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THE FOMO FACTOR: ASSESSING THE DECLINE OF COMPUTER SHOP FACILITIES AMIDST THE RISE OF ACCESSIBLE PERSONAL GADGETS AMONG MILLENNIALS AND GENERATION Z AT SANTA ROSA, NUEVA ECIJA

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ABSTRACT

This study analyzed the trends of digital consumption in Santa Rosa while focusing on the importance of computer shops in the locality regardless of the growing prevalence of mobile gadgets. This study sought to analyze how the principles of scarcity and digital choice architecture affect FOMO among Millennials and Generation Z. The descriptive-correlational method of research was used, and survey questionnaires were administered to 82 respondents composed of three (3) shop owners and seventy-nine (79) customers. Tests such as t-test, Pearson correlation (r), and ANOVA were used in analyzing the gathered data. The majority of the respondents were male respondents who belong to the Millennials and Generation Z. It was revealed from statistical analysis that there was no significant relationship ($p > .05$) between the socioeconomic profiles of the respondents and their level of FOMO, thus proving that there was no effect of the demographic factors of the study population to the said phenomenon. Moreover, computer shops remain relevant as "third places" because they provide good connectivity, technical support, and opportunities for socialization. Also, digital fatigue was associated with prolonged screen time and online activity.

KEYWORDS: Fear of Missing Out(FOMO); Choice Architecture; Scarcity Principle; Computer Shop; Digital Consumption; Millennials; Generation Z

1. INTRODUCTION

Social media has changed from a simple channel of communication to a battleground for competition because of the fast growth of the digital economy. Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) has progressed from being a sociological theory to a common marketing tool that employs psychological techniques to persuade consumers to buy products in today's digital age (Asih et al., 2025)[1]. The advent of social media has led marketers to adapt their strategies by moving away from the conventional marketing approach of brand awareness to scarcity tactics and limited-time offers (LTOs) (Argan et al., 2022) [2]. These techniques are particularly relevant regarding the Millennial and Generation Z populations, who utilize digital to help control their identities and establish social credibility (Moore et al., 2022) [3]. Among "digital natives," involvement in social media activities and "snack content" viewing are often driven by personal goals and social validation needs (Nam & Jung, 2021) [4].

The use of technology in this scenario has a lot to do with the fast pace at which the trading environment in the Philippines is developing, with particular emphasis on the growth of mobile-based trading in sub-urban areas such as Santa Rosa, Nueva Ecija (Ragaza et al., 2025) [5]. The consumers in these markets undergo targeted marketing tactics based on scarcity, creating a unique form of anxiety among them in being labeled as "smart consumers." The effect of the pressure is often intensified through the convergence of socio-psychological satisfaction and consumer values due to the increased use of virtual markets such as TikTok Shop (Osei-Frimpong et al., 2022) [6]. Balancing the benefits of reliable connections with the pressure of always being online, computer shop become the reliable spot for virtual interactions by individuals whose internet connections are often inconsistent (Ronchi et al., 2026) [7]. Customers are placed in a continuous loop of stress caused by the endless warnings about "stocks running low" or "last day sales" that come through their mobile phones.

As individuals are constantly evaluating themselves against the perfectly curated trends on social media platforms, studies have found that this engagement with social media content may contribute to lower satisfaction with life and physical appearance (Stieger et al., 2022) [8]. "Digital hoarding," where the constant fear of losing out on information leads to an obsessive consumption of digital data, worsens this feeling of anxiousness (Wu et al., 2024) [9]. Even with its universal issue, there is deficient literature locally concerning the impacts of scarcity stimuli on psychological motivation among Filipinos. This paper aims to fill this void by exploring the connection between socio-economic profiles and dimensions of FOMO, recognizing that digital consumption often stems from socio-normative weaknesses

(Kanungo et al., 2022) [10]. Prior studies often focus on urban-wide impacts or the broader digital divide (He et al., 2022) [11] while neglecting the specific challenge confronting consumers in communities such as Santa Rosa, which entails navigating their digital existence amidst local socio-economic conditions (Syahputra et al., 2023) [12]. The research looks at the effects that the constant need for connectivity has on young people's needs satisfaction and mental health, analyzing the issue through a descriptive-correlational perspective (Nesbit & Lole, 2026) [13]. At the end of the day, it is essential to understand these kinds of stresses, considering the fact that social anxiety and irrational procrastination are largely impacted by the intensity of one's fear of missing out (FOMO) (Wu et al., 2025; Li & Ye, 2022) [14]. The aim of the research is to provide a local analysis of the impact of such stressors on young people in Santa Rosa. Through establishing the relationship between the socioeconomic characteristics and FOMO of the local digital customers, the research successfully achieved its objective.

1.1. The Scarcity Principle and Choice Architecture

Under the Scarcity Principle in psychology, the value of something increases when there is a reduction in its availability. Choice architecture uses this principle in today's market environment through nudging techniques that create a sense of urgency but do not restrict the final freedom of choice for the consumer. Such nudges as the Limited Time Offer utilize cognitive biases for making a person act immediately; additionally, it gets further strengthened by the Fear of Missing Out (FOMO), which a person naturally possesses. The effectiveness of such motivating factors increases greatly due to their compliance with the psychological requirements of the individual as well as the identity, since being always on through modern technologies becomes more important than anything else (Koban, 2025) [15].

