

Research Paper

Effect of Usage of Online Platforms on Levels of Consumer Behaviour, Online Addiction, and FOMO amongst Generation Z

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ABSTRACT

This study explores how online platform use influences consumer behavior, fear of missing out (FOMO), and social networking addiction among Generation Z. Social media plays a central role in their daily lives, shaping how they connect, feel, and make decisions. A quantitative design is used with 120 participants aged 14–29 from the Delhi-NCR region. Data is collected using standardized scales and analyzed through correlation, regression, and t-test. The findings show that higher social media use is linked with increased consumer behavior, stronger FOMO, and greater social networking addiction. FOMO is also positively related to both consumer behavior and addiction. Social media use and FOMO significantly predict consumer behavior. The study highlights the strong influence of digital platforms on emotional experiences and behavioral patterns. It concludes that social media use significantly affects consumer behavior, FOMO, and social networking addiction among Generation Z.

Keywords: *Social Media Use, Consumer Behavior, FOMO, Social Networking Addiction, Generation Z*

Over the years, social media has rapidly evolved and brought people closer than ever before, reshaping how individuals connect, communicate, and experience the world (Kalita, & Goswami, 2025). For Generation Z, this digital environment is not just an addition to life but a core part of it. Born and raised in the “digital era,” they have grown up alongside technology, making online platforms central to their everyday routines (Chakola, 2023). Social media has become a space where they interact, express themselves, and stay constantly updated with ongoing trends and information. However, this constant connectivity also creates a subtle pressure to always remain engaged, often leading to heightened levels of fear of missing out (FOMO) and anxiety (Sharma, Sachdeva, Malhotra, & Juneja, 2023). At the same time, it cannot be ignored that these platforms have also contributed positively by enhancing communication skills and providing opportunities for self-expression among young individuals (Prihantira, & Dharmawan, 2025).

Generation Z actively engages with platforms such as YouTube and Instagram for entertainment and information, while platforms like Snapchat, Facebook, Reddit, X, and LinkedIn further contribute to their content consumption and social interaction (Kalita, &

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Goswami, 2025). This continuous exposure to online content shapes not only their preferences but also their lifestyle choices. Many individuals feel a strong urge to stay updated with trends and maintain a certain online presence, which often translates into compulsive consumer behavior and increased online purchasing (Kalita, & Goswami, 2025). Advertising companies recognize this pattern and closely monitor Generation Z, as they represent a major segment of online consumers influenced by digital marketing strategies and algorithms (Chakola, 2023).

The concept of FOMO, or fear of missing out, emerged alongside the rise of social networking platforms, reflecting the growing tendency of individuals to compare their lives with what they see online (Chakrabarti, 2024; Fitria, Hadromi, & Ekmarinda, 2024). As people become more connected digitally yet less engaged in offline interactions, they often experience a sense of missing out on meaningful experiences. This emotional state is associated with anxiety, depression, fatigue, and reduced performance in daily life, highlighting its impact on overall well-being. Another important aspect is social media addiction, where excessive use of online platforms leads to increased time consumption, lower emotional stability, and reduced self-esteem (Lina, Hou, & Ali, 2022). This pattern is closely linked with FOMO, as individuals who feel a stronger fear of missing out tend to remain constantly connected, reinforcing their dependence on social media. This cycle further influences consumer behavior, as emotional needs and social comparison drive individuals toward higher levels of online purchasing.

Research also suggests that prolonged social media engagement is associated with traits such as narcissism and lower life satisfaction, which further contribute to increased social media addiction (Nguyen, Tran, Nguyen, Nguyen, & Dinh, 2025). These interconnected factors highlight the complex relationship between digital engagement, emotional experiences, and behavioral patterns. Understanding these relationships is essential for promoting healthier and more balanced digital habits. Studies have also emphasized the importance of sustainable social media practices, suggesting that mindful content and usage can encourage more responsible consumption behavior among Generation Z (Confetto, Covucci, Addeo, & Normando, 2023).

Overall, social media plays a powerful role in shaping the thoughts, emotions, and behaviors of Generation Z. While it offers connection and opportunity, it also introduces challenges that influence both psychological well-being and everyday decision-making.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Azhar, Akhtar, Rahman, & Khan (2025) found that for Generation Z, perceived usefulness increases online purchasing, while perceived risk reduces it. This highlights how practical value plays a key role in shaping online buying behavior.

