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FOMO and User-Generated Content in Sport Marketing: A Theory of Planned Behavior Approach to Padel Participation Intention

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Abstract: *Padel has grown rapidly in Indonesia, and much of its spread has been driven by social media content. This study analyzes the influence of User-Generated Content (UGC) and Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) on padel participation intention, with the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), comprising attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control (PBC), as the mediating framework. Data were collected from 304 active social media users who had never played padel but had been exposed to padel-related UGC, and analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) in SmartPLS with two-tailed tests. Of the 14 hypotheses tested, nine were supported, two were significant in the opposite direction from the prediction, and three were not supported. UGC positively affected attitude and subjective norms, with credibility as the strongest dimension shaping attitude. FOMO displayed an opposing pattern of influence, lowering attitude while strongly increasing PBC and reinforcing subjective norms. PBC was the strongest predictor of intention, whereas subjective norms had no significant effect on intention. Overall, FOMO exerted the largest total effect on intention, with PBC serving as the strongest mediating pathway. This study offers three theoretical contributions: FOMO influences the TPB components in opposite directions, UGC drives intention through personal attitudes rather than social norms, and PBC dominates in a sport that depends heavily on ease of access. These findings provide practical guidance for padel industry practitioners to prioritize ease of access and authentic communication.*

INTRODUCTION

Padel is one of the fastest-growing sports worldwide, combining elements of tennis and squash. First introduced in Mexico in 1969, padel has expanded rapidly, particularly in Spain, which has become the center of the sport's development across Europe. The game is widely

regarded as simple and highly social, contributing to its increasing popularity in many countries. According to Google search trends through May 2025, Lithuania, Tunisia, and Croatia are among the countries that have recently shown strong interest in padel. Notably, Indonesia ranks 15th among countries with the highest interest in padel, indicating that the sport has begun to attract significant attention and is likely to continue growing in the future (Carro & Robert, 2025).

According to the Playtomic (2025) report, the growth of padel has exceeded projections, with more than 50,000 courts constructed worldwide in 2024, surpassing the initial estimate of 43,249 courts. Indonesia has also established a strategic position within the global padel industry. Based on data from the International Padel Federation (FIP) as of May 2024, Indonesia ranked 29th globally and 6th in Asia, with 134 courts, representing approximately 51% of all padel courts in Southeast Asia (Tempo.co, 2025).

Padel infrastructure in Indonesia has expanded rapidly. The number of courts increased from 134 in May 2024 to at least 551 courts across the country's ten largest cities by December 2025 (Ayo.co.id, 2025). This remarkable growth indicates that padel has evolved from a temporary sports trend into a rapidly expanding recreational industry.

However, Sweden's experience demonstrates that rapid growth may also create substantial risks. Following a surge in popularity between 2016 and 2020, Sweden experienced an oversupply of padel courts after the pandemic, leading to the closure of numerous facilities. The country's largest padel company, We Are Padel, filed for restructuring in 2022 after suffering significant financial losses, followed by the bankruptcy of several other padel businesses (Detik Finance, 2025). This experience provides an important lesson for Indonesia to anticipate the risks of oversupply and declining participation resulting from shifting sports trends.

A similar shift in consumer interest toward emerging racket sports has also occurred globally. In the United States, the rapid rise of pickleball has prompted the adaptation of traditional racket sport facilities (The New York Times, 2023). Likewise, the construction of 551 padel courts in Indonesia by the end of 2025 reflects changing investment patterns and growing interest among urban communities, highlighting the importance of managing the industry's expansion sustainably.

Social media platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and Facebook play a crucial role in promoting padel through User-Generated Content (UGC), which refers to content created by users based on their personal experiences (Mathur et al., 2022). UGC has been shown to increase consumer attention, engagement, and behavioral intentions toward products and activities (Mathur et al., 2022; Zhuang et al., 2023). In the context of padel, user-generated photos, videos, and testimonials can enhance public awareness and stimulate interest in trying the sport.

The effectiveness of UGC is influenced by three key factors: perceived benefit, perceived enjoyment, and perceived credibility (Mathur et al., 2022; Jo & Park, 2023). Perceived benefit refers to the usefulness of the information received and has been found to foster positive consumer attitudes (Mir et al., 2013). Perceived enjoyment reflects the pleasure individuals experience while engaging with padel-related content on social media, thereby encouraging participation (Su & Chiu, 2021). Meanwhile, perceived credibility represents the degree of trust users place in the information presented and has been shown to positively influence consumer attitudes (Mathur et al., 2022; Demba et al., 2019).

In addition to shaping attitudes, UGC may also trigger Fear of Missing Out (FOMO). Economic analyst Nailul Huda argues that the growth of Indonesia's padel industry has been largely driven by public trends and social media exposure, motivating many individuals to participate due to FOMO (Tempo.co, 2025). Anecdotally, informal conversations conducted by

the authors with padel players in October 2025 suggested that, besides health and lifestyle motivations, several players started playing padel after seeing their friends' activities on social media.

FOMO refers to an individual's concern about missing rewarding experiences that others are enjoying (Zhang et al., 2023). Previous studies have shown that FOMO strengthens subjective norms, namely the perceived social pressure that influences individuals to conform to their reference groups (Deliana et al., 2024). Consequently, FOMO may foster more favorable attitudes toward padel and enhance individuals' intention to play, as they become motivated to participate in activities that are currently popular (Deliana et al., 2024).

These phenomena are consistent with the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), which posits that attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control are the primary determinants of behavioral intention (Ajzen, 1991). In this context, UGC, through perceived benefit, perceived enjoyment, and perceived credibility, shapes individuals' attitudes, while FOMO reinforces subjective norms, jointly increasing the intention to participate in padel (Deliana et al., 2024).

Although numerous studies have examined FOMO within TPB-based models in the contexts of e-commerce, impulsive buying, and travel intention (Kang et al., 2019; Deliana et al., 2024; Harahap et al., 2024), research investigating its influence on sport participation remains limited, and no empirical study has linked padel-related UGC, through perceived benefit, enjoyment, and credibility, with FOMO and participation intention in an emerging padel market such as Indonesia.

Based on these conditions, this study examines the effects of UGC and FOMO on attitude, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control, and the intention to participate in padel in Indonesia. The findings are expected to inform the sustainable development of the Indonesian padel industry and help stakeholders anticipate the risk of declining participation similar to that experienced in Sweden.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

User-Generated Content (UGC)

User-Generated Content refers to content created and shared voluntarily by users based on their personal experiences, outside a professional or commercial context (Mathur et al., 2022). Unlike sponsored advertising, UGC is perceived as originating from peers, which gives it distinctive persuasive properties on social media (Zhuang et al., 2023). Prior research identifies three perceptual dimensions through which UGC affects consumer responses: perceived benefit, the extent to which the information helps viewers reduce uncertainty and make decisions (Mir et al., 2013; Mathur et al., 2022); perceived enjoyment, the pleasure or entertainment experienced while consuming the content (Nguyen et al., 2023; Su & Chiu, 2021); and perceived credibility, the degree to which the information is regarded as trustworthy, convincing, and reliable (Mathur et al., 2022; Demba et al., 2019). In the padel context, these dimensions capture how match clips, testimonials, and community posts created by players are evaluated by audiences who have not yet played the sport.

