

THE ROLE OF FOMO AND HEDONISM IN SHAPING CONSUMPTIVE BEHAVIORS AND RELIGIOUS ADHERENCE AMONG SIBOLGA'S MUSLIM MILLENNIALS

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Abstract

This study aims to uncover the impact of Fear of Missing Out (FoMO) and hedonism on consumptive behaviour among Muslim millennials in Sibolga, North Sumatra, and how these behaviours interact with religious and social values within a culturally and religiously significant context. Employing a qualitative phenomenological approach, the research collected data through observations, in-depth interviews, and documentation involving eleven Muslim millennials in Sibolga. The findings reveal that FoMO and hedonism contribute to increased consumption of luxury goods and experiences, driven by the desire to stay connected with global trends and achieve instant gratification, often at the expense of local religious values and traditions. This tension between engaging in modern lifestyles and maintaining cultural and religious identities presents a significant dilemma for the youth. The study suggests that educational and social interventions focused on sustainability values and spiritual awareness are necessary to help the younger generation balance the pressures of hedonism and excessive digital connectivity.

Keywords: *Fear of missing out, Lifestyle, Hedonism, Millennials*

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengungkap dampak dari Fear of Missing Out (FoMO) dan hedonisme terhadap perilaku konsumtif di kalangan milenial muslim di Kota Sibolga, Sumatera Utara, serta bagaimana perilaku ini berinteraksi dengan nilai-nilai agama dan sosial dalam konteks budaya dan keagamaan yang kuat. Menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif fenomenologi, penelitian ini mengumpulkan data melalui observasi, wawancara mendalam, dan dokumentasi yang melibatkan sebelas milenial muslim di Sibolga. Temuan penelitian menunjukkan bahwa FoMO dan hedonisme mendorong peningkatan konsumsi barang mewah dan pengalaman, yang didorong oleh keinginan untuk tetap terhubung dengan tren global dan memperoleh kepuasan instan, seringkali dengan mengorbankan nilai-nilai agama dan tradisi lokal. Ketegangan antara mengikuti gaya hidup modern dan mempertahankan identitas budaya serta keagamaan ini menimbulkan dilema yang signifikan bagi generasi muda. Penelitian ini menyarankan perlunya intervensi sosial dan pendidikan yang berfokus pada nilai-nilai keberlanjutan dan kesadaran spiritual untuk membantu generasi muda menyeimbangkan tekanan hedonisme dan konektivitas digital yang berlebihan.

Kata Kunci: *Fear of missing out; Gaya hidup; Hedonisme; Milenial*

A. Introduction

The rapid development of technology and digitalisation over the past decade has brought significant changes to various aspects of human life (Hassani et al., 2021; Hofkirchner & Kreowski, 2022). Notably, this transformation is evident in lifestyle changes, where the widespread accessibility of digital information has facilitated increased consumer behaviour among individuals. According to Thamrin and Saleh (2021), public interest in products showcased on online marketplaces has shifted consumption patterns towards being more influenced by appearance and the latest trends rather than actual needs.

This shift has also coincided with the emergence of the Fear of Missing Out (FoMO) syndrome and an increase in hedonistic lifestyles, particularly among younger generations. FoMO, which refers to the fear of missing out on important information or experiences, often drives individuals to continuously access social media, potentially leading to internet addiction (Topino et al., 2023; Zhang et al., 2023). Hodgkinson and Poropat (2014), as cited in Mudrikah (2019), describe FoMO as an anxiety that compels individuals to stay constantly connected, which ultimately has a negative impact on mental health and quality of life.

On the other hand, a hedonistic lifestyle, which emphasises the pursuit of immediate pleasure and enjoyment, often disregards moral and spiritual values (Cheung et al., 2001; Vitrano, 2020). This not only encourages consumerist and materialistic behaviour but also affects how individuals interact within society. The tendency to prioritise self-gratification can undermine social relationships and weaken community bonds, where social interactions are more often based on personal gain rather than social solidarity.

