



Beyond scarcity marketing: what really drives young consumers to buy from a viral local culinary brand?

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Abstract

In Indonesia, several local food outlets have become viral on social media, serve only limited quantities, and attract long queues of young diners. Focusing on one such ramen restaurant (The Golden Geisha), this research adopts the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) framework to examine how perceived scarcity, electronic word of mouth (EWOM), perceived food value, and fear of missing out (FoMO) relate to Generation Z consumers' purchase intention. Purposive sampling produced 600 valid responses from consumers aged 18–26 years living in Yogyakarta or Semarang who had seen social-media reviews of the restaurant, and the data were analysed using SmartPLS 4 software. Perceived scarcity does not have a significant direct effect on purchase intention, but shows a positive indirect effect through perceived food value. EWOM and FoMO both display significant positive associations with purchase intention. At a theoretical level, the findings refine S-O-R applications in viral food-consumption research by identifying EWOM and FoMO as stimuli that connect directly to behavioural intention, while positioning scarcity as a stimulus that operates only through the organism state of perceived value. At a practical level, the results point to the need for viral food brands to safeguard product quality, manage eWOM and influencer content in digital channels, and design campaigns that make use of FoMO in a responsible way to convert online attention into actual visits.

1. INTRODUCTION

The viral food trend embraced by the public represents a distinctive phenomenon in Indonesia, serving as a lifeline for numerous small and medium enterprises striving to endure and prosper in the fiercely competitive culinary landscape (Kurniati & Hidayat, 2022; Wijaya, 2019). Consumers, especially the Z Generation, who spend almost 5 to 8 hours a day accessing the internet, are often moved to try food widely discussed by netizens on social media (Siste et al., 2020). The electronic word-of-mouth system has supplanted traditional marketing strategies, enabling businesses of varied scales to attain substantial visibility in the market. Presently, virtually any entity, regardless of its size, holds the potential to achieve viral status and garner recognition from a broad audience. Even an inconspicuous food stall nestled in a distant alleyway can suddenly surge visitation



following positive reviews from consumers or food influencers ([Kristia et al., 2023](#); [Wahyuningsih et al., 2022](#)).

A noteworthy culinary trend that has captured the interest of consumers is the Golden Geisha (GG) restaurant, a local Indonesian establishment acclaimed for its Japanese fusion cuisine, mainly specializing in its ramen menu. The GG Restaurant has been the subject of amplified electronic word of mouth (EWOM) due to numerous reviews on social media from consumers and food influencers. GG Restaurant, which has several outlets in Yogyakarta and Semarang, is famous for its long queues of consumers, and uniquely, this restaurant does limit the number of portions to eat despite the overwhelming demand. The phenomenon of long queues at GG Restaurant may signal the existence of perceived scarcity, which is the consumer's view of the limited availability of products and the fact that getting the products from this restaurant requires extra effort ([Chae et al., 2020](#); [Ladeira et al., 2023](#)). On the one hand, this perceived scarcity can encourage consumers to be more eager to buy certain products because of the pride and sense of exclusivity when successfully obtaining goods or experiencing specific experiences ([Chen et al., 2021](#)). The interest in wanting to own the product is amplified in consumers who experience the "fear of missing out" (FoMO) situation, or a situation where someone is worried that they will lose the opportunity to feel or have something that is considered valuable and is also widely used by the people around them ([Zhang et al., 2020](#)). On the other hand, perceived scarcity can have a negative impact since pressure from competition to get a product can cause stress. Hence, consumer buying interest decreases until they decide to switch to other substitute products ([Biraglia et al., 2021](#)). Perceived food value, or consumer perception of the value of a food product, is also an essential factor that can influence consumer interest in trying a food product. To convert consumer interest into actual purchases, consumers need to be convinced that the food product is indeed of good quality, has a unique taste, and is in accordance with the sacrifices that consumers will make ([Aditi et al., 2022](#); [Muhajir et al., 2022](#)).

Conceptually, most prior studies have treated perceived scarcity, eWOM, FoMO and perceived value in isolation or only as direct predictors of purchase intention ([Banerjee et al., 2025](#); [Cengiz & Şenel, 2024](#)), so they do not explain how these forces work together in a scarcity-based, viral restaurant setting. The phenomenon of scarcity marketing has been widely researched in the context of luxuries or fashion products in well-known foreign brands ([Barton et al., 2022](#)). However, the impact of scarcity marketing is still rarely explored in the context of viral culinary MSME products in Indonesia. Grounded in the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) framework, this study tests an integrated model in which these three stimuli shape Generation Z consumers' perceived food value and, through it, their purchase intention towards GG Restaurant.

