

บทบาทของความกลัวพลาดโอกาส (FOMO) ในการตลาดดิจิทัล: กรณีศึกษา ผลกระทบของไทยแอร์เอเชียต่อการตัดสินใจซื้อของผู้บริโภค

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บทคัดย่อ

ภาวะกลัวพลาดโอกาส (Fear of Missing Out: FOMO) ถูกนำมาใช้ในกลยุทธ์การตลาดดิจิทัลในหลากหลายอุตสาหกรรม การเข้าใจพฤติกรรมและการตอบสนองของผู้บริโภคต่อกลยุทธ์เหล่านี้ช่วยให้การการตลาดสามารถปรับแคมเปญให้เหมาะสมกับความต้องการของลูกค้า ทำให้การทำการตลาดดิจิทัลมีประสิทธิภาพมากขึ้น อย่างไรก็ตามงานศึกษาที่เกี่ยวข้องกับสายการบินต้นทุนต่ำและ FOMO ในบริบทไทยยังมีจำกัด ดังนั้น งานวิจัยเชิงคุณภาพนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อระบุและจำแนกกลยุทธ์ FOMO ที่ใช้ในสื่อดิจิทัลของสายการบินต้นทุนต่ำ และศึกษาผลกระทบต่อการตัดสินใจซื้อบัตรโดยสารของผู้บริโภค ข้อมูลจะเก็บจากโพสต์เฟสบุ๊คของ Fly AirAsia ระหว่างเดือนกันยายน 2567 ถึงมกราคม 2568 โดยรวบรวมถ้อยคำ ประโยค และภาพเพื่อวิเคราะห์เนื้อหา และใช้ข้อมูลที่ได้เป็นกรอบกำหนดประเด็นสำหรับการทำสัมภาษณ์เชิงลึกแบบกึ่งโครงสร้าง (Semi-Structured Interview) จากนั้นจึงวิเคราะห์ข้อมูลผ่านกรอบแนวคิด Prospect Theory, Scarcity Theory, Social Proof Theory และ Impulse Buying Theory เพื่อสำรวจการตอบสนองของผู้บริโภคต่อกลยุทธ์ FOMO ได้แก่ ข้อเสนอจำกัดเวลา (Limited-Offers) กลยุทธ์ราคา (Pricing Strategy) การนำเสนอจุดหมายปลายทาง (Destination Attractions) การใช้ผู้มีอิทธิพลทางสื่อ (influencer Endorsement) แคมเปญตามเทศกาล (Event-Driven Campaigns) และการโปรโมตบริการเสริม (Service Promotion) ผลการศึกษาพบว่า คำที่ปรากฏบ่อยที่สุดคือ “จองด่วน” และ “จองเลย” ข้อเสนอที่จำกัดเวลาและกลยุทธ์ราคาเป็นปัจจัยที่กระตุ้นความเร่งรีบและการตัดสินใจแบบฉับพลันได้อย่างมีประสิทธิภาพ ขณะที่การใช้อินฟลูเอนเซอร์ (Influencer) และภาพปลายทางท่องเที่ยวสามารถช่วยสร้างแรงบันดาลใจ ความคาดหวัง และตอกย้ำบรรทัดฐานทางสังคม ส่งผลต่อการมีส่วนร่วมของผู้บริโภคอย่างชัดเจน นอกจากนี้ การวิเคราะห์เชิงประเด็นยังพบรูปแบบการใช้ภาษาที่เน้นความเร่งด่วน การสื่อถึงความขาดแคลน และเนื้อหาภาพที่โดดเด่นดึงดูดความสนใจ โดยสรุป งานวิจัยชี้ให้เห็นว่าแม้กลยุทธ์การตลาดที่อาศัย FOMO จะสามารถส่งเสริมเจตนาการซื้อของผู้บริโภคได้อย่างมีนัยสำคัญ แต่ประสิทธิผลดังกล่าวขึ้นอยู่กับลักษณะของเนื้อหาโปรโมชันและคุณค่าที่ผู้บริโภครับรู้ ซึ่งนำไปสู่ข้อเสนอแนะเชิงปฏิบัติสำหรับนักการตลาดดิจิทัลและประเด็นที่ควรศึกษาต่อในอนาคต

คำสำคัญ: ภาวะกลัวพลาดโอกาส; FOMO; การตลาดดิจิทัล; สายการบินแอร์เอเชีย; สายการบินต้นทุนต่ำ

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The Role of Fear of Missing Out in Digital Marketing: A Case Study of Thai Air Asia's Influence on Consumer Purchase Decisions

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Abstract

Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) has been implemented in digital marketing across various industries with different strategies. Understanding how customers respond to these marketing strategies allows marketers to adjust the campaigns to suit individual preferences, resulting in more efficient use of digital marketing resources. However, studies on low-cost carriers and FOMO in the Thai context are limited. The main objective of this qualitative study is to identify and categorize FOMO strategies used in low-cost carriers' digital marketing and to investigate their impact on consumer decisions to purchase a plane ticket. Data were collected from a cross-sectional study of Fly AirAsia Facebook posts from September 2024 to January 2025; words, sentences, and pictures of the posts were kept for content analysis to identify themes for thematic analysis from in-depth semi-structured interviews from participants through the lens of Prospect Theory, Scarcity Theory, Social Proof Theory, and Impulse Buying Theory and to examine their responses to various FOMO-driven marketing strategies, including limited offers, pricing tactics, destination attractions, influencer endorsements, event-driven campaigns, and service promotions. The findings revealed that among highly frequent posts and many post types, 'Book Now' and 'Reserve Now' are most frequently used. Limited offers and pricing strategies effectively trigger urgency and impulse buying, whereas influencer endorsements and destination imagery evoke aspirational desires and social proof, reinforcing consumer engagement. Additionally, thematic analysis identified key patterns of FOMO techniques, such as the prevalence of urgent language, scarcity cues, and visually captivating content. The study concludes that while FOMO-based strategies can effectively drive consumer purchase intention, their impact varies depending on the nature of the promotional content and perceived value. Implications for digital marketing practitioners and recommendations for future research are discussed.

Keywords: FOMO; Digital Marketing; AirAsia; Low-Cost Carriers

1. Introduction

Digital marketing is essential for business success, especially in Thailand, where people spend an average of 7.58 hours online daily—above the global average of 6.4 hours (Kemp, 2024). Social media offers a powerful platform for businesses to increase brand awareness, influence consumer decisions, and drive sales. Fear of Missing Out (FOMO), a psychological principle based on humans' tendency to compare themselves to others and avoid missing out (Przybylski et al., 2013), is widely used in digital marketing through strategies such as limited-time offers, flash sales, exclusive access, influencer campaigns, social media teasers, contests, giveaways, and real-time updates (Chiu et al., 2016; Hodkinson, 2019). FOMO strategies can create urgency, boost engagement, enhance brand perception, increase customer loyalty, and provide social proof (Fiveable, 2024a).

