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Analysis of RUCAS Brand's Scarcity Marketing Strategy on Generation Z's FOMO Behavior

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Abstract: This study aims to analyze how the implementation of scarcity marketing strategies shapes an exclusive brand image and influences the consumption behavior of Generation Z in the modern fashion industry. This research uses a qualitative approach with conceptual analysis of marketing practices implemented by the RUCAS brand, particularly through product scarcity mechanisms and controlled distribution systems. The findings indicate that the application of a limited-quantity scarcity strategy combined with a single digital distribution channel successfully creates a perception of exclusivity and purchasing urgency among consumers. This condition is further reinforced by the psychological characteristics of Generation Z, which are closely associated with the phenomenon of Fear of Missing Out (FOMO), leading consumers to make impulsive and sometimes irrational purchasing decisions. In addition, the high demand in the primary market has stimulated the emergence of a dynamic secondary market through reseller activities, indirectly validating the symbolic value and prestige of the products through significantly higher resale prices. The study concludes that in the contemporary fashion industry, the value of a brand is no longer determined solely by the functional value of its products, but also by symbolic prestige, limited accessibility, and the social dynamics surrounding the brand.

Keywords: Scarcity Marketing, Brand Image, Fear of Missing Out (FOMO), Generation Z, Fashion Industry.

INTRODUCTION

The Indonesian fashion industry has been experiencing a fairly positive trend recently. A 2024 chart from Databoks shows that Gen Z's shopping interest in fashion ranked second, just below necessities. This high figure demonstrates that fashion has become a crucial aspect of Gen Z's daily self-presentation.

Net Spending Intention* Gen Z Indonesia Berdasarkan Kategori Belanja (Oktober 2024)

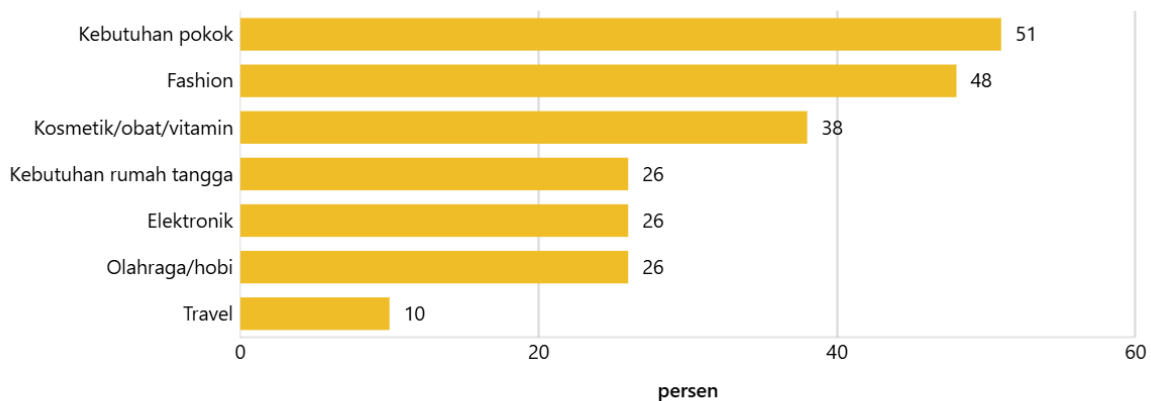


Figure 1. Gen Z Net Spending Intentions by Shopping Category (October 2024)
Source: Databoks.com

The development of this industry is the result of a shift in the paradigm of consumer behavior, in which people now prioritize social status and identity over the functional value of clothing. This transformation has been driven by exposure to digital environments and visual culture among Generation Z, which shapes consumption patterns characterized by a high awareness of image, symbols, and social prestige. This perspective aligns with the argument presented by Benedicta et al. (2022), who state that fashion—comprising items such as clothing and accessories—is no longer merely a basic necessity used to cover the body or serve as decoration. Instead, it has transformed into a communication tool used to convey personal identity. This momentum presents a golden opportunity for local fashion entrepreneurs to compete with global brands through marketing strategies that are relevant to the characteristics of this generation.

Generation Z refers to individuals born between 1997 and 2012 and is widely recognized as a generation that grew up alongside the rapid development of the digital era (Septiawan et al., 2020). In addition, Generation Z is often characterized by the phenomenon known as Fear of Missing Out (FOMO). FOMO refers to a psychological condition in which individuals feel anxious or worried when they believe they have missed out on an experience, opportunity, or activity that is perceived as interesting or enjoyable (Pangaila et al., 2025). The presence of FOMO is clearly reflected in consumptive behavior related to fashion. This behavior psychologically drives individuals to remain connected, visible, and up-to-date with emerging trends within their social environment, often by purchasing items that are not urgently needed (Abimanyu, 2025). The phenomenon of FOMO among Generation Z is further amplified by the abundance of trends circulating on social media platforms (Hidayati & Nasution, 2025).

