

Scrolling Toward Simplicity: Social Media Use, Fear of Missing Out, and Minimalist Consumption Among Generation Z In Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

This study examines how social media use and fear of missing out (FoMO) relate to minimalist consumption tendencies among young people in Indonesia. The study examines whether intense social media use merely stimulates overconsumption or can also support a more focused and sustainable minimalist lifestyle. A cross-sectional quantitative survey was conducted with 275 young Indonesian users who actively use Instagram and TikTok. Data were collected through an online questionnaire and analyzed using partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) to test for direct and indirect effects. Results indicate that social media use has a positive and significant effect on FoMO and a positive and significant effect on minimalist consumption. Conversely, FoMO does not significantly predict minimalist consumption; therefore, FoMO does not mediate the relationship between social media use and minimalist consumption. These findings suggest that social media can serve as a supportive space for minimalist practices when users are exposed to content and communities that promote simple and sustainable living. Practically, despite the insignificant role of FoMO, this study informs sustainable marketing and consumption initiatives by suggesting that brands and their supporters integrate buy less but better messaging into Instagram/TikTok campaigns, encourage mindful reordering and purchasing routines, and build community based engagement rather than relying on promotional cues driven by urgency or FoMO. Overall, this study highlights the ambivalent role of social media in youth consumption behavior and suggests opportunities to promote minimalist lifestyles in developing countries.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Over the past decade, social media has evolved from a mere networking tool to everyday life and consumption. In Indonesia, We Are Social recorded approximately 139 million social media users in 2023, or roughly 50 percent of the population, increasing to approximately 180 million users by the end of 2025, representing roughly 63 percent of the national population (Kemp, 2024, 2025). GWI, (2023) research and recent digital reports indicate that internet users aged 16 to 64 in Indonesia spend an average of 3 hours and 11 minutes per day on social media, making it one of the most time-intensive digital activities among young people. Majeed et al., (2024) assert that high social media penetration is driven by a combination of digital literacy, infrastructure, and cultural norms that encourage online connectivity as a standard pattern of social and economic interaction. In this context, short-video platforms, like TikTok and Instagram Reels have become primary channels for young users to seek entertainment, information, and inspiration for consumption (Zhang & Abdullah, 2025).

Generation Z is the most intensive social media user group. Various studies in Indonesia show that Gen Z uses social media as a primary source for discovering trends, choosing brands, and adopting a more emotional and symbolic consumption lifestyle than previous generations (Alyani et al., 2025; Dewantoro et al., 2025). Huwaida et al., (2024) found that the intensity of social commerce use among Gen Z in Indonesia is strongly associated with exposure to influencer content, peer recommendations, and interactive features such as live streaming and user reviews. Taken together, these patterns suggest that social media for Indonesian Gen Z functions not only as an information channel, but also as a day to day consumption space where product discovery, evaluation, and purchase-related interaction increasingly occur through short-video and social commerce features (Tandon et al., (2021).

Indonesia is a particularly relevant environment for examining the relationship between high school seniors SMU, FoMO, and minimalist consumption because it combines rapid social media growth with high daily usage and a large and highly connected Gen Z cohort (Kemp, 2025). Furthermore, social media engagement among

Indonesian Gen Z is closely tied to social commerce and short-form video platforms, which embed consumption into everyday scrolling and interactions (Huwaida et al., 2024; Zhang & Abdullah, 2025). In this environment, social media operates not only as a communication medium but also as a marketplace and cultural arena where consumption norms are shaped through influencers, peer interactions, and digitally mediated networks of desire (Djafarova & Bowes, 2021; Kozinets et al., 2017). At the same time, these same platforms also disseminate sustainability-oriented and “living with less” narratives that can support more selective consumption (Mutiarasari, 2025; Nekmahmud et al., 2022). Therefore, testing the proposed mechanism in Indonesia strengthens theoretical assessments of whether relationships formed in Western environments can be generalized to emerging markets characterized by intensive and commerce-oriented social media use (Lu & Sinha, 2024). In such digital and socially visible environments, a key psychological process that becomes particularly relevant is the fear of missing out (FoMO).

FoMO refers to the understanding that others may be having rewarding experiences from which one is absent, and it is frequently intensified by continuous exposure to peers' and influencers' highlights on social media. In the realm of consumption, FoMO encourages consumers to respond to hedonic temptations and to loosen self-control (Keinan & Kivetz, 2008), less controlled consumption (Dinh & Lee, 2022a; Good & Hyman, 2020). Advertisers often exploit it to activate consumers' natural aversion to potential losses through messages such as limited-time offers or stock-outs, encouraging immediate purchases (Dinh & Lee, 2022b; Good & Hyman, 2020). Several recent studies have shown that FoMO is not only associated with social media use but also predicts various unplanned and risky consumption behaviors such as impulse buying, compulsive buying, binge-watching, risky investments, and unsustainable fashion purchases (Bläse et al., 2023; Hussain et al., 2023).

