

## A Research Agenda on Dual Emotional Mechanisms of Fear of Exclusion and Fear of Missing Out in Social Commerce Repurchase Behavior

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**Abstract.** This study develops an integrative conceptual framework explaining how two fear-based emotions, Fear of Exclusion (FOE) and Fear of Missing Out (FOMO), jointly drive online repurchase behavior in social commerce. This framework links emotional, cognitive, and relational mechanisms to advance a holistic understanding of digital engagement and consumer trust formation. Grounded in the Stimulus–organism–response and social comparison perspectives, the model conceptualizes FOE as a social stimulus that activates FOMO as an organismic response. It integrates antecedents related to personality traits, influencer attributes, and positive information and incorporates social media usage, perceived social comparison, and brand trust as mediating and moderating mechanisms. As a conceptual synthesis, this study aims to guide future empirical and experimental research. The model proposes that FOE intensifies FOMO, which subsequently enhances brand trust and repurchase intentions. Positive information and influencer credibility act as emotional triggers, whereas cognitive and relational mechanisms convert fear-based activation into sustained engagement. Social media usage and FOE further strengthen these effects by amplifying emotional sensitivity and behavioral responses. This study introduces a dual-emotion pathway (FOE → FOMO) that unites emotional, cognitive, and relational mechanisms to explain digital engagement and trust in social commerce. This study extends the current knowledge by clarifying how FOE serves as a social antecedent of FOMO and how both emotions jointly shape long-term repurchase behavior. This framework offers a novel foundation for research on ethical personalization and emotionally intelligent platform design.

**Keywords:** Fear of Missing Out (FOMO), Fear of Exclusion (FOE), Social Commerce, Repurchase Behavior.

## 1. Introduction

The proliferation of social commerce platforms, such as TikTok Shop, Instagram Shopping, and Shopee Live, has redefined the boundaries between social interaction and digital consumption. Consumers are no longer passive buyers but emotionally engaged participants whose purchasing decisions unfold through algorithmic recommendations, peer visibility, and influencer endorsements (Casaló *et al.*, 2020; Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017; Lou & Yuan, 2019). As social media increasingly mediates how people connect and consume, the psychological dynamics rooted in belonging and comparison have become central to understanding online behavior. Among these, Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) and Fear of Exclusion (FOE) have emerged as two interrelated emotions that profoundly shape users' engagement and repurchase intentions (Holte *et al.*, 2022; Przybylski *et al.*, 2013; Reer *et al.*, 2019).

FOMO refers to the anxiety that others may be experiencing rewarding opportunities without one's participation, often amplified by continuous exposure to social updates and scarcity-based marketing (Hayran *et al.*, 2020; Hodkinson, 2019; Tandon *et al.*, 2021). In contrast, FOE captures the anticipatory fear of being ignored, marginalized, or excluded from valued groups, a response deeply rooted in human needs for belonging and social validation (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Lee & Shrum, 2012). Recent studies suggest that FOE may serve as a social antecedent of FOMO, as exclusion sensitivity triggers compensatory behaviors aimed at reestablishing inclusion, such as compulsive checking, following influencers, or repeated purchases (Alt, 2015; Elhai *et al.*, 2021; Franchina *et al.*, 2018). Despite the growing recognition of FOMO's behavioral influence of FOMO, limited research has jointly examined FOE and FOMO as complementary forces within the emotional architecture of social commerce.

Prior studies have established that FOMO contributes to impulsive or repeated online buying (Hayran *et al.*, 2020; Sofiana & Hayu, 2025), while personality factors such as neuroticism, extraversion, and openness amplify vulnerability to these emotions (Blackwell *et al.*, 2017; McCrae & John, 1992; Watson & Clark, 1997). Similarly, social stimuli such as influencer credibility (Casaló *et al.*, 2020; Ohanian, 1990) and information cues signaling scarcity or popularity (Cheung & Thadani, 2012; Huang & Benyoucef, 2017) intensify affective engagement. However, the dual mechanism through which FOE and FOMO interact to sustain long-term behavioral commitment beyond impulsive actions remains unexplored. Moreover, little is known about how social media usage (SMU) and perceived social comparison (PSC) amplify these effects or how brand trust (BT) channels emotional arousal into sustained repurchase (Chou & Hsu, 2016; Wu *et al.*, 2023).

To address these gaps, this study proposes an integrative framework grounded in the stimulus–organism–response (SOR) and social comparison paradigms (Ahn & Lee, 2024; Mehrabian & Russell, 1974). It conceptualizes FOE as a social stimulus that activates FOMO as an affective organismic response, which subsequently drives repurchase behavior. By integrating personal, social, and informational antecedents alongside moderating and mediating mechanisms such as SMU, PSC, and BT, this model provides a holistic explanation of emotional engagement in digital consumption.

