



# The Relationship Between FOMO, Social Media Use, and Impulsive Buying: A Cross-Cultural Comparison of Turkey and Germany

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## ABSTRACT

The aim of this study is to examine the relationship between consumers' social media use, fear of missing out (FOMO), and impulsive buying behavior within the context of cultural differences. The current study tested a theoretical framework that evaluated the influence of a set of social media usage, fear of missing out, and impulsive buying behavior. The research was conducted through a survey of 700 university students in Istanbul and Bremen. The findings indicate that social media use and FOMO are positively and significantly associated with impulsive buying behavior. Moreover, students in Turkey were found to have higher levels of impulsive buying compared to those in Germany. However, the main limitation of the study is that the sample consists solely of university students, which restricts the generalizability of the results. This study contributes to the literature by comparatively revealing the impact of digital interactions and cultural factors on consumer behavior.

**Keywords:** FOMO, Social media, Communication studies, Consumer behavior, Impulsive buying, Cultural differences

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# FOMO, Sosyal Medya Kullanımı ve Plansız Satın Alma Arasındaki İlişki: Türkiye ve Almanya Arasında Kültürlerarası Bir Araştırma

Derya Şahin 

ÖZ

Bu çalışmanın amacı tüketicilerin sosyal medya kullanımı ve FOMO eğilimleri ile plansız satın alma davranışları arasındaki ilişkiyi kültürel farklılıklar bağlamında incelemektir. Bu çerçevede çalışma, sosyal medya kullanımı, kaçırma korkusu ve plansız satın alma davranışından oluşan bir kümenin etkisini inceleyen kuramsal bir çerçeveyi test etmiştir. Araştırma, İstanbul ve Bremen’de öğrenim gören 700 üniversite öğrencisi üzerinde anket yöntemiyle yürütülmüştür. Bulgular, sosyal medya kullanımının ve FOMO düzeyinin plansız satın alma davranışı ile pozitif ve anlamlı ilişkili olduğunu göstermektedir. Ayrıca Türkiye’de yaşayan öğrencilerin plansız satın alma eğiliminin Almanya’daki öğrencilere kıyasla daha yüksek olduğu tespit edilmiştir. Bununla birlikte, araştırmanın en önemli sınırlılığı örneklemin yalnızca üniversite öğrencilerinden oluşmasıdır. Bu sınırlılık, sonuçların genellenebilirliğini kısıtlamaktadır. Çalışma, dijital etkileşimlerin ve kültürel faktörlerin tüketici davranışları üzerindeki etkilerini karşılaştırmalı olarak ortaya koyarak literatüre katkı sağlamaktadır.

**Anahtar Sözcükler:** FOMO, Sosyal medya, İletişim Çalışmaları, Tüketici davranışı, Plansız satın alma, Kültürel farklılıklar

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## INTRODUCTION

In today's world, technology has become an essential part of human life. The digital world, which has developed alongside technology, has earned a place in human history beyond its promise. Looking at the historical trajectory of the digital world, it is evident that, at times, advantageous and, at other times, incredibly daring strategies have been implemented to liberate people. The innovations aligned with the political structure and spirit of the period have been highly successful in achieving the relevant goal.

The shocking impact of the digital world on human life is growing by the day (Şahin, 2021). This development is driven by innovations created to meet individuals' wishes and needs. At the same time, its absence creates an intolerable void. The concept of fear of missing out (FOMO), which appears at this very point, has recently become a rapidly spreading phenomenon. FOMO is defined as the feeling of being left out of current events or opportunities due to observing others' experiences through individuals' online social networks (Przybylski et al., 2013, p. 66). This feeling is regarded as a consequence of the permanent connection to the digital world. While online networking platforms allow users access to a continuous flow of information about the lives of others, they also cause individuals to evaluate their own experiences in comparison to those of others and lead to a constant fear of being "left out" (Hodkinson, 2019, p. 67).

This aims to understand how FOMO, social media use, and cultural factors affect impulsive buying behavior. Previous studies have shown that FOMO and social media are significant influences on consumer behavior, yet limited research has examined these relationships in a cross-cultural context. To fill this gap, the study examines how these variables relate to consumer attitudes and behaviors in Turkey and Germany. By placing this research within the existing literature on digital consumption and cultural influences, this study aims to offer insights that can contribute to both academic discussions and practical applications in consumer research.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Fear of Missing Out (FOMO)

In general, FOMO is defined as an individual's fear of missing out on or lacking what others experience (Przybylski et al., 2013, p. 1842). FOMO has been described as a form of social anxiety that not to attend social event and missing out current news (Tozkoparan & Kuzu, 2019, p. 88). People's desire for socialization (Bekman, 2022) and popularity motivates and increases their use of the internet

and social media. Individuals use social media to gain approval from their followers and friends and present themselves as more aesthetically attractive.

