

Fear of Missing Out (FoMO) and Digital Communication Intensity Among Generation Z on TikTok: A Literature Review

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ABSTRACT

Fear of Missing Out (FoMO) has emerged as a prominent psychological phenomenon in contemporary digital environments, particularly among Generation Z, who are highly engaged with social media platforms such as TikTok. This study aimed to examine the conceptualization of FoMO, identify patterns of digital communication intensity among Generation Z on TikTok, and analyze the influence of FoMO on their communication behaviors. The study employed a qualitative approach using a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) design. Data were collected from peer-reviewed journal articles published between 2020 and 2026 and retrieved from academic databases, including Scopus, Google Scholar, ScienceDirect, SpringerLink, and Taylor & Francis. The selected studies were analyzed using thematic content analysis to identify recurring themes and relationships related to FoMO and digital communication intensity. The findings indicate that FoMO functions as a significant psychological driver of digital communication intensity among Generation Z. TikTok's algorithm-driven content recommendations, viral culture, and real-time engagement features encourage users to access the platform frequently, monitor online activities continuously, and actively participate in digital interactions. The review also reveals that FoMO strengthens social connectedness and online participation while simultaneously increasing the risk of anxiety, digital dependency, and communication overload. Furthermore, digital communication intensity is reflected in frequent platform access, prolonged engagement duration, content creation, and active participation in online communities. This study concludes that FoMO plays a central role in shaping communication behaviors within TikTok's digital ecosystem. The findings contribute to the growing literature on digital communication and social media behavior and highlight the importance of promoting digital literacy and healthy social media engagement among Generation Z.

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INTRODUCTION

The rapid advancement of digital technology has fundamentally transformed the way individuals communicate, access information, and interact within society. Among the most significant developments is the widespread adoption of social media platforms, which have become integral to everyday communication practices. Social media offers various features that

facilitate interaction, information sharing, and content creation; however, alongside these benefits, it also generates several behavioral and psychological challenges for users. Nearly all generations engage with social media on a daily basis, but Generation Z remains one of the most active user groups. Born between 1995 and 2010, Generation Z is often referred to as the internet generation due to its extensive exposure to digital technologies, high technological competence, and familiarity with diverse information systems and digital applications (Maharani et al., 2025).

The growing dependence on social media has intensified digital communication practices, particularly among younger users. Social media functions not only as a communication medium but also as a primary channel for information dissemination and social interaction. The convenience of accessing information and maintaining social connections through digital platforms encourages users to spend increasing amounts of time online (Azizah et al., 2026). As digital natives, Generation Z demonstrates a strong tendency to integrate social media into daily routines, frequently adopting behaviors, expressions, and communication styles observed within online communities (Aldy & Kholil, 2025). The expansion of social media has consequently influenced multiple dimensions of society, including interpersonal relationships, business activities, and community interactions (Riyandini et al., 2025).

Among contemporary social media platforms, TikTok has emerged as one of the most influential applications worldwide. TikTok enables users to create, edit, and share short-form videos through numerous interactive features, including video filters, music integration, live streaming, voice modification, auto-captioning, and content moderation tools (Jannah & Mariyati, 2025). Its popularity is largely attributed to its sophisticated algorithmic system, particularly the “For You Page” feature, which continuously curates personalized content based on users’ viewing behaviors and preferences. Research has shown that algorithm-driven features such as TikTok’s For You Page and similar mechanisms on other social media platforms repeatedly expose users to tailored content, significantly increasing engagement and content consumption (Padmaningrum et al., 2026). Consequently, TikTok has evolved beyond an entertainment platform into a powerful environment that shapes communication patterns, social interactions, and behavioral tendencies among Generation Z.

The increasing intensity of social media engagement has also contributed to the emergence of Fear of Missing Out (FoMO), a psychological phenomenon that has attracted considerable scholarly attention. According to McGinnis, FoMO refers to an undesirable anxiety arising from the belief that others are experiencing more rewarding and enjoyable experiences than oneself, a condition largely intensified through social media exposure (Hidayati & Irwan, Muhammad Nasution, 2025). FoMO reflects psychological pressure rooted in the desire to remain socially relevant, connected, and visible, even within virtual environments. Social media amplifies this pressure by constantly presenting idealized portrayals of other people’s lives, achievements, and experiences, leading individuals to perceive absence from digital interactions as a loss of meaning, identity, and social connection (Ayu et al., 2025).

Within the TikTok ecosystem, FoMO has become particularly significant due to the platform’s rapid content circulation, viral culture, and recommendation algorithms. Users are continuously exposed to trending content, creating a persistent sense of urgency to remain updated and engaged. Consequently, many individuals feel compelled to maintain constant interaction with the platform to avoid missing important trends, discussions, or social experiences (Asyahidda & Azis, 2024). This phenomenon is especially pronounced among Generation Z, whose extensive access to social media and online interactions may intensify feelings of exclusion when they are unable to participate in ongoing digital conversations or social activities (Sengkey et al., 2025).

Previous studies have demonstrated that FoMO significantly influences various aspects of Generation Z's behavior. Individuals experiencing FoMO tend to check social media platforms repeatedly, experience anxiety when disconnected from online environments, and compare their lives unfavorably with the idealized representations presented by others, potentially leading to emotional distress, reduced productivity, and weakened face-to-face social relationships (Rahadiani et al., 2025). Furthermore, FoMO has been associated with strong emotional motivations and fears of exclusion, encouraging individuals to follow trends, maintain social connectedness, and engage in behaviors that alleviate feelings of uncertainty and social deprivation (Mandira & Zaerofi, 2025).