This study aims to investigate the influence of FoMO and hedonism within the social and religious context of Sibolga City, North Sumatra, where the majority of the population is Muslim. In a society steeped in religious values, this phenomenon poses a dilemma for the younger generation, who, on one hand, seek to follow modern trends, while on the other, must uphold the values taught by their religion and local traditions. This research will explore how religious and cultural values are maintained or adapted amidst the pressures of a fast-paced, instant gratification-oriented modern lifestyle.

Sibolga City was chosen as the research site due to its unique representation of the interplay between strong religious traditions and the influences of globalisation. Through this study, we hope to identify the factors influencing lifestyle choices among Muslim millennials and their impact on their social and religious lives. The research is expected to provide insights into how young Muslims in Sibolga navigate the complexities of modern life without losing the cultural and religious identity they have long upheld.

B. Method

This study employs a qualitative approach using phenomenological methods, aiming to understand the subjective experiences of individuals related to the phenomena of Fear of Missing Out (FoMO) and hedonism among Muslim millennials in Sibolga City. Sugiyono (2019) defines qualitative research as a method that examines phenomena in their natural context, where the researcher serves as the key instrument in data collection and analysis. This approach allows the researcher to gain a deep understanding of the subjects' perspectives and motivations, which may not be achievable through quantitative methods.

The research subjects comprise eleven Muslim millennials residing on Jalan Merpati, Aek Manis, South Sibolga, Sibolga City, North Sumatra. The selection of subjects is based on specific criteria related to their engagement with social media and its influence on their lifestyles. Data were collected through three primary techniques: observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. Observations were conducted to gather data on the subjects' daily interactions and their use of social media in a natural context. In-depth interviews were employed to explore the subjects' understanding of FoMO and hedonism, as well as the implications of these phenomena on their religious and social values. Documentation, including notes and digital artefacts, was used to collect additional evidence that supports the analysis of the phenomena. Data analysis was carried out by systematically organising and categorising the data obtained from interviews and observations. This process involved organising the data into categories, analysing unit by unit, synthesising information, and developing emerging patterns or themes. Finally, the data were compiled to form conclusions that are comprehensible and beneficial to both the researcher and the readers.

C. Discussion

1. Fear of Missing Out and Hedonism as Lifestyle-Forming Factors

FoMO (Fear of Missing Out) and hedonism are closely related in millennial behaviour (Maysitoh et al., 2020; Milyavskaya et al., 2018). FoMO is a psychological phenomenon where individuals fear being left out of current trends or moments, prompting them to always strive to stay up-to-date. This condition drives consumptive behaviour, where millennials are encouraged to consume popular products, follow trending lifestyles, and experience the same things as the celebrities they follow on social media. It is evident that this behaviour is closely related to hedonism, which is the pursuit of pleasure and personal satisfaction. Compared to other age groups, FoMO is more prevalent among millennials, who are also the largest group of social media users in Indonesia. According to a study by Ahmad & Nurhidayah (2020), millennials ranked first in social media use in Indonesia in 2019.

Hedonism, which is associated with the need to socialise and display social status, often encourages individuals to adopt a luxurious lifestyle. This lifestyle is not only attractive but also easily adopted by those who want to be seen as part of a certain group.

This phenomenon is reinforced by reality shows that offer instant popularity as a reward, increasing hedonistic tendencies without considering resources or consequences.

FoMO and hedonism among millennials are often influenced by their environment. They imitate the lifestyles of famous figures or strive to become famous, sometimes through instant means. According to psychologist Sunatra (2016), the human tendency to seek pleasure and avoid discomfort is a fundamental element of hedonistic behaviour, which drives individuals to continually seek satisfaction in various aspects of life.

Fear of Missing Out (FoMO)

FoMO (Fear of Missing Out) and hedonism play a significant role in shaping millennial behaviour. The phenomenon of FoMO is a psychological condition where individuals fear missing out on current trends or moments, driving them to always appear up-to-date. This condition leads millennials towards intense consumptive behaviour, where they are driven to consume popular products, follow trending lifestyles, and try to experience the same things as the celebrities they idolise on social media. This behaviour is closely correlated with hedonism, which focuses on the pursuit of pleasure and personal satisfaction.

