

Tennis as Sports Trend FoMo Phenomenon Among Middle Class in Jakarta

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Abstract

This study examines how fear of missing out (FoMO), reinforced by social media, shapes tennis as a lifestyle practice among middle-class individuals in Jakarta. Adopting a qualitative phenomenological approach, it draws on interviews, observations, and document analysis involving eight participants, including club managers, coaches, enthusiasts, content creators, and beginner players. The findings indicate that platforms such as Instagram and TikTok play a significant role in constructing tennis not only as a physical activity but also as a marker of fitness, status, and social identity. Exposure to curated content contributes to the perception of tennis as an aspirational practice and encourages participation through social comparison and conformity to digitally mediated norms. The study further shows that participation is shaped by the interplay between symbolic aspiration and material constraints, as individuals use tennis to construct identity, expand social networks, and negotiate belonging, while economic barriers continue to limit access. By integrating Veblen and Baudrillard, this study frames tennis as symbolic consumption under digitally mediated aspiration, shaping the performance of lifestyle, identity, and class in urban contexts.

Keywords: FoMO, Jakarta, Middle-class, Social Media, Tennis

INTRODUCTION

Social networking platforms have evolved beyond their initial role as communication tools, increasingly functioning as spaces for constructing self-image and sharing socially valued moments. Consequently, the concept of fear of missing out (FoMO) has emerged alongside the expansion of social media (Przybylski et al., 2013). FoMO refers to a form of intrapersonal experience characterised by psychological unease and anxiety associated with perceived exclusion from meaningful experiences, particularly those mediated through digital interactions (Syahnar et al., 2018). This phenomenon is especially visible on platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, Facebook, and Twitter, where users continuously share curated representations of their lives. Marseal (2022) notes that individuals experiencing FoMO tend to seek continuous updates related to their interests, as reflected in the prominence of curated content, such as K-pop idols' lifestyles, within their feeds.

Indonesia's digital landscape provides a relevant context for examining the relationship between social media, FoMO, and lifestyle formation. Indonesia had 213 million internet users as of January 2023, representing approximately 77% of the total population. Jakarta, in particular, records one of the highest levels of internet penetration, reaching 86.96% according to the Indonesian Internet Service Providers Association (APJII) (Annur, 2023). Data further indicates that 52% of active social media users in Jakarta access these platforms for lifestyle-related information, while 29% engage with sports-related content. These patterns indicate that social media functions not only as a communication medium but also as a significant source shaping lifestyle preferences and engagement in physical activities (Badan Pusat Statistik, 2019).

Social media use plays a central role in intensifying FoMO. Hunt et al. (2018) demonstrate that social media engagement is associated with increased levels of FoMO, while reduced usage contributes to lower levels of loneliness, depression, and anxiety. Platforms such as Instagram and TikTok allow users to observe others' experiences while emphasising socially valued moments, thereby reinforcing pressure to participate in similar activities, particularly among the middle-class. Exposure to idealised online content is also associated with heightened FoMO and problematic patterns of social media use driven by social comparison (Servidio et al., 2024). As a result, decisions to engage in specific activities are increasingly influenced by digitally mediated exposure, including participation in sports such as tennis.

Tennis has historically been associated with elite social groups (Zhai & Vancouver, 2022). Traditional representations of the sport emphasised exclusivity through dress codes and leisure culture, reinforcing its image as a high-status activity. However, this perception has gradually shifted alongside the rise of consumer culture and increasing individualism, expanding access to middle-class participants (Zhai & Vancouver, 2022). Studies suggest that tennis has evolved from an aristocratic activity into a more widely practised sport, including among middle-class participants (Gabor et al., 2021).

In Indonesia, the growing visibility of tennis has been amplified by social media exposure and celebrity involvement. Public figures such as Raffi Ahmad and Nagita Slavina

have contributed significantly to promoting tennis-related activities (Kristina, 2024). Events such as “Tiba-tiba Tennis”, organised by VINDES Sport, have further increased public engagement (Widyanira et al., 2023). These events can be understood as sport spectacles, where media, performance, and cultural meaning intersect to shape public perception (King, 2023). As influential figures, these celebrities influence public perception and consumer behaviour, particularly among millennials and Generation Z (Primasari & Puspitasari, 2023). Empirical studies confirm that Raffi Ahmad and Nagita Slavina significantly shape behavioural intentions and lifestyle perceptions among Indonesian audiences (Caraka et al., 2022). Their portrayal of tennis as part of an enjoyable and successful lifestyle contributes to its repositioning as a desirable middle-class practice (Kristina, 2024).

