following is the definition of each variable according to experts:

### **1. *Fear of Missing Out (FoMo)***

According to (Philip Kotler, 2012) FoMo is a phenomenon that arises due to social uncertainty and the individual's desire to stay connected to social trends or experiences. Meanwhile, according to (Przybylski et al., 2013) FoMo is related to the basic psychological need to connect with social.

### **2. *Consumptive Lifestyle***

According to (Hernández & Guzmán, 2019) a consumptive lifestyle is a consumption pattern that is based on desires rather than needs and is influenced by the social environment and trends. According to (Solomon, 2002) consumers tend to be motivated to buy a product based on emotional and social aspects, not just functional needs.

## **2. METHOD**

The method used in this study is a qualitative approach, which allows to reveal the essence of the phenomenon being analyzed, simplifying the acquisition of impartial data (Sugiyono, 2015) states that researchers use qualitative research techniques in the authentic context of the object being studied. According to (Fiantika, 2022) qualitative research aims to reveal individual experiences, such as behavior, perceptions, motivations, and actions, in a comprehensive manner, using descriptions in the form of language in a specific and natural environment, and utilizing various natural techniques.

Based on the previous definition, it can be concluded that qualitative research is a natural study that produces essential data. In this study, a qualitative perspective was adopted and a case study approach was used. This study focuses intensively on a particular entity that is analyzed as an example (Abdi, 2020). Information from case studies can be collected from various parties involved. The object of research is a source of data that can reveal information related to ongoing research challenges (Assyakurrohim et al., 2022). The technique for selecting research subjects uses a purposive sampling technique, which is selected with certain considerations and purposes (Sugiyono, 2015). The criteria determined by the researcher as research subjects are those who are involved in the FoMo lifestyle phenomenon among gen z students and have experience related to the consumption of viral goods. Based on this, the subjects in this study were selected with the following criteria:

- a. Gen Z students who are active on social media and involved in the FoMo phenomenon related to viral goods.

- b. Gen Z students who often interact with viral goods trends through digital platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and Twitter.
- c. Gen Z students who are willing to be interviewed and provide information related to their experiences in interacting with viral goods.

This study involved two groups of students at the State University of Malang and with different educational backgrounds. These two groups of gen z students were selected based on the consideration that qualitative research emphasizes the depth of information rather than the number of informants. Therefore, the determination of the subject of this research was carried out using purposive sampling techniques in accordance with the objectives or criteria of the research population. The following is a description of the object of this research :

No	Name	Description
1	FF	24-year-old male youth, geography teacher, last education: Bachelor's degree
2	IH	24-year-old male youth, store manager at a hiking gear rental shop, last education: Bachelor's degree
3	DY	23-year-old male youth, geography teacher, last education: Bachelor's degree
4	DTW	23-year-old male youth, geography teacher, last education: Bachelor's degree
5	FBK	24-year-old male youth, freelance worker, last education: Bachelor's degree
6	DP	24-year-old female youth, freelance worker, last education: Master's degree
7	DS	24-year-old female youth, currently unemployed, last education: Master's degree
8	IS	23-year-old female youth, currently unemployed, last education: Bachelor's degree
9	IL	23-year-old female youth, currently unemployed, last education: Bachelor's degree
10	BS	26-year-old male youth, freelance worker, last education: Bachelor's degree
11	DT	24-year-old male youth, data collection staff, last education: Bachelor's degree

12	PA	24-year-old female youth, currently unemployed, last education: Bachelor's degree
13	AS	24-year-old female youth, geography teacher, last education: Bachelor's degree
14	NU	24-year-old female youth, currently unemployed, last education: Bachelor's degree
15	AD	24-year-old female youth, hospital administrative staff, last education: Bachelor's degree

Data collection methods in this study include interviews, documentation, and observation, all of which are carried out to reveal the essence of FoMo in the selection of viral products among students. Interviews were conducted directly using structured questions which were then explored further based on the experiences of the participants, while documentation in the form of digital recordings and photos of student interactions with viral products on social media were used as a complement to enrich the data. (Rachmawati, 2007). Interpretation of information follows the scheme of (Bastian et al., 2018) which includes the stages of data collection, reduction, verification, and drawing conclusions.

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### Result



**Picture 1. Documentation of Interviews with Informant Group 1.**

Based on conversations with various participants, it was found that the majority of respondents experienced pressure due to FoMo, which influenced their decisions to purchase viral items. IS, DP, FBK, IH, DY, and DTW showed a strong tendency to follow trends, especially those trending on Instagram and TikTok, in order to stay connected with their social communities and avoid feelings of isolation. For instance, IS bought a popular bag frequently

used by influencers, while FBK purchased shoes that were trending on TikTok. In their purchasing decisions, the main factors were not price or product functionality, but rather trends and social influence from friends and influencers. However, some respondents, such as DP and IH, have begun to adopt a more cautious approach by considering the usefulness of products before purchasing. In contrast, IL took a more logical stance and was not easily influenced by the fear of missing out, emphasizing the importance of necessity and purpose in each purchase. Although active on social media, FF appeared to be less affected by FoMo. Overall, the FoMo phenomenon has clearly shaped the lifestyle and financial conditions of the respondents, with several admitting to having sacrificed other needs just to follow current trends. Gen Z consumerism now exists in a more dynamic landscape that is closely tied to the ever-evolving wave of social media.