This study also aligns with the journal's growing focus on affective computing and ethical personalization, offering an emotion-based framework for algorithmic engagement. This resonates with recent special issues emphasizing digital emotion, social influence, and platform personalization, which call for integrative perspectives on how emotions, technology, and social interaction co-create value in digital ecosystems. By conceptualizing FOE and FOMO as dual emotional mechanisms embedded in algorithmic engagement and social comparison, this study contributes to the emerging discussions on emotionally intelligent and ethically designed digital platforms.

## 2. Theoretical Background and Literature Gaps

### 2.1. Fear of Missing Out, and Fear of Exclusion in Digital Environments

The emergence of social commerce has amplified the psychological need for constant social connections and belonging. The Fear of Missing Out, a pervasive apprehension that others might be

experiencing rewarding opportunities without one's participation, has become a defining emotional experience of the digital era (Hayran *et al.*, 2020; Przybylski *et al.*, 2013). Rooted in self-determination theory, FOMO reflects the frustration of basic psychological needs for relatedness, competence, and autonomy, which are continuously challenged by social comparison and online visibility (Alt, 2015; Franchina *et al.*, 2018). Individuals with high FOMO tend to exhibit higher social media usage frequency, compulsive checking behavior, and stronger emotional reactivity to social updates (Elhai *et al.*, 2021; Sofiana & Hayu, 2025). Within social commerce platforms, these tendencies manifest as impulsive purchases, repeated engagement, and sustained interaction with brands or influencers (Nasr *et al.*, 2023; Tandon *et al.*, 2021).

Complementing FOMO, the Fear of Exclusion represents the anticipatory anxiety of being ignored, marginalized, or excluded from social groups (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Holte *et al.*, 2022). This concept is grounded in ostracism theory, which posits that humans possess a fundamental need to belong and experience distress when this need is threatened (Lee & Shrum, 2012). In digital settings, FOE may arise when users perceive unequal attention, lack of visibility, or exclusion from social interactions, such as likes, comments, or influencer engagement. This emotional state often precedes and amplifies FOMO, as individuals attempt to reassert inclusion by increasing their participation in online activities, following influencers, or engaging in repurchasing to signal their sense of belonging (Elhai *et al.*, 2021; Franchina *et al.*, 2018). Despite these theoretical linkages, existing studies rarely examine FOE and FOMO as interconnected emotional drivers within the same behavioral framework.

## 2.2. Stimulus–Organism–Response (SOR) and Social Comparison Frameworks

The Stimulus–Organism–Response model has been extensively used to explain consumer behavior in technology-mediated environments (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974). According to this model, environmental or social stimuli (S) influence internal emotional and cognitive states (O), which, in turn, determine behavioral outcomes (R). In social commerce, social stimuli such as influencer activities, peer recommendations, and positive information cues can evoke emotional reactions, such as FOMO, that guide purchasing behavior (Cheung & Thadani, 2012; Huang & Benyoucef, 2017; Sofiana & Hayu, 2025). Thus, FOMO functions as an organismic response mediating between external cues and behavioral engagement, transforming informational exposure into emotional motivation and consumption.

Simultaneously, social comparison theory provides a complementary perspective for understanding emotional reactions to online visibility. Individuals continuously compare themselves with others to assess their social standing, competence, and connectedness (Reer *et al.*, 2019; Steinberger & Kim, 2023). Digital platforms intensify this process by providing quantifiable metrics of social approval, such as likes, shares, and comments, which make exclusion or inferiority highly salient. Perceived social comparison (PSC) thus becomes a cognitive bridge linking social media usage (SMU) to emotional activation, particularly FOMO. Empirical research demonstrates that frequent exposure to curated social content heightens both FOMO and negative affect, reinforcing cyclical engagement (Alt, 2015; Elhai *et al.*, 2021). Therefore, integrating the SOR and social comparison perspectives enables a more comprehensive explanation of how emotional and cognitive mechanisms jointly sustain participation in social commerce.

Personality psychology provides further insights into why individuals differ in their susceptibility to FOMO and the FOE. The Five-Factor Model suggests that traits such as neuroticism, extraversion, and openness to experience strongly predict emotional reactivity and social sensitivity (McCrae & John, 1992; Watson & Clark, 1997). Neurotic individuals tend to interpret ambiguous social cues as rejection, increasing their vulnerability to FOE, whereas extraverts and open individuals are more responsive to social novelty and validation, predisposing them to FOMO (Blackwell *et al.*, 2017). Hence, personal traits shape the intensity of fear-based emotions and their translation into consumption behaviors.

Social stimuli from influencers further increase emotional contagion. Influencer characteristics such

as attractiveness, trustworthiness, and expertise enhance credibility and parasocial interaction, making followers more likely to internalize influencer behaviors and endorsements (Casaló *et al.*, 2020; Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017; Ohanian, 1990). Such perceived authenticity can elicit aspiration and FOMO, encouraging viewers to imitate influencer purchases or to participate in limited-time campaigns (Van Solt, 2019; Laili *et al.*, 2025). In parallel, positive information (PI), such as favorable reviews, limited offers, and peer endorsements, functions as an informational stimulus that amplifies social validation and scarcity perceptions (Cheung & Thadani, 2012; Huang & Benyoucef, 2017; Weinstein, 2018). Collectively, these antecedents—personal, social, and informational—form the external and internal triggers that activate FOE and FOMO within social commerce ecosystems.