These developments position tennis not only as a sport but as a lifestyle practice shaped by social media and FoMO. Continuous exposure to curated representations of success and leisure may generate pressure among middle-class individuals to participate in such activities to align with perceived social expectations. However, existing studies primarily examine FoMO and social media within general contexts, with limited attention to how these dynamics influence participation in lifestyle-oriented sports, particularly among the urban middle-class in Jakarta. Addressing this gap, the present study examines how FoMO operates as a driver of lifestyle engagement in tennis among Jakarta’s middle-class, and how social media reshapes perceptions, norms, and patterns of participation in contemporary urban life.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Fear of missing out (FoMO) has emerged as a significant psychological concern in the context of contemporary communication technologies. It refers to anxiety arising from the perception of being excluded from socially meaningful experiences, particularly those mediated through digital interactions. Exposure to social media intensifies this condition, as platforms present highly selective and idealised representations of others’ lives, encouraging social comparison and shaping perceptions of desirability (Vogel et al., 2014). Such conditions may prompt individuals to engage in activities perceived as socially valued, including lifestyle-oriented practices such as tennis among the urban middle-class.

Social dimensions further intensify FoMO beyond individual psychological factors. Baumeister and Leary (1995) argue that individuals experiencing social exclusion or reduced belonging are more susceptible to FoMO, as they seek to maintain interpersonal connections. Continuous exposure to high-status activities displayed by peers, influencers, and public figures on platforms such as Instagram and TikTok reinforces this sensitivity, including participation in lifestyle sports such as tennis.

The need for belonging and the fear of exclusion operate as core mechanisms underlying FoMO. Individuals are particularly vulnerable during periods of social disconnection, and these feelings are amplified by constant exposure to curated content (Dewi et al., 2025). A cyclical pattern emerges in which FoMO drives increased social media use, which in turn intensifies exposure to idealised content and reinforces feelings of inadequacy.

FoMO can therefore be understood as a socially reinforced process rather than an isolated psychological condition. It emerges through the interaction between emotional states and digitally mediated environments. These dynamics extend into lifestyle-related behaviours, particularly physical activities. Individuals who adopt healthier lifestyles tend to report higher life satisfaction (Grant et al., 2009) and are more likely to engage in sports such as tennis. Such patterns align with findings that middle-class lifestyles are reproduced through cultural practices, including leisure, sport, and consumption across generations (Bielińska, 2025). Within this process, tennis increasingly functions as a marker of social identity and prestige.

Multiple interrelated dimensions shape FoMO, including social connection, life satisfaction, social media exposure, the need for acceptance, and self-regulation capacities (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Dewi et al., 2025; Servidio et al., 2024). Individuals with weaker social connections or lower life satisfaction are more likely to experience FoMO, particularly when exposed to idealised representations. At the same time, strong desires for social acceptance and repeated exposure to digital trends encourage participation in socially valued activities, while limited self-regulation intensifies concern about missing future opportunities.

Debord's concept of the "society of the spectacle" provides further insight into these dynamics. In contemporary societies, direct experience is increasingly replaced by mediated representation, where social relations are shaped through images rather than direct interaction (Nunn, 2019; Stratton, 2018). Social media platforms function as key sites for producing and circulating such representations, exposing individuals to curated and often unrealistic portrayals of lifestyle that influence self-evaluation and contribute to FoMO (Xu et al., 2025).

These dynamics are particularly evident in lifestyle-oriented sports such as tennis. On social media, tennis is represented not only as physical activity but also as a symbol of health, success, and social engagement. Images of luxury environments, fashionable sportswear, and exclusive social circles construct an "idealised self" that individuals are encouraged to pursue (Servidio et al., 2024). Repeated exposure to such representations may motivate participation not only for enjoyment but also for social validation and upward mobility.

