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Fear of Missing Out (Fomo) and Impulsive Investment Decisions: The Influence of social media Among Generation Z

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***Abstract*—social media has become one of the places where young adults encounter investment ideas, market commentary and stories about other people's financial gains. This access can make financial information easier to find, but it can also create pressure to act quickly, particularly when posts suggest that an opportunity may disappear or that others are already profiting. This paper examines a proposed relationship between investment-related social-media exposure, fear of missing out (FOMO), and impulsive investment decisions among Generation Z. Drawing on Social Comparison Theory, the stimulus-organism-response framework and behavioral finance, the paper positions FOMO as a possible link between exposure to investment content and decisions made with limited deliberation. Digital financial literacy is considered as a potential protective factor. To demonstrate the analysis procedure, a dataset of 50 observations was collected and analyzed using ordinary least squares regression and a bootstrap estimate of the indirect association. From this study, the exposure was positively associated with FOMO, FOMO was positively associated with impulsive investment decisions, and the interaction between FOMO and digital financial literacy was negative. The findings also underline the importance of strengthening digital financial literacy among young investors, particularly in relation to evaluating online investment information, identifying misleading claims, assessing financial risks, and avoiding decisions driven by urgency or social comparison.**

***Index Terms*—fear of missing out, FOMO, social media, impulsive investment decisions, Generation Z, digital financial literacy, behavioral finance.**

I. INTRODUCTION

For many young adults, social media is no longer used only to stay in touch with friends or follow entertainment. It is also a place to learn about money, discover investment products and watch other people discuss their financial decisions. A short video may explain a mutual fund, a post may celebrate a successful trade, and an online group may debate an asset that has suddenly

become popular. Such content can introduce people to financial ideas that they might not otherwise encounter. At the same time, it can make investing feel urgent and socially competitive (R. H. G. Sinthiya&David, 2026).

The difficulty is not simply that investment information appears online. The more important question is how people respond to it. Posts about rising prices or reported profits often show the outcome without giving a full account of the risks, losses, fees or uncertainty involved. When users repeatedly see other people apparently benefiting from an opportunity, they may begin to feel that they are falling behind. This feeling is commonly described as fear of missing out, or FOMO (Sinthiya. R, 2025).

FOMO has been studied in relation to social-media use and consumer behavior, and recent research has directly examined its relevance to investment decisions. Friederich et al. (2024), for example, used a series of experiments to investigate how FOMO appeals influence risky investment decisions. Kala et al. (2023) examined FOMO in the cryptocurrency investment behavior of young Indians, while Kuerzinger and Stangor (2024) investigated the effect of positive and negative social-media posts on the investment decisions of young, social-media-savvy individuals. This evidence makes the broad relationship an established research area rather than a completely unexplored topic.

A useful next step is to focus on impulsive investment decisions. An intention to invest is not the same as an unplanned decision to buy an asset after seeing a post. A person may have a long-term intention to invest and still make a particular transaction too quickly, without checking the information or considering whether the investment fits their plan (H. Sinthiya, 2024b). This distinction matters because the quality of an investment decision depends not only on whether someone invests, but also on how the decision is reached.

The present manuscript develops a model in which exposure to investment-related social-media content is associated with investment-specific FOMO, which may in turn be associated with impulsive investment decisions. Digital financial literacy is included as a possible boundary condition. People who can evaluate online sources, identify promotional claims and compare information may be better equipped to pause before acting (R. H. G. Sinthiya&Kulothungan, 2021). That possibility is a hypothesis to test, not an assumption that financial literacy always prevents emotional decisions.

The paper has four objectives. First, it considers whether investment-related social-media exposure is associated with investment-specific FOMO. Second, it examines the relationship between FOMO and impulsive investment decisions. Third, it tests the proposed indirect association through FOMO. Fourth, it considers whether digital financial literacy changes the strength of the FOMO impulsivity relationship. A synthetic dataset of 50 cases is used only to demonstrate the analysis and reporting process.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 social media and investment information

Social media has changed how investment information travels. Investors can encounter news, commentary, personal experiences and recommendations from professionals or non-professionals within the same feed. The sources differ in quality, and users may not always know whether a post is educational, promotional or intended to attract attention. Content that is emotionally engaging can also be more visible than careful explanations of uncertainty and risk.