The reliability and structure of the digital environment will also influence the effectiveness of such stimuli. Consumers who feel the digital platform is reliable and user-friendly are more likely to respond to the stimuli of scarcity, giving credibility to urgency (Saoula et al., 2023) [16]. These indicators create a sense of "socio-normative vulnerability" for teens in regional settings, whereby the need for social acceptance and digital exclusion force adolescents to make impulsive purchases (Kanungo et al., 2022) [17]. The strategic placement of the "snack content" and advertisements ensures that the path to purchasing is affected by fear of lagging despite the decision made by the individual (Nam & Jung, 2021) [18].

1.2. Dimensions of Scarcity and Choice Architecture

Depending on the influence that the principle of scarcity has on the decision-making process of consumers, there are different classifications based on its implementation in digital choice

architecture. There are two kinds of scarcity distinguished by scientists, namely normative scarcity that draws attention to the social impact of not being part of a certain trend and emotional scarcity, which creates the feeling of “thrill of the sale” or the thrill of getting an item limited in number (Bok, Shum, & Lee, 2025) [19]. They function as pillars for information within the digital context and encourage rapid decisions rather than sensible financial planning.

Moreover, the design of the digital space is often associated with the effectiveness of scarcity triggers. The development of a system with an individual "live atmosphere" that aims at encouraging spontaneous buying behavior exploits the emotional responses and heuristic biases of the consumers (Yang, Cao, et al., 2022) [20]. Nevertheless, most of the existing literature on choice architecture is limited to the specific context and often overlooks the role played by socio-economic differences and demographics between regions. Analyzing the effects of such scarcity-based designs on individuals in suburban areas remains essential since intergenerational strife and technological innovations influence the behavior of consumers in the digital space (Moore, Rowe, et al., 2022) [21].

1.3. Rationale of the Study

The need to comprehend the various psychological aspects that may affect consumer behavior has become increasingly necessary in this age, where digital marketing has become more and more sophisticated. In fact, scarcity as an approach has gained prominence as an aspect of choice architecture in the field of digital marketing in a bid to influence the choices made by younger consumers amid the swift evolution of local economies in the Philippines into one that revolves around mobility. While such marketing tactics using scarcity are viewed as being quite effective in driving sales in the short term, there is hardly any understanding of their effects on the well-being of Millennials and Gen Z individuals in suburban communities. To determine if such stresses affect everyone equally, regardless of their socioeconomic backgrounds, it will be necessary to assess the potential influence of their demographic factors and patterns of online activity.

The objectives of this study are to examine the influence of scarcity triggers on the digital behavior of youth from Santa Rosa, Nueva Ecija, and to analyze the association between the socioeconomic profiles and the FOMO levels. This research aims to address the following questions:

1. What are the demographic and socio-economic particulars of respondents in regards to age, gender, profession and purchasing behavior online?

2. How much FOMO does the Generation Z and Millennial linked to their speed of connectivity, social media
3. Is there a significant relationship between the respondents' socio-economic profile and their susceptibility to FOMO?
4. How do scarcity stimuli within digital choice architecture influence the psychological and behavioral tendencies of consumers in a localized provincial setting?

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

2.1. Eligibility Criteria

The selected literature was from studies that have examined the effects of choice architecture and the concept of scarcity on consumer decision making, digital consumption, or FOMO among youth populations. Other criteria for selecting the literature include: (a) studies published from January 2021 through May 2026; (b) written in English; (c) empirical studies, i.e., mixed-method, quantitative, or qualitative studies; and (d) availability of full text. Exclusion criteria include: (a) lack of full text; (b) studies performed outside the time frame; (c) non-empirical sources like editorials, letters, opinions, etc.; and (d) studies not specifically addressing consumer behaviors via digital or social media platforms.

2.2. Information Sources and Search Strategy

The two databases that have been selected for conducting the literature review systematically are Scopus and Taylor & Francis Online. The following keywords and Boolean operators have been applied: “Fear of Missing Out and social media,” “scarcity principle and consumer behavior,” “choice architecture and digital consumption,” and “Millennials and Gen Z.” The researchers performed source filtering and limiting using sources that are relevant and more recent. For the year ranges of 2021 and 2026, the researchers could publish just those entries under Social Sciences, Psychology, Business, Management, and Decision Sciences. With respect to the document types, only journals and conference papers would be included while editorials, notes and book reviews were excluded from considerations.

2.3. Data Collection and Statistical Analysis Process

The data collected from the respondents were systematically categorized and coded for purpose of analysis. In order to ensure that the participants of the survey were currently frequenting the computer shop and were residents of the selected barangays, the responses were filtered and analyzed based on predetermined qualifications. The said qualifications were developed before the conduct of the study and consistently utilized throughout the data cleansing process so that any form of selection bias can be minimized. The researchers were

able to obtain valuable information regarding the socio-economic characteristics, online expenditure, degree of FOMO, and perception of the usefulness of the computer shop among the respondents. Data collected were analyzed using various statistical tests namely Pearson's r, t-test and ANOVA.

3. RESULTS

3.1. Study Characteristics

This chapter presents the results derived from the collective data and includes a detailed discussion of the findings.

Table 1. Respondents in terms of Age.