Previous research has primarily examined FoMO in relation to social media use, social connection, and self-presentation. FoMO is closely linked to maintaining social presence, particularly among younger users, where continuous engagement reduces the risk of perceived exclusion (Aisafitri et al., 2021; Mayasari & Nurrahmi, 2023). Digital environments not only amplify FoMO but may also offer mechanisms for managing it through technological interventions (Alutaybi et al., 2020). However, limited attention has been given to how FoMO shapes participation in lifestyle-oriented activities such as sports within middle-class contexts.

Understanding tennis as a symbol of social aspiration requires engagement with theories of consumption and social differentiation. Veblen's concept of conspicuous consumption explains how visible practices signal social status, while Baudrillard emphasises that consumption is driven by symbolic meaning rather than utility (Veblen,

1994). From this perspective, participation in tennis represents not only physical engagement but also a symbolic act through which individuals express identity, status, and belonging within digitally mediated environments. Tennis therefore functions as both a sport and a cultural sign embedded in processes of social differentiation. These perspectives provide a conceptual basis for examining FoMO as both an experiential and socially constructed phenomenon shaped by digital media, symbolic consumption, and class dynamics. Such an approach enables analysis of how FoMO, social media, and symbolic consumption intersect in shaping tennis as a middle-class lifestyle in Jakarta.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a qualitative phenomenological approach to examine the lived experiences of middle-class individuals in Jakarta who engage in tennis as a lifestyle shaped by fear of missing out (FoMO) and social media. The analysis focuses on how these experiences are perceived, interpreted, and given meaning in everyday life. Phenomenology seeks to capture the essence of experience as articulated by participants, emphasising how FoMO is lived rather than merely observed as a social trend (Greening, 2019; Sugiyono & Lestari, 2021).

The study is grounded in an interpretive epistemological perspective, which assumes that social reality is constructed through experience and interaction. Within this framework, FoMO and lifestyle practices such as tennis are understood as meanings that emerge through engagement with digital media, social comparison, and everyday social contexts. The researcher is positioned as an interpretive agent who attends closely to participants' accounts to examine how these experiences are structured and expressed.

The participants consisted of eight middle-class residents of Jakarta, aged between 25 and 40 years, with monthly incomes ranging from IDR 5 to 20 million, based on middle-class income classifications defined by the World Bank (2021). Participants were selected through purposive sampling, with criteria including active involvement in tennis and frequent use of social media for at least three hours per day. This strategy was intended to capture variation in how FoMO and social media shape engagement with tennis as a lifestyle. The characteristics of the participants are presented in Table 1.

No	Name	Information
1	M.A	Tennis Club Manager
2	F.H	Tennis Club Coach
3	J.N	Active Tennis Enthusiast
4	D.N	Active Tennis Enthusiast
5	A.O	Tennis Content Creator/Influencer
6	D.M	Tennis Content Creator/Influencer
7	A.A	Beginner Tennis Player
8	S.N	Beginner Tennis Player

Table 1 presents the diversity of participant roles, enabling the study to capture variations in how FoMO and social media are experienced across different forms of engagement with tennis. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, supported by

observations and document analysis. Interviews served as the primary method for accessing participants' lived experiences, allowing them to articulate how they engaged with tennis in relation to FoMO, social comparison, and digitally mediated lifestyle practices. Observations and documents provided contextual insight into how these experiences were enacted in everyday and online settings. Interviews were conducted in a semi-structured format to maintain focus while allowing participants to elaborate on their experiences.

Data analysis followed a phenomenological procedure aimed at uncovering the structure of lived experience. Interview transcripts were read repeatedly to achieve immersion in participants' accounts, with attention directed towards how experiences were described rather than solely what was reported. Analysis began with the identification of significant statements, defined as expressions that directly conveyed participants' experiences of FoMO in relation to tennis, particularly in terms of exclusion, aspiration, social comparison, and the desire to participate. These statements were selected based on their relevance to the phenomenon and their capacity to reveal lived meaning in concrete situations.