Kalita, & Goswami (2025) observed that platforms like YouTube and Instagram are most preferred by Gen Z for entertainment and information, followed by Snapchat and Facebook. However, excessive use often leads to mental fatigue and distraction.

Prihantira, & Dharmawan (2025) showed that social media positively influences communication skills among Gen Z, helping them build confidence and express themselves more effectively in digital spaces.

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Rahman, Rizwan, Arumugam, & Jegathesan (2025) found that higher social media addiction and lower self-esteem are linked with greater FOMO. However, FOMO was not directly related to anxiety, suggesting different underlying causes.

Nguyen, Tran, Nguyen, Nguyen, & Dinh (2025) highlighted that narcissism is associated with lower self-esteem and life satisfaction, along with increased social media addiction among Gen Z.

Chakrabarti (2024) explained that FOMO emerged with the rise of social media, where constant online exposure leads to comparison, perfectionism, and reduced psychological well-being.

Fitria, Hadromi, & Ekmarinda (2024) found that FOMO negatively affects performance, leading to anxiety, low productivity, fatigue, and other mental health concerns among young individuals.

Chakola (2023) emphasized that Gen Z's consumer behavior is strongly influenced by social media and influencers, with brands using algorithms to shape preferences and purchasing decisions.

Confetto, Covucci, Addeo, & Normando (2023) suggested that sustainable social media content can encourage healthier and more responsible consumption patterns among Gen Z.

Sharma, Sachdeva, Malhotra, & Juneja (2023) found that increased time spent online is linked with higher FOMO, lower emotional stability, and reduced extraversion, especially among Gen Z.

Borshalina et al. (2022) reported that social media alone does not significantly influence purchasing, but when combined with FOMO, it strongly impacts online consumption behavior.

Lina, Hou, & Ali (2022) highlighted that celebrity influence and instant gratification drive impulsive buying behavior among Gen Z on online platforms.

Pertiwi, Suminar, & Ardi (2022) found a strong link between social media use, self-esteem, and psychological well-being, emphasizing the need to reduce dependency for healthier outcomes.

Lalwani, Kumar, & Rani (2021) observed that Gen Z, especially males, show higher online engagement and are influenced by pricing, advertisements, and reviews while making purchase decisions.

METHODOLOGY

Aim

To analyze the effects of online platforms' use on consumer behavior, social media addiction, levels of FOMO amongst Generation Z

Objectives

- To study the levels of Social Media Usage amongst Generation Z.

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- To study the correlation between Social Media Usage and Consumer Behavior amongst Generation Z.
- To study the correlation between Social Media Usage and FOMO amongst Generation Z.
- To study the correlation between Social Media Usage and Social Networking Addiction amongst Generation Z.

Hypotheses

- Social Media Usage has significant relation with Consumer Behavior
- Social Media Usage has significant relation with FOMO
- Social Media Usage has significant relation with Social Networking Addiction
- FOMO has significant relation with Social Networking Addiction

Research Design

Quantitative research design was implemented using convent sampling style, to collect data from participants.

Population

Generation Z, born from 1997 to 2012, within the age range 14 years to 29 years old, resided in Delhi-NCR region, who all uses social media platforms.

Sample and Sampling Technique

The research was conducted on 200 samples who belong to Generation Z. Convenience Sample Technique was used.

Research Tools

- **SMUS Questionnaire:** Social Media Use Scale was developed and designed by Lin, Wang, and Chen (2016). It has 22 items and has 5 subdivisions; Social Interaction, Entertainment, Information Seeking, Convince, Social Comparison. It calculates the degree of usage of online platforms by a person, and its impacts.
- **CB Questionnaire:** Consumer Behavior Scale was developed by Piyul Maruti Walunj (2021). It has 10 items, used to calculate how much a person purchases and is influenced by social media advertising. It shows the levels of mental state of a person as well.
- **FOMO Questionnaire:** FOMO (Fear of Missing Out) Questionnaire developed by Przybylski, Murayama, Dehaan, and Gladwell (2013). It is to assess the fear of missing out level in a person. It has 22 items, with Yes/No questions, Rating scale, Frequency scale, and 5 likert scales.
- **SNA Questionnaire:** Social Networking Addiction was developed by Shahnawaz & Rehman (2016), to assess the degree of addiction in people due to overindulgence on online platforms. It has 21 items with 6 subdivisions: salience, mood modification, tolerance, withdrawal, conflict, relapse.