Age	Frequency	Percentage
18-25 Years Old	44	55.70%
26-33	13	16.46%
34-41	16	20.25%
42-49	6	7.59%
Above 49	0	0%
Total:	**79**	**100%**

As seen from Table 1, the largest share of the respondents is represented by those who belong to the category of young adults. Thus, the first group comprises 44 people or 55.70% of the total number of participants, including millennials aged from 18 to 25 years old. The second biggest group comprises 16 people or 20.25%, including those whose age lies between 34 and 41. Overall, 76% of all respondents' population belongs to the mentioned above age brackets. However, when it comes to the participation level of other age groups, one can note that it considerably decreases. Thus, only 13 individuals or 16.46% belong to the age category from 26 to 33, while 6 participants or 7.59% are aged from 42 to 49. Finally, the oldest age group (above 49) has not participated in the research; thus, its percentage of participation is 0%.

These results mean that the research sample included a great number of young adults. Following the findings provided by Elhai et al. (2021) [22], younger millennials aged from 18 to 25 rely more heavily on smartphones and SNSs, leading to higher FOMO and negative affectivity. Hence, any interventions developed in accordance with the study's purposes should focus on this aspect.

Table 2. Respondents in terms of Gender.

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Female	20	25.32%
Male	59	74.68%
Total:	**79**	**100%**

The demographic data in Table 2 indicate that the responder group is mainly made up of men. Out of 79 respondents, 20 were female while men are 59. This marked male-dominated in the sample aligns with recent data showing a higher percentage of men are engaged in online gaming and other digital environments. There are important places behind which we can study Fear of Missing Out on these platforms (Rozgonjuk et al., 2021) [23] . Given this gender split, it feels like any solution which looks to solve Fear of Missing Out needs the opinions and online experiences of male millennials and gen z to be front-and-centre; this group makes up 78.5% of the sample.

Table 3. Respondents in terms of Current Occupation.

Occupation	Frequency	Percentage
Student	25	31.65%
Freelancer	19	24.05%
Corporate Professional	3	3.80%
Unemployed	3	3.80%
Self-employed	29	36.71%
Total:	**79**	**100%**

Data in table 3 reveals that the most of the respondents are self-employed, comprising 29 individuals of the sample. This group is the largest among the demographics. Students are the second largest group at 31.65% (25 responses), followed by freelancers at 24.05% (19 responses). In comparison, both corporate professionals and unemployed individuals represent the smallest categories, each at 3.80% (3 responses). The high number of self-employed and student millennials aligns with research by Aziz, M.T. et al. (2025) [24]. These innovations are manifest in how access and exposure variables surround flexible work and school schedules, ultimately increasing digital connectivity but also raising an additional risk of online social comparison. The factors are more likely to result into FOMO. The null distribution of occupations indicates that to significantly reduce FOMO, any intervention must take place within specific types of time constraints and online activities for students and self-employed workers.

Table 4. Respondents in terms of Monthly Mobile Data Spending.

Amount	Frequency	Percentage
₱ 100-200	15	18.99%
₱ 200-300	7	8.86%
₱ 300-400	24	30.38%
Above ₱ 400	33	41.77%
Total:	**79**	**100%**

Table 4 reveals that most respondents use more than ₱400 per month for mobile internet data. With the percentage value of 41.77%, the spending above ₱400 makes up the largest among all the 33 respondents. The next category has twenty-four members who represent 30.30%. Fifteen people representing 18.99% fall within the ₱100 – 200 category. Finally, the last category has only seven members representing 8.86% in the ₱200 – 300 category.

These results of Tandon et al. (2021)[25] are validated by this rise in mobile data usage. As per their study, young people who invest more money in mobile data plans also indulge in problematic social media usage and suffer from FOMO. It is evident that for devising any remedy, both behavioral and financial facets related to mobile data usage need to be considered. Higher spending might mean a stronger need for constant online access and comparison with others.

Table 5. Respondents in terms of Monthly Computer Shop Fees.

Amount	Frequency	Percentage
₱ 100-200	22	27.85%
₱ 200-300	7	8.86%
₱ 300-400	11	13.92%
₱ Above 400	39	46.37%
Total:	**79**	**100%**

Table 5 above reveals that the majority of users pay 400+ each month on computer shop use. The highest range with 39 people is 400+, taking up 49.37% of the survey population. The next most frequent category has 22 people in the 100-200 range, taking up 27.85% of the sample. The next most frequent range had 11 people in the 300-400 range, making up 13.92% of the sample. The lowest in the range, with only seven people, were those who spent money on the 200-300 range, taking up 8.86% of the survey population.

The higher amount paid at computer shop can correlate with findings from Servidio et al. (2021) [26], that high frequency public internet usage is correlated with problematic smartphone usage and an addiction to the online world to lessen the feeling of FOMO. This

range of money shows that the environment should focus on how the social nature of computer shop can contribute to higher rates of money spent, since increased costs most likely equate to more time spent on these platforms.

Table 6. Respondents in terms of Daily Screen Time.

Duration	Frequency	Percentage
Less than 3 hours	11	13.92%
3-6 hours	44	55.70%
7-10 hours	15	18.99%
More than 10 hours	9	11.39%
Total:	**79**	**100%**

Table 6 highlights that majority of respondents experience moderately to highly active use of screens, with 55.70 percent spending three to six hours on gadgets daily, while 30.38 percent are using screens for more than seven hours. Considering that excessive exposure to screens and disruptions in sleep architecture are directly associated with neuropsychological stress, it makes such a high-usage scenario particularly concerning. According to Lai et al. (2022) [27], impairment in neural connectivity and mental performance is related to sustained sleep disturbances and reduction of specific types of sleep oscillations.

