

The Impact of FOMO and Meme Marketing on Generation Z Consumer Engagement: A Conceptual Study

Param Patel¹, Dhrumil Babaria², Harsh Kalyani³

^{1,2,3}International Institute of Business Study, Bengaluru, India.

Abstract:

The rise of social media has significantly changed the way brands interact with Generation Z consumers. Among the various digital marketing strategies, FOMO (Fear of Missing Out) marketing and meme marketing have gained considerable attention due to their ability to attract, engage, and influence young audiences. FOMO marketing creates a sense of urgency and exclusivity, encouraging consumers to take immediate action, while meme marketing uses humour, relatability, and trending content to enhance brand visibility and engagement. This conceptual study examines the impact of these two marketing strategies on Gen Z consumer engagement using secondary data from academic journals, industry reports, and digital marketing studies. The findings suggest that both FOMO and meme marketing positively influence consumer attention, social media interaction, brand recall, and purchase intention. The study highlights the importance of authenticity, cultural relevance, and emotional connection in engaging Gen Z consumers. The research contributes to the understanding of contemporary digital marketing practices and provides valuable insights for marketers seeking to build stronger relationships with younger audiences.

Keywords: FOMO Marketing, Meme Marketing, Generation Z, Consumer Engagement, Social Media Marketing, Digital Consumer Behaviour.

1. INTRODUCTION

The increasing use of social media has significantly changed the way brands communicate with consumers. Platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, and X have become essential marketing channels, particularly for Generation Z. As digital natives, Gen Z consumers spend a considerable amount of time online and are highly influenced by trends, social interactions, and digital content.

To capture the attention of this generation, marketers are increasingly adopting innovative and engaging strategies. Two of the most prominent approaches are Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) marketing and meme marketing. FOMO marketing creates a sense of urgency by promoting limited-time offers, exclusive products, and scarcity-based campaigns, encouraging consumers to take immediate action (Przybylski et al.). Meme marketing, in contrast, uses humorous, relatable, and culturally relevant content to connect with audiences and increase brand visibility (Tsai).

These strategies have become particularly effective among Gen Z consumers, who value authenticity, entertainment, and interactive brand communication. Unlike traditional advertising, FOMO and meme marketing encourage active participation through likes, comments, shares, and online discussions. As a result, they play an important role in shaping consumer engagement and influencing purchasing decisions. Consumer engagement has become a key measure of marketing effectiveness in the digital era. Brands that successfully engage consumers often experience stronger brand awareness, customer loyalty, and purchase intentions. While previous studies have examined FOMO marketing and meme marketing separately, limited attention has been given to their combined influence on Gen Z consumer engagement. Therefore, this study aims to explore the impact of FOMO and meme marketing on Generation Z consumer engagement through an analysis of existing literature and secondary data. The study seeks to provide

insights that can help marketers develop more effective digital marketing strategies for younger consumers.

2. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Generation Z represents one of the most influential consumer groups in the digital era. As brands increasingly rely on social media marketing, understanding the effectiveness of FOMO and meme marketing has become essential. This study explores how these strategies influence consumer engagement among Gen Z consumers. The research contributes to existing literature by examining the combined role of FOMO and meme marketing in shaping consumer behavior. The findings may help marketers, brand managers, and businesses design more engaging and relevant digital marketing campaigns for younger audiences.

3. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

1. To examine the influence of FOMO (Fear of Missing Out) marketing on consumer engagement among Generation Z.
2. To analyse the impact of meme marketing on consumer engagement and brand interaction among Generation Z consumers.
3. To explore how FOMO and meme marketing collectively contribute to enhancing consumer engagement in the digital marketing environment.

4. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Generation Z is widely recognized as the first generation to grow up entirely in a digital environment. According to Francis and Hoefel, Gen Z consumers value authenticity, creativity, and meaningful interactions with brands, making social media a crucial platform for engagement (Francis and Hoefel). Their purchasing decisions are often shaped by online communities, influencers, and digital trends.

The concept of Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) has gained significant attention in consumer behavior research. Przybylski et al. define FOMO as a feeling of anxiety arising from the perception that others may be having rewarding experiences without one's participation (Przybylski et al.). Marketers often leverage this psychological trigger through limited-time offers, exclusive product launches, and scarcity-based promotions to encourage immediate consumer action.

Alfina argues that FOMO can significantly influence consumer engagement and decision-making in digital environments (Alfina). Similarly, Ujjain found that FOMO-driven marketing messages increase consumer attention and interaction, particularly among younger social media users (Ujjain).