On the other hand, a countertrend has emerged in the form of consumer minimalism, understood as a consumer perspective on acquiring fewer goods more consciously and deliberately, allowing attention to be focused on the things that matter most in life (Kang et al., 2021a; Wilson & Bellezza, 2022). This lifestyle encourages more thoughtful consumption decisions aligned with personal goals, ultimately helping to reduce overall consumption and support sustainability (Martin-Woodhead, 2022; Zafar, 2022). The study of minimalism is gaining ground in the literature on consumer behaviour and sustainable consumption. Santos -Corrada et al., (2024) describe minimalism as a consumption pattern that rejects excess, seeks to reduce clutter, and prioritizes quality of life and environmental impact. Kang et al., (2021) developed a hierarchical structure of minimalism, reflected in discarding unused items, shopping mindfully, preserving the longevity of items, and maintaining independence in consumption decisions. Wilson & Bellezza, (2022) conceptualize consumer minimalism as a consumption value that encourages consumers to limit ownership to carefully chosen items and favor a simple aesthetic.

In this study, minimalism is treated as a mindset that embraces the conscious acquisition and ownership of fewer items to lead a more purposeful and meaningful life. Minimalism is distinct from anti-consumption, which involves an active rejection of consumption and a complete disengagement from the consumerist system (Lee & Kwon, 2023). Numerous studies have shown that when consumers adopt minimalism, they tend to choose simpler and more sustainable lifestyles, acquiring only essential items, practicing more conscious storage practices, and avoiding wasteful use of resources. They place greater emphasis on the quality and durability of goods and prefer experiential consumption over the accumulation of material possessions (Bardey et al., 2022; Kang et al., 2021a; Martin-Woodhead, 2022; Wilson & Bellezza, 2022). This orientation primarily seeks to reduce and simplify possessions. However, within the digital ecosystem, minimalist values can also be learned and reinforced through exposure to educational content, online communities, and simple lifestyle campaigns on social media.

Existing literature suggests that social media plays an ambivalent role in consumption. Many studies confirm that intense social media use reinforces materialism, conspicuous consumption, and impulse buying behavior. Denegri-Knott & Molesworth, (2010) argue that digital technology amplifies and reorganizes consumption desires. Kozinets et al., (2017) introduced the concept of digitally extended desire networks, in which smartphones and social media sites drive consumer desires by sharing purchase information in the form of images and text and by connecting individuals with similar interests, thereby reinforcing consumption desires. Within the Stimulus Organism Response framework, various external stimuli on social media, such as advertisements, influencers, and user-generated content, elicit positive emotions and pleasurable arousal, which can then trigger impulse buying behaviour (Djafarova & Bowes, 2021). At the same time, the constant flow of information, notifications, and attention shifts diminishes clarity of thought and depletes the self-regulatory capacity needed to manage conscious consumption (Lu & Sinha, 2024; Rosen et al., 2013; Sriwilai & Charoensukmongkol, 2016; Xanidis & Brignell, 2016).

However, research on sustainable consumption also shows that social media can be an effective channel for spreading the values of sustainability, green consumption, and a minimalist lifestyle. Nekmahmud et al., (2022) found that social media marketing focused on environmental issues increased purchase intentions for green products. Recent studies on Gen Z in various countries, including Indonesia, show that exposure to ecological content, social responsibility, and narratives of simple living on social media is associated with more positive

attitudes toward sustainable consumption and more selective consumption choices (Mutiarasari, 2025). Digital communities and campaigns about decluttering, capsule wardrobes, no-buy challenges, and living with less are widely circulated on short-video platforms. Therefore, for some users, intense social media use can increase exposure to minimalist messages and role models. In this context, Lu & Sinha, (2024) make a significant contribution by showing that high social media use is associated with increased FoMO, which in turn weakens minimalist consumption tendencies. However, FoMO can also be positively directed when minimalism is positioned as a social movement on social media, encouraging consumers to declutter and be more selective in their purchases. These findings suggest that the relationship between social media use and minimalist consumption differs across contexts and depends on the types of content and networks that dominate users' experiences.

Despite the rapid growth of research on minimalist consumption, empirical evidence on how social media use shapes minimalist consumption in emerging markets remains limited. In Indonesia, existing studies predominantly position social media as a driver of trends, purchasing decisions, and social commerce participation among young consumers (Dewantoro et al., 2025; Huwaida et al., 2024), while sustainable consumption research more often addresses green consumption in general rather than minimalism as a day-to-day consumption pattern. Moreover, the mechanism proposed in Western research, where social media use heightens fear of missing out (FoMO), which is then linked to minimalist consumption has not been widely tested in the Indonesian context (Lu & Sinha, 2024). Addressing this gap is theoretically important because FoMO scholarship has largely emphasized psychological consequences and overconsumption outcomes (Hussain et al., 2023; Jabeen et al., 2023; Servidio et al., 2024), leaving its role in restrained consumption orientations such as minimalism under-examined beyond the setting studied by (Lu & Sinha, 2024).