The impact of FoMO extends beyond communication behaviors and affects broader social and economic dimensions. Studies have shown that poor intrapersonal communication and high social media intensity contribute to FoMO, which subsequently encourages uncontrolled consumption patterns and hedonistic lifestyles among Generation Z (Nurhasanah, 2024). Similarly, FoMO has been linked to impulsive purchasing behaviors, particularly in social media environments where promotional content is delivered through attractive short-video formats (Artini & P2, 2026). This trend is particularly relevant among Generation Z individuals aged 18–29, who are navigating critical developmental stages involving financial independence, career formation, and social identity construction (Asyifa et al., 2024). In addition, social influence plays a significant role in shaping consumption and communication behaviors, as Generation Z users frequently imitate products, lifestyles, and behaviors displayed by admired individuals or peer groups on social media (Nirwana et al., 2025).

The relationship between FoMO and social influence is further strengthened by peer pressure dynamics. Adolescents and young adults often seek social acceptance, validation, and status within their peer networks, making them more susceptible to online behavioral norms. The interaction between FoMO and peer pressure creates a digital environment in which users feel compelled to participate continuously in online interactions to maintain group membership and social relevance (Fauziah, 2025). Such tendencies align with findings indicating that Generation Z frequently adopts behaviors observed within online communities, including language patterns, memes, and forms of self-expression that originate from social media content (Aldy & Kholil, 2025).

A growing body of empirical research has examined FoMO among Generation Z. Mangerongkoda et al. (2024) found a significant positive relationship between FoMO and social media addiction, indicating that higher levels of FoMO are associated with excessive social media use. Fahsya and Junaidi (2025) reported that FoMO serves as a major driver encouraging Generation Z users to follow viral TikTok trends and continuously monitor online content. Likewise, Lestari and Nurhabibah (2026) revealed that FoMO manifests through fears of missing trends, concerns regarding social evaluation, and a desire to remain relevant in digital environments, with TikTok algorithms and peer influences acting as major contributing factors. Siregar (2026) further demonstrated that intensive TikTok use reinforces FoMO tendencies and increases users' need for continuous digital connectivity. Moreover, Fahmi (2025) identified FoMO as a mediating variable between neuroticism and social media addiction, emphasizing its role in strengthening digital engagement among Generation Z users.

Despite these important contributions, existing studies remain fragmented. Most investigations focus on specific outcomes of FoMO, such as social media addiction, mental health issues, impulsive consumption, trend participation, or consumer behavior. Although research concerning social media and Generation Z continues to expand, there remains limited scholarly effort to synthesize comprehensively how FoMO influences digital communication intensity

among Generation Z, particularly within the TikTok environment. Existing studies tend to examine isolated aspects of social media behavior rather than providing a holistic understanding of how FoMO shapes communication patterns and engagement dynamics (Pangestu, 2026). Consequently, a comprehensive literature review is necessary to consolidate current knowledge, identify recurring themes, and establish a broader conceptual understanding of the relationship between FoMO and digital communication intensity.

This study offers novelty by systematically reviewing recent scholarly literature concerning the influence of Fear of Missing Out on digital communication intensity among Generation Z TikTok users. Unlike previous studies that primarily employ empirical approaches to examine isolated behavioral outcomes, this review synthesizes findings across multiple research domains, including communication behavior, social media engagement, psychological well-being, social influence, and digital interaction patterns. Through this approach, the study aims to develop a more comprehensive understanding of how FoMO operates as a psychological mechanism influencing communication intensity within algorithm-driven social media environments.

Accordingly, this study addresses three research questions: (1) How has Fear of Missing Out (FoMO) been conceptualized and discussed in the literature concerning Generation Z's use of TikTok? (2) What patterns of digital communication intensity among Generation Z on TikTok are identified in previous studies? and (3) How does Fear of Missing Out (FoMO) influence the intensity of digital communication among Generation Z on TikTok based on findings from recent scholarly literature? Therefore, the objective of this study is to synthesize and critically analyze existing literature regarding the relationship between FoMO and digital communication intensity among Generation Z on TikTok. The findings are expected to contribute to communication studies, digital media research, and social psychology by providing a comprehensive theoretical foundation for understanding digital communication behavior in contemporary social media environments.

METHODS

1. Research Approach and Design

This study employed a qualitative research approach using the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) method to examine the relationship between Fear of Missing Out (FoMO) and digital communication intensity among Generation Z on TikTok. A literature review is a systematic and transparent method for identifying, evaluating, and synthesizing findings from previous studies to generate a comprehensive understanding of a particular research topic. The SLR approach was selected because it enables researchers to critically assess existing evidence, identify research trends, and reveal theoretical and empirical gaps that may not be visible through individual studies.

According to Snyder (2019), literature reviews play a crucial role in advancing knowledge by integrating previous findings and developing new conceptual insights. Similarly, Xiao and Watson (2019) argued that systematic literature reviews provide rigorous procedures for collecting and synthesizing evidence, thereby improving the reliability and transparency of research findings. Therefore, the SLR method was considered appropriate for exploring how FoMO influences digital communication intensity among Generation Z TikTok users based on recent scholarly literature.

2. Data Sources and Search Strategy

The data used in this study consisted exclusively of secondary data obtained from peer-reviewed journal articles, conference proceedings, and scholarly publications related to FoMO, digital communication, Generation Z, and TikTok. The literature search was conducted through

internationally recognized academic databases, including Scopus, Google Scholar, ScienceDirect, SpringerLink, Taylor & Francis Online, Wiley Online Library, and Emerald Insight.

The search process was conducted using combinations of the following keywords: “*Fear of Missing Out*,” “*FoMO*,” “*digital communication intensity*,” “*social media communication*,” “*Generation Z*,” “*Gen Z*,” “*TikTok*,” “*social media engagement*,” and “*digital behavior*.” Boolean operators such as **AND** and **OR** were utilized to refine search results and improve relevance. According to Booth et al. (2021), a clearly defined search strategy is essential in systematic reviews because it minimizes selection bias and enhances reproducibility. Likewise, Page et al. (2021) emphasized that transparent search procedures improve the credibility and validity of review findings.

3. Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

The selection of literature was conducted using predetermined inclusion and exclusion criteria to ensure the relevance, quality, and credibility of the studies included in this review. The inclusion criteria comprised articles published between 2020 and 2026, reflecting the most recent developments in research on Fear of Missing Out (FoMO), social media use, TikTok, digital communication, and Generation Z. Eligible studies included empirical research, literature reviews, and theoretical articles published in peer-reviewed journals. To ensure accessibility and consistency in data analysis, only full-text articles available in English or Indonesian and accessible through recognized academic databases were considered. Furthermore, the selected studies were required to explicitly address at least one of the key themes examined in this review, namely FoMO, TikTok usage, digital communication behavior, or Generation Z.

Conversely, several exclusion criteria were applied to refine the selection process and maintain the focus of the review. Articles published before 2020 were excluded because they were considered less reflective of the rapidly evolving digital and social media landscape, particularly the emergence and widespread adoption of TikTok. Studies that did not directly address FoMO, TikTok, Generation Z, or digital communication behaviors were also excluded. In addition, non-scholarly publications, including editorials, opinion pieces, book reviews, and other sources lacking a peer-review process, were omitted to ensure academic rigor. Duplicate records retrieved from multiple databases were identified and removed during the screening process to avoid redundancy and ensure the accuracy of the review findings.

The use of explicit inclusion and exclusion criteria is considered essential in systematic reviews because it helps maintain consistency and reduces the risk of subjective selection (Aromataris & Munn, 2020). Furthermore, such criteria improve the methodological rigor of evidence synthesis and ensure that only relevant studies are included in the review process (Petticrew & Roberts, 2021).

4. Data Collection Procedure

The data collection process was conducted in several stages. First, relevant articles were identified through database searches using predetermined keywords. Second, titles and abstracts were screened to determine their relevance to the research objectives. Third, full-text articles were assessed according to the inclusion and exclusion criteria. Fourth, selected studies were organized and managed using reference management software to facilitate systematic analysis.

To ensure transparency and replicability, the study adopted the principles of the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) framework. PRISMA is widely recognized as a guideline for improving the reporting quality of systematic reviews and enhancing methodological transparency (Page et al., 2021). Through this procedure, only studies directly addressing FoMO, TikTok use, Generation Z, and digital communication intensity were retained for final analysis.

5. Data Analysis Technique

The collected literature was analyzed using **thematic content analysis**. This technique was employed to identify recurring themes, patterns, concepts, and relationships within the selected studies. The analysis involved several stages: (1) familiarization with the literature, (2) coding of relevant findings, (3) categorization of themes, (4) synthesis of evidence across studies, and (5) interpretation of the results in relation to the research objectives.

Thematic analysis is particularly suitable for literature review studies because it allows researchers to systematically identify common patterns across diverse sources of evidence (Braun & Clarke, 2022). Furthermore, Vaismoradi et al. (2023) noted that thematic analysis facilitates the development of conceptual frameworks by integrating findings from multiple studies into coherent thematic categories. In this study, thematic analysis was used to synthesize evidence concerning the conceptualization of FoMO, patterns of digital communication intensity among Generation Z, and the influence of TikTok on users' communication behaviors.

6. Trustworthiness and Research Quality

To enhance the trustworthiness of the review findings, several quality assurance procedures were implemented. First, only peer-reviewed publications were included to ensure scholarly credibility. Second, literature was collected from multiple academic databases to improve coverage and reduce publication bias. Third, the inclusion and exclusion criteria were consistently applied throughout the selection process. Finally, findings were compared and synthesized across multiple studies to strengthen analytical validity.

According to Snyder (2019), the credibility of literature review studies depends on systematic procedures, transparent selection processes, and critical synthesis of evidence. Likewise, Booth et al. (2021) emphasized that methodological transparency and rigorous evaluation of sources contribute significantly to the reliability and validity of review outcomes. Therefore, these procedures were implemented to ensure that the findings accurately reflected current scholarly knowledge regarding FoMO and digital communication intensity among Generation Z on TikTok.

RESULTS

1. Conceptualization of Fear of Missing Out (FoMO) in the Context of Generation Z's TikTok Use

a. Definition and Theoretical Foundations of FoMO

(1) Conceptual Definitions of FoMO in Contemporary Literature

The literature consistently conceptualizes Fear of Missing Out (FoMO) as a psychological condition characterized by anxiety arising from the perception that others are experiencing rewarding events, information, or social interactions without one's participation. Within digital environments, FoMO is increasingly associated with users' desire to remain continuously informed, connected, and socially relevant. The reviewed studies indicate that TikTok's dynamic content ecosystem amplifies this phenomenon by providing a constant stream of trends, viral content, and social interactions that encourage users to remain engaged (Hidayati & Irwan, Muhammad Nasution, 2025; Ayu et al., 2025). Consequently, FoMO has evolved from a general social concern into a technology-mediated experience that significantly influences online communication behaviors among Generation Z.

(2) Psychological Dimensions of FoMO

The findings reveal that FoMO encompasses several psychological dimensions, including anxiety, social insecurity, emotional dependence on online interactions, and fear of social exclusion. Individuals experiencing FoMO tend to engage in repetitive social media monitoring to reduce uncertainty and maintain awareness of ongoing social activities. Previous studies show that Generation Z users frequently experience discomfort when disconnected from social media and

often compare themselves with the idealized experiences presented by others, leading to emotional distress and heightened psychological pressure (Rahadiani et al., 2025). Furthermore, FoMO is driven by emotional motivations related to maintaining social connectedness and avoiding feelings of isolation within digital communities (Mandira & Zaerofo, 2025).