Meme marketing has emerged as another effective strategy for engaging Generation Z consumers. According to Tsai, memes allow brands to communicate in a humorous, relatable, and culturally relevant manner, making brand messages more appealing to younger audiences (Tsai). Because memes are highly shareable, they contribute to greater brand visibility and online engagement.

Barbu Kleitsch further highlights that emotionally engaging and trend-based content can strengthen consumer involvement with brands (Barbu Kleitsch). Consequently, meme marketing enhances brand recall and encourages active consumer participation through likes, comments, and shares.

The literature suggests that both FOMO marketing and meme marketing positively influence consumer engagement. While FOMO encourages immediate responses through urgency and exclusivity, meme marketing promotes engagement through humor and relatability. Together, these strategies help brands establish stronger connections with Generation Z consumers in the digital marketplace.

5. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a **conceptual and descriptive research design** to examine the impact of FOMO marketing and meme marketing on Generation Z consumer engagement. The research is based entirely on

secondary data, making it suitable for understanding existing knowledge, identifying patterns, and developing a conceptual framework related to digital consumer behaviour.

5.1 Data Sources

The study relies on secondary data collected from a variety of sources, including peer-reviewed journal articles, conference papers, books, industry reports, and reputable online publications. Relevant literature was obtained from databases such as Google Scholar, ResearchGate, Scopus-indexed journals, and marketing research reports. Priority was given to recent studies published between 2020 and 2026 to ensure the relevance of the findings, while a few foundational studies were included to provide theoretical support.

5.2 Data Collection Process

The data for this study were collected through a systematic review of secondary sources related to FOMO marketing, meme marketing, Generation Z, consumer engagement, and digital consumer behaviour. Relevant literature was identified using academic search platforms such as Google Scholar, ResearchGate, Scopus-indexed journals, and published industry reports. Keywords including *FOMO Marketing*, *Fear of Missing Out*, *Meme Marketing*, *Generation Z Consumer Behaviour*, *Consumer Engagement*, and *Social Media Marketing* were used to locate relevant studies.

To ensure the quality and relevance of the research, priority was given to peer-reviewed journal articles and recent publications. Studies that directly examined consumer engagement, social media marketing, FOMO, or meme marketing were included, while articles with limited relevance to the research objectives were excluded. The selected literature was carefully reviewed and organized according to the key themes addressed in the study.

5.3 Data Analysis

The collected data were analysed using a thematic analysis approach. This method involved reviewing and categorizing information from different sources to identify recurring themes, concepts, and patterns related to the impact of FOMO and meme marketing on Generation Z consumer engagement.

The analysis focused on understanding how FOMO marketing influences consumer attention, urgency, and purchase behaviour, as well as how meme marketing affects brand recall, social sharing, and consumer interaction. Similarities and differences across the reviewed studies were compared to develop a comprehensive understanding of the topic.

Based on the findings from the literature, major themes were identified and synthesized to establish relationships between the variables under study. The insights obtained from this analysis formed the basis for the conceptual framework and the findings of the research.

5.4 Research Limitations

The study is based entirely on secondary data and therefore relies on the accuracy, credibility, and scope of previously published research. Since no primary data were collected, the findings reflect interpretations derived from existing literature rather than direct consumer responses.

The study focuses specifically on Generation Z consumers and may not accurately represent the behaviour of other demographic groups. Additionally, digital marketing trends, social media platforms, and consumer preferences continue to evolve rapidly, which may affect the long-term applicability of some findings.

Furthermore, the research adopts a conceptual approach and does not include statistical testing or empirical validation. As a result, the proposed relationships between FOMO marketing, meme marketing, and consumer engagement should be viewed as conceptual insights that may be further examined through future empirical studies.

6. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The conceptual framework of this study is developed based on the existing literature on FOMO marketing, meme marketing, and consumer engagement. The framework proposes that FOMO marketing and meme marketing act as independent variables that influence Generation Z consumer engagement.

FOMO marketing creates a sense of urgency, scarcity, and exclusivity, encouraging consumers to interact with brand content and make faster purchasing decisions. Meme marketing, on the other hand, uses humour, relatability, and cultural relevance to capture consumer attention and increase brand interaction. These factors collectively contribute to higher levels of consumer engagement, including likes, comments, shares, brand recall, and purchase intention.