2. THEORETICAL REVIEW AND HYPOTHESIS

Perceived Scarcity and Consumer Purchase Intention

Perceived scarcity encompasses consumers' perceptions of the limited availability of goods and services caused by quantity or time limitations, with the expectation that such perceptions will heighten purchase intention ([Broeder & Wentink, 2022](#)), instil a sense of urgency to acquire ([Wu et al., 2021](#)), prompt impulsive buying, and stimulate competition

among consumers (Campos et al., 2022; Cengiz & Şenel, 2024). Brands can cultivate perceived scarcity through tactics such as restricting the number of products available, offering products for a limited duration, imposing specific purchasing criteria, or pricing products at a premium to cater to exclusive market segments (Tang et al., 2025). This product scarcity marketing strategy is generally applied by luxury brands (Chen et al., 2021), fashion (Chae et al., 2020), and art products (Gupta et al., 2024). The advantages that brand want to create from these types of products are the uniqueness of the product and the exclusive and premium image for its consumers (Barton et al., 2022). Marketing strategies that limit the time of purchase are currently popular, such as selling products on live streaming media on various social media or e-commerce platforms (Guo et al., 2023; Hmurovic et al., 2023; Li et al., 2023; Nafarin & Oktavio, 2021). The situation that sellers want to create by providing this time-limited promotion is an urgent situation, so consumers are apprehensive if they miss the offer, and later, it will cause regret (Good & Hyman, 2021). Perceived scarcity can occur due to external factors outside the control of the producer, for example, in the COVID-19 pandemic situation, the supply chain of raw materials for various basic needs is disrupted, resulting in a supply vacuum so that consumers are also competing to buy the products they need, even willing to pay high prices to buy these products (Schumacher & Micheli, 2024; Yuen et al., 2022).

Scarcity promotions can lead to adverse outcomes for consumers, including increased levels of aggressive behaviour, stress, and negative emotions stemming from heightened competition and environmental pressure (Harikrishnan et al., 2022). Consumer satisfaction may decrease if customers feel that the effort and sacrifice made to obtain a product is not worth the perceived benefits, which can lead to a decrease in purchase intention (Kumar et al., 2023; Li et al., 2021). While many studies report a positive link between perceived scarcity and purchase intention (Wang et al., 2022), other research finds no significant effect (Park, 2025), suggesting that the relationship is context-dependent. Evidence from local Indonesian culinary products is limited, so this study re-examines the effect in that setting.

H₁: Perceived scarcity affects consumer purchase intention.

EWOM and Consumer Purchase Intention

Electronic word of mouth is content generated by customers or paid influencers related to their experiences using products or services provided by certain brands that are disseminated through social media or other digital platforms (Kristia, 2021; Hadi, et al., 2025). The food choices of today's young generation, especially consumers from Generation Z, are proven to be highly affected by viral content, positive reviews, and engaging promotional narratives delivered by food influencers they see on social media (Tabassum et al., 2020). However, the frequency of exposure to negative EWOM can reduce consumer attitude, increase perceived purchase risk, and also reduce interest in consuming a product (Liao et al., 2021). Generation Z is a discerning cohort that approaches information consumption with scepticism (Esquen & Palomino-Flores, 2025). Viral content does not invariably pique their interest in purchasing, notably if the source lacks credibility (Sinha, 2025). In instances where influencers are financially incentivized, their reviews of products or experiences may lack sincerity, as their primary focus is delivering the brand's message (Pradhan et al., 2023). Moreover, the questionable credibility of information sources,

including random internet users, engenders consumer reluctance to trust the electronic word-of-mouth (EWOM) they encounter (Liao et al., 2021). This study examines how EWOM circulating about local ramen brands can influence young consumers' interest in making purchases with the following hypothesis:

H₂: EWOM affects consumer purchase intention

FoMO and Consumer Purchase Intention.

Fear of missing out is a psychological condition experienced by individuals related to the worry that arises when not taking action, not participating in an activity when many other people are doing the activity, or not knowing information (Roberts & David, 2020). According to Self-Determination Theory, FoMO arises when relatedness and competence as basic psychological needs are not met, and in turn individuals may feel left out also worry about falling behind others (Bok et al., 2025; Dadiotis & Roussos, 2024). This concern can be amplified due to high exposure to various information on social media, thus driving the experiencing individual to act impulsively, taking actions similar to people he considers crucial or his surroundings to relieve the worries he experiences (Barari, 2023; Çelik et al., 2023; Littman-Ovadia & Russo-Netzer, 2024). In young consumers, peer behaviour can also greatly influence their consumption behaviour, especially in purchasing fashion products (Sun et al., 2022), cosmetics (Kang et al., 2020), and sustainable products (Liu, 2022), so that they do not feel excluded or left out from their peers (Good & Hyman, 2021). Indeed, fear of missing out (FoMO) has been shown to drive individual purchase intention, especially when the product is viral (Sun & Bao, 2023). However, recent evidence also shows that FoMO-based appeals can backfire: consumers who purchase under FoMO pressure often report regret, disappointment, and a sense of manipulation, which discourages subsequent purchase intentions (Morsi et al., 2025). Given this possibility, it is important to examine whether FoMO actually encourages purchase intention in the GG Restaurant context, or whether it might fail to do so.