Therefore, this study reexamines the influence of social media use on minimalist consumption through FoMO among Gen Z in Indonesia who actively use social media. The objectives of this study are to (1) examine the influence of social media use on FoMO, (2) examine the influence of social media use on minimalist consumption, and (3) examine whether FoMO mediates the relationship between social media use and minimalist consumption. Thus, this study assesses whether higher social media use is associated with stronger FoMO and how FoMO relates to minimalist consumption tendencies in a digital environment where users are exposed to consumer impulses and simple life narratives. Theoretically, this study extends the social media and FoMO literature by examining the mechanism of SMU with FoMO in an emerging market context and contributes to minimalist consumption research by clarifying how social media exposure relates to restrained consumption orientations outside of a Western-dominated context (F. C. Lu & Sinha, 2024). Practically, these findings are expected to provide information to marketers, minimalist activists, and policy makers in designing social media communication strategies that are more balanced between commercial objectives and sustainable consumption behavior among Generation Z. Based on the conceptual development outlined above, the hypotheses tested in this study are as follows:

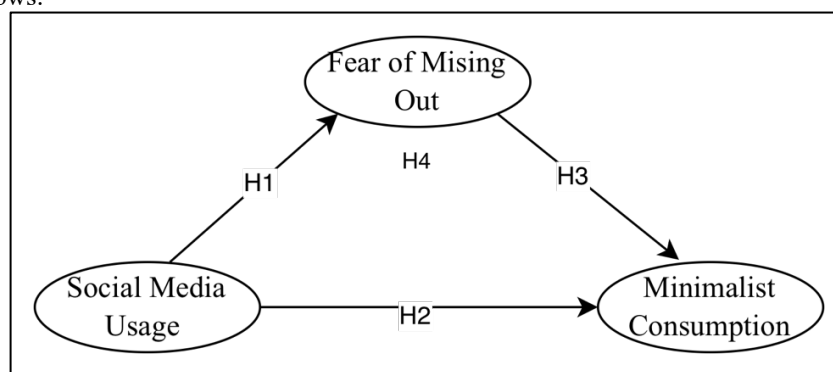


Figure 1. Conceptual Model

H1: Social media use has a positive effect on fear of missing out.

H2: Social media use has a positive impact on minimalist consumption.

H3: Fear of missing out negatively affects minimalist consumption.

H4: Fear of missing out mediates the impact of social media use on minimalist consumption.

By referring to the conceptual framework and formulated hypotheses, this study seeks to provide a more comprehensive picture of how social media use shapes the psychological experience of fear of missing out and how both relate to minimalist consumption tendencies among Gen Z in Indonesia. The results are expected not only to re-examine Lu and Sinha's findings in a different cultural context but also to provide an empirical basis for

designing communication strategies and interventions that encourage more curated, sustainable consumption behavior among young social media users.

2. METHOD

This study aims to examine the influence of social media use on minimalist consumption, with Fear of Missing Out (FoMO) as a mediating variable among young Indonesian users. This study employed a quantitative, survey-based approach [Creswell, \(2007\)](#). The population in this study were young Indonesians who actively use social media. The research sample was obtained using a non-probability purposive sampling approach. Purposive sampling was chosen because a clear sampling frame for Indonesian Gen Z users who use Instagram/TikTok daily was not available. Therefore, respondent selection needed to be based on exposure criteria appropriate to the research objectives. The respondent criteria were: (1) Generation Z (born 1997–2012) and meeting the minimum age limit of 18 years at the time of completing the survey, and (2) using Instagram and/or TikTok daily or almost daily. To reduce potential bias, screening questions were used at the beginning of the questionnaire.

Primary data were collected using an online questionnaire in Indonesian based on a five-point Likert scale, distributed via a form to eligible respondents and completed independently. The variable measurements in this study adopted and adapted scales from previous research, such as those used in [Lu & Sinha, \(2024\)](#) study on social media use, Fear of Missing Out (FoMO), and minimalist consumption. FoMO was measured using the Fear of Missing Out Scale developed by [Przybylski et al., \(2013\)](#). Minimalist consumption was measured using an adaptation of the consumer minimalism indicator from [Kang et al., \(2021\)](#) and the Consumer Minimalism Scale developed by [Wilson & Bellezza, \(2022\)](#). All indicators were measured on a five-point Likert scale.

Ethical considerations. Participants were recruited online through a survey link and completed the questionnaire voluntarily. Before beginning the survey, respondents were provided with a consent form explaining the purpose of the study, the voluntary nature of participation, and the right to withdraw at any time without consequence; only respondents who agreed to participate could proceed with the questionnaire. To protect privacy, the survey did not collect any direct personal information (e.g., phone numbers or specific addresses). All responses were securely stored, accessible only to the research team, and reported in aggregate form for research purposes.