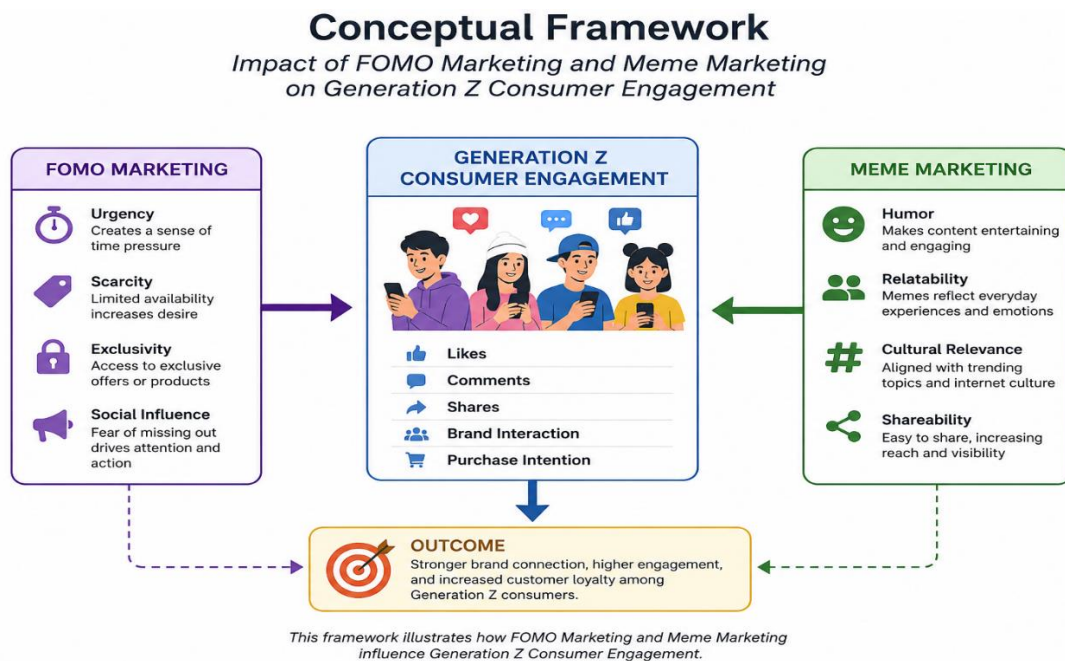


Figure 1: Proposed Conceptual Framework

Key Components of the Conceptual Framework:

1.FOMO Marketing: Creates urgency and exclusivity, encouraging consumers to engage with brand content and take quick actions.

2.Meme Marketing: Uses humour and relatable content to attract attention and increase consumer interaction.

3.Consumer Attention and Interest: Acts as a bridge between marketing strategies and consumer engagement by capturing users' interest.

4.Generation Z Consumer Engagement: Includes likes, comments, shares, brand interaction, and purchase intention.

5.Positive Brand Outcomes: Results in higher brand awareness, stronger customer relationships, and improved consumer loyalty.

The framework suggests that both FOMO marketing and meme marketing positively influence Generation Z consumer engagement. While FOMO marketing drives immediate consumer action through psychological urgency, meme marketing strengthens engagement by making brand communication more entertaining, relatable, and shareable.

7. FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The analysis of existing literature reveals that both FOMO marketing and meme marketing significantly influence Generation Z consumer engagement in the digital environment. As Gen Z consumers spend a

considerable amount of time on social media platforms, they are more likely to engage with content that is interactive, relatable, and emotionally appealing.

One of the key findings of the study is that FOMO marketing effectively captures consumer attention by creating a sense of urgency and exclusivity. Strategies such as limited-time offers, flash sales, countdown timers, and exclusive product launches encourage consumers to take immediate action. According to Przybylski et al., the fear of missing out is closely linked to online behaviour and can influence decision-making among highly connected social media users (Przybylski et al.). As a result, FOMO-based campaigns often generate higher engagement rates and increase consumers' willingness to interact with brands.

Another important finding is that meme marketing has become a powerful communication tool for brands targeting Generation Z. Memes are easy to understand, entertaining, and highly shareable. The literature suggests that meme-based content attracts greater consumer attention than conventional advertisements because it aligns with the communication style of younger audiences. Tsai observed that meme marketing enhances brand visibility and encourages active participation through likes, comments, and shares (Tsai). The study also finds that authenticity plays a crucial role in determining the effectiveness of both marketing strategies. Generation Z consumers are more likely to engage with brands that communicate in a genuine and relatable manner. Francis and Hoefel emphasize that younger consumers prefer brands that understand their values, interests, and digital culture (Francis and Hoefel). Therefore, brands that use memes naturally and apply FOMO ethically tend to achieve better engagement outcomes.

Furthermore, the findings indicate that while FOMO marketing primarily drives immediate consumer responses, meme marketing contributes to long-term engagement and brand recall. FOMO encourages consumers to act quickly due to perceived scarcity, whereas meme marketing strengthens emotional connections and increases brand memorability. Together, these strategies complement each other and create a more engaging digital experience for consumers.