One of the local fashion brands that has gained popularity among Generation Z is RUCAS. This Jakarta-based brand was founded by Rubin Castro Muhandi in 2018. RUCAS is recognized by the public as a brand that releases streetwear products such as denim, hoodies, jackets, and T-shirts featuring contemporary designs. Furthermore, the brand's reputation has also been strengthened through collaborations with prominent Indonesian influencers, which reinforces its brand positioning among consumers. This popularity is supported by previous research conducted by Wartini et al. (2025), which found that 69.3% of respondents actively interacting with the RUCAS brand were within the age range of 21–30 years.

As widely known, RUCAS consistently sells its products through limited releases that occur at specific periods. The brand introduces new products in highly restricted quantities and does not restock or re-release them in the market. This strategy creates a sense of exclusivity that strengthens the brand image among consumers. Observing the marketing pattern implemented by RUCAS, it can be understood that the brand applies scarcity marketing as a strategy to promote its products. According to Roihan (2025), scarcity marketing is a marketing technique designed to create urgency and increase consumer attraction by generating the perception of limited availability for a product. This strategy often pressures consumers to make purchasing decisions within a short period of time without fully considering rational evaluation.

The strategy implemented by RUCAS successfully leverages the FOMO phenomenon among Generation Z by utilizing product scarcity to create an image of exclusivity for the brand. This success is not only evident in the primary market but is also reflected in the high resale value ecosystem in the secondary market. This phenomenon further highlights the relevance and psychological impact of scarcity marketing in building a prestigious brand image. Therefore, this study aims to further examine and analyze the concept of scarcity marketing strategies implemented by RUCAS.

Literature Review

Scarcity Marketing

Scarcity marketing is a marketing approach that leverages product scarcity through the management of product availability in order to enhance both the selling value and the perceived value of a product in the eyes of consumers (Barton et al., 2022). Meanwhile, according to Abi et al. (2026), scarcity marketing is a marketing approach that exploits consumer psychology to increase product attractiveness through strategies of product limitation or scarcity. On the other hand, Rusadi et al. (2025) argue that scarcity marketing is a marketing technique that utilizes the psychological aspects of scarcity and time limitation by creating the impression that a product is difficult to obtain, thereby triggering consumers to make rapid purchasing decisions.

There are two types of scarcity commonly applied in this marketing strategy: limited-time scarcity and limited-quantity scarcity. Limited-time scarcity refers to product offers provided to consumers within a specific time frame. In contrast, limited-quantity scarcity emphasizes the limited number of products available to consumers (Aggarwal, as cited in Heriyanto et al., 2021).

Brand Image

Brand image refers to a collection of memories and perceptions that emerge in consumers' minds regarding a particular product. These perceptions are not solely influenced by the product's physical specifications but are also shaped by advertising effectiveness, marketing strategies, and direct impressions derived from user experiences (Suciningtyas, 2012).

The more positive the brand image associated with a product, the greater the level of consumer interest in that brand, as consumers tend to prefer products from brands that possess credibility and provide a sense of comfort in their use (Saputri & Pranata, 2014). Therefore, in order to strengthen relationships with consumers and enhance brand value, companies need to pay particular attention to public perceptions regarding their brand image (Al Satria & Firmansyah, 2024).

Fear of Missing Out (FOMO)

Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) is a psychological phenomenon referring to an individual's anxiety or fear of missing out on interesting experiences or activities perceived as important by

others (Przybylski et al., 2013). This phenomenon does not only affect individuals' psychological conditions but can also trigger excessive consumptive behavior.

The high intensity of social media usage among adolescents and young adults contributes to a sense of urgency to follow the latest shopping trends in order to avoid feelings of being left behind (Nasution et al., 2023).

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach using a descriptive method. According to Zaubi et al. (2025), qualitative research emphasizes descriptive aspects and depth of analysis, focusing on a holistic understanding of phenomena within their natural contexts. In line with this perspective, the descriptive method is used to address actual problems by objectively presenting facts (Soendari, 2012).

The study utilizes secondary data, including various previously published reports and publications. The use of secondary data was chosen to improve efficiency in terms of time and resources, although it still requires careful verification to ensure reliability and relevance (Zakariah & Afriani, as cited in Sulung & Muspawi, 2024).