Thai AirAsia, one of Thailand's most successful low-cost carriers, provides an ideal case for studying FOMO in digital marketing. Known for its attractive campaigns and cost-efficient approach to reach a wide customer base, AirAsia aligns with its motto, "Now Everyone Can Fly." With over 13 million Facebook followers as of November 2024, frequent posts, high on-time performance, and extensive route coverage, the airline achieves strong business results (AirAsia, 2025). Despite frequent use of FOMO strategies, the flood of social media content can overwhelm consumers, and the most effective strategies for different Thai segments remain unclear.

This study aims to examine how FOMO on Thai AirAsia's Facebook page influences consumer purchase decisions and how the insights can help optimize low-cost carriers' social media campaigns for local audiences. The research addresses the following question:

- How does FOMO in Low-cost carriers' digital marketing campaigns influence consumer decisions to purchase airline tickets?

2. Literature Review

2.1 Theoretical Foundations of FOMO

FOMO refers to the persuasive that others might be having rewarding experiences from which one is absent. It is often exacerbated by social media, where individuals are constantly exposed to others having a good life (Dinçer et al., 2022; Ivantchev & Ivantcheva, 2024). Alabri also mentioned that the critical point of FOMO is that the need to belong is a significant driver of FOMO, as individuals seek social validation and connection (Alabri, 2022), which is similar to the social proof theory by Robert Cialdini, that people are likely to do what other people do in a given situation (Cialdini, 2001a).

FOMO is strongly rooted in social psychology, particularly in the need for social validation and peer influence. This provides the theoretical foundation for examining how social media content can trigger FOMO and influence consumer behavior, particularly in the context of AirAsia.

2.2 Digital Marketing Strategies Leveraging FOMO

The techniques have been used in Digital marketing, which also depends on the platform characteristics. Facebook and Instagram can use FOMO to amplify the limited-time offers or exclusive content. Personalized messages can create a sense of urgency, such as countdowns for sales or exclusive access to

events. In addition, focusing on high-quality content that highlights scarcity, such as limited product releases or exclusive insights, would enhance customers' trust and loyalty (Kumar & Kumar, 2024).

Prospect Theory, which includes the concept of Loss Aversion, helps explain the psychological basis of FOMO by suggesting that individuals are more sensitive to potential losses than equivalent gains. In the context of marketing, consumers may perceive missing out on a deal as a loss, prompting quicker decisions. Scarcity Theory further supports this mechanism by proposing that items or opportunities appear more valuable when they are limited. Integrating FOMO in digital marketing content, such as "Limited time offer" and "Only 3 seats left!" can create a sense of scarcity, making consumers act faster, and Thai AirAsia usually uses this tactic on its social media channels. Digital marketers have different tools to elevate consumers' FOMO to encourage faster decision-making, such as limited-time offers, exclusive deals, and countdown timers (Good & Hyman, 2021; Hodkinson, 2019).

The content on Facebook posts is also important to convey what the company wants to communicate to customers based on its objectives. Loo adopted the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) to study customers' social media reactions on different carriers' Facebook pages (Loo, 2020). The type of post stimuli affects Facebook users' cognitions and emotions that lead to various behaviors. Posts about an airline's achievements often get negative feedback from customers who use the platform to complain about their experience with the service. While relationship-building posts, such as thanks and festive greetings, received more positive responses.

2.3 Consumer Decision-Making and Psychological Impact of FOMO

FOMO strongly influences consumer decision-making, particularly in impulsive purchases. Impulse Buying Theory suggests that consumers sometimes make sudden, unplanned purchases driven by emotions or situational triggers (Stern, 1962; Chauhan, 2024). Factors such as price, promotional strategies, and service quality can trigger impulsive buying, with price and destination availability being especially important for low-cost carrier customers (Yurawan, 2014). Research on Southeast Asian passengers indicates that attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control significantly shape purchase behaviors for low-cost carriers (Buaphiban & Truong, 2017).

Social and digital environments further intensify the psychological impact of FOMO. Social media exposes consumers to influencer recommendations, trending promotions, and peer consumption patterns, all of which can create heightened purchase urgency and emotional tension (Yaputri et al., 2022; Kumar & Kumar, 2024). These behaviors align with Social Proof Theory, which explains why consumers look to others' actions, especially in uncertain situations, when forming their own decisions (Cialdini, 2001a). Cultural dimensions, such as collectivism and power distance, also moderate how consumers experience FOMO and impulse buying, resulting in different levels of susceptibility across markets (Jayasuriya et al., 2022).

Overall, FOMO shapes both cognitive evaluations (e.g., perceived scarcity, time pressure) and emotional reactions (e.g., anxiety, urgency), influencing consumers' likelihood of making immediate purchase decisions. These insights provide the foundation for examining how Thai AirAsia's social media content activates FOMO among Thai consumers and how such psychological triggers translate into ticket-purchase behavior within a culturally collectivist context.

3. Conceptual Framework

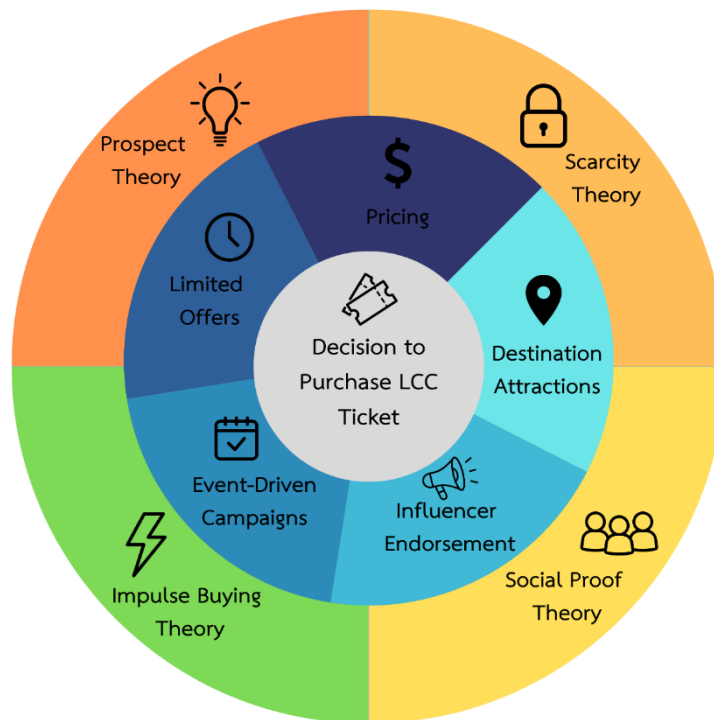


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework (Figure 1) is derived from 4 main theories: Prospect Theory, Scarcity Theory, Impulse Buying Theory, and Social Proof Theory, which were mentioned in previous studies related to FOMO from the literature review section. Associated Digital marketing strategies have been leveraged regarding the 4 main theories, and were matched from the observed Fly AirAsia Facebook posts to come up with the most frequently used strategies as shown in the second layer of the circle, and it affects the consumer's FOMO feeling that triggers the decision to purchase of low-cost carriers ticket.