Fear of Missing Out (FOMO)

Fear of Missing Out is a pervasive apprehension that others might be having rewarding experiences from which one is absent (Przybylski et al., 2013; Deliana et al., 2024). FOMO is closely tied to social media use, which continuously exposes individuals to curated displays of others' activities (Zhang et al., 2023), and has been shown to drive conformity consumption, adopting behaviors displayed by reference groups (Kang et al., 2019). Because padel's growth in

Indonesia has been strongly trend- and social-media-driven (Tempo.co, 2025), FOMO is a theoretically appropriate antecedent for explaining why non-players form intentions to try the sport.

Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB)

The Theory of Planned Behavior posits that behavioral intention is determined by attitude toward the behavior (the individual's evaluative judgment of performing it), subjective norms (perceived social pressure from important referents), and perceived behavioral control (the perceived ease or difficulty of performing the behavior, encompassing beliefs about resources, opportunities, and capability) (Ajzen, 1991). TPB provides the mediating framework of this study: UGC and FOMO are modeled as antecedents whose effects on participation intention are transmitted through the three TPB constructs.

Hypothesis Development

UGC and Attitude

Attitude toward a behavior is a subjective evaluation of whether performing it is favorable or unfavorable (Ajzen, 1991). When individuals evaluate padel-related UGC as beneficial, they form positive judgments of the message content that carry over into their evaluation of the sport itself; the usefulness of information has been found to significantly shape consumer attitudes toward UGC (Mir et al., 2013; Mathur et al., 2022). Enjoyment operates as an intrinsic motivator: users who feel entertained while interacting with content develop more favorable evaluations of both the content and the activity it depicts (Moon & Kim, 2001; Su & Chiu, 2021; Jo & Park, 2023). Credibility, comprising trustworthiness and the expertise of the content creator, determines whether the message is accepted at all; UGC judged credible generates more positive attitudes and greater willingness to engage with the promoted activity (Mathur et al., 2022; Demba et al., 2019). Accordingly:

H1. User-Generated Content, consisting of perceived benefit, perceived enjoyment, and perceived credibility, positively influences attitude toward playing padel.

UGC and Subjective Norms

UGC also shapes normative perceptions. Under the Information Adoption Model (Sussman & Siegal, 2003), information perceived as useful serves not only personal evaluation but also as a social reference signaling what one's community values; consistent with Social Proof Theory (Cialdini et al., 1999), individuals treat others' visible behavior as a guide to appropriate conduct. Positive emotional experiences with content tend to be socially shared, creating descriptive norms that padel is an activity one's peers enjoy and endorse (Izquierdo-Yusta et al., 2022; Ozuem et al., 2016). Credible sources strengthen this process because normative beliefs are more readily formed from signals judged trustworthy (Sussman & Siegal, 2003; Ajzen, 1991). Accordingly:

H2. User-Generated Content, consisting of perceived benefit, perceived enjoyment, and perceived credibility, positively influences subjective norms regarding playing padel.

FOMO and the TPB Constructs

FOMO can foster favorable evaluations of trending activities: the desire to follow popular social trends leads individuals to view the activity as attractive and socially relevant (Kang et al., 2019; Deliana et al., 2024). Observing others enjoying padel through UGC was therefore expected to translate FOMO into a more positive attitude toward the sport:

H3. FOMO positively influences attitude toward playing padel.

FOMO is inherently normative. The anxiety of being left behind heightens sensitivity to the expectations and behavior of one's reference group (friends, family, and community), amplifying perceived social pressure to participate (Przybylski et al., 2013; Kang et al., 2019; Saavedra &

Bautista, 2020):

H4. FOMO positively influences subjective norms regarding playing padel.

For perceived behavioral control, prior evidence pointed to a negative relationship: FOMO-driven urgency encourages impulsive, less deliberate decision processes that weaken individuals' sense of control over their behavior, as found in online purchasing contexts (Nasr et al., 2023; Khoa et al., 2025). An individual moved to play padel by FOMO may simultaneously feel they lack the skill, time, or facilities to actually do so:

H5. FOMO negatively influences perceived behavioral control over playing padel.

FOMO can also translate directly into action tendencies. When individuals fear being left behind, they are more inclined to join activities favored by their social groups to maintain social connection and relevance, independent of deliberate evaluation (Kang et al., 2019; Deliana et al., 2024):

H6. FOMO positively influences the intention to participate in padel.

TPB Constructs and Participation Intention

Consistent with TPB's core propositions (Ajzen, 1991), individuals with favorable evaluations of padel are expected to form stronger participation intentions (H7); perceived support and expectation from important others should raise intention (H8); and confidence in one's ability to manage the time, cost, access, and skills required should strengthen intention (H9), with self-efficacy beliefs motivating goal pursuit:

H7. Attitude positively influences the intention to participate in padel.

H8. Subjective norms positively influence the intention to participate in padel.

H9. Perceived behavioral control positively influences the intention to participate in padel.

The Mediating Role of the TPB Constructs

TPB positions attitude, subjective norms, and PBC as the proximal determinants through which external variables affect intention (Ajzen, 1991). Prior work shows attitude mediating the effects of perceived benefit, enjoyment, and credibility on purchase intention (Mathur et al., 2022), and attitude and subjective norms mediating FOMO's effect on impulsive buying (Deliana et al., 2024). By extension, UGC dimensions and FOMO are expected to influence padel participation intention through the TPB constructs:

H10. Attitude mediates the effect of UGC, consisting of perceived benefit, perceived enjoyment, and perceived credibility, on participation intention.

H11. Attitude mediates the effect of FOMO on participation intention.

H12. Subjective norms mediate the effect of UGC, consisting of perceived benefit, perceived enjoyment, and perceived credibility, on participation intention.

H13. Subjective norms mediate the effect of FOMO on participation intention.

H14. Perceived behavioral control mediates the effect of FOMO on participation intention.