(3) Theoretical Perspectives Explaining FoMO in Digital Environments

The reviewed literature suggests that FoMO can be understood through perspectives emphasizing social connectedness, social comparison, and psychological needs fulfillment. Social media platforms create environments where individuals continuously evaluate their social positions relative to others. In the context of TikTok, algorithm-driven content exposure intensifies awareness of peers' activities and achievements, thereby increasing users' concerns about missing valuable social experiences (Padmaningrum et al., 2026). As a result, FoMO functions as a motivational mechanism that encourages continuous engagement with digital platforms to satisfy needs for belongingness, recognition, and social participation.

b. Characteristics of Generation Z as Digital Natives

(1) Digital Behavior and Media Consumption Patterns

The findings indicate that Generation Z exhibits intensive digital engagement characterized by frequent social media use, rapid information consumption, and high adaptability to technological innovations. As digital natives, this generation has integrated online communication into everyday life and relies heavily on social media for information, entertainment, and interpersonal interaction (Maharani et al., 2025). The literature further demonstrates that Generation Z actively consumes and produces digital content, making social media platforms such as TikTok central to their communication practices (Azizah et al., 2026).

(2) Social Identity Formation in Online Environments

The reviewed studies highlight that social media plays a significant role in shaping identity construction among Generation Z. Online environments provide opportunities for self-expression, social recognition, and identity exploration through content creation and participation in digital communities. Generation Z users frequently adopt communication styles, behaviors, and cultural trends circulating within online networks to establish social belonging and personal identity (Aldy & Kholil, 2025). Consequently, digital platforms have become important spaces where social identities are negotiated and maintained.

(3) Dependence on Social Media for Communication and Information

The literature demonstrates that Generation Z increasingly depends on social media as a primary source of communication and information. Social media platforms facilitate instant access to news, social interactions, and community engagement, reducing reliance on traditional communication channels (Riyandini et al., 2025). This dependence contributes to a stronger need for continuous connectivity, making Generation Z more vulnerable to FoMO when unable to access ongoing digital conversations or emerging online trends (Sengkey et al., 2025).

c. TikTok as a FoMO-Inducing Digital Environment

(1) The Role of Algorithmic Content Recommendations

The findings reveal that TikTok's recommendation system plays a central role in fostering FoMO among users. Through the "For You Page" algorithm, users are continuously exposed to personalized content aligned with their interests and previous interactions. This algorithmic mechanism encourages prolonged engagement and repeated platform visits because users anticipate discovering new and relevant information (Padmaningrum et al., 2026). Consequently, algorithm-driven content exposure reinforces users' perceptions that important experiences or information may be missed if they disengage from the platform.

(2) Viral Culture and Trend Participation

The literature identifies viral culture as another important factor contributing to FoMO on TikTok. The rapid dissemination of challenges, hashtags, and trending content creates social expectations for users to participate in popular digital activities. Studies indicate that Generation Z users often follow viral trends to maintain social relevance and avoid feelings of exclusion from online communities (Fahsyah & Junaidi, 2025). As a result, trend participation becomes both a communication practice and a strategy for preserving social visibility within digital networks.

(3) Continuous Connectivity and Real-Time Engagement

The reviewed studies suggest that TikTok promotes a culture of continuous connectivity through its real-time content updates and interactive features. Users are encouraged to remain constantly connected in order to monitor emerging trends, social interactions, and community discussions (Asyiahidda & Azis, 2024). This environment increases users' perceived need to stay online and strengthens FoMO-related behaviors, particularly among individuals who place high value on social participation and digital engagement.

d. Factors Contributing to FoMO Among Generation Z on TikTok

(1) Social Comparison and Peer Influence

The findings consistently identify social comparison as a major contributor to FoMO. Exposure to curated representations of others' achievements, lifestyles, and experiences encourages users to evaluate their own lives against perceived social standards. This process is further intensified by peer influence, as Generation Z users frequently seek acceptance and validation within their social networks (Ayu et al., 2025). The literature indicates that observing peers' activities on TikTok often increases concerns about being left behind socially or culturally (Fauziah, 2025).

(2) Need for Belongingness and Social Validation

Another recurring theme in the reviewed studies is the need for belongingness and social validation. Generation Z users frequently utilize TikTok to maintain social relationships, gain recognition, and receive feedback from peers. The desire to be acknowledged within online communities motivates continuous participation in digital interactions and content engagement (Mandira & Zaerofti, 2025). Consequently, FoMO emerges when users perceive a potential disruption to these social connections and validation processes.

(3) Fear of Social Exclusion and Information Loss

The literature further demonstrates that fear of exclusion and information loss significantly contributes to FoMO among Generation Z. Users often perceive staying informed about trends, discussions, and community activities as essential for maintaining social relevance. Missing important information may create feelings of isolation and reduce individuals' sense of belonging within digital communities (Sengkey et al., 2025). Therefore, the fear of being excluded from social interactions and missing valuable information serves as a key driver of sustained engagement with TikTok and other social media platforms.

2. Patterns of Digital Communication Intensity Among Generation Z on TikTok

a. Concept and Indicators of Digital Communication Intensity

(1) Frequency of Social Media Use

The reviewed literature indicates that digital communication intensity among Generation Z is primarily reflected in the frequency of social media usage. As digital natives, Generation Z routinely accesses social media platforms throughout the day for communication, information acquisition, and entertainment purposes (Azizah et al., 2026). TikTok, in particular, has become one of the most frequently accessed platforms due to its personalized content delivery and

continuous stream of short-form videos. The findings suggest that repeated access to TikTok has become an integral part of daily communication practices, enabling users to remain connected with ongoing social interactions and emerging trends (Padmaningrum et al., 2026).

(2) Duration of Online Engagement

In addition to frequency, communication intensity is reflected in the duration of users' online engagement. The literature demonstrates that Generation Z spends considerable amounts of time interacting with digital content, often exceeding the time allocated to conventional face-to-face communication. TikTok's algorithmic structure encourages prolonged viewing behavior by continuously recommending relevant content, thereby increasing users' engagement duration (Jannah & Mariyati, 2025). This extended exposure strengthens users' involvement in digital communication processes and facilitates continuous participation in online communities.

