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The delicate balance of social influences on consumption: A comprehensive model of consumer-centric fear of missing out

Metin Argan^{a,*}, Mehpare Tokay Argan^b, Nilüfer Z. Aydınoglu^c, Alper Özer^d

^a Department of Sports Management, Faculty of Sport Sciences, Eskişehir Technical University, Tepebaşı, Eskişehir 26555, Turkey

^b Faculty of Applied Sciences, Bilecik Şeyh Edebali University, Bozüyük, Bilecik 11300, Turkey

^c College of Administrative Sciences and Economics, Koç University, Sarıyer, İstanbul 34450, Turkey

^d Faculty of Political Sciences, Ankara University, Çankaya, Ankara 06590, Turkey

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ABSTRACT

The current study explores the underlying psycho-social motivations of consumer-centric fear of missing out (FoMO) and, in turn, its effects on consumption behavior. More specifically, we add to the literature by investigating the complex set of relationships between the antecedents of consumer-centric FoMO (consumer need for uniqueness – CNFU and consumer independence), its underlying dimensions (desire for belonging and anxiety of isolation), and its consequences on (conformity and conspicuous) consumption. The data were collected from a total of 1156 consumers residing in the United States and Turkey, a developed and a developing country, using convenience sampling. Confirmatory factor analyses, as well as structural equation modeling, were applied. The findings revealed negative effects of consumer independence on consumer-centric FoMO, whereas CNFU had a counter-intuitive positive effect, as proposed. In turn, the underlying dimensions of FoMO, desire for belonging and anxiety of isolation, affected consumption consequences in the opposite direction with positive and negative influences respectively. Moreover, consumer-centric FoMO mediated the association between individual consumer differences and socially-motivated consumption behavior. The theoretical and applied implications of these results are discussed.

1. Introduction

Fear of missing out (FoMO) has become increasingly prevalent with the expansion of social media and individuals pursuing fuller lives (e.g., Alt, 2015). FoMO is defined as a “pervasive apprehension that others might be having rewarding experiences from which one is absent, ... a desire to stay continually connected with what others are doing” (Przybylski, Murayama, DeHaan, & Gladwell, 2013, p.1841). Accordingly, FoMO is closely associated with social influence effects as it builds on a comparative evaluation of one's situation with others (Hayran, Anik, & Gurhan-Canli, 2016). Recent research has extended the conceptualization of FoMO to introduce consumer-centric FoMO as a domain-specific construct (e.g., Good & Hyman, 2020a; Hodgkinson, 2019). Building on the definition of FoMO as a general personal tendency, consumer-centric FoMO is more specifically conceptualized in relation to consumption contexts – as the “apprehension about not acquiring a product or engaging in a (consumption) experience extolled

by other people” (Good & Hyman, 2020b, p.331). As such, consumer-centric FoMO denotes a similar feeling of apprehension about relative deprivation, but one that more directly relates to and more readily captures consumption behavior (e.g., Hayran, Anik, & Gürhan-Canli, 2020; Hodgkinson, 2019).

Consumption behavior is often shaped by social motivations. Ample previous research has demonstrated the effect of social needs, and in turn, various social influences, on choices and displays of possessions (e.g., Bearden, Netemeyer, & Teel, 1989; Escalas & Bettman, 2003). We all try to strike a balance between our sense of belonging and sense of self, between our needs of conformity and independence, and between striving for prestige and self-actualization. These motivations influence how we respond to others' consumption choices emotionally and behaviorally.

In line with our focused objective of better understanding the processes for consumption-related conceptualization of FoMO, we build on self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985, 1991) to identify its

* Corresponding author.

E-mail addresses: margan@eskisehir.edu.tr (M. Argan), mehpare.argin@bilecik.edu.tr (M.T. Argan), naydinoglu@ku.edu.tr (N.Z. Aydınoglu), ozar@politics.ankara.edu.tr (A. Özer).