Methods of Data Analysis

Data was analysed by Jamovi software for statistical analyses.

- Frequency Analysis for Demographic Detail
- Cronbach' alpha for reliability
- Descriptive Statistics

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- Pearson Correlation Analysis
- Linear Regression analysis
- Independent samples t-test

Ethical Considerations

- Consent form was filled out voluntarily by participants for each sample collection
- Confidentiality will be practiced
- Voluntary Participation was practiced
- Understanding of study rules by participants

RESULTS

The study consisted of 120 participants belonging to Generation Z. The majority of participants fell within the second age category (72.5%), indicating that most respondents were young adults. The sample was largely female-dominated, with 90% female participants and 10% male participants. Most participants were students (90.8%), reflecting a population actively engaged in academic and digital environments.

A significant proportion of participants reported long-term exposure to social media, with 73.3% using it for more than five years. Almost all participants (99.2%) reported active use of social media, and 97.5% owned smartphones, with 91.7% accessing platforms primarily through mobile devices. These findings highlight the deep integration of digital platforms into daily life.

Patterns of Social Media Usage

The results indicate high levels of engagement with social media platforms. A majority of participants (61.7%) reported spending a high number of hours per week on social media. Additionally, 77.5% of participants reported opening social media applications immediately after unlocking their phones, suggesting habitual usage patterns.

Platform-wise trends show that Instagram had high engagement (55%), followed by other platforms such as Snapchat, WhatsApp, Facebook, and Twitter with varying levels of usage. Activities on social media were largely centered around viewing photos and videos, social interaction, and seeking information, reflecting the role of these platforms in both entertainment and communication.

Table No. 1 *Frequencies of How many hours per week do you spend on social media?*

How many hours per week do you spend on social media?	Counts	% of Total	Cumulative %
1	16	13.3%	13.3%
2	30	25.0%	38.3%
3	74	61.7%	100.0%

Table No. 2 *Frequencies of How long have you been using social media?*

How long have you been using social media?	Counts	% of Total	Cumulative %
1	5	4.2%	4.2%
2	27	22.5%	26.7%
3	88	73.3%	100.0%

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Awareness and Experience of FOMO

Awareness of FOMO was very high among participants, with 91.7% reporting familiarity with the concept. In terms of experience, 54.2% reported experiencing FOMO, while a smaller percentage denied or were uncertain about it. Additionally, 58.3% of participants reported having attempted a digital detox at some point, indicating awareness of the potential negative effects of excessive social media use.

Table No. 3 *Frequencies of Do you think you have 'FOMO'?*

Do you think you have 'FOMO'?	Counts	% of Total	Cumulative %
1	52	43.3%	43.3%
2	65	54.2%	97.5%
3	1	0.8%	98.3%
4	2	1.7%	100.0%

Reliability and Descriptive Statistics

All measurement scales demonstrated good internal consistency. Cronbach's alpha values were high for Social Media Use (0.873), Consumer Behavior (0.744), FOMO (0.845), and Social Networking Addiction (0.934), indicating reliable measurement of variables.

Descriptive statistics showed moderate to high levels across variables. The mean score for social media use (73.0) suggests frequent engagement, while consumer behavior (40.6) and FOMO (41.1) indicate moderate levels. Social networking addiction showed a relatively higher mean (76.5), reflecting variability in addiction tendencies among participants.

Correlation Analysis

Pearson correlation analysis revealed significant positive relationships among key variables. Social media use was positively correlated with consumer behavior ($r = 0.332$, $p < .001$), indicating that higher engagement is associated with increased purchasing tendencies.

Social media use also showed a positive relationship with FOMO ($r = 0.202$, $p < .05$) and social networking addiction ($r = 0.422$, $p < .001$), suggesting that increased usage contributes to both emotional and behavioral dependence.

FOMO was significantly correlated with consumer behavior ($r = 0.305$, $p < .001$) and social networking addiction ($r = 0.445$, $p < .001$), highlighting its central role in influencing both psychological experiences and online behaviors. These findings are consistent with prior research indicating the interconnected nature of social media use, FOMO, and behavioral outcomes (Sharma et al., 2023; Borshalina et al., 2022).