A study by Ahmad & Nurhidayah (2022) found that millennials dominated social media use in Indonesia in 2019, making them more vulnerable to FoMO than other age groups. On the other hand, hedonism is related to the need for individuals to socialise and display social status, which often drives them to adopt a luxurious lifestyle. This phenomenon is not only attractive but also easily influences those who want to be recognised as part of the elite group. Reality shows that offer instant popularity as a reward add to the hedonistic tendencies, where individuals do not consider the resources or consequences of their behaviour.

According to psychologist Sunatra (2016), the human tendency to pursue pleasure and avoid discomfort forms the basis of hedonistic behaviour, which drives individuals to continue seeking satisfaction in various aspects of life. FoMO and hedonism among millennials are often influenced by their social environment, where they imitate the lifestyles of famous figures or strive to become famous, often through instant means. The combination of social media influence and the desire to follow the latest trends makes these two phenomena highly relevant in analysing contemporary social and cultural dynamics.

Hedonism

According to Chaney as cited by Rizaldi (2016), a hedonistic lifestyle is a pattern of life directed at the pursuit of pleasure, such as frequently spending time outside the home, playing, enjoying the city buzz, purchasing expensive desired items, and trying to be the centre of attention. This lifestyle emphasises experiences that prioritise luxury and pleasure without deep consideration of actual needs.

In Sibolga City, hedonism has become a strong influence among the Muslim millennial community. They tend to seek instant gratification and are often trapped in

consumptive and materialistic behaviour. In their quest for satisfaction, millennials in Sibolga purchase unnecessary items, often leading to debt and financial problems. This tendency also influences their lifestyle choices in social and religious aspects, where they may prefer spending time with friends rather than engaging in worship or choose clothing that emphasises style over modesty. Thus, hedonism affects not only consumption choices but also social and spiritual behaviour, challenging the more conservative traditional values held by the local community. This condition requires a deep understanding of how cultural and religious values interact with the ever-evolving trends of modern lifestyles.

According to Kotler in 2000 as cited in Fatmawati (2022), the factors that contribute to a hedonistic lifestyle can be categorised as internal and external. A hedonistic lifestyle is not formed instantly but is influenced by various factors that drive a person towards hedonism. Internal factors include attitudes, which are states of mind and thought prepared to respond to specific objects and directly influence behaviour. Experience and observation also play a role, where social behaviour is influenced by learning from past actions. The personality and self-concept of each individual contribute to determining their unique behaviour. Additionally, behavioural motives such as the need for security and prestige drive individuals towards a hedonistic lifestyle. Perception, the process of selecting and interpreting information, also plays a crucial role.

External factors include reference groups, which have a direct or indirect influence on an individual's behaviour. The family plays a crucial role in shaping long-lasting attitudes and behaviours. Social class, a homogeneous group in society with similar values, interests, and behaviours, also influences lifestyle choices. Culture, which includes the knowledge, beliefs, arts, and social norms acquired by individuals, also plays a role in shaping a hedonistic lifestyle.

Jannah (2021), in her article on students from the Faculty of Da'wah and Communication at UIN Ar-Raniry, identifies various forms of hedonistic lifestyles found in individual lives. Psychological hedonism is the view that humans instinctively avoid pain and pursue pleasure. Evaluative hedonism considers that only pleasure is valuable, while pain or discomfort is deemed undesirable. A hedonistic lifestyle also includes behavioural hedonism, where behavioural changes in society tend to seek only pleasure. Cognitive hedonism is an excessive mindset in purchasing that can lead to irrational thinking when desires are unmet. Non-selective hedonism reflects a consumptive attitude without selective consideration of benefits or harm.

Characteristics of individuals with a hedonistic lifestyle include a desire for attention, impulsiveness, being followers, lacking rationality, and being easily influenced, as stated by Putri (2009) in Jennyya, Pratiknjo & Rumampuk (2021). An interviewee, TA, aged 27, described herself as someone who always wants to stay connected with social media to keep up with conversations with friends and enjoys social activities such as dining out, shopping, and vacationing. This indicates that the characteristics of a

hedonistic lifestyle can be observed from various attributes involving pleasure and social influence.

