

From Imagination to Buying Things: Exploring the Moderation Role of Fear of Missing Out in Parasocial Relationship and Purchasing Intention

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Abstracts

One of the unique research topics studied is purchasing merchandise among fandoms or communities that have specific interests, such as cartoons, anime, or celebrities. The satisfaction one gets and the feeling of happiness from being attached to one's idol is one of the factors that makes someone willing to spend money to buy idol items. This purchasing behavior has multifaceted causes, one of which is caused by parasocial relationships. Parasocial relationships are defined as socio-emotional interactions with fictional characters like cartoons, anime, or celebrities and are perceived as two-way interactions despite being one-sided. This phenomenon raises questions about when individuals experiencing PSRs may be satisfied purchasing character-related items. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the influence of parasocial relationships on purchasing intentions and the potential moderating role of FOMO among 200 early adults aged 18 to 25. Data analysis in this research employs a moderation model using Process by Hayes in SPSS 22.0. Previous studies have identified how parasocial relationships can increase individuals' intentions to buy character merchandise. The hypothesis suggests that fear of missing out can strengthen the experience of someone with an inner attachment to their idol, which will make them buy goods to support their idol. Furthermore, this research can deepen our understanding of how parasocial relationships influence the intention to purchase character-related items. This study can expand the study of fandom to maximize the potential to increase subjective well-being and happiness by looking at the uniqueness of fandoms.

Keywords: Parasocial Relationships, Parasocial Love, Parasocial Friendship, FOMO, Idol Merchandise Purchasing Intentions

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Introduction

The fandom phenomenon has become quite a significant influence on Indonesian society today. Several unique cultures and a combination of subcultures considered cool by teenagers and adults are essential phenomena that will influence individual behaviour. This rapid growth occurs almost all over the world. It focuses on two popular cultures in Indonesia, namely Japanese Culture (J-pop, Anime, Manga and Video games) and South Korean culture (K-pop music, drama, fashion and cosmetics) (Baudinette, 2020). The word fan refers to all people enthusiastic about particular performers, actors, books, musicians, television, and works of art. Fan behaviour refers to supportive actions done by individuals towards their idols. Despite this, the fandom context does not only focus on human celebrities but also celebrities in the form of pictures or cartoons (Abd-Rahim, 2019; Derbaix & Korchia, 2018). This fan phenomenon has been around for a long time. Starting from childhood to old age. This behaviour also develops from time to time according to life events experienced by the individual. The phenomenon experienced by individuals when forming their liking for celebrities is caused by the development of their social identity. Several scholars state that in identity formation, several characteristics can disrupt the stability of an individual's life course. This stability can be caused by physiological changes, such as puberty or menopause, then age-graded life transitions, such as graduating from high school and transformations in commitment to essential relationships. So that when they are teenagers, individuals begin to develop a feeling of liking for the object of their fans because of the exploration of their sense of self and overall independence. This collection of fans will form the term fandom (Harrington & Bielby, 2010).

In a stable fandom, fans will form an idea practice so that it develops into a liking for their celebrity object, which will lead to consumption behaviour among the fandom (Derbaix & Korchia, 2018). Idols or the management of an idol group create a brand that will enhance the consumer behaviour of fans (Chen et al., 2021). Fans will automatically demand that they buy the product as a feeling of love for their idol (Zhang, 2017). This consumptive behaviour is supported by the characteristics of fans motivated by their emotional condition, so purchasing merchandise will generate self-pleasure and a sense of belonging to the group of fans or fandom (Zaharieva, 2022).

Before consumer behaviour occurs, there is a feeling of intention to buy it. Purchasing intention occurs due to internal and external factors that cause someone to desire to buy an item through the media. This buying behaviour is based on the influence of the internet and social media, and there are characteristics, namely trust and intrinsic evaluation, in oneself to move to buy a product (Meskaran et al., 2013). Pop culture fans tend to own merchandise owned by celebrities, virtual celebrities, or idol groups because this is one of the brands built by that celebrity group, resulting in brand recognition and persuasion, which can generate consumer behaviour in a celebrity's fandom (Liu et al., 2020).