Data collection was conducted through digital documentation studies of web-based sources, including the official website and social media accounts of RUCAS, in order to capture patterns in their marketing communication. In addition, the author conducted a literature review of relevant academic journals and scholarly works to strengthen the theoretical framework. The collected data were then analyzed descriptively to construct a comprehensive overview of the implementation of scarcity marketing strategies employed by the RUCAS brand.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on observations of the official website and social media accounts of RUCAS, a pattern of marketing strategies was identified that is systematically integrated with the psychological characteristics of its target market. These findings demonstrate that the success of the brand is not only driven by the popularity of its product designs but also by strict product scarcity management and the emotional dynamics of Generation Z consumers in shaping an exclusive brand image.

To further examine this phenomenon, the analysis in this chapter focuses on three interconnected aspects: the technical implementation of the strategy, the psychological manifestations among Generation Z, and the implications for the market. Through this discussion, the relevance between scarcity marketing strategies and consumer psychology is expected to be understood as a new standard within the local fashion industry.

Implementation of the Scarcity Marketing Strategy

The initial implementation of the scarcity marketing strategy by RUCAS involves strict control over its product distribution and transaction channels. Based on the observations, the brand designates its official website as the exclusive platform for product purchases and payments.

This exclusive use of the website allows the company to influence consumer psychology through visual media by displaying the label "Sold Out" to indicate products that are no longer available. This single-channel policy indirectly encourages consumers to compete with one another within the same digital space in order to obtain RUCAS products.

As a result, Generation Z consumers experience a sense of urgency to complete their purchases as quickly as possible before the products are sold out, often without considering other factors. In addition, the centralization of all payment activities enables RUCAS to manage product inventory in real-time, ensuring that the scarcity ecosystem created by the brand can be controlled in accordance with the company's vision and mission.

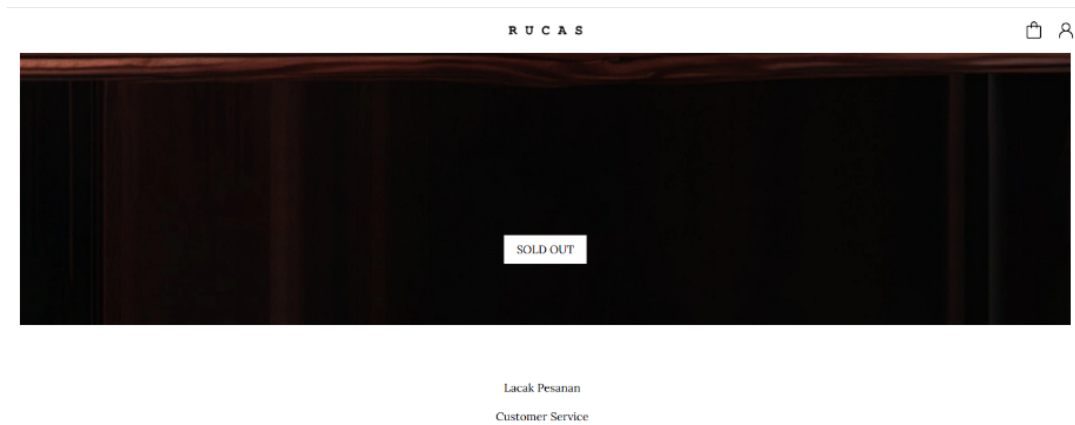


Figure 2: Product Stock Availability Information on the Official Website
Source: Rucas.co

Based on digital observations through its Instagram account, RUCAS has utilized social media as a promotional tool for its products while simultaneously communicating the element of limited-quantity scarcity. Posts on Instagram that provide detailed information regarding product release times create collective anticipation. This information regarding product releases serves as a crucial catalyst to trigger adrenaline and urgency in buyers. The posts also include a provision that buyers are only allowed to pay for one product, emphasizing the concept of limited-quantity scarcity. This effort is deliberately made to create a state of FOMO (Focus on Purchase) in its consumers, especially Gen Z. Once buyers are influenced by this, they will race and compete to obtain the product. Through this policy, RUCAS has indirectly emphasized the value and worth of its products. The implication is that exclusive value arises in the brand image embedded in the public eye.



Figure 3: RUCAS Product Release Information
Source: [instagram.com/rucas.co/](https://www.instagram.com/rucas.co/)

Manifestations of FOMO Behavior in Gen Z Consumers

RUCAS's marketing strategy successfully created a sense of urgency among its buyers. As seen in Figure 4, some buyers expressed their anxiety and sadness in the Instagram comments section due to their failure to compete for RUCAS products. Buyers who missed out actively requested that RUCAS re-release the sold-out collection. This behavior aligns with Gen Z characteristics, where fear and anxiety arise when they feel they have missed out on something they find interesting and enjoyable (FOMO). The high level of buyer interaction and concern for the brand successfully validates RUCAS as a brand with an exclusive image.

