Fear of missing out as a driver of purchase intentions: a bibliometric analysis of global research

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Abstract

A psychological state that has emerged as an important construct to capture consumer behavior in the digital context is fear of missing out (FOMO). With the rise of social media, influencer campaigns, and scarcity-based content, FOMO is becoming increasingly prevalent and shaping consumer purchasing behavior. But the existing research is fragmented and dispersed across psychology, marketing, and behavioral science, with no overall appreciation of the field. Based on that, the current study undertakes a bibliometric analysis of global research on FOMO and purchase intention, drawing on 603 peer-reviewed papers from the Scopus and Web of Science databases. The performance analysis and science mapping techniques were carried out using Bibliometrix, focusing on keyword co-occurrence and thematic mapping. The results show that there was significantly increased research in the temporal frame post-2018, and prevailing research themes included anxiety, social media, addiction, and digital behavior. The study identifies areas for future research to converge FOMO with consumer behavior theory and practice, as well as directions for integrating theoretical developments in FOMO and digital consumer behavior.

Keywords: *FOMO; Bibliometric; Purchase intentions; Psychology; Consumer Behavior.*
JEL Classification: *M31; D12; D91; L86*

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1. Introduction

Consumer decision-making processes have been transformed by the rapid growth of digital ecosystems, which generate novel psychological drivers of behavior. Thriving amongst these is a construct called Fear of Missing Out (FOMO), which describes cognitive experiences of the perceived danger of missing out on opportunities to engage with others (Przybylski et al., 2013). FOMO has been studied in a variety of different disciplines and settings, including psychology and social media, but rarely in consumer behavior. However, despite much research on this phenomenon, the field of consumer behavior has still not, on its own, examined how FOMO influences purchase intention.

Previous studies conceptualize FOMO as a sense of anxiousness about others enjoying enriching events or opportunities without them, triggering urgency, leading to social comparisons, and prompting behavior (Przybylski et al., 2013; Solt et al., 2018). Scarcity psychological activation has been increasingly used in digital marketing through limited-time offers, coupons, and influencer communication strategies (Abdrabbo et al., 2025; Bläse et al., 2024; Dinh et al., 2023). Empirical research also confirms the impact of FOMO on impulsive buying, compulsive consumption, and online engagement behaviors (Hussain et al., 2023; Mert & Tengilimoğlu, 2023). Yet, although these findings have been expanding, there is a lack of development of the Theory of Action of appending FOMO to existing models of consumer behavior.

On a theoretical level, FOMO can be considered a key psychological process alongside other decision-making processes. According to the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) model, the internal organismic state is activated by external stimuli, such as media, peers, and marketing messages (Dinh et al., 2023). Likewise, according to the Social Comparison Theory, upward comparisons have a greater effect, intensifying feelings of deprivation, increasing FOMO perceptions, and subsequently affecting behavioral responses (Przybylski et al., 2013). Moreover, the theory of planned behavior can be used to rationalize the role such affective and cognitive factors play in forming an intention (Ajzen, 1991). Although there are theoretical connections, past research has largely investigated FOMO in isolation, limiting understanding of how it affects purchase intention.

The abundance of research on FOMO in various areas, such as psychology, marketing, information systems, and behavioral science, also contributes to this fragmentation (Bläse et al., 2024; Jabeen et al., 2023). Even though the number of publications has grown considerably in recent years, there is a lack of systematic monitoring of the mental structure, thematic development, and research paths in the nexus of FOMO and purchase intention. As reported in bibliometric studies, this is a hindrance to theoretical consolidation and to establishing coherent research agendas (Donthu et al., 2021).

In digital transactions, a phenomenon known as Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) has become a serious consideration in the customer choice. It is about someone's fear that other people are having fun at something they are not, and that makes them feel anxious, hurried, and bad about themselves (Przybylski et al., 2013). In consumer behavior settings, such emotional reactions frequently lead to increased purchasing motivations, especially in situations where there are scarcity cues, time-limited deals, endorsement marketing, and persistent exposure to social media (Dinh et al., 2023; Hussain et al., 2023). The Stimulus-Organism-Response Model can be used to identify the total amount of stimuli that trigger the creation of psychological conditions, such as FOMO, which, in turn, determine the behavioral reaction, in this particular study, the purchase intention.

Furthermore, Social Comparison Theory describes the constant self-assessment of a person by comparing themselves to someone else, especially when people see what others are doing on social media and what is getting posted about them, or when people have idealized lifestyles (Festinger, 1954). Emphasizing such comparisons contributes to a sense of urgency and exclusion, driving impulsive and socially driven buying habits. Similarly, it has been stated that emotional and cognitive evaluations affect one's intentions for behavior, according to the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991). In this sense, FOMO operates as a psychological tool to amplify consumers' impulse to engage in a "jump on board" act or a social mode of consumption, activity, or marvel. Therefore, it is not only rational evaluation that inspires people to buy, but also other rational and irrational feelings and perceptions that arise from a digitally constructed evaluation process. This theoretical connection will help clarify FOMO's influence on consumer consumption behavior and may increase its importance in modern marketing and digital consumption studies.

Thus, a framework for global research on FOMO and purchase intention was developed to close this research gap by conducting a comprehensive bibliometric analysis of data from the Scopus and Web of Science databases. The objectives of this study are (1) to review the evolution of the research output, (2) to find influential authors, (3) to outline dominant and emerging trends of the research output, and (4) to map the intra- and inter-conceptual structure

of the domain. In addition to descriptive mapping, this study contributes to the field by interpreting the bibliometric results in line with theory and highlighting key gaps in research. This does so by extending knowledge of the centrality of "FOMO" in consumer behavior and by providing a basis for incorporating psychological drivers into existing purchase-intention frameworks. The results also have implications for management when developing marketing programs aimed at inducing urgency and social influences, and without engaging in unethical or unsustainable consumption (Bläse et al., 2024).

2. Data and approach

2.1. Research design

To analyze the development, key research topics, and overall concepts of research on FOMO and purchase intention, this study employed a bibliometric approach. Bibliometric analysis helps in the systematic analysis of a large number of publications of research (Aria & Cuccurullo, 2017; Donthu et al., 2021) by mapping out publication trends, citation patterns, and the relationship between topics (Linnenluecke et al., 2020). Consistent with prior studies, the research integrates performance analysis and science mapping techniques to provide a comprehensive understanding of the field (Bhaskar et al., 2022; Donthu et al., 2021; Zupic & Čater, 2015).

2.2. Systematic literature review Approach

In this research, a systematic literature review (SLR) approach was used, guided by the PRISMA 2020 Framework (see Figure 1), to ensure transparency, reproducibility, and rigor in article selection by identifying relevant scholarly researchers and articles. The PRISMA model offers a methodical approach to determining, filtering, examining each study to qualify, and selecting the studies to be included in a review. The aim of the review was to identify empirical and theoretical literature on the correlation between Fear of Missing Out (FOMO), social influence, and consumer buying intentions in marketing and consumer behavior settings.

2.3. Data sources and search Strategy

Data were collected from two major academic databases: Scopus and Web of Science (WoS), which are widely recognized for their extensive coverage of peer-reviewed research and suitability for bibliometric analysis (Donthu et al., 2021). A structured search query was developed using Boolean operators:

("FOMO" OR "Fear of Missing Out") AND ("Purchase Intention" OR "Buying Intention" OR "Purchase Behaviour" OR "Buying Behaviour")

The search was applied to titles, abstracts, and author keywords to ensure comprehensive retrieval of relevant studies. Data extraction was conducted in December 2025 to ensure transparency and reproducibility of the research process.

2.3.1. Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

To ensure the quality and relevance of the chosen research, screening required the use of predefined inclusion and exclusion criteria. The reviews are limited to studies published between 2014 and 2025, peer-reviewed journal articles written in English, accessible with full text, and indexed in Scopus or Web of Science. Studies were excluded if they (i) were conference papers, book chapters, editorials, or notes, (ii) were non-English publications, (iii)

did not focus on consumer purchase intention or related behavioral constructs, or (iv) were duplicate records across databases. These criteria are consistent with established bibliometric research practices (Donthu et al., 2021).