Each significant statement was subsequently examined to derive meaning units through a process of condensation that preserved their experiential significance, with particular attention to what these expressions revealed about participants' lived experiences of visibility, belonging, and lifestyle expectations. These meaning units were then organised into experiential themes reflecting shared patterns across accounts, including pressures to engage, expectations of social visibility, and the tension between aspiration and material constraints, which were understood as interrelated dimensions of experience rather than discrete analytical categories. The final stage involved synthesising these themes to articulate the essential structure of the phenomenon, through which FoMO emerged as a lived condition characterised by an ongoing negotiation between the desire for inclusion, the need for social visibility, and the constraints imposed by economic and social conditions. Throughout, interpretation remained grounded in participants' descriptions, ensuring that the findings faithfully reflected the structure of experience as expressed in their accounts.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Fear of Missing Out (FoMO) is experienced by participants as a persistent awareness of being left outside socially valued moments, particularly those made visible through digital media. Engagement with platforms such as Instagram and TikTok exposes individuals to curated representations of tennis as a desirable lifestyle, creating a sense of pressure to participate, not only to engage in the activity itself but also to remain socially connected and visible. In this context, participation is not experienced as a purely individual choice, but as a response to the perceived need to align with what is socially recognised and shared.

Interpretation of the findings was guided by awareness that prior assumptions about FoMO, middle-class lifestyle, and social media visibility could shape the reading of participants' accounts. To manage this, analytical attention was directed towards

participants' experiential descriptions, particularly how they expressed belonging, exclusion, and participation in relation to tennis. Meanings were derived from these accounts rather than imposed through predefined conceptual categories. Such positioning supports the interpretive validity of the analysis within a phenomenological framework.

Tennis, which was historically associated with elite social groups, is now increasingly encountered by participants as an aspirational yet seemingly accessible lifestyle practice. Rather than simply recognising this shift, participants describe experiencing tennis through images and representations that emphasise style, exclusivity, and social desirability. These representations shape how individuals imagine participation, where engaging in tennis is felt not only as physical activity but also as a way of becoming visible within a socially valued lifestyle.

This phenomenon is particularly evident within middle-class communities in Jakarta, where continuous exposure to digitally curated content normalises tennis as part of a desirable lifestyle. As one participant explained:

“Tennis has now become part of the lifestyle identity of the middle class in Jakarta. It is no longer just associated with the upper class. Now, clubs are within the reach of the middle class. Entrepreneurs like Bines also bring sports apparel, tennis equipment, and coaching services with them. Social media has a lot to do with this [democratisation]” (J.N., Tennis Enthusiast, Interview, January 25, 2025)

This account reflects how participants interpret their engagement as part of a broader process of social positioning, which resonates with Bourdieu's (1984) concept of distinction, where cultural practices function as markers of social differentiation. However, the democratisation of tennis remains partial and uneven. While social media promotes the image of accessibility, participation continues to be shaped by underlying economic constraints. Beyond illustrating social positioning, this account also reflects how participants experience a shifting sense of belonging, where tennis becomes associated with inclusion within a desirable social group. The experience is not limited to recognising accessibility but involves a feeling of being drawn into a lifestyle that signals social relevance.

Based on field observations, the material realities of tennis intensify this contradiction, as court rental in areas such as Kuningan and Pondok Indah ranges between IDR 275,000 and IDR 470,000 per hour, while branded racquets and sportswear require considerable financial investment. These findings indicate that, despite its representation as an inclusive trend, tennis remains structurally embedded within middle- and upper-class consumption patterns. Material constraints are experienced not only as practical limitations but also as sources of tension, particularly when the desire to participate is shaped by constant exposure to idealised representations. This creates a perceived gap between aspiration and actual participation, which is felt as both social and personal distance. As a result, participation is not only a matter of interest but also of economic capacity.

In addition to economic barriers, social media contributes to the formation of

normative expectations regarding participation. As one club manager noted:

“Yes, social media helps us attract new members, but it also raises expectations. People now feel they need to wear stylish outfits and play at high-end courts just to be seen as part of the tennis scene” (M.A., Club Manager, Interview, December 23, 2025)

This experience highlights how participants come to associate participation with recognition and social presence, reflecting what Castells (2012) describes as networked forms of identity construction. Engagement in tennis, therefore, becomes a form of social performance rather than purely a recreational activity.