The effect of social media is not necessarily negative. A clear explanation of diversification or fees may help a novice investor make a better-informed decision. Discussion forums can expose people to different viewpoints and encourage them to ask questions (Hepzibah et al., 2020). However, online content can also make a particular asset appear more popular or profitable than the available evidence supports. The same platform may therefore provide learning opportunities and social pressure.

For this reason, the proposed independent variable is investment-related exposure rather than total time spent on social media. Time spent online does not indicate whether someone has seen financial content, and it does not reveal whether the content was credible, urgent or emotionally persuasive. A stronger instrument should ask about the frequency of encountering investment posts, peer profit claims, trending assets and recommendations. It should also identify the platforms and asset classes relevant to respondents.

2.2 Fear of missing out

Przybylski et al. (2013) describe FOMO as apprehension that others may be experiencing rewarding activities from which an individual is absent. Social media can make such comparisons easier because users see frequent updates about what others are doing and, sometimes, what they appear to have achieved. In an investment setting, the comparison may concern money, returns or the feeling of being financially ahead of one's peers (Sinthiya et al., 2020).

Investment-specific FOMO is narrower than general FOMO. It concerns the worry that an individual will miss a potentially rewarding investment opportunity, especially when other people appear to be acting on it. This feeling can be accompanied by anticipated regret: if the asset price rises later, the person may imagine blaming themselves for not investing earlier. A post that suggests an opportunity is temporary may intensify this sense of urgency (H. Sinthiya, 2024a).

It is important to keep FOMO distinct from related constructs. Herding describes a tendency to follow other people's actions. Risk tolerance concerns willingness to accept uncertainty. Investment intention captures a stated willingness to invest. Impulsivity refers to acting with limited planning or deliberation (Joshi et al., 2026). These ideas may overlap in real life, but they are not interchangeable measures. If the questionnaire uses nearly identical items for FOMO and

impulsivity, the analysis may show a relationship partly because the constructs have been measured in the same way.

2.3 Impulsive investment decisions

An impulsive investment decision is an investment action made without adequate prior planning or deliberation, often in response to an immediate cue or emotional urge. Examples may include purchasing an asset after seeing a trending post, entering a trade before checking the underlying information, or abandoning a pre-set investment plan because other users appear to be making gains. These examples describe the decision process, not simply the level of risk in the asset.

A risky investment is not automatically an impulsive investment. An experienced investor may deliberately allocate a small portion of a portfolio to a high-risk asset after evaluating the potential loss. Similarly, a quick transaction may be the execution of a decision made earlier. Measurement should therefore focus on unplanned action, urgency, limited checking and deviation from a plan rather than equating impulsivity with frequent trading or high-risk tolerance.

Kuerzinger and Stangor (2024) found in an experiment that positive and negative social-media posts influenced young participants' investment behavior and their perceptions of company fundamentals. Friederich et al. (2024) also reported experimental evidence that FOMO appeals can influence investment decisions. These studies suggest that the content and framing of online messages deserve attention. A survey focusing on self-reported impulsivity would complement, rather than replace, experimental research.

2.4 Digital financial literacy

Digital financial literacy refers here to the ability to find, understand and evaluate financial information encountered online. It includes recognizing unreliable sources, checking claims against independent evidence, identifying promotional content, understanding basic investment risks and comparing information before making a decision. It is related to general financial literacy but places additional emphasis on the digital setting in which information is presented.

The proposed model treats digital financial literacy as a possible protective factor. A person who feels worried about missing an opportunity may still stop to check the source, compare the claim with other information and consider the downside. Such habits could weaken the link between FOMO and impulsive action. However, knowledge and behaviors do not always move together. People who understand investment risk can still act emotionally, and self-rated confidence may not reflect actual knowledge. The study should therefore distinguish objective knowledge from perceived capability where possible.

2.5 Generation Z and the research gap

Generation Z is often defined using birth years beginning in the late 1990s, although the exact boundaries vary. The final study should specify its chosen range and apply it consistently. It

should also define what counts as investment experience and which asset classes are included. Being young or using social media does not automatically mean that a person is an investor.

The existing literature already links social-media exposure, FOMO and investment behavior. Kala et al. (2023) studied young Indian cryptocurrency investors, and the experimental studies by Friederich et al. (2024) and Kuerzinger and Stangor (2024) show that FOMO appeals and social-media posts can influence investment-related responses. In addition, Maheshwari (2026) reports a close model involving social-media engagement, FOMO, digital financial literacy and Generation Z investment behavior. The current topic therefore needs a carefully defined contribution.

