Social Media Marketing and iPhone Repurchase Intention: The Roles of FOMO and Materialism

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Abstract

Purpose: This study applies the stimulus–organism–response (S-O-R) framework to examine how Social Media Marketing Effectiveness (SMME) influences iPhone repurchase intention among Generation Z consumers in Indonesia, focusing on the mediating roles of Fear of Missing Out (FOMO), social comparison, and materialism.

Methodology: Data were collected through an online questionnaire distributed to 285 Indonesian iPhone users who actively used social media. The proposed model was tested using Structural Equation Modeling with the Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) approach via SmartPLS.

Results: The findings indicate that SMME significantly enhances FOMO, whereas social comparison positively influences both FOMO and materialism. However, FOMO did not significantly affect repurchase intention. In contrast, materialism has a significant positive effect on repurchase intention, indicating that it represents a stronger and more stable psychological pathway for repeat purchasing behavior than FOMO.

Conclusions: The results suggest that while social media marketing can activate short-term emotional responses such as FOMO, more enduring value orientations such as materialism play a more decisive role in shaping repurchase intentions for high-involvement symbolic products such as iPhones.

Limitations: This study relied on cross-sectional, self-reported data from Indonesian consumers, which limits causal inference and generalizability to other product categories or cultural contexts.

Contributions: This study extends the S-O-R framework by contrasting short-term affective and long-term value-based psychological mechanisms in explaining repurchase intention, offering both theoretical insights and practical guidance for social media marketing strategies.

Keywords: *FOMO, Materialism, Repurchase Intention, Social Comparison, Social Media Marketing Effectiveness*

1. Introduction

The global smartphone market is one of the most competitive and innovation-driven industries, shaped by rapid technological development and fierce brand rivalry (Hanaysha et al., 2021; Manzoor et al., 2020). Premium brands, such as Apple, maintain their dominance not only through product innovation but also by positioning their devices as cultural symbols that reflect status, identity, and social belonging. The iPhone illustrates this dual role by serving both utilitarian and aspirational purposes. In such a saturated market, repurchase intention has become a critical strategic priority, as retaining loyal

consumers is more sustainable than acquiring new ones (Terblanche 2018).

Generation Z, born between the late 1990s and early 2010s, represents the most digitally connected cohort. Their purchasing behavior is strongly influenced by interactive and visually engaging marketing content on platforms such as Instagram, TikTok and YouTube (Habib & Almamy, 2025; Sadikov, 2025). These platforms serve as ecosystems for identity formation and social validation, making Gen Z particularly susceptible to psychological drivers such as social comparison, fear of missing out (FOMO), and materialism (Dinh & Lee, 2023; Gökerik, 2024; Shrestha et al., 2022).

Indonesia offers a compelling context for examining these dynamics in several ways. With more than 210 million active internet users and social media penetration exceeding 80 percent, smartphones and social platforms are deeply integrated into daily life (Asosiasi Penyelenggara Jasa Internet Indonesia, 2024). Indonesian Gen Z consumers spend over four hours daily on digital media (Evita et al., 2023), making them highly exposed to influencer content, peer interactions, and lifestyle-driven campaigns that often influence switching and repurchasing behaviors.

Despite extensive research on social media marketing and consumer behavior, there are still several gaps in the literature. Prior studies have predominantly focused on purchase or impulse buying intentions, while repurchase intention, especially for high-involvement and symbolically loaded products such as smartphones, has received less attention. Moreover, psychological drivers such as FOMO, social comparison, and materialism are often examined in isolation rather than within an integrated framework. Although the Stimulus–Organism–Response (S-O-R) model is widely used, empirical studies contrasting short-term affective responses and more stable value-based orientations in explaining repeat purchase behavior remain limited, particularly in emerging markets and among Gen Z consumers.

This study addresses these gaps by integrating these constructs to explain the iPhone repurchase intention in Indonesia. The Stimulus–organism–response (SOR) framework explains how external marketing stimuli affect psychological states, which subsequently shape behavioral outcomes (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974). In this study, social media marketing effectiveness (SMME) is conceptualized as the stimulus, while FOMO, social comparison, and materialism represent organismic responses, and repurchase intention serves as a behavioral outcome.