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antecedents and consequences with a comprehensive consideration of these various social motivations in today's consumption landscape. More specifically, we simultaneously explore the effects of consumer independence and need for uniqueness, as key underlying psycho-social consumer motivations, on the generation of consumer-centric FoMO, which, in turn, is proposed to influence conformity and conspicuousness in consumption behavior.

Accordingly, our work helps to better understand consumer-centric FoMO and socially-motivated consumption with its multiple drivers and adds to consumer behavior and social psychology literatures in various ways. First, we establish an association between individual consumer characteristics and FoMO with a joint consideration of independence and need for uniqueness. Previous work has linked FoMO to certain personality traits such as extraversion, neuroticism, and attachment style (e.g., Alt, 2015; Blackwell, Leaman, Trampusch, Osborne, & Liss, 2017); however, recent research calls for further exploration of its individual-level antecedents (Rozgonjuk, Sindermann, Elhai, & Montag, 2021). Second, we focus our scope on consumption and provide an empirical test of consumer-centric FoMO, as a domain-specific variable, with its recently proposed multiple dimensions (Kang, Cui, & Son, 2019) using a large-scale survey across two countries. Other recent work conceptualizing FoMO as a consumer-centric variable has predominantly focused on the effects of external contextual triggers on its generation (e.g., product category, Kang & Ma, 2020; communication appeal, Good, Hyman, 2020b). We add to this work by focusing on the effects of individual consumer characteristics in relation to social influence as social comparison is an inherent aspect of FoMO. Third, while previous work had mostly focused on everyday reconnection attempts as behavioral consequences of FoMO (e.g., social media use, Przybylski et al., 2013), we explore its effects on reconnecting consumption behavior (i.e., conformity and conspicuousness). Finally, our unique data also enable us to conduct supplementary analyses, providing further insight into the cross-country comparison of the proposed effects. Recent work (Karimkhan & Chapa, 2021; Munawar, Bashir, Fahim, Rehman, & Mukhtar, 2021) has demonstrated differential effects across collectivist and individualistic cultures in relation to FoMO's behavioral consequences, highlighting the need for cross-cultural empirical investigations like ours.

1.1. Fear of missing out and its underlying dimensions

Individuals inherently care about what others are doing and desire to stay connected to these experiences (Przybylski et al., 2013). When this link is broken or uncertain, FoMO presents itself as an aversive negative state typically associated with underlying psycho-social needs and deficiencies (Blackwell et al., 2017). Previous research in psychology has mostly described FoMO in relation to psychological anxiety and obsessive symptoms, which have been shown to then lead to excessive, compulsive, or impulsive behavior (e.g., Carson, 2017). Other research has highlighted the social side of FoMO and has suggested a multi-dimensional conceptualization that considers both a social interaction (or need to belong) aspect and a social anxiety (or social pain) aspect (Abel, Buff, & Burr, 2016; Lai, Altavilla, Ronconi, & Aceto, 2016).

Building on this research, Kang et al. (2019) argue that FoMO can be distinguished by two underlying psycho-social motivations. The first is *desire for belonging*, "which refers to the person experiencing FoMO as having a strong need for interpersonal attachments ..., and need for recognition from others" (Kang et al., 2019; p.4). Accordingly, desire for belonging reflects a need to express one's symbolic meaning of personality and is represented by the dimensions of prestige sensitivity, social connectedness, and praise from others (e.g., Kang et al., 2020). The second is *anxiety of isolation*, explained as the uneasy anticipation of being left out of the mainstream group (Alt, 2015) and is represented by the dimensions of feeling alienated, ignored, and falling behind (e.g., Elhai et al., 2018).