One of the factors that can cause someone to have purchasing intention is because there is parasocial interaction between individuals. Parasocial interaction or relationship is a social factor in which an individual forms an illusion of closeness with a celebrity, giving rise to an attachment that increases feelings of care and wanting to support the celebrity (Xiang et al., 2016). Parasocial relationships are divided into 2, namely parasocial romantic love, which is when the individual imagines his idol in the form of love or affection like a romantic partner, and parasocial friendship, which is when the individual feels friendly with his idol (Tukachinsky, 2011). Parasocial interactions will generate an intention to purchase and

increase a fan's impulsive purchases (Vazquez et al., 2020; Xiang et al., 2016). In pop culture, including fans of K-pop idols and manga or anime, interaction by viewing information, the latest album or episode, as well as concerts or exhibitions will increase fan interest and engagement, which will result in increased parasocial interaction and the tendency to purchase products issued by the brand strategy in each celebrity group (Goncalves et al., 2020).

Social media interaction is also assumed to increase parasocial interaction with fans' merchandise purchase intentions. The tendency to purchase is due to influence and word of mouth, which can insert messages into a person's subconscious mind. The messages displayed on social media and the comments therein will cause euphoria so that someone can easily be influenced to buy a product (Wagner et al., 2017; Zafar et al., 2019).

The behaviour of being afraid of missing a moment or Fear of Missing Out also occurs when there is deep interaction on social media, which explicitly makes the celebrity feel essential to the fans. Korean wave and otaku culture are often associated with someone influenced by one of them to take supportive steps towards the brand built by the celebrity. This can also increase the bandwagon effect so that fans are obsessed with merchandise made by their idol group (Aw & Labrecque, 2020; Kung, 2021; Kang & Ma, 2020).

From the background created, We propose three hypotheses, namely:

H1: There is an influence of Parasocial Friendship Support on Idol Goods Purchase Intention

H2: There is an influence of Parasocial Friendship Communication on Idol Goods Purchase Intention

H3: There is an influence of Parasocial Love Physical on Idol Goods Purchase Intention

H4: There is an influence of Parasocial Love Emotional on Idol Goods Purchase Intention

H5: There is an influence of Fear of Missing Out on Idol Goods Purchase Intention

H6: There is an influence of Parasocial Friendship Support on Idol Goods Purchase Intention, which is moderated by Fear of Missing Out

H7: There is an influence of Parasocial Friendship Communication on Idol Goods Purchase Intention, which is moderated by Fear of Missing Out

H8: There is an influence of Parasocial Love Physical on Idol Goods Purchase Intention, which is moderated by Fear of Missing Out

H9: There is an influence of Parasocial Love Emotional on Idol Goods Purchase Intention, which is moderated by Fear of Missing Out

Method

Collecting respondent data in this study used a convenience sampling method, meaning anyone who felt willing could fill out the questionnaire without coercion and have the right to refuse. The questionnaire was distributed using online Google Forms media. The criteria set are respondents aged 18 to 29 who like anime, K-pop, or both.

Table 1. Demographics Participant (N = 264)

Demography	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Cumulative (%)
Gender			
Male	53	20,1%	20,1%
Female	211	79,9%	100,0%
Age (M = 23.96, SD = 3.08)			
Pendidikan Terakhir			
Secondary School	1	0,4%	0,4%
Highschool	80	30,3%	30,7%
Diploma	12	4,5%	35,2%
Undergraduate	157	59,5%	94,7%
Master Program	12	4,5%	99,2%
Doctoral Program	2	0,8%	100,0%
Interest			
Anime	59	22,3%	22,3%
K-Pop	128	48,5%	70,8%
Anime & K-Pop	77	29,2%	100,0%
Monthly Income			
Less than Rp500.000	54	20,5%	20,5%
Rp500.000 - Rp1.000.000	37	14,0%	34,5%
Rp.1.000.000 - Rp3.000.000	53	20,1%	54,5%
Rp3.000.000 - Rp5.000.000	62	23,5%	78,0%
More than Rp5.000.000	58	22,0%	100,0%
Monthly Expenditures for Purchasing Favorite Anime / K-Pop Merchandise			
Less than Rp100.000	162	61,4%	61,4%
Rp100.000 - Rp500.000	68	25,8%	87,1%
Rp.500.000 - Rp1.500.000	25	9,5%	96,6%
Rp1.500.000 - Rp3.500.000	7	2,7%	99,2%
More than Rp3.500.000	2	0,8%	100,0%
Preference for purchasing location for Anime/K-Pop merchandise			
Shopping at the Official Mall Store	14	5,3%	5,3%
Community Blog	11	4,2%	9,5%
Community Café	6	2,3%	11,7%
E-Commerce (Tokopedia, Shopee, Blibli, dan sebagainya)	69	26,1%	37,9%
Social Media (Twitter/Instagram/TikTok)	164	62,1%	100,0%