Although prior studies have examined these constructs separately, empirical research integrating SMME with these psychological mechanisms within a single SOR-based model, particularly in the context of Generation Z smartphone consumers in emerging markets, remains limited (Deliana et al., 2024; Dinh & Lee, 2024). This study offers a novel contribution by simultaneously comparing short-term affective responses (FOMO) and more stable value-based orientations (materialism) as parallel psychological pathways linking social media marketing to repurchase intentions. This study extends the application of the SOR framework to high-involvement symbolic products and provides new empirical evidence from the Indonesian market.
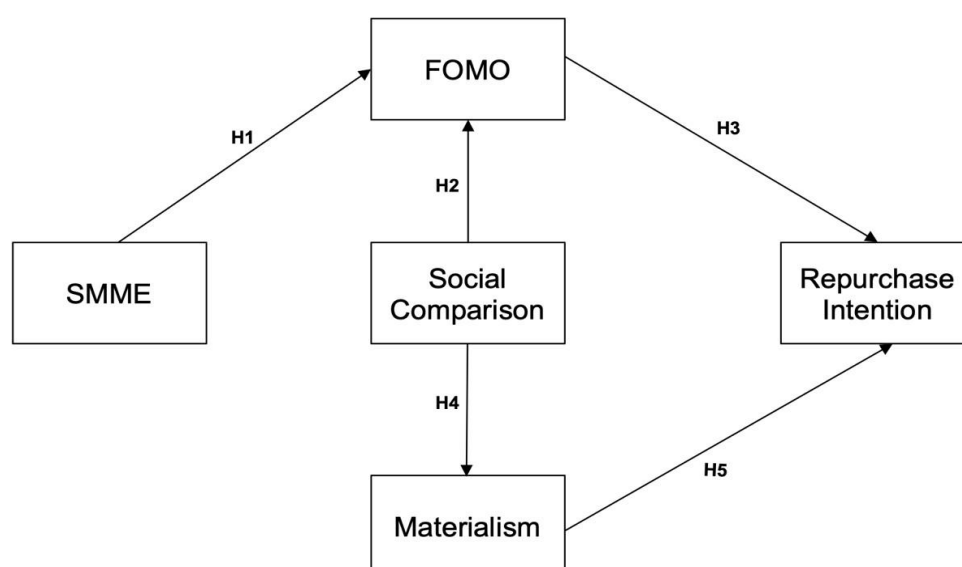
2. Literature Review

The Stimulus Organism Response (SOR) model (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974). provides a useful lens for explaining how marketing stimuli shape consumer behavior through internal psychological mechanisms. In social media contexts, Social Media Marketing Effectiveness (SMME) operates not only as an informational cue but also as a symbolic and social stimulus that constructs norms, aspirations, and identity-relevant meanings (Albutra et al., 2023; Vendri et al., 2023; Sağtaş, 2022). These stimuli are processed through organismic states such as social comparison, Fear of Missing Out (FOMO), and materialism, which represent interrelated cognitive and affective pathways (Dinh & Lee, 2024; Hu et al., 2021; Martinac Dorčić et al., 2023). Social comparison reflects a cognitive-evaluative process in which individuals assess themselves against others' curated online portrayals (Festinger, 1954; Hu et al., 2021; Pedalino & Camerini, 2022), which heightens sensitivity to aspirational standards and social status cues.