Table 7 Likert Scale Interpretation.

Table

Score	Range Values /Interval	Interpretation
1	1.00 - 1.74	Strongly Disagree
2	1.75 – 2.49	Disagree
3	2.50 – 3.24	Agree
4	3.25 – 4.00	Strongly Agree

Table 8. 2.1 Instant Connectivity.

Statement	Mean	SD	Verbal Interpretation
1. I feel a sense of anxiety or restlessness if I am unable to check my phone notifications immediately.	2.54	0.93	Agree
2. I find it difficult to ignore incoming messages, even when I am busy with other important tasks.	2.65	0.88	Agree
3. I feel the need to stay "online" 24/7 to ensure I am reachable by my social or professional circles.	2.52	0.99	Agree
4. I habitually check my device for updates even when I haven't received a specific alert or notification.	2.63	1.00	Agree
5. I feel "disconnected" or "left behind" if I spend more than a few hours without internet access.	2.47	0.90	Agree
Pooled mean	**2.56**	**0.94**	**Agree**

Table 8 assesses the extent to which the respondents felt Mobile Phone Anxiety and the need to be always connected, concerning the feeling of restlessness and the pressure to always be available. The overall mobile phone anxiety is rated to 2.54, which indicates that the respondent felt anxious when they could not access their phone notification immediately, while a mean of 2.65 reveals that they found it difficult to disregard incoming messages. On average, the respondents 'agree' with the Mobile Phone Anxiety statements (pooled mean = 2.56), hence a need to always be connected. Among other statements, participants admitted that they often check for updates (M = 2.63) and feel that they must always be online (M = 2.52). This indicates that the potential link between excessive mobile phone usage and negative mental health effects may indeed exist, consistent with prior research into cell phone addiction and FOMO (Chen et al., 2021) [28].

Table 9. 2.2 Social Media Engagement.

Statement	Mean	SD	Verbal Interpretation
1. I feel bothered or excluded when I see my peers posting about social events that I did not attend.	2.71	0.91	Agree
2. I feel a strong pressure to post updates about my own life to stay relevant within my social network.	2.57	1.00	Agree
3. I find myself constantly scrolling through feeds to ensure I am up-to-date with what others are doing.	2.65	0.93	Agree
4. I feel the need to react to or comment on trending topics immediately so I am not excluded from the conversation	2.61	0.94	Agree
5. I feel "disconnected" or "left behind" if I spend more than a few hours without internet access.	2.61	0.90	Agree
Pooled mean	**2.63**	**0.93**	**Agree**

Table 9 demonstrates users' feelings of social alienation and pressure to remain up-to-date with online social happenings by analyzing respondents' social media anxiety levels and desire to maintain contact: with an average of 2.71, the respondents felt disturbed when social events happened online that they were not invited to, and with an average of 2.57, felt pressured to make social media postings so they would remain up-to-date. The average respondents, for social media anxiety, tend to "agree" that the questions provided do mean a great deal to them, showing that they have a great desire to maintain contact online, with a pooled mean of 2.63. Particularly, the respondents showed they would feel isolated if they did not have the Internet for a couple of hours, as this had an average of 2.61, and the incessant scanning of their news feeds so that they would remain up-to-date has an average of 2.65. These results are in line with studies on social media anxiety and FOMO, suggesting a

possible connection between excessive social media use and detrimental effects on mental health (Kircaburun et al., 2022) [29].

Table 10. 2.3 Digital Consumption Patterns.

Statement	Mean	SD	Verbal Interpretation
1. I spend more time-consuming digital content than I originally intended because I am afraid of missing a trend.	2.54	1.01	Agree
2. I subscribe to numerous news alerts or influencers primarily to be among the first to know about new information	2.65	1.03	Strong Agree
3. I feel compelled to watch "limited-time" or "live" digital content immediately to avoid losing the experience.	2.51	0.99	Agree
4. I often consume multiple forms of digital media at once (e.g., dual-screening) to keep up with the volume of available information.	2.52	0.97	Strong Agree
5. I feel overwhelmed by the amount of content I "must" consume to stay informed, yet I find it hard to stop.	2.53	0.92	Strong Agree
Pooled mean	**2.55**	**0.98**	**Agree**

Table 10 analyses the usage of digital media and the extent of FOMO, and focuses on respondents' behavior and mindset on keeping up to date. Respondents had increased their digital reading (mean score 2.54) beyond their intended reading hours due to fear of missing a trend, and subscribed to many news alerts/influencers in order to stay ahead of news (mean score 2.65). Average respondents "agree" with the statements about digital media intake in general (pooled mean score 2.55), and possess a high urge to stay updated. Also, participants did report that they consume multiple digital media at the same time (M = 2.52) and they felt a compulsion to immediately read time-limited digital content (M = 2.51). These results suggest a possible connection between excessive digital media consumption and detrimental mental health effects, which is in line with studies on digital media addiction and FOMO (Montag et al., 2021) [30].

Table 11 3.1 Hardware Performance.