Focusing our scope on a conceptualization of FoMO as related to

consumption domains, we build on self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985, 1991) to propose consumer independence and need for uniqueness (previously shown to have essential social influence effects in consumer behavior, e.g., Goldsmith & Clark, 2012; Ruvio, 2008) as the two key antecedents of consumer-centric FoMO, in association with its above-mentioned psycho-social dimensions of desire for belonging and anxiety of isolation. In turn, per the self-determination theory, as FoMO reflects a negative emotional state, it has behavioral consequences for the individual consumer who is trying to cope with the emotion. Using this motivational perspective, we explore these effects on conformity consumption and conspicuous consumption, behavioral responses that were shown to be socially motivated in consumer behavior research (Otterbring, Ringler, Sirianni, & Gustafsson, 2018; Sundie et al., 2011; see Fig. 1 for our conceptual model). We next discuss these proposed relationships in detail.

1.2. Antecedents of consumer-centric FoMO

Consumers are inclined to be influenced by the norms, beliefs, and behaviors of the social groups they belong to or aspire to belong to (e.g., Bearden et al., 1989; Escalas & Bettman, 2003). The main tenets of the long-established self-determination theory (SDT; Deci & Ryan, 1985, 1991; Ryan & Deci, 2000) are insightful in understanding how underlying psycho-social motivations shape such consumer inclinations. SDT investigates innate psychological needs that are the basis of human self-motivation (Deci & Ryan, 1985, 1991) and posits that "all individuals have natural, innate, and constructive tendencies to develop an ever more elaborate and unified sense of self" (Ryan & Deci, 2002, p.5). The theory assumes that an individual tries to develop and maintain a complex and well-constructed *sense of self* while also building his or her person through *connections with other people* (Maxwell, Tefertiller, & Morris, 2021). Recent work has demonstrated that a lack of these basic psychological needs may lead to FoMO. More specifically, this stream of research has documented that having one's basic psychological needs satisfied is a significant negative predictor of FoMO (Dou, Li, Li, Li, & Wang, 2021; Xie, Wang, Wang, Zhao, & Lei, 2018) while a deficiency in these needs is positively correlated with FoMO (Chai et al., 2018; Oberst, Wegmann, Stodt, Brand, & Chamarro, 2017).

In relation to consumption contexts, underlying psychological needs in relation to development and maintenance of sense of self reflect themselves as consumer independence (e.g., Gilal, Zhang, Paul, & Gilal, 2019). The independent consumer tends to adhere to their baseline personal preferences and tastes and gives no weight to socially prescribed norms in consumption decisions (Goldsmith & Clark, 2012; Nail, 1986). Sense of independence entails the notion of freedom for the consumer, who demands the right to make ostensibly autonomous choices based on individuality and self (Caruana, Crane, & Fittett, 2008). Such freedom, however, does not entail a motivation to actively rebel against existing norms; the independent consumer is simply impartial to such norms and influences (Goldsmith & Clark, 2012).

Consumer independence was shown to be positively correlated with self-sufficiency (Clark, 2006; Turk & Ercis, 2017), the extent to which an individual sees themselves to be self-governing (Raskin & Terry, 1988). Furthermore, it was shown to be negatively related to susceptibility to normative influence, social consumption motivation, materialism, and others' approval (Clark, 2006; Kasser, 2002). Accordingly, the independent consumer is predominantly uninterested in others' opinions, evaluations, and behaviors, and is more protected against insecurities triggered by social comparison (Turk & Ercis, 2017). Hence, as consumer-centric FoMO inherently reflects a pervasive apprehension about others' possessions and experiences as defined before, we propose that consumer independence should have a negative influence on its activation. Focusing on FoMO's underlying dimensions, we more specifically predict that:

H1. Consumer independence will affect desire for belonging

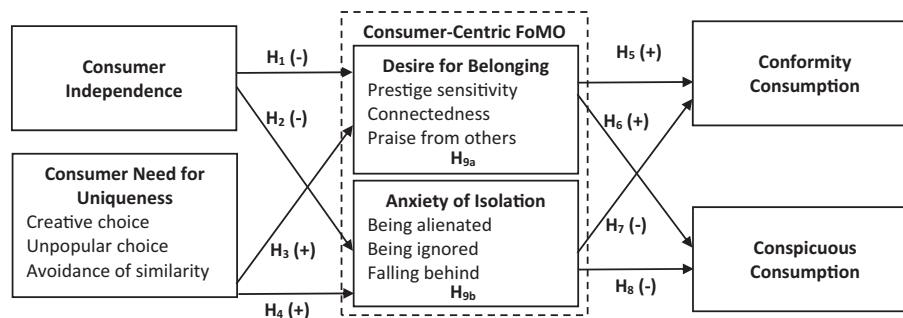


Fig. 1. Conceptual model.

negatively.