Overuse of social media can cause compulsive behavior, such as FOMO, which leads to stay connect by smartphones (Ivie et al., 2020). These individuals also tend to experience profound feelings of regret related to their neglected duties. Furthermore, those who are heavily engaged in virtual interactions often compare their own lives with the seemingly perfected lives of others, which may lead to feelings of inadequacy and a persistent sense of isolation. The pattern of behavior has been linked to increased levels of anxiety and the development of various adverse psychological outcomes (Brailovskaia & Margraf, 2024).

Although prior studies have examined relationships among FOMO, social media use, and impulsive buying behavior (Abel et al., 2016; Buglass et al., 2017), empirical research has yet to provide clear evidence on how cultural differences may influence these variables. Marketers typically employ FOMO-based strategies and social media engagement tactics to drive target audiences toward impulsive buying behavior (Erdoğan & Şanlı, 2019; Song et al., 2017; Rautela & Sharma, 2022). Previous research has shown that FOMO can serve as a significant trigger of impulsive buying as well (Przybylski et al., 2013; Zhang et al., 2020). Based on this body of evidence, the present study focuses on the relationships among FOMO, social media use, and impulsive buying and formulates the following hypotheses.

**H1:** Fear of missing out (FOMO) will be positively related to impulsive buying behavior (IBB).

### Social Media Usage

The rapid development of communication and information technologies in today's world has enabled people to experience a radical change in their communication habits (Solmaz, 2013). Digital technologies, which have advantages including access to information, following the agenda, interacting, producing content, efficiently performing daily life activities such as banking, shopping, etc., socializing, and publishing, have become a necessity of the information society (Tutgun-Ünal & Deniz, 2020, p. 1291; Yıldırım & İpek, 2020, p. 70). While social media allows individuals to express with one another, it also permits corporations to reach consumers smoothly and provides numerous interaction options (Appel et al., 2020, p. 90).

Social media networks are environments where individuals of all ages participate for many purposes and are exposed to each other's behaviors while they are together. In this context, there are many studies examining the positive (Borah et al., 2022; Rao et al., 2022) and negative (Ivie et al., 2020;

O'day & Heimberg, 2021) aspects of social media. However, since the focus here is the impact of social network use on FOMO and impulsive buying behavior, the studies in this context serve as the starting point for the research. Particularly, research has shown that increased social media usage directly contributes to intensified FOMO levels (Roberts & David, 2019; Alutaybi et al., 2020; Jabeen et al., 2023; Hetz et al., 2015). Moreover, studies have established that social media engagement, specifically exposure to advertisements and peer behaviors, notably triggers impulsive buying behaviors (Nuseir, 2020; Yang et al., 2024; Singh et al., 2023).

Roberts and David (2019) studied the relationship between time spent on social media and FOMO levels, showing that larger social media engagement directly correlates with intensified fear of missing out. Alutaybi et al. (2020) examined the psychological impact of social media disclosure, showing that extended time spent on social platforms notably expands individuals' anxiety about missing out on social media experiences.

Although the relationship between social media use and FOMO is well-founded, researchers have also investigated how social media interaction directly triggers impulsive purchasing behavior. Yang et al. (2024) studied the effect of social media advertisements on consumer behaviors, showing that disclosure of social media marketing content notably increases impulsive purchasing tendencies. Nuseir (2020) analyzed the relationship between social media usage and impulsive buying behavior, finding that increased social media engagement particularly triggers spontaneous purchase decisions among younger consumers. At this point, in the context of this research, the effect of online social media activity on impulsive buying action was investigated by adding the FOMO variable. Furthermore, given that cultural contexts form both social media use and consumer decision-making, it is reasonable to expect that the relationship between social media, FOMO, and impulsive buying may differ across countries. This provides the rationale for the comparative focus of the present study.

**H2:** Social media usage (SMU) will be positively related to fear of missing out (FOMO).

**H3:** Social Media Usage (SMU) will be positively related to impulsive buying behavior (IBB).

## Impulsive Buying

The idea of impulsive buying has stayed the focus of various studies on consumer behavior and marketing since the 1950s (Öz & Mucuk, 2015, p. 42). Essentially, impulsive buying is described as the consumer's sudden decision to make a purchase. "*Impulsive buying is a purchase made mostly as a result of the sudden emergence of an impulse without any plan*" (Çakmak & Yurtsever, 2012, p. 48). Impulsive

buying can occur in any environment, but the emergence of this behavior in individuals varies depending on the events they experience in their daily lives. Therefore, the existence of many paradigms about consumers' impulsive buying intentions leaves many questions about impulsive buying unanswered.