(3) Levels of Interaction and Participation

Digital communication intensity is also characterized by the level of interaction and participation within online environments. The reviewed studies reveal that Generation Z actively engages in various forms of communication, including liking, commenting, sharing, and creating content. Such activities indicate that users are not merely passive consumers but active participants in digital communication networks (Aldy & Kholil, 2025). Higher levels of interaction reflect stronger engagement with online communities and greater involvement in digital social exchanges.

b. Forms of Digital Communication on TikTok

(1) Content Creation and Sharing

The findings show that content creation and sharing represent one of the dominant forms of digital communication on TikTok. The platform enables users to express opinions, share experiences, and communicate personal identities through short-form video content. Generation Z users actively produce and distribute videos as a means of self-expression and social interaction, transforming communication from text-based exchanges into multimedia engagement (Jannah & Mariyati, 2025). This participatory culture reinforces users' visibility and presence within digital communities.

(2) Commenting, Messaging, and Live Interactions

Another significant form of communication on TikTok involves commenting, direct messaging, and live-stream interactions. These features facilitate immediate feedback and real-time communication between users. The literature suggests that interactive communication strengthens users' sense of connectedness and promotes active participation in online discussions (Riyandini et al., 2025). Through comments and live interactions, users establish social relationships, exchange information, and engage in collective conversations around shared interests.

(3) Participation in Trends, Challenges, and Hashtags

Participation in trends, challenges, and hashtag campaigns constitutes a distinctive communication practice on TikTok. The reviewed studies indicate that users frequently engage with trending content as a means of social participation and community involvement (Fahsyah & Junaidi, 2025). By participating in viral challenges and hashtag movements, Generation Z users communicate their identities, demonstrate social awareness, and strengthen their connections with broader digital audiences.

c. Communication Behaviors of Generation Z on TikTok

(1) Information-Seeking Behavior

The findings reveal that TikTok increasingly functions as an information source for Generation Z. Users utilize the platform to access news, educational content, lifestyle information, and updates regarding current events. The accessibility and visual presentation of information

make TikTok an attractive alternative to traditional information channels (Azizah et al., 2026). Consequently, information-seeking behavior has become an important component of digital communication intensity among Generation Z users.

(2) Entertainment-Oriented Communication

Entertainment remains a dominant motivation for communication on TikTok. The platform provides a diverse range of content, including music, comedy, storytelling, and creative performances, which encourages frequent engagement and prolonged interaction (Jannah & Mariyati, 2025). The literature suggests that entertainment-oriented communication not only fulfills recreational needs but also facilitates social interaction through shared experiences and discussions surrounding popular content.

(3) Relationship Maintenance and Social Networking

The reviewed studies demonstrate that TikTok serves as a medium for maintaining interpersonal relationships and expanding social networks. Users interact with friends, influencers, and online communities through various communication features, enabling them to sustain social connections regardless of geographical boundaries (Riyandini et al., 2025). This networking function reinforces the role of TikTok as both a communication platform and a social environment where relationships are continuously developed and maintained.

d. Emerging Trends in Digital Communication Intensity

(1) Always-Online Communication Culture

One emerging trend identified in the literature is the development of an always-online communication culture. Generation Z increasingly perceives constant connectivity as a normal aspect of everyday life, facilitated by mobile devices and social media platforms. Continuous access to TikTok enables users to remain informed about social activities, trends, and interactions in real time (Sengkey et al., 2025). This culture contributes to higher levels of communication intensity and reinforces expectations of immediate responsiveness.

(2) Short-Video Communication Preferences

The findings indicate a growing preference for short-video communication among Generation Z. Compared with traditional text-based communication, short-form videos provide more engaging, concise, and visually appealing ways to convey information and emotions. TikTok has accelerated this shift by popularizing video-based communication formats that align with users' preferences for rapid content consumption and interactive engagement (Jannah & Mariyati, 2025). As a result, communication practices have become increasingly visual, dynamic, and content-driven.

(3) Algorithm-Driven Interaction Patterns

The literature further reveals that digital communication intensity on TikTok is strongly influenced by algorithm-driven interaction patterns. Personalized recommendation systems shape users' communication experiences by determining the content they consume, engage with, and share (Padmaningrum et al., 2026). These algorithmic mechanisms not only increase user engagement but also influence communication behaviors by continuously directing attention toward specific topics, communities, and trends. Consequently, digital communication on TikTok is increasingly characterized by algorithmically mediated interactions that reinforce participation and sustained engagement.

3. The Influence of Fear of Missing Out (FoMO) on Digital Communication Intensity Among Generation Z on TikTok

a. FoMO as a Driver of Digital Communication Intensity

(1) Increased Frequency of TikTok Access

The reviewed literature consistently demonstrates that FoMO serves as a significant driver of increased TikTok usage among Generation Z. Individuals experiencing FoMO tend to access social media more frequently to ensure that they do not miss important information, trending content, or social interactions. Mangerongkoda et al. (2024) found that higher levels of FoMO were positively associated with excessive social media use, suggesting that the fear of being left behind motivates users to maintain constant engagement with digital platforms. In the context of TikTok, this tendency is reinforced by the rapid circulation of content and the continuous emergence of viral trends, encouraging users to repeatedly access the platform throughout the day (Fahsyah & Junaidi, 2025).

(2) Continuous Monitoring of Online Activities

Another recurring finding is the tendency of individuals with high FoMO to continuously monitor online activities. The literature indicates that Generation Z users frequently check TikTok feeds, notifications, and trending content to remain aware of ongoing developments within their social networks and online communities (Asyaidi & Azis, 2024). This behavior reflects an effort to reduce uncertainty and maintain social awareness, particularly in digital environments where information changes rapidly. Consequently, continuous monitoring becomes a habitual communication practice that increases the overall intensity of online engagement.

(3) Desire to Remain Updated with Trends and Information

The desire to stay updated with current trends and information emerged as one of the strongest motivations underlying FoMO-related communication behaviors. Generation Z users often perceive awareness of trending content as essential for maintaining social relevance and participation within digital communities (Lestari & Nurhabibah, 2026). As a result, TikTok functions not only as an entertainment platform but also as a primary source of real-time information, encouraging users to remain actively connected to ongoing discussions and viral phenomena.

b. Behavioral Impacts of FoMO on Communication Practices

(1) Excessive Engagement with Digital Content

The findings reveal that FoMO contributes to excessive engagement with digital content. Individuals experiencing FoMO tend to spend more time consuming, interacting with, and responding to online content than those with lower levels of FoMO. This heightened engagement is motivated by concerns about missing valuable information or social experiences occurring within digital environments (Rahadiani et al., 2025). Consequently, communication practices become increasingly centered on continuous content consumption and interaction.