H2. Consumer independence will affect anxiety of isolation negatively.

Unlike individuals motivated by independence who actively ignore social influence, those motivated by need for uniqueness (NFU) tend to be under the influence of others' normative behaviors but strive to establish their distinctiveness by acting in contrast to social norms (Nail, 1986; Ohmann & Burgmer, 2016). Customer need for uniqueness (CNFU) is an application of NFU and represents differentiation motivations through one's product and brand choices (Ruvio, 2008; Snyder, 1992). Previous research identifies three dimensions of CNFU as possible behavioral manifestations: creative choice counter-conformity, unpopular choice counter-conformity, and avoidance of similarity (Tian, Bearden, & Hunter, 2001). Accordingly, unlike independent consumers (who adhere to their personal tastes), those high in CNFU are inherently socially motivated and care about expressing their individuality and uniqueness to others (Tian & McKenzie, 2001). CNFU is a reflection of the underlying connectedness needs per the SDT paradigm, represented from a unique social identity perspective (Reis, 1994), where the individual's motivations are shaped under social influence unlike the case for independence.

Furthermore, CNFU has been previously associated with attention to social comparison information, social status concerns, and self-monitoring (Lynn & Harris, 1997). As such, consumers with high CNFU are sensitive to the behaviors and evaluations of others. These motivations naturally call for caring more about what others are doing to feel in control and establish one's differentiation. Hence, we predict that CNFU will have a positive effect on consumer-centric FoMO dimensions:

H3. Consumer need for uniqueness will affect desire for belonging positively.

H4. Consumer need for uniqueness will affect anxiety of isolation positively.

1.3. Consequences of consumer-centric FoMO

As an aversive negative state, an important aspect of FoMO is its potential link to psychological health and well-being (Przybylski et al., 2013). FoMO has been associated with general unhappiness, deficits in mood, and depressed feelings, as it might challenge one's social self-esteem and undermine the sense that one has made good decisions in life (e.g., Morford, 2010; Wortham, 2011). Per the SDT, as explained above, the satisfaction of basic psychological needs and effective self-regulation underlies psychological health. When such needs are not met, individuals are compelled to undertake compensatory actions or regulate their negative state (Dou et al., 2021; Sheldon, Abad, & Hinsch, 2011). Accordingly, consumers with high levels of FoMO would be motivated to cope with or potentially resolve this negative state.

Building on Folkman and Lazarus' (1988) model of stress and coping,

Moore, Dahl, Gorn, and Weinberg (2006) identify that emotion coping strategies can be (i) behavioral, where the emphasis is on avoiding the trigger or repairing the situation with a new trigger or (ii) cognitive appraisal, when avoidance or repair is not possible or less likely, where the focus is on emotion regulation. As our conceptualization of FoMO includes a desire (for belonging) aspect and an anxiety (of isolation) aspect, we build on previous research to propose that the coping responses will be different. We posit that desire for belonging, with its underlying dimensions of prestige sensitivity, connectedness, and praise from others, relates conceptually closer to social comparison and accordingly socially motivated repairing behavior as further explained below. On the other hand, anxiety of isolation, with its dimensions of being alienated, and being ignored, falling behind, conceptually maps closer to feelings of loneliness (Fumagalli, Dolmatzian, & Shrum, 2021), shown to be more associated with inaction (e.g., Brage, Meredith, & Woodward, 1993).