Conceptual Framework

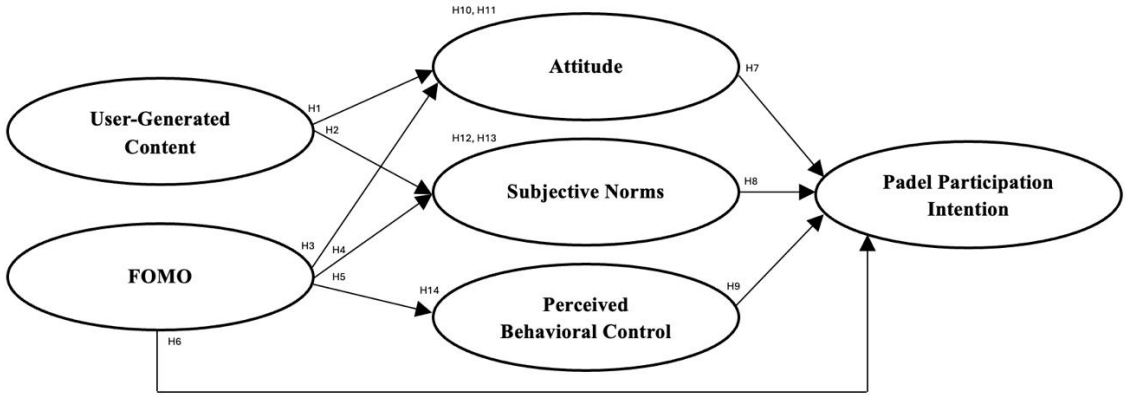

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

RESEARCH METHOD

Research Design and Data Sources

This study employed a quantitative, cross-sectional survey design. Primary data were collected through an online questionnaire; secondary data were obtained from relevant scientific literature and industry reports. All constructs were measured reflectively on a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree), with items adapted from established sources (Table 1). Eight items, one per construct (PB4, PE3, PC3, F5, A2, SN5, PBC3, PI3), were reverse-worded as a consistency check and reverse-coded (6 − raw score) prior to analysis, following Hair et al. (2019).

Table 1. Constructs, Operational Definitions, and Measurement Items

Construct (Source)	Code	Item (summarized)
Perceived Benefit: extent to which UGC improves one's decision outcomes (Mathur et al., 2022)	PB1	UGC information is relevant and fits my needs
	PB2	UGC information is timely and supports decision-making
	PB3	UGC helps me make decisions that save time
	PB4	UGC helps me make decisions that save cost (R)
Perceived Enjoyment: pleasure felt when consuming content (Nguyen et al., 2023)	PE1	Padel UGC is entertaining
	PE2	Padel UGC gives me pleasure
	PE3	Padel UGC feels exciting (R)
Perceived Credibility: information judged trustworthy, convincing, reliable (Mathur et al., 2022)	PC1	Padel UGC is unbiased
	PC2	Padel UGC contains reliable information
	PC3	Padel UGC contains believable information (R)
Fear of Missing Out: worry of missing experiences others enjoy (Deliana et al., 2024)	F1	Worry about missing experiences others are having
	F2	Worry that others have more experiences than me
	F3	Worry of social exclusion for not joining current experiences

	F4	Anxiety of being seen as unimportant if not participating
	F5	Anxiety when seeing others obtain new things I do not have (R)
Attitude: affective and cognitive evaluation (Mathur et al., 2022)	A1	Positive feelings toward padel
	A2	Playing padel is the right decision (R)
	A3	Padel is a beneficial activity
Subjective Norms: perceived social pressure and willingness to comply (Izquierdo-Yusta et al., 2022)	SN1	Important others think I should play padel
	SN2	Many people around me playing padel influences my decision
	SN3	Sense of obligation from prevailing social norms
	SN4	Tendency to comply with important others' expectations
	SN5	Peer influence to play padel (R)
Perceived Behavioral Control: perceived ease/difficulty, resources, capability (Ajzen, 1991)	PBC1	Sufficient money to support padel participation
	PBC2	Sufficient time to actively play padel
	PBC3	Participating in padel is easy (R)
Participation Intention: indication of willingness to perform the behavior (Ajzen, 1991)	PI1	Desire to play padel
	PI2	Intention to play padel if given the opportunity soon
	PI3	Plan to play padel (R)

Note: (R) = reverse-worded item. Items are condensed English renderings of the original Indonesian questionnaire.

Population and Sample

The target population comprised active social media users in Indonesia who had never played padel but had been exposed to padel-related UGC on platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, or YouTube. Purposive sampling was applied with four inclusion criteria: aged at least 20 years, never having played padel, familiarity with the sport, and prior exposure to padel-related UGC.

The sample size was determined using the ten-times rule commonly applied in PLS-SEM, which recommends a minimum sample equal to ten times the number of indicators (Hair et al., 2021). With 29 measurement indicators, the minimum required sample was 290 respondents; a target of 300 was set to enhance model stability.

Data Collection

Data were collected via Google Forms and distributed through Instagram, Threads, and WhatsApp, as well as offline through personal and professional networks. Before the main survey, a pilot test with 20 respondents meeting the target criteria confirmed instrument clarity; based on pilot feedback, a double-barreled UGC item was split into two items (time efficiency and cost efficiency), a clarifying description was added to the credibility item on unbiased content, brief variable definitions with examples were added, and sport-option lists were extended. To encourage participation, respondents in Surabaya and surrounding areas were offered complimentary premium padel racket rental sessions, while respondents elsewhere could enter a prize draw for e-wallet credits.

Screening questions verified eligibility: willingness to participate, correct identification of a padel court image, correct identification of a padel racket image, and comprehension of the UGC concept, supplemented by a consistency check between regular and reverse-coded items to flag careless respondents. Of the 446 collected responses, 80 failed court identification, 53 failed racket identification, and 9 did not comprehend the UGC concept, yielding 304 valid respondents (64.27%).

Respondent Profile

Respondents were predominantly young adults aged 20–29 (79.9%; mean age 26.5), female (63.8%), highly educated (80.3% hold a diploma or higher; 53.6% bachelor's degree), unmarried (71.4%), and formally employed (60.5% private-sector, state-enterprise, or civil-service employees). Geographically, 83.2% resided in Java, concentrated in East Java (51.0%), particularly Surabaya (36.5%). Respondents were intensive social media users: 84.5% spent at least three hours per day on social media, with Instagram (75.3%) and TikTok (74.0%) the dominant platforms for viewing padel content; 70.4% first learned about padel through social media, and 61.2% were exposed to padel content daily. Although 91.4% had at least one friend or close contact who actively plays padel, the main barriers to trying the sport were situational: no opportunity yet (38.5%), court distance (16.1%), no playing partner (13.5%), and difficulty finding courts (6.9%), totaling 75.0% access and network related rather than motivational or financial. Willingness to pay per two-hour session concentrated in the Rp 75,001–150,000 range (52.0%).

Analysis Strategy

The model was estimated with variance-based PLS-SEM in SmartPLS, evaluating the measurement model (validity and reliability) and the structural model (VIF, R^2, f^2, and path significance via bootstrapping with 5,000 resamples) following Hair et al. (2019). Two-tailed testing was applied as the more conservative choice, given that two paths were anticipated to be contested in direction.

