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THE FOMO PHENOMENON IN THE PURCHASE OF GIFTING PRODUCTS DUE TO THE TREND OF SOCIAL MEDIA CONTENT IN UPMS ECONOMICS EDUCATION STUDENTS

Titin Yuni Astutik[1], Yulia Tri Lestari[2], M. Alfian Fikri Muzakki[3], Ragil Retno Palupi[4]
[1,2,3,4]Economic Education Study Program, PGRI Mpu Sindok University, Indonesia
E-mail: titinyuniastutik5@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

The development of social media has encouraged the emergence of various gifting trends that can affect the way students view and purchase gifting products. Exposure to popular content of gift recommendations, unboxing, and gifting products can cause a desire to follow trends and feelings of fear of missing out (FOMO).This study aims to analyze the phenomenon of FOMO in the purchase of gifting products due to social media content trends in students of Economics Education, PGRI Mpu Sindok University.This study uses a qualitative method with a phenomenological approach. The research informants were selected purposively by involving 4th semester students who actively use social media, have seen gifting content, and have experience buying or giving gifting products. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, observations, and documentation, then analyzed using thematic analysis. The results of the study showed that exposure to gifting content on TikTok and Instagram made students obtain references about the type, price, and trending gifting products. This exposure also raises the desire to follow the actions of others and the feeling of happiness because they are not left behind the trend. However, FOMO is not the only consideration in purchasing gifting products. Informants also consider product reviews, affordable prices, product popularity, and the desire to give something memorable to others. Thus, the phenomenon of FOMO in purchasing gifting products is one of the experiences that accompany students' decisions in following trends, while purchasing decisions are formed through a combination of social media influences, product considerations, price conditions, and the emotional meaning of gifting.

Keywords: *FOMO, Social Media, Gifting, Purchasing Behavior, Students.*

A. INTRODUCTION

The rapid development of social media has influenced the way students get information, interact, and follow changes in consumption trends. Social media not only functions as a communication tool, but also as a place for various trends to emerge through various content such as product recommendations, reviews, unboxing, and gifting content. The presentation of content that is done repeatedly can build students' interest in certain products and encourage students to engage in consumption behaviors that develop in the surrounding environment. In this situation, the phenomenon of fear of measing out (FOMO) arises, which is an individual's concern that others are getting a pleasant or valuable experience while they are not experiencing it. Therefore, FOMO is very relevant in consumption behavior because trends shown through social media can cause the desire to imitate the activities or possessions of others.(Oktania & Indarwati, 2022).

This phenomenon can be seen in the purchase of gift products, which are items purchased to give to others as a sign of attention, appreciation, or a certain celebration. For students, the purchase of gift products is not always based on practical needs, but can also be influenced by trends that appear on social media. As students continue to watch content about gift recommendations, hampers, or gifting products that are now in high demand, the desire to follow these trends can arise so as not to feel left behind in their social environment. The problem that then arises is how FOMO as the impact of social media content trends is related to students' choices in buying gift products. The study (Sari, 2026) revealed that FOMO and conformity are related to impulse purchases among students who actively use social media, while research (Aresti et al., 2026) found that digital content marketing and FOMO can increase impulse buying in tiktok shop consumers, so that digital content not only functions as a source

of product information, but can also be a stimulus that drives purchase decisions. The two studies have similarities with this study in discussing FOMO and purchasing behavior in the digital environment, but different objects and focus of the study. However, there is a research gap in the previous study (Sari, 2026) emphasizing the relationship between FOMO and conformity and impulsive buying behavior, while (Aresti et al., 2026) focused on buying skincare at TikTok Shop. The two studies have not specifically investigated gifting products as purchase objects arising from social media content trends, especially in the context of Economics Education students. In addition, previous research focused more on measuring relationships or impacts between variables, so it has not in-depth explained the experiences of students who are exposed to gifting trends on social media, the emergence of fear of missing out, and the reasons students follow these trends by buying gifting products. The uniqueness of this study is based on the study of the FOMO phenomenon in the purchase of gift products related to social media content trends among UPMS Economics Education students, so this study not only examines purchasing behavior but also seeks to understand the underlying phenomenon and motivation.(Gunawan & Arifin, 2024).