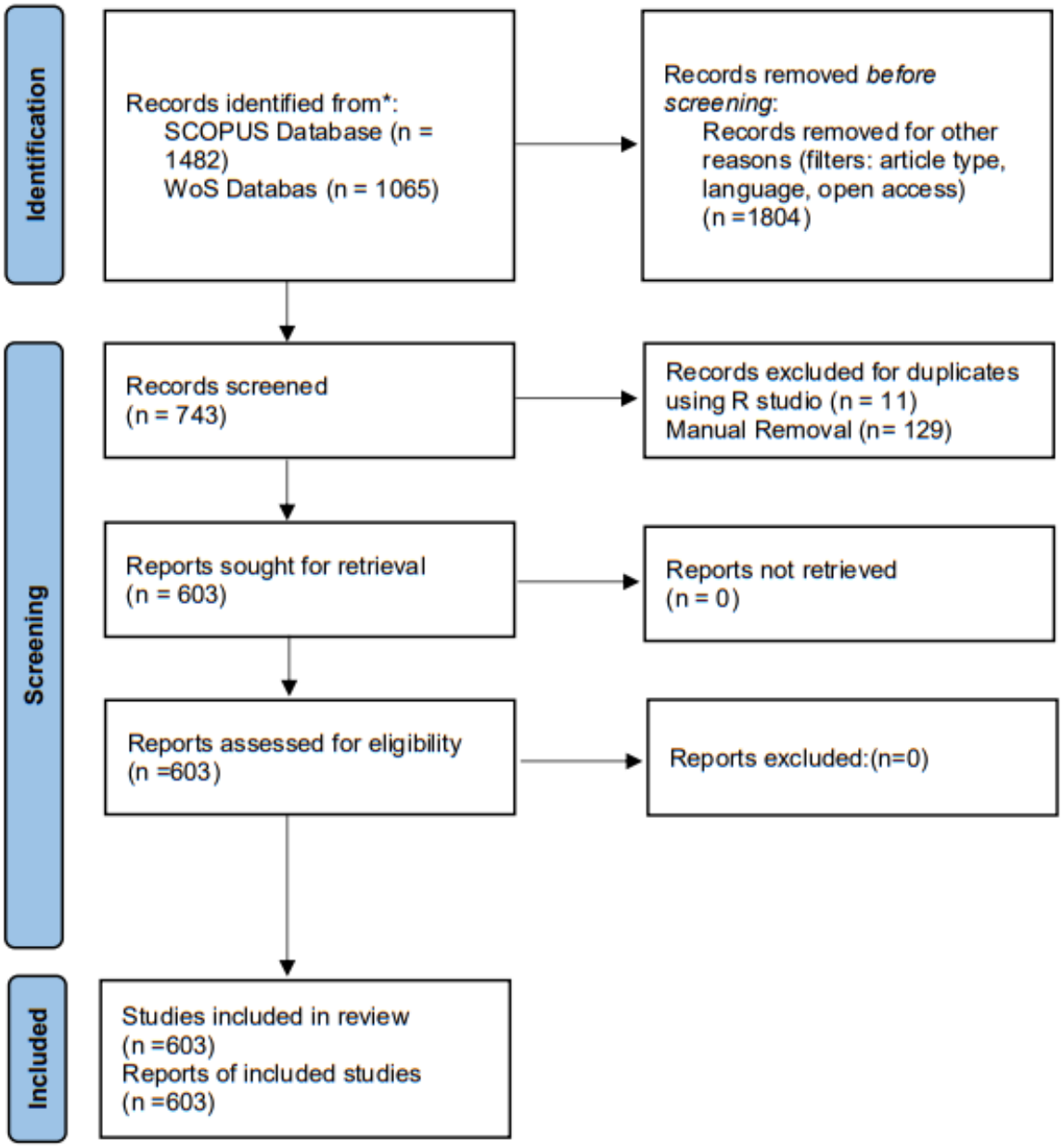

Figure 1. PRISMA Framework (Source: Author)

2.3.2. Study Selection Process

The selection of studies was conducted in the four phases of the PRISMA framework: identification, screening, eligibility, and inclusion. The identification stage returned 1482 records on Scopus and 1065 on Web of Science, for a total of 2547. The preliminary filtering criteria (article type, language, and open access) eliminated 1804 records, leaving 743 for further screening. In the screening stage, the remaining 743 records were filtered based on title and abstract to determine their suitability for the research topic. RStudio was used to identify duplicate records, eliminating 11 duplicate articles. Also, 129 records were manually filtered out as irrelevant to the research objectives. Subsequent to this screening process, 603 records were retained in full text. In the eligibility stage, the entire content of the 603 other articles was

accessed, and evaluations of their inclusion and exclusion criteria were conducted in accordance with the established criteria. No other articles were eliminated during the initial stages, as all the retrieved studies were eligible. Lastly, 603 articles comprised the systematic review. These studies constituted the primary data set analyzed to examine the relationship between FOMO, social influence, and consumer purchase intention.

2.4. Data cleaning and standardization

To enhance the reliability and validity of the analysis, a rigorous data cleaning process was undertaken. Bibliometric studies emphasize the importance of keyword standardization to avoid distortions in thematic mapping (Aria & Cuccurullo, 2017; Bhaskar et al., 2022).

The following steps were implemented:

i. **Keyword standardization:** Terms such as "FOMO" and "Fear of Missing Out" were merged, while variations such as "purchase behaviour" and "purchase behavior" were harmonized.

ii. **Synonym consolidation:** Conceptually similar terms (e.g., "AI" and "Artificial Intelligence") were unified to ensure consistency.

iii. **Duplicate removal:** Records retrieved from both databases were screened, and duplicates were removed.

iv. **Manual screening:** Titles and abstracts were reviewed to ensure relevance to the research objectives.

This process ensures consistency in keyword co-occurrence analysis and improves the robustness of findings, as recommended in prior bibliometric studies (Donthu et al., 2021).

2.5. Analytical tools and techniques

The analysis was conducted using Bibliometrix (R package) for Data processing and statistical analysis (Aria & Cuccurullo, 2017), VOSviewer for network visualization and clustering, and RStudio for data cleaning and thematic mapping.

2.6. Bibliometric analysis

The study employs two complementary analytical approaches. First, performance analysis including annual scientific production, citation analysis, leading authors, journals, and countries. Second, science mapping includes keyword co-occurrence analysis, co-authorship networks, bibliographic coupling, and thematic mapping and evolution.

Performance analysis focuses on descriptive analytics such as annual publication counts, citation analysis, and the identification of leading journals and authors (Donthu et al., 2021; Zupic & Čater, 2015). Key indicators include the total number of publications per year, citation counts, h-index for authors and sources, and mapping of research productivity trends.

Science mapping is a study of the intellectual and social structure of a research field. It aids in determining themes, networking characteristics, and the process of knowledge development over time (Jelvehgaran Esfahani et al., 2019). There are several methods of science mapping. Keyword co-occurrence analysis can identify dominant and emerging research themes by analyzing the patterns of keyword appearance in publications. Co-authorship analysis provides insights into collaboration dynamics and relationships among

scientists, institutes, and countries, revealing the nature of knowledge generation and academic networks. Bibliographic coupling groups documents with topical similarities by sharing substances and points out areas of new development and current research in a field. Thematic mapping and evolution analysis are used to identify the evolution and growth of research topics or themes over time and to pinpoint both well-established and emerging research topics. Furthermore, network clustering (e.g., Louvain or modularity maximization) groups relevant concepts or documents based on the relationships among citations or keywords they share. These techniques will provide a comprehensive understanding of the structure and growth of a research area.

These techniques enable the identification of both established and emerging research themes and provide insights into the intellectual structure of the field (Zupic & Čater, 2015).

2.7. Restriction to open access

The paper considers only open-access journal articles, thereby guaranteeing transparency, accessibility, and reusability of the bibliometric analysis while providing a more restricted data set. Open access publications are linked to the possibility to retrieve full-text data and facilitate comprehensive screening, validation, and verification of bibliographic records and of thematic content (Aria & Cuccurullo, 2017; Donthu et al., 2021). Additionally, previous bibliometric research has recognized that open access datasets increase replicability and allow future researchers to replicate findings without restrictions of institutions (Piwowar et al., 2018).

Moreover, in the past few decades, open-access publishing has come into prominence, which is indicative of a wider transition to the leveling of scientific knowledge, not least in emerging disciplines, like digital consumer behavior or studies related to social media (Piwowar et al., 2018). Because this study focuses on current research trends, it was important to include open-access articles to ensure adequate representation of the more recent and high-impact papers. In accordance with previous bibliometric studies, it is noted that using only open-access publications can lead to selection bias and also not cover all of the high-impact journals that require sign-up access (Donthu et al., 2021). This restriction is noted and tackled in the discussion section.

3. Analysis

3.1. Completeness of bibliometric metadata

The metadata completeness evaluation of a merged bibliometric dataset of 603 documents retrieved in two databases is shown in Figure 2. It can break down several metadata fields in detail, the count and percentages of missing values, and the quality status of every field:

i. Core bibliographic metadata such as Author, Document Type, Language, Publication Year, Title, and Total Citation are fully complete, with a 0% missing rate and an “Excellent” status.
ii. Keywords such as Affiliation, Corresponding Author, DOI, Journal, and Abstract are virtually full (lacking in 1-8 cases, less than 1.5 percent) and are of the grade of “Good”.
iii. 6.47% of records are missing author keywords, also rated “Good”.
iv. “Keywords Plus” (alternative keyword indexing) is absent for 28.19% of documents, categorized as “Poor”.

v. Two major metadata categories, "Cited References" and "Science Categories", are completely missing (100%), indicating that none of the 603 records include this information.

Completeness of metadata -- **603** docs merged from 2 DBs

Original size docs -- Deleted duplicated docs

Metadata	Description	Missing Counts	Missing %	Status
AU	Author	0	0.00	Excellent
DT	Document Type	0	0.00	Excellent
LA	Language	0	0.00	Excellent
PY	Publication Year	0	0.00	Excellent
TI	Title	0	0.00	Excellent
TC	Total Citation	0	0.00	Excellent
C1	Affiliation	1	0.17	Good
RP	Corresponding Author	1	0.17	Good
DI	DOI	1	0.17	Good
SO	Journal	1	0.17	Good
AB	Abstract	8	1.33	Good
DE	Keywords	39	6.47	Good
ID	Keywords Plus	170	28.19	Poor
CR	Cited References	603	100.00	Completely missing
WC	Science Categories	603	100.00	Completely missing

Figure 2. Completeness of bibliometric metadata

3.2. Descriptive overview of publications

Figure 3 provides important insights into FOMO, social influence, and purchase intentions (2014-2025). 603 documents from the data source, comprising 248 sources, demonstrate a notable 19.35% annual growth rate. A total of 1829 authors have contributed, with an average of 3.78 authors per document. International co-authorship is at 22.06%, and only 33 papers are single-authored. A total of 2472 keywords are covered, with an average document age of 3.42 years and 30.48 citations per document, suggesting a balance between recent advances and published studies.