Overall, the study concludes that the strategic use of FOMO marketing and meme marketing can significantly enhance Generation Z consumer engagement. Businesses that successfully combine urgency, authenticity, humor, and cultural relevance are more likely to build stronger relationships with consumers and improve their overall digital marketing performance.

8. CONCLUSION

The study examined the impact of FOMO marketing and meme marketing on Generation Z consumer engagement through the analysis of secondary data and existing literature. The findings indicate that both marketing strategies play a significant role in attracting consumer attention and encouraging engagement in digital environments.

FOMO marketing influences consumer behavior by creating a sense of urgency and exclusivity, motivating consumers to interact with brand content and make quicker decisions. Meme marketing, on the other hand, enhances engagement through humor, relatability, and cultural relevance, making brand communication more appealing to younger audiences.

The study further highlights that Generation Z consumers prefer authentic, interactive, and entertaining content over traditional advertising approaches. As a result, brands that effectively incorporate FOMO and meme marketing into their digital strategies are more likely to improve consumer engagement, strengthen brand visibility, and build stronger relationships with their target audience.

Overall, the research concludes that FOMO marketing and meme marketing have become valuable tools for organizations seeking to engage Generation Z consumers in an increasingly competitive digital marketplace.

9. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study is based entirely on secondary data collected from existing research articles, books, and industry reports. Therefore, the findings are dependent on the accuracy and scope of the available literature.

The research focuses specifically on Generation Z consumers and may not be applicable to other generational groups. Additionally, consumer behavior and social media trends evolve rapidly, which may influence the long-term relevance of the findings.

Furthermore, the study does not include primary data collection or statistical analysis. As a result, the proposed relationships between FOMO marketing, meme marketing, and consumer engagement are conceptual in nature and require further empirical validation.

REFERENCES:

1. Alfina. "FOMO Related Consumer Behaviour in Marketing Context." *Cogent Business & Management*, vol. 10, no. 3, 2023.
2. Francis, Tracy, and Fernanda Hoefel. "True Gen: Generation Z and Its Implications for Companies." *McKinsey & Company*, 2018.
3. Przybylski, Andrew K., Kou Murayama, Cody R. DeHaan, and Valerie Gladwell. "Motivational, Emotional, and Behavioral Correlates of Fear of Missing Out." *Computers in Human Behavior*, vol. 29, no. 4, 2013, pp. 1841–1848.
4. Razzaq, A., et al. "Meme Marketing Effectiveness: A Moderated-Mediation Examination of Consumer Responses to Brand Memes." *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, vol. 76, 2024.
5. Tsai, P. H. "The Influence of Meme Marketing on Consumer Purchase Behaviour." *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, vol. 82, 2025.
6. Arganoz, P. E., et al. "The Effectiveness of Using Meme Marketing on Generation Z Consumers in the Philippines." *Review of Integrative Business and Economics Research*, 2024.
7. Mutiarasari, N. A. G., et al. "Scrolling Toward Simplicity: Social Media Use, Fear of Missing Out, and Minimalist Consumption Among Generation Z in Indonesia." *Jurnal Ilmiah Manajemen dan Bisnis*, vol. 10, no. 2, 2025.
8. Pramesty, Jihan Adira, and Sarita Candra Merida. "Fear of Missing Out (FoMO) and Impulsive Buying Among Generation Z: An Examination Within the Doom Spending Phenomenon." *Fakultas Psikologi Ar-Raniry Journal*, vol. 3, no. 2, 2025.
9. Syafila, A. O. "Examining the Role of Fear of Missing Out in Shaping Online Impulsive Buying Behaviour Among Generation Z Students." *Sanitas Journal of Social Research*, 2025.
10. Minh, N. T. B. "The Impact of FOMO and Promotional Programs on Online Purchasing Decisions of Generation Z." *Dong Thap University Journal of Science*, 2026.
11. "Understanding the Influence of Meme Marketing in Influencing Gen Z's Brand Perception." *ResearchGate Publication*, 2025.
12. "A Study on Gen Z's Social Media Behaviour: Consumer Preferences Towards Brands Adopting Meme Marketing." *International Journal of Advanced Research*, 2025.
13. "Impact of Meme Marketing on Generation Z." *International Journal of Novel Research and Development*, 2025.
14. "Generational Differences in Consumer Engagement with Meme-Based Marketing." *International Scientific Journal of Engineering and Management*, 2025.
15. "Memes as Marketing: Exploring Their Role in Digital Brand Engagement and Consumer Perception." *Inspira Research Journal of Commerce, Economics and Computer Science*, 2025.