Statement	Mean	SD	Verbal Interpretation
1. I find that computer shop equipment offer superior processing speeds compared to my personal laptop or smartphone.	2.73	0.98	Agree
2. The high-resolution monitors and specialized peripherals (gaming mice/keyboards) in computer shop provide a better experience than my own gear.	2.49	1.11	Agree
3. I prefer using computer shop for heavy digital tasks (e.g., gaming, video editing) because my personal gadgets tend to lag.	2.68	0.97	Agree
4. I believe that the hardware in most computer shop is more up-to-date than the technology I personally own.	2.65	0.99	Agree
5. The overall technical performance of computers makes them my primary choice for high-intensity digital activities.	2.71	0.95	Agree
Pooled mean	**2.65**	**1.00**	**Agree**

Table 11 shows that people's choices and attitudes toward computer shop, their digital devices, and their habits toward doing digital tasks are assessed. The average response showed people prefer using computer shop for intensive digital work (M=2.68) as computers show better performance (M=2.73). With an average score (pooled mean=2.65) that the respondents "agree" with the statement above, there is a significant preference for performing intensive digital tasks in computer shops. Notably, respondents also indicated that computers are their first choice based on overall technological performance (M = 2.71) and that computer shop hardware, in most cases, is more up-to-date than users' personal computers (M = 2.65). These findings might hint at a relationship between user choice and access to reliable technology and correspond to previous research on the influence of environmental factors on digital use and performance (Bouazizi et al., 2022) [31].

Table 12 3.2 Connection Reliability.

Statement	Mean	SD	Verbal Interpretation
1. The internet connection in computer shop is significantly more stable than the mobile data I use on my personal gadgets.	2.72	0.86	Agree
2. I experience fewer connectivity interruptions (disconnections) when using computer shop facilities compared to my home network.	2.68	0.86	Agree
3. I rely on computer shops when I need to download or upload large files because their bandwidth is faster than my personal connection.	2.51	0.97	Agree
4. I perceive the low latency (ping) in computer shop to be more reliable for real-time online engagement than my own devices.	2.68	1.03	Agree
5. I feel more confident in the "always-on" nature of computer shop compared to the fluctuating signal of my personal mobile data.	2.75	1.06	Agree
Pooled mean	**2.67**	**0.96**	**Agree**

The pooled mean of 2.67 (SD = 0.96) shown in the data table 12 is interpreted in words as "Agree". This implies that many of the people surveyed feel that links provided by computer stores are reliable and stable as compared to their mobile data or personal home network links. The "always on" capability of café internet ranked number one (Mean = 2.75, SD = 1.06), while second in line is the link’s reliability compared to personal gadgets (Mean = 2.72, SD = 0.86).

Furthermore, respondents appreciate the use of the computer store's services in offering them low latency instant communication (Mean = 2.68, SD = 1.03) along with high bandwidth usage in terms of downloading/uploading large files (Mean = 2.51, SD = 0.97). It can thus be said that "utility" of the computer store includes its reliability and quality service among other things. Perceived usability and reliability of the digital service become vital aspects in ensuring customer retention and gaining trust. This particular feature becomes important as it further enhances the importance of the computer shop being a critical link in their digital

consumption cycle, as well as due to technological coherence of the network in the shop that provides them with "e-trust," which their own mobile data cannot offer at this point Saoula, O., et al (2023)[32].

Table 13 3.3 Physical Environment.

Statement	Mean	SD	Verbal Interpretation
1. I find the dedicated workspace in computer shop to focus than using my gadgets in a public or home setting.	2.76	0.89	Agree
2. The gaming chairs in computer shops are more comfortable than my personal setup.	2.65	0.99	Agree
3. I enjoy the social atmosphere and "community feel" of a computer shop more than the solitary use of my own gadgets.	2.80	0.93	Agree
4. The air-conditioning and lighting provided in computer shop improve my overall digital experience.	2.52	1.06	Agree
5. I perceive computer shop as a safer or more dedicated space for digital consumption than using my phone.	2.66	1.92	Agree
Pooled mean	**2.68**	**0.96**	**Agree**

Evaluations of the physical setting at computer shop were obtained from respondents and are reported in Table 13. Overall, computer shop environments received a pooled mean score of 2.68 (SD = 0.96), indicating respondents overall rated the computer shop environment as "Agree". In relation to the physical infrastructure and social environment, these results indicate that computer shop clearly provide benefits or advantages when compared to home or personal environments. The social environment and communal aspect of the computer shop received the highest rating from respondents, with a mean score of 2.80 (SD = 0.93); whereas the availability of an independent work environment to enable focused concentration received a mean score of 2.76 (SD = 0.89).

According to the data, both Generation Z and the Millennial generation view computer shops as a social common ground; however, they find the physical environment highly compelling. Recent research by Degefa (2025) [33] supports this assertion in that it illustrates how young people use social media and the digital environment as tools for finding out about and participating in the community. A café is considered an essential "third space" for digital networking; they prefer a "community environment" to using their gadgets in isolation.

Moreover, several references made to the quality of lighting and HVAC (Heating Ventilation Air Conditioning). Also, the comfort of the gaming chairs all contribute to creating the best digital experience possible. Kellerman (2021) [34] examined how social, spatial & physical aspects are incorporated into digital experiences and how social interaction occurs between

people transitioning from in-person to digital interactions; therefore, this is indicative of what people like when they are engaged in digital activities.

Table 14 3.4 Functional Convenience.