3.3. Annual scientific production

Table 1 shows the annual scientific output of articles in the field between 2014 and 2025. The graph showed that research output was steady and growing since 2014, with numbers spiking significantly after 2018. The sharp rise is noted during 2020-2023, when the number of articles exceeded 150 by 2023. After this peak, article production decreased dramatically, reaching its minimum in 2025 (until the data extraction for the study).

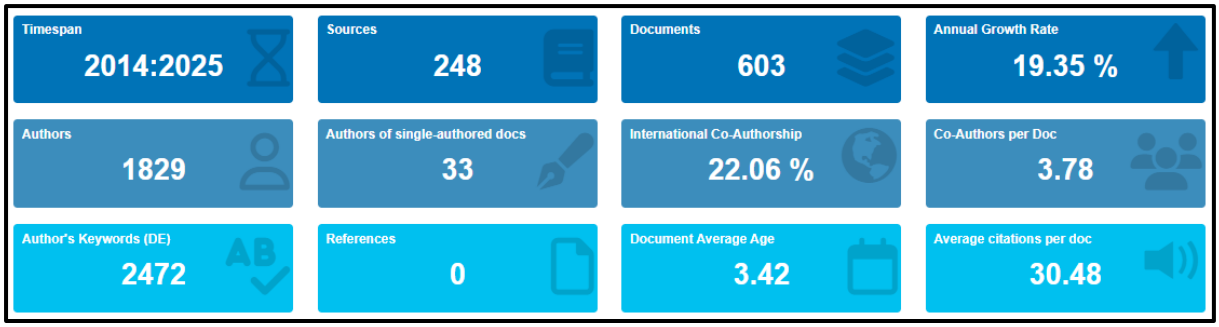

Figure 3. Main information of the study on the SCOPUS and WOS databases

Table 1. Annual scientific production

Year	Articles
2014	1
2015	9
2016	8
2017	14
2018	26
2019	38
2020	59
2021	84
2022	112
2023	158
2024	87
2025	7

Notes: This table presents the year-wise publications.

3.4. Annual citations per year

Table 2 presents an overview of the yearly trend in average citations per article in the dataset from 2014 to 2025. The highest citation peaks occurred around 2016-2018, with the maximum mean number of citations per year in 2018 at 11. Subsequently, this tendency indicates that its peak dropped significantly, with levels increasing in 2020 and 2021, but the average number of citations per year decreased gradually after 2022, reaching its lowest point of slightly more than 2 in 2024.

Table 2. Average citations per year

Year	MeanTCperArt	N	MeanTCperYear	CitableYears
2014	28	1	2.33	12
2015	36.44	9	3.31	11
2016	94.5	8	9.45	10
2017	80.79	14	8.98	9
2018	89.69	26	11.21	8
2019	26.11	38	3.73	7
2020	55.95	59	9.33	6
2021	44.43	84	8.89	5
2022	24.11	112	6.03	4
2023	16.53	158	5.51	3
2024	5.11	87	2.56	2
2025	3.43	7	3.43	1

Notes: This table presents the average citations per year. Total citations per article (MeanTCperArt), Number of articles (N), mean citations per year (MeanTCperYear), and the number of years each cohort has been citable.

3.5. Most prolific authors

Table 3 lists the top contributing authors, giving the total number of articles authored and a fractional count (excluding multi-authored articles). The most productive author is “Dhir A” (11 articles, fractional contribution of 2.23), then comes the author with 9 articles, contributing

2.44 fractionalized, namely, "Griffiths M", followed by the author with 8 articles, contributing 2.35 fractionalized, namely, "Montag C".

This order is supported by the bubble plot, which shows the number of documents written by each of these top authors; the larger and darker the bubble, the more productive the author is. The top authors have produced between 6 and 8 documents, suggesting a focus group of the heavy producers of research that is advancing the field.

Table 3. Most Relevant Authors

Authors	Articles	Articles Fractionalized
Dhir A	11	2.23
Griffiths M	9	2.44
Montag C	8	2.35
Lin C	7	1.98
Tandon A	7	1.42
Elhai J	6	1.35
Kaur P	6	1.25
Li C	6	0.97
Xu Y	6	1.87
Dwivedi Y	5	1.20

Notes: This table presents the top prolific authors.

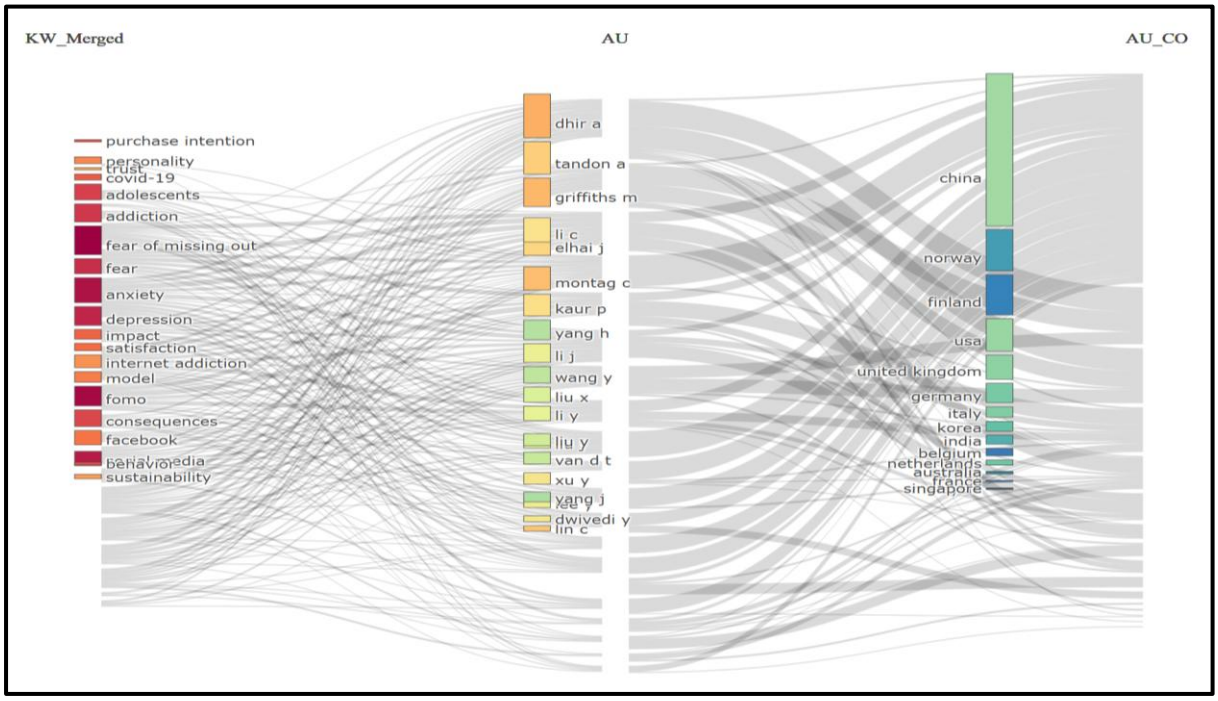

Figure 4. Sankey diagram

3.6. Three-field plot

Figure 4 shows a three-field Sankey diagram that reflects the dynamic connections among the research keywords (KWMerged), prolific authors (AU), and their countries of origin (AU_CO). The first field contains high-frequency keyword themes, the central field lists the most popular authors, and the right field shows each author's country of affiliation. Distributed connections represent how the main topics traverse among authors, and these connections are then mapped to countries, providing information on the topical frontier and the global distribution of knowledge within the research community.

This best describes the inter-relatability of research interests, professional leadership, and the geographical scope, making it possible to interpret knowledge production networks in a subtle manner.

3.7. Most prolific sources

Table 4 indicates the number of articles published in each journal, with the most frequent articles published in the journal being "Sustainability (Switzerland) with 42 articles, then Frontiers in Psychology (34), and finally the International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health (21). Additional sources worth mentioning include Current Psychology, PLOS ONE, and Frontiers in Psychiatry, each with more than 10 articles. This visualization accentuates the field's interdisciplinary nature and psychological focus, and provides an objective picture of where sources are concentrated and where they are published, and where they are most likely to be the main sources of scholarly communication on this site.

Table 4. Most prolific sources

Sources	Articles
Sustainability (Switzerland)	42
Frontiers in Psychology	34
International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health	21
Sustainability	20
Current Psychology	17
PLOS One	14
Frontiers in Psychiatry	12
Psychology Research and Behaviour Management	12
Behavioural Sciences	11
BMC Psychology	11

Notes: This table presents the top prolific sources.

Table 5. Sources' local impact by H-index

Source	h_index	g_index	m_index	TC	NP	PY_start
Sustainability (Switzerland)	21	33	1.91	1171	42	2015
Frontiers in Psychology	15	26	1.88	718	34	2018
International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health	14	21	1.56	1538	21	2017
Sustainability	14	20	1.27	628	20	2015
Computers in Human Behaviour	9	10	0.90	1568	10	2016
Current Psychology	9	15	2.25	245	17	2022
Frontiers in Psychiatry	9	12	1.50	308	12	2020
Technological Forecasting and Social Change	9	9	1.8	872	9	2021
PLOS One	8	13	1.33	192	14	2020
BMC Psychology	7	9	1.75	102	11	2022

Notes: This table lists journals by local impact, ranked by H-index.