Number of Watching Favorite Anime Characters/K-Pop Idols on Videos/Television/Films			
1 times per week	63	23,9%	23,9%
2 - 3 times per week	54	20,5%	44,3%
3 - 5 times per week	43	16,3%	60,6%
Almost Everyday	104	39,4%	100,0%
Number of favorite Anime / K-Pop events or concerts that have been attended so far			
Never had Any Event	118	44,7%	44,7%
1 time	34	12,9%	57,6%
2 - 3 times	54	20,5%	78,0%
4 - 5 times	23	8,7%	86,7%
More than 5 times	35	13,3%	100,0%
Have Favorited this Anime / K-Pop Character for (Years)			
1 - 3 years	66	22,4%	22,4%
4 - 6 years	63	21,4%	43,9%
7 - 10 years	72	24,5%	68,4%
More than 10 years	93	31,6%	100,0%
Total Participant			264

This research involved 264 participants aged between 18 and 29 years ($M=23.96$; $SD= 3.08$), including those who liked K-Pop, Anime, and both. Women constitute the majority of respondents from this research, namely 79.9%. Participants also reported their last level of education, where the most were Bachelor's degrees at 59.5%, followed by high school, diploma and master's degrees at 30.3%, 4.5% and 4.5%. Information on participants' hobbies was also recorded in this research, dominated by participants who liked K-pop at 68.6%, followed by participants who liked both and Anime at 29.2%. Participants also reported monthly income; the results were Less than Rp. 500,000 as many as 54 (20.5), Rp. 66.5% of working participants dominated this research, followed by participants who had not worked as much as 33.5%. Finally, the average frequency of participants' smartphone use in a day was divided into three categories: more than 6 hours a day as much as 61%, 3-6 hours a day as much as 36.1%, and < 3 hours as much as 2.9%.

Results

The main objective of this study is to examine whether (a) PFS will affect IGPI, (b) FOMO will affect IGPI, (c) FOMO will moderate the influence between PFS and IGPI, (d) PFC will affect IGPI, (e) FOMO will moderate the influence between PFC and IGPI, (f) PLE will affect IGPI, (g) FOMO will moderate the influence between PLE and IGPI, (h) PLP will affect IGPI, (i) FOMO will moderate the influence between PLP and IGPI. The research questions will be discussed in several stages of the study results.

Preliminary Analysis

Table 2 shows the mean, SD and Pearson correlation for the variables studied. The results show that higher loneliness will cause FOMO, and higher Envy will cause FOMO.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics and the matrix relationship between variables

	M	SD	PFS	PFC	PLE	PLP	FOMO	IGPI
PFS	1.19	2.03	-					
PFC	0.726	1.73	0.671** *	-				
PLE	0.628	1.85	0.727** *	0.552** *	-			
PLP	4.46	3.10	0.415** *	0.362** *	0.629** *	-		
FOMO	- 0.823	1.29	0.264** *	0.205** *	0.390** *	0.257** *	-	
IGPI	0.232	2.29	0.539** *	0.399** *	0.545** *	0.380** *	0.289** *	-

Note: N= 264. *= $p < 0.05$, **= $P < 0.01$, ***= $P < 0.001$
Regression and Moderation Test between variables