H₃: FoMO affects consumer purchase intention

The Role of Perceived Food Value as Mediator

Recent hospitality and food marketing studies have increasingly adopted the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) framework to explain how marketing cues in restaurant and food-related settings are translated into consumer behavioural intentions (Asyraff et al., 2023; Sodom et al., 2024). Within this framework, external stimuli such as social media communication, service attributes and online reviews are conceptualised as environmental inputs that shape internal evaluations, including perceived value, which then drive responses such as purchase intention or continued patronage (Utami et al., 2025). Perceived food value is an individual's perception of benefits compared to the price paid or time sacrificed to obtain a particular type of food (Watanabe et al., 2020). Indicators of perceived food value include evaluation of the taste of food that satisfies the palate, pleasant dining experience, quality of food ingredients, and fair price (Huang et al., 2019). Food quality that is perceived to be good can drive individuals to purchase and consume particular foods (Curvelo et al., 2019; Watanabe et al., 2020). Consumers can assess the quality of food even if they have not tried the food yet, which comes from learning from other people's experiences either conveyed directly or getting review information from sources

considered credible from the internet or exposed by positive EWOM (Nofal et al., 2022). When a product is seen to be in high demand by others and even contested by many people, this phenomenon can form the perception that the product is of quality (Shi et al., 2020). Commodity Theory can explain this phenomenon, which states that the scarcity situation is a driver of consumer perceptions regarding the uniqueness and value of an item; the rarer it is, the more valuable it seems (Lee & Jung, 2021). The role of perceived value in mediating the relationship between perceived scarcity and product purchase intention can also be explained using Reactance Theory, which states that a product will look more valuable and consumers will be more motivated to get the product if the product is rare (deBruijn & Antonides, 2022).

H₄: Perceived food value mediates the relationship between EWOM and consumer purchase intention

H₅: Perceived food value mediates the relationship between perceived scarcity and consumer purchase intention