Participation was voluntary: the first screening question recorded respondents' explicit willingness to take part before any survey items were shown, and responses were used solely for the purposes of this research.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Measurement Model Evaluation (Outer Model)

The measurement model evaluation assesses the quality of the indicators in measuring the latent constructs, covering convergent validity, discriminant validity, and construct reliability.

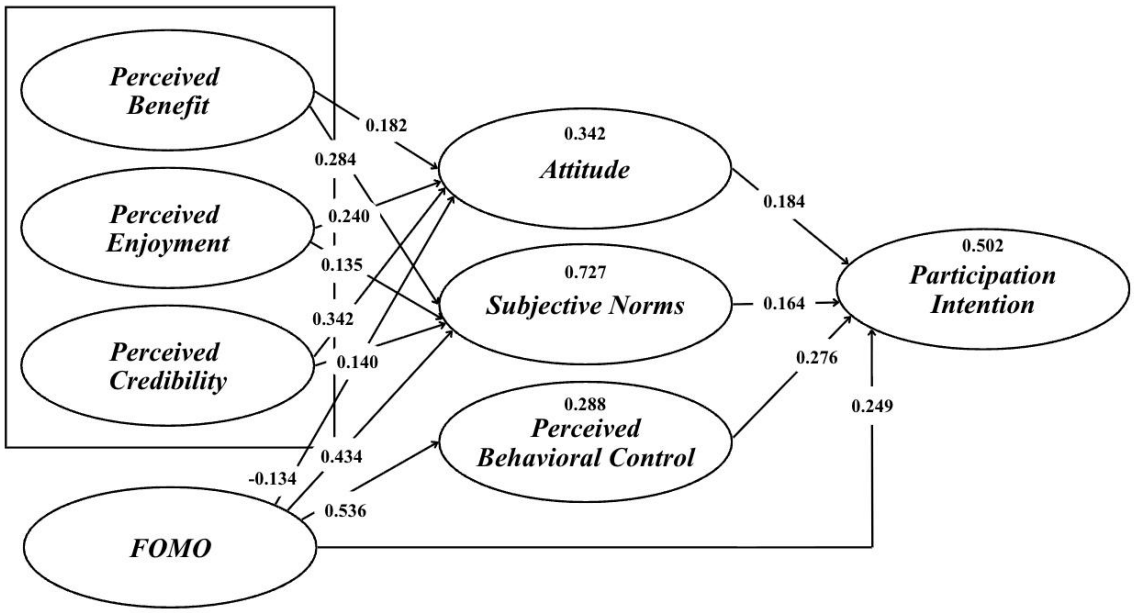

Figure 2. PLS-SEM Algorithm

Figure 2 presents the estimated structural model. The model explains 50.2% of the variance in participation intention ($R^2 = 0.502$), with $R^2 = 0.727$ for subjective norms, 0.342 for attitude, and 0.288 for perceived behavioral control. Full path estimates are reported in Tables 11–14.

Convergent Validity

Criteria: outer loading ≥ 0.70 and AVE ≥ 0.50 (Hair et al., 2019).

Table 2. Outer Loading Results

Construct	Indicator	Outer Loading	Description
Perceived Benefit	PB1	0,830	Valid
	PB2	0,848	Valid
	PB3	0,860	Valid
	PB4	0,777	Valid
Perceived Credibility	PC1	0,818	Valid
	PC2	0,816	Valid
	PC3	0,865	Valid
Perceived Enjoyment	PE1	0,816	Valid
	PE2	0,846	Valid
	PE3	0,860	Valid
Fear of Missing Out	F1	0,909	Valid
	F2	0,869	Valid
	F3	0,889	Valid
	F4	0,926	Valid
	F5	0,812	Valid
Attitude	A1	0,851	Valid
	A2	0,927	Valid
	A3	0,744	Valid
Subjective Norms	SN1	0,868	Valid
	SN2	0,842	Valid

	SN3	0,867	Valid
	SN4	0,863	Valid
	SN5	0,816	Valid
Perceived Behavioral Control	PBC1	0,825	Valid
	PBC2	0,844	Valid
	PBC3	0,829	Valid
Participation Intention	PI1	0,881	Valid
	PI2	0,848	Valid
	PI3	0,853	Valid

All indicators exceed 0.70 (lowest 0.744, A3; highest 0.927, A2) and are therefore valid.

Table 3. Average Variance Extracted (AVE)

Construct	AVE	Description
Attitude	0,712	Valid
Fear of Missing Out	0,778	Valid
Perceived Behavioral Control	0,693	Valid
Participation Intention	0,741	Valid
Perceived Benefit	0,688	Valid
Perceived Credibility	0,694	Valid
Perceived Enjoyment	0,707	Valid
Subjective Norms	0,725	Valid

All AVE values exceed 0.50 (lowest 0.688, Perceived Benefit; highest 0.778, FOMO); convergent validity is established.

Discriminant Validity

Table 4. Fornell–Larcker Criterion (diagonal = √AVE)

	A	FOMO	PB	PBC	PC	PE	PI	SN
Attitude (A)	0,844							
Fear of Missing Out (FOMO)	0,315	0,882						
Perceived Benefit (PB)	0,478	0,647	0,829					
Perceived Behavioral Control (PBC)	0,442	0,536	0,574	0,833				
Perceived Credibility (PC)	0,538	0,551	0,699	0,541	0,833			
Perceived Enjoyment (PE)	0,472	0,597	0,599	0,494	0,593	0,841		
Participation Intention (PI)	0,473	0,582	0,594	0,601	0,642	0,487	0,861	
Subjective Norms (SN)	0,543	0,775	0,743	0,674	0,658	0,647	0,642	0,851

The square root of each construct's AVE exceeds its correlations with other constructs; the Fornell–Larcker criterion is met.