Statement	Mean	SD	Verbal Interpretation
1. I prefer computer shop because they offer "all-in-one" services (printing, scanning, photocopying) that my personal gadgets cannot provide.	2.72	0.80	Agree
2. The "pay-per-use" nature of computer shop is more cost-effective for me than maintaining high-end personal hardware.	2.59	1.02	Agree
3. I find it more convenient to use a computer when I need to multitask across several windows that are difficult to manage on a mobile screen.	2.65	0.88	Agree
4. The proximity of computer shop to my school or workplace makes them a more accessible option than going home to use my own computer.	2.56	1.01	Agree
5. I value the technical support available in computer shop (on-site staff) which I don't have when my personal gadgets malfunction.	2.61	0.94	Agree
Pooled mean	**2.63**	**0.93**	**Agree**

Overall results of the functional convenience assessment can be found in Table 14. The overall means from the assessment indicated that the sample rated functional convenience as 2.63 (SD = 0.93) or “agree,” indicating that the sample believes that computer shop provide a useful service hub that helps alleviate the constraints of their personal devices for tasks other than just for connectivity. The averaged means indicated that all-in-one services, like printing, scanning, and photocopying, rated the highest among respondents at 2.72 (SD = 0.80), and ease of multitasking with multiple internet windows compared to a small mobile phone screen was a close second at 2.65 (SD = 0.88).

Computer shop continue to be needed as they continue to fulfill the "bridge" role to provide services that are difficult to provide using personal smart devices, and consumers rely on these types of facilities to perform day-to-day tasks. Both of those qualities can be found in the "pay-as-you-go" model, along with having access to technical support on-site, thus allowing users to have an economical, functional alternative to owning high-priced personal hardware.

In addition, the proximity of cafés to either schools or businesses (Mean = 2.56, SD = 1.01) suggests the role of a "substitution" in choosing the best available digital touchpoint based on the convenience of the location. For example, Mutahari and Suzuki (2025) [35] suggest there is

a tendency for people to engage in digital service substitution within social and urban networks as they search for efficient and sustainable digital solutions that are found in their geographic area. As a result, cafés create opportunities for Santa Rosa youth to access tools needed to support their digital workspace, thus extending the convenience of accessing those tools.

Table 15. Correlation Matrix.

		Age	Mobile Data Spending	Computer shop Fees	Daily Screen Time	MEAN	MEAN (2)	MEAN (3)
Age	**Pearson's r**	—						
	df	—						
	p-value	—						
Mobile Data Spending	**Pearson's r**	0.125	—					
	df	77	—					
	p-value	0.274	—					
Computer shop Fees	**Pearson's r**	-0.037	0.692	—				
	df	77	77	—				
	p-value	0.745	<.001	—				
Daily Screen Time	**Pearson's r**	-0.023	-0.280	-0.001	—			
	df	77	77	77	—			
	p-value	0.841	0.013	0.992	—			
MEAN	**Pearson's r**	-0.027	0.046	0.074	0.099	—		
	df	77	77	77	77	—		
	p-value	0.811	0.685	0.516	0.386	—		
MEAN (2)	**Pearson's r**	0.037	-0.024	0.031	0.173	0.232	—	
	df	77	77	77	77	81	—	
	p-value	0.747	0.833	0.787	0.127	0.035	—	

Table 15. Correlation Matrix.								
		Age	**Mobile Data Spending**	**Computer shop Fees**	**Daily Screen Time**	**MEAN**	**MEAN (2)**	**MEAN (3)**
MEAN (3)	**Pearson's r**	0.026	0.041	0.085	0.065	0.233	0.232	—
	df	77	77	77	77	81	81	—
	p-value	0.821	0.720	0.455	0.570	0.034	0.035	—

Source: Jamovi version 2.6.44 2026

Table 15 reveals that there was no found statistically significant association between the three FOMO dimensions and the demographic variables of age, mobile data spending, computer shop fees for connecting to the Internet, and daily screen time due to their p-values exceeding.05. These statistics indicate that FOMO is a persistent phenomenon experienced by youth living within Santa Rosa across all social and economic factors and the length of time they are online. Additionally, the matrix reveals a high degree of internal associations within the three dimensions of FOMO ($p < .05$), but there was no ability to predict FOMO by demographic characteristics. Furthermore; Çelik, Koseoglu, and Elhai (2023) [36] found consistent support that FOMO is auristic construct and is therefore a cohesive scientific measure.

Table 16. Independent Samples T-Test for Gender.				
		Statistic	**df**	**p**
MEAN	**Student's t**	-0.732	77.0	0.466
MEAN (2)	**Student's t**	-0.426	77.0	0.671
MEAN (3)	**Student's t**	-1.827	77.0	0.072
Source: Jamovi version 2.6.44 2026				

The absence of statistically significant differences between men and women regarding their level of FOMO in each of the three areas is shown in Table 19 below. There are no differences in the p-values for digital consumption (0.072), social media usage (0.671), and instant connection (0.466). They are all greater than the significance level of 0.05. As demonstrated in the research conducted by Tufan et al. (2025) [37], who found that FOMO serves as a core psychological vulnerability resulting in poor social media behavior and

digital burnout irrespective of demographics, such results prove the insignificant role played by demographics in determining people's level of fear of missing out.

Table 17. One-Way ANOVA (Welch's) for Current Occupation.

	F	df1	df2	p
MEAN	1.355	4	13.9	0.299
MEAN (2)	2.160	4	13.7	0.128
MEAN (3)	0.178	4	10.6	0.945

Source: Jamovi version 2.6.44 2026

FOMO scores exhibit no distinguishable differences between professions, as evident from Table 17 One-Way ANOVA for Current Occupation. The p-value for Connectivity (0.299), Engagement (0.128), and Consumption (0.945) is greater than 0.05. It demonstrates that whether someone has high or low FOMO does not depend on whether they are a student or a professional. Therefore, the experience is universal to this young generation. Such results align with the research conducted by Syahputra, Miswanto, and Hafni (2023) [38], who noted that internet-induced anxiety can often be widespread irrespective of any specific social and demographic functions. Thus, it can be said that instead of being dependent on one's profession, the psychological necessity of staying online seems to be a generational phenomenon in Santa Rosa.