This conceptual framework helps guide the research to discover the digital marketing strategies related to FOMO, which the selected theories can explain, and further explore the consumers' feelings towards the strategy used by LCC.

4. Methodology

This research aims to identify and categorize FOMO strategies used in Low-Cost carriers' marketing efforts and to investigate the impact of FOMO on Low-cost carriers' digital marketing campaigns on consumer decisions to purchase. Hence, the study employs directed content analysis and inter-rater reliability (IRR) to ensure coding credibility, followed by participant interviews to explore their feelings in depth. The following subsection discusses the research methods to find the answer in accordance with the objectives.

4.1 Directed Content Analysis and Inter-Rater Reliability (IRR)

The 196 posts were collected from “Fly AirAsia” Facebook posts, including descriptions and pictures from September 2024 to January 2025. The Directed Content Analysis will be used to focus on existing theories or frameworks to guide the analysis (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). The related theories will be categorized and extended to explore FOMO phenomena in digital marketing, resulting in the decision to purchase LCC.

Starting by defining the initial category based on the conceptual model, then analyzing the social media posts and data segments into predefined categories and creating subcategories if a new theme emerges. Later, Thematic analysis was used to identify, analyze, and interpret patterns or themes within the context of interview transcripts (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

In addition to the coding process, Inter-Rater Reliability (IRR) is implemented to ensure the study's credibility, trustworthiness, and reduce bias, following Cohen's Kappa (k) metric, can measure the agreement between 2 coders, can be adjusted if needed, and is suitable for categorical data (Landis & Koch, 1977).

The coders are randomly coded from random posts. A contingency table was created, and the observed and expected agreements were calculated and then derived into Cohen's Kappa formula, where 0.8 is considered acceptable:

$$\text{Cohen's Kappa (K)} = \frac{P_o - P_e}{1 - P_e},$$

Where:

P_o = Proportion of observed agreement where both raters agree.

$$P_o = \frac{\text{Number of agreed classification}}{\text{Total Classifications}}$$

P_e = Proportion of expected agreement by chance. It uses marginal totals (row and column totals in the contingency table) to calculate the likelihood of random agreement.

$$P_e = \frac{\text{Number of agreed classification}}{\text{Total Classifications}}$$

4.2 Participant Interviews

This is to follow the objective to investigate the impact of FOMO on Low-cost Carriers' digital marketing campaigns on consumer decisions to purchase by leveraging a purposive sampling technique to interview participants.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the prepared interview questions, and participants were asked to elaborate more on their answers. The duration of the interview will be approximately 40-60 minutes for 15 participants.

Interview participants were selected using purposive criteria, including Thai nationality, age between 20 and 60 years, prior experience making flight-booking decisions influenced by FOMO, and active use of digital platforms to access promotional content.

The interview has 2 parts, which are general demographic questions, including age, gender, education level, geographic location, and travel frequency, and interview questions showing the post's sample that follows the 5 main themes as defined in the conceptual framework, with another Service promotion theme newly derived from the coding process.

5. Research Findings and Discussion

5.1 Coders Agreement

The results from 2 coders are shown on the table below.

Table 1 The Expected Agreement Value for each Category

Pre-defined Category	Results
Limited Offers	0.01062057476
Pricing	0.0202780091
Destination Attractions	0.0676801332
Influencer Endorsement	0.02332361516
Event-Driven Campaign	0.04589233653
Service Promotion	0.0104123282

Table 2 The Value of Cohen's Kappa

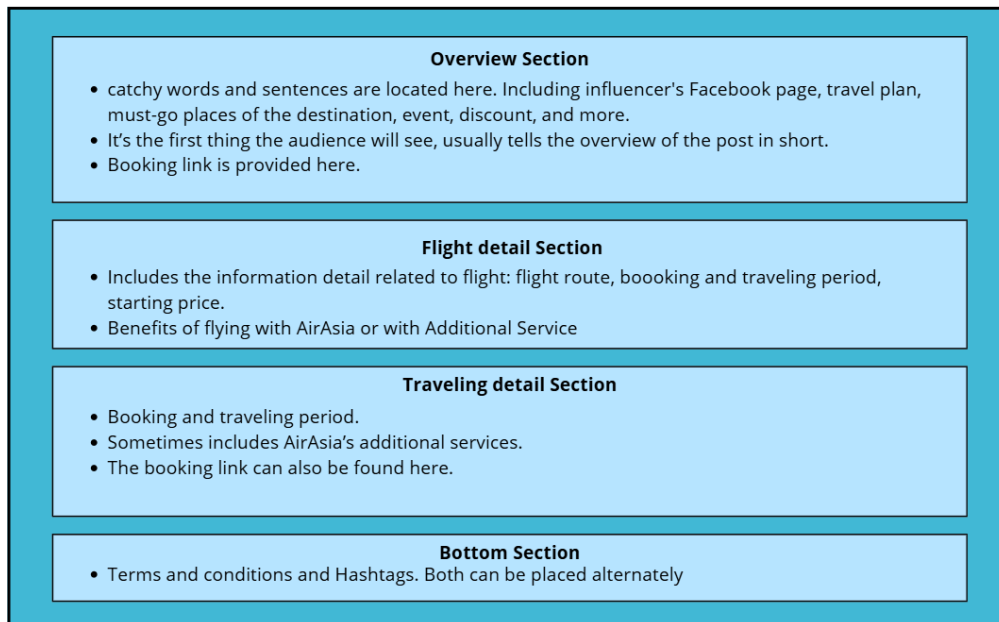
Measurements	Results
P_o (Observed Agreement)	0.8520408163
P_e (Expected Agreement)	0.1782069971
Cohen's Kappa (K)	0.8199556541

Cohen's Kappa result is more than 0.8, indicating that there is almost perfect agreement.

5.2 Post Description Section Structure

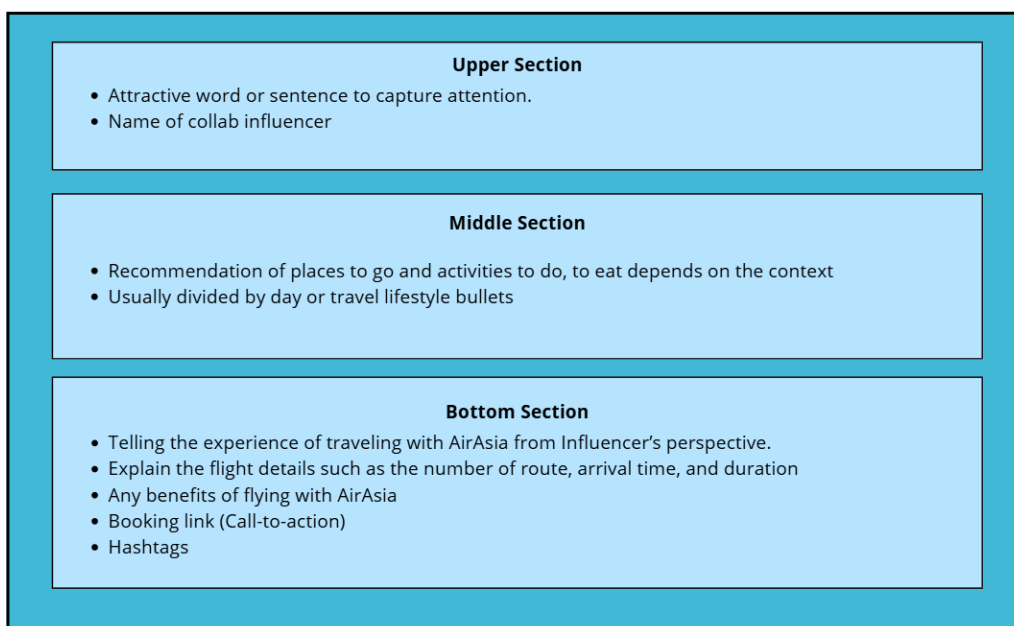
The structure of description has a variety of usage in the posts, but it can mainly be categorized into 2 types. This can be varied depending on the post context. This helps us see the overview of how AirAsia structures its description in the posts.

