

FOMO AS A SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING TOOL -ETHICAL IMPLICATIONS AND CONVERSION IMPACT AMONGST GEN Z

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to explore how Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) serves as a marketing tool on social media, with an emphasis on its ethical considerations and its impact on the purchasing decisions among Gen Z. In today's digitally connected world, FOMO acts as a strong psychological mechanism driving purchasing behavior and customer engagement on various digital platforms. Based on secondary qualitative research, this paper consolidates findings from prior literature to explore how FOMO works through feelings of social comparison, emotional anxiety and the desire to connect, which often contributes to Gen Z's impulsive buying habits. This study reveals that Gen Z, being raised in a digital environment, are highly responsive to FOMO- triggering strategies such as time-limited offers, Influencer-driven promotions & scarcity cues that creates urgency and social pressure. Although these strategies can successfully drive engagement & short-term conversions, they also raise ethical concerns as they capitalize on psychological susceptibilities which often results in emotional distress and post-purchase regrets. Ultimately, the study also highlights the need for marketers to maintain a balance between persuasive appeal & ethical integrity, it also encourages them to adopt value-driven marketing practices. The future research can explore more frameworks that aligns FOMO-driven marketing with consumer welfare to build a more ethical and sustainable digital environment.

KEYWORDS: *FOMO (Fear Of Missing Out), Social Media Marketing, Digital Persuasion, Gen Z Consumers, Ethical Implications, Purchasing Behavior.*

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