3.2. Integrative Synthesis of Included Studies

The connection between digital choice architecture and psychological manifestations of FOMO (fear of missing out) can be found via the integrative analysis of the selected research. In particular, the "scarcity principle" is no longer just a tool for sales promotion but one of the major constituents of the digital world affecting the ways in which Millennials and Gen Z individuals organize their social and economic activity. As was found in the study carried out by Bok, Shum, and Lee (2025) [39], excitement-seeking behavior occurs due to the stimuli created by the principle of scarcity and thus does not involve logical thinking.

This synthesis also highlights the importance of the reliability and ease of use of a platform in determining the efficacy of digital cues. When the stability and ease of use of a service foster "e-trust," users become more susceptible to the pressure of urgency created by "limited-time" offers. In a localized context, this results in a high dependency on computer shop as reliable hubs that emphasize the "always-connected" nature of digital existence. This methodological

focus on localized variations aligns with the framework of Diaz, R.A.(2025) [40], who emphasizes that understanding regional dynamics and specific categorical variations is essential for identifying disparities in economic and behavioral patterns within the Philippine setting

Finally, scientific evidence indicates a "socio-normative vulnerability" among the youth. It does not matter whether an individual belongs to any socio-economic class as the tendency to maintain social status through "smart consumption" always leads to an endless stress cycle and a constant connection to digital technology. From this discussion, it is clear that even if FOMO is one psychological phenomenon, it is greatly impacted by the choice architecture of platforms.

3.3. Participants

The total number of participants involved in the examined studies was over 15,000 individuals, including student groups and consumer samples from prosperous regions. In these samples, different age groups and levels of proficiency in using technologies have been observed; moreover, some studies emphasized the role of Millennials and Generation Z members as digital natives (Nam & Jung, 2021) [41]. Although there have been some experiments where the specific age and gender of participants were the main selection criteria for testing particular generational features, only few works provided a profound differentiation of the psychological characteristics based on demographic aspects such as age or gender.

4. DISCUSSION

This specific demographic is primarily made up of young members of the Millennial and Gen Z generation (76%), males (74.68%) working either as students or self-employed, as identified by the demographic data of the sample participants. It suggests that in the case of Santa Rosa, the “digital native” demographic that uses computer shop as their primary venues for both work and recreation is responsible for its digital ecosystem. The predominance of self-employed (36.71%) and student demographics (31.65%) reveals a flexible yet technology-reliant demographic. Moreover, the tendency towards online gaming and intensive use of platforms, which are considered risky environments for experiencing digital anxiety, can be explained by the male prevalence (Rozgonjuk et al., 2021) [42].

Further evidence of reliance on digital access is provided by behavior and finances. Most users report spending more than ₱400 per month on their computer shop access charges (49.37%) and mobile internet expenses (41.77%). Also, most individuals utilize their screens for more than three hours daily (86%). Their expenditure on connectivity reveals their perception of digital access as a necessity rather than a luxury. According to Tandon et al. (2021) [43], improper use of social media accounts for higher monthly expenditures on data plans. The expensive price of accessing the internet in Santa Rosa can be viewed as an instance of "choice architecture," whereby consumers choose "always on" access, but have to incur high charges due to their fear of disconnection.

Instant Connectivity scale yielded a pooled mean score of 2.56 (SD = 0.94), and this score could be interpreted as "Agree". This indicates that there is a constant psychological urge on the part of the respondents to stay updated and accessible. It appears that both the use of monitoring gadgets despite receiving no notifications (mean score of 2.63) and the inability to ignore received messages despite being occupied (mean score of 2.65) agreed the most with respondents.

This continuous quest for connection becomes a digital "normative nudge" where being unreachable is viewed as loss of one's reputation or prestige. As reported by Elhai et al. (2021) [44], young users experience increased negative affectivity because of reliance on instant notifications. In the case of Santa Rosa, the continuous surveillance process is driven by the fear of being "left behind" (Mean = 2.47).

In addition, there were also qualitative comments from the three (3) shop operators on the significance of having a good and stable internet connectivity as a key factor that maintains customer interaction with the shop. First shop operator revealed that internet connection speed becomes an important factor, especially during peak time when there are numerous customers who are utilizing the shop’s facilities for playing games and surfing on the internet. For the shop owner, a poor internet connection speed is detrimental to the inflow of customers because they will leave or shift to another shop when the internet connection is slow. The shop owner also revealed the upgrade in the shop’s internet connection speed by changing the subscription fee for a faster internet service.

Second owner pointed out the impact of inconsistent electric power in summertime. The owner pointed out the fact that inconsistent electric power will not only have an effect on the

business but also make the cost of electric power increase, thus affecting the total profitability of the computer shop. It was found that besides having reliable internet, operational sustainability of the computer shop also needs infrastructural assistance such as consistent electric power supply, since it could not be completely controlled.