The performative dimension of tennis is further reinforced through visual representations circulating on social media. Carefully curated images featuring aesthetic settings, coordinated outfits, and stylised gameplay create a symbolic economy in which tennis is associated with an idealised lifestyle. As one participant described:

“On Instagram, I see influencers playing on rooftop courts, wearing matching outfits, and posting slow-motion serves. It looks cool, stylish, and aspirational” (J.N., Active Tennis Enthusiast, Interview, February 4, 2025)

Such representations encourage individuals to engage in tennis not only for physical or leisure purposes but also as a form of digital storytelling and status signalling. In this context, participation is closely tied to the desire to construct a visible and socially validated identity.

FoMO becomes particularly evident when participation is driven by perceived social pressure rather than intrinsic motivation. Individuals report feelings of exclusion when they observe others engaging in tennis-related activities online, leading to a desire to participate to maintain social belonging. As one beginner player explained:

“If I see players online having fun and playing, I feel that perhaps I am not involved but should also play or be there” (S.N., Beginner Tennis Player, Interview, January 25, 2025)

This reflects the mechanism described by Przybylski et al. (2013), in which FoMO is intensified through environments characterised by high visibility and continuous social comparison. Participation in tennis, therefore, becomes a response to perceived social expectations rather than purely personal preference. Participants describe this condition as a feeling of being left behind, where observing others’ engagement creates an internal pressure to act, even in the absence of prior interest. This experience reflects a shift from voluntary participation to a form of compelled engagement shaped by social visibility.

Despite these pressures, some participants demonstrate reflexivity and resistance towards FoMO-driven behaviour. Strategies such as limiting social media use and prioritising personal enjoyment indicate the presence of agency within digitally mediated environments. As one content creator noted:

“I set boundaries for myself, such as having digital detox days, and remind myself to find enjoyment in tennis independently” (A.O., Content Creator, Interview, February 2, 2025)

However, such resistance is not equally accessible to all individuals. The dominance of polished, elite-oriented representations of tennis may lead to symbolic exclusion, particularly for those with limited economic resources or lower levels of social capital. Social media simultaneously expands access to lifestyle trends while reinforcing class-based hierarchies through visual representation (Phua et al., 2017).

Overall, these findings reveal that tennis, as a lifestyle trend in Jakarta, operates within a complex intersection of aspiration, visibility, and structural constraint. Social media facilitates participation by increasing visibility and desirability, while simultaneously shaping expectations and reinforcing existing inequalities. Within this dynamic, FoMO is experienced not only as an emotional response but as a socially structured condition emerging from ongoing interaction between digital exposure and social positioning.

Economic Disparities and Accessibility

Economic disparities play a significant role in shaping how tennis is experienced across different segments of Jakarta’s middle class. While the sport has gained visibility and popularity, findings indicate that access, motivation, and symbolic meaning vary considerably between lower-middle and upper-middle-class participants. For individuals in the lower-middle class, tennis often remains an aspirational activity, encountered primarily through social media rather than direct participation. In contrast, upper-middle-class individuals are more able to engage with the trend, although participation may function more as a lifestyle accessory than a sustained practice.

This disparity is reflected in the experiences of lower-middle-class participants, who often encounter tennis as a symbol of exclusion rather than inclusion. As one beginner participant explained:

“I kept seeing my friends posting about their tennis games at these fancy clubs, and I will be honest, I felt left out. But it is not as if I could easily join them, as membership is expensive. I had to wait for a free trial class to give it a try” (A.A., Beginner, Interview, February 4, 2025)

This account illustrates how FoMO is experienced as a form of economic exclusion, where exposure to digitally mediated lifestyles intensifies awareness of social distance. Rather than facilitating participation, social media in this context amplifies perceived inequality by making aspirational lifestyles visible but not fully accessible. This condition is experienced as a sense of exclusion that is reinforced through repeated exposure to lifestyles that remain materially out of reach, intensifying awareness of social distance.