Data analysis was conducted using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with the aid of SmartPLS. PLS-SEM is appropriate when the research objective is oriented toward predicting/explaining variance in endogenous constructs and when the structural model is relatively complex, including mediation effects ([Hair et al., 2019; Zikmund et al., 2010](#)). Mediation is determined based on the significance of the indirect effect and the change in the significance of the direct effect after the mediator is entered into the model. Compared to covariance-based SEM approaches, which generally emphasize evaluating global model fit, PLS-SEM is more appropriate for predictive purposes and focuses on the explained variance of endogenous constructs in mediation models ([Hair et al., 2019; Zikmund et al., 2010](#)).

The data collection in this study used an online questionnaire, which has the potential to introduce selection bias and limit the generalizability of the findings. Therefore, the results primarily reflect Gen Z Indonesians who actively use Instagram/TikTok daily or almost daily, and interpretation of the findings outside this segment requires caution.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

A. RESULT

Respondent Profile

This study recruited 280 respondents, but after a screening process for completeness and suitability of the criteria, 275 respondents (approximately 98.2 percent) were deemed eligible for analysis. The majority of respondents (95.7 percent) were aged 18–24, while other age groups represented less than 5 percent each. The gender composition was relatively balanced, with 52.9 percent female and 47.1 percent male. Nearly all respondents (99.6 percent) had Instagram and/or TikTok accounts. In terms of frequency, 74.1 percent used Instagram and/or TikTok daily, 20.2 percent almost daily, and the remainder only occasionally. In terms of duration, 24.3 percent used Instagram and/or TikTok for 1–2 hours per day, 36.1 percent for 3–4 hours, 16.8 percent for 5–6 hours, 17.5 percent for more than 6 hours, and only about 5 percent for less than 1 hour per day. The education level of respondents was dominated by high school graduates or equivalent (85.4 percent), followed by respondents with a bachelor's degree (12.9 percent), and the remainder with other levels in tiny proportions. The majority of respondents resided in East Java, Central Java, Denpasar, Maluku, and several provinces in Sumatra.

Outer Model (Measurement Model)

The measurement model in this study consisted of three reflective constructs: social media use, fear of missing out, and minimalist consumption. Evaluation of the outer model was conducted by assessing convergent and discriminant validity, as well as the internal reliability of the constructs based on outer loadings, average variance extracted, composite reliability, and Cronbach's alpha, as recommended by Hair et al., (2019). The outer loading values for each indicator, which served as the basis for assessing convergent validity, are shown in Figure 2.

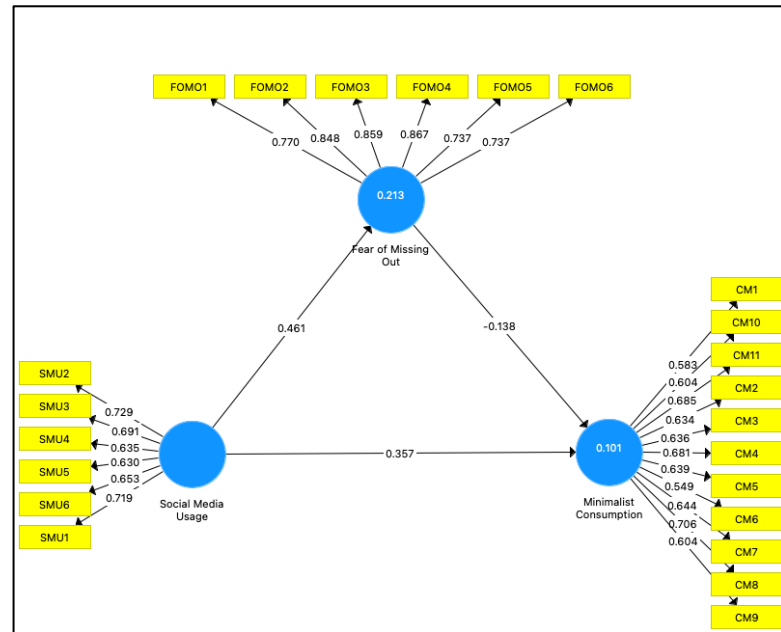


Figure 2. Measurement model (Outer Model)

Figure 2 shows that all indicators measuring the three latent constructs have outer loading values ranging from approximately 0.55 to 0.87. Thus, all indicators exceed the acceptable minimum threshold of 0.50, and most indicators also approach or exceed the 0.70 threshold used as the ideal criterion for convergent validity in the reflective model (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Hair et al., 2021). Overall, these findings indicate that the measurement model meets the requirements for convergent validity. A summary of the internal reliability and average variance extracted values for each construct is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Indicator loading, composite reliability, average variance extracted

Variabel	Indicator	Outer Loading	Cronbach' Alpha	Rho_A	CR	AVE
Social Media Usage	SMU1	0,719	0,763	0,763	0,835	0,459
	SMU2	0,729				
	SMU3	0,691				
	SMU4	0,635				
	SMU5	0,630				
	SMU6	0,653				
Fear Missing Out	FOMO1	0,770	0,890	0,890	0,917	0,648
	FOMO2	0,848				
	FOMO3	0,859				
	FOMO4	0,867				
	FOMO5	0,737				
	FOMO6	0,737				
Minimalist	CM1	0,583	0,853	0,856	0,881	0,403
	CM2	0,634				
	CM3	0,636				
	CM4	0,681				
	CM5	0,639				