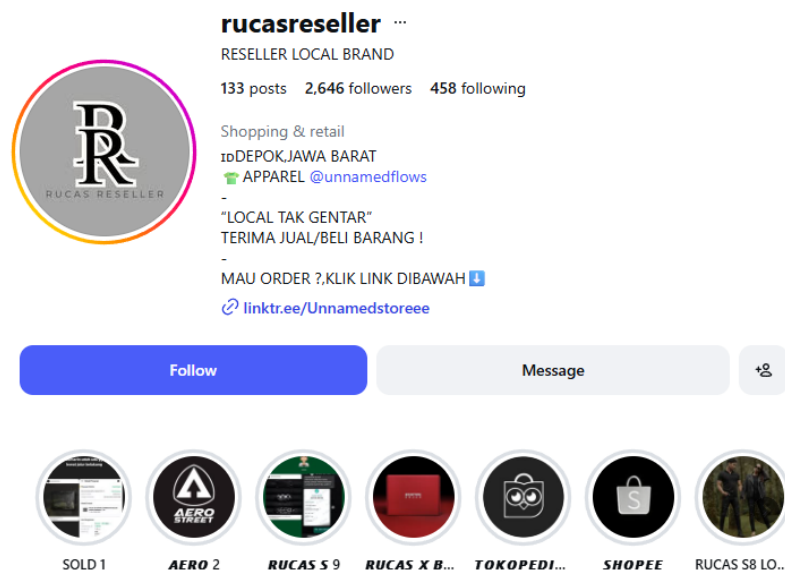


Figure 4: The FOMO Phenomenon Among Gen Z Consumers
Source: [instagram.com/rucas.co/](https://www.instagram.com/rucas.co/)

The failure of Gen Z consumers to acquire RUCAS products signifies a missed opportunity to communicate their social identity. For Gen Z, fashion is not simply a physical object that serves to cover the body, but has transformed into a communication tool for conveying self-image to others. Gen Z tends to prioritize social status over the functional value of clothing. By owning a collection of RUCAS products, renowned for their exclusivity, they have reached the top of the social trend hierarchy. This motive drives Gen Z consumers to request the re-release of sold-out products to gain the same validation.

Implications for the Secondary Market

RUCAS's strict policies, which created product scarcity in the market, and the intense reaction from Gen Z consumers to this phenomenon, have had a significant impact on the retail market. Initially, acquiring RUCAS products was only possible through primary market interactions, namely product sales by authorized stores to consumers. However, given RUCAS's reputation as a brand with considerable public prestige, a secondary market has emerged, allowing RUCAS products to be purchased not only through primary market interactions but also through interactions with secondary markets, specifically resellers. This means buyers are no longer competing solely with other buyers but also with resellers, who expect higher margins from selling scarce products.



Sumber: [instagram.com/rucasreseller/](https://www.instagram.com/rucasreseller/)
Figure 5 Akun Reseller RUCAS

Resellers, or businesses that purchase products for resale, are concrete evidence of the relevance of RUCAS's scarcity strategy to Gen Z consumers. The emergence of these parties validates that RUCAS's scarcity strategy successfully triggers Gen Z's fear of missing out on something they consider valuable or enjoyable. Furthermore, the presence of resellers and the price increases in the secondary market confirm that RUCAS products are viewed as valuable assets, as the company will not re-release the same product.

The presence of resellers provides Gen Z consumers with an alternative option to obtain RUCAS products, even at the cost of significant price increases due to scarcity. Furthermore, this situation creates a high sense of urgency for consumers to make irrational purchasing decisions at product release times to avoid future price spikes. This dynamic ultimately creates a closed market ecosystem where RUCAS's limited-quantity scarcity policy automatically increases the asset value for future product owners.

CONCLUSION

This study shows that RUCAS's systematic implementation of a scarcity marketing strategy has successfully constructed an exclusive brand image by exploiting the psychological characteristics of Generation Z, which are dominated by the Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) phenomenon. Through the implementation of limited-quantity scarcity and the control of a single digital distribution channel, RUCAS creates a purchasing urgency that forces consumers to make irrational decisions to maintain their existence and social status. The success of this strategy is not only reflected in the high activity in the primary market but also triggers the formation of a dynamic secondary market ecosystem, where resellers validate that the product has transformed into a high-value asset with a fantastic resale price. Thus, the synergy between product scarcity management and the manifestation of Gen Z's consumer behavior demonstrates that in the modern fashion industry, a brand's value is now determined more by symbolic prestige and limited access than simply the product's functional value.

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