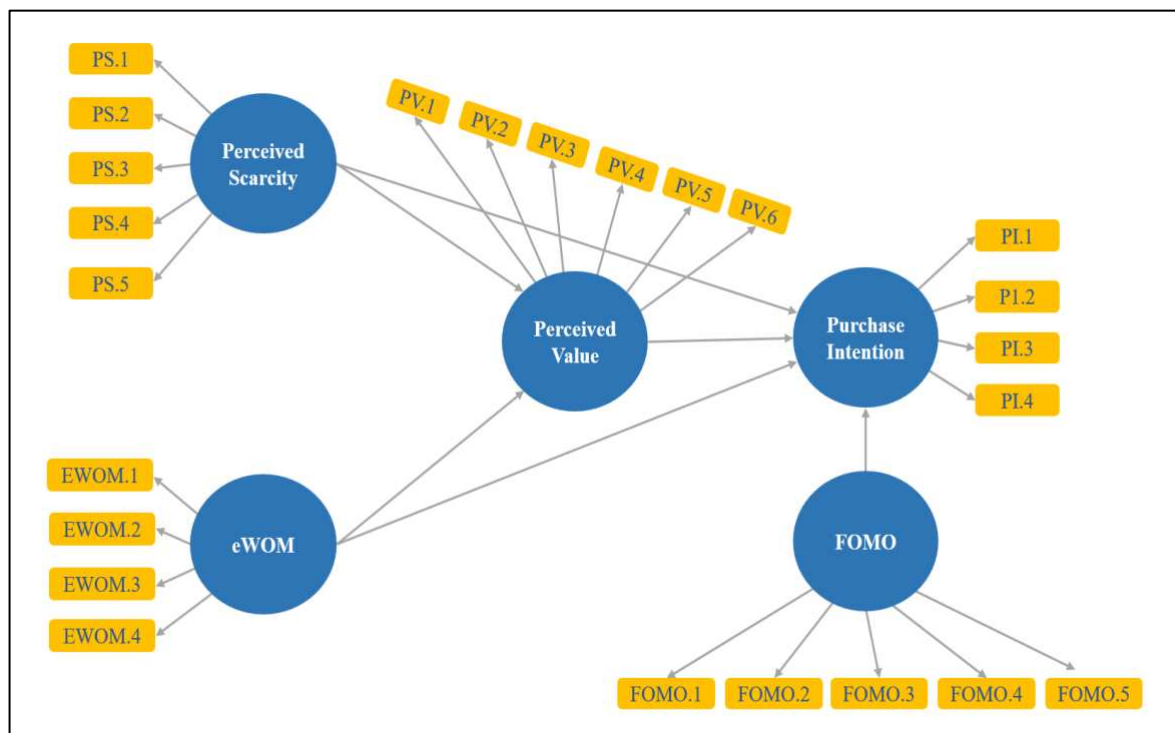


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study uses a quantitative research especially cross-sectional design with a survey as a data collection method to examine the effect of perceived scarcity, EWOM, FOMO, and perceived food value on consumer purchase intention for products offered by GG restaurants. The data collection period for this study was from February to June 2024. In general, this study's population is the nascent consumer cohort, which is the target market of GG restaurants. For the selection of samples in this study, the method used is judgemental sampling with the criteria that respondents are individuals aged 18 to 26 years who live in Yogyakarta and Semarang and have also watched reviews about GG on various

social media. The baseline sampling threshold required in this study was 240 respondents, calculated using the Hair's rule of Thumbs (Sarstedt et al., 2022), namely the total questionnaire items multiplied by ten. The study targeted 400 valid responses, considering that this number exceeded the minimum required to provide better statistical power. The first part of the questionnaire explained all the criteria needed for the study and required the respondent's consent to proceed to the next part of the questionnaire. In the preliminary section of the questionnaire, it was delineated that 1) the anticipated duration for completion is approximately 10-15 minutes; 2) The data will be utilized exclusively for scientific publication purposes; 3) Respondents are assured anonymity as the questionnaire does not solicit specific identifying details such as personal names or addresses, following research ethical standards that uphold confidentiality, privacy, and respondent rights (Nunan et al., 2020).

The research instruments utilized in this study were derived from prior studies involving comparable variables, with questionnaire statement items tailored to this study's specific context and focus, namely the products of GG restaurants (see Table 1). Perceived scarcity is measured by four indicators which include demand perception (PS.1), limited-quantity scarcity (PS.2; PS.3), limited-time scarcity (PS.4), perceived competitiveness (PS.5) (Chen et al., 2021; Wu et al., 2012). EWOM is measured using four indicators which include quantity of EWOM (EWOM.1), valence of EWOM (EWOM.2), credibility of EWOM (EWOM.3), and information perceived usefulness (EWOM.4) (Nofal et al., 2022; Tabassum et al., 2020).

Perceived food value is measured using six indicators, which include uniqueness (PV.1), taste (PV.2), variety (PV.3), experience (PV.4), price (PV.5), and quality of ingredients (PV.6) (Huang et al., 2019; Watanabe et al., 2020). FoMO is measured using four indicators which include worry about regret feeling (FoMO.1; FoMO.3), worry about missing out (FoMO.2), worry about others' better experience (FoMO.4), feeling of being left out (FoMO.5) (Riordan et al., 2020; Singh & Banerjee, 2024). Purchase intention is measured using three indicators which include likelihood of purchase (PI.1), consideration of purchase (PI.2; PI.3), and recommendation intention (PI.4) (Bushara et al., 2023; Núñez-Fernández et al., 2021). Upon completion of the questionnaire, respondents were asked to identify demographic characteristics such as gender, perceived financial situation, monthly average for culinary activities, most frequently used social media options, and an open-ended question about their most significant barrier to purchasing food at a GG restaurant.

The data analysis used in this study is confirmatory factor analysis, which proved the five hypotheses previously determined using the help of SMARTPLS 4 statistical software. The instruments used were tested for reliability and validity by reviewing several indicators such as the outer loading value (minimum value of 0.7), Cronbach's Alpha (0.7 or higher), composite reliability (0.7 or higher), Average Variance Extracted (greater than or equal to 0.50), HTMT (less than 0.90), and Fornell-Larcker Criterion (Sarstedt et al., 2022). To prove the hypothesis, the structural model evaluation and mediation test were conducted by evaluating the P-values (> 0.05), t-statistics (> 1.96), and path coefficient (Hair et al., 2019; Sarstedt et al., 2022). Evaluation of the model fit between the data and the model used in the study was carried out by evaluating the coefficient of determination (R-square),

predictive relevance (Q-square), and Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) indicators (Alavi et al., 2020; Cheah et al., 2024).