Figure 2 Route Promote Structure of Description



The main idea of the post is located at the top section, and the rest tells the details of the flights, destinations, including booking and flying period. It can be found commonly on the campaigns and promotion posts.

Figure 3 Influencer Post Structure of Description



Post related to influencer review is also commonly used. It contains a special review from influencers collaborating with AirAsia with a recommended travel plan, and ending with flight details.

5.3 Wording Analysis

The analysis of Thai AirAsia's Facebook posts identified recurring words and phrases that trigger FOMO among consumers. Words such as "Book Now" (จองด่วน) and "Reserve Now" (จองเลย) appear most frequently, typically near the booking link or during the booking period. According to the collected posts, "Book Now" (จองด่วน) was used 37 times, followed by "Reserve Now" (จองเลย) 31 times. These words, along with phrases associated with scarcity, exclusivity, rewards, and experiences, are frequently combined (e.g., Urgency & Scarcity) to create a strong sense of urgency for consumers. Table 3 shows how each word/phrase was grouped and most frequent words that appeared in the analyzed texts.

Table 3 Groups of words/phrases, their frequency and most frequent words/phrases

Group	Word/Phrase	Frequency	Most Frequent Words	FOMO Trigger
Urgency	"Book Quickly" (จองด่วน), "Book Now" (จองเลย), "Hurry to Book" (รีบจอง), "Urgent" (ด่วน), "Last Day" (วันสุดท้าย), "Last Chance" (โอกาสสุดท้าย), "Coming Soon" (เร็ว ๆ นี้), "Final Stretch" (โค้งสุดท้าย)	97	จองด่วน (37), จองเลย (31)	Create time pressure that encourages consumers to act immediately, avoiding the risk of missing the opportunity.
Scarcity	"Limited Quantity" (จำนวนจำกัด), "Only" (เท่านั้น), "Within" (ภายใน), "First 100 People" (100 ท่านแรก)	13	จำนวนจำกัด (5), เท่านั้น (6)	Emphasize limited availability, which increases the perceived value of the opportunity and triggers FOMO.
Exclusivity	"Special" (พิเศษ), "Free" (ฟรี), "Giveaway" (แจก), "Cool Activities" (กิจกรรมเจ๋ง ๆ), "Exclusive Privileges" (สิทธิพิเศษ)	16	"Special" (พิเศษ) (6), "Free" (ฟรี) (4)	Suggest unique benefits only accessible to a limited audience, enhancing the sense of missing out.

Table 3 Groups of words/phrases, their frequency and most frequent words/phrases (cont.)

Group	Word/Phrase	Frequency	Most Frequent Words	FOMO Trigger
Reward	"Discount" (ส่วนลด), "Pay Fun" (เปย์ฟิน), PAYDAY, "Free Giveaway" (แจกฟรี), BIG SALE, "Within Budget" (ไม่เกินงบ)	9	"Discount" (ส่วนลด) (2)	Emphasize tangible gains that consumers may lose if they do not act.
Experience	"Fun" (ฟิน), "Heartwarming" (ใจฟู), "Impressive" (ประทับใจ), "Must Experience" (สัมผัสครั้ง), "Go Enjoy" (ไปฟิน), "Chill" (ชิล), "Chic" (ชิค), "Snap" (แซะ), "Great" (ดีเลย), "Go Ahead" (ไปเลย), "Convenient" (สะดวก), "On Time" (ตรงเวลา)	19	"Fun" (ฟิน) (3), "Great" (ดีเลย) (2)	Appeal to emotional satisfaction, making consumers fear missing enjoyable experiences.
Social Proof	"Everyone Can Go" (ใคร ๆ ก็ไปได้), "Shop Freely" (ชอปเพลิน), "Super Wow" (สุดว้าว), "Top Hit" (ยอดฮิต)	6	"Top Hit" (ยอดฮิต) (2)	Indicate that others are participating, motivating consumers to follow the crowd to avoid social exclusion.
Emotion	"Wow" (ว้าว), "Impressive" (ประทับใจ), "Heartwarming" (ใจฟู), "Fun" (ฟิน), "Great" (ดีเลย), "No Delay" (ไม่ดีเลย์), "Unique" (ไม่ซ้ำใคร), "Release Joy" (ปล่อยจอย)	10	"Wow" (ว้าว) (2)	Using emotional triggers complement other FOMO strategies by motivating users to act quickly.

Table 3 Groups of words/phrases, their frequency and most frequent words/phrases (cont.)

Group	Word/Phrase	Frequency	Most Frequent Words	FOMO Trigger
Urgency & Scarcity	"Most Urgent" (ด่วนที่สุด), "Last Time" (ครั้งสุดท้าย), "All Out" (จัดเต็ม), "Packed" (จุก ๆ), "Grand" (ยิ่งใหญ่)	9	-	amplify FOMO by simultaneously targeting
Exclusivity & Reward	"Special" (สุดพิเศษ), "Free Giveaway" (แจกฟรี), "Cool Activities" (กิจกรรมเจ๋ง ๆ), "Discount" (ส่วนลด)	6	-	multiple triggers, making posts especially compelling.
Urgency & Experience	"Don't Forget" (อย่าลืม), "Don't Miss" (ห้ามพลาด), "Only" (เท่านั้น), "Last Chance" (โอกาสสุดท้าย)	8	-	

5.4 Sentence Analysis

The analysis explores the specific language and messaging techniques AirAsia uses in its digital marketing content to evoke FOMO and influence consumer behavior. The sentences in posts often leverage scarcity, urgency, social proof, and emotional triggers to encourage quicker purchasing decisions.

5.4.1 Limited Offers

The sentences emphasize that the offers are only available for a short time period by highlighting countdowns and deadlines, leveraging loss aversion techniques, and driving customers to act quickly for fear of losing the special deal that will soon expire which is matched with Scarcity Theory, more sensitive to potential losses than gains, leading them to respond more intensely to messages that imply scarcity or exclusivity (Kahneman & Tversky, 1979). In AirAsia's post, these techniques usually come with steep discounts or zero-baht fares that lead to higher conversion rates during the final hours of a campaign. Time-limited offers create urgency and scarcity, motivating consumers to act immediately to avoid missing out.