We first focus on repair behavior strategies, proposed to be activated by higher desire for belonging. One such potential route is through conformity consumption, defined as susceptibility to group influence, adherence to group norms, and making compliant consumption choices (Bearden et al., 1989). Those consumers who have a higher desire for belonging (as a dimension of FoMO) display an increased need for social approval (Alt, 2015) and tend to seek validation and acceptance (Griskevicius et al., 2009). They may, thus, change their behavior accordingly toward conforming to others and display consumption patterns approved by their associative groups (Hall-Phillips, Park, Chung, Anaza, & Rathod, 2016).

Another potential route back into the mainstream could be through conspicuous consumption, defined as a tendency to purchase and exhibit expensive goods (Veblen, 1899). Consumers purchase luxury goods not only for their high quality but also to meet their ego-involved and social needs (Efendioglu, 2019). Possession, and more importantly, display of luxury goods, are often used to communicate a person's wealth and level of prestige to others (e.g., Wang & Griskevicius, 2014). Hence, conspicuous consumption can signal information to others, where the individual tries to boost his or her status within a group by choosing the products that are seen as prestigious by them (Clark, Zboja, & Goldsmith, 2007). Accordingly, consumers with a higher desire for belonging (as a dimension of FoMO) may revert to conspicuous consumption to seek recognition from others and to stay connected to them.

Bringing these two discussions together on socially motivated repair behavior, we predict that:

H5. Desire for belonging will affect conformity consumption positively.

H6. Desire for belonging will affect conspicuous consumption positively.

We posit that the consequences for the anxiety of isolation dimension of consumer-centric FoMO could be different in relation to repair versus appraisal intentions (per Folkman & Lazarus, 1988; Moore et al., 2006). Anxiety of isolation was shown to be associated with feelings of

loneliness and depression (Barry & Wong, 2020; Fumagalli et al., 2021), and previous research has demonstrated a close correlation between loneliness and inaction (Brage et al., 1993). This line of work describes loneliness as a debilitating psychological condition, characterized by depressive symptomatology as well as somatic symptoms such as lethargy. Accordingly, we predict that the isolation anxiety triggered as part of FoMO will not affect reconnection attempts positively like the desire for belonging dimension, but instead will lead to inaction in line with its correlation with loneliness and the associated symptoms. As conformity consumption and conspicuous consumption constitute the potential reconnection behaviors in our conceptual model, we more specifically predict that:

H7. Anxiety of isolation will affect conformity consumption negatively.

H8. Anxiety of isolation will affect conspicuous consumption negatively.

Building on a comprehensive consideration of our hypotheses above in relation to the antecedents and consequences of consumer-centric FoMO, we also posit that its underlying dimensions of desire for belonging and anxiety of isolation will mediate the effects of the proposed individual consumer characteristics on socially motivated consumption behavior:

H9a. Desire for belonging will mediate the effects of consumer independence and consumer need for uniqueness on conformity consumption, and conspicuous consumption.

H9b. Anxiety of isolation will mediate the effects of consumer independence and consumer need for uniqueness on conformity consumption and conspicuous consumption.

2. Method

2.1. Participants

The sample for the study comprised of consumers residing in two countries, the United States and Turkey, a developed and a developing country, to increase generalizability and to enable supplementary comparative analyses in line with previously demonstrated cultural differences in FoMO effects (Karimkhan & Chapa, 2021; Munawar et al., 2021). Convenience sampling method was used. We recruited 588 participants from USA via Amazon Mechanical Turk (MTurk). Forty-four respondents were excluded due to incorrect responses on attention-checks. In Turkey, an online questionnaire was conducted via Google Forms with 657 participants. Forty-five surveys were deemed unusable due to invalid responses (e.g., blank, double answers, etc.). The total number of responses used in the analyses was 1156 (544 in USA and 612 in Turkey; median age 26–35, 58% female). See Supplementary Materials for screening criteria and detailed descriptives for the final sample (available at Open Science Framework, see <https://osf.io/7b6hc/>).