CM6	0,549
CM7	0,644
CM8	0,706
CM9	0,604
CM10	0,604
CM11	0,685

Notes: SMU = Social media usage; FoMO = Fear of missing out; CM = Minimalist consumption

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Table 2. Discriminant validity (Fornell-larcker criterion)

	Fear of Missing Out	Minimalis Consumers	Social Media Usage
Fear of Missing Out	0,805		
Minimalis Consumers	0,027	0,635	
Social Media Usage	0,461	0,294	0,677

Table 2 presents the results of discriminant validity testing using the Fornell and Larcker criteria, where the square root of the average variance extracted is placed on the diagonal and compared with the correlations between constructs off the diagonal (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Hair et al., 2021). The square root of the AVE for fear of missing out (0.805) is higher than its correlations with minimalist consumption (0.027) and with social media use (0.461). Similarly, the value of 0.635 for the minimalist consumption construct is greater than its correlation with social media use (0.294). For social media use, the square root of the AVE (0.677) is also greater than the correlations with the other two constructs. This pattern indicates that each construct explains its own indicators better than it shares variance with different constructs. Therefore, overall, the Fornell-Larcker criteria are met, and discriminant validity can be declared adequate. This indicates that the three constructs in the model are empirically distinct and warrant further analysis during structural model testing.

Table 3. Outer VIF values

Indicator	VIF
SMU1	2,038
SMU2	2,274
SMU3	1,504
SMU4	1,340
SMU5	1,294
SMU6	1,300
FOMO1	1,870
FOMO2	2,566
FOMO3	3,058
FOMO4	3,602
FOMO5	1,668
FOMO6	1,664
CM1	1,895
CM2	2,217
CM3	1,740
CM4	1,857
CM5	1,573
CM6	1,359
CM7	1,826
CM8	1,751
CM9	1,478
CM10	1,507
CM11	1,546

Table 3's outer VIF values show that all indicators across the three constructs range from 1.29 to 3.60. All of these values are well below the 5.0 threshold for multicollinearity (Hair et al., 2019). Therefore, it can be concluded that there are no multicollinearity issues at the indicator level, meaning each item can reflect its construct relatively independently, and the measurement model is suitable for further evaluation of the inner model.

Inner Model (Structural Model) Coefficient of Determination (R^2)

The coefficient of determination is used to assess how much of the variation in endogenous constructs can be explained by the exogenous constructs in the model. In the context of PLS-SEM, Hair et al. (2019) stated that R^2 values of around 0.75, 0.50, and 0.25 can be interpreted as substantial, moderate, and weak, respectively. This standard is flexible depending on the field and the model's complexity. The results of the R^2 coefficient of determination in this study are as follows:

Table 4. Coefficient of Determination (R^2)

	R Square	R Square Adjusted
Fear of Missing Out	0,213	0,210
Minimalist Consumers	0,101	0,095

The structural model evaluation results show that the R^2 value for fear of missing out is 0.213. This means that approximately 21.3 percent of the variation in FoMO among respondents can be explained by social media use. This value is slightly below the 0.25 threshold, which in the PLS SEM literature is often categorized as weak to moderate explanatory power for behavioral research, but remains acceptable, especially when the model is parsimonious, and the endogenous construct is influenced by many other factors outside the model (Hair et al., 2019; Hair et al., 2021). Meanwhile, the R^2 value for minimalist consumption of 0.101 indicates that approximately 10.1 percent of the variation in minimalist consumption tendencies is explained by the combination of social media use and FoMO. This value shows relatively low explanatory power, suggesting that other factors heavily influence minimalist consumption among Indonesia's younger generation. Therefore, substantively, this model has limited explanatory power but remains informative, as it shows that social media use and FoMO contribute significantly, but are not the sole determinants of minimalist consumption tendencies.

Hypothesis Testing

After the measurement model was declared to meet the validity and reliability criteria, and the initial evaluation of the structural model revealed no interfering multicollinearity issues, the next stage was to test the research hypotheses. Testing was conducted using the bootstrapping procedure in PLS SEM to obtain path coefficient estimates, t-values, and p-values as shown in Figure 2 and Table 5.