### **2.3. Mediating and Moderating Mechanisms: Social Media Usage, Social Comparison, and Brand Trust**

The persistence of emotional engagement in social commerce also depends on mediating and moderating processes that translate fear-based activation into behavioral commitment. Social media usage (SMU) intensity magnifies exposure to social cues, thus heightening FOMO and reinforcing the engagement cycles (Franchina *et al.*, 2018; Sofiana & Hayu, 2025). Users with high SMU are more susceptible to emotional contagion and act quickly on promotional stimuli. At the cognitive level, perceived social comparison (PSC) mediates the relationship between SMU and FOMO, as individuals continuously evaluate themselves relative to their peers' visible consumption (Reer *et al.*, 2019; Steinberger & Kim, 2023).

On the relational side, brand trust operates as a key mechanism that converts emotional arousal into sustained repurchase. Trust reflects consumers' willingness to rely on a brand's integrity and reliability (Chou & Hsu, 2016; Lou & Yuan, 2019). When FOMO-driven users repeatedly engage with credible brands or influencers, their experiences reinforce familiarity and emotional attachment, fostering behavioral loyalty (Wu *et al.*, 2023). Thus, BT serves as both an emotional buffer and a behavioral bridge, stabilizing the volatile dynamics of fear-based engagement.

### **2.4. Identified Gaps and Research Contribution**

Despite extensive research on FOMO and online consumer behavior, several gaps still remain. First, the joint role of the FOE and FOMO has not been systematically explored. Existing studies have examined these constructs independently, overlooking how the FOE may function as a social antecedent of FOMO and how both emotions interact to sustain long-term engagement rather than impulsive acts (Elhai *et al.*, 2021; Franchina *et al.*, 2018). Second, research has yet to integrate personal, social, and informational antecedents into a unified model that explains how emotional activation leads to repurchase through cognitive (PSC) and relational (BT) mechanisms. Third, prior frameworks insufficiently address contextual moderators, such as social media usage intensity and exclusion sensitivity, which may determine when FOMO most strongly influences behavior (Alt, 2015; Sofiana & Hayu, 2025).

Addressing these gaps, this study proposes an integrative conceptual model grounded in the SOR and social comparison perspectives that connects personal traits, influencer dynamics, and positive information with FOE, FOMO, PSC, BT, and online repurchase behavior.

## **3. Conceptual Model Development**

### **3.1. Identified Gaps and Research Contribution**

Building on the Stimulus–Organism–Response (SOR) paradigm (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974) and the social comparison perspective (Reer *et al.*, 2019; Steinberger & Kim, 2023), the proposed conceptual framework explains how emotional and cognitive mechanisms jointly shape online repurchase behavior in social commerce. Within this framework, Fear of Exclusion is conceptualized as a social stimulus

that evokes Fear of Missing Out as an affective organismic response, which in turn drives behavioral outcomes such as engagement and repurchase. The model integrates personal dispositions, social stimuli, and informational triggers as antecedents of these emotions, while incorporating social media usage, perceived social comparison, and brand trust as mediators and moderators that channel emotional energy into sustained consumer participation.

This framework aligns with contemporary understandings of digital consumer psychology, which emphasize that emotions and social cognition are central to online purchasing and innovation diffusion (Hayran *et al.*, 2020; Hodkinson, 2019). It also extends prior work on FOMO by introducing FOE as its social antecedent and identifying the moderating factors that determine when and how these emotional mechanisms strengthen repurchase intentions.

### 3.2. Hypotheses Development

Personality plays a crucial role in determining how individuals perceive social inclusion and interpret the digital cues. According to the Five-Factor Model (McCrae & John, 1992), traits such as neuroticism, extraversion, and openness to experience influence emotional reactivity and social sensitivity of individuals. Neurotic individuals tend to experience heightened anxiety and vulnerability to social rejection, making them more prone to the FOE. Extroverts are driven by the need for external validation, and open individuals characterized by curiosity may feel discomfort when they cannot participate in ongoing trends fueling FOMO (Blackwell *et al.*, 2017; Stead & Bibby, 2017; Watson & Clark, 1997). Thus, personality predispositions set an emotional foundation for digital engagement.

- **H1:** Personal traits (sensitivity, openness to experience, and extraversion) positively influence Fear of Exclusion (FOE) in social commerce.
- **H2:** Personal traits positively influence Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) in social commerce.

Influencers act as key social stimuli in digital markets, serving as opinion leaders and emotional catalysts for consumer behavior (Casaló *et al.*, 2020; Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017). Attributes such as attractiveness, trustworthiness, and expertise enhance credibility and parasocial interactions (Lou & Yuan, 2019; Ohanian, 1990). When audiences observe influencers endorsing desirable products or experiences, they experience aspirational tension and anticipated regret, which are core affective components of FOMO (Sofiana & Hayu, 2025; Tandon *et al.*, 2021).