2.2. Measures and procedure

A 12-item short-form of the CNFU scale (Tian et al., 2001) was used to measure uniqueness as a multidimensional construct (creative choice, unpopular choice, and avoidance of similarity). We used Clark's (2006) 5-item scale to measure consumer independence. Consumer-centric FoMO, as a domain-specific variable, was measured with a 20-item, two-dimensional scale (desire for belonging and anxiety of isolation; Kang et al., 2019). We measured consumers' conformity behavior with three items (Bearden et al., 1989). Conspicuous consumption was measured with a four-item scale (Segal & Podoshen, 2013). All the measures, with the exception of FoMO (ranging from 1 = "never" to 5 = "always"), were rated using a five-point Likert scale (from 1 = "strongly disagree" to 5 = "strongly agree"). A full list of items is provided in the

Supplementary Materials (<https://osf.io/7b6hc/>), with the Cronbach's Alpha values for the scales.

After indicating consent, the participants completed a self-administered online survey on Qualtrics (USA) or Google Forms (Turkey) to indicate their responses on the aforementioned measures. A brief explanation of the study purpose and a survey link was posted on MTurk (USA) or on several social media platforms (Turkey) to reach the participants.

2.3. Data analysis

A confirmatory factor analysis was conducted to evaluate the measurement model, following assumption tests and examination of bivariate correlations. Structural equation modeling (SEM) was used to examine the hypothesized relationships.

3. Results

Normality was achieved (skewness: 0.22 to 0.42; kurtosis: -1.07 to -0.24) for both first and second-order factors (West, Finch, & Curran, 1995). Bivariate correlations between variables of interest and descriptive statistics are presented in Table 1.

Common method bias and measurement invariance tests were applied to our cross-country data, and all required criteria were met. Accordingly, there was no serious threat to common method variance, and additionally, configural, metric, and scalar invariance was established for the US and Turkish groups. A detailed discussion of these analyses and summary fit indices are presented in the Supplementary Material (<https://osf.io/7b6hc/>).

3.1. Measurement model

We first applied a second-order confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to test whether the dimensions of CNFU, desire for belonging, and anxiety of isolation constitute a higher-order factor. CFA confirmed that the sub-dimensions of the three variables explained their respective latent variables as data fit the higher-order models (fit indices are reported in Supplementary Material, <https://osf.io/7b6hc/>). One item of prestige sensitivity was eliminated from the study due to low factor loading (0.40; Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2010). Factor loadings in all the other sub-dimensions ranged from 0.73 to 0.94 and were significant ($p < .01$). Tests of convergent and discriminant validity for the second-order CFA are reported in the Supplementary Material (<https://osf.io/7b6hc/>).

CFA was performed to verify the factor structure of the main model. One item of conspicuous consumption was heavily loaded to conformity (0.49); thus, it was eliminated. One item of conformity consumption was also eliminated due to low factor loading (<0.70 , Hair et al., 2010), confirmed with the standardized residual as well (>2.58 , Byrne, 2016). CFA with the remaining items showed satisfactory results (reported in Supplementary Material, <https://osf.io/7b6hc/>), with standardized factor loadings higher than the threshold level of 0.70 (Hair et al., 2010), and all critical ratios were significant ($p < .001$), supporting convergent validity (Byrne, 2016). Convergent validity was achieved as composite reliability (CR) and average variance extracted (AVE) values were higher than the thresholds of 0.70 and 0.50, respectively (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988; Table 1). All the AVE values were higher than the squared correlations between constructs (Fornell & Larcker, 1981), except between conformity consumption and conspicuous consumption ($0.61 < 0.65$).

We also applied the heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT) to support the discriminant validity as Voorhees, Brady, Calantone, and Ramirez (2016) point out that HTMT analysis is a more comprehensive and less constrained test for determining discriminant validity in variance-based SEM. We computed the HTMT ratio among all the variables. The results indicated that all the values (between 0.03 and 0.82; Supplementary Material, Table S3, <https://osf.io/7b6hc/>) were lower than the

Table 1
Means, standard deviations and correlations.