Although impulsive buying is often considered a form of irrational behavior, Hausmann (2000) argued the opposite. According to Hausmann, buying occurs with impulses. In some cases, things that are needed and, in some cases, things that are not required are purchased with a sense of pleasure, and this sense of joy may not be entirely economic. Therefore, such a situation is essentially rational because it satisfies people's feelings. The most important proof of this is that the behaviors exhibited to meet one's emotions will not be irrational (Yalman & Aytekin, 2014, p. 90).

To further strengthen the theoretical foundation, the relationships among social media use, FOMO, and impulsive buying can be situated within established communication theories. Uses and Gratifications theory (Wei et al., 2024) offers a model for comprehending how individuals vigorously use social media to fulfil informational, enjoyment, and social needs, which may heighten feelings of FOMO (Katz et al., 1974). Social Comparison theory (SCT) (Wills, 2024) describes how individuals' disclosure of digital interactions is likely to participate in upward comparisons, leading to perceived inadequacy and impulsive consumption decisions. Moreover, Social Identity theory (Hsieh, 2023) underscores the role of group belonging and cultural identification in shaping consumer choices, linking cultural context with consumer psychology (Festinger, 1954; Wills, 1981). These frameworks complement Hofstede's cultural dimensions by embedding the observed cross-cultural differences within broader media effects and communication processes.

Besides Hofstede's cultural dimensions, more latest frameworks provide precious perspectives on cross-cultural differences. Schwartz's Value Theory (Schwartz, 1992; 2012) highlights ten universal value types (e.g., hedonism, conformity, security) that shape individual motivations and consumer choices. This model has been widely applied in comparative research and offers a more dynamic understanding of cultural influences on behavior compared to static national indices. Moreover, cultural hybridization approaches (Kraidy, 2005) argue that global and local cultural elements interact in complex ways, suggesting that consumer practices are often shaped by hybrid identities rather than homogeneous cultural patterns. Integrating these perspectives enriches the explanatory power of the current study.

## **A Cross-Cultural Comparison of Social Media Use, FOMO, and Impulsive Buying between Turkey and Germany**

To understand how culture shapes individual and collective behaviors, it is essential to examine Hofstede's theory. Hofstede determined several key cultural dimensions that distinguish societies. The individualism-collectivism dimension measures the degree to which individuals are integrated into groups. Germany scores notably higher (67) on individualism compared to Turkey (37), indicating that German society emphasizes individual achievement and personal responsibility. In contrast, Turkish society is more collectivistic, prioritizing group harmony and social relationships. Power distance reflects the extent to which less powerful member of society accepts unequal power distribution, with Turkey (66) showing higher power distance than Germany (35), suggesting more hierarchical social structures in Turkey. Uncertainty avoidance indicates a society's tolerance for ambiguity and uncertainty, where both countries score relatively high, with Turkey (85) showing even stronger uncertainty avoidance than Germany (65). Finally, the long-term versus short-term orientation dimension shows that Germany (83) demonstrates a strong long-term orientation to Turkey (46), reflecting different approaches to planning and tradition.

It is known that Turkey and Germany have a multidimensional economic, political, military, and social paradigm based on the past years. However, there are serious differences between the two countries in terms of culture and level of development, which can be systematically understood through Hofstede's cultural framework.

Habits of consumption reflect an important social dynamic shaped by cultural, economic, and social factors. The individualistic nature of German culture (Hofstede score: 67) versus the collectivistic orientation of Turkish culture (score: 37) fundamentally shapes how consumers in these countries make purchasing decisions. In this respect, Germany and Turkey are two significantly different countries, and a comparison are affected.

The consumption habits of Germany and Turkey are significantly based on cultural and social factors, which align with Hofstede's theoretical predictions. In Germany, the high individualism score manifests in consumer behaviors that often depend on quality and sustainability, as individual consumers take personal responsibility for their choices. It is of great importance for German consumers to purchase environmentally friendly and long-lasting products (GfK, 2022), reflecting the long-term

orientation characteristic (score: 83) of German culture. In addition, discounts and special offers are often carefully evaluated and extensive research is done before shopping in Germany (Statista, 2023).

On the other hand, Turkey's collectivistic culture (score: 37) is evident in consumption habits that are more socially influenced and price-oriented. Discounted products and special offers are frequently preferred in Turkey (TUIK, 2023). Turkish consumers traditionally prefer to shop as large families and social circles, and consumption increases on special days such as social events and holidays (Yılmaz, 2022). This behavior directly reflects Hofstede's collectivism dimension, where group influence and social ties play a crucial role in decision-making.