- **H3:** Influencer traits (attractiveness, trustworthiness, and expertise) positively influence consumers' FOMO in social commerce.

Information in social commerce environments functions not only as a cognitive resource but also as a social and emotional trigger for consumers. Positive information, such as favorable reviews, peer recommendations, and limited-time offers, enhances perceived social approval and scarcity pressure (Cheung & Thadani, 2012; Huang & Benyoucef, 2017; Weinstein, 2018). This information flow drives continuous engagement and motivates consumers to revisit platforms to avoid missing opportunities.

Furthermore, social media use (SMU) magnifies these effects. Frequent interaction with social content strengthens FOMO by reinforcing the rhythm of social updates, likes, and influencer activities (Alt, 2015; Franchina *et al.*, 2018; Sofiana & Hayu, 2025). PI also increases platform usage by fostering curiosity and habit formation, embedding consumption within the everyday digital life (Huang & Benyoucef, 2017).

- **H4:** Positive information has a positive effect on consumers' FOMO.
- **H5:** Positive information positively affects social media usage.
- **H6:** Social media usage has a positive influence on FOMO.

The interaction between FOE and FOMO reflects a sequential emotional process. FOE arises from perceived social neglect or rejection and often transforms into FOMO as consumers attempt to reassert their sense of belonging through participation (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Elhai *et al.*, 2021; Holte *et al.*, 2022). Empirical evidence shows that individuals who fear exclusion engage more frequently in online activities to restore social connections, thereby intensifying FOMO (Franchina *et al.*, 2018; Reer

*et al.*, 2019).

- **H7:** Fear of Exclusion positively influences FOMO among social commerce consumers.

Within the SOR framework, FOMO operates as an internal affective state that transforms emotional tension into behavior. When consumers experience FOMO, they engage more actively with brands, influencers, and communities to maintain social visibility and a sense of belonging (Hayran *et al.*, 2020; Tandon *et al.*, 2021). Over time, these interactions foster brand trust, a belief in brand reliability and benevolence that mediates the link between emotional arousal and repurchase behavior (Chou & Hsu, 2016; Lou & Yuan, 2019). Thus, FOMO serves as both a motivator of immediate action and a foundation for enduring brand relationships (Wu *et al.*, 2023).

- **H8:** FOMO positively influences online repurchase behavior.
- **H13:** FOMO positively influences brand trust.
- **H14:** Brand trust positively influences online repurchase behavior.

Social commerce engagement is inherently comparative in nature. The visibility of others' consumption establishes a benchmark for social evaluation, activating perceived social comparison (PSC) as a cognitive mediator between SMU and FOMO (Reer *et al.*, 2019; Steinberger & Kim, 2023). Frequent exposure to curated social content heightens both FOMO and negative affect by reinforcing perceived inferiority and exclusion. Accordingly, intensive social media use not only increases emotional activation but also strengthens the translation of FOMO into behavioral outcomes (Alt, 2015; Franchina *et al.*, 2018).

- **H11:** Social media usage positively influences perceived social comparison.
- **H12:** Perceived social comparison positively influences FOMO.

Emotional reactivity and digital immersion are proposed as boundary conditions that intensify FOMO's behavioral effects of FOMO. Individuals high in FOE are susceptible to social signals and interpret consumption and participation as means of restoring social inclusion. Consequently, FOE amplifies the relationship between FOMO and repurchase (Elhai *et al.*, 2021; Franchina *et al.*, 2018). Similarly, high levels of SMU create continuous exposure to triggers, accelerating the conversion of FOMO into purchase actions (Alt, 2015; Sofiana & Hayu, 2025). Moreover, FOE strengthens the effect of SMU on FOMO, suggesting that socially anxious individuals are more likely to experience emotional contagion when they are heavily engaged online.

- **H9:** FOE moderates the relationship between FOMO and online repurchase behavior, such that the relationship is stronger when FOE is high.
- **H10:** Social media usage moderates the relationship multi-layered and online repurchase behavior, such that the relationship is stronger with higher SMU.
- **H15:** FOE moderates the relationship between SMU and FOMO, such that the relationship is stronger with higher FOE.

Taken together, the proposed model presents a multilayered structure linking emotional, cognitive, and behavioral processes. Personal traits, influencer attributes, and positive information are the primary stimuli that activate FOE and FOMO, reflecting individual differences and social triggers (Cheung & Thadani, 2012; McCrae & John, 1992; Ohanian, 1990). These emotional states are further shaped by cognitive (PSC) and relational (BT) mechanisms and intensified by contextual moderators (SMU and FOE), aligning with the evidence that comparison and digital immersion amplify emotional reactivity (Franchina *et al.*, 2018; Reer *et al.*, 2019). The final behavioral outcome of online repurchase behavior emerges not merely as a transactional response but as a means of maintaining social connection and emotional equilibrium, revealing the affective motivations embedded in digital consumption (Hayran *et al.*, 2020).