"Last 3 Days" (3 วันสุดท้าย)

"Last of the Year" (ครั้งสุดท้ายของปี)

"Final Stretch" (โค้งสุดท้าย)

5.4.2 Pricing (Special Discounts and Loyalty Rewards)

AirAsia constantly creates content based on its partnership's special offers, such as credit card brands, destination partnerships. Pricing strategies in AirAsia's digital marketing are tactically framed to highlight exceptional value, effectively combining Prospect Theory's value function and Impulse Buying Theory's emotionally charged ads and bundled offers. Highlighting exclusive or limited offers motivates consumers to act quickly to gain rewards they might otherwise miss.

"Special! Only for KTC credit cards, get a 500 THB discount" (พิเศษ! เฉพาะบัตรเครดิต KTC รับส่วนลด 500 บาท)

“Special activity: Receive AirAsia points totaling 3 million points, 187 prizes available” (กิจกรรมพิเศษรับ AirAsia points รวม 3 ล้านพอยท์ จำนวน 187 รางวัล)

5.4.3 Value Proposition Beyond Price

Beyond affordable pricing, AirAsia emphasizes other benefits such as convenience, comfort, and unique experiences. Sentences promoting these aspects create emotional appeal and highlight the value of acting now, especially for extra services like in-flight amenities.

“So convenient! Don't forget to book and enjoy” (สะดวกแบบนี้ อย่าลืมจองไปพินกันด้วยนะ)

“Direct flight from Bangkok (Don Mueang) to Seoul” (บินตรงจาก กรุงเทพฯ (ดอนเมือง) สูโซล)

5.4.4 Seasonal Campaigns

AirAsia's seasonal posts highlight attractions and events at specific times of the year. By showing time-limited or seasonal experiences, consumers feel they might miss unique moments if they do not act. This strategy aligns with Scarcity Theory.

“Year-end overseas travel: 6 dream cities you must visit at least once in your life” (เที่ยวนอกปลายปี โหมเมนต์ดี 6 เมืองในฝันที่อยากไปสักครั้งในชีวิต)

“During the festive season, cities will be decorated with millions of lights, offering a super chill atmosphere and nice weather. Plus, they are nearby with no visa required” (ในช่วงเทศกาลแห่งความสุข เมืองที่จะประดับตกแต่งไปด้วยไฟนับล้านดวง บรรยากาศสุด ชิล อากาศก็ดี แคมป์บินใกล้ ไม่ต้องใช้วีซ่า)

5.4.5 Destination Marketing

AirAsia also promotes destinations using influencer content, showcasing unique experiences tailored to each influencer's style. Posts often include action-oriented sentences that encourage immediate engagement and highlight social proof, making consumers fear missing out on experiences others are enjoying.

“Simple travel plan for Nha Trang, Vietnam with the page ‘ASA PaPaiLong’ – 3 gray banknotes got you covered” (แพลนเที่ยวญาจาง เวียดนาม ง่าย ๆ กับ เพจอาสาพาไปหลง 3 ใบเทาเอาอยู่)

“If watching this makes you want to travel, pack your bags and book your ticket with AirAsia now” (ใครดูแล้วอยากเที่ยวเก็บกระเป๋า ไปจองตั๋วกับแอร์เอเชียได้เลยครับ)

5.5 Picture Analysis

This section analyzes the visual content of AirAsia's Facebook posts to understand how images and graphics are used to evoke FOMO and influence consumer behavior. Pictures can reinforce urgency, scarcity, social proof, and emotional appeal, complementing the wording and sentences analyzed previously.

5.5.1 Limited Offers

A total of 24 posts were categorized under Limited Offers. These posts strategically emphasize scarcity-driven marketing, impulse buying inducements, and social proof mechanisms. Visuals often highlight countdowns, limited availability, or promotional banners, creating a sense of urgency and scarcity that encourages rapid consumer action. Consumers viewing these images may fear missing out on limited-time deals, prompting immediate booking behavior.

5.5.2 Pricing

41 posts were categorized under Pricing. Pricing visuals are often combined with destination attractions or other themes, which sometimes caused ambiguity between coders. After discussion, the primary theme was

determined for each post. These images convey urgency, highlight perceived value, and induce impulsive purchase behavior. By presenting steep discounts, special offers, or loyalty rewards visually, AirAsia encourages consumers to act quickly to avoid missing out on these valuable deals, aligning with Prospect Theory, Impulse Buying Theory, Scarcity Theory, and Social Proof Theory.

5.5.3 Destination Attractions

Destination-focused visuals showcase culturally significant locations and compelling imagery to promote domestic and international routes. By emphasizing unique attractions, these posts appeal to travelers' desire for memorable experiences. Seeing these images can create a fear of missing out on enjoyable or culturally significant travel experiences, motivating consumers to book promptly to avoid missing such opportunities.

5.5.4 Influencer Endorsement

28 posts are considered Influencer Endorsement. AirAsia utilizes influencers to enhance brand credibility, foster emotional connection, and increase engagement. Visuals often feature influencers experiencing destinations or interacting with products in unique ways, which highlights aspirational or relatable experiences. Consumers observing these posts may feel that they are missing out on the experiences others are enjoying, strengthening the social proof effect and motivating bookings.

5.5.5 Event-Driven Campaign

43 posts are considered Event-Driven Campaign, often tied to festivals or seasonal events. AirAsia uses these images to promote timely and memorable experiences, emphasizing events or attractions that exist only for a limited period. Consumers viewing these visuals experience FOMO, feeling they could miss a unique opportunity if they do not act quickly, which drives engagement and encourages immediate booking.

5.5.6 Service Promotion

The new Service Promotion category includes 20 posts highlighting additional services, bundled offers, or premium in-flight amenities. These visuals emphasize convenience, value, and enhanced travel experiences. By showing premium offerings visually, AirAsia creates a sense of exclusivity and scarcity, motivating consumers to upgrade or purchase additional services to avoid missing out on a better travel experience.

Across all picture categories, AirAsia strategically uses visual content to trigger FOMO in different ways. Limited offers and pricing images emphasize urgency and scarcity, destination and event images highlight experiences that may be missed, influencer posts leverage social proof, and service promotions appeal to exclusivity. By integrating these FOMO triggers, AirAsia encourages quicker consumer decisions, higher engagement, and increased bookings.

5.6 Results from the interview

The interviews were conducted from April to early May 2025, with a total of 15 participants. The sample consisted of 7 males and 8 females, aged between 22 and 50 years old (average age = 32.87). Most participants resided in Bangkok and the surrounding metropolitan area (Bangkok = 8, Pathum Thani = 2, Nonthaburi = 2), while three participants lived outside Bangkok but had previously relocated from other regions for work or study.