More specifically, the social media content trends here include different types of trends that are widely and repeatedly shared by influencers and content creators, such as unboxing videos, aesthetic reviews, and tutorials on how to create creative gift ideas. The existence of this sustainable variety of content has sparked students' interest in gift products, which are special items or packages such as gifts, graduation bouquets, personal gifts, or celebratory gifts. These items are not purchased for personal use but are given to others as a way to show appreciation and maintain social relationships. The phenomenon of FOMO (Fear Of Missing Out) where this phenomenon began to emerge among students due to the psychological urge to gain recognition from peers and the desire to stay in line with social norms. When social media created the idea that giving or exchanging trending gift products was a standard way to show care, it made students feel worried about being disinterested, left behind, or missing out on trends if they didn't buy the product. Based on this explanation, a study entitled "The FOMO Phenomenon in Gifting Product Purchases due to Social Media Content Trends in UPMS Economics Education Students" was conducted to find out how social media content trends can cause FOMO and are related to the purchase of gifting products among students. This study is expected to be able to describe students' experiences in dealing with the phenomenon of consumption on social media, especially related to the emergence of fear of missing out, the urge to follow trends, and considerations when buying gifting products. As a result, this research can contribute to the analysis of student consumer behavior in dealing with changes in consumption culture in the digital age.

B. RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses a qualitative method with a phenomenological approach. The qualitative method was chosen because the research aims to deeply understand students' experiences in feeling the fear of missing out (FOMO) due to the trend of gifting content on social media, as well as its relationship with the purchase of gifting products. According to (Sugiyono, 2019)), qualitative research is used to research conditions that occur naturally. The researcher himself is the main tool in this research process. This data source was chosen deliberately and the way to collect data can use several methods at once, where the data analysis is carried out by taking meaning from the data, not just to generalize. The phenomenological approach is used because this research focuses on experiences that are truly felt and understood by students about the phenomenon of FOMO. Conceptually, FOMO is a person's worry that others are having a more enjoyable or meaningful experience, while not participating (Przybylski et al., 2013).

Thus, this study aims to understand students' experiences starting from the way they see the trend of gifting content, the emergence of a desire to participate in trends or the fear of missing out, to the decision-making process of buying gifting products. This research was conducted on students of the Economics Education Study Program, University of PGRI Mpu Sindok (UPMS) in Nganjuk Regency, East Java, from September to October 2026. The selection of location was carried out based on the suitability of the place for the purpose of the research, namely UPMS Economic Education students as subjects who experienced relationships with social media and gift-giving trends. The data sources in this study include primary data and secondary data. Primary data was obtained directly from students through interviews and observations, while secondary data came from documents related to the

research. Data collection techniques were carried out by means of semi-structured interviews, observations, and documentation as a method of triangulation techniques. (Sugiyono, 2019) explained that the triangulation technique is carried out by combining several data collection methods so that data obtained from the same source can be better checked for reliability. In this study, interviews were used to understand students' experiences of gifting content trends, the fear of missing out, comparisons with others, reasons for buying gifting products, and their considerations after viewing content on social media observation was used to understand the behavioral context related to social media use and gifting; while documentation was used as supporting evidence in this study.

Data validation is carried out by comparing techniques, sources, and also checking back with respondents. The triangulation technique is carried out by comparing data obtained from interviews, observations, and documents, while source triangulation is carried out by comparing information from several students who have different backgrounds and experiences. (Sugiyono, 2019) said that triangulation is a way to check the correctness of data by using several sources and data collection methods. After conducting the analysis, the researcher also contacted the participants to reconfirm the information or interpretation results that had been obtained. This is done so that the results of the research are in accordance with the experiences they conveyed. Thus, this study is expected to provide a clear understanding of how the trend of gift content on social media can be the background for the emergence of fear of missing out (FOMO), as well as how this experience is related to the decision of UPMS Economics Education Study Program students to buy gift products.

C. RESULTS OF RESEARCH AND DISCUSSION

The results of the study show that UPMS Economics Education students quite often see gifting content recommendations on social media, especially TikTok. Where the content seen is in the form of gift recommendations for friends, spouses, and parents, unboxing videos, and gift ideas based on a certain budget. These findings show that social media is one of the main reference sources for students to get to know various choices of gifting products. This condition is in line with (Silitonga, 2022) which found that marketing through social media can provide information about products while attracting consumer attention so that it is related to the emergence of purchase intentions. Thus, exposure to gifting content in the student experience not only serves as entertainment, but also as a means of obtaining information about products that can be given to others.