3.8. Sources' local impact

Table 5 presents the academic impact of key journal sources in the domain, based on bibliometric measures such as h-index, g-index, m-index, total citations (TC), publications (NP), and inclusion in the list by year (PY_start). With the highest h-index (21), indicating the productivity and citation impact, and the highest g-index (33) and a strong m-index (1.91), 42 articles published since 2015 and 1,171 total citations, Sustainability (Switzerland) is introduced. The impact of Frontiers in Psychology and International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health is also strong, with h-indexes of 15 and 14, g-indexes of 26 and 21, and a significant number of total citations and publications. The other influential sources are Computers in Human Behavior, Current Psychology, and Technological Forecasting and

Social Change, each with an h-index and m-index of 9 or higher, reflecting recent contributions of impact.

3.9. Country scientific production

Table 6 reveals how science is produced globally. The map uses color gradients to show how much a country has produced scientific works, with darker colors indicating greater productivity. China has been portrayed as the world leader in publications, with 399 publications, ranking behind only the United States (154), the United Kingdom (122), Italy (84), and Germany (68). Other significant contributors are the Netherlands, South Korea, Spain, India, and Turkey, which produced between 41 and 58 documents.

Table 6. Country scientific production

Region	Freq
China	399
USA	154
UK	122
Italy	84
Germany	68
Netherlands	58
South Korea	57
Spain	57
India	55
Turkey	41

Notes: This table presents the scientific production of countries in the research field based on publication frequency.

3.10. Most cited countries

Table 7 shows the countries with the highest total number of citations across all their research and the average number of citations per country's articles. Overall, the UK is the most cited country (2,807), and the highest average number of citations per article (78). (see table 7 below) China is next (2,722 total, 19.7 average), followed by the US (1,197 total, 32.4 average). France has the fourth-highest total number of citations (1030 cited articles) and the highest per-article citation count (103). This means it may have fewer publications, but many more important ones. Other countries that perform well are the Netherlands, India, Italy, Spain, Korea, and Norway. The average citation range for the articles in these countries is 19-56. The distribution of research output across these countries is uneven and can indicate the academic community's involvement and cooperation at a large scale.

Cross-national cooperation can improve the quality and impact of research development and strengthen linkages among researchers. Future research on FOMO and purchase intent will focus more on interdisciplinary approaches. Different institutions can work together to address complex global problems across various fields.

3.11. Most cited documents

Table 8 shows the most-cited records worldwide, both in terms of overall citations and citations per year. The most cited article is “Kuss D, 2017, Int J Environ Res Public Health” (Each year is based on the current-year distribution of citations). Top cited article: “Kuss D, 2017, Int J Environ Res Public Health” (Most citations per year are based on the distribution of citations in the current year. Significant additional ones have also been authored by Kamboj S (2018, with 501 citations, a strong annual rate of more than 40 citations per year), Beyens I (2016,

with 476 citations, annual rate > 40 cit. per year), and Hansen J (2018, with 416 citations, annual rate > 40 cit. per year).

Table 7. Most cited countries

Country	TC	Average Article Citations
United Kingdom	2807	78
China	2722	19.7
USA	1197	32.4
France	1030	103
Netherlands	864	45.5
India	838	23.3
Italy	790	30.4
Spain	767	30.7
Korea	762	25.4
Norway	568	56.8

Notes: This table presents the citation impact of countries based on total citations and average citations per article.

One important analysis type in the field of bibliometrics is the analysis of the most globally cited documents, as this can be used to find the basics, innovations, and most influential documents in a given research area. These papers serve as a barometer of research quality, impact, and intellectual highs and lows.

3.12. Tree map of frequent keywords

Figure 5 presents a treemap visualization of the most frequent research keywords. It arranges keywords into rectangles sized proportionally to their frequency, enabling a quick view of thematic prominence in the literature. “Fear of missing out” leads with 113 occurrences (7%), followed by “FOMO” (93, 6%), “anxiety” (78, 5%), “social media” (70, 4%), “depression” (65, 4%), and other high-frequency terms such as “fear,” “addiction,” “adolescents,” “behaviour,” “purchase intention,” and “covid-19.” Psychological and behavioral concepts (e.g., anxiety, depression, addiction) and technology-related themes (e.g., social media, internet addiction, smartphone use) are especially prominent.

Table 8. Most cited documents

Paper	Total Citations	TC per Year	Normalized TC
(Kuss & Griffiths, 2017)	613	68.11	7.59
(Kamboj et al., 2018)	501	62.63	5.59
(Beyens et al., 2016)	476	47.60	5.04
(Hansen et al., 2018)	416	52.00	4.64
(Wolniewicz et al., 2018)	326	40.75	3.63
(Iyer et al., 2020)	266	44.33	4.75
(Ismagilova et al., 2020)	243	40.50	4.34
(Liu et al., 2021)	232	46.40	5.22
(Ben Arfi et al., 2021)	222	44.40	5.00
(Petrescu et al., 2019)	221	36.83	3.95

Notes: This table presents the top-cited documents.

The overall gist of this treemap is definitely a focus on zen concepts of study, notably the FOMO and purchase-intention factors, and the seeming expansion of a wide spectrum of evolving study concepts. It offers a wide and deep picture of the thematic concerns and advances of the fields of interest involved, showing the intensity and scope of scholarly interest and resolve.

Figure 5. Tree map of frequent keywords

3.13. Trend topics

Figure 6 presents a trend analysis of the key research topics, showing their frequency and temporal development from 2017 to 2024. The bubble chart is used to visualize the frequency and recency of the research terms. The larger bubbles (e.g., "fear of missing out," "fomo," "anxiety," "social media," "addiction") are associated with high-frequency topics; their positions in the timeline reflect the first-wave periods of their rise, most of which peaked in 2021-2024. The keywords that include the condition of fear of missing out (113 times, 93 times, and 78 times, respectively), fomo (93 times), and anxiety (78 times) demonstrate their popularity as the research topics of interest over the years, whereas other keywords, including social media, addiction, behaviour, trust, internet, and attitudes, also had persistent high frequencies and median year values in 2021-2023. It is worth noting that the last few years have seen increased interest in psychological constructs, such as disorder, self, and validity, reflecting the topic's complexity and its significant extension.

This can support mapping the field's evolution; in turn, it will inform policies and direct future research. This value highlights the emerging, impactful contexts and the focus points of current discussion. Trending themes aim to present a comprehensive yet brief overview of complex or rapidly evolving areas, serving as a navigational roadmap for scholars navigating the current knowledge landscape.

3.14. Coupling map

Table 9 shows that four main topic clusters can be identified based on document-coupling, with each of them being labeled according to its major research theme (e.g., COVID-19/fear of missing out/fomo, sustainability/consumption behavior/electronic commerce, fear of missing out/fomo/social media, and fear of missing out/fomo/phubbing). Group frequency, centrality, and impact measures show the roles of structures and scholarly authority of these clusters (Appio et al., 2014).

The document coupling analysis (Figure 7) indicates that the field is increasingly multidisciplinary and developing into a new intellectual architecture, with four main groups of themes around the relationship between FOMO and purchase intention. These clusters are identified based on their effects and centrality, thereby highlighting their academic importance and applicability to the study.