	M	SD	CR	AVE	CIND	CNFU	DFB	AIO	COMC	CONC
CIND	2.93	1.22	0.93	0.73	0.85					
CNFU	2.67	0.86	0.86	0.67	-0.04	0.82				
DFB	2.65	1.12	0.97	0.91	-0.59*	0.54*	0.96			
AOI	2.57	1.36	0.99	0.96	-0.68*	0.46*	0.93*	0.98		
COMC	2.93	1.05	0.75	0.61	-0.22*	0.61*	0.64*	0.57*	0.77	
CONC	2.91	1.10	0.88	0.71	-0.28*	0.66*	0.64*	0.55*	0.81*	0.84

M: Mean, SD: Standard deviation, CR: Composite reliability, AVE: Average variance extracted.

CIND: Consumer Independence; CNFU: Consumer Need for Uniqueness; DFB: Desire for Belonging; AOI: Anxiety of Isolation; COMC: Conformity consumption; CONC: Conspicuous consumption.

Values in diagonal are the square root of AVE; off-diagonal values are correlations.

* $p < .01$.

threshold value of 0.85 (Henseler, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2015). Only the HTMT value between desire for belonging and anxiety of isolation was higher than the threshold (0.92), as Fornell and Larcker's (1981) method had also indicated. As such, to address to issue, after constraining the covariance to one between these two variables, we compared unconstrained and unconstrained models. χ^2 difference was significant ($p < .001$); thus, discriminant validity was confirmed (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988).

3.2. Structural model

We tested our hypotheses using SEM with maximum likelihood. Fit indices of the structural model had a good fit (see Supplementary Material, <https://osf.io/7b6hc/>). Results indicated that all the paths were significant, showing support for all the proposed relationships (Fig. 2). We found that consumer independence's effects were negative on both desire for belonging ($H_1; \beta = -0.62, p < .01$) and anxiety of isolation ($H_2; \beta = -0.70, p < .01$), the two dimensions of consumer-centric FoMO, as expected. CNFU affected both desire for belonging ($H_3; \beta = 0.81, p < .01$) and anxiety of isolation ($H_4; \beta = 0.67, p < .01$) positively. Desire for belonging had positive effects on both conformity consumption ($H_5; \beta = 2.23, p < .01$) and conspicuous consumption ($H_6; \beta = 2.32, p < .01$). We also found negative effects of anxiety on conformity consumption ($H_7; \beta = -1.58, p < .01$) and conspicuous consumption ($H_8; \beta = -1.67, p < .01$). Thus, all our hypotheses were supported. We also tested and ruled out alternative models; which are reported in Supplementary Material (<https://osf.io/7b6hc/>).

3.3. Mediation and supplementary analyses

We also conducted mediation analyses to test whether the two dimensions of consumer-centric FoMO mediated the relationships

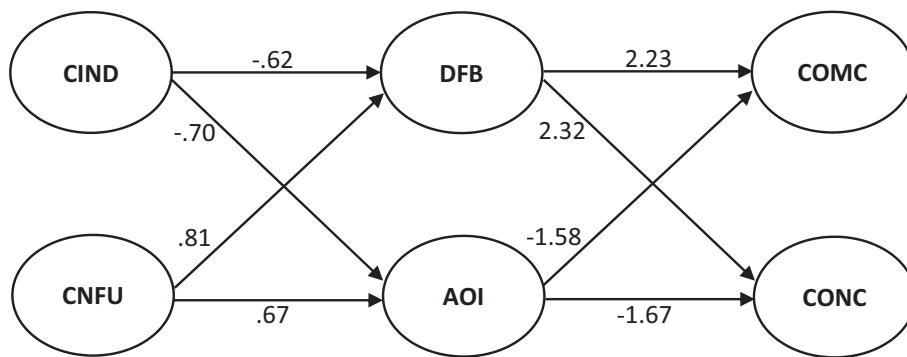


Fig. 2. Structural model

Standard estimates are represented (see Supplementary Material for detailed statistics, <https://osf.io/7b6hc/>)

CIND: Consumer Independence; CNFU: Consumer Need for Uniqueness; DFB: Desire for Belonging; AOI: Anxiety of Isolation; COMC: Conformity consumption; CONC: Conspicuous consumption.