The gifting content seen by students also has very diverse forms and variations, including product recommendations, unboxing, and gift ideas based on the budget. This diversity allows students not only to know the existence of a product, but also to get an overview of the form, price, and way of giving gifts. These findings show that the characteristics of information in social media content can be part of the initial process when students recognize a gifting product. This is relevant to research that has been conducted by (Satriyo et al., 2021) which discusses social media marketing and review content as factors related to consumer buying interest. Thus, gifting content can be understood as a source of information that helps students form an initial interest in the product before considering a purchase. Exposure to gifting content further shows that there is a desire for students to do the same after seeing others giving attractive gifts. The student stated that his desire was stronger when the product he saw was trending on social media. This finding shows that the experiences of others displayed through social media can be a social reference for students in determining the form of gifting. (Silitonga, 2022) found that marketing through TikTok has a positive effect on students' buying interest, especially because the information obtained through the platform can increase confidence and trust in the product. In the context of this study, the interest in following the actions of others shows that gifting content can build attention and a desire to try the form of giving that is currently popular on social media.

The desire to follow these trends is then related to the experience of FOMO that students feel. Where students reveal that they sometimes feel happy when they can follow a developing trend so that they do not feel left behind from something that is busy on social media. This experience shows that FOMO in this study is not always present in the form of strong anxiety, but can appear as a desire to stay on top of something that is currently popular. (Kusuma et al., 2023) shows that FOMO is related to the use of social media and can make individuals pay more attention to activities that take place on social media. Therefore, the experience of the resource persons shows that FOMO can be part of the dynamics of students when responding to trends that arise through social media. Despite the experience of FOMO, the results of the interviews showed that the decision to buy gifting products was not only

based on the fear of being left behind. Students mentioned that product reviews, affordable prices, and trending product conditions were also reasons for the emergence of interest in buying. The findings showed that students still considered the characteristics of the product before making a decision. There are other factors that show that price and online consumer reviews are aspects related to product purchase decisions on the Tokopedia marketplace. This strengthens the research findings that FOMO is one of the experiences that accompanies the purchase process, while information about products and price affordability is also an important consideration.

Product reviews are one of the information that students directly consider before making a purchase. Students are not only interested because they see the product appearing in social media trends, but also pay attention to the available reviews about the product. This shows that exposure to content does not automatically make students make a purchase, but can be continued with the process of searching for information. (Satriyo et al., 2021) shows that review content is one of the aspects related to consumer buying interest. These findings support the results of this study that reviews can be additional information for students to assess a gifting product before deciding to buy it. In addition to reviews, affordable prices are another consideration in the purchasing experience carried out by students. Trending gifting products are still considered based on their ability to buy them. This shows that the desire to follow trends does not automatically make students ignore economic considerations. (Yuliani, 2021) shows that price is one of the aspects related to purchasing decisions. Thus, the experience of the resource persons shows that social media trends and price considerations can run simultaneously in the process of purchasing gifting products. Students may be interested in products because they are trending, but the final decision still considers whether the price of the product is considered affordable. Trending products are also part of the consideration of resource persons in buying gifting. When a product appears a lot on social media and is considered popular, the product becomes more interesting to pay attention to. These findings show that popularity formed through social media can increase student attention to certain gifting products. (kadek Ayu Nensiana, 2024) Through research on the florist's business, it was found that social media has a positive and significant effect on purchasing decisions. These findings are relevant to this study because florists are a form of business that provides products that can be used as gifting, such as bouquets or a series of gifts. Thus, social media can be a space that introduces and increases consumer attention to gifting products.(Arifin et al., 2025).

However, this study also found a side that does not completely lead to purchase. Where students do not state that every gifting content they see makes them buy the product immediately. Purchases are made when several considerations are considered appropriate, especially when the product is trending, has interesting reviews, and is affordable. These findings are important because they show that social media exposure does not automatically result in purchasing decisions. (Putri, 2021), for example, found that social media marketing had a significant effect on purchase intent, but electronic word of mouth in the study did not show a significant influence.(Anisa et al., 2022) These differences show that consumers' responses to digital information are not always the same and depend on the context and how consumers assess the information they receive. Other findings show that the experience after buying and giving gifting products tends to be positive. Students said that they feel happy when giving gifts, especially when the person who receives the gift also feels happy. This shows that gifting has a social and emotional dimension, not just the activity of buying a product. In student experience, satisfaction arises not only because of successfully obtaining a trending product, but because the gift can bring happiness to others. Thus, gifting products have a meaning as a medium to show attention and create a positive experience between the giver and the recipient.