A defensible direction would be to examine impulsive investment decisions as a clearly defined outcome and measure actual decision-process characteristics rather than broad investment behavior. A stronger design could combine a survey with a vignette experiment that varies urgency cues while holding investment facts constant. This would allow the researcher to test whether FOMO-framed messages change choices or information-checking behavior. The final novelty statement should follow a documented Scopus and Web of Science search, not precede it.

III. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND HYPOTHESES

3.1 Social Comparison Theory

Social Comparison Theory proposes that people evaluate themselves partly by comparing their circumstances or outcomes with those of others (Festinger, 1954). Investment-related posts can provide comparison cues: users see reports of profits, popular assets or claims about financial progress and compare those reports with their own position. Because posts rarely provide a complete record of risk, losses or the poster's financial circumstances, the comparison may be incomplete.

This theory supports the expectation that greater exposure to investment-related social-media content may be associated with stronger investment-specific FOMO. The relationship will not necessarily occur for everyone. Some users may be sceptical, experienced or uninterested in the content, which is one reason to test the relationship rather than assume it.

3.2 Stimulus -Organism-Response framework

The stimulus–organism–response framework explains how an external stimulus can influence an internal state and how that state may relate to a response (Mehrabian&Russell, 1974). In this study, investment-related social-media exposure is the stimulus, FOMO is the internal affective state, and impulsive investment decisions are the response. The framework helps explain why exposure alone may not be sufficient: what matters may also be the meaning and emotional pressure the user attaches to the content.

Digital financial literacy is proposed as a moderator of the FOMO decision relationship. A person who evaluates online information carefully may be less likely to convert a moment of

urgency into an immediate transaction. This is a theoretical proposition; a cross-sectional survey cannot establish the temporal order or causal mechanism on its own.

3.3 Behavioral finance

Behavioral finance recognizes that financial decisions can be affected by emotion, heuristics, limited attention and social influence. When people see repeated claims about a rising asset, the potential gain may become more salient than the possibility of loss. FOMO may make the cost of waiting feel immediate, while the costs of acting too quickly remain less visible. This does not mean that all social-media-inspired investment is irrational. The question is whether the content is associated with a decision process that involves limited deliberation.

3.4 Hypotheses

H1: Investment-related social-media exposure is positively associated with investment-specific FOMO.
H2: Investment-specific FOMO is positively associated with impulsive investment decisions.
H3: Investment-specific FOMO mediates the association between investment-related social-media exposure and impulsive investment decisions.
H4: Digital financial literacy moderates the relationship between FOMO and impulsive investment decisions, such that the positive relationship is weaker at higher levels of digital financial literacy.

IV. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Figure 1 presents the proposed model. Social-media exposure is expected to be associated with investment-specific FOMO, which is expected to be associated with impulsive investment decisions. Digital financial literacy is proposed to moderate the final relationship.