**Table 1** Average Consumption Expenditure per Household with Expenditures Greater Than Zero By Consumption Purpose

Year	2005	2010	2015	2020
Turkey	2.688	3.587	4.263	3.868
Germany	3.186	3.301	3.561	3.608

Source: (TUIK, 2023)

While individualism and personal needs are prioritized in Germany, consistent with its high individualism score, the influence of social ties and environment has more impact on consumption behaviors in Turkey, aligned with its collectivistic orientation. It is thought that these differences offer a unique perspective for the examination of the effects of concepts specific to the digital world, such as social media and FOMO (Fear of Missing Out), on impulsive buying behaviors.

Germany's long-term orientation (score: 83) is reflected in consumers' ability and willingness to invest in premium-quality products and services (Statista, 2023). The strong social security system and high-income levels are other factors supporting consumer spending in Germany. This long-term thinking aligns with a sustainability focus and quality-oriented consumption patterns.

In contrast, Turkey's short-term orientation (score:46) and high uncertainty avoidance (Score: 85) manifest in more price-sensitive and immediate gratification-seeking consumer behavior. Turkish consumers are more sensitive in seeking price advantages and discounted product (TUIK, 2023). Moreover, low-income levels and economic uncertainties in Turkey cause consumers to plan their spending more carefully, reflecting the high uncertainty avoidance characteristic of Turkish culture.

**Table 2** Internet Purchases Made by Individuals

Year	2020	2021	2022	2023
Turkey	23.93	32.37	33.59	38.02
Germany	75.03	69.00	66.23	67.52

Source: (Statista, 2023)

The individualistic nature of German culture supports independent digital consumption decisions, where e-commerce is widespread and shopping via digital platforms is a general trend among consumers (GfK, 2022). In Turkey, even digital consumption patterns reflect collectivistic tendencies, where social media influence and group recommendations play a significant role in online purchasing decisions, despite the growing e-commerce sector.

**Table 3** Preferences for Social Media Platforms

2024	YouTube	Instagram	TikTok	LinkedIn	Snapchat	X
Turkey	11	5	10	13	11	7
Germany	8	9	20	12	7	11

Source: (We are social, 2024)

Cultural values identified by Hofstede provide a helpful framework for understanding how consumer behaviors differ across societies (Jan et al., 2024). These values not only shape communication styles and decision-making processes but also extend to digital environments where social media plays a central role (Han et al., 2024). In particular, collectivism, uncertainty avoidance, and indulgence dimensions are closely related to the psychological mechanisms underlying FOMO (Mert, & Tengilimoğlu, 2023) and impulsive buying (Kacen & Lee, 2002). Collectivist orientations heighten sensitivity to group opinions (Zimu, 2023), high uncertainty avoidance may foster quick purchasing to reduce ambiguity (Jiang & Kassoh, 2022), and indulgent tendencies emphasize immediate gratification. Building on these cultural dimensions, the following predictions can be made regarding social media use, FOMO, and impulsive buying behaviors. Based on Hofstede's cultural dimensions theory, several predictions can be made about social media usage, FOMO, and impulsive buying behaviors:

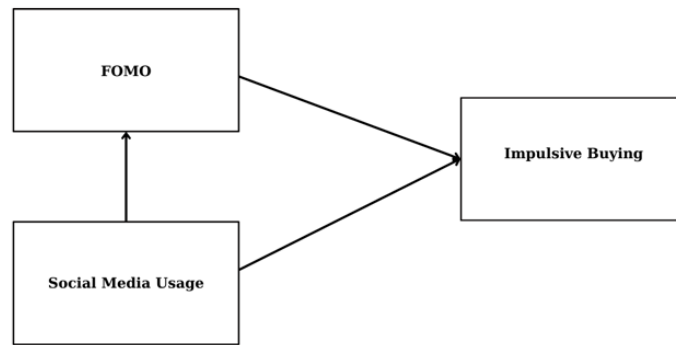
1. Collectivistic cultures (Turkey) should show social media influence on purchasing decisions due to.
2. FOMO should be more pronounced in a collectivistic culture where not participating in group activities or trends creates anxiety.
3. Uncertainty avoidance differences should influence impulsive buying patterns, with higher uncertainty avoidance cultures potentially showing more price-focused impulsive purchases.

**H4:** Social media usage, fear of missing out, and impulsive buying behavior differ significantly across cultures for participants.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### The Objective of Research

The main objective of this research is to assess whether FOMO, social media, and cultural factors play a significant role in impulsive buying behavior. In line with the purpose of this study, the research model and several research questions have been developed. The model created during this research is outlined as follows.



**Figure 1** Proposed Conceptual Model

The questions that will be focused on within the scope of the research are listed below.