Note: Some of the proposed paths had betas higher than one due to high correlations between desire for belonging, anxiety of isolation, and the dependent variables. Since there is no problem for discriminant validity, multicollinearity (VIF: $4.033 < 5$), and model fit indices, interpretation should be the same as coefficients lower than one (Jöreskog, 1999; Hayes, 2009). Deegan (1978) also states that this is not necessarily a concern in interpretation, and

model modifications may cause worse scenarios because of the risk of bias in model specification error. Even though it is unusual, similar results can be found in the literature (e.g., Kavanagh, Signal, & Taylor, 2013; Yang, Peng, & Meng, 2019).

consumer characteristics with consequential consumption patterns. Accordingly, FoMO can be considered a trigger variable, which shapes conformity consumption and conspicuous consumption under the influence of consumer characteristics.

From the theoretical perspective, this study advances the literature on socially motivated consumption by examining the relationship between specific dimensions of consumer-centric FoMO and distinctive characteristics of consumers. Our results contribute to the existing literature and suggest that CNFU and independence should be taken into consideration when investigating FoMO-mediated consumption. Our findings on the relationships between consumer independence, FoMO, conformity consumption, and conspicuous consumption are in line with previous studies (e.g., Przybylski et al., 2013; Ruvio, 2008; Tian et al., 2001; Wang & Griskevicius, 2014). We extend this line of work by a simultaneous consideration of all the constructs and with a domain-specific conceptualization of FoMO, which more directly captures consumption behavior. We also find support for our counter-intuitive hypothesis that CNFU is positively associated with consumer-centric FoMO. This insight is motivated by the explanation that unlike independent consumers, those high in CNFU are socially motivated and pay close attention to social comparison information (Lynn & Harris, 1997; Tian & McKenzie, 2001).

Our study sample was limited to a set number of respondents from two countries, the USA and Turkey. More samples from different countries should be investigated to further generalize the current findings. From the methodological perspective, a qualitative or an experimental design may enable a deeper understanding of the effect of distinctive consumer characteristics on FoMO-mediated consumer behavior. The current research findings represent an understanding that does not focus on a particular product category or service. Future research may explore these effects for specific types of products or services, such as status-involved products or concerts and events with group attendance for which the social experience may be more salient. Another interesting area for future research on specific types of products could be studying how the effects might change across convenience versus exclusive or hedonic versus utilitarian products. The specific characteristics of the product (e.g., luxurious brand of shoe, Hudders, 2012) or the service (e.g., Saturday night party, Milyavskaya, Saffran, Hope, & Koestner, 2018) can influence the mediating or moderating role of consumer-centric FoMO.

Our overall set of findings suggest that if marketers want to use FoMO strategically, they should also take into account the set of norms and personal differences that can influence consumer response. The results also offer new insights into how marketers can manage their communication campaigns more effectively. Appealing to consumers' NFU and independence tendencies might be more appropriate for some product categories as certain products might offer different levels of distinctiveness to consumers than others. Correspondingly, it might be the case that consumers who are more sensitive to social norms tend to engage more in conformity consumption and conspicuous consumption through FoMO. These implications are further highlighted by the increasing prevalence of FoMO in our post-pandemic society as demonstrated by recent work (e.g., Fumagalli et al., 2021; Hayran & Anik, 2021; Jacobsen, 2021).

CRedit authorship contribution statement

Metin Argan: Conceptualization, Methodology, Supervision, Writing – review & editing. **Mehpare Tokay Argan:** Methodology, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing. **Nilüfer Z. Aydinoglu:** Investigation, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing. **Alper Özer:** Investigation, Methodology, Formal analysis, Writing – review & editing.

Appendix A. Supplementary material

Supplementary material to this article can be found online at <https://osf.io/7b6hc/>.

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