This evaluative process fosters affective anxiety in the form of FOMO (Przybylski et al., 2013; Hattingh et al., 2022; Putta, 2022) and promotes the internalization of materialistic values, where possessions are viewed as central to success and happiness (Li et al., 2022; Zulkarnaen & Fitriani, 2023; Ling et al., 2023). While FOMO primarily functions as a short-term motivational trigger that increases urgency and engagement in response to exclusive or time-limited marketing cues (Ardyan & Sanapang, 2023; Steinberger & Kim, 2022), materialism represents a more stable value orientation that strengthens symbolic consumption, brand attachment, and repeat purchasing behaviors (Lim et al., 2020; Pellegrino et al., 2022; Hussain et al., 2023). From an SOR perspective, these mechanisms jointly explain how effective social media marketing translates social and symbolic stimuli into enduring behavioral outcomes, particularly repurchase intentions for high-involvement and identity-relevant products such as smartphones (Terblanche, 2018; Dinh & Lee, 2024; Sigalingging & Tj, 2026).

3. Methodology

This study employed a quantitative research design to examine the relationships between social media marketing effectiveness, Fear of Missing Out (FOMO), social comparison, materialism, and iPhone repurchase intention among Indonesian consumers. Indonesia provides a relevant research context due to its high social media penetration, large Generation Z population, and strong symbolic positioning of smartphones, particularly iPhones, in everyday digital and social life. Primary data were collected using a structured online questionnaire distributed via WhatsApp, Instagram, TikTok, Facebook, and LINE, which resulted in 285 valid responses. A purposive sampling technique was used, targeting individuals who had previously purchased an iPhone, were active social media users, and were at least 18 years old, as this group was most exposed to social media marketing stimuli and relevant to the study objectives.

The questionnaire was divided into two sections: an introductory part that explained the study purpose, voluntary participation, and confidentiality assurance, followed by the measurement items for each construct. A seven-point Likert scale, ranging from (1) strongly disagree to (7) strongly agree, was used to capture nuanced perceptions of the participants. A pilot test with 50 respondents was conducted prior to the main survey to ensure the clarity and reliability of the instrument. The final dataset met the minimum sample size requirement for SEM-PLS analysis, following the guideline of 5–10 respondents per indicator, thereby ensuring sufficient statistical power to evaluate the hypothesized relationships. Nevertheless, as the data were collected through a self-administered online survey, the results may be subject to common method, self-report, and sampling biases related to voluntary participation and internet access. These limitations should be considered when interpreting the findings.

4. Results and Discussions

4.1 Social Media Marketing Effectiveness and FOMO

Social media marketing effectiveness (SMME) has been shown to intensify psychological responses, such as the Fear of Missing Out (FOMO). Research indicates that users exposed to curated and aspirational content often feel excluded, leading to compulsive engagement (Servidio, 2021). Studies have confirmed that effective marketing strategies, such as influencer collaborations, real-time updates, and personalized storytelling, heighten the urgency to participate in trends and maintain social belonging (Handryani & Tj, 2026). These findings suggest that SMME not only drives engagement but also triggers FOMO as a central mechanism in shaping consumer behavior.

H_1: The social media marketing effectiveness has a positive effect on FOMO.

4.2 Social Comparison, FOMO, and Repurchase Intention

Social comparison theory explains that individuals evaluate themselves in relation to others, a process that is amplified on social media, where curated lifestyles dominate (Dinh & Lee, 2022; Festinger, 1954). Upward comparisons often generate inadequacy and anxiety, directly fueling FOMO (Putta, 2022; Gokul Karthika, 2023). Empirical evidence shows that individuals with stronger social comparison orientations are more prone to FOMO and to compulsive online behaviors (Anwar et al., 2020; Uram & Skalski, 2020). Generation Z, immersed in digital culture, is particularly vulnerable to this cycle, where influencer and peer content intensifies comparison-based anxiety (Alabri, 2022). While FOMO effectively stimulates initial engagement and impulsive purchases, its influence on repurchase intentions remains complex. Research suggests that FOMO-driven behaviors are often associated with compulsive checking and short-term gratification rather than with stable loyalty (Dinh & Lee, 2022; Steinberger & Kim, 2022). Some studies indicate that FOMO can reinforce repeat purchases in online marketplaces when mediated by trust and community effects (Bläse et al., 2024; Yildirimer and Yentür, 2024). However, its primary effect is immediate rather than sustained, highlighting the contextual nature of FOMO in consumer decision-making.