Table No. 4 *Correlations between mother's optimism and her symptom reporting*

		SMUS_ Total	CB_ Total	FOMO_ Total	SNA_ Total
SMUS_ Total	Pearson's r	—			
	df	—			
	p-value	—			
	95% CI Upper	—			
	95% CI Lower	—			
	Pearson's r	0.332***	—		
	df	118	—		

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CB_Total	p-value	<.001	—		
	95% CI Upper	0.483	—		
	95% CI Lower	0.163	—		
	Pearson's r	0.202*	0.305***	—	
FOMO_Total	df	118	118	—	
	p-value	0.027	<.001	—	
	95% CI Upper	0.368	0.459	—	
	95% CI Lower	0.023	0.133	—	
	Pearson's r	0.422***	0.296**	0.445***	—
	df	118	118	118	—
SNA_Total	p-value	<.001	0.001	<.001	—
	95% CI Upper	0.559	0.451	0.578	—
	95% CI Lower	0.263	0.123	0.289	—

Regression Analysis

Linear regression analysis showed that social media use and FOMO significantly predict consumer behavior. Social media use ($\beta = 0.2488$, $p = 0.009$) and FOMO ($\beta = 0.2118$, $p = 0.026$) emerged as significant predictors. However, social networking addiction did not significantly predict consumer behavior ($p = 0.344$) when all variables were considered together. The model explained 17.6% of the variance in consumer behavior ($R^2 = 0.176$), suggesting that while these factors are important, other variables may also contribute.

Group Differences (t-test Analysis)

Independent samples t-test results indicated no significant differences between groups across social media use, consumer behavior, FOMO, and social networking addiction ($p > .05$). Although minor variations in mean scores were observed, these differences were not statistically significant, suggesting relatively similar patterns across groups.

Table No.5 Independent Samples T-Test

							95% Confidence Interval			
		Statistic	df	p	Mean difference	SE difference	Lower	Upper	Cohen's d	Effect Size
SMU S Total	Student's t	1.085	118	0.280	2.44	2.25	-2.016	6.90	Cohen's d	0.330
CB Total	Student's t	1.368	118	0.174	2.11	1.54	-0.945	5.17	Cohen's d	0.416
FOMO Total	Student's t	-0.958	118	0.340	-2.89	3.01	-8.858	3.08	Cohen's d	-0.292
SNA Total	Student's t	0.380	118	0.705	2.73	7.19	-11.500	16.96	Cohen's d	0.116

DISCUSSION

The present study set out to understand how the use of online platforms shapes consumer behavior, fear of missing out (FOMO), and social networking addiction among Generation Z. The findings clearly reflect how deeply social media has become a part of everyday life for young individuals. Almost all participants reported active use of social media, with the majority spending a significant number of hours online each week. This aligns with existing research which highlights that Generation Z, having grown up in a digital environment, naturally integrates social media into daily routines for communication, entertainment, and information (Kalita, & Goswami, 2025; Chakola, 2023).

One of the most noticeable patterns in the findings is the intensity and habitual nature of social media use. A large proportion of participants reported opening social media platforms almost immediately after unlocking their phones, suggesting that usage is not always conscious but often automatic. This supports earlier findings that excessive engagement with social media can become habitual and deeply embedded in daily life (Sharma, Sachdeva, Malhotra, & Juneja, 2023). At the same time, the high level of usage also reflects the positive side of digital platforms, as they continue to provide opportunities for connection, self-expression, and communication development among Generation Z (Prihantira, & Dharmawan, 2025).

The study also highlights the strong presence of FOMO among participants. A significant proportion reported experiencing FOMO, and an even larger number were aware of the concept. This reflects how normalized this emotional experience has become in today's digital culture. The constant exposure to others' lives, achievements, and experiences creates a subtle yet persistent pressure to stay connected and not miss out. These findings are consistent with previous research, which suggests that FOMO has emerged alongside the rise of social networking platforms and is closely linked to social comparison and online engagement (Chakrabarti, 2024; Fitria, Hadromi, & Ekmarinda, 2024).

Importantly, the results of this study show a significant positive relationship between social media use and FOMO. This indicates that as individuals spend more time online, they are more likely to experience feelings of missing out. This relationship highlights the emotional cost of constant connectivity. While social media creates opportunities for connection, it also exposes individuals to curated versions of others' lives, which may lead to dissatisfaction and comparison. As supported by Sharma et al. (2023), increased time spent online is associated with higher levels of FOMO and reduced emotional stability.