(2) Compulsive Checking Behavior

Compulsive checking behavior represents another significant outcome of FoMO. The literature demonstrates that users frequently revisit social media platforms to verify updates, monitor peer activities, and review newly published content (Mandira & Zaerofo, 2025). This repetitive behavior often occurs automatically and becomes integrated into daily routines. On TikTok, the constant availability of personalized content strengthens this tendency by creating expectations that new and potentially important information may appear at any moment (Padmaningrum et al., 2026).

(3) Increased Participation in Online Interactions

The reviewed studies further indicate that FoMO encourages greater participation in online interactions. Users experiencing FoMO are more likely to engage in commenting, sharing, content creation, and participation in viral trends to maintain visibility and social presence within digital communities (Fahsyah & Junaidi, 2025). Such behaviors reflect attempts to remain connected and

actively involved in ongoing social conversations, thereby increasing communication intensity across multiple forms of online engagement.

c. Social and Psychological Consequences of FoMO-Driven Communication

(1) Social Connectedness and Online Belonging

One of the positive outcomes identified in the literature is the enhancement of social connectedness and online belonging. Through continuous interaction on TikTok, users are able to maintain relationships, participate in communities, and strengthen their sense of social inclusion. The reviewed studies suggest that digital engagement provides opportunities for users to develop connections with peers who share similar interests, thereby reinforcing feelings of belonging within online environments (Sengkey et al., 2025).

(2) Anxiety and Psychological Pressure

Despite these social benefits, FoMO-driven communication is frequently associated with psychological challenges. The literature consistently reports that FoMO generates anxiety, emotional stress, and concerns about social exclusion (Hidayati & Irwan, Muhammad Nasution, 2025). Continuous exposure to idealized portrayals of others' experiences may intensify social comparison processes and create pressure to remain constantly active online (Ayu et al., 2025). Consequently, users may experience emotional discomfort when unable to participate in digital interactions or keep up with emerging trends.

(3) Digital Dependency and Communication Overload

The findings also reveal that prolonged FoMO-related engagement can contribute to digital dependency and communication overload. Continuous exposure to large volumes of information, notifications, and online interactions may create cognitive and emotional fatigue. Siregar (2026) found that intensive TikTok use reinforced users' dependence on digital connectivity, while Mangerongkoda et al. (2024) demonstrated a strong association between FoMO and social media addiction. These findings suggest that FoMO may transform digital communication from a functional activity into a compulsive behavior characterized by excessive dependence on online interactions.

d. Synthesis of Literature Findings

(1) Major Themes Identified Across Previous Studies

The synthesis of the reviewed literature identifies several recurring themes concerning FoMO and digital communication intensity among Generation Z on TikTok. These themes include the need for continuous connectivity, fear of social exclusion, social comparison, algorithm-driven engagement, and participation in digital trends. Collectively, these factors contribute to heightened communication intensity by encouraging users to remain actively involved in online environments (Fahsy & Junaidi, 2025; Lestari & Nurhabibah, 2026).

(2) Similarities and Differences in Research Findings

The reviewed studies consistently agree that FoMO functions as a significant predictor of increased social media engagement and communication intensity. Most studies highlight the role of FoMO in motivating frequent platform access, trend participation, and sustained digital interaction (Mangerongkoda et al., 2024; Fahmi, 2025). However, differences emerge regarding the primary consequences of FoMO. Some studies emphasize its psychological impacts, including anxiety and emotional distress (Rahadiani et al., 2025), whereas others focus on behavioral outcomes such as social media addiction, impulsive consumption, or trend-following behaviors (Nurhasanah, 2024; Artini & P2, 2026). These differences suggest that FoMO operates as a multidimensional phenomenon with diverse implications across social, psychological, and behavioral domains.

(3) Proposed Conceptual Relationship Between FoMO and Digital Communication Intensity Among Generation Z on TikTok

Based on the synthesized findings, this review proposes that FoMO functions as a central psychological mechanism linking users' social needs with their communication behaviors on TikTok. The desire to remain informed, socially connected, and relevant motivates Generation Z users to engage in frequent platform access, continuous monitoring of online activities, and active participation in digital interactions. TikTok's algorithmic environment further strengthens this relationship by continuously exposing users to personalized content, viral trends, and social feedback mechanisms. As a result, FoMO increases digital communication intensity through higher frequencies of platform usage, prolonged engagement duration, and greater participation in online communication activities. This conceptual relationship suggests that FoMO serves as both a psychological motivator and a behavioral catalyst shaping communication practices within contemporary social media environments.

DISCUSSION

1. Results Analysis

a Conceptualization of Fear of Missing Out (FoMO) in the Context of Generation Z's TikTok Use

The findings indicate that FoMO has evolved beyond a psychological concern about missing social experiences and has become a central mechanism shaping digital behavior within contemporary social media environments. In the context of TikTok, FoMO operates as a form of perceived social urgency that motivates Generation Z users to maintain continuous awareness of ongoing interactions, viral trends, and emerging information. This finding suggests that FoMO is not merely a reaction to social exclusion but also a response to the increasing speed of information circulation within algorithm-driven platforms.

From a conceptual perspective, the results demonstrate that FoMO is closely associated with the need for social connectedness and belongingness. Generation Z users perceive digital participation as an important means of maintaining social relevance within their peer networks. Consequently, remaining informed about online activities becomes a symbolic indicator of social inclusion. This interpretation supports the argument that FoMO emerges when individuals perceive a discrepancy between their desire for social participation and their actual level of engagement within digital communities (Lestari & Nurhabibah, 2026).