Table 5. HTMT Results (threshold < 0.90)

Relationship Between Constructs	HTMT	Description
FOMO ↔ Attitude	0.305	Meets the Criterion
PBC ↔ Attitude	0.517	Meets the Criterion
PBC ↔ FOMO	0.614	Meets the Criterion

Participation Intention ↔ Attitude	0.545	Meets the Criterion
Participation Intention ↔ FOMO	0.651	Meets the Criterion
Participation Intention ↔ PBC	0.744	Meets the Criterion
Perceived Benefit ↔ Attitude	0.541	Meets the Criterion
Perceived Benefit ↔ FOMO	0.715	Meets the Criterion
Perceived Benefit ↔ PBC	0.698	Meets the Criterion
Perceived Benefit ↔ Participation Intention	0.705	Meets the Criterion
Perceived Credibility ↔ Attitude	0.654	Meets the Criterion
Perceived Credibility ↔ FOMO	0.637	Meets the Criterion
Perceived Credibility ↔ PBC	0.690	Meets the Criterion
Perceived Credibility ↔ Participation Intention	0.797	Meets the Criterion
Perceived Credibility ↔ Perceived Benefit	0.860	Meets the Criterion
Perceived Enjoyment ↔ Attitude	0.564	Meets the Criterion
Perceived Enjoyment ↔ FOMO	0.688	Meets the Criterion
Perceived Enjoyment ↔ PBC	0.628	Meets the Criterion
Perceived Enjoyment ↔ Participation Intention	0.600	Meets the Criterion
Perceived Enjoyment ↔ Perceived Benefit	0.727	Meets the Criterion
Perceived Enjoyment ↔ Perceived Credibility	0.757	Meets the Criterion
Subjective Norms ↔ Attitude	0.590	Meets the Criterion
Subjective Norms ↔ FOMO	0.830	Meets the Criterion
Subjective Norms ↔ PBC	0.800	Meets the Criterion
Subjective Norms ↔ Participation Intention	0.740	Meets the Criterion
Subjective Norms ↔ Perceived Benefit	0.844	Meets the Criterion
Subjective Norms ↔ Perceived Credibility	0.783	Meets the Criterion
Subjective Norms ↔ Perceived Enjoyment	0.763	Meets the Criterion

All 28 pairs are below 0.90 (highest 0.860, PC ↔ PB; lowest 0.305, FOMO ↔ Attitude). Following Henseler et al. (2015), the liberal 0.90 threshold is applied given the conceptual proximity of several constructs (e.g., FOMO and subjective norms both capture social-referent pressure; the UGC dimensions share a common content source).

Construct Reliability

Table 6. Construct Reliability

Constructs	Cronbach's α	rho_a	CR (rho_c)	Description
Attitude	0,802	0,849	0,880	Reliable
FOMO	0,929	0,944	0,946	Reliable
PBC	0,780	0,783	0,872	Reliable
Participation Intention	0,825	0,829	0,896	Reliable
Perceived Benefit	0,848	0,853	0,898	Reliable
Perceived Credibility	0,780	0,782	0,872	Reliable
Perceived Enjoyment	0,793	0,794	0,879	Reliable
Subjective Norms	0,905	0,907	0,929	Reliable

All constructs exceed 0.70 on both criteria; reliability is established.

Structural Model Evaluation (Inner Model)

Following Hair et al. (2019) and Hair & Alamer (2022), the evaluation covers collinearity

(VIF), R^2, effect size (f^2), and path significance via bootstrapping with 5,000 resamples.

Multicollinearity (VIF)

Table 7. Inner Model VIF

Path	VIF	Descripton
Attitude → Participation Intention	1.504	No Multicollinearity
FOMO → Attitude	1.964	No Multicollinearity
FOMO → PBC	1.000	No Multicollinearity
FOMO → Participation Intention	2.619	No Multicollinearity
FOMO → Subjective Norms	1.964	No Multicollinearity
PBC → Participation Intention	1.865	No Multicollinearity
Perceived Benefit → Attitude	2.501	No Multicollinearity
Perceived Benefit → Subjective Norms	2.501	No Multicollinearity
Perceived Credibility → Attitude	2.172	No Multicollinearity
Perceived Credibility → Subjective Norms	2.172	No Multicollinearity
Perceived Enjoyment → Attitude	1.899	No Multicollinearity
Perceived Enjoyment → Subjective Norms	1.899	No Multicollinearity
Subjective Norms → Participation Intention	3.916	No Multicollinearity

All VIF values are below 5.00 (highest 3.916, SN → PI); no collinearity issues.

Coefficient of Determination (R^2)

Table 8. R^2 and Adjusted R^2

Endogenous Construct	R^2	Adjusted R^2	Category
Subjective Norms	0.727	0.723	Moderate–Strong
Participation Intention	0.502	0.496	Moderate
Attitude	0.342	0.333	Moderate
Perceived Behavioral Control	0.288	0.285	Weak–Moderate

50.2% of the variance in participation intention is explained by attitude, subjective norms, PBC, and FOMO. Subjective norms show the highest R^2 (0.727), explained by the three UGC dimensions and FOMO. PBC (R^2 = 0.288) has FOMO as its sole predictor. Overall the model shows adequate explanatory power for a consumer-behavior model (Hair et al., 2019).

Effect Size (f^2)

Table 9. Effect Size (f^2)

Path	f^2	Effect Size
FOMO → Perceived Behavioral Control	0.404	Large
FOMO → Subjective Norms	0.351	Large
Perceived Benefit → Subjective Norms	0.118	Small
Perceived Behavioral Control → Participation Intention	0.082	Small
Perceived Credibility → Attitude	0.082	Small
FOMO → Participation Intention	0.047	Small
Perceived Enjoyment → Attitude	0.046	Small
Attitude → Participation Intention	0.045	Small
Perceived Enjoyment → Subjective Norms	0.035	Small
Perceived Credibility → Subjective Norms	0.033	Small
Perceived Benefit → Attitude	0.020	Small

Subjective Norms → Participation Intention	0.014	No Effect
FOMO → Attitude	0.014	No Effect

FOMO contributes the largest effects, on PBC (0.404) and subjective norms (0.351). Other paths show small effects; f^2 measures a predictor's unique contribution to R^2, so significance is assessed separately via bootstrapping.

Hypothesis Testing (Direct Effects)

Criteria: $t > 1.96$, $p < 0.05$ (two-tailed, 5,000 resamples). Two-tailed testing was applied as the more conservative criterion, as justified in the Research Method.

Table 10. Direct Effect Results

Hypothesis	Path	β	T-Statistic	p-Value	Decision
H1	Perceived Benefit → Attitude	0.182	2.582	0.010	Accepted
	Perceived Enjoyment → Attitude	0.240	4.143	<0.001	
	Perceived Credibility → Attitude	0.342	3.708	<0.001	
H2	Perceived Benefit → Subjective Norms	0.284	4.566	<0.001	Accepted
	Perceived Enjoyment → Subjective Norms	0.135	3.130	0.002	
	Perceived Credibility → Subjective Norms	0.140	3.154	0.002	
H3	FOMO → Attitude	-0.134	2.013	0.044	Rejected (Negative Direction)
H4	FOMO → Subjective Norms	0.434	7.833	<0.001	Accepted
H5	FOMO → Perceived Behavioral Control	0.536	11.078	<0.001	Rejected (Positive Direction)
H6	FOMO → Participation Intention	0.249	3.827	<0.001	Accepted
H7	Attitude → Participation Intention	0.184	3.587	<0.001	Accepted
H8	Subjective Norms → Participation Intention	0.164	1.960	0.050	Rejected
H9	Perceived Behavioral Control → Participation Intention	0.276	4.470	<0.001	Accepted

Of the nine direct hypotheses, six were supported in the predicted direction (H1, H2, H4, H6, H7, H9). Two were statistically significant but opposite to prediction: H3 (predicted positive, observed $\beta = -0.134$, $p = 0.044$) and H5 (predicted negative, observed $\beta = 0.536$, $p < 0.001$). H8 was not supported at the two-tailed threshold ($p = 0.050$). These patterns are interpreted in the Discussion.