Another key finding of the study is the significant relationship between social media use and consumer behavior. Participants who reported higher engagement with social media also showed stronger tendencies toward online purchasing. This reflects how digital platforms influence not only thoughts and emotions but also everyday decisions. Exposure to advertisements, influencers, and trending products creates a sense of urgency and desire to participate in what is perceived as popular or socially valued. This finding aligns with research by Chakola (2023), which highlights how social media algorithms and influencer culture shape consumer preferences among Generation Z. Similarly, Lina, Hou, & Ali (2022) suggest that convenience, instant gratification, and celebrity influence play a major role in driving impulsive online purchases.

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FOMO also emerged as an important factor influencing consumer behavior. The study found a positive relationship between FOMO and purchasing tendencies, suggesting that individuals who experience stronger feelings of missing out are more likely to engage in consumption behavior. This reflects an emotional motivation behind purchasing decisions, where individuals buy products not only for utility but also to feel included or up-to-date with social trends. This is further supported by Borshalina et al. (2022), who found that FOMO significantly influences online purchasing behavior, especially when combined with social media exposure.

The relationship between FOMO and social networking addiction was another strong finding in this study. Individuals who reported higher levels of FOMO also showed greater tendencies toward addictive social media use. This suggests a reinforcing cycle, where the fear of missing out drives individuals to stay constantly connected, which in turn increases their dependence on social media platforms. This finding is consistent with Rahman, Rizwan, Arumugam, & Jegathesan (2025), who reported that individuals with higher social media addiction and lower self-esteem tend to experience higher levels of FOMO.

The study also found a significant relationship between social media use and social networking addiction. Increased engagement with digital platforms was associated with more compulsive and habitual usage patterns. This supports earlier research indicating that excessive social media use can lead to reduced emotional stability and lower self-esteem (Lina, Hou, & Ali, 2022). Over time, this can affect overall well-being, as individuals may struggle to disconnect from online environments.

Interestingly, while social media use and FOMO significantly predicted consumer behavior, social networking addiction did not emerge as a strong independent predictor in the regression analysis. This suggests that while addiction is related to usage and emotional experiences, it may not directly drive purchasing decisions when other factors are considered. Instead, emotional triggers such as FOMO and overall engagement with social media appear to play a more direct role in influencing behavior.

Another important aspect highlighted by the study is the broader psychological impact of prolonged social media engagement. Previous research has linked high levels of social media use with traits such as narcissism, lower life satisfaction, and reduced self-esteem (Nguyen, Tran, Nguyen, Nguyen, & Dinh, 2025). These findings, when considered alongside the present results, emphasize the complex and interconnected nature of digital experiences. Social media is not just a tool but an environment that shapes how individuals perceive themselves and others.

Despite these challenges, it is also important to recognize that social media is not entirely negative. As highlighted by Prihantira & Dharmawan (2025), these platforms can enhance communication skills and provide valuable opportunities for expression and connection. The key lies in understanding how to use these platforms in a balanced and mindful way. Research by Confetto, Covucci, Addeo, & Normando (2023) suggests that promoting sustainable and responsible digital practices can help individuals develop healthier consumption habits and reduce negative psychological outcomes.

Overall, the findings of this study highlight the dual nature of social media. On one hand, it offers connection, convenience, and opportunities for growth. On the other hand, it

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introduces emotional pressures, behavioral changes, and potential risks related to addiction and well-being. For Generation Z, who are deeply immersed in this digital environment, these effects are especially significant.

In conclusion, the discussion reinforces that social media use, FOMO, consumer behavior, and social networking addiction are closely interconnected. Increased engagement with online platforms not only shapes how individuals act but also how they feel and perceive their experiences. Understanding these relationships is essential for promoting healthier digital habits and supporting the psychological well-being of Generation Z in an increasingly connected world.

CONCLUSION

The study shows that social media plays a powerful role in shaping how Generation Z thinks, feels, and behaves. Higher usage connects with stronger consumer behavior, greater fear of missing out, and more habitual patterns of use. Individuals engage not only to connect but also to stay included and updated. This creates a cycle where emotions influence actions, and actions reinforce usage. The findings highlight that social media is not just a tool but a lived experience. It influences everyday choices and emotional well-being. The study concludes that social media use significantly affects consumer behavior, FOMO, and social networking addiction among Generation Z.

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Conflict of Interest

The author declared no conflict of interest.

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