2. FoMO and Hedonism Among Muslim Millennials in Sibolga

Muslim millennials in Sibolga City are very conscious of their appearance. They always want to look trendy and keep up with the latest fashion trends because, to them, appearance is paramount. This is evident in the clothes they wear, their hairstyles, and the accessories they use. Many millennials spend hours each day scrolling through social media. They feel anxious if they are not constantly connected to the outside world and aware of what is happening. They may even access social media continuously to obtain the latest information. Muslim millennials in Sibolga City spend much of their time on social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok. They are constantly checking their social media to see what others are doing, which can trigger FoMO.

Muslim millennials in Sibolga City tend to be consumptive. They enjoy buying branded goods and following a hedonistic lifestyle. This is evident from the many cafes and restaurants they visit and the luxurious items they own. Muslim millennials in Sibolga enjoy spending time pursuing their pleasures. They often go to cafes, restaurants, and other entertainment venues, and they also enjoy going on holiday. They frequently compare themselves with others on social media and always want to stay connected with the latest trends. Seeking instant gratification, focusing only on momentary pleasures such as shopping, eating delicious food, and partying becomes their main priority.

FoMO drives Muslim millennials to always follow the latest trends. They constantly want to buy the latest products and follow the most popular fashions. This can make them consumptive and materialistic. FoMO also drives them to always want to appear perfect on social media. They want to show others that they have a happy and successful life. This leads them to exaggerate or fabricate their realities in their social media posts.

In Sibolga City, FoMO and hedonism can be further triggered by social media, where an individual who frequently accesses their social media to view posts from friends, relatives, or family experiences increasing anxiety. For instance, when an individual sees a WhatsApp story of a peer posing with restaurant-style dishes or an Instagram story showing a friend who has bought the latest smartphone, or views family members enjoying a pleasant holiday that the individual is not part of, the person experiencing FoMO will instantly feel worried, fearful, and anxious, thinking about why they could not participate in those moments. The residents of Sibolga City are still keen to keep up with the times. They never, or do not want to, miss out on trends or lifestyles they use to showcase their identities, especially among the Muslim millennials.

FoMO and hedonism negatively impact the lifestyle of Muslim millennials in Sibolga City. These two concepts encourage them to behave impulsively, materialistically, and irresponsibly. This can endanger their physical and mental health and damage their relationships with others. FoMO can make them anxious, envious, and

consumptive. Hedonism can make them materialistic, individualistic, and behave contrary to Islamic values.

In Sibolga City, FoMO and hedonism significantly impact the millennial generation. One case that occurred in Sibolga due to the influence of FoMO and hedonism involved a 30-year-old millennial committing fraudulent "julo-julo" schemes to follow trends and enhance their appearance. They recruited customers or "players" interested in joining them in this scheme with varying weekly and monthly payments, ranging from 200,000 to 500,000 IDR, promising returns of 2 million to 5 million IDR per week or month. However, when asked to pay, they claimed the money had not been collected, using the funds received from dozens of people to purchase luxury items such as iPhones, expensive clothes, branded bags, and a more lavish lifestyle. It is important for Muslim millennials in Sibolga City to recognise the dangers of FoMO and hedonism. They need to learn to manage their fear of missing out and seek pleasure in healthy ways. They should also learn to live more simply and focus on what truly matters in life.

"For trends, yes, because I follow a trend account for style, so I don't fear missing out. My motive? Well, I'm the type of person who prioritises fashion; I think it's important because style is something people notice. Like, 'How neat is this person?' or 'What's their fashion sense like?'" (Interview with TA, 27 years old)

TA expressed that they follow trends according to their personal interests, particularly in fashion, as they consider fashion important to understand, such as how to match styles that suit them. This influences TA to follow style-specific trend accounts to stay informed about fashion trends. Others follow current trends merely to fulfil their personal needs, such as seeking attention from their friends on social media. As AP stated:

"Yes, I follow trends to keep up with the times. I don't want to fall behind, so whenever there's something new, I update right away, not necessarily to be number one, but just so I'm not outdated." (Interview with AP, 26 years old)