This integrative framework advances existing research by demonstrating that FOMO and FOE are not isolated pathologies of digital use but adaptive mechanisms that sustain participation in connected markets. By uniting emotional, cognitive, and relational pathways, this model provides a theoretically coherent foundation for understanding consumer engagement as an affective process embedded in

social commerce ecosystems (Tandon *et al.*, 2021).

Following the theoretical reasoning and hypotheses development presented above, all proposed relationships are listed in Table 1. The summary illustrates the structural logic of the conceptual framework, linking personal traits, influencer characteristics, and positive information as antecedents of the dual emotional mechanisms of Fear of Exclusion, and Fear of Missing Out. It further integrates the mediating and moderating effects of social media usage, perceived social comparison, and brand trust, which channel emotional activation into online repurchase behavior, consistent with prior work linking emotional engagement to relational loyalty (Chou & Hsu, 2016; Wu *et al.*, 2023). Together, these hypotheses portray a multi-level emotional–cognitive pathway that explains how social, informational, and psychological forces jointly sustain consumer engagement within social commerce ecosystems.

Table 1. Summary of Research Hypotheses

Code	Hypothesis Statement	Expected Relationship	Supporting Literature
<b>H1</b>	Personal traits (sensitivity, openness, and extraversion) positively influence Fear of Exclusion in social commerce.	Positive (+)	Blackwell <i>et al.</i> (2017); McCrae and John (1992); Stead and Bibby (2017); Watson and Clark (1997)
<b>H2</b>	Personal traits positively influence the Fear of Missing Out in social commerce.	Positive (+)	Alt (2015); Blackwell <i>et al.</i> (2017); Przybylski <i>et al.</i> (2013)
<b>H3</b>	Influencer traits (attractiveness, trustworthiness, and expertise) positively influenced consumers' FOMO in social commerce.	Positive (+)	Casaló <i>et al.</i> (2020); Djafarova and Rushworth (2017); Lou and Yuan (2019); Ohanian (1990)
<b>H4</b>	Positive information positively affects consumers' FOMO.	Positive (+)	Cheung and Thadani (2012); Huang and Benyoucef (2017); Weinstein (2018).
<b>H5</b>	Positive information has a positive effect on social media usage.	Positive (+)	Cheung and Thadani (2012); Huang and Benyoucef (2017)
<b>H6</b>	Social media usage positively influences the Fear of Missing Out.	Positive (+)	Alt (2015); Elhai <i>et al.</i> (2021); Franchina <i>et al.</i> (2018)
<b>H7</b>	Fear of Exclusion positively influences Fear of Missing Out in social commerce.	Positive (+)	Baumeister and Leary (1995); Elhai <i>et al.</i> (2021); Franchina <i>et al.</i> (2018); Holte <i>et al.</i> (2022).
<b>H8</b>	Fear of Missing Out positively influences Online Repurchase Behavior.	Positive (+)	Hayran <i>et al.</i> (2020); Tandon <i>et al.</i> (2021)
<b>H9</b>	Fear of Exclusion strengthens the relationship between FOMO and Online Repurchase Behavior.	Moderation (+)	Elhai <i>et al.</i> (2021); Franchina <i>et al.</i> (2018)
<b>H10</b>	Social Media Usage strengthens the relationship between FOMO and Online Repurchase Behavior.	Moderation (+)	Alt (2015); Sofiana and Hayu (2025)
<b>H11</b>	Social Media Usage positively influences Perceived Social Comparison.	Positive (+)	Reer <i>et al.</i> (2019); Steinberger and Kim (2023)
<b>H12</b>	Perceived Social Comparison positively influences Fear of Missing Out.	Positive (+)	Reer <i>et al.</i> (2019); Steinberger and Kim (2023).

Code	Hypothesis Statement	Expected Relationship	Supporting Literature
<b>H13</b>	Fear of Missing Out positively influences Brand Trust.	Positive (+)	Chou and Hsu (2016); Lou and Yuan (2019); Wu <i>et al.</i> (2023)
<b>H14</b>	Brand Trust positively influenced Online Repurchase Behavior.	Positive (+)	Chou and Hsu (2016); Lou and Yuan (2019); Wu <i>et al.</i> (2023)
<b>H15</b>	Fear of Exclusion moderates the relationship between Social Media Usage and Fear of Missing Out.	Moderation (+)	Elhai <i>et al.</i> (2021); Franchina <i>et al.</i> (2018)

The conceptual model derived from the preceding hypotheses is shown in Figure 1. It visually integrates the emotional, cognitive, and behavioral mechanisms underlying consumer engagement in social commerce. As shown, personal traits, influencer attributes, and positive information act as exogenous antecedents that activate the dual emotional constructs of Fear of Exclusion and Fear of Missing Out. These emotions interact dynamically to influence brand trust and online repurchase behavior, whereas social media usage and perceived social comparison serve as key mediating and moderating mechanisms that reinforce the emotional-behavioral pathway. The model also posits boundary conditions in which FOE and SMU amplify the strength of emotional effects, providing a comprehensive framework for understanding how psychological and social processes jointly sustain participation and loyalty in digital marketplaces.