In terms of occupation, 9 participants worked in private-sector companies, 3 were government employees, 1 was university staff, 1 was a college student, and 1 worked in a family business. Their travel frequency with low-cost carriers over the past 12 months ranged from 0 to 10 trips across all low-cost airlines operating in Thailand. The interviews were conducted through both online platforms (13 participants) and in-person sessions (2 participants), depending on participant availability and convenience.

These demographic and behavioral characteristics indicate that the participants represent typical users of low-cost carriers in Thailand who actively engage in digital platforms for travel-related decisions, making them appropriate for exploring FOMO-related booking behavior.

The Interview guide consisted of 2 parts:

- (1) General demographic questions
- (2) Reactions to FOMO triggers identified in the content analysis

The questions were derived from the literature review, including Scarcity Theory, Social Proof Theory, Prospect Theory, and Impulse Buying Theory, as well as the themes identified during the content analysis. This ensured that the interview explored both cognitive and emotional responses to FOMO triggers relevant to digital airline marketing.

5.6.1 Keywords

Participants were shown the selected FOMO-triggered words and needed to choose those words that triggered their FOMO feeling the most. “BIG SALE”, “Last Day” (วันสุดท้าย), and “Final Stretch” (โค้งสุดท้าย) are the most selected words in the frequency of 9, 8, 6 respectively.

5.6.2 Facebook Post Recall

When asking participants what is in their mind when thinking about a Facebook post from Thai low-cost carriers, based on their experience. Most of them remembered that they saw the post related to low-cost carriers and remember the 0 baht promotion and the urgent feeling triggered keyword (“Free” (ฟรี), “First 100 People” (ร้อยท่านแรก), “Hurry to Book Before It’s Gone” (รีบจองก่อนหมด), “Last Day” (วันสุดท้าย). However, some participants feel no motivation to book the flight after seeing the new route to various destinations includes a landmark or a must-visit place.

5.6.3 Thematic Analysis Results

(1) Limited Offers

- Impact based on travel plans: The study revealed that time-limited offers, such as “Last 14 days” or “Last 3 days,” elicit mixed emotional responses among consumers. Participants who already had travel plans reported feeling a sense of urgency to act quickly, aligning with the scarcity principle (Cialdini, 2009). The plan also includes the people who go with them, family members, or friends; some participants don’t want to go alone. Available period and pricing are also important to decide, not just the pressure-triggered strategy. This is also aligned with Przybylski’s research that the urgency is context-dependent (Przybylski et al., 2013).

- Effect of Specific Phrases and Language: Specific words such as “Last Day,” “Final Call,” and “Last Chance” were perceived as more compelling than longer-duration offers like “14 Days Only. Most participants felt compelled by the terms indicating immediate action, but a few perceived such language as exaggerated or manipulative.

- Influence of Visual Elements (Colors and Formats): Color usage also emerged as a significant factor in driving urgency. Red was commonly associated with urgency and time-sensitivity interpreted as a call-to-action, while yellow was perceived as indicative of limited stock or final deals. This insight aligns with color psychology in marketing, where it influences the likeability and familiarity of the brand (Labrecque & Milne, 2012).

- Skepticism and Perceived Authenticity: Several participants expressed skepticism about the authenticity of limited offers, considering it a marketing strategy, particularly when similar promotions have been repeatedly seen. Then they feel no pressure to act quickly or decide to give up because they think that the seats are already filled up. It can be considered as the cry-wolf effect, where overuse of urgency leads to diminishing the brand's credibility (Hodkinson, 2019).

(2) Pricing

- Completed travel plan more than seeing super cheap prices: Participants often feel excited initially when seeing the promotion associated with super cheap prices, but decide not to purchase a ticket yet since it requires lots of preparation before booking the flight right away. They need to prepare the travel plan, available period, people who are going with, etc., before making a final decision. This behavior aligns with the Planned Behavior Theory (Ajzen, 1991), where intentions are influenced by perceived control and situational factors.

- Urgent booking behavior: price and timing synchronization. However, some participants have experience booking flights right away when they see special prices that are cheaper than usual, and when they see posts on Facebook. This happened when they had an available period, such as on a weekend or holiday, and needed some vacation.

- The synchronization between promotional prices and specific travel periods acts as a powerful motivator for immediate booking. This finding highlights the effectiveness of time-limited promotions targeting weekends, holidays, or common vacation periods as a tactic for increasing conversion rates. The decision-making process here resembles the Scarcity Principle (Cialdini, 2001b), where perceived rarity (e.g., limited-time offers) accelerates purchase behavior.

- Specific price points as immediate triggers: Many participants express the attractive feeling of seeing the discounted price. Specific price points, clearly displayed in large fonts or vibrant colors, capture attention more effectively. It evokes a stronger immediate response than percentage-based. They explained that numerical price tags are more transparent and relatable.

- Skepticism and perceived deception of unmatched prices: Comparing and contrasting prices before making a decision has also been recommended to ensure that they get the best price. Some participants have experienced a mismatch between the promoted price and the actual price, which makes them feel negative towards the brand. This aligns with the Attribution Theory (Weiner, 1985), where consumers are exposed to negative experiences in marketing tactics, potentially reducing brand credibility, and also matched with the theory of Expectation-Disconfirmation (Oliver, 1980), where unmet expectations result in negative consumer experiences.

- Consumer segmentation: price sensitivity and convenience priority: Pricing can gain higher interest from participants who are students and early to mid-career professionals, where budget friendliness is

the priority of concern. At the same time, older people tend to have less concern about the budget. They can pay a little bit more to trade for convenience and comfort throughout their journey.

- Younger participants (20s-30s) are highly price-sensitive and likely to book immediately if the price aligns with the available period. For older participants (40s-50s), they are less likely to be affected by low price tactics, but more inclined to pay extra to gain more comfort.

(3) Destination Attractions

- Destination relevance and personal connection: Participants are more likely to engage with promotional content when the destination aligns with their personal interests, bucket list, or hometown, as some of them need to fly frequently to their home. Destinations that hold emotional or personal significance are perceived as more compelling. This is influenced by personal relevance and emotional attachment, which can be explained by the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991), suggesting that personal relevance amplifies the intention to act on promotional offers.

- Visual appeal and emotional resonance of destination images: Showing beautiful pictures of the destination, such as scenery, activities to do, and creating the excitement of going to the destination. They see themselves in the destination's picture and want to see more information about the post because of the fear of missing the special deals.

- Using destination imagery to showcase the different scenarios is a powerful motivator for engagement. This tactic follows the Visual Persuasion Theory, where visual cues effectively evoke emotions and drive decision-making (Messaris, 1996).

- Unexplored or lesser-known destinations as attention grabbers: Destination promotions featuring unfamiliar or lesser-known locations generate curiosity and attract more attention, especially for participants who actively seek new travel experiences. Unexplored destinations act as novelty triggers that captivate attention and inspire curiosity to click. The Exploration Motivation Theory can explain this phenomenon, that novel stimuli are more attractive and give a stronger sense of behavioral responses (Berlyne, 1960)

- Recommendation-based destination marketing: In addition, recommendation posts related to places to go and activities to do give the audience the idea to go to each place based on individual preferences. This creates a sense of personalization and relevance, increasing the likelihood of engagement.