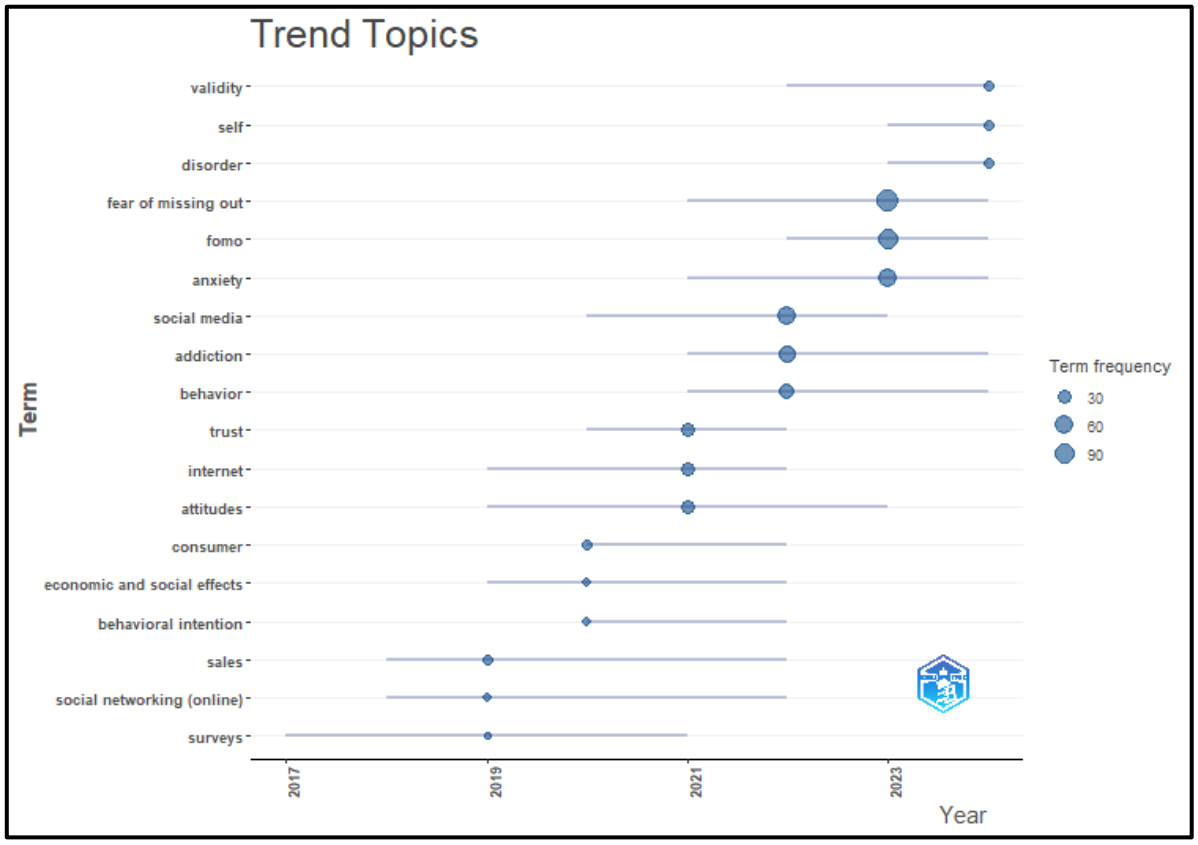

Figure 6. Bubble diagram of trending topics

The first cluster features COVID-19, FOMO, and other concepts stemming from the pandemic and the digital world. Although the cluster was relatively low in centrality, the moderate impact indicates that the workload associated with this stream of research is significant, given the knowledge gained about how to enhance FOMO-related behaviors during a period of social isolation, uncertainty, and increased online involvement. This cluster focuses on the implications of global crises, promoting digital consumption and psychologically motivated consumer behavior.

Although the second cluster, consumer behavior, sustainability, and electronic commerce, is not as dominant, it has the largest effect. These terms are heavily weighted with high confidence ratings, suggesting a highly specialized study stream with a strong focus on a particular theme. This cluster, showing greater research interest in "ethical consumerism" and "electronically affected buying behaviors," indicates that a new trend is emerging in the use of FOMO in sustainable consumption and in e-commerce.

The biggest and most important cluster in the network is the third one, which includes social media, FOMO, and fear of missing out. Social media is seen as the primary context for FOMO research, not only because of its frequency but also because it is of significant importance. This case highlights the power of social media, online communities, and

influencers on consumers' minds, shopping intentions, and preferences. The key conceptual theme in this cluster is social-media-related FOMO, as indicated by the clustering's position.

There is a cluster of emerging research that bridges phubbing and FOMO with the concept of fear of missing out, represented by the fourth cluster. The relative strength of this cluster, combined with its centrality, highlights the growing academic interest in hazardous behaviors related to digital technology, the over-dependence on smartphones, and the phenomenon of social isolation resulting from excessive Internet use. Overall, the coupling analysis reveals that FOMO research has transcended psychological studies and is now exploring broader areas of consumer behavior, including sustainability, the impact of social media, and digital well-being.

Table 9. Clusters of coupling map

Label	Group	Freq	Centrality	Impact
covid-19 - conf 26.7% fear of missing out - conf 4.7% fomo - conf 7%	1	51	0.28	2.33
sustainability - conf 100% consumption behavior - conf 80% electronic commerce - conf 100%	2	14	0.20	2.96
fear of missing out - conf 76.5% fomo - conf 70.2% social media - conf 74.2%	3	140	0.46	2.07
fear of missing out - conf 18.8% fomo - conf 22.8% phubbing - conf 50%	4	45	0.42	2.72

Notes: This table presents the thematic clusters identified through document coupling analysis. Label represents the dominant keywords associated with each cluster, while conf (confidence score) indicates the strength of association between keywords and their respective cluster. Group refers to the cluster identification number. Freq represents the number of documents included in each cluster. Centrality measures the degree of connection of a cluster with other clusters. Impact reflects the scholarly influence and prominence of a cluster.

3.15. Thematic map

Figure 8 presents a cluster analysis of research themes using Callon centrality and density metrics to position keyword clusters by their structural role and field development.

By categorizing topics by centrality (relevance to the field) and density (level of internal development), Figure 8 offers significant insights into the conceptual structure and maturity of research on FOMO and purchase intention. Three main theme clusters are identified by the analysis: fear of missing out, purchase intention, and Alfven waves.

The “fear of missing out” cluster, which has a high density and centrality, can be found in the motor themes quadrant. This topic not only has the highest cluster frequency (2167) but also the highest centrality score (5.651), indicating that this topic lies at the heart of the study area. This also points to the psychological and emotional side of digital consumer behavior, which has been the focus of recent research, as evidenced by related concepts such as FOMO and anxiety. This cluster is in the motor themes quadrant, so this concept is conceptually sound and certainly has a strong influence on the field's overall trajectory. This research shows the latest focus in social media regarding the anxiety engendered by its omnipresent use and speed, and the engagement of behavior in consuming contexts online.

The “purchase intention” cluster has a high degree of relevance and conceptual development and is situated within the fundamental context of the groups. Although the cluster has a relatively high frequency (889 occurrences) an analysis of the centrality score in the

context of the FOMO cluster showed that the measure of purchase intent is a more basic outcome variable in the literature than it is a stand-alone field of study. Related concepts such as sustainability and trust are also mentioned, suggesting new approaches to connect FOMO-related behavior with responsible consumption, consumer trust, and considerations of behavioral impact. The place of this cluster highlights a major research gap, as purchase intention is frequently discussed but not sufficiently explored in theory alongside the concept of FOMO. The finding further suggests that more theory-based research is required that synthesizes FOMO with well-established consumer behavior models, such as TPB and SOR.

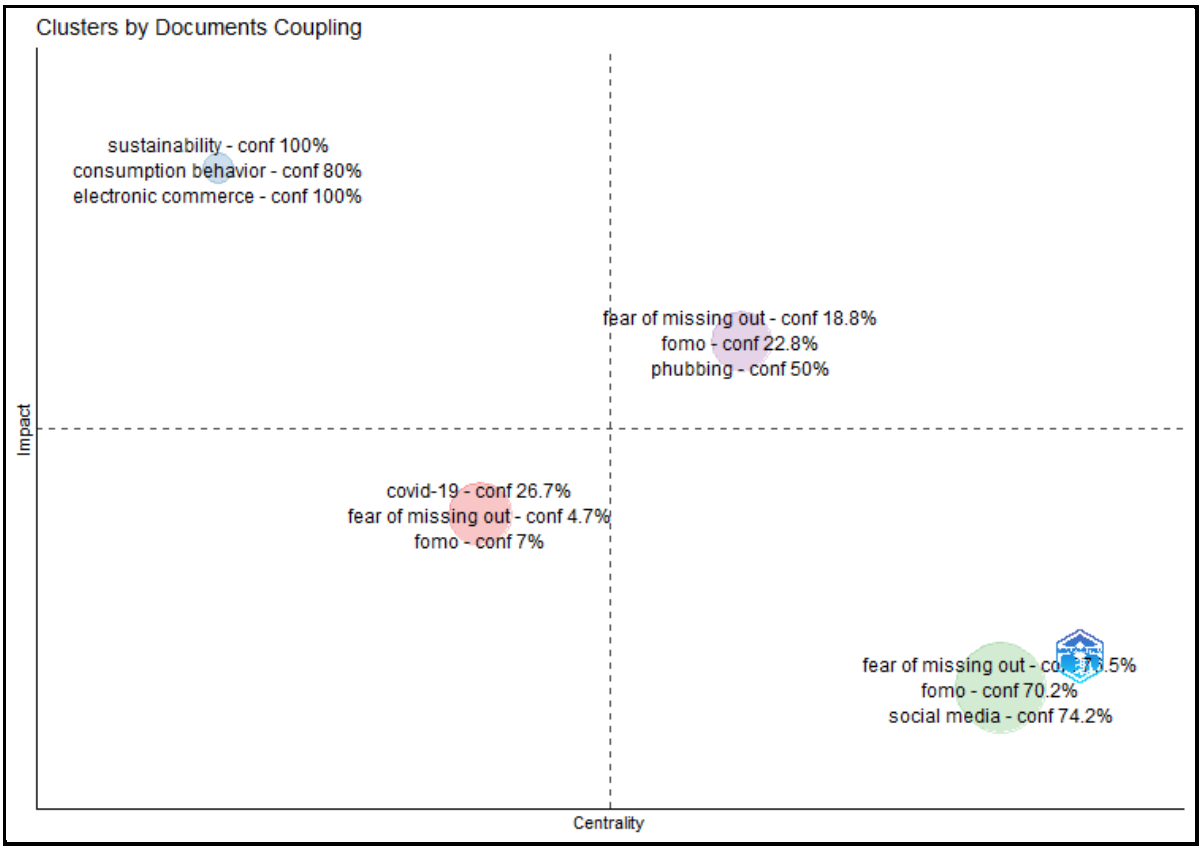

Figure 7. Graph of clusters by document coupling

Table 10. Clusters of thematic map

Cluster	Callon Centrality	Callon Density	Rank Centrality	Rank Density	Cluster Frequency
purchase intention	3.17	35.69	2	1	889
fear of missing out	5.65	35.77	3	2	2167
Alfvén waves	0	42.17	1	3	21

Notes: This table presents the thematic clusters identified through thematic mapping analysis based on Callon centrality and Callon density measures. Rank Centrality and Rank Density represent the relative position of clusters based on their respective scores. Cluster Frequency is the number of keyword occurrences per thematic cluster.