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Respondents' demographic characteristics

Demographic characteristics of respondents, which include respondents' financial characteristics, gender characteristics, and main social media channels used to search for culinary recommendations, were analyzed descriptively by displaying the frequency and percentage proportion of the demographic characteristics analyzed, as shown in Figure 2. The study surveyed young respondents' average monthly dining out budget, revealing that a significant portion (45%) spent less than Rp 500,000. Regarding perceived financial condition, a majority (34%) can meet basic needs with some extra for non-essentials, while 22% can comfortably meet basic needs and other desires. Gender distributions show a predominant female respondent rate of 67%. Social media preferences of respondents to find information on culinary recommendations are led by TikTok (48.25%), followed by Instagram (28.75%). Open-ended questions to respondents regarding the main barriers to purchasing GG Restaurant products include lack of time to queue (735 mentions) and absence of dining companions (195 mentions).

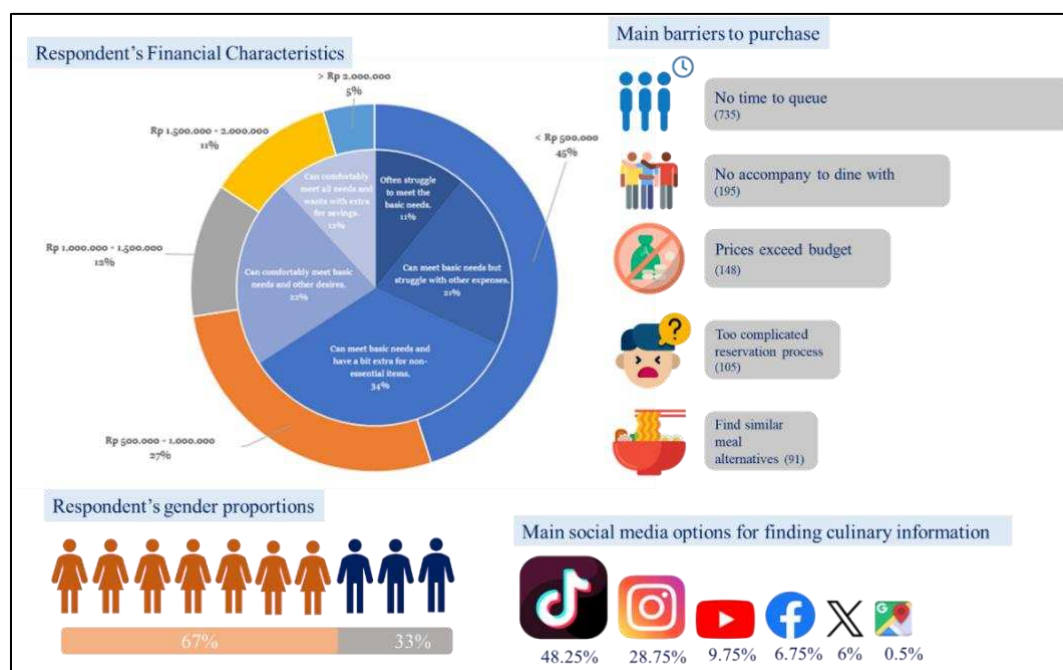


Figure 2. Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Data analysis results

The evaluation of measurement constructs results of the manifest variables and latent variables used in this study are shown in Table 1. Measurement model evaluation needs to be done before the hypothesis testing stage to ensure that the instruments used in this study, namely questionnaire items and variables of perceived scarcity, EWOM, perceived food value, FOMO, and purchase intention, are valid and reliable instruments. The outer loading value of each manifest variable in this study ranges from 0.707 to 0.843, which

indicates that all questionnaire items in this variable are valid. All latent variables' composite reliability values were above 0.85, and the AVE value exceeded 0.5, indicating strong convergent validity. Overall, the questionnaire items and latent variables used in this study met the criteria of good reliability, good construct validity, and good discriminant validity.

Table 1. Measurement Model Evaluation

Latent Variables	Questionnaire Items	Outer Loadings	Cronbach's Alpha	CR	AVE
Perceived Scarcity (Chen et al., 2021; Wu et al., 2012)	PS.1 It seems that this restaurant's products are in demand by many people	0.725	0.784	0.852	0.536
	PS.2 I think that the daily portion of food at this restaurant is limited.	0.710			
	PS.3 I realise that to buy food at this restaurant, it is better to make a reservation in advance.	0.707			
	PS.4 I realise that the availability of food at this restaurant is limited for certain times of the day.	0.785			
	PS.5 I think that the limited availability of food in this restaurant creates a competitive atmosphere among customers.	0.732			
EWOM (Nofal et al., 2022; Tabassum et al., 2020)	EWOM.1 I often see reviews about this restaurant's products.	0.714	0.781	0.859	0.603
	EWOM.2 The majority of reviews regarding the food offered by this restaurant are positive.	0.793			
	EWOM.3 Online reviews of the food offered by this restaurant seem trustworthy.	0.786			
	EWOM.4 Food reviews from customers of this restaurant that I have seen on social media, help me to make my culinary choices.	0.811			
Perceived Food Value (Huang et al., 2019; Watanabe et al., 2020)	PV.1 It seems like the food products offered by this restaurant have a unique flavour compared to other culinary producers.	0.770	0.862	0.897	0.592
	PV.2 I perceive the taste of the food offered by this restaurant to be good.	0.736			
	PV.3 I perceive that this restaurant offers a wide variety of menus that arouse my taste buds.	0.800			
	PV.4 I believe this restaurant offers a pleasant dining experience.	0.742			
	PV.5 I think the price of the food is in line with the quality offered.	0.791			