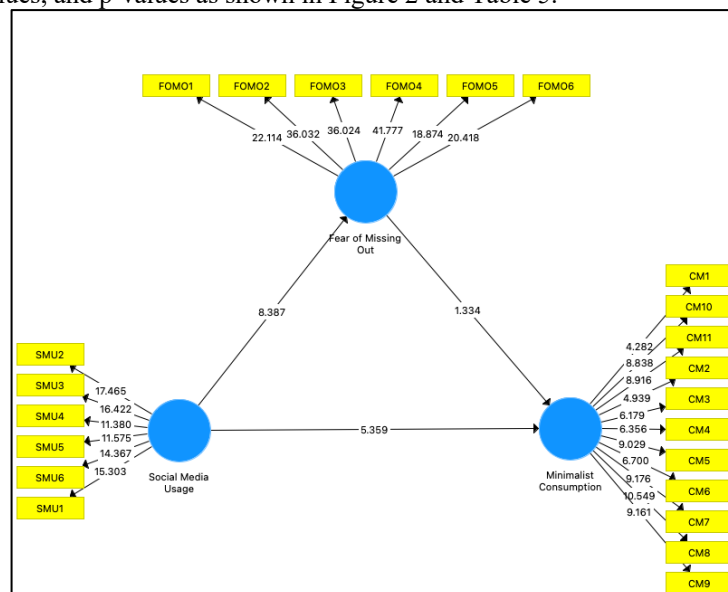


Figure 2. Structural model (inner model)

Table 5. Path Coefficients and hypothesis testing results

	Oeiginal Sampel	Sampel Mean	St-Dev	T-Statistics	P-Values
Social Media Usage - -> Fear of Mising Out	0,461	0,467	0,055	8,387	0,000
Social Media Usage -> Minimalist Consumption	0,357	0,382	0,067	5,359	0,000
Fear of Missing Out -> Minimalist Consumption	-0,138	-0,144	0,103	1,334	0,183

The results of the hypothesis testing are presented through coefficient values, t-statistics, and p-values, which are explained as follows:

- H1: The path coefficient from social media use to fear of missing out is 0.461, with a p-value of $0.000 < 0.05$, and a t-statistic of $8.387 > 1.96$. Because the p-value is less than 0.05 and the t-statistic exceeds the t-table value of 1.96, the effect of social media use on fear of missing out is positive and significant. Therefore, H1 is accepted. This means that the higher the intensity of social media use, the higher the level of FoMO experienced by young respondents in Indonesia.
- H2: The path coefficient from social media use to minimalist consumption is 0.357, with a p-value of $0.000 < 0.05$, and a t-statistic of $5.359 > 1.96$. Because the p-value is below 0.05 and the t-statistic is greater than 1.96, this effect is positive and statistically significant. Thus, H2 is accepted. This finding indicates that for the respondents in this study, social media use is associated with a higher tendency towards minimalist consumption. Therefore, social media is not only a space that encourages overconsumption but can also serve as a channel that strengthens exposure to minimalist values and practices among Gen Z.
- H3: The path coefficient from fear of missing out to minimalist consumption is -0.138, with a p-value of $0.183 > 0.05$ and a t-statistic of $1.334 < 1.96$. Because the p-value is greater than 0.05 and the t-statistic is less than 1.96, the effect of FoMO on minimalist consumption is not statistically significant. However, the coefficient is negative, as expected. Therefore, H3 is rejected.
- H4: One of the basic requirements for mediation is a significant effect of the mediator on the dependent variable. Because the path from FoMO to minimalist consumption is not substantial, this requirement is not met. Thus, H4, which states that FoMO mediates the influence of social media use on minimalist consumption, is not supported in this model; the influence of social media use on minimalist consumption appears mainly as a direct effect, without a significant mediating role for FoMO.

B. DISSCUSSION

The overall results of this study reveal a distinctive pattern in the relationships among social media use, fear of missing out, and minimalist consumption among Gen Z in Indonesia. In summary, the main findings are as follows. First, social media use has a positive and significant effect on fear of missing out, thus supporting H1. Second, social media use also has a positive, significant impact on minimalist consumption, thereby supporting H2. Third, the effect of fear of missing out on minimalist consumption is insignificant, thus supporting H3. Fourth, fear of missing out does not mediate the relationship between social media use and minimalist consumption, thus supporting H4. When compared with findings from emerging economies, this pattern demonstrates that FoMO consistently emerges as a psychological response to intense social media use, but its behavioral consequences do not always lead to increased consumption, as the direction of the impact can depend on the cultural context, market conditions, and the type of consumption behavior used as the outcome.

The first finding indicates that social media use has a positive and significant effect on fear of missing out. The more intensely respondents used Instagram and TikTok, the higher their perceived levels of FoMO. These results are consistent with recent research that views social media as a primary context for the emergence of FoMO, as users are constantly exposed to others' activities and achievements in real time. Several studies have shown that continued exposure to peer and influencer content on social media is associated with increased FoMO, anxiety, and the drive to stay connected. [Hussain et al., \(2023\)](#) found that FoMO is positively related to materialism and compulsive buying tendencies in online shopping environments. They emphasized that the constant flow of social information reinforces feelings of being left behind when not engaging with what others are doing. [Mazaheri Habibi et al., \(2024\)](#) also showed that FoMO is a significant trigger of social media engagement and impulse buying behavior, as users feel the need to respond immediately to trends and recommendations on their timelines. In the context of retail consumption, [Yasin Abbas et al., \(2025\)](#) found that consumers' FoMO tendencies increase impulse buying and post-purchase regret, especially when they follow promotional information channels intensively. [Ayyasy et al., \(2025\)](#) study in Indonesia also showed that the higher the FoMO triggered by social media content, the greater the impulse buying tendency among young consumers. Similar findings were reported