These positive feelings go hand in hand with the feeling of being happy to be able to follow trends. Students stated that sometimes there is a sense of happiness because they do not miss the trends that are developing on social media. The findings show that there are two experiences that take place simultaneously, namely the desire to follow trends and the desire to give something to others. In the perspective of FOMO, the experience of not wanting to be left behind can be understood as part of an individual's response to the activities seen in their social environment. (Kusuma et al., 2023) shows that FOMO is related to the use of social media and the individual's attention to the activities that are taking place in it. Therefore, FOMO in this study can be understood as one of the experiences that accompany gifting activities, not as the only meaning of the purchase. The most important finding in this study is that the student stated that the main reason for giving gifts is not because they are afraid of falling

behind trends, but because they want to give something memorable for others. This means that although social media trends and the feeling of not wanting to be left behind can increase interest in gifting products, there is a more dominant personal motivation in the gifting experience. This shows that gifting behavior cannot be explained only through the perspective of FOMO. Social media can serve as a source of inspiration and information, while the decision to give a gift is still related to personal goals and social relationships between the giver and the recipient. This finding is also in line with (kadek Ayu Nensiana, 2024) which shows that social media can be related to purchasing decisions, but the decision is still related to the characteristics of the product that consumers are considering.(Lusardi & Mitchell, 2017).

Based on the overall findings, the FOMO phenomenon in purchasing gifting products for UPMS Economics Education students is formed through a series of experiences starting from exposure to gifting content, the emergence of interest in trending products, the desire to follow the actions of others, to the emergence of feelings of not wanting to be left behind. However, the series does not always end with purchases because students still consider reviews, prices, and the attractiveness of products. Research (Oktania & Indarwati, 2022)shows that in the context of social commerce, TikTok users' purchase intentions are also related to perceptions of usefulness, convenience, and suitability with lifestyle. These findings support the results of this study that students' experience of gifting content is not only determined by trends, but also by considerations whether the product and purchase experience are in accordance with the needs and conditions of students. Overall, this study shows that the trend of gifting content on social media has a role in shaping the student experience, ranging from getting to know products, obtaining references, interested in following trends, considering purchases, to feeling happiness after giving gifts. On the positive side, social media provides inspiration about the form of gifts, product information, and gift ideas based on a budget. On the other hand, exposure to trends can give rise to the desire to follow the actions of others and the feeling of not wanting to be left behind. However, the findings of the study also show that FOMO is not the only consideration in purchasing because the resource persons still pay attention to reviews, prices, product trends, and the purpose of providing something memorable. Thus, the phenomenon of FOMO in UPMS Economics Education students is more accurately interpreted as part of the socio-psychological experience in following the gifting trend on social media that interacts with rational and emotional considerations in the purchase process.

D. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of research and discussion, the FOMO phenomenon in purchasing gifting products for UPMS Economics Education students emerged through exposure to gifting content on social media, especially TikTok. Content in the form of gift recommendations, unboxing videos, and budget-based gift ideas became a source of reference for students in recognizing gifting products and emerging trends. These exposures can then foster interest in following the actions of others, especially when the gifting products displayed are popular on social media.

The experience of FOMO can be seen from the desire to follow trends and the feeling of happiness when not feeling left behind by something that is crowded on social media. However, the results of the study show that FOMO is not the only consideration in purchasing gifting products. In addition, students also consider product reviews, affordability, and the attractiveness of trending products before deciding to buy. This shows that exposure to social media trends does not automatically result in a purchase, but interacts with students' rational consideration of the product.

Another important finding shows that the purchase of gifting products has social and emotional meaning for students. Although there is a sense of pleasure in being able to follow trends, the main reason for giving gifts is the desire to give something memorable and make the recipient feel happy. Thus, the phenomenon of FOMO in this study is more accurately interpreted as one of the social-psychological experiences that accompany gifting behavior, not as a single factor that determines purchasing decisions. Overall, the trend of social media content plays a role in providing inspiration and forming interest in gifting, while the decision to buy is formed through a combination of trends, product information, price, and personal motivation to give something meaningful to others.

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