In contrast, participants from more economically stable backgrounds describe their engagement with tennis in symbolic and identity-oriented terms. As one enthusiast noted:

“Exercise, for me, is a lifestyle; it is not just exercise. I play not only for the game, but also for the outfits and the moments. It makes me feel good, as though I belong to something better” (D.N., Enthusiast, Interview, January 25, 2025)

This reflects a different dimension of FoMO, in which participation is less about avoiding exclusion from activity itself and more about maintaining alignment with an aspirational identity. Here, tennis functions as a symbolic resource through which individuals construct a sense of belonging, status, and self-presentation within a digitally visible social space.

These contrasting experiences highlight how class position shapes the expression of FoMO. For lower-middle-class individuals, FoMO is primarily associated with exclusion from shared social experiences, while for upper-middle-class participants, it is linked to sustaining a desirable image and lifestyle coherence. FoMO therefore operates differently across class contexts, functioning both as a pressure to access participation and as a mechanism for maintaining symbolic inclusion.

Further analysis suggests that FoMO is not a uniform experience but takes multiple forms depending on individual motivations and interpretations. Some participants describe FoMO as a form of socio-status anxiety, driven by the need to remain visible and relevant within social networks, while others frame their engagement in more intrinsic terms related to health and personal well-being.

This distinction is evident in the observations of a club manager:

“We have members who come in just to take photos and socialise. They barely play but always wear the right brands and post about every session. However, we also have regular members who play for health. They do not post much, but they are consistently present” (M.A., Manager, Interview, December 23, 2025)

This suggests a clear divide between FoMO as social performance and FoMO as lifestyle maintenance. In the former, participation is oriented towards visibility and recognition, while in the latter, it is grounded in personal fulfilment and routine practice.

Similarly, shifts in motivation over time indicate that FoMO-driven behaviour may evolve into more authentic engagement. As one content creator explained:

“I initially joined because everyone else was doing it. I did not want to be left out. However, over time, I began to genuinely enjoy tennis, and it became part of how I take care of myself” (A.O., Content Creator, Interview, February 2, 2025)

This transition highlights the fluid nature of FoMO, where externally driven participation can develop into intrinsic motivation. Such findings suggest that FoMO does not solely produce superficial engagement but may also act as an entry point into sustained lifestyle practices.

At the same time, some participants demonstrate critical awareness of the pressures embedded within digitally mediated representations of tennis. A tennis coach observed:

“The issue now is that people come with expectations shaped by Instagram, as they think tennis is all about looking good and being ‘in’. I try to show them the less glamorous side, including the effort and the learning process. It is not all about aesthetics” (F.H., Coach, Interview, January 18, 2025)

This highlights a tension between the visual construction of tennis and its lived reality. Digital representations tend to prioritise aesthetics and status, often obscuring the effort, discipline, and learning processes involved in the sport.

A similar pattern emerges among new participants, who often engage in prolonged observation before participating. One beginner reflected:

“I spent months watching tennis content on TikTok and Instagram. Everyone looked so stylish and confident. I did not feel like I belonged. When I finally joined, it turned out to be more enjoyable than I expected. However, I also realised how much I had been comparing myself” (S.N., Beginner, Interview, February 4, 2025)

These findings suggest that FoMO is initially constructed through processes of digital comparison and idealised representation but may be reshaped through direct experience, as engagement in actual tennis practice can challenge previously internalised perceptions of inadequacy and reveal a gap between mediated images and lived reality. At the same time, participation in tennis among Jakarta’s middle class is shaped by a complex interaction between aspiration, social comparison, and structural constraints, in which digital media plays a dual role by expanding awareness and desirability while simultaneously reinforcing symbolic and material boundaries. Within this context, FoMO operates as a dynamic and context-dependent phenomenon closely intertwined with class position, digital exposure, and the pursuit of social identity.

This study further demonstrates that social media communication shapes lifestyle choices and aspirations for social status through a series of intersecting and, at times, contradictory processes, particularly in relation to tennis as an emerging urban trend. While tennis has traditionally been associated with exclusivity among Jakarta’s upper class, the growing influence of public figures and digitally mediated representations has contributed to the formation of a “new lifestyle” market, simultaneously expanding its appeal and redefining what it means to belong to the urban middle class in Indonesia.