by [Yasin Abbas et al., \(2025\)](#), who studied Gen Z and found that FoMO driven by social media plays a strong role in triggering spontaneous purchases across various product categories. Thus, the H1 result in this study is not only consistent with existing literature but also strengthens evidence that among Gen Z Indonesians, intense social media use is not merely a means of information but also strengthens the psychological mechanism of FoMO (Fomo), associated with the need to stay updated, the fear of missing out on experiences, and the tendency to adapt to what their social networks are doing. The consistency of these findings is also seen in studies in emerging economies, particularly in the Southeast Asian context, where the intensity of social and commercial exposure on digital platforms becomes very high, encouraging a shopping orientation and attention to other people's activities, which strengthens the social comparison mechanism with conditions that are theoretically close to the formation of FoMO ([Le & Ngoc, 2024](#)).

The second finding shows that social media use has a positive and significant effect on minimalist consumption. The path coefficient from social media use to minimalist consumption is positive and significant, thus supporting H2. This positive finding is more easily understood when compared to research on minimalism in emerging economies, which highlights the role of economic pressure and the search for meaning in life as drivers of minimalist practices. Young consumers in China emphasize that minimalist consumption can emerge and be negotiated in response to both economic pressure and the need for self-expression. Therefore, minimalism is not necessarily antithetical to social media but can instead be an alternative narrative that also spreads through digital platforms ([Lu et al., 2024a](#)). Furthermore, research in Indonesia also shows that social media-based communities can serve as spaces for the socialization of anti-consumptive/minimalist values and sustainable practices ([Ngoc Nguyen & Nguyen, 2025](#)). This supports the interpretation that the more frequently Gen Z is exposed to a specific content ecology, the greater their chances of internalizing minimalist practices. On the one hand, high social media use can trigger a fear of missing out and encourage impulsive product acquisition. On the other hand, when minimalism is positioned as a social movement on social media, specific psychological mechanisms can be leveraged to promote decluttering, reject unnecessary free products, and strengthen commitment to more conscious consumption. In other words, the effects of social media depend heavily on the narratives, content types, and communities that dominate users' timelines, not solely on the platforms themselves ([Y. Lu et al., 2024b](#)).

The literature on consumer minimalism confirms that it is a consumption pattern characterized by mindful curation, reduced possessions, and a preference for quality and sustainability. [Wilson & Bellezza, \(2022\)](#) demonstrated that minimalist consumers tend to resist impulse buying, prioritize longevity, and prioritize function and meaning over quantity of goods. [Kang et al., \(2021\)](#) found that consumers who adopt minimalist values are more selective in product acquisitions, more willing to discard non-essential items, and more aware of the environmental implications of their consumption patterns. These findings are consistent with the view that minimalism is associated with efforts to reduce clutter, prioritize quality of life, and support sustainability ([Chen et al., 2024](#); [Martin-Woodhead, 2022](#)). Furthermore, research on social media and sustainable consumption suggests that digital platforms can be effective channels for disseminating green norms and frugal lifestyles. [Deveci & Yildiz, \(2025\)](#) found that social media marketing focused on environmental issues can increase green purchase intentions and encourage sustainable consumption behavior. Other studies on young people also report that exposure to social media content on the environment, social responsibility, and simple living is associated with more positive attitudes toward sustainable consumption and more selective product choices. Combining these findings, the H2 result can be interpreted as meaning that some young Indonesian users utilize social media not only to follow consumer trends but also to access content and communities that promote simpler, more curated, and more sustainability-oriented living. Content about decluttering, underconsumption, frugal living, and sustainable lifestyles, which is becoming increasingly popular on TikTok and Instagram, has the potential to serve as an essential reference for respondents, suggesting that the intensity of social media use is positively correlated with consumption practices more aligned with minimalist values ([Nekmahmud et al., 2022](#)).

Unlike the previous two paths, the effect of fear of missing out on minimalist consumption is insignificant. The path coefficient is negative but not statistically significant enough to conclude that FoMO directly weakens respondents' minimalist tendencies, thereby failing to disprove H3. This is interesting because much of the FoMO literature has shown that it encourages excessive consumption behavior. Various studies have found that FoMO is associated with impulsive and compulsive buying across multiple contexts. [Dempsey et al., \(2019\)](#) demonstrated that FoMO increases impulse purchasing and post-purchase regret in retail consumers. [Hussain et al. \(2023\)](#) found that FoMO is correlated with anxiety, materialism, and compulsive buying, and emphasized FoMO as a crucial trigger in a difficult-to-control cycle of repetitive purchases. Several more recent studies, such as those by [Servidio et al., \(2024\)](#) and ([Bläse et al., 2024](#)), also found that FoMO triggered by social media content encourages impulse buying of lifestyle and skincare products among young consumers. [Servidio et al., \(2024\)](#) suggests that FoMO plays a role in the emergence of obsessive-compulsive buying among Gen Z through brand passion. While FoMO

tends to be associated with excessive consumption behavior, it appears, in theory, to contradict the spirit of minimalism, which relies on self-control and limiting ownership (Lai et al., 2016; Milyavskaya et al., 2018).