Furthermore, the findings reveal that TikTok's algorithmic ecosystem strengthens the development of FoMO by continuously exposing users to personalized and socially relevant content. The constant appearance of new information, trends, and peer-generated content creates a perception that valuable experiences are occurring at all times. Such conditions reinforce users' concerns about missing opportunities for social interaction and participation. This interpretation aligns with the view that algorithm-driven media environments intensify users' awareness of others' activities and consequently increase the perceived importance of remaining connected (Padmaningrum et al., 2026). In addition, the tendency of Generation Z to use social media as a space for identity formation further amplifies FoMO because online participation becomes intertwined with self-presentation and social recognition (Maharani et al., 2025).

b Patterns of Digital Communication Intensity Among Generation Z on TikTok

The findings reveal that digital communication intensity among Generation Z extends beyond the frequency of social media usage and encompasses a broader pattern of sustained engagement, active participation, and continuous interaction. The results suggest that communication intensity should be understood as a multidimensional construct involving not only

how often users access TikTok but also how deeply they participate in communication processes occurring within the platform.

The reviewed literature demonstrates that TikTok has transformed communication from a predominantly interpersonal activity into a participatory digital practice characterized by content creation, content sharing, commenting, and engagement with online communities. This transformation indicates that communication intensity is increasingly measured through interactive behaviors rather than simple exposure to media content. As a result, Generation Z users function simultaneously as content consumers and content producers within the platform's communication ecosystem (Jannah & Mariyati, 2025).

Another important interpretation emerging from the findings is the normalization of continuous connectivity. The always-online culture identified in the literature suggests that communication has become integrated into users' daily routines and social expectations. Access to information, peer interactions, and community participation can occur at any moment, reducing temporal boundaries between online and offline communication. This condition supports the notion that digital communication intensity among Generation Z is influenced by both technological accessibility and changing social norms regarding connectivity (Sengkey et al., 2025). Furthermore, the popularity of short-video communication formats reflects a broader shift toward more immediate, visual, and interactive forms of communication that align with the preferences of digitally connected generations (Azizah et al., 2026).

c The Influence of Fear of Missing Out (FoMO) on Digital Communication Intensity

Among Generation Z on TikTok

The findings demonstrate that FoMO functions as a key psychological driver that increases digital communication intensity among Generation Z TikTok users. The relationship identified in this review suggests that FoMO motivates individuals to engage more frequently with social media because maintaining awareness of social developments becomes psychologically rewarding. In this sense, communication intensity can be interpreted as a behavioral manifestation of users' efforts to satisfy their need for social connectedness and informational certainty.

The results further indicate that FoMO contributes to the development of habitual communication practices, particularly through repetitive monitoring of content, notifications, and online interactions. Such behaviors are not solely driven by entertainment motives but are also influenced by concerns about missing socially valuable information. Consequently, users become increasingly involved in communication activities that reinforce their sense of participation within digital communities. This finding suggests that FoMO acts as a mechanism linking psychological needs with observable communication behaviors (Mandira & Zaerofi, 2025).

Moreover, the findings reveal that the influence of FoMO is characterized by a dual effect. On one hand, FoMO encourages social connectedness, participation, and engagement within online communities. On the other hand, excessive communication intensity may lead to anxiety, emotional pressure, and digital dependency. This duality indicates that FoMO should not be viewed exclusively as a negative phenomenon; rather, it represents a complex motivational force capable of generating both adaptive and maladaptive outcomes depending on the extent of users' engagement. The positive association between FoMO and intensive social media use identified in the literature further supports the interpretation that FoMO has become one of the primary psychological determinants of communication behavior in contemporary digital environments (Mangerongkoda et al., 2024; Rahadiani et al., 2025).

2. Comparison with Previous Studies

The findings of this review are largely consistent with previous studies that conceptualize FoMO as a psychological condition characterized by concerns about missing rewarding social experiences and important information shared within digital environments. The present review found that FoMO among Generation Z is closely associated with the need for social connectedness, social participation, and continuous awareness of online activities. This finding supports the conceptualization proposed by Lestari and Nurhabibah (2026), who argued that FoMO emerges from individuals' concerns about being excluded from social interactions and trending information circulating on digital platforms.

The findings also corroborate the argument that algorithm-driven social media environments intensify FoMO by increasing users' exposure to social information and peer activities. In this review, TikTok's recommendation system was identified as an important mechanism that continuously presents users with personalized content, thereby strengthening perceptions of social relevance and participation. This result is consistent with Padmaningrum et al. (2026), who found that algorithmic content exposure contributes significantly to users' tendencies to remain constantly connected to social media platforms.

Furthermore, the findings align with previous studies emphasizing the role of Generation Z as digital natives whose social interactions are increasingly embedded within online environments. Maharani et al. (2025) reported that social media has become an important medium for communication, identity construction, and social engagement among Generation Z. Similarly, the present review demonstrates that TikTok functions not only as a communication platform but also as a social space where users negotiate belongingness, visibility, and social recognition. These similarities suggest a growing consensus that FoMO is strongly influenced by both individual psychological needs and the structural characteristics of contemporary digital platforms.

The findings concerning digital communication intensity are consistent with previous research indicating that social media has fundamentally transformed communication practices among younger generations. This review found that communication intensity on TikTok is characterized by frequent platform access, prolonged engagement duration, and active participation in content-related interactions. These findings support Jannah and Mariyati (2025), who observed that TikTok encourages participatory communication through content creation, interaction, and community engagement.

The results also confirm previous observations regarding the emergence of an always-online communication culture. Sengkey et al. (2025) argued that continuous digital connectivity has become a defining characteristic of contemporary communication among Generation Z. The present review similarly found that users perceive constant access to information and social interaction as a normal aspect of daily life, leading to higher levels of communication intensity and online engagement.