AP mentioned that they always follow trends to avoid being perceived as outdated or "kudet" (less updated) by their friends, doing so to attract their friends' attention. In contrast, AIL expressed that they are only interested in knowing the current trends but not necessarily trying them, unlike AP. AIL's statement is as follows:

"Not really. If there's a trend, I like watching people, but I don't make it myself because I'm just not that into it. Hmm... it's related to my personality; if I were to describe my FoMO, I just want to know what's happening, but not to the point of doing it myself. I just want to know what's going on so I can talk about it with my friends and not miss out on new information." (Interview with AIL, 36 years old)

AIL prefers observing the current trends rather than engaging or trying them out, as for them, just knowing is enough without having to do or try them, to avoid missing out on information when interacting with their friends.

As revealed by several millennial informants experiencing FoMO, some use social media to seek information related to their interests, hobbies, or current situations

because they see social media as a platform to fulfil their interaction instincts and satisfy their curiosity, leading to a sense of personal satisfaction. Their habits evolve into a need, and in every activity, they cannot be separated from social media, as accessing it allows them to stay updated and avoid missing out on information.

Like FoMO, several studies also show a strong correlation between consumptive behaviour or hedonism and millennials. For instance, Sukarno & Indrawati (2018) found that millennials tend to live luxurious lifestyles, particularly using items such as bags, shoes, jackets, clothes, or accessories from expensive or well-known brands, travelling by motorbike or car, owning high-end smartphones, having hangout spots they frequently visit with friends, and a desire to own trendy items. Millennials strive to conform to trends, purchasing items like shoes and accessories that are currently popular and having sophisticated phones due to a desire to fit in with their peer groups and gain acceptance and recognition from them. Millennials will adjust their behaviour, hobbies, lifestyle, and appearance to match their peers, ensuring they are accepted as part of the group.

In Sibolga City, amidst a religious society, hedonism clearly sidelines religion. For hedonists, religion is merely an attire that can be discarded or donned at will. Religious messages are nothing more than "passing advertisements," with no desire to understand, let alone practise them. Hedonism has led them to a misguided mindset, focusing on achieving pleasure and utility even if it contradicts Islamic teachings. Their spirituality is hollow because they see religious teachings as an obstacle to fulfilling worldly pleasures. People want to own items like advanced smartphones, feel embarrassed if they can't buy a car, or feel inferior to neighbours if they don't have a large television. The shame felt by hedonists stems not from their deviant behaviour but from their inability to fulfil their desires, which is the opposite. In life, there is nothing wrong with desiring something. In Islam, there is no prohibition against wanting permissible things. However, if one already possesses an item that functions well and provides complete service but still feels dissatisfied and constantly lacks, one needs to question what their true focus in life is

D. Conclusion

The study explores the complex interactions between Fear of Missing Out (FoMO), hedonism, and the lifestyle choices of Muslim millennials in Sibolga City, a region known for its strong religious and cultural values. The findings indicate that rapid technological advancements and digitalisation have significantly shaped the consumptive behaviours of the younger generation, leading them to frequently follow the latest trends and engage extensively with social media. The phenomena of FoMO and an increasing inclination towards hedonism have considerably impacted their social and spiritual interactions, often prioritising personal gratification over moral and spiritual values. Qualitative data analysis, derived from observations, in-depth interviews, and documentation, reveals that FoMO drives millennials to remain continuously connected and updated with current trends, which frequently triggers excessive consumptive

behaviours. In contrast, hedonism is rooted in the desire to display social status and seek personal pleasure, often resulting in impulsive buying and neglect of financial and social responsibilities. This lifestyle challenges not only the religious norms but also undermines the more traditional social structures in Sibolga City.

This study concludes that social and educational interventions focused on sustainability values and spiritual awareness could assist the younger generation in navigating the pressures of hedonism and FoMO. Effective education on responsible technology use and the reinforcement of religious and community values can help mitigate the negative impacts of a lifestyle dominated by the pursuit of instant gratification. This is crucial to ensuring that the younger generation in Sibolga City can maintain their cultural and religious identity amid rapid globalisation. Thus, this study not only enhances the understanding of how traditional values and modern lifestyles interact but also provides insights into how communities can strengthen social and spiritual resilience in an ever-evolving digital era.

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