The insignificant direct effect of FoMO on minimalist consumption in this study suggests that the relationship between FoMO and minimalist consumption among Gen Z in Indonesia is not linear. In developing countries, most studies on FoMO (Fear of Missing Out) often focus on outcomes related to consumption behaviors closer to the point of purchase. One study in a developing country like Vietnam, specifically on impulsive behavior on social media platforms, found that FoMO contributes to impulsive buying behavior among young consumers (Ngoc Nguyen & Nguyen, 2025). Therefore, the difference in the results in this study is that FoMO is not significant towards minimalist consumption because this study focuses on Generation Z where FoMO in Gen Z in Indonesia can be more dominant related to social affiliation, not the accumulation of ownership of goods.

The consequence of this path pattern is the lack of empirical support for the mediating role of fear of missing out in the relationship between social media use and minimalist consumption. Conceptually, this study proposes that FoMO mediates the influence of social media use on minimalist consumption, referring to the model of Lu & Sinha, (2024), who found that social media usage increases FoMO and that FoMO tends to weaken minimalist consumption tendencies except when minimalism is packaged as a social movement on social media. In their framework, FoMO serves as a key psychological mechanism explaining how social media use can shift consumers from simpler consumption patterns toward less planned product acquisition (Li et al., 2021). However, in this study, social media use was shown to increase FoMO and to be directly positively correlated with minimalist consumption. In contrast, FoMO did not have a significant effect on minimalist consumption. This statistically renders the indirect impact through FoMO insignificant, thus disproving H4. In other words, in the Indonesian Gen Z sample, the influence of social media on minimalist consumption operates more through direct channels or through other mechanisms that do not involve FoMO as the primary link. These findings also open up space for further discussion regarding the theoretical and practical implications of the relationship between social media use, FoMO and minimalist consumption, which will be outlined in the conclusion.

4. CONCLUSION

This study aims to answer two main questions, whether social media use among Gen Z in Indonesia increases fear of missing out and how the combination of the two relates to the tendency for minimalist consumption. Based on data from 275 respondents who are active Instagram and TikTok users, the modeling results indicate that more intense social media use is associated with higher perceived fear of missing out. At the same time, social media use is also positively associated with minimalist consumption. These findings suggest that social media not only functions as a trigger for anxiety about missing out but can also serve as a learning space and reference point for the values of a simple and curated lifestyle for the younger generation.

More specifically, social media use has a positive and significant effect on fear of missing out, whereas fear of missing out does not significantly predict minimalist consumption and does not mediate the relationship between social media use and minimalist consumption. Overall, the influence of social media on minimalist consumption in this sample appears to operate primarily through a direct pathway or through other mechanisms beyond fear of missing out. Theoretically, these results refine perspectives that position fear of missing out as a primary pathway from social media exposure to consumption escalation, indicating that this pathway may not apply in the same way when the outcome is a minimalist lifestyle requiring self-control and intentional curation.

The findings indicate that brands can promote minimalist-oriented consumption among Indonesian Gen Z more effectively through content and communities that normalize mindful curation and decluttering, rather than through FoMO-based urgency cues. In practice, brands can integrate minimalist messages into Instagram and TikTok campaigns by emphasizing buy less but better narratives and by demonstrating concrete routines in short-form video formats such as decluttering diaries, capsule routines, low-buy challenges, and simple decision rules. In addition, offerings can be aligned with minimalist values through durability claims supported by evidence, repair/refill options, and curated essential bundles instead of volume-based promotions.

For policymakers, Indonesia's market context characterized by social commerce and widespread access to pay-later (BNPL) features highlight the importance of consumer protection and digital literacy to mitigate impulse buying pressures. Practical steps include strengthening transparency for sponsored content and commercial claims, improving disclosure of BNPL costs, and supporting circular-economy infrastructure that makes minimalist consumption feasible for price-sensitive consumers.

This study has several limitations that should be considered when interpreting the findings. First, the sample size limits the representativeness of respondents, making the findings inaccurate and non-generalizable to all Indonesian consumers. Second, the study employed a cross-sectional survey design; the associations found are associations at a single point in time. Therefore, longitudinal or experimental studies are needed to test the direction of the relationships and the dynamics of change. Third, the study's focus on Gen Z Indonesians who use Instagram/TikTok daily or almost daily makes the results more relevant to this segment and may not necessarily apply to other age groups or different social media usage patterns.

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