Third owner of the computer shop talked about how things like mice, keyboards and headsets get broken a lot. This happens especially when kids use them to play games. When this stuff gets broken it means the shop has things for people to use. The owner said they need to fix or replace things right away. This is important because computer shops need to have equipment for people to use. The owner wants to keep customers happy so they need to make sure everything works well like the computers and other things people use when they're in the shop such, as mice, keyboards and headsets.

Overall, computer shops are really important to people in the community. People like to go to computer shops because they have an internet connection. This is very important for customers. They also like it when the computer shops are open all the time and the equipment is working properly. Computer shops are like a place where people can get online. This is especially true for people who do not have internet at home. The people who own the computer shops have a time keeping them open but they are still very important to the community. Computer shops help people stay connected to the internet, they are a key part of the community.

5. CONCLUSIONS

Regarding to SOP 1 on the background and digital habits of the respondents, the study concludes that the local digital scene is mostly driven by young men aged 18 to 25 who are students (31.65%) or self-employed (36.71%). Whereas 41.77% spend more than ₱400 monthly for mobile internet expenses and 46.37% pay the same for computer hopping charges, these people are really spending much to access the internet. In case of the sample respondents, 86.08% of them are spending much for a significant number of hours online.

Whereas SOP 2 talks about the extent at which FOMO affects their digital engagements daily, the younger generation seems to be overly dependent on the usage of their devices. This is seen through the incessant desire to always check their phones despite no notifications popping up (connectivity mean= 2.56), the feeling of exclusion or frustration when their friends post updates of engaging in social interactions (engagement mean = 2.63), and the

constant need to multitask on different screens to keep abreast with fast-changing online trends (consumption mean = 2.55).

As indicated by the survey, these places are able to avoid closing down as they become a good alternative in solving problems that might arise using personal cell phones and laptops, as per SOP 3. This is because they offer fast internet speed (mean = 2.73), reliable internet connection compared to mobile internet, which does not disconnect (mean = 2.75), one-stop services such as printing services (mean = 2.72), as well as a comfortable arrangement, which acts as an attractive social place (mean = 2.80).

On examining SOP 4 in regard to the correlation of personal characteristics to FOMO scores, statistical methods like the Pearson's r test, t-test, and analysis of variance reveal that there is no significant difference when it comes to one's age, gender, profession, and spending habits because none of these factors influences their level of anxiety ($p \leq .05$).

With regard to SOP 5 concerning the current status and main hindrances faced by computer shops in terms of performance, it is discovered that even though such shops are highly praised for having quality computers and an inviting atmosphere, they are at risk because of the continued trend of the mobile economy. Computer store arrangements have fallen victim to an unstable economic cycle due to the digital fatigue of consumers and their inability to allocate their scarce finances towards buying mobile data and computers.

5.1. IMPLICATIONS

1. Learning about digital choice architecture will help understand how specific digital cues, along with scarcity, influence consumer behavior and speedy decision-making.
2. Revitalization Strategy: Helps local computer store owners and other relevant stakeholders in devising their business strategy, knowing that connectivity, comfort, and convenience are the primary factors motivating teenagers in these rural areas.
3. Behavioral psychology: Because it focuses on the unique behavioral aspects of teenage internet use in a specific Philippine environment, it is important to contrast it with today's global trends.

5.2. Limitations of the Present Study

1. Access and Database Restrictions: It might be assumed that the absence of full-text articles, limitations of database access, or specific filter choices made during the literature search could have led to the exclusion of relevant research papers from the systematic review process.
2. Lack of Certain Demographic Data: While scarcity-based approaches have proven efficient in numerous digital economies, few of the existing research works divide participants into specific groups based on certain socio-economic parameters. Hence, no solid conclusions can be made based on this paper regarding the effectiveness of regional or cross-cultural factors on digital choice architecture.
3. Potential Sources of Bias: Certain biases related to publication and reporting were not assessed in detail in the selected research.
4. Limitation of Time Period: As the conducted study had a limited time period, the longitudinal investigation of the respondents' behavior may not have been properly completed.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The computer shop owners must create specific services and marketing strategies that consider the socio-economic profiles of the millennial generation in terms of their age, occupation, and spending habits on the Internet, in order to deal effectively with FOMO, instant communication, and social networking sites.
2. Computer shop premises/facilities must consider upgrading their computer equipment, ensuring steady connectivity at high speeds, and providing customers with a safe environment.
3. Business owners should be using appropriate planning, maintenance of systems, use of current technology, and provision of quality service, as they include expensive maintenance expenses, outdated machinery, and reduced customer demand.
4. A revitalization strategy must concentrate on making computer stores into a one-stop digital service center that caters to gaming, online education, telecommuting, video editing, and socializing in order for it to keep pace with today’s evolving digital world.
5. For the future survival and up-to-date technology of computer stores in Sta. Rosa, Nueva Ecija. In order to develop digitally related services, skills training, and community projects, all sectors involved in computer stores must cooperate.

Author Contributions

Conceptualization, F.C. and C.F.; methodology, B.J.M.; software, T.C.; validation, D.S., M.J.P. and R.D.; formal analysis, D.S., M.J.P. and R.D.; investigation, F.C., C.F., B.J.M, and T.C..; resources, F.C., C.F., B.J.M., T.C., and J.R.C.; data curation, F.C., C.F.; writing—original draft preparation, F.C. and C.F.; writing—review and editing, F.C.; visualization, C.F. and T.C., J.R.C. and B.J.M.; supervision, R.D.; project administration, R.D. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

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Informed Consent Statement

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Data availability statement: The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

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