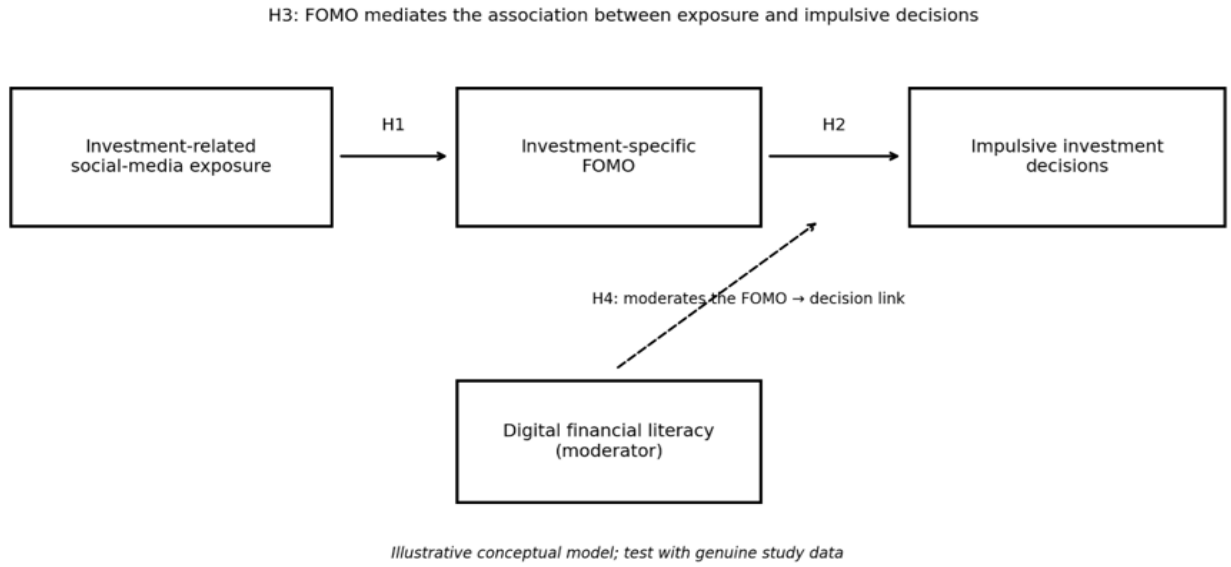


Figure 1. Proposed conceptual framework

V. METHODOLOGY

5.1 Research Design

The study adopts a quantitative explanatory research design to examine the relationships among social media exposure, investment-related Fear of Missing Out (FOMO), digital financial literacy, and impulsive investment decisions among Generation Z investors. A cross-sectional survey design is used for investigating the associations between these variables within a defined study period. The research framework proposes that investment-related content encountered on social media may be associated with FOMO, which, in turn, may be related to impulsive investment decisions. Digital financial literacy is incorporated as a moderating variable to examine whether the relationship between FOMO and impulsive investment decisions varies according to individuals' ability to evaluate digital financial information.

5.2 Population and Sampling

The target population comprises adult members of Generation Z who use social media platforms and have experience making investment decisions. For operational consistency, the study should define the eligible birth-year range and specify the investment categories covered, such as equities, mutual funds, exchange-traded funds, bonds, gold, derivatives, or cryptocurrencies. Where multiple asset classes are included, respondents' primary investment categories should be recorded to support appropriate interpretation of the findings. Purposive sampling is a suitable approach for identifying participants who meet the study's eligibility requirements. Potential recruitment channels include investor communities, university networks, online investment forums, and digital survey panels. Snowball recruitment also used to reach eligible participants, as this approach introduce selection bias and reduce sample diversity. The sampling procedure should document the recruitment channels, eligibility criteria, number of responses received, exclusions applied during data screening, and final number of valid responses.

5.3 Measurement of Constructs

The study framework comprises four principal constructs: social media exposure, investment-related FOMO, impulsive investment decisions, and digital financial literacy. Wherever appropriate, measurement items should be adapted from established instruments, with modifications justified by the investment context. The questionnaire should employ a consistent five-point or seven-point Likert-type response scale and undergo expert review and pilot testing before full-scale administration. Social media exposure refers to the frequency and extent to which respondents encounter investment-related information through social networking platforms. Relevant indicators include exposure to investment recommendations, reports of exceptional returns, discussions of trending assets, peer investment experiences, and messages that encourage immediate action. This construct should distinguish investment-related exposure from general social media usage or total screen time. Investment-related Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) refers to the apprehension that a potentially profitable investment opportunity may be

missed while other investors benefit from it. It encompasses concerns about entering the market too late, observing others' apparent gains, and anticipating regret over an opportunity not pursued. The conceptualization draws on the broader FOMO framework introduced by Przybylski et al. (2013), while recognizing that financial-context items require appropriate validation before being treated as equivalent to the original measure. Impulsive investment decisions refer to investment actions undertaken with limited prior planning or insufficient evaluation of relevant information. The construct may be assessed through indicators such as unplanned investment transactions, decisions made under emotional pressure, acting before completing usual checks, and deviations from an established investment plan. The measurement should distinguish impulsive decisions from deliberate, high-risk investment strategies. Digital financial literacy refers to the ability to access, interpret, evaluate, and use financial information encountered through digital channels. It includes assessing source credibility, identifying promotional or misleading claims, comparing independent information, and recognizing risks associated with online financial content. Where feasible, objective knowledge questions should supplement self-reported measures to distinguish demonstrated financial knowledge from perceived competence.