The conceptual model illustrates the hypothesized relationships among the constructs proposed in this study. Personal traits, influencer attributes, and positive information serve as antecedents that activate Fear of Exclusion and Fear of Missing Out. These dual emotional mechanisms are linked through sequential and reciprocal effects, in which the FOE functions as a social antecedent of the FOMO. The framework incorporates social media usage, perceived social comparison, and brand trust as mediating and moderating variables that channel emotional arousal into online repurchase behavior. FOE and SMU also act as boundary conditions that strengthen the impact of FOMO on consumer repurchase decisions.

As shown in Figure 1, the conceptual model integrates emotional, cognitive, and relational pathways to explain sustained engagement within social commerce ecosystems. The proposed relationships depict a circular mechanism in which social exclusion anxiety (FOE) heightens FOMO, which subsequently enhances brand trust and increases repurchase intention. The inclusion of social comparison and platform usage contextualizes the emotional process within everyday digital interactions, highlighting how algorithmic visibility, influencer dynamics, and informational cues co-create an affective cycle that drives consumer loyalty and innovation participation.

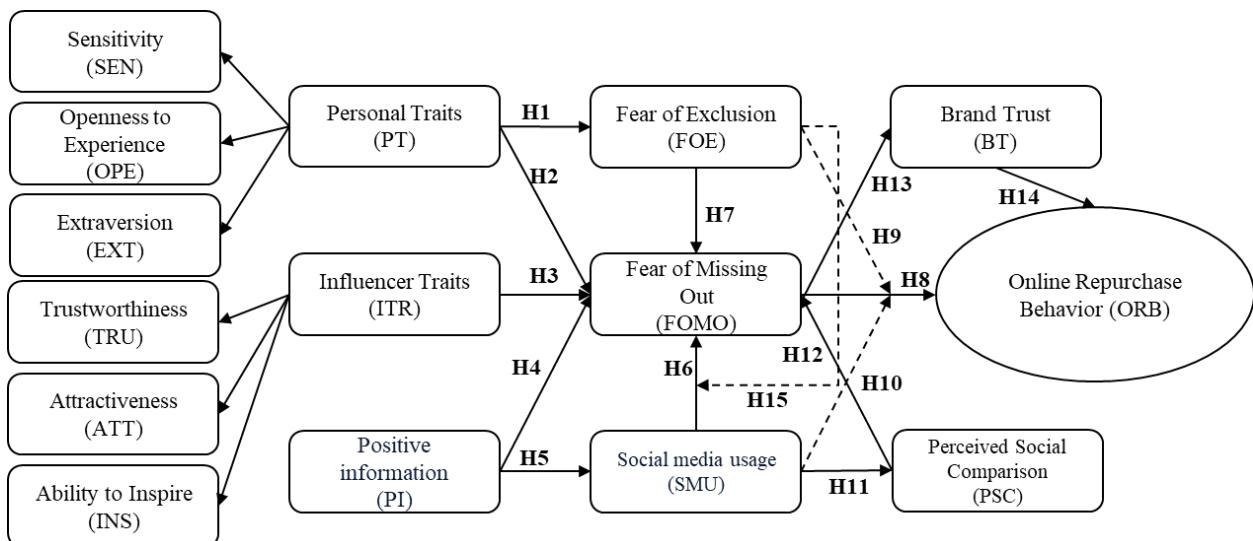


Fig.1: Conceptual Model

## 4. Research Propositions

Building on the preceding conceptual framework, this study proposes a set of 15 hypotheses (H1–H15) that collectively explain how personal, social, and informational antecedents trigger emotional mechanisms, Fear of Exclusion, and Fear of Missing Out, which subsequently shape consumer trust and repurchase behavior in social commerce. The model adopts the stimulus–organism–response logic (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974) and the social comparison mechanism (Reer *et al.*, 2019; Steinberger & Kim, 2023) to structure the emotional–cognitive–behavioral pathway.

The first group of hypotheses (H1–H3) addresses individual and social antecedents, proposing that personality characteristics (e.g., sensitivity, openness, and extraversion) and influencer traits (attractiveness, trustworthiness, and expertise) amplify users' emotional vulnerability to FOE and FOMO (Casaló *et al.*, 2020; McCrae & John, 1992; Ohanian, 1990). The second cluster (H4–H6) focuses on informational antecedents and media exposure, suggesting that positive information (PI) and habitual social media usage intensify emotional arousal and platform dependency (Alt, 2015; Cheung & Thadani, 2012; Huang & Benyoucef, 2017). The third cluster (H7–H15) elaborates on the emotional interaction between FOE and FOMO, their behavioral consequences, and the boundary conditions of these effects, emphasizing the mediating role of perceived social comparison and brand trust and the moderating influences of FOE and social media use (Chou & Hsu, 2016; Lou & Yuan, 2019; Wu *et al.*, 2023). Collectively, these hypotheses form a comprehensive model that links psychological predispositions, social influences, and information stimuli to sustained consumer engagement. To enrich the theoretical contribution of this framework, we propose three broader propositions for future conceptual and empirical exploration.