H_2: Social comparison positively affects FOMO.

H_3: FOMO positively eaffect snrepurchasn.

4.3 Social Comparison, Materialism, and Repurchase Intention

Social comparison also strongly predicts materialism, as frequent exposure to influencers and peers encourages consumers to internalize possessions as markers of success (Dinh and Lee, 2022; Waqar et al., 2023). Individuals who engage in upward comparisons are more likely to develop materialistic values that shape their consumption motivation (Ling et al., 2023). Materialism acts as a bridge to purchasing behavior, as consumers seek products that enhance identity expression and social validation (Usmani & Ejaz, 2020; Lucky et al., 2023; Yunanto et al., 2025). In the smartphone context, materialistic orientations reinforce brand attachment and increase the likelihood of repeat purchase (Firmansyah et al., 2024; Pratisthita et al., 2022).

H_4: Social comparison positively affects materialism.

H_5: Materialism positively affects repurchase intention.

4.4 Respondent Characteristics

Table 1 shows the respondent distribution, with the majority of participants in this study being female (66.7%), while male respondents accounted for 33.3%. In terms of age, most respondents fell within the 21–23 years old category (65.6%), followed by those aged 24–27 years (32.3%), while only a small proportion were aged 18–20 years (2.1%). Regarding residency, the vast majority of respondents were from Java (87.7%), with smaller proportions from Kalimantan (3.9%), Sumatra (2.8%), Bali (2.5%), Sulawesi (1.8%), and other Eastern Indonesian regions (1.4%). This distribution highlights that the sample is dominated by young adults residing in Java, which reflects the demographic concentration of Generation Z on Indonesia's most populous island. Regarding job roles, the largest group consisted of students (74%), followed by employees working in public or private institutions (14.7%), entrepreneurs or self-employed individuals (7.7%), housewives (2.6%), teachers (0.7%), and freelancers (0.4%). This indicates that the sample was primarily composed of digitally active students while still capturing perspectives from diverse professional backgrounds.

Table 1.

Respondents	Total	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	95	33.3
Female	190	66.7
Age		
18-20 years old	6	2.1
21-23 years old	187	65.6
24-27 years old	92	32.3
Residency		
Bali	7	2.5
Java	250	87.7
Kalimantan	11	3.9
Sulawesi	5	1.8
Sumatra	8	2.8
Other Eastern Indonesia		
Regions	4	1.4
Job Role		
Freelance	1	0.4
Teacher	2	0.7
Housewives	7	2.6
Public/Private Employees	42	14.7

4.5 Outer Model

Hair et al. (2021) describe the first stage of Partial Least Squares-Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) as the evaluation of the measurement model, also referred to as the outer model. This stage assesses how effectively latent variables are represented by their indicators and ensures that the validity and reliability criteria are met. Outer model evaluation involves three key components: convergent validity, discriminant validity, and internal consistency reliability. Convergent validity measures the extent to which indicators reflect the construct they are intended to represent, with recommended thresholds of factor loadings above 0.50 and an Average Variance Extracted (AVE) greater than 0.50, indicating that more than half of the variance in indicators is explained by the construct (Hair et al., 2019).

Discriminant validity, on the other hand, ensures that each construct is distinct from the others by comparing indicator loadings across constructs, which requires that the square root of a construct's AVE exceeds its correlations with other constructs (Hair et al., 2021). Reliability was then assessed to confirm that the measurement items consistently captured the same construct. Both Composite Reliability (CR) and Cronbach's alpha are commonly used, with values above 0.70 indicating strong internal consistency. While Cronbach's alpha assumes equal weighting of indicators, CR accounts for varying indicator loadings, making it particularly appropriate for PLS-SEM applications (Hair et al., 2021). Overall, evaluating the outer model is a critical step in ensuring the accuracy, reliability, and quality of the measurement model before proceeding to structural path analysis.