The interesting thing is that the "Alfven waves" cluster, which has a high density but a very low centrality, falls within the special-themed quadrant. This cluster is likely contaminated with data from keyword extraction or the literature, as the bibliometric data include terms such as oscillations, magnetohydrodynamics, and Alfven waves that do not relate to consumer behavior or marketing research. Revelations of this group's conceptual irrelevance suggest it lacked any meaningful thematic stream, even though the topic of a niche may be a distinct and

limited area of study. The outcome underscores the importance of comprehensive data cleansing and keyword harmonization for precision and conceptual relevance in bibliometric studies.

As the thematic map shows, the conscientiousness in consumer decision-making remains relatively undeveloped today; however, psychologically oriented themes are most common in the literature on FOMO and purchase intention. The results indicate an evolution towards broader multidisciplinary concerns such as sustainability, trust, and digital well-being, reflecting the new dynamics for future research on digital consumer behavior.

The cluster analysis table (Table 10) quantifies centrality (CallonCentrality) and density (CallonDensity) for major clusters, emphasizing the prominence of "fear of missing out" (centrality: 5.65, density: 35.78, frequency: 2167) over "purchase intention" and "Alfven waves" (the latter representing a niche, less integrated scientific discourse).

3.16. Country collaboration network

Co-authorship and bibliographic coupling emphasize active networked research groups, providing a visual representation of the social machinery that drives field development (Acedo et al., 2006; Cisneros et al., 2018).

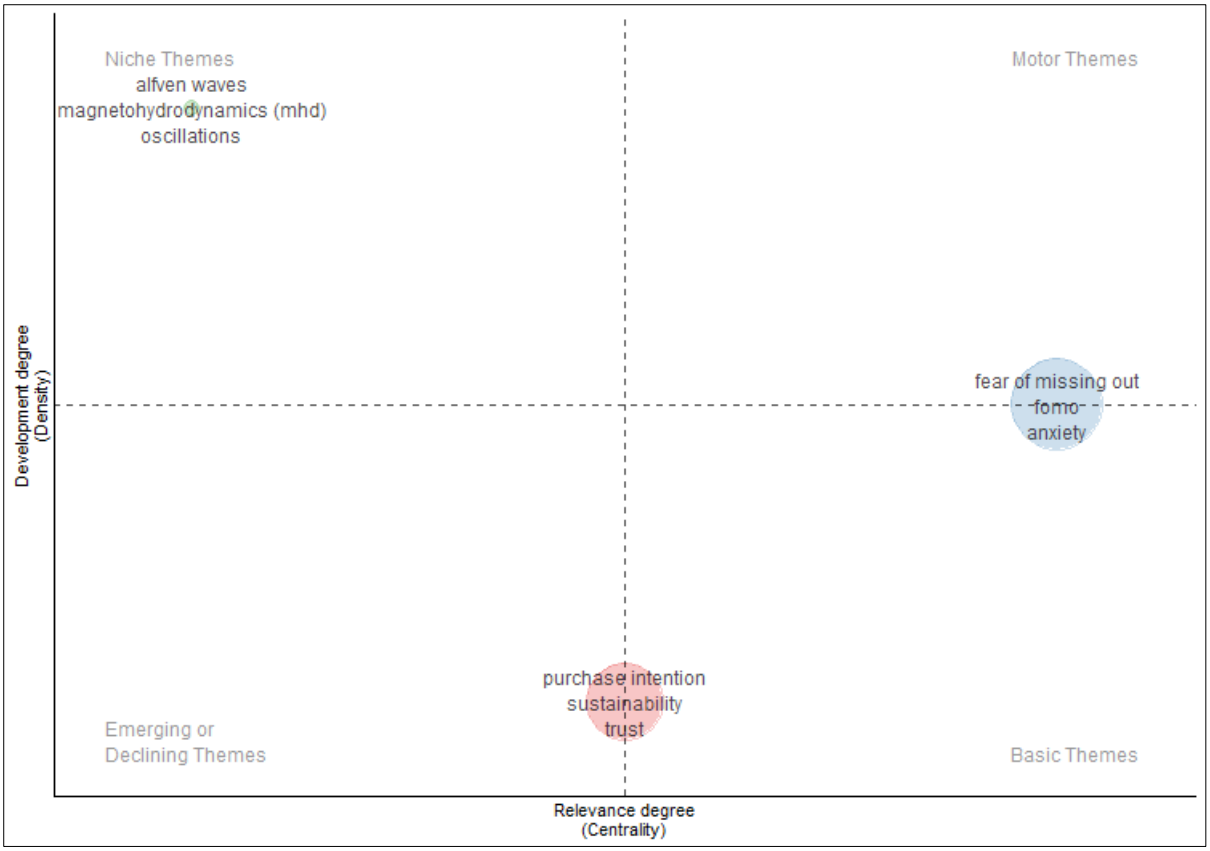

Figure 8. Cluster diagram of themes

The country collaboration network analysis can support the well-established trend of the core studies of FOMO and purchase intention research becoming progressively multidisciplinary and globalized, as shown in Figure 9. The top three partnerships that can be concluded are between China and the United Kingdom (10 publications), China and the United States (9 publications), and the United Kingdom and Australia (8 publications). Cooperation with the United States and the United Kingdom illustrates the interaction of Eastern and

Western perspectives in understanding digitally impacted consumer behavior, while the United States' influence in undertaking research is exemplified by collaborations with China. An interesting note is that, despite the limited number of their eight connections, cross-cultural views and perspectives originating from emerging markets in the FOMO area also emerged as another notable research linkage.

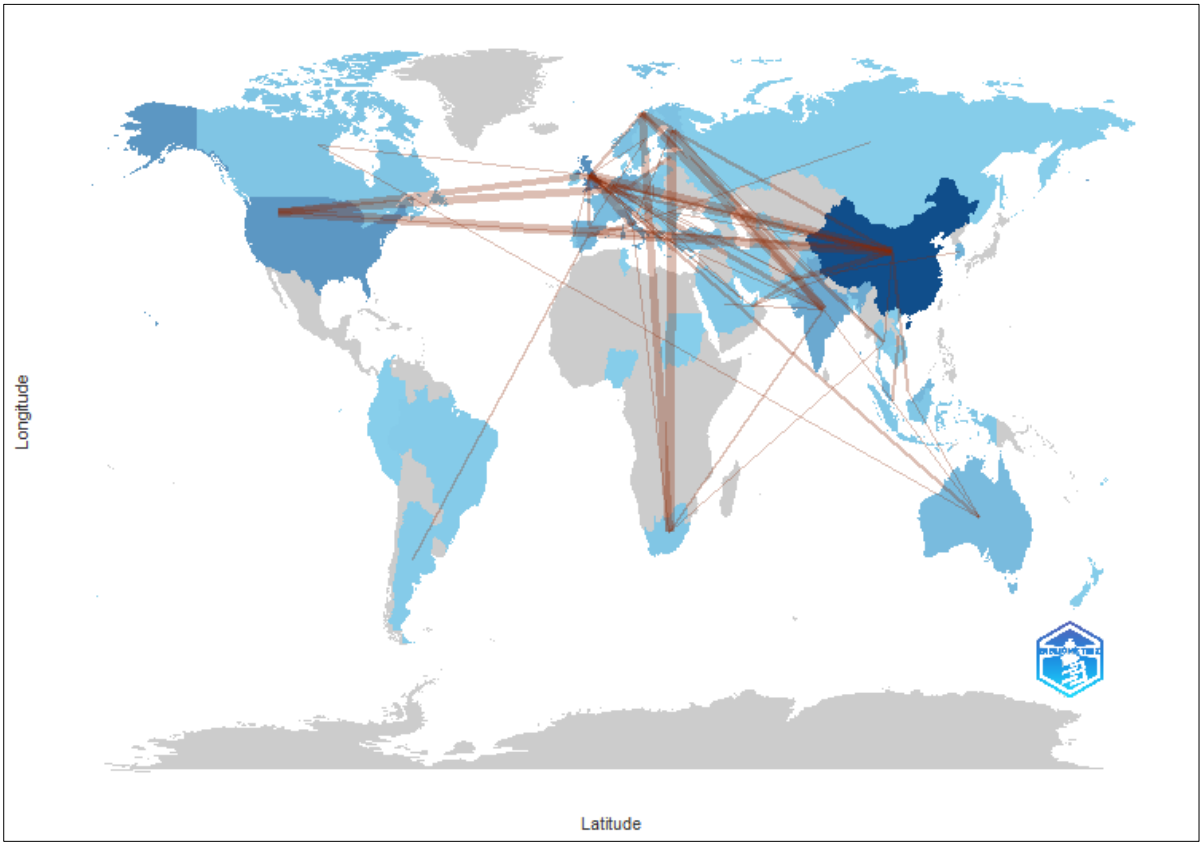

Figure 9. Country Collaboration Network

Furthermore, Norway-Finland, Norway-South Africa, and the UK-Italy had seven joint collaborations, indicating potential transcontinental and European research networks. This is witnessed by increasing collaboration between countries on research projects in FOMO (India - Finland with 6 collaborations each, and USA - Germany, followed by India - Norway, UK - USA with 5 collaborations each). Overall, the collaboration network suggests that research on FOMO and purchase intention is maturing through widespread international academic partnerships rather than through a geographically structured approach. This facilitates broader theoretical development, methodological diversity, and trans-cultural analysis of consumer behavior in the digital environment.