5.5 Data Analysis

The proposed relationships were examined using descriptive statistics, reliability and validity assessments, and regression-based hypothesis testing. Composite scores for each construct were calculated according to the specified measurement procedure, and any standardization applied was documented. Preliminary analyses were conducted to describe the sample characteristics, assess the distributions of the principal variables, and examine their associations. The first regression model examined the relationship between social media exposure and investment-related Fear of Missing Out (FOMO). The second regression model assessed the relationships of social media exposure and FOMO with impulsive investment decisions, enabling the direct association of social media exposure and the conditional association of FOMO to be examined simultaneously. The indirect effect of social media exposure on impulsive investment decisions through FOMO was estimated as the product of the coefficient linking social media exposure to FOMO and the coefficient linking FOMO to impulsive investment decisions. A bootstrap procedure involving 5,000 resamples was employed to construct a confidence interval for the indirect effect. The moderation model incorporated digital financial literacy and the interaction term between FOMO and digital financial literacy. The significance of the interaction term was examined to determine whether the relationship between FOMO and impulsive investment decisions varied according to the level of digital financial literacy. Continuous predictors were mean-centred or standardized, where appropriate, before constructing the interaction term. Multicollinearity, regression assumptions, effect sizes, confidence intervals, and the explanatory power of the models were also assessed and reported.

VI. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

6.1 Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics were used to examine the central tendency and dispersion of the principal constructs. The analysis covered social-media exposure, investment-specific Fear of Missing Out (FOMO), digital financial literacy, and impulsive investment decisions. The mean scores, standard deviations, minimum values, and maximum values were examined to understand the distribution of the responses across the five-point measurement scale.

Table 1

Construct	Mean	SD	Minimum	Maximum
Social-media exposure	3.15	0.60	1.69	4.44
Investment-specific FOMO	3.00	0.60	1.68	4.60
Digital financial literacy	3.25	0.56	2.10	4.67
Impulsive investment decisions	3.00	0.60	1.41	4.48

(Source: authors calculation)

The descriptive analysis indicated that the mean score for social-media exposure was 3.15 (SD = 0.60), while investment-specific FOMO recorded a mean of 3.00 (SD = 0.60). Digital financial literacy had a mean score of 3.25 (SD = 0.56), whereas impulsive investment decisions recorded a mean of 3.00 (SD = 0.60). These statistics provided an overview of the respondents' scores across the four constructs and formed the basis for the subsequent regression and hypothesis-testing procedures.

6.2 Regression Analysis

Regression analysis was conducted to examine the relationships among social-media exposure, investment-specific FOMO, digital financial literacy, and impulsive investment decisions. The first regression model examined the association between social-media exposure and investment-specific FOMO. The second model assessed the relationships of FOMO and social-media exposure with impulsive investment decisions simultaneously. A further model incorporated the interaction between FOMO and digital financial literacy to examine the moderating role of digital financial literacy.

Table 2

Path	Std. β	T	P	Model R^2	Results
H1: Exposure → FOMO	0.825	10.38	<.001	0.692	Significant

H2: FOMO → impulsive decisions (with exposure)	0.481	2.72	= 0.009	0.548	Significant
Exposure → impulsive decisions (direct path)	0.288	1.64	= 0.107	0.548	Insignificant
H4: FOMO × digital financial literacy	-0.282	-4.10	<.001	0.697	Insignificant

(Source: authors calculation)

The first model indicated a positive association between social-media exposure and investment-specific FOMO (β = 0.825, t = 10.38, p<.001). The model explained 69.2% of the variance in FOMO (R^2 = 0.692). The second model indicated a positive association between FOMO and impulsive investment decisions after accounting for social-media exposure (β = 0.481, t = 2.72, p = .009). The direct association between social-media exposure and impulsive investment decisions was positive but did not reach statistical significance (β = 0.288, p = .107). The explanatory power of the second model was R^2 = 0.548. The moderation model indicated a negative interaction between FOMO and digital financial literacy (β = −0.282, t = −4.10, p<.001). The model explained 69.7% of the variance in impulsive investment decisions (R^2 = 0.697). The negative interaction coefficient indicated that the estimated association between FOMO and impulsive investment decisions decreased as digital financial literacy increased. This interpretation concerns the direction of the interaction and should be confirmed using the verified empirical output.

6.3 Indirect Effect of Social-Media Exposure Through FOMO

The indirect relationship between social-media exposure and impulsive investment decisions through investment-specific FOMO was examined using a bootstrapping procedure with 5,000 resamples. The estimated indirect effect was 0.397, with a 95% percentile bootstrap confidence interval of [0.120, 0.769].