FoMO (Riordan et al., 2020 ; Singh & Banerjee, 2024)	PV.6	I think the products offered by this restaurant are made from premium quality raw materials.	0.774	0.854	0.894	0.629
		If most of the people who are closest to me choose to go to this restaurant, and I do not go with them, then				
	FoMO.1	I am worried that I will regret not going with them.	0.843			
	FoMO.2	I am going to worry about what I have missed out on.	0.799			
	FoMO.3	I will regret missing the opportunity to eat with them.	0.782			
	FoMO.4	I worry that they will have a good experience without me.	0.804			
Purchase Intention (Bushara et al., 2023 ; Núñez-Fernández et al., 2021)		I will feel left out because they had a good time without me.	0.734	0.793	0.865	0.617
	PI.1	I am interested in purchasing the food offered by this restaurant.	0.781			
	PI.2	I plan to purchase food from this restaurant in the near future.	0.797			
	PI.3	I will try this restaurant's food if I have sufficient free time.	0.774			
	PI.4	I will suggest buying food at this restaurant for my friends and family.	0.789			

Source: Authors' calculations generated using SMARTPLS 4 software

The research instrument must adhere to the discriminant validity criteria to ensure the distinctiveness of the latent variables employed in this study. Specifically, each variable's HTMT value should not exceed 0.85, and the diagonal values in the Fornell-Larcker test should surpass any corresponding off-diagonal values within the same row and column ([Rasoolimanesh, 2022](#)).

Table 2 shows that each construct's HTMT value ranges from 0.436 to 0.808, indicating adequate discriminant validity. Likewise, the square root AVE value of the relationship between the same latent variables is greater than its relationship with different variables, further supporting good discriminant validity conditions.

Table 2. Discriminant Validity

	HTMT					Fornell-Larcker Criterion				
	EWOM	FoMO	PS	PV	PI	EWOM	FoMO	PS	PV	PI
EWOM						0.777				
FoMO	0.436					0.357	0.793			
PS	0.749	0.398				0.587	0.328	0.732		
PV	0.808	0.463	0.785			0.669	0.401	0.651	0.769	
PI	0.794	0.55	0.673	0.807		0.631	0.461	0.535	0.670	0.785

Source: Authors' calculations generated using SMARTPLS 4 software

Upon evaluating the structural model, it was discerned that perceived scarcity does not exert a direct and statistically significant influence on the purchase intention of GG

Restaurant products. This conclusion is based on the t-statistic of 1.570 (below the threshold value of 1.96) and a p-value of 0.116 (exceeding the threshold value of 0.05). These results prove that H1 is rejected. As for the effect of EWOM and FoMO on purchase intention, both are significant predictors of purchase intention. EWOM shows a strong positive influence with a positive path coefficient of 0.279, t-statistics of 5.818, and p-value of 0.000. FoMO also significantly influences young consumers' purchase intention to buy products offered by GG Restaurants with a path coefficient of positive 0.193, t-statistics 4.241, and p-value 0.000. Furthermore, the mediating role of perceived food value was confirmed in two key relationships. Perceived food value can partially mediate the relationship between EWOM and purchase intention (indirect path coefficient 0.156, t-statistic 5.597, p-value 0.000). Perceived food value can also fully mediate the relationship between perceived scarcity and consumer purchase intention for GG Restaurant products (indirect path coefficient 0.141, t-statistic 4.956, p-value 0.000). In conclusion, although perceived scarcity alone cannot drive purchase intention (H1 rejected), EWOM and FoMO significantly influence consumer decisions (H2 and H3 accepted). In addition, perceived food value plays a significant role in mediating the relationship between EWOM and perceived scarcity on the purchase intention of GG Restaurant products (H4 and H5 accepted). A summary of the decisions regarding the hypothesis is shown in

Table 3.