(4) Influencer Endorsement

- Contents align with participants' desire: Participants are more likely to engage with influencer content when the destination aligns with their pre-existing travel interests or desired travel list. If the featured destination is already on their bucket list, they are more inclined to engage and consider the content for future reference. Moreover, detailed and informative content that includes travel plans, itineraries, and specific travel tips is perceived as more valuable and actionable than general promotional content. Participants appreciate structured itineraries and practical information, such as transportation options and dining recommendations.

- Inspirational and aspirational influence: Influencers who present destinations with visually appealing, aspirational content can evoke a desire to visit, even if the destination was not previously considered by the participant.

- Post-purchase content as travel planning inspiration: Some participants also mentioned engaging with influencer content after purchasing a ticket, using it as a source of inspiration or itinerary guidance for their upcoming trip. This strategy leverages the Post-Purchase Reassurance Effect, where content that affirms the consumer's choice fosters positive brand associations and reduces cognitive dissonance.

- Credibility concerns and perceived authenticity: Several participants express skepticism towards influencer content, perceiving it as overly promotional or insincere. They tend to seek more authentic reviews from non-sponsored sources such as YouTube, Pantip, or independent travel blogs. Trustworthy and unbiased sources hold more persuasive power than overtly commercial endorsements (Hovland & Weiss, 1951).

(5) Event-driven Campaign

- Negative feelings towards seasonal events: Participants generally expressed a negative sentiment towards event-driven promotions, perceiving them as crowded, expensive, and inconvenient. These participants actively avoid traveling during festival periods, associating them with stress rather than enjoyment. This indicates a potential misalignment between promotional messaging and actual travel intentions for specific traveler segments.

- Participants who have personal or emotional connections to specific festivals or destinations show a stronger interest in event-driven promotions, particularly when the destination has personal significance. This highlights the importance of targeted event marketing that leverages personal connections to destinations rather than generic festival promotions.

- The convenience-price-availability triad: Event-driven campaigns that emphasize a combination of convenient flight schedules, affordable pricing, and reliable return flights are more likely to gain traction among participants.

- Low appeal of onboard activities: Activities involving AirAsia staff or celebrity appearances onboard are generally perceived as unnecessary or even undesirable, especially for travelers who seek relaxation.

(6) Service Promotion

- Service promotion as informative detail: AirAsia's Facebook content also promotes its services, which are limited to AirAsia's flights. When these services are added together with booking, customers will earn more benefits at a cheaper cost. Participants mentioned that they feel nothing or dislike seeing these posts, compared to other types of posts would trigger the feeling of booking much more.

- Service promotion content is perceived as functional but uninspiring. It lacks the emotional or aspirational triggers that participants respond to in destination-based or price-focused posts. This indicates a potential gap in marketing strategy, where service promotions could be reframed to emphasize convenience, comfort, and peace of mind rather than basic product information.

- Preference for full-service carriers over low-cost add-ons: Participants weigh the perceived cost-effectiveness of full-service carriers against AirAsia's add-ons. The additional effort required to assess, compare, and purchase multiple add-ons detracts from the appeal. This finding aligns with the Cognitive Effort Theory (Payne, 1976), where consumers seek to minimize cognitive effort in decision-making. For AirAsia,

there is an opportunity to reframe add-ons as all-inclusive bundles that simplify booking and present a clear, consolidated price.

- Trust and perceived service quality: Participants also expressed their feelings towards airlines because of the good quality service that makes them trust AirAsia and choose to fly with it next time.

- Positive service experience can be a brand differentiator, reinforcing perceived reliability and encouraging repeat purchases. While AirAsia's add-ons may not be the primary attraction, highlighting positive service aspects (e.g., punctuality, courteous staff) can strengthen brand loyalty and increase willingness to consider add-ons.

Table 4 summarizes study results and groups them into key themes.

Table 4: Themes of study results

Themes	Study Results
Limited Offers	Generated the strongest scarcity-based FOMO responses. Participants reacted most intensely to urgent phrasing and time-sensitive colors, which heightened perceived pressure to make quick decisions. However, overuse of such tactics also caused skepticism and reduced credibility, showing that scarcity-induced FOMO is effective but fragile.
Pricing	Produced value-driven FOMO, particularly when prices were extremely low and clearly displayed. Participants experienced excitement and fear of missing a good deal, but purchasing was often delayed until travel plans were feasible. This shows that pricing triggers FOMO only when aligned with personal readiness and available travel periods.
Destination Attractions	Activated experiential FOMO. Visually appealing images, recommended activities, and unfamiliar destinations stimulated curiosity and a desire not to miss unique experiences. Participants imagined themselves at the destination, demonstrating how visual persuasion and novelty cues strongly fuel FOMO.
Influencer Endorsement	Created social-comparison FOMO. Influencers showcasing appealing trips made some participants feel motivated to travel or save ideas for future trips. However, perceived insincerity reduced trust among others, indicating that authenticity significantly moderates FOMO in influencer-based promotions.
Event-Driven Campaigns	Produced mixed or negative FOMO effects. While participants with emotional connections to specific festivals responded positively, most associated event-season travel with crowds and inconvenience, reducing interest and in some cases creating avoidance rather than FOMO.
Service Promotion	Generated little to no FOMO. These posts were seen as functional, informational, and not emotionally compelling. Although positive service experiences contributed to trust and loyalty, service add-ons themselves did not trigger urgency or fear of missing out.

Overall, the cross-theme comparison shows that FOMO is most strongly triggered by scarcity, value, and experiential imagery, while authenticity and personal relevance influence how effectively the message

translate into intention to book. Themes lacking emotional or experimental appeal—such as service promotions—produce minimal FOMO effects.

6. Conclusions

6.1 Research Finding Summary

The study analyzed the short and impactful words collected from “Fly AirAsia” Facebook promotional posts and revealed that AirAsia employs a multi-layered FOMO strategy, integrating urgency, scarcity, reward, exclusivity, and emotional appeal to compel immediate consumer action. Urgency was picked as the dominant strategy, with phrases “จอลดด่วน” and “จอลดเลย”, which mirrors digital marketing practices that employ time pressure to accelerate decision-making (Kumar & Kumar, 2024). These cues directly reflect Scarcity Theory, which states that consumers perceive scarce or time-limited offers as more valuable, and are therefore more likely to take immediate action. The wording also supports Prospect Theory’s loss aversion, in which individuals act quickly to avoid missing out on a good deal rather than to seek gains. This confirms earlier studies showing that urgency-based appeals are central to FOMO-driven marketing (Good & Hyman, 2021; Hodgkinson, 2019).