Mediation Testing (Specific Indirect Effects)

Table 11. Specific Indirect Effects

Hypothesis	Mediating Path	β	T-Statistic	p-Value	Decision
H10	Perceived Benefit → Attitude → Participation Intention	0.033	2.027	0.043	Mediated
	Perceived Enjoyment → Attitude → Participation Intention	0.044	2.671	0.008	
	Perceived Credibility → Attitude →	0.063	2.423	0.015	

	Participation Intention				
H11	FOMO → Attitude → Participation Intention	-0.025	1.695	0.090	Not Mediated
H12	Perceived Benefit → Subjective Norms → Participation Intention	0.047	1.618	0.106	Not Mediated
	Perceived Enjoyment → Subjective Norms → Participation Intention	0.022	1.645	0.100	
	Perceived Credibility → Subjective Norms → Participation Intention	0.023	1.496	0.135	
H13	FOMO → Subjective Norms → Participation Intention	0.071	2.041	0.041	Mediated
H14	FOMO → Perceived Behavioral Control → Participation Intention	0.148	4.510	<0.001	Mediated (Strongest Effect)

Attitude mediates all three UGC dimensions (H10), while subjective norms do not mediate UGC (H12). For FOMO, mediation runs through subjective norms (H13) and, most strongly, through PBC (H14); mediation through attitude (H11) is not supported.

Table 12. Total Indirect Effects on Participation Intention

Exogenous Variables	Total Indirect Effect	T	p	Description
FOMO → Participation Intention	0,194	4,573	<0,001	Significant
Perceived Credibility → Participation Intention	0,086	3,091	0,002	Significant
Perceived Benefit → Participation Intention	0,080	2,545	0,011	Significant
Perceived Enjoyment → Participation Intention	0,066	3,276	<0,001	Significant

Table 13. Total Effects on Participation Intention

Exogenous Variables	Total Effect	T	p	Description
FOMO → Participation Intention	0,443	8,340	<0,001	Significant (strongest)
PBC → Participation Intention	0,276	4,470	<0,001	Significant
Attitude → Participation Intention	0,184	3,587	<0,001	Significant
Subjective Norms → Participation Intention	0,164	1,960	0,050	Not Significant
Perceived Credibility → Participation Intention	0,086	3,091	0,002	Significant
Perceived Benefit → Participation Intention	0,080	2,545	0,011	Significant
Perceived Enjoyment → Participation Intention	0,066	3,276	<0,001	Significant

FOMO shows the largest total effect on participation intention (0.443 = direct 0.249 + indirect 0.194), confirming its central role and validating its inclusion as a key antecedent.

Model Fit

Table 14. Model Fit

Indicator	Saturated Model	Estimated Model	Criteria
SRMR	0,076	0,101	< 0,08 (saturated fulfilled)
d_ULS	2,540	4,449	—
d_G	0,862	0,959	—
Chi-square	1.526,725	1.618,419	—
NFI	0,771	0,757	> 0,90

The saturated-model SRMR (0.076) meets the < 0.08 criterion, while the estimated model (0.101) is slightly above it and NFI (0.757) is below the 0.90 ideal. As PLS-SEM is prediction-oriented, fit indices are not primary evaluation criteria (Hair et al., 2019); construct validity, reliability, and the R^2 of the endogenous constructs are the more relevant indicators of the model's quality.

Discussion

The Effect of UGC on Attitude and Subjective Norms (H1–H2)

The H1 and H2 results indicate that the three UGC dimensions (perceived benefit, perceived enjoyment, perceived credibility) positively and significantly affect both attitude and subjective norms, though with different strength orderings across the two TPB constructs.

UGC on Attitude (H1)

Perceived credibility is the strongest predictor of attitude ($\beta = 0.342$; $p < 0.001$), followed by perceived enjoyment ($\beta = 0.240$; $p < 0.001$) and perceived benefit ($\beta = 0.182$; $p = 0.010$); H1 is supported. This aligns with the Information Adoption Model, which places credibility as a primary factor in information adoption and attitude formation (Sussman & Siegal, 2003), and with Mir et al. (2013), Febriane et al. (2023), and Choudhary et al. (2024). Credibility's dominance is plausible because padel is a relatively new sport in Indonesia and the majority of respondents are highly educated (80.3% hold a diploma or higher), making them more critical in evaluating online information (Flanagin & Metzger, 2013).

Perceived enjoyment also shapes positive attitudes, in line with Moon & Kim (2001), Su & Chiu (2021), and Jo & Park (2023), confirming enjoyment as an intrinsic motivator. Perceived benefit had a significant but smaller influence, consistent with Mathur et al. (2022) and Mudambi & Schuff (2010), suggesting that in recreational sports like padel, credibility and enjoyable experiences shape attitudes more than utilitarian benefits.

UGC on Subjective Norms (H2)

For subjective norms, perceived benefit is the strongest predictor ($\beta = 0.284$; $p < 0.001$), followed by perceived credibility ($\beta = 0.140$; $p = 0.002$) and perceived enjoyment ($\beta = 0.135$; $p = 0.002$); H2 is supported. This suggests information about padel's benefits is more effective in shaping social perceptions than personal attitudes. These results are supported by Ozuem et al. (2016) and Izquierdo-Yusta et al. (2022): UGC creates social values and expectations that influence subjective norms. In Indonesia's collectivist culture this influence may be amplified, because social proof more easily shapes normative perceptions (Cialdini et al., 1999), consistent with She et al. (2024), Zhuang et al. (2023), Bahtar & Muda (2016), and Tung et al. (2023).

The orderings differ across the two constructs: for attitude, credibility > enjoyment > benefit; for subjective norms, benefit > credibility > enjoyment. Credibility and enjoyment

operate mainly through a cognitive–affective pathway, while benefit operates through a normative pathway. The implication is that UGC strategies must be matched to communication objectives; no single content type is most effective for all aspects of persuasion.

The Effect of FOMO on the TPB Constructs (H3–H5)

FOMO significantly influences all three TPB constructs, but in different directions: positively on subjective norms (H4: $\beta = 0.434$; $p < 0.001$) and PBC (H5: $\beta = 0.536$; $p < 0.001$), negatively on attitude (H3: $\beta = -0.134$; $p = 0.044$).