Effect size (see

Table 3) is an indicator used to evaluate the significance and strength of the relationship between exogenous variables or mediation variables with endogenous variables. The effect size for direct effects that are proven to have a significant relationship, such as the relationship between EWOM and purchase intention and the relationship between FOMO and purchase intention, is 0.007 (low effect size) and 0.087 (low to medium effect size), respectively. Both effect sizes by the mediating variable, namely perceived food value, evaluated with the upsilon indicator (ν), have a low mediating effect because the value is still between 0.010 and 0.075 (Ogbeibu et al., 2021).

Table 3. Path Coefficients and Hypothesis Test

Hypothesis	Relationship	Path Coefficient	T statistics	P values	Effect Size	Hypothesis Decision
H ₁	Perceived Scarcity → Purchase Intention	0.075	1.570	0.116	0.007	Not supported
H ₂	EWOM → Purchase Intention	0.279	5.818	0.000	0.087	Supported
H ₃	FoMO → Purchase Intention	0.193	4.241	0.000	0.067	Supported
H ₄	EWOM → Perceived Value → Purchase Intention	0.156	5.597	0.000	0.024	Supported (partial-mediation)
H ₅	Perceived Scarcity → Perceived Value → Purchase Intention	0.141	4.956	0.000	0.020	Supported (full-mediation)

Source: Authors' calculations generated using SMARTPLS 4 software

Various indicators were examined to ensure the structural equation model's robustness and fit to the tested data, including R-square, Q² predict, and SRMR, as shown in Table 4. The coefficient of determination (R-square) indicates the proportion of variance of perceived food value and purchase intention that can be predicted from the antecedent variables. The coefficient of determination of perceived food value is 0.550, indicating that 55% of the variance in perceived food value can be explained by EWOM and perceived scarcity. Similarly, the coefficient of determination of purchase intention of GG Restaurant products is 0.545, indicating that 54.5% of the variance in purchase intention is explained by perceived scarcity, EWOM, FoMO, and perceived food value. This R-square value signifies the substantial explanatory power of the model, indicating that the antecedent variables effectively predict the endogenous variables (Hair et al., 2021).

The Q²predict value, obtained from the blindfolding process, measures the predictive relevance of the model. Perceived food value and purchase intention have Q²predict values of 0.542 and 0.476, respectively. Both Q²predict values exceed zero, indicating that the model has good predictive relevance for perceived food value and purchase intention (Sarstedt et al., 2022).

The SRMR indicator with a value below 0.08 indicates a sufficient level of goodness of fit in the structural model (Hair et al., 2019; Sarstedt et al., 2022). Throughout the data analysis, the SRMR for the estimated model shows an SRMR value of 0.065, indicating an optimal alignment between the model and the data obtained. This shows that the gap of the observed correlation and the correlation implied in the framework is minimal, thus further validating the model's overall fit.

Table 4 Model Fit Evaluation

	R-square	Q ² predict	SRMR (Estimated model)
Perceived food value	0.550	0.542	0.065
Purchase intention	0.545	0.476	

Source: Authors' calculations generated using SMARTPLS 4 software

Discussion

This study reveals that consumers' perceived scarcity, arising from high consumer demand but limited availability of GG Restaurant products, does not affect the purchase intention of this ramen product in the Generation Z consumer segment. Respondents recognise the crowding, yet the condition appears to be treated as effort rather than added value, so the scarcity signal expected in Commodity Theory does not directly emerge as motivation to buy. A beverage-category study with Indonesian Generation Z consumers reports a similar pattern, where social influence and product judgment outweigh scarcity cues in shaping buying decisions (Kalangit et al., 2025). In e-commerce study context of Luxembourg respondent found that scarcity often creates frustration and lowers perceived benevolence instead of encouraging purchase (Tuncer et al., 2024). While prior experimental work with Eastern culture samples shows that demand-based scarcity appeals strengthen responses to high visibility products (Khoso et al., 2023). In other previous contrary study, the apparent limitedness of top-tier products has a notable impact

on consumer behavior, particularly among individuals seeking a unique consumer experience (Maojie, 2023; Wang et al., 2022), aiming to manifest an exclusive self-image (X. Wang et al., 2024), and belonging to the middle to upper-middle economic strata with significant purchasing power (Kim & Kim, 2020). Our survey of Indonesian Generation Z diners in GG ramen restaurant context finds that naturally occurring demand-based scarcity, such as long queues and limited capacity, does not directly increase purchase intention, which points to different boundary conditions for the effect of scarcity appeals in this cultural setting.