- How is social media use associated with impulsive buying tendencies among consumers?
- In what ways does FOMO shape consumer decision-making and contribute to impulsive buying behavior?
- How do cultural differences influence the relationships between social media use, FOMO, and impulsive buying?

### Research Method

The sample was drawn from Istanbul Aydın University (Turkey) and Bremen University (Germany) to provide a cross-cultural perspective by representing one Middle Eastern and one European cultural context. These universities were chosen based on accessibility and prior institutional collaborations that facilitated data collection. The target population consisted of undergraduate and associate degree students enrolled in the 2023–2024 academic year. Participants were included if they were at least 18 years old, officially registered at one of the two universities, and voluntarily consented to participate in the study. A total of 700 valid responses were obtained after excluding incomplete questionnaires. The questionnaire form was created by utilizing the “*Motivational, emotional, and*

*behavioral correlates of fear of missing out*” developed by Przybylski et al. (2013), “*Normative Influences on Impulsive Buying Behavior*” developed by Rook and Fisher (1995), and “*Does Social Medium Influence Impulse Buying of Indian Buyers?*” developed by Sharma et al. All scales were first developed in English and were adapted into Turkish and German using the standard forward–backward translation procedure (Brislin, 1970). Two independent bilingual researchers conducted the initial translation, and a panel of subject-matter experts reviewed the items for conceptual and cultural equivalence. Subsequently, two native English speakers performed the back-translation to ensure semantic consistency. Minor discrepancies were resolved through consensus, and a pilot test (n=30) confirmed the linguistic clarity and reliability of the translated versions.

### Findings of the research

In the study, descriptive statistics will be evaluated first. In this context, an evaluation will be carried out on the basis of scales regarding the fundamental statistical values, such as mean, standard deviation, skewness, and kurtosis, of the scales included in our survey question group.

**Table 4** Descriptive Statistics

		SMU	FOMO	IBB
All Participants	Mean	3,0145	2,8763	2,7228
	Std. Deviation	,74846	,82916	1,06117
	Minimum	1,00	1,00	1,00
	Maximum	5,00	5,00	5,00
	Skewness	-,182	-,017	,340
	Kurtosis	-,287	-,595	-,973

Descriptive statistics of the data set obtained from the questionnaire are given in Table 4. A mean value of around 3 indicates a high rate of participation in the questions that are stated as positive. Standard deviation values below approximately 1 point indicate that the respondents did not give extremely different answers.

**Table 5** Cronbach’s Alpha Values for Each Scale

Scale	Number of Items	Cronbach’s Alpha
SMU	8	.749
FOMO	9	.815
IBB	6	.837

The validity and reliability analyses of the SMU, FOMO, and IBB scales used in this study were conducted. The reliability of the scales was tested using Cronbach’s Alpha coefficient. The SMU ( $\alpha = .749$ ), FOMO ( $\alpha = .815$ ), and IBB ( $\alpha = .837$ ) scales all demonstrated values above .70. These results indicate that the scales possess an acceptable level of internal consistency. The validity of the scales was ensured based on constructs previously validated in prior studies (Przybylski et al., 2013; Sharma et al., 2018). In

addition, factor loadings and item–total correlations were examined, and no items with low loading values were identified. These findings confirm that the scales employed in this study are both valid and reliable.

**Table 6** T-Test

Variable	Levene's Test p	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Cohen's d
SMU	.757	-0.51	676	.613	-0.03	0.04
FOMO	.035	0.16	674.05	.873	0.01	0.01
IBB	< .001	-4.50	661.82	< .001	-0.36	1.05

Independent-samples t-tests were conducted to examine differences between participants from Turkey and Germany on social media use (SMU), fear of missing out (FOMO), and impulsive buying behavior (IBB). For SMU, Levene's test indicated equal variances ( $p = .757$ ), and no significant difference was found between the groups,  $t(676) = -0.51$ ,  $p = .613$ . For FOMO, Levene's test revealed unequal variances ( $p = .035$ ); results from the "equal variances not assumed" line indicated no significant difference between Turkey and Germany,  $t(674.05) = 0.16$ ,  $p = .873$ . However, a significant difference was observed for IBB scores,  $t(661.82) = -4.50$ ,  $p < .001$ , with participants from Turkey ( $M = 2.90$ ,  $SD = 0.97$ ) scoring higher than those from Germany ( $M = 2.54$ ,  $SD = 1.12$ ). The effect size for IBB was large (Cohen's  $d = 1.05$ ), suggesting that nationality had a substantial influence on impulsive buying behavior.