Table 2. Results of Convergent Validity and Reliability Test

Variables	Items	Standardization factor load	Cronbach's α	CR	AVE
Social	SMME 1	0.653	0.971	0.973	0.578
Media Effectiven Marketing	SMME 2	0.765			
	SMME 3	0.799			
	SMME 4	0.737			
	SMME 5	0.749			
	SMME 6	0.903			
	SMME 7	0.917			
	SMME 8	0.881			
	SMME 9	0.873			
	SMME 10	0.869			
	SMME 11	0.858			
	SMME 12	0.798			
	SMME 13	0.889			
	SMME 14	0.871			
	SMME 15	0.874			
	SMME 16	0.836			
	SMME 17	0.833			
	SMME 18	0.815			
	SMME 19	0.861			
	SMME 20	0.862			
	SMME 21	0.772			
	SMME 22	0.784			
	SMME 23	0.877			
	SMME 24	0.887			
	SMME 25	0.876			
	SMME 26	0.844			
	SMME 27	0.858			
Fear/ Of	FO1	0.777	0.851	0.886	0.566
Missing Out	FO2	0.770			
	FO3				
	FO4	0.828			
	FO5				
	FO6	0.717			
	SC1 SC2	0.660			
	SC3 SC4				
	SC5 SC6	0.753			
Social Comparison	MA1	0.817	0.919	0.947	0.713
		0.890			
		0.794			
		0.843			
		0.845			
		0.873			
		0.817			
Materialism	MA2	0.729	0.873	0.908	0.663
	MA3	0.799			

	MA4	0.865			
	MA5	0.854			
Repurchase Intention	RI1	0.830	0.862	0.904	0.702
	RI2	0.812			
	RI3	0.894			
	RI4	0.813			

4.6 Inner Model

In Structural Equation Modeling using Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS), the evaluation of the inner model focuses on analyzing the relationships among latent constructs. Several statistical measures were employed to assess the quality and predictive capability of the model. Path coefficients were examined to evaluate the strength and direction of the hypothesized relationships, with values closer to 1 indicating strong positive associations and values near -1 suggesting strong negative associations. The coefficient of determination (R^2) was used to measure explanatory power, where values of 0.75, 0.50, and 0.25 represent substantial, moderate, and weak predictive accuracy, respectively (Hair et al., 2021). Predictive relevance (Q^2) was also tested to verify the model's out-of-sample predictive capability; Q^2 values greater than zero suggest that the model has predictive relevance for the given endogenous construct (Hair et al., 2021). Finally, mediation analysis was performed using the bootstrapping procedure in SmartPLS to test the significance of indirect effects and clarify the mediating role of the selected constructs.

4.7 Coefficient of Determination Test (R Square)

Table 3. R-Square

	R-square
FOMO	0.045
Materialism	0.494
Repurchase Intention	0.033

Table 4. Result of Hypothesis Test

	Original sample	T statistics	P-values	
SMME -> FOMO	0.370	2.132	0.017	H1 Accepted
Social_Comparison -> FOMO	0.364	1.871	0.031	H2 Accepted
FOMO -> Repurchase_Intention	0.073	0.522	0.301	H3 Not Accepted
Social_Comparison -> Materialism	0.703	16.438	0.000	H4 Accepted
Materialism -> Repurchase_Intention	0.179	1.841	0.033	H5 Accepted

For the first path, SMME → FOMO, the findings indicated a significant effect, with a coefficient of 0.370, a t-value of 2.391, and a p-value of 0.017. For the second path, Social Comparison → FOMO, the effect was also statistically significant, characterized by a coefficient of 0.364, a t-value of 2.160, and a p-value of 0.031. However, the third path, FOMO → Repurchase Intention, did not show statistical significance, with a coefficient of 0.073, t-value of 1.032, and p-value of 0.301, indicating that H_3 is not supported. In the next relationship, Social Comparison → Materialism, the results revealed a highly significant effect, with a coefficient of 0.703, t-value of 13.982, and p-value of 0.000, confirming H_4. Finally, for the path Materialism → Repurchase Intention, the analysis demonstrated a significant effect, with a coefficient of 0.179, t-value of 2.131, and p-value of 0.033, thus supporting H_5.