Sentence-level findings further show strong reliance on scarcity-oriented messaging such as “3 days left” (3 วันสุดท้าย) and “Last chance of the year” (ครั้งสุดท้ายของปี), reinforcing the psychological triggers identified in FOMO literature. AirAsia also employs numerous exclusive or partnership-based pricing messages, for example, “Exclusive KTC credit card offer – 500 THB discount” (พิเศษ! เฉพาะบัตรเครดิต KTC รับส่วนลด 500 บาท). These tactics align with Impulse Buying Theory, which highlights that clear, specific, and immediate savings increase the likelihood of spontaneous purchases (Stern, 1962; Chauhan, 2024). This is particularly relevant in the low-cost carrier context, where consumers exhibit high sensitivity to price promotions and limited-seat deals (Yurawan, 2014; Buaphiban & Truong, 2017). Destination-based phrases that rely on social validation, such as “เที่ยวสิงคโปร์คุ้มกว่าใคร ต้องบินแอร์เอเชีย,” demonstrate the use of Social Proof Theory, where traveler popularity and collective behavior influence consumers’ destination choices (Cialdini, 2001a; Yaputri et al., 2022).

The picture analysis shows that Thai AirAsia often integrates multiple themes—most notably Influencer Endorsement, Destination Attraction, and Event-Driven Campaigns—within a single post. This blended approach aligns with Loo’s (2020) application of the Stimulus–Organism–Response (S-O-R) framework, which posits that visual stimuli trigger emotional responses that subsequently drive online engagement and purchasing behaviors. Scenic landscapes, iconic landmarks, cultural imagery, and festival-related visuals are used to evoke emotional resonance, consistent with literature indicating that vivid and high-quality imagery heightens FOMO and strengthens consumer desire (Kumar & Kumar, 2024). Additionally, AirAsia’s maintained visual identity, through consistent color schemes (red and white) and recognizable brand elements, supports findings in digital branding studies stating that coherence enhances trust and reduces perceived risk during online decision-making.

Interview results reveal that Limited-offer messages only influence behavior when participants already have pre-existing travel intentions, which aligns closely with the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991), particularly the role of intention and perceived behavioral control in shaping actual behavior. Participants also emphasized that precise numerical prices seem more credible than percentage discounts, reinforcing Impulse

Buying Theory's proposition that clarity reduces cognitive load and increases the likelihood of spontaneous bookings. However, inconsistencies between promotional and actual ticket prices generated perceptions of dishonesty, underscoring Hodgkinson's (2019) argument that transparency is crucial in building trust in digital marketing.

Among all visual themes, Destination Attraction emerged as the most influential. Destinations associated with personal nostalgia, bucket-list aspirations, or previous positive experiences significantly increased consumers' intention to browse or purchase, a pattern consistent with the emotional and social dimensions of FOMO highlighted by Dinçer et al. (2022) and Ivantchev & Ivantcheva (2024). Pictures of lesser-known locations also elicited a sense of curiosity and adventure, demonstrating how novelty can amplify FOMO-driven exploration. By contrast, participants expressed skepticism toward overly curated influencer content, aligning with recent findings that consumers increasingly prefer authentic, experience-based recommendations over promotional endorsements (Yaputri et al., 2022).

Event-driven campaigns generated mixed reactions, reflecting cultural nuances identified by Jayasuriya et al. (2022). While some participants were attracted to culturally meaningful or nostalgic festivals, others avoided peak periods due to high prices and crowding, illustrating how cultural values, social expectations, and perceived inconvenience interact to shape FOMO-driven motivations. Finally, Service Promotion was viewed as informative rather than emotionally engaging, which corresponds with earlier studies showing that functional content generates weaker affective responses compared to experiential or community-oriented posts.

Overall, the findings not only confirm but also extend prior research by demonstrating how FOMO-related theories, including Scarcity Theory, Prospect Theory, Impulse Buying Theory, Social Proof Theory, and S-O-R, operate simultaneously within Thai AirAsia's digital marketing ecosystem. Integrating these perspectives provides a comprehensive understanding of how psychological triggers, digital content design, and cultural context jointly influence Thai consumers' flight-booking decisions on social media.

6.2 Research Benefits and Implications

(1) Academic Contribution

This study can enrich theoretical understanding of how FOMO strategies influence consumer purchase decisions within the low-cost carriers, particularly in the context of Thai AirAsia. It also extends existing literature on digital persuasion by examining scarcity, urgency, and social proof cues shape decision-making in high-frequency, price-sensitive travel purchases.

(2) Implications for Airlines

The findings offer airlines practical guidance for developing more effective FOMO-driven marketing initiatives. Specific strategies include implementing real-time seat availability indicators (e.g., "Only 3 seats left"), incorporating countdown timers in time-sensitive fare promotions, and sending personalized notifications based on users' past search behavior. These applications can enhance message relevance and stimulate quicker purchase decisions among consumers. Blending different approaches gives more impact to induce attention.

(3) Implications for Digital Marketers

Digital marketers can utilize the results to design targeted, psychologically aligned campaigns that resonate with consumers who are sensitive to FOMO cues. Effective approaches include segmenting audiences

by behavioral tendencies, integrating social proof statements (e.g., “1,000 people booked this destination today”), and optimizing push notifications and email content to highlight limited-time opportunities.

(4) Responsible and Ethical Marketing Practices

The findings also emphasize the importance of ethical considerations when employing FOMO-driven strategies. Marketers should avoid excessive pressure tactics or misleading scarcity claims, ensure transparency regarding offer availability, and establish boundaries that prevent emotional manipulation. Adhering to responsible practices can sustain consumer trust and mitigate potential backlash.

(5) Implications for Hospitality Businesses

Hotels, and other tourism-related businesses with limited marketing resources can apply FOMO principles to enhance booking conversions. Potential strategies include displaying real-time demand signals (e.g., “12 people are viewing this room”), offering flash promotions during low-demand periods, and collaborating with airlines to create limited-time bundled deals.

(6) Implications for E-commerce Platforms

Most e-commerce platforms have already implemented FOMO-based such as low-stock notices, limited-time deals, and personalized recommendations. The findings of this study support the refinement and optimization of these strategies. Platforms can enhance effectiveness by improving the precision of scarcity signals, tailoring urgency cues to individual consumer behavior, and ensuring transparency to avoid misleading pressure tactics. Additionally, the insights encourage e-commerce operators to evaluate the ethical boundaries of their current FOMO-driven mechanisms and make adjustments that sustain consumer trust while maintaining conversion performance.

6.3 Limitations and Future Research

The research focuses solely on Thai AirAsia, considering that other Low-cost carriers might learn more about their digital marketing strategies and their impact on consumers from different perspectives. In addition, future research should consider cross-cultural analysis since cultural perspectives may impact on how people perceive and respond differently to FOMO campaigns.

The study collects data from consumer perception at a single point in time. Using longitudinal data could provide more comprehensive insights into how consumers respond to FOMO strategies over time or during different marketing campaigns.

Future research should consider quantitative analysis to validate the identified themes, including necessary metrics, which could provide a more extensive analysis of FOMO strategy effectiveness. It should also compare the results of findings across different social media platforms.

Cross-industry comparison is also recommended since each industry has its conditions and unique response to the strategies. And behavioral dimensions and new theory should be included to earn a wider range of insights.

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