**Table 7** Pearson Correlation Coefficients among the Variables

Variable	SMU	FOMO	IBB
SMU	1	.564	.515
FOMO		1	.647
IBB			1

Pearson correlation analyses were conducted to examine the relationships among social media use (SMU), fear of missing out (FOMO), and impulsive buying behavior (IBB). The results indicated significant positive correlations among all variables. SMU was positively correlated with FOMO ( $r = .56$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and IBB ( $r = .52$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Additionally, FOMO was strongly and positively correlated with IBB ( $r = .65$ ,  $p < .001$ ). These findings suggest that increased social media use and higher levels of FOMO are associated with greater impulsive buying tendencies. Pearson correlation analyses were conducted to examine the relationships among social media use (SMU), fear of missing out (FOMO), and impulsive buying behavior (IBB). The results indicated significant positive correlations among all variables. SMU was positively correlated with FOMO ( $r = .56$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and IBB ( $r = .52$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Additionally, FOMO was strongly and positively correlated with IBB ( $r = .65$ ,  $p < .001$ ). These findings suggest that increased social media use and higher levels of FOMO are associated with greater impulsive buying tendencies.

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In today's digital world, social media has become an indispensable part of people's everyday lives. These online platforms both facilitate communication between individuals and have a significant impact on consumer behavior. (Şahin & Doruk, 2023). The structure of social media, which is based on constant interaction and sharing, has led to psychological effects such as Fear of Missing Out (FOMO). Mainly, the impulsive buying tendencies in consumer behavior are observed more frequently in individuals with intensive social media use. In this research, the effects of FOMO, social media use, and cultural factors on impulsive buying behavior were examined, and how these effects differ across two countries with distinct cultural structures, Turkey and Germany, were studied. The primary objective of the study is to understand the impact of modern digital factors, such as social media and FOMO, on consumer behavior and to reveal cross-cultural differences.

To reveal the research's purpose, a literature review was conducted to identify the most appropriate model, and an online survey was used to assess the model that emerged from the research. Based on the answers from the 700-sample group, a data set was created, and the research results were interpreted in light of the data obtained.

General evaluations of the three main scales used in the study —social media use, fear of missing opportunities, and impulsive buying —were conducted. Within the scope of the evaluation, the mean, standard deviation, skewness, and kurtosis are reported. In the rest of the study, the hypotheses regarding the relationships among the scales were tested. In order to test whether the differences in social media use, fear of missing opportunities, and impulsive purchasing variables according to culture are statistically significant, the T-test results are included. As a result of the research, it was found that there was a meaningful difference according to the variables.

The findings of this study show significant differences between groups, revealing relationships among variables such as nationality, mean SMU, mean FOMO, and mean IBB. In particular, there was a significant difference in mean IBB values according to the nationality variable, indicating that these measurements differed between the Turkey and Germany groups. This result aligns with previous cross-cultural findings (Sharma et al., 2014; Nguyen & Cakanlar, 2016) suggesting that cultural orientations strongly influence impulsive buying behavior. As demonstrated by Kacen and Lee (2002), both regional cultural dimensions, such as individualism–collectivism and individual-level self-construal (independent vs. interdependent), systematically shape impulsive purchasing tendencies. Accordingly, the higher

impulsive buying tendencies observed in the Turkish sample may stem from collectivist cultural values that emphasize social approval, emotional expressiveness, and conformity to group norms (Smith et al., 2018; Brown, 2020), whereas the lower levels in the German sample may reflect the influence of individualistic values that (Garcia & Fernandez, 2021) promote self-control, emotional restraint, and delayed gratification. Finally, the negative correlation between nationality and IBB suggests that individuals from different nationalities may have different IBB values. This result provides important hints about how cultural and social contexts may affect certain behavioral standards (Yamada et al., 2022).

Beyond the descriptive interpretation of the result, the observed relationship between social media use, fear of missing out, and impulsive buying can be explained through several underlying psychological mechanisms. First, frequent exposure to curated and idealized content on social media platforms may intensify upward social comparison processes, increasing feelings of inadequacy, anxiety, and perceived social exclusion. Such affective states can, in turn, motivate compensatory consumption behaviors, where impulsive purchases serve as a short-term strategy for mood regulation and self-affirmation. Second, FOMO-driven content often incorporates cues of scarcity and urgency, which heighten perceived opportunity loss and reduce cognitive deliberation, thereby facilitating impulsive decision-making. Finally, FOMO reflects a heightened concern for social belonging and normative alignment; in this context, impulsive buying may function as a means of restoring social connectedness and signaling participation in socially valued consumption trends.

This research comparatively reveals the effects of FOMO, social media use, and cultural factors on impulsive buying behavior in Turkey and Germany, which have distinct cultural and economic structures. The data shows significant differences between these two countries: consumer behavior is more price-oriented and influenced by social context, especially in Turkey. At the same time, factors such as quality and sustainability are more important in Germany. A deeper investigation of these differences will provide further insight into how cultural and social factors shape consumer behavior and will serve as an essential guide for future studies.