Additionally, the findings support Azizah et al. (2026), who emphasized that Generation Z increasingly prefers visual and short-form communication formats over traditional communication channels. This review found that TikTok's short-video ecosystem facilitates rapid information exchange and encourages more interactive communication behaviors. The consistency between these findings and previous studies indicates that communication intensity among Generation Z is shaped not only by technological accessibility but also by changing communication preferences and digital cultural practices.

The findings of this review strongly support previous studies reporting a positive relationship between FoMO and intensive social media use. This review found that FoMO

increases the frequency of TikTok access, encourages continuous monitoring of online activities, and stimulates active participation in digital communication practices. These findings are consistent with Mangerongkoda et al. (2024), who reported that individuals with higher levels of FoMO tend to demonstrate stronger engagement with social media and are more vulnerable to problematic usage patterns.

The present findings also corroborate the study conducted by Fahmi (2025), which identified FoMO as an important psychological factor influencing online engagement behavior. Similar to the current review, Fahmi found that users experiencing FoMO are more likely to engage in repetitive social media activities to maintain awareness of social developments and peer interactions. This consistency reinforces the argument that FoMO functions as a motivational force underlying communication intensity in digital environments.

However, while previous studies often focused on specific outcomes such as social media addiction, anxiety, or impulsive behavior, the present review provides a broader perspective by integrating communication-related dimensions into the analysis. Rahadiani et al. (2025) emphasized the psychological consequences of FoMO, particularly anxiety and emotional distress, whereas the current review demonstrates that these psychological factors are closely connected to communication behaviors such as continuous engagement, content monitoring, and active participation. Therefore, this review extends previous research by positioning FoMO as a multidimensional construct that simultaneously influences psychological experiences and digital communication practices among Generation Z TikTok users.

3. Implications of Findings

a. Theoretical Implications

The findings contribute to the growing body of literature on digital communication and social media behavior by demonstrating that FoMO functions not only as a psychological construct but also as a significant determinant of digital communication intensity. This review extends previous understandings by highlighting the interaction between psychological needs, algorithm-driven content exposure, and communication behaviors among Generation Z. The findings suggest that FoMO serves as a conceptual bridge linking social connectedness, online participation, and sustained digital engagement within contemporary social media environments.

b. Practical Implications

From a practical perspective, the findings emphasize the importance of promoting digital literacy and healthy social media practices among Generation Z users. Educators, parents, and policymakers should recognize that excessive communication intensity may be influenced by psychological pressures associated with FoMO. Therefore, interventions focusing on digital well-being, self-regulation, and critical awareness of algorithmic content exposure may help users develop more balanced patterns of social media engagement.

4. Limitations of the Study

This study has several limitations. First, the review relied exclusively on secondary data obtained from published literature, limiting the ability to examine direct experiences of Generation Z TikTok users. Second, variations in research designs, cultural contexts, and measurement approaches across the reviewed studies may affect the consistency of findings. Third, the rapidly evolving nature of TikTok and other social media platforms may influence communication behaviors beyond those captured in the current literature. Future studies are therefore encouraged to employ empirical and longitudinal approaches to provide a more comprehensive understanding of FoMO and digital communication intensity.

5. Partial Conclusions

The findings indicate that FoMO plays a substantial role in shaping digital communication intensity among Generation Z on TikTok. By encouraging continuous connectivity, frequent platform access, and active participation in online interactions, FoMO has become an important psychological driver of contemporary communication behavior. At the same time, while FoMO may strengthen social connectedness and online engagement, it may also contribute to anxiety, digital dependency, and excessive communication practices. These findings underscore the need to understand digital communication not only from technological perspectives but also from psychological and social dimensions, providing a foundation for the final conclusions of this study.

CONCLUSION

This literature review examined the relationship between Fear of Missing Out (FoMO) and digital communication intensity among Generation Z on TikTok. The findings demonstrate that FoMO has become a significant psychological factor shaping communication behaviors within contemporary digital environments. The review revealed that FoMO is characterized by concerns about missing social interactions, valuable information, and emerging online trends, which motivate Generation Z users to remain continuously connected to social media platforms. TikTok's algorithm-driven ecosystem, viral culture, and real-time content delivery further reinforce these tendencies by encouraging users to engage frequently and actively with digital content.

The study also found that digital communication intensity among Generation Z is reflected in frequent platform access, prolonged online engagement, and active participation in various communication activities, including content creation, commenting, sharing, and involvement in online communities. These communication practices are increasingly influenced by users' desires to maintain social relevance, strengthen social connections, and remain informed about ongoing digital developments. Consequently, TikTok functions not only as a communication platform but also as a social environment that facilitates continuous interaction and participation.

A key finding of this review is that FoMO positively influences digital communication intensity by increasing the frequency of TikTok use, encouraging continuous monitoring of online activities, and promoting active engagement in digital interactions. While FoMO may strengthen social connectedness and foster participation in online communities, excessive levels of FoMO may also contribute to anxiety, psychological pressure, digital dependency, and communication overload. These findings suggest that FoMO plays a dual role as both a facilitator of social engagement and a potential source of problematic communication behaviors.

Theoretically, this study contributes to the literature by extending the understanding of FoMO beyond its traditional association with psychological well-being and social media addiction. The findings position FoMO as an important communication-related construct that links psychological needs, social participation, and communication intensity within algorithm-mediated digital environments. Practically, the study highlights the importance of digital literacy, self-regulation, and digital well-being initiatives to help Generation Z develop healthier and more balanced patterns of social media use.

Future research should move beyond literature-based investigations by employing empirical, longitudinal, and cross-cultural approaches to examine the evolving relationship between FoMO and digital communication behaviors across different social media platforms. Further studies may also explore moderating variables such as gender, personality traits, digital literacy, and cultural backgrounds to provide a more comprehensive understanding of FoMO in contemporary digital society.

In conclusion, FoMO has emerged as a central psychological driver of digital communication intensity among Generation Z on TikTok. Understanding this phenomenon is essential for explaining contemporary communication patterns and for developing strategies that promote responsible, meaningful, and sustainable engagement within increasingly interconnected digital environments.

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