Within this shifting landscape, participants increasingly perceive tennis not merely as a sport, but as a symbol of modernity, health, prestige, and social desirability constructed through online representations. In this context, FoMO manifests as a strong psychological impulse to replicate the experiences observed within digital environments. As indicated by participants, engagement in tennis is not solely driven by intrinsic motivations related to health, but is also influenced by the fatigue and pressure generated by idealised portrayals of leisure and social life on social media.

This pattern becomes particularly pronounced in Jakarta, a city characterised by high levels of internet penetration and digital connectivity. Platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and WhatsApp function not only as communication tools but also as spaces where lifestyle trends are actively produced, circulated, and normalised. Within this environment, FoMO operates not merely as an individual emotional response but as a structural effect of continuous exposure to curated and idealised imagery, reflecting a broader shift towards a communication paradigm in which individuals are constantly negotiating identity within digital networks.

At the same time, these digitally mediated aspirations are shaped by persistent economic constraints. Participants, including club managers and content creators, highlighted the high costs associated with engaging in tennis, ranging from premium court rentals in areas such as Pondok Indah and Kuningan to the purchase of branded racquets and fashionable sportswear. A basic tennis racquet alone may cost several million rupiah, while membership fees and coaching sessions can be substantially higher. Although social media has increased the visibility and perceived accessibility of tennis, it has simultaneously elevated aesthetic and financial expectations, requiring individuals not only to participate but also to conform to specific visual and lifestyle standards.

Overall, the gap between aspiration and affordability becomes increasingly evident, particularly for middle-class individuals who are exposed to socially recognised lifestyle practice but face material limitations in accessing them. This gap is not only structural but also experienced as a form of social distance, where non-participation may be perceived as exclusion from shared narratives of visibility and belonging within digitally mediated environments. Within this context, FoMO extends beyond tennis as a single activity and reflects a broader condition in which participation is closely tied to recognition and social validation. The lived experience of FoMO in this context can be understood as a dynamic tension between aspiration, visibility, and exclusion, where individuals feel a persistent pull to align themselves with socially visible practices while simultaneously negotiating the constraints of economic access and social positioning. FoMO therefore emerges not merely as a fear of missing activities, but as an ongoing negotiation between the need to be present, the pressure to be seen, and the possibility of being left out within contemporary digital social life.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that fear of missing out (FoMO) **operates as a lived and socially embedded condition that shapes lifestyle participation among** Jakarta's urban middle class, particularly in relation to tennis as an emerging trend. Rather than functioning solely as an individual psychological response, FoMO is experienced through ongoing engagement with curated digital representations on social media. Within this context, tennis is no longer perceived merely as a physical activity but as a socially meaningful practice through which individuals negotiate identity, belonging, and participation within a digitally visible environment.

The findings further highlight the role of digital media in transforming tennis into a site where recognition, visibility, and social positioning are continuously negotiated. Through processes of social comparison and mediated representation, individuals are

encouraged to participate in activities that align with perceived social expectations. However, this process is not experienced uniformly. Class position significantly shapes how FoMO is experienced, with lower-middle-class individuals facing structural barriers to participation, while upper-middle-class individuals engage in tennis as a means of sustaining social presence and symbolic alignment with desirable lifestyles. These dynamics reflect broader patterns of inequality in which access to participation and the ability to remain socially visible are unevenly distributed across social groups.

From a theoretical perspective, this study contributes to the understanding of FoMO by situating it within the intersection of digital culture, symbolic consumption, and class dynamics. By integrating perspectives from Veblen (1994) and Baudrillard (1998), the findings suggest that participation in lifestyle-oriented activities such as tennis is not only driven by functional or recreational motives but also by the pursuit of symbolic recognition and socially validated forms of self-presentation. In this sense, FoMO can be understood as an experiential condition shaped by the circulation of meaning within digitally mediated environments, rather than as a purely individual psychological response.

In practical terms, these findings underline the need for more critical and inclusive approaches to lifestyle promotion in digital contexts. Scholars and practitioners in education, psychology, and communication can develop strategies to promote self-awareness and media mindfulness, particularly among digital-native populations that are more susceptible to social comparison and normative pressures shaped by online environments (Berkout & Flynn, 2024). Such efforts are essential not only to mitigate the negative effects of FoMO but also to support more reflective, meaningful, and equitable forms of participation within contemporary urban digital life.

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