In this study, scarcity-oriented marketing does not increase the purchase intention of post-millennial consumers unless it is accompanied by perceived food value. Scarcity, which can be witnessed by individuals in the form of many requests related to the product and a lot of talk about the product on the internet, can provide a quick and instant signal in the minds of consumers that the product may have good quality (Wrabel et al., 2022). For young Indonesian consumer segment in this study, scarcity-based stimuli are effective only when consumers perceive that the required “sacrifice” (e.g., waiting in line or booking in advance) is justified by a superior food experience (including perceived flavour suitability, uniqueness and deliciousness, pleasant dining experiences, and the use of premium-quality ingredients). Align with this study finding, prior research in Canadian consumer context had demonstrated the efficacy of scarcity cues employed by marketers in enhancing the perceived value of a product and subsequently affecting end-users' intention to make a purchase (Lee & Jung, 2021).

Within the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) framework, our findings indicate that EWOM about GG Restaurant serves as the external stimulus that repeatedly exposes consumers to others' experiences, shapes their perceived food value, and subsequently increases their intention to purchase the restaurant's products. This dynamic is consistent with the mere-exposure effect and with prior studies showing that consumers often rely on social media reviews before deciding to try particular foods (Hanaysha, 2022; Qiao & Sun, 2024). Sources of positive food-related review information can come from food influencers, who have been shown to help shape cognitive and affective perceptions of food quality in order to encourage consumers purchase the reviewed gourmet (Ismagilova et al., 2020). Young consumers are also influenced to try food because their closest friends and family recommend it, and the nature of this recommendation is considered more authentic and trustworthy by this segment of Generation Z (Tabassum et al., 2020).

Favorable value perception can boost purchase intentions, and young purchaser are even willing to pay upscale prices to get products that are considered to be of high quality (Bushara et al., 2023). FoMO conditions experienced by respondents were shown to positively influence purchase intention for GG Restaurant products. This aligns with previous research, which indicates that fear of missing out can trigger immediate purchase decisions to avoid perceived regret (Riordan et al., 2020). Audiences who devote ample time viewing content on social digital environment, where users are often exposed to idealized depiction of individuals' lifestyle, can reinforce feelings of inadequacy and fear of missing out (Dadiotis & Roussos, 2024). Young consumers, notably Generation Z, often feel compelled to conform and partake in trending activities or social events (Soni & Bhukya, 2025). This study identifies peer pressure as intensifying FoMO as individuals

compare their experiences to those of their peers, feeling inadequate or excluded if they believe they are not participating in similar experiences (Tandon et al., 2021). Respondents express concern if many of their friends and acquaintances have dined at GG Restaurant while they have not, leading to feeling left out, isolated, or regretful. The anxiety of exclusion among young-adult consumers could stimulate individuals to engage in activities and make popular and widely discussed purchases within their social circles.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

At the theoretical level, this research clarifies how scarcity-based and EWOM as social influence cues are processed within the S-O-R framework in a Generation Z culinary context. In the context of scarcity-based marketing in culinary field, this study expands the S-O-R framework and shows that perceived scarcity alone does not directly increase purchase intentions among Generation Z consumers. Perceived scarcity relevance for purchase intention appears when it strengthens perceived food value. EWOM has a direct positive effect on purchase intention and, at the same time, indirectly increases purchase intention by enhancing perceived value. By incorporating FoMO as a socially driven emotional state, this study also shows that purchase intentions are not only the result of a rational evaluation of food value; they are also shaped by consumers' fear of missing out on dining experiences with their peers. This study's framework suggests that purchase intention for ramen offered by local culinary MSMEs is shaped by a combination of cognitive value judgements and socially driven emotions, rather than by scarcity cues alone, and it offers a more fine-grained use of the S-O-R framework in the context of scarcity-based marketing.

The findings of this study can be utilized by GG Restaurant, targeting young consumers by leveraging EWOM and FoMO conditions in this consumer segment, mainly by convincing consumers that GG restaurant products have good quality in terms of taste, raw materials, and a unique and different dining experience compared to other similar culinary products. Scarcity tactics can be effective, but they need to be coupled with strategies that enhance perceived value to be truly impactful. In today's highly competitive culinary industry, brands must be wary of the potential negative impact of perceived scarcity, as other ramen brands offering products with similar taste and quality could threaten GG restaurants. The practical recommendation that can be suggested from the results of this research are: 1) Enhance the online presence of the business with marketing strategies that encourage satisfied customers to leave positive reviews and share their experiences; 2) Create urgency by providing limited-time offers or exclusive deals; 3) Create marketing promos such as bundling or discounts that benefit consumers to come to this restaurant with their friends; 4) Value enhancement and menu innovation so that product quality is maintained and products can still be seen as unique compared to other culinary products.

This study's limitations include the limited sample characteristics of Generation Z, which may limit the generalization of the findings to other demographic groups. It also only focuses on one restaurant, GG Restaurant, which may not fully represent the wider food industry. Future research should consider how scarcity marketing strategies, EWOM, FoMO, and perceived food value can influence purchase intention in a wider demographic

segment and include different types of businesses.

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