FOMO on Attitude (H3)

FOMO significantly but negatively influences attitude ($\beta = -0.134$; $p = 0.044$), contrary to the positive prediction. Transparency about the pattern is warranted: the zero-order latent correlation between FOMO and attitude is positive ($r = 0.315$; Table 5), and the path turns negative only once the UGC dimensions are controlled. The negative coefficient is therefore best read as follows: after accounting for UGC-driven attitude formation, the residual FOMO component, pure social pressure stripped of content quality, is associated with less favorable evaluations of the sport. Given the small effect size ($f^2 = 0.014$) and marginal significance, this finding warrants replication.

This interpretation is consistent with FOMO marketing appeals, where exposure to viral content can trigger an approach–avoidance response: some individuals follow the trend, while others resist because they feel their freedom is threatened (Hodkinson, 2019), and with Psychological Reactance Theory, in which external pressure triggers negative attitudes toward the object of persuasion (Steindl et al., 2015). Morsi et al. (2025) similarly found that FOMO can both drive behavior and shape negative attitudes, and Kang et al. (2020) showed FOMO-based motivation is driven more by extrinsic than intrinsic factors. This study extends these findings to padel participation in Indonesia.

FOMO on Subjective Norms (H4)

H4 is supported ($\beta = 0.434$; $p < 0.001$), with FOMO a main predictor of subjective norms ($R^2 = 0.727$). Individuals experiencing FOMO are driven to follow group behavior to avoid feeling left behind, consistent with Kang et al. (2019), Saavedra & Bautista (2020), Deliana et al. (2024), and Przybylski et al. (2013).

FOMO on Perceived Behavioral Control (H5)

FOMO has a strong positive effect on PBC ($\beta = 0.536$; $p < 0.001$), which is the strongest path in the model, although the direction is opposite to the hypothesized negative effect, so H5 is not supported as formulated. This aligns with Budnick et al. (2020) and Tandon et al. (2021), who argue FOMO also drives engagement, information seeking, and adaptive behavior, and with Babu et al. (2026), who found that under FOMO individuals perceive greater control over upcoming behavior. In the padel context, FOMO pushes individuals to seek information about court locations, costs, communities, and how to play, increasing confidence in overcoming participation barriers (Kang et al., 2019, 2020).

The FOMO–PBC relationship thus appears context-dependent: in online purchasing, FOMO reduces perceived control by encouraging impulsive decisions (Nasr et al., 2023; Khoa et al., 2025), whereas in preparation-based behaviors such as sport participation, which require planning time, cost, and access, FOMO increases readiness and confidence. This boundary condition is a theoretical contribution of the study.

FOMO and Participation Intention (H6)

FOMO has a positive and significant direct effect on participation intention ($\beta = 0.249$; $p < 0.001$); H6 is supported. The higher an individual's fear of missing the padel trend, the higher

their intention to participate, without requiring an extended cognitive–social process. This is consistent with Mari et al. (2024), who show that FOMO often operates through a relatively automatic, fast affective route in the adoption of new activities. FOMO is therefore not merely an anxiety trigger but a strong direct driver of behavioral intention.

TPB Constructs and Participation Intention (H7–H9)

Two of the three TPB constructs significantly predict participation intention: PBC is the strongest predictor (H9: $\beta = 0.276$; $p < 0.001$), followed by attitude (H7: $\beta = 0.184$; $p < 0.001$), while subjective norms sit exactly at the significance threshold (H8: $\beta = 0.164$; $p = 0.050$) and are not supported under the two-tailed criterion.

Attitude (H7)

The positive effect of attitude is consistent with TPB's core postulate (Ajzen, 1991) and with meta-analytic evidence on exercise intention (Hagger & Hamilton, 2024). Its comparatively modest coefficient relative to PBC and FOMO suggests that padel intention, particularly when triggered by UGC and FOMO, is driven more by perceived capability and trend-following than by elaborate attitudinal evaluation: individuals may intend to play not because they deeply like the sport, but because they feel able to and compelled not to miss out.

Subjective Norms (H8)

The non-significant normative path is the study's most theoretically provocative null result, since it appears to contradict both TPB and the collectivist-culture argument advanced under H2. Three complementary explanations apply. First, statistical dominance: once FOMO (direct $\beta = 0.249$) and PBC ($\beta = 0.276$) are in the model, the residual contribution of subjective norms is negligible ($f^2 = 0.014$; VIF = 3.916 on the SN → PI path), suggesting FOMO functions as the more proximal social-pressure mechanism through which normative influence operates. Second, the descriptive data agree: although 91.4% of respondents have friends who play padel, perceived social pressure was the lowest-scoring TPB construct ($M = 3.38$), indicating that having friends who play is experienced as their choice, not as an injunctive expectation directed at the respondent. Third, a measurement explanation: 70.4% of respondents first encountered padel through social media rather than through close referents, so the relevant normative source may be generalized online communities, which standard subjective-norm instruments, which are anchored on important others, capture poorly. This aligns with meta-analytic findings that subjective norms are typically the weakest TPB predictor (Armitage & Conner, 2001; McEachan et al., 2011) and that strong PBC can crowd out normative influence (La Barbera & Ajzen, 2020).

Perceived Behavioral Control (H9)

PBC's dominance is highly consistent with the descriptive finding that 75.0% of respondents named situational, access-related factors (lack of opportunity, court distance, absence of playing partners, and difficulty finding courts) as their main barrier, rather than motivation or price. This internal consistency between descriptive and inferential results strengthens the validity of the model. The finding also aligns with Ivanov et al. (2024) and Aslan (2023), who show perceived control is a precondition of intention for behaviors requiring resources and access.

The Mediating Role of the TPB Constructs (H10–H14)

Of five mediation hypotheses, three are supported (H10, H13, H14) and two are not (H11, H12), revealing a systematic differentiation in how UGC and FOMO reach intention.

Attitude mediates all three UGC dimensions (H10), with credibility the strongest indirect path ($\beta = 0.063$), consistent with the Information Adoption Model (Sussman & Siegal, 2003) and Mathur et al. (2022): for a new sport, inexperienced consumers depend heavily on how trustworthy incoming information is before forming personal evaluations. Attitude does not

mediate FOMO (H11: β = −0.025; p = 0.090), because the negative FOMO→Attitude and positive Attitude→Intention paths offset each other; FOMO's influence on intention does not travel through personal evaluation. Subjective norms do not mediate UGC (H12: all three indirect paths non-significant), reflecting both the weak SN→Intention link and the character of padel UGC, which is informational and experiential rather than explicitly normative: it shows personal experiences and tutorials, not messages about what others should do. Subjective norms do, however, mediate FOMO (H13: β = 0.071; p = 0.041): FOMO's strong input into norms (β = 0.434) compensates for the weak final path, whereas UGC's smaller inputs (β = 0.135–0.284) do not, showing that a mediation path's viability depends on the strength of its first stage, not only its final link. Finally, PBC is the strongest mediating pathway in the entire model (H14: β = 0.148; p < 0.001), and together with FOMO's direct effect explains FOMO's dominant total effect (0.443).