3.17. Factorial analysis

The grouping of these images depicts a conceptual framework, and the grouping of research keywords is illustrated using multidimensional scaling, hierarchical clustering, and conceptual mapping.

Figure 10 is a dendrogram showing hierarchical clustering of keywords, with very similar terms clustered together. It is a hierarchical tree, which allows discovering subthemes and families of concepts (e.g., “FOMO,” “fear of missing out,” “unconscionable anxiety, depression, and digital behaviour). The dendrogram contains a unique data point, represented by each leaf or endpoint. The branches that connect these leaves form clusters. Items that are

linked at lesser levels are more similar to one another than those that are linked at higher levels. The vertical distance between branches reflects the dissimilarity between clusters, with shorter distances indicating greater similarity. The number of clusters in the dendrogram can be determined by sketching a horizontal line across it. Intersecting branches below this line indicate discrete clusters.

Figure 11 is a two-dimensional conceptual structure diagram obtained using multiple correspondence analysis (MCA) and provides a spatial representation of the keywords. Terms are plotted based on both their semantic and research relevance with core constructs (i.e., fear of missing out, social media, purchase intention, addiction, and behavior) placed in the center of the plot and peripheral constructs (i.e., marketing, consumption behavior, and problematic internet use) positioned at the periphery. The spatial arrangement of keywords on an MCA graph indicates their correlation: points in close proximity exhibit a stronger association, whilst those that are far apart demonstrate a weaker association. Mapping the established, thoroughly investigated domains also reveals underrepresented areas, facilitating the identification of future research gaps and unexplored subjects.

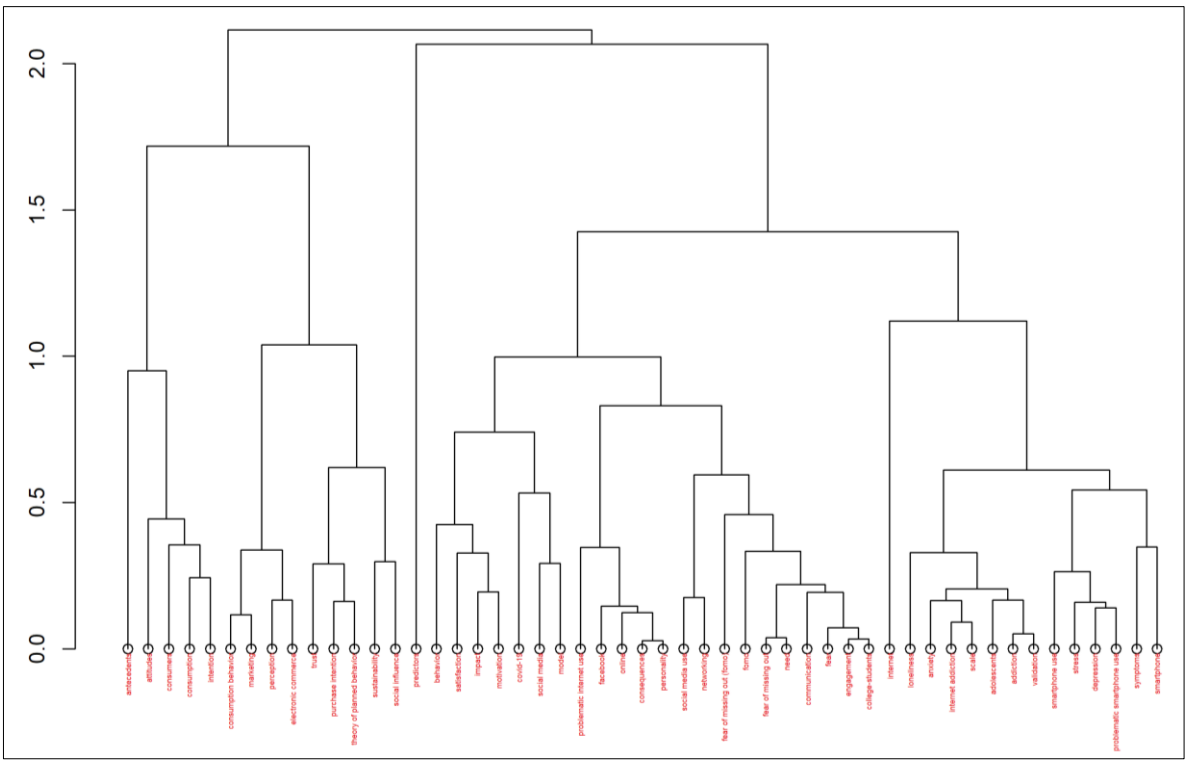

Figure 10. Dendrogram of factor analysis

3.18. Corresponding author countries

Table 11 summarizes the distribution and collaborative patterns of research articles across various countries in the field of interest. China has the most articles (138, 22.89%), followed by the USA (37, 6.13%), India (36, 5.97%), and the UK (36, 5.97%). The table shows the number of articles published by Single Country Publications (SCP) and Multiple Country Publications (MCP). It shows that China has a strong majority of SCPs (121 out of 138), but countries like the United Kingdom and Norway have a much higher percentage of MCPs compared to their total output. This shows that these countries work together a lot (UK MCP%: 47.22; Norway MCP%: 70). Jordan and Israel are two examples of countries that conduct research in only one country, with no MCPs. The MCP percentage shows how much each

country works with other countries on research. Italy, Spain, Germany, the Netherlands, and Belgium also had significant collaborative outputs.

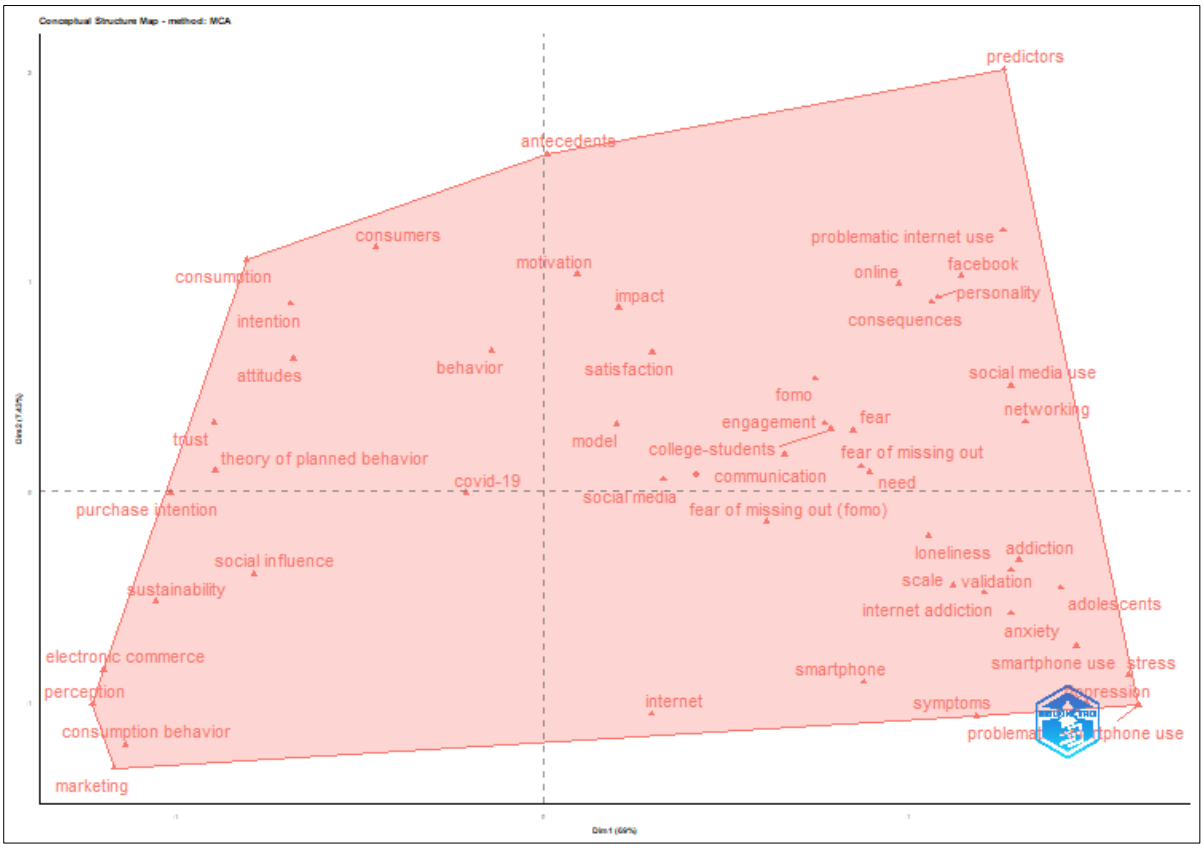

Figure 11. MCA graph of Factor Analysis

Table 11. Corresponding author countries

Country	Articles	Articles %	SCP	MCP	MCP %
China	138	22.89	121	17	12.32
Usa	37	6.14	29	8	21.622
India	36	5.97	33	3	8.332
United Kingdom	36	5.97	19	17	47.222
Korea	30	4.98	25	5	16.67
Italy	26	4.31	18	8	30.77
Spain	25	4.15	17	8	32.00
Germany	24	3.98	18	6	25.00
Netherlands	19	3.15	14	5	26.32
Malaysia	18	2.99	15	3	16.67
Australia	15	2.49	13	2	13.33
Turkey	12	1.99	10	2	16.67
Belgium	10	1.66	6	4	40.00
France	10	1.66	8	2	20.00
Jordan	10	1.66	10	0	0
Norway	10	1.66	3	7	70.00
Indonesia	9	1.49	7	2	22.22
Canada	8	1.33	6	2	25.00
Romania	8	1.33	7	1	12.50
Israel	7	1.16	7	0	0

Notes: This table presents the distribution of countries of corresponding authors based on publication output and collaboration patterns. Articles refers to the total number of publications attributed to the corresponding author's country, while Articles % indicates the percentage share of total publications. SCP refers to Single Country Publications, whereas MCP refers to Multiple Country Publications. MCP % indicates the proportion of internationally collaborative publications relative to the total number of articles for each country.