### *Proposition 1: Dual-Emotion Mechanism of Digital Consumption*

FOMO and FOE represent complementary rather than independent emotional processes. FOE functions as a social trigger and a perceived threat of exclusion, while FOMO reflects the motivational response to regain inclusion through digital engagement and purchasing (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Elhai *et al.*, 2021; Holte *et al.*, 2022). Their interaction constitutes a cyclical mechanism that sustains participation in social commerce and reframes fear-based emotions as adaptive forces in online communities.

### *Proposition 2: Cognitive–Relational Conversion of Emotional Arousal*

Emotional activation driven by FOMO transforms into behavioral commitment through cognitive and relational mediation. Social comparison translates emotional arousal into perceived self-relevance, while brand trust converts short-term engagement into lasting loyalty (Lou & Yuan, 2019; Reer *et al.*, 2019). This cognitive–relational conversion suggests that emotions function not only as transient affective states but also as mechanisms of knowledge co-creation and trust-building within platform ecosystems, consistent with evidence showing that emotional engagement strengthens social attachment and repeat purchase behavior (Hayran *et al.*, 2020; Wu *et al.*, 2023).

### *Proposition 3: Boundary Conditions of Emotional Engagement*

The strength of the emotional–behavioral link varies depending on users' digital involvement and exclusion sensitivity. Heavy social media users experience continuous exposure to comparison cues, magnifying FOMO, whereas individuals high in FOE exhibit stronger compensatory behaviors aimed at reestablishing belonging (Alt, 2015; Franchina *et al.*, 2018; Sofiana & Hayu, 2025). These moderators define the conditions under which digital emotions most strongly predict sustained consumption and co-creation, reinforcing the evidence that habitual platform engagement heightens emotional reactivity and accelerates purchase behavior (Hayran *et al.*, 2020).

The 15 hypotheses and three theoretical propositions collectively explain how emotional, cognitive, and relational mechanisms converge to shape consumer participation in social commerce. Thus, the

framework extends the current understanding of digital consumer psychology by positioning FOE and FOMO as dual emotional engines that transform social anxiety into engagement, trust, and repurchase, which are key drivers of innovation and value co-creation in digital marketplaces (Tandon *et al.*, 2021).

## 5. Theoretical and Managerial Implications

### 5.1. Theoretical contributions

This research advances the theoretical understanding of digital consumer psychology by integrating Fear of Exclusion (FOE) and Fear of Missing Out into a unified emotional framework that explains sustained participation and repurchase behavior in social commerce.

Previous studies have mainly investigated FOMO as an isolated antecedent of impulsive buying or media addiction (Alt, 2015; Hayran *et al.*, 2020; Przybylski *et al.*, 2013), whereas the role of FOE, rooted in ostracism and belongingness theories, has received limited attention (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Holte *et al.*, 2022). By conceptualizing FOE as a social antecedent of FOMO, this study clarifies the dual-emotion mechanism that drives digital behavior of consumers. FOE activates FOMO by signaling perceived social exclusion, and FOMO motivates behaviors aimed at reestablishing connections through engagement and purchasing (Elhai *et al.*, 2021; Franchina *et al.*, 2018). This emotional cycle reframes fear-based reactions as adaptive forces of inclusion in connected marketplaces.

Second, this study extends the Stimulus–Organism–Response (SOR) model (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974) by introducing multi-layered antecedents, personal, social, and informational stimuli that evoke emotional, cognitive, and relational responses. While prior applications of SOR in e-commerce emphasized utilitarian cues such as service quality or information design (Huang & Benyoucef, 2017), the present model highlights affective and social stimuli, influencer credibility, positive information, and social validation as key triggers of emotional activation and behavioral continuity (Casaló *et al.*, 2020; Cheung & Thadani, 2012). This expansion bridges the gap between the psychological and technological interpretations of online consumption, demonstrating how social presence and informational richness jointly sustain engagement.

Third, by integrating social comparison theory (Reer *et al.*, 2019; Steinberger & Kim, 2023), the model situates emotional responses within the cognitive processes of self-evaluation and positioning. These findings suggest that perceived social comparison mediates the relationship between social media use and FOMO, supporting the idea that digital emotions are socially constructed rather than purely individual experiences. This insight contributes to the emerging literature on emotion-based engagement, revealing that comparison and validation are central to how consumers co-create meaning and motivation in networked environments (Tandon *et al.*, 2021).