The findings of this research highlight several key points to guide future studies. Firstly, the effects of FOMO and social media use on consumer behavior should be thoroughly examined across cultural and social contexts. More extensive research on how social media influences consumer decisions, particularly across countries, could provide essential data for international marketing strategies. In addition, this study underscores the importance of comparing two countries to understand

the impact of cultural factors on consumer behavior. Future studies could make similar comparisons across cultures by extending this comparison, and more general conclusions can be drawn.

In addition, the research findings encourage the use of advanced statistical models to research the effects of digital interactions, such as FOMO and social media use, on impulsive buying behaviors. For example, the literature in this area can be extended by examining how different cultural groups handle FOMO and its effects on consumer psychology. In addition, the impacts of individualism and community-based cultural differences on social media-based consumption behaviors could be an essential research topic for future studies.

Finally, this study provides an essential basis for the comparison of two different countries, such as Turkey and Germany. More detailed analyses can be made in future studies by considering different age groups, genders, or other demographic factors. These studies may help marketers and policymakers in making strategic decisions by providing them with more comprehensive information about the effects of cultural factors on impulsive buying behaviors.

This research has several limitations. First, even though utilizing a Gen-Z sample was a good choice for exploring social media use, FOMO, and impulsive buying behavior, studying the general Gen-Z instead of the college student population will make the findings more generalizable. Second, the current study documents impulsive buying behavior at a single point in time. A more reliable approach would require a longitudinal study to generate comparable empirical evidence over time. Third, our conceptual model provided valuable preliminary findings to explain a complex phenomenon that involves multiple theoretical traditions. This conceptual model will need additional empirical efforts to confirm or improve its measurement reliability and validity.

## GENİŞLETİLMİŞ ÖZET

Modern çağda teknoloji, insan hayatının vazgeçilmez bir parçası haline almıştır. Teknoloji ile bağlantılı olarak gelişen dijital dünya ise insanlık tarihinde vadinin de ötesinde bir yer kazanmıştır. Dijital dünyanın tarihi sürecine bakıldığında, kimi zaman avantajlı, kimi zaman insanı özgürleştirmeye yönelik son derece iddialı stratejilerin uygulandığı görülmektedir. Dönemin siyasi yapısına ve ruhuna yönelik olarak tercih edilen yeniliklerin ilgili amaç doğrultusunda hedefe ulaşmakta ne denli başarılı oldukları açık bir şekilde görülmektedir. Dijital dünyanın insan hayatı üzerindeki önemli etkisi, bireylerin istek ve ihtiyaçlarına yönelik yapılan yeniliklerle gün be gün artmakta, yokluğu ise tahammül edilemeyecek bir boşluk yaratmaktadır.

Günümüz dünyasında sosyal medya, tüketicilerin güncel yaşamlarını (Varghese & Agrawa, 2021) ve satın alma davranışlarını (Wang, 2023) önemli düzeyde etkilemektedir. Sosyal medya platformlarının gün be gün artması sayesinde tüketicilerin bu platformları kullanarak ürün ve hizmetleri karşılaştırmalarına (Chopra et al., 2020), güncel trendlere anlık bir şekilde erişmelerine (Palalic et al., 2021) ve bu platformlardan etkilenen çevrelerinden aldıkları geri bildirimlerle satın alma davranışlarının büyük ölçüde şekillendiği gözlemlenmektedir. Bu noktada, bireylerin sosyal medya kullanma eğilimlerinin ve bir şeyleri kaçırma korkusu olarak bilinen FOMO eğilimlerinin plansız satın alma davranışları üzerindeki etkisi, incelenmeye değer bir konu haline gelmiştir. Bu çalışmanın amacı, sosyal medya kullanımının ve FOMO'nun tüketici davranışları üzerindeki etkilerini kültürel farklılıklar bağlamında karşılaştırmalı olarak analiz etmektir. Araştırma, FOMO, sosyal medya ve kültürel faktörlerle ilintili çalışmalarda tüketicilerin tutum ve davranışları üzerinde nasıl bir etki yaratabileceği üzerinde genel bir bakış açısı sunması beklenilmektedir.