The overall pattern: UGC operates through the personal cognitive–affective channel (attitude), while FOMO operates through social pressure and, above all, perceived capability. TPB proves robust enough to accommodate both mechanisms (Hagger & Hamilton, 2024), but marketing built on UGC and marketing built on FOMO must target different TPB constructs.

Qualitative Respondent Feedback

An optional open-ended question asked what padel businesses should do to attract more first-time participants; 286 of 304 respondents (94%) gave substantive answers, thematically coded into seven dominant themes (Table 15).

Table 15. Dominant Themes in Respondent Feedback (multiple themes per respondent possible)

No.	Theme	Respondents	%
1	Better facilities and court quality	106	37.1
2	Promotions, packages, and discounts	104	36.4
3	More affordable prices	86	30.1
4	Better social media content	74	25.9
5	Trial sessions or beginner classes	69	24.1
6	Expanded locations and accessibility	60	21.0
7	Events, tournaments, and competitions	52	18.2

Six of the seven themes concern lowering practical barriers, which are conceptually operationalizations of PBC, a pattern that qualitatively corroborates H9 and helps explain the weak normative path: no dominant theme mentions social pressure or conformity. Several respondents also flagged padel's exclusive image ("promote that padel is not as expensive as people think, even though its branding is like a rich person's sport") and warned against relying on FOMO as a short-term strategy ("don't just rely on padel as a FOMO trend, because it won't last, maintain service quality, courts, and affordable prices"), independently echoing the study's argument that the industry must transition from FOMO-driven urgency to durable quality and trust.

Theoretical Contributions

Three contributions emerge. First, FOMO influences TPB components in opposite directions, lowering attitude while raising subjective norms and PBC, challenging the treatment of FOMO as a uniform behavioral driver and applying psychological reactance (Steindl et al., 2015; Hodkinson, 2019) and the cost-and-benefit-of-FOMO framework (Budnick et al., 2020; Tandon et al., 2021) within one model. Second, the direction of the FOMO–PBC relationship is context-specific: negative in reactive behaviors such as impulsive online purchasing (Nasr et al., 2023) but positive in preparation-based behaviors such as sport participation, opening a research agenda on reactive-versus-preparatory behavior as a conceptual moderator. Third, UGC about

recreational activities operates through personal attitude formation rather than social proof (H10 supported, H12 rejected), and PBC dominates intention in access-based sports, challenging the stereotype that collectivist societies are invariably norm-driven (cf. Armitage & Conner, 2001; La Barbera & Ajzen, 2020).

Managerial Implications

Four implications follow directly from the findings. First, because PBC is the strongest predictor of intention and 75% of stated barriers are access-related, operators should prioritize lowering entry barriers: transparent court and pricing information, easy booking, beginner sessions, rental equipment, and beginner matchmaking, interventions respondents themselves requested most. Second, because credibility is the strongest UGC dimension shaping attitude, communication should be built on authentic, credible player content rather than polished advertising; benefit-framed content is the better lever where the goal is shaping social perceptions. Third, FOMO-based promotion does convert directly into intention, but it simultaneously erodes attitudes; scarcity and trend cues should therefore always be paired with actionable enablement (booking links, price guides, nearest-court information) so triggered urgency can convert rather than curdle into resistance. Fourth, pricing should respect the observed willingness-to-pay concentration at Rp 75,000–150,000 per session, with premium offerings above Rp 200,000 relevant to only about 10% of the potential first-timer market.

Limitations and Future Research

Four limitations qualify these findings. First, the opposite-direction effects of FOMO on attitude (H3) and PBC (H5) are explained post hoc through psychological reactance and preparatory-agency mechanisms that were not directly measured; reactance, defensive devaluation, and information-seeking behavior should be measured as intervening variables in future work. Second, generalizability is limited: respondents were predominantly 20–29 years old, Java-Bali domiciled, and highly educated, and the padel-related participation incentive may have over-recruited respondents already interested in the sport. Third, the weak normative pathway may partly be a measurement artifact: the instrument captures injunctive norms from important others but not descriptive norms from online communities, which the data suggest are the more relevant referent. Fourth, several hypothesis outcomes, H8 above all, are sensitive to the two-tailed testing choice; the conservative approach was applied consistently, but H8's status sits at a methodologically sensitive point. In addition, four HTMT pairs exceed the conservative 0.85 cutoff (though all pass 0.90), reflecting the conceptual adjacency of FOMO and subjective norms. Future research should measure the psychological processes underlying the H3/H5 reversals, test boundary conditions of the FOMO–PBC relationship (material versus experiential objects, access barriers, cultural characteristics), diversify samples by age, region, and socioeconomic background, and examine moderators of the UGC pathway such as perceived authenticity and content-creator type.

CONCLUSION

This study analyzed the influence of User-Generated Content (UGC) and Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) on the intention to participate in padel, using the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) as the mediating framework, based on PLS-SEM analysis of 304 respondents and 14 hypotheses.

First, UGC has a significant positive effect on attitude (H1) and subjective norms (H2). All UGC dimensions (perceived benefit, enjoyment, credibility) contribute positively, with credibility the strongest factor shaping attitude and benefit the strongest factor shaping subjective norms.

Second, FOMO exhibits distinct patterns of influence on the TPB constructs: positive on subjective norms (H4) and perceived behavioral control (H5), but negative on attitude (H3). FOMO does not always act as a positive driver; it operates through different mechanisms on each TPB construct.

Third, perceived behavioral control is the strongest predictor of participation intention (H9), followed by attitude (H7), while subjective norms have no significant effect (H8). FOMO also has a direct positive effect on intention (H6) and the largest total effect of any antecedent.

Fourth, of the five mediation hypotheses, three were supported. Attitude mediates the effect of UGC on intention (H10), subjective norms mediate the effect of FOMO (H13), and perceived behavioral control is the strongest mediating pathway between FOMO and intention (H14). Attitude does not mediate FOMO (H11) and subjective norms do not mediate UGC (H12), indicating that UGC and FOMO operate through different TPB pathways.

Overall, 9 of 14 hypotheses were supported, 2 were significant in the opposite direction (H3, H5), and 3 were not supported (H8, H11, H12). The model shows adequate predictive ability (R^2: intention 0.502; subjective norms 0.727; attitude 0.342; PBC 0.288). The study offers three theoretical contributions: FOMO influences each TPB component differently, UGC drives intention through personal attitudes rather than social norms, and perceived behavioral control is dominant in explaining participation intention in access-based sports such as padel.

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