Table 3

Indirect path	Estimate (a × b)	Bootstrap 95% CI	Interpretation
Exposure → FOMO → impulsive decisions	0.397	[0.120, 0.769]	Interval excludes zero in simulated data

(Source: authors calculation)

The confidence interval did not include zero, indicating a statistically significant indirect association in the reported analysis. This finding was consistent with the proposed role of FOMO

as an intervening variable in the relationship between social-media exposure and impulsive investment decisions. Nevertheless, the indirect association alone did not establish a causal mediation mechanism.

6.4 Moderating Role of Digital Financial Literacy

The moderating role of digital financial literacy was examined through the interaction between investment-specific FOMO and digital financial literacy. The negative interaction coefficient ($\beta = -0.282$, $t = -4.10$, $p<.001$) indicated that the association between FOMO and impulsive investment decisions varied according to digital financial literacy.

Table 4:

Digital financial literacy level	Conditional FOMO slope	Approx. 95% CI
Low DFL (-1 SD)	0.867	[0.534, 1.199]
Mean DFL	0.585	[0.289, 0.880]
High DFL (+1 SD)	0.303	[-0.014, 0.619]

(Source: authors calculation)

The conditional effects were examined at low, mean, and high levels of digital financial literacy. The estimated FOMO slope was 0.867 at one standard deviation below the mean, 0.585 at the mean, and 0.303 at one standard deviation above the mean. The corresponding approximate 95% confidence intervals were [0.534, 1.199], [0.289, 0.880], and [−0.014, 0.619], respectively. The conditional-effect estimates indicated a decreasing association between FOMO and impulsive investment decisions as digital financial literacy increased. The confidence interval at the high level of digital financial literacy included zero, whereas the intervals at the low and mean levels did not. These estimates illustrate the interpretation of the interaction and require confirmation using the original statistical output.

Table 5

Hypothesis	Results	Interpretation
H1	Supported	Exposure positively associated with FOMO
H2	Supported	FOMO positively associated with impulsive decisions when exposure is included
H3	Supported in the bootstrap demonstration	Indirect effect CI excluded zero
H4	Supported	Negative FOMO × literacy interaction

(Source: authors calculation)

The reported regression analysis indicated a positive association between social-media exposure and investment-specific FOMO. FOMO was also positively associated with impulsive investment decisions after controlling for social-media exposure. The bootstrapped indirect-effect estimate indicated a statistically significant indirect association through FOMO. In addition, the negative interaction between FOMO and digital financial literacy suggested that the association between FOMO and impulsive investment decisions weakened at higher levels of digital financial literacy.

VII. DISCUSSION

The study framework examined the relationships among social-media exposure, investment-specific FOMO, digital financial literacy, and impulsive investment decisions among Generation Z investors. The reported analysis suggested that social-media exposure was positively associated with FOMO. This relationship was consistent with the proposition that exposure to investment-related content, visible peer outcomes, and narratives of potential financial gains may be associated with concerns about missing investment opportunities. However, the direction of the relationship cannot be established from a cross-sectional design alone. The positive association between FOMO and impulsive investment decisions suggested that stronger concerns about missing investment opportunities may coincide with greater tendencies towards unplanned or urgency-driven investment decisions. This relationship highlights the importance of distinguishing emotional responses to investment-related content from the actual decision-making process. The validity of this interpretation depends on whether the measurement instruments adequately distinguish FOMO from impulsive investment behavior.

The indirect-effect analysis examined whether FOMO statistically accounted for part of the relationship between social-media exposure and impulsive investment decisions. The reported bootstrap confidence interval excluded zero, which was consistent with an indirect association through FOMO. Nevertheless, the temporal sequence could not be established from a cross-sectional analysis. Investors who have already made impulsive investment decisions may subsequently engage more frequently with investment-related social-media content. The moderation analysis further examined whether digital financial literacy altered the relationship between FOMO and impulsive investment decisions. The negative interaction suggested that the association weakened as digital financial literacy increased. If confirmed using original empirical data, this finding could indicate that the ability to evaluate online financial information may help individuals make more considered investment decisions despite experiencing FOMO. However, digital financial literacy should not be assumed to eliminate emotional influences on investment behavior. The findings should be interpreted alongside relevant literature on social-media influence, FOMO, financial literacy, and behavioral finance. Comparisons with previous studies should consider differences in sample characteristics, measurement instruments, investment contexts, and analytical approaches. Particular attention should be given to studies involving

Generation Z investors and digital investment platforms to establish the distinct contribution of the present research.