Araştırma kapsamında Türkiye'nin İstanbul ilinde ve Almanya'nın Bremen ilinde yaşayan üniversite öğrencileri örneklem olarak seçilmiştir. Bu iki ülkenin farklı ekonomik, sosyal ve kültürel yapıları; dijital medya kullanıma ve tüketim alışkanlıkları açısından farklılıklar göstermektedir. Bu çerçevede yapılan karşılaştırmalı analiz hem dijital etkileşimin hem de kültürel yapının plansız satın alma davranışı üzerindeki etkisini ortaya koymayı amaçlamaktadır. Araştırmadaki veriler anket yöntemi kullanılarak 700 katılımcıdan elde edilmiştir. Anket formu, ilgili literatürden uyarlanmış ölçekler temelinde oluşturulmuştur

Araştırma sonucunda sosyal medya kullanımı ve FOMO eğiliminin plansız satın alma davranışı üzerinde pozitif ve anlamlı bir ilişki olduğunu göstermiştir. Bunun yanı sıra, sosyal medya kullanım düzeyi arttıkça bireylerin FOMO düzeyinde de ciddi bir artış gözlemlenmiştir. Bu bulgular, sosyal medyanın salt bir bilgi aracı olmakla kalmayıp, tüketicilerin plansız satın alma kararlarını şekillendiren güçlü bir belirleyici olduğunu ortaya koymaktadır.

Kültürel bağlamla ilintili karşılaştırmalara bakıldığında ise, Türkiye'de yaşayan örneklemin Almanya'da yaşayan örnekleme kıyasla plansız satın alma davranışının daha yüksek düzeyde olduğu tespit edilmiştir. Elde edilen bu farklılığın Türkiye'de yaşayan tüketicilerin sosyal bağlara ve toplumsal onayı gerektiren duygusal eğilimlere daha fazla yatkın olduğunu; buna karşılık Almanya'da yaşayan tüketicilerin daha rasyonel davranışlar sergilemeye eğilimli olduğunu göstermektedir. Bu bulgular, kültürel farklılıkların psikolojik süreç ve dijital etkileşimlerle birleşerek tüketim davranışlarını nasıl şekillendirdiğine dair güçlü bir çerçeve sunmaktadır. Tüketim alışkanlıkları, kültürel, ekonomik ve sosyal

faktörlerin etkisiyle şekillenen önemli bir sosyal dinamiği temsil eder. Almanya ve Türkiye, bu bağlamda birbirinden belirgin farklılıklar gösteren iki ülke olup, tüketim alışkanlıkları açısından yapılan karşılaştırmalar, her iki ülkenin tüketim trendlerini ve ekonomik yapılarının nasıl etkilendiğini anlamak açısından önem taşır.

Ayrıca elde edilen verilerle gerçekleştirilen korelasyon analizinde, sosyal medya kullanımı ve plansız satın alma davranışı arasında güçlü bir ilişki düzeyi olduğu tespit edilmiştir. Bu durum sosyal medyanın tüketicileri satın alma davranışına yönlendirmede güçlü bir işleve sahip olduğunu göstermektedir. Öte yandan, FOMO eğilimi yüksek olan tüketicilerin sosyal medya kullanım sıklığı ve plansız satın alma davranışı arasında güçlü bir paralellik olduğunu ortaya koymaktadır. Bu bulgular, özellikle genç tüketiciler üzerinde sosyal medya kullanımının güçlü bir satın alma tetikleyicisi olabileceğini düşündürmektedir.

Sonuç olarak, bu araştırma FOMO, sosyal medya ve kültürel farklılıkların plansız satın alma davranışı üzerindeki etkisini bütüncül bir bakış açısıyla ele alarak, literatüre önemli katkılar sunmaktadır. Bu noktada, iki farklı kültürel özelliklere sahip ülkelerin karşılaştırılması, tüketici davranışlarının salt psikolojik süreçlerle şekillenmediğini, aynı zamanda içinde yaşanılan sosyal bağlamdan güçlü bir şekilde etkilendiğini göstermektedir. Elde edilen bulgular, dijital pazarlama stratejilerinin kültürel farklılıklar göz önünde bulundurularak şekillendirilmesi gerekliliğini desteklemektedir. Sosyal medyanın bireysel ya da topluluk halinde küresel iletişime imkân vererek hayatımızın vazgeçilmez bir parçası haline geldiği düşünülürse, bu denli etkin bir aracın bireyde bir şeyleri kaçırma korkusu ve plansız davranışlar yaratması kaçınılmazdır. Dolayısıyla böyle önemli bir konunun iki ülke üzerinden incelenmesi çalışmayı özgün kılmaktadır. Gelecekte yapılacak araştırmaların ise farklı sosyoekonomik ve yaş aralığını kapsayacak şekilde daha geniş örneklem üzerinden yürütülmesi önerilmektedir.

#### **Çıkar Çatışması / Conflict of Interest**

Yazar çıkar çatışması olmadığını beyan etmiştir. / The author declares that there is no conflict of interest.

#### **Yapay Zekâ Kullanımı / Use of Artificial Intelligence**

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#### **Yazarların Katkıları / Author Contributions**

Makale tek yazarlıdır. / The article has a single author.

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