4.7 Discussion

The findings of this study provide strong support for the stimulus–organism–response (SOR) framework by demonstrating how social media marketing effectiveness (SMME) as a stimulus shapes repurchase behavior through distinct psychological mechanisms. First, the significant effect of SMME on Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) supports H_1 and confirms the SOR assumption that emotionally and socially rich marketing stimuli activate affective organismic states (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974). This result is consistent with prior research showing that personalized content and influencer-based communication intensify urgency and social belonging (Chakrabarti Almamy, 2025; Chakrabarti, 2024).

Second, the significant effect of social comparison on FOMO supports H_2 and aligns with social comparison theory (Festinger, 1954), which posits that upward comparisons in digitally curated environments increase anxiety and self-evaluative concerns (Steinberger & Kim, 2022; Wang, 2023). However, the non-significant relationship between FOMO and repurchase intention leads to the rejection of H_3 and suggests that FOMO operates primarily as a short-term affective trigger rather than a stable driver of repeat purchasing, consistent with Hayran et al. (2020) and Mustikasari et al. (2025).

In contrast, the strong effect of social comparison on materialism supports H_4 and indicates that repeated exposure to aspirational social cues fosters the internalization of value-based orientations toward possessions (Ling et al., 2023; Pellegrino et al., 2022). Finally, the significant effect of materialism on repurchase intention supports H_5 and confirms that materialism functions as a more enduring organismic mechanism that translates symbolic consumption motives into repeated purchase behavior, particularly for identity-relevant products such as the iPhone. Taken together, these findings refine the SOR framework by distinguishing between short-term affective responses (FOMO) and long-term value-based orientations (materialism) as parallel but unequal pathways linking social media marketing stimuli to repurchase behavior conclusions

5. Conclusions

5.1 Conclusion

This study examines the effects of social media marketing effectiveness, social comparison, FOMO, and materialism on repurchase intention among iPhone users in Indonesia using 285 valid responses analyzed with the SEM-PLS. The findings show that social media marketing effectiveness and social comparison significantly increase FOMO, whereas FOMO does not significantly influence repurchase intention. In contrast, social comparison strongly enhances materialism, which significantly drives repurchase intention.

These results indicate that while FOMO mainly functions as a short-term affective trigger, materialism represents a more stable value-based mechanism that sustains repeated purchasing behavior. From a managerial perspective, the findings suggest that technology brands should not rely solely on urgency-based tactics but should also cultivate aspirational brand meanings and identity-relevant value propositions. For brands such as Apple, positioning products as both functional tools and lifestyle symbols can strengthen emotional attachment and encourage loyalty. At a broader level, the results highlight the importance of promoting digital literacy and mindful consumption among Generation Z consumers.

5.2 Research Limitation

Despite these contributions, this study has several limitations. First, the sample size was relatively modest and relied on self-reported data, which may have introduced common method and social desirability biases. Second, the cross-sectional research design limits the ability to draw causal inferences from the studied variables. Third, the focus on Indonesian iPhone users restricts the generalizability of the findings to other countries, cultural contexts, and product categories. Finally, the model does not incorporate other potentially important determinants of repurchase intention, such as brand trust, peer influence, price sensitivity, and ecosystem lock-in effects.

5.3 Suggestion and Direction for Future Research

Future studies should expand the model by incorporating additional psychological and marketing-related variables, such as brand trust, perceived value, peer influence, and pricing strategies, to provide a more comprehensive explanation of repurchase behaviors. Longitudinal or experimental research designs are recommended to better capture causal relationships and changes in consumer motivation over time. Moreover, extending the investigation beyond smartphones to other product categories, such as fashion, travel, or digital services, would enhance the external validity of the findings. Finally, qualitative approaches, including in-depth interviews or focus groups, could provide richer insights into the underlying psychological processes that shape repurchase behavior in digital consumer markets.

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