4. Results

This bibliometric review examined research on FOMO as a Driver of Purchase Intentions. A total of 603 peer-reviewed articles were analyzed in the Scopus and Web of Science databases. The selected studies were published from 2014 to 2025. The situation showed that the growth of literature was considerable, with a 19.35% per annum rate. The number of publications has risen consistently since 2018, reaching over 150 in 2023. Lower publication counts in 2024 and 2025 could be due to the time required for data chasing rather than a decrease in scholarly awareness.

1,829 authors contributed to the dataset, averaging 3.78 per article, indicating a collaborative, interdisciplinary research environment. The U.S., the U.K., and China became the big suppliers in the industry. The UK had the highest citation impact, but in terms of citations per article. The interdisciplinary nature of FOMO research across psychology, marketing, and the behavioral sciences was demonstrated by leading publication outlets, including Sustainability (Switzerland), Frontiers in Psychology, and the International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health. Dhir A., Griffiths M, and Montag C. have been among the most prolific contributors and have had a significant influence on the intellectual development of the field.

“Fear of missing out” and “FOMO,” “anxiety,” and “social media” were the most prominent research topics in the keyword co-occurrence and keyword clustering analysis. The most prominent thematic cluster was related to social media use and behavior outcomes, indicating that the mainstream focus of current research is on psychological and Technological aspects of consumer behavior. These results show a shift in the study of digital consumption and technology behavior.

Logical mapping using factorial and network analyses was used to examine the field's global intellectual map. The findings showed significant conceptual links among FOMO, psychological well-being, digital behavior, and purchase intention. International ties were not, however, aligned, but relationships between them remained uneven. China had the largest number of publications, while smaller nations, such as the United Kingdom and Norway, showed fairly robust international research collaborations.

The FOMO anxiety relationship was found as a prominently articulated and central research focus through thematic mapping. Themes related to purchase intention and sustainability showed less development and represented important research opportunities. Again, the bibliographic coupling and co-authorship analyses revealed the high level of centralization among a limited number of scholars and inter-scholar collaborations, especially in psychology, marketing, and technology-related fields. Phubbing, addiction, and sustainability are the themes for the upcoming times, which, once again, indicate a field in which a wider range of behavioral and societal issues are being explored.

5. Discussion

5.1 Theoretical insights

The paper highlights the theoretical centrality of FOMO in consumer psychology, especially its mediating and moderating roles in the use of technologies, social comparison, and the intention to buy (Przybylski et al., 2013). Impulsive and experiential marketing is not the only attribute associated with FOMO; it also acts as a catalyst for herd behavior, and urgency has

been demonstrated in digital marketing tactics (limited-time offers, influencer marketing, viral campaigns) (Dinh et al., 2023; Hussain et al., 2023; Mert & Tengilimoğlu, 2023; Tandon et al., 2025). The net-like structure of the research shows that academic investigation is primarily grounded in behavioral science and draws on constructs such as loss aversion, present bias, and social proof.

5.2 Research gaps

The field is expanding exponentially, and some aspects remain very critical. First, a majority of studies are conducted in online spaces and among younger generations, overlooking the impact of FOMO in offline, traditional shopping and among older audiences (Beyens et al., 2016; Przybylski et al., 2013). Second, most studies (analyzing FOMO, purchase intention, anxiety, and social media) rarely include long-term consequences (e.g., post-purchase regret, sustainability, psychological well-being) (Bläse et al., 2024; Iyer et al., 2020). Third, bibliometric mapping has reported a strong reliance on cross-sectional survey designs, with a paucity of research on experimental and longitudinal studies (Donthu et al., 2021; Zupic & Čater, 2015). Fourth, a preference for Chinese, US, and UK output results in a lack of representation of emerging economies, though India is a rapidly developing trend (Bhaskar et al., 2022; Donthu et al., 2021). Lastly, areas like FOMO-phubbing are new, and these clusters suggest the possibility of more unified models that bridge FOMO and device-related and mental health consequences (Elhai et al., 2021; Gao et al., 2023; Wolniewicz et al., 2018).

5.3 Future directions

Future studies must focus on methodological extension using experimental and qualitative designs, heterogeneous environments that include offline settings and diverse demographics, and on holistic outcomes, e.g., sustainability, ethical consumption, and psychological well-being. The avenue will enhance theoretical frameworks and enable greater application of policy and managerial uses (Donthu et al., 2021; Przybylski et al., 2013).

5.4 Managerial and policy implications.

The use of FOMO-based tactics, such as scarcity indicators, offers, and influencer campaigns, can help marketers increase urgency and drive buying behavior by demonstrating that these methods are effective at prompting impulsive purchases among online buyers (Dinh et al., 2023; Kamboj et al., 2018). Nonetheless, the brand must also consider the ethical aspect by ensuring that the persuasive motive is balanced with the psychological health (Bläse et al., 2024; Elhai et al., 2021).

The platform's policy measures and regulators are also recommended to take into account the psychological effects of PR campaigns targeting hopeless consumer groups. The facts indicate that behavioral control should be regulated and disallowed through regulatory review and regulations, specifically in industries serving youth and addictive consumer markets (Beyens et al., 2016; Bläse et al., 2024; Elhai et al., 2021; Przybylski et al., 2013).

Moreover, educational initiatives that encourage digital literacy and resistance to impulsive buying driven by FOMO can help consumers make more conscious choices and prevent them from falling prey to emotions (Dhir et al., 2018).

The possibility of unsustainable consumption driven by untamed FOMO should be considered alongside responsible marketing by sustainability professionals and industry

leaders. Using behavioral understanding to benefit society, e.g., leveraging FOMO to encourage positive actions such as green purchasing, can provide an avenue for ethical creation (White et al., 2019).

6. Conclusion

The present bibliometric analysis confirms the growing scholarly significance of Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) as an important psychological driver of consumer purchase intentions within digital and experiential consumption environments. The findings demonstrate that FOMO has evolved into an emerging yet increasingly influential research domain in consumer psychology, behavioral science, and digital marketing, with expanding attention toward social media influences, psychological mechanisms, and digitally mediated consumption behavior (Dinh et al., 2023; Hussain et al., 2023; Przybylski et al., 2013). The rapid expansion of publications since 2018 further underscores the growing academic and practical relevance of FOMO in shaping consumer decision-making.

The study further reveals that while existing scholarship has substantially advanced the understanding of FOMO-related psychological processes and online behavioral outcomes, important conceptual, methodological, and contextual gaps remain. In particular, the findings indicate the need for greater theoretical integration between FOMO and established consumer behavior theories, such as the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991), Social Comparison Theory (Festinger, 1954), and the Stimulus–Organism–Response framework to better explain purchase intentions in digitally mediated marketplaces (Bläse et al., 2024; Dinh et al., 2023). Moreover, opportunities for interdisciplinary inquiry remain substantial, particularly in relation to sustainability, ethical consumption, psychological well-being, and digitally induced behavioral outcomes. As digital ecosystems continue to transform consumer markets through algorithmic targeting, influencer marketing, and scarcity-based promotional strategies, understanding the evolving role of FOMO becomes increasingly important for researchers, practitioners, and policymakers alike. Developing ethically informed and psychologically responsible approaches to digital marketing may contribute toward a more balanced, sustainable, and consumer-centric marketplace while minimizing unintended negative behavioral and psychological consequences (Elhai et al., 2021; White et al., 2019).

There are several constraints to note. The research was limited to English-language, open-access, peer-reviewed journal articles, which might not have captured valuable knowledge in other languages or in grey literature (Donthu et al., 2021; Mongeon & Paul-Hus, 2016; Zupic & Čater, 2015). Further, the use of Scopus and Web of Science as the standard in bibliometric research might not capture emergent research that is not found in other indexed databases or non-core indexed sources. Bibliometric analyses inherently use publication metadata quality and completeness, and a large amount of missing data has been found in certain sub-areas (e.g., keywords and references cited) (Aria & Cuccurullo, 2017; Cobo et al., 2011; Donthu et al., 2021). Although the mapping provides a holistic overview of publication trends, it does not assess the quality or causality of the underlying primary research or systematically consider the practical implications not covered in the index of existing research frameworks (Donthu et al., 2024; Zupic & Čater, 2015). Lastly, the field's geographical and thematic biases can drive biased interpretations of the global FOMO phenomenon, and future research should be more balanced, inclusive, and methodologically plural (Bhaskar et al., 2021).

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