Fourth, the model incorporates brand trust as a relational mediator that translates transient fear into enduring loyalty. Prior studies have associated FOMO with impulsivity or emotional exhaustion (Hayran *et al.*, 2020; Sofiana & Hayu, 2025), but few have examined its constructive potential in fostering trust and repurchase (Chou & Hsu, 2016; Lou & Yuan, 2019; Wu *et al.*, 2023). The current framework shows that when emotional engagement is channeled through credible brands and influencers, it cultivates a stable relational outcome of trust, which functions as an affective resource in the open innovation process.

Finally, the inclusion of FOE and SMU as moderators refines our understanding of the boundary conditions of emotional engagement. These moderators demonstrate that the strength of the FOMO–behavior relationship depends on users' social sensitivity and digital immersion (Alt, 2015; Sofiana & Hayu, 2025). Theoretically, this highlights that emotional mechanisms are context-dependent and fluctuate across levels of platform involvement and perceived exclusion.

The proposed model integrates affective, cognitive, and relational processes into a coherent emotion–cognition–trust loop. Within this dynamic, emotional arousal (FOE and FOMO) serves as the initial affective stimulus that activates cognitive appraisal through perceived social comparison, which

subsequently transforms into relational confidence, expressed as brand trust. This sequential pathway demonstrates how emotional uncertainty evolves into psychological reassurance and behavioral loyalty. Such integration advances traditional SOR logic by connecting affective activation with trust-based behavioral outcomes, thereby offering a unified framework for emotion-driven engagement in social commerce (Wu *et al.*, 2023).

## 5.2. Managerial Implications

From a managerial perspective, the findings offer valuable insights for platform operators, digital marketers, and brand managers seeking to enhance engagement without compromising consumer well-being and privacy.

First, understanding the dual-emotion mechanism (FOE–FOMO) enables firms to design emotionally intelligent marketing strategies. Rather than exploiting fear-based appeals, platforms should emphasize inclusive participation through messages that highlight community, co-creation, and shared experiences. Campaigns that evoke curiosity and social connection, instead of scarcity or anxiety, can convert emotional arousal into positive engagement and loyalty.

Second, managing informational and influencer stimuli is critical. Since influencer credibility directly triggers FOMO, platforms should carefully curate collaborations with trustworthy endorsers who align with the brand's values. Authenticity, transparency, and consistent communication mitigate manipulative perceptions while reinforcing trust and repurchase intentions. Positive informational cues, such as verified reviews or user-generated recommendations, should ethically emphasize social proof rather than artificially creating urgency.

Third, the intensity of social media usage should be monitored and personalized. While higher SMU increases engagement, it can also heighten anxiety and fatigue. Platforms can implement adaptive algorithms to detect excessive use and introduce digital well-being features such as reminders or cooldown intervals to prevent emotional overload. This approach aligns with the emerging trends in responsible and sustainable digital marketing.

Fourth, enhancing brand trust is central to transforming emotional activation into repurchase. Managers should foster continuous reciprocal interactions between consumers and brands through responsive customer service, transparent data handling, and community-based engagement. FOMO-induced engagement becomes valuable when anchored in trust and satisfaction rather than manipulation.

Finally, recognizing the boundary effects of the FOE provides an opportunity to segment audiences based on emotional sensitivity. Consumers who are more prone to exclusion anxiety respond better to campaigns that emphasize belonging and inclusion. Designing emotionally balanced experiences in which participation satisfies the need for connection without amplifying anxiety can enhance both loyalty and mental well-being.

In summary, this study offers a framework for ethical emotional design in social commerce. By leveraging insights from FOE and FOMO dynamics, managers can balance engagement and responsibility, creating platforms that are not only profitable but also psychologically sustainable for users. Thus, the model bridges theoretical innovation with managerial relevance, illustrating how emotion-driven engagement can evolve from reactive consumption to participatory co-creation in the digital marketplace.

For instance, in emerging social commerce markets such as Vietnam, platforms such as TikTok Shop and Shopee Live have transformed emotional engagement into a central mechanism of digital marketing. These platforms employ real-time interactions, limited-time discounts, and influencer-led livestreaming to trigger consumers' Fear of Missing Out and Fear of Exclusion. While these tactics effectively stimulate repurchase and engagement, they also highlight the managerial challenge of balancing commercial incentives with ethical and emotional design. Adopting transparent messaging, promoting inclusive participation, and introducing well-being reminders during intensive campaigns can help firms maintain users' trust and long-term loyalty. Such context-sensitive strategies exemplify how emotional

design principles can be localized within Southeast Asian digital ecosystems, aligning commercial success with psychological sustainability.

The rapid convergence of social media and e-commerce has transformed consumption from a utilitarian exchange to an emotionally charged process of social participation. Within this transformation, Fear of Exclusion and Fear of Missing Out have emerged as central emotional forces shaping digital engagement and repurchase behavior. Grounded in the Stimulus–Organism–Response and social comparison frameworks, this study developed an integrative model that positions FOE as a social antecedent of FOMO and identifies how personal traits, influencer credibility, and positive information jointly activate these feelings. The framework also incorporates social media usage, perceived social comparison, and brand trust as mediating and moderating mechanisms that translate emotional arousal into a sustained repurchase behavior.

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