Table 3. Regression Variable to IGPI

No	Model	IGPI B
1	PFS	0.297***
2	PFC	0.024
3	PLE	0.265**
4	PLP	0.081
5	FOMO	0.289

PFS= Parasocial Friendship Support; PFC= Parasocial Friendship Communication; PLE= Parasocial Love Emotional; PLP= Parasocial Love Physical; FOMO= Fear of Missing Out; IGPI; Idol Goods Purchasing Intention; Model 1= PFS; Model 2= PFS, PFC; Model 3= PFS, PFC, PLE; Model 4= PFS x PFC x PLE, PLP; *= $P < 0.05$; **= $P < 0.01$; ***= $p < 0.001$

The regression analysis results in table 3 show that the PFS variable influences IGPI in the context of moderator regression ($\beta = 0.297$, $p < a$). And, PLE variable also has an effect on IGPI ($\beta = 0.265$, $p < a$) with the multiple regression both variables have effect on IGPI. But, PFC ($\beta = 0.024$, $p > a$) and PLP ($\beta = 0.081$, $p > a$) variable do not have effect on IGPI. Therefore, the findings support only hypothesis 1.

When tested by adding the interaction between 4 dimensions of PSR and IGPI, tidak terdapat interaksi moderasi yang signifikan antara semua dimensi PSR dan IGPI. In conclusion, when

FOMO becomes a moderator maka tidak terjadi moderasi antara 4 dimensi PSR terhadap IGPI; therefore, hypothesis 3 is not proven.

Discussion

This study proves two of the three hypotheses. The variable examined in this study is the intention to purchase. This research limits the intention to purchase to the population of pop culture fans, especially those with the most extensive fan base. 2 pop cultures are developing in Indonesia, namely Korean pop culture, such as idol groups or music bands. Then, Japanese pop culture focuses on manga, anime and idol groups. The phenomenon seen in this research was examined by purchasing merchandise among this fan group.

Hypothesis 1 in this research is that there is an influence of parasocial interaction on purchase intention. This research found that parasocial interactions with celebrities or idol groups, with the type of parasocial in the form of love or parasocial in the form of friendship, will increase purchase intention. Several studies have found related to this hypothesis. In one study, it was found that social interaction had a positive effect on purchase intention; this was due to the feeling of envy and comparison shown to the idol group, so there was a particular emotional attachment (Purwanto, 2021). This also agrees with other research, which states that engagement with viewers or followers can strengthen parasocial interaction and purchase intention (Lee & Lee; Shen et al., 2022).

Then, hypothesis 2 in this research wants to find the influence of Fear of Missing Out on purchase intention. In this research, it was found that fear of missing out will increase purchase intention. One study explains that the fear of missing out on purchasing goods is caused by the individual's tendency to socially compare what happens to them (Blasé et al., 2023; Purwanto, 2021). Fomo will create anxiety and fear of being left behind by what is being updated, including when the idol group releases merchandise (Good & Hyman, 2021).

Then, to answer hypothesis 3 in this research, namely FOMO as a moderator or strengthening or weakening the influence between parasocial interaction and purchase intention. In this research, FOMO does not moderate parasocial interaction, namely love and friendship. This could be because individuals aged 18-29 years already have good enough self-control so that FOMO does not become one of the criteria for someone to purchase merchandise to the point of impulsive buying (Fumar et al., 2023).

One of the limitations of this research is that not much has been studied in depth regarding merchandise purchases among pop culture lovers or fans, so the reference material is relatively small and needs to be deepened. Second, there are possible differences between Korean pop and Japanese pop fanbases that need to be separated to help researchers see the dynamics of the differences between fans in the two cultures. Third, the fans in this study were aged 18-29 years, where the formation of identity in fan culture occurs during adolescence, ranging from 11 to 17 years.

Conclusion

It can be concluded that this research can add to the scientific knowledge of PSR, FOMO and IGPI research. The results showed no moderation effect between PSR and IGPI when moderated by FOMO. However, the correlation results between variables show correlations with high significance between all variables. Suggestions for future research development

could be to conduct research by looking at the intention to purchase idol goods as a predictor of parasocial relationships, which FOMO moderates. Then this research is also limited to adults and has not explored teenagers who are currently searching for identity and looking for role models. Therefore, further research can take samples from teenagers to obtain comprehensive results related to this parasocial relationship phenomenon.

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