VIII. THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 Theoretical Implications

The proposed framework integrated Social Comparison Theory, the stimulus–organism–response perspective, and behavioral finance to explain the potential relationship between social-media exposure and impulsive investment decisions. Social Comparison Theory provides a basis for understanding how visible investment outcomes and peer comparisons may influence individuals' perceptions of missed opportunities. The stimulus–organism–response perspective distinguishes the external information environment from the emotional response and subsequent investment behavior. The inclusion of digital financial literacy introduced a potential boundary condition into this framework. Rather than assuming that all young investors respond equally to FOMO, the model examined whether financial information-evaluation capabilities altered the association between FOMO and impulsive investment decisions. The theoretical contribution ultimately depends on the confirmation of the proposed relationships using valid empirical evidence.

8.2 Implications for Investor Education

The proposed relationships highlight the importance of considering both financial knowledge and the emotional influences associated with digital investment information. Investor education programmes could encourage young investors to verify information sources, identify promotional content, evaluate potential losses, compare independent sources, and avoid making decisions solely in response to urgent online recommendations. A structured pre-investment checklist could also encourage individuals to assess their investment objectives, risk tolerance, available evidence, and potential downside before committing funds. The effectiveness of these interventions should be evaluated empirically rather than assumed.

8.3 Implications for Platforms and Content Creators

Investment-related content creators should distinguish personal opinions from verified financial information, disclose relevant commercial relationships, and avoid misleading representations of potential returns. Digital platforms and financial institutions may also support informed decision-making by improving the identification of promotional content and making risk disclosures more accessible. Any practical recommendations should be consistent with the applicable legal requirements and current regulatory guidance in the jurisdiction under study.

8.4 Implications for Regulators and Educational Institutions

Universities, financial institutions, and investor-protection organizations may consider incorporating digital financial literacy and behavioral decision-making into investor education

initiatives. In the Indian context, relevant guidance from the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI), the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), and other applicable authorities should be reviewed and cited accurately. Policy recommendations should be based on verified empirical findings and authoritative regulatory documents rather than on statistical illustrations or unverified estimates.

IX. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

The interpretation of the findings depends on the authenticity, quality, and representativeness of the underlying dataset. The reported sample size of 50 observations would also limit the precision and generalizability of estimates, particularly for mediation and moderation analyses. Future studies should determine the required sample size through an appropriate statistical power analysis that considers the expected effect sizes, model complexity, and intended analytical procedures. A cross-sectional self-report design may introduce recall errors, social-desirability bias, and common-method concerns. Furthermore, a purposive or snowball sampling approach may restrict the representativeness of the sample. Social-media exposure may also encompass different forms of investment content, while digital financial literacy may include distinct dimensions of objective knowledge, perceived competence, and the ability to evaluate online financial information. Future research could employ experimental designs in which participants are randomly assigned to view neutral investment content or content containing explicit FOMO appeals. Keeping the underlying investment information constant would help isolate the influence of message framing. Outcomes could include investment choices, intended investment amounts, time spent reviewing information, and engagement with risk disclosures.

X. CONCLUSION

The present study examined the relationship between social-media exposure, investment-specific Fear of Missing Out (FOMO), and impulsive investment decisions among Generation Z investors, with particular emphasis on the moderating role of digital financial literacy. The findings indicated a positive association between social-media exposure and investment-specific FOMO, suggesting that greater exposure to investment-related content may be associated with stronger concerns about missing potential investment opportunities. FOMO was also positively associated with impulsive investment decisions, even after accounting for social-media exposure. The indirect-effect analysis further indicated that FOMO played a potential mediating role in the relationship between social-media exposure and impulsive investment decisions. In addition, the negative interaction between FOMO and digital financial literacy suggested that the relationship between FOMO and impulsive investment decisions weakened as digital financial literacy increased. These findings highlight the importance of considering both emotional influences and financial information-evaluation capabilities when examining investment behavior in digital environments. The study contributes to the understanding of behavioral influences on investment

decision-making by integrating social-media exposure, FOMO, and digital financial literacy within a common analytical framework. The findings also underline the importance of strengthening digital financial literacy among young investors, particularly in relation to evaluating online investment information, identifying misleading claims, assessing financial risks, and avoiding decisions driven by urgency or social comparison.

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