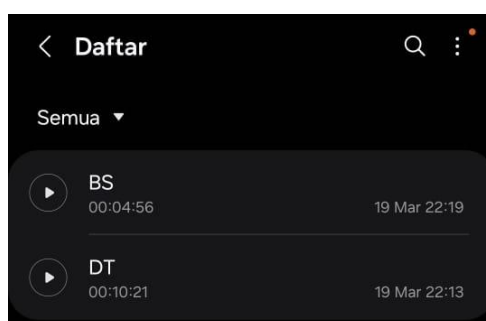
**Picture 2. Documentation of Interviews with Informant Group 2.**

An interview analysis with DS (24 years old, a female currently seeking employment) revealed that although she is actively engaged on Instagram and TikTok and acknowledges the existence of trends and social influence on her shopping decisions, she does not fall into the FoMo category. DS decided to buy a pair of trending flat shoes because many of her friends and influencers were wearing them, but she still considered her own desires and preferences. She realized that following trends can affect her finances and admitted to having postponed other desires in order to buy trending items. DS has become more careful and wise in her purchases, emphasizing the importance for students to be cautious and not buy things just for the sake of following trends.



**Picture 3. Documentation of Interviews with Informant Group 3.**

The results of conversations with PA, AS, NU, and AD revealed various responses to the FoMo phenomenon. PA, a 24-year-old currently seeking employment, stated that although she is active on Instagram, she is not affected by FoMo and prefers to buy items based on personal needs rather than trends. She prioritizes value and quality in her purchasing decisions and is more careful in managing her expenses. Informant AS, a 24-year-old English teacher, acknowledged that her life is influenced by FoMo, especially in the areas of beauty and fashion, and she often buys viral products after hearing recommendations from well-known influencers. AS has adopted a more cautious attitude after reflecting on some of her impulsive purchases. NU, also 24 years old and looking for a job, is not influenced by FoMo, choosing to buy items based on necessity rather than trends, and is unaffected by friends' or influencers' opinions. AD, a 24-year-old working as a hospital administrative staff, is influenced by FoMo and follows product trends on Instagram and TikTok, particularly in the beauty and fashion sectors where influencers play a key role in her purchasing decisions. Nevertheless, she strives to be more selective and wise in choosing items that are truly needed. Although some respondents were caught in the wave of FoMo, they all made efforts to be more prudent and manage their finances responsibly.



**Picture 4. Documentation of Interviews with Informant Group 4.**

Based on interviews with BS (26 years old, freelancer) and DT (24 years old, data analyst), it was revealed that both are affected by FoMo and are active on Instagram and TikTok. BS often purchases viral items, such as shoes and accessories trending on TikTok, influenced by friends and influencers, although he tries to be more selective. BS admitted that

following trends can impact his finances and sometimes lead to sacrificing other needs. DT is also influenced by FoMo, especially in the area of gadgets and technology, and has bought viral products like earphones. A positive development is that DT is trying to be more selective after experiencing regret from past purchases. Both emphasized the importance for students to manage their finances wisely and avoid making purchases hastily just because something is trending.

## **Discussion**

Based on conversations with various respondents, FoMo has a significant influence on the purchasing decisions of viral products, particularly among Generation Z. IS, DP, FBK, IH, DY, and DTW tend to follow emerging trends on Instagram and TikTok to stay connected with their social communities and avoid feeling isolated. IS purchased a bag that is widely used by influencers, while FBK bought shoes that are trending on TikTok. Their purchasing decisions are more influenced by trends and social pressure from friends and influencers than by the value or functionality of the products. However, some respondents, such as DP and IH, have begun to take a more selective approach by evaluating the benefits of products before buying. In contrast, IL and PA are more rational in dealing with FoMo, choosing to buy items based on their needs rather than simply following trends. Overall, the FoMo phenomenon strongly affects students' lifestyles and financial conditions, with some admitting to having sacrificed other priorities in order to follow trends. This reflects a form of Gen Z consumerism that is highly influenced by the ever-evolving dynamics of social media.

Unlike other respondents, individuals such as DS, PA, NU, and AD demonstrated various responses to the FoMo phenomenon. Although DS is active on Instagram and TikTok, she is not influenced by FoMo and prefers to purchase items based on her personal needs rather than following trends. She is aware that following trends can affect her finances, but she always chooses products with careful consideration. PA, AS, and NU adopted a more rational approach to purchasing, choosing items that fit their needs and avoiding purchases based solely on aesthetics or trends. However, AD and AS, despite being influenced by FoMo, have tried to be more cautious after experiencing the economic consequences and disappointment from impulsive purchases. Overall, although some Generation Z students are caught in the wave of FoMo and a tendency toward consumptive behavior regarding viral products, they all strive to be wiser in managing their finances and making more responsible purchasing decisions with a focus on essential needs.



#### 4. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that the FoMo phenomenon profoundly influences the lifestyle and consumptive behavior of Generation Z students, particularly in purchasing viral products trending on platforms such as Instagram and TikTok. The majority of students choose to follow trends to stay connected with their social communities and avoid feelings of loneliness. Their purchasing decisions are more influenced by trends and the social success of friends and influencers, although some students have begun to be more cautious in evaluating the usefulness of products before buying. Additionally, several students take a more rational approach by choosing items based on their personal needs rather than simply following trends. This sense of FoMo can affect both lifestyle and financial conditions, but most students strive to manage their spending more wisely and choose products that are genuinely needed, avoiding purchases driven solely by trends and fashion.

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