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The Cryptocurrency Market: A scale development study on the behaviors of investors

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Abstract. This research aims to develop a fear of missing out on the opportunities scale in the cryptocurrency market (CFOMO). This research is methodologically designed. The scale was applied to 116 cryptocurrency market investors. Exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses were used to test the construct validity of the scale, and internal consistency coefficient, item-total correlation, and test-retest analysis were used for reliability. The KMO value (0.882) and Barttlet's test results (433.775) were statistically significant due to the Principal Component Analysis, which determined the suitability of the scale for construct validity testing. The reliability coefficient of the scale was calculated as 0.82. As a result of confirmatory factor analysis, X2=27.396, df=26 ($p<0.05$), X2/df=1.054, RMSEA=0.022, GFI=0.95, CFI=0.99 and IFI=0.99 revealed that the model showed good fit. The findings of the study showed that the CFOMO scale is valid and reliable.

Keywords. Cryptocurrency, Fear of missing out, scale development

1. Introduction

In the last two decades, especially with the contribution of technological developments, we have been experiencing the process of increasing globalization and digitalization of the world economy [1]. In this context, the development of the cryptocurrency market has become an important element in the digitalization of the global financial market. Launched in 2009 by the still-unknown pseudonym Satoshi Nakamoto, Bitcoin was the first successful decentralized cryptocurrency. Nakamoto sought to create a coin that eliminated any trusted central authority and sought to establish trust through cryptographic proof [2]. In a short period, cryptocurrencies quickly gained popularity. The prices and market values of assets in the cryptocurrency market have maintained their upward trend despite ups and downs. By 2025, the total value of all cryptocurrencies exceeded 3 trillion dollars, and Bitcoin, which reached a value of 100 thousand dollars, reached a total volume of 1.9 trillion dollars [3]. There are currently more than 10,000 cryptocurrencies. However, most of them are dead or inactive, with the top 20 cryptocurrencies accounting for around 90% of the total market [4]. A potential threat to cryptocurrencies stems from the speculative nature of these assets. Many participants in these markets expect the value of one or another cryptocurrency to increase[5]. Investors may act with the psychology of fear of missing opportunities (FOMO)[6]. As investors perceive that the

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price of cryptocurrency will increase, they may buy as much cryptocurrency as they can without hesitation to maximize profits from the price increase. In reality, the risk of cryptocurrency investment is very high as there are no real assets investors own. Investors' positive attitudes towards cryptocurrencies may lead them to take more risks and buy cryptocurrencies. Thus, FOMO fuels investors' desire to make big gains in the cryptocurrency markets [7].

FOMO is a concept that has been studied especially in the context of social networks and aims to describe the feeling that when something happens on social networks, you are not part of it [8]. FOMO is defined as the desire to constantly follow the posts made by individuals around people on social media and is associated with negative emotions such as low mood and low life satisfaction [9]. However, FOMO is too broad to be limited only to social media. For example, it is possible to associate the investment decisions of investors in financial markets with FOMO. Investing is one of the most important decisions consumers make in their lives, as it involves risks and opportunities and can have lifelong consequences for asset management [10]. In financial markets, FOMO can be caused by rapid price increases that trigger the fear of missing out on the opportunity to make more profit and lead to more risk-taking. The grief and sadness caused by the inability to seize a good opportunity can contribute to the development of FOMO [11]. On the other hand, the complex cryptocurrency technology makes most people unaware of what is going on [12]. It is also argued that information asymmetry exists in cryptocurrency transactions. This creates a “fear of missing out” phenomenon among those who do not have much information [13].

In the literature, the impact of FOMO on investors' investment decisions in cryptocurrency markets has generally been addressed in two different ways. Either by using the FOMO scale developed by Przybylski et al. (2013) for social media [14,15] or through econometric modeling [13,16]. The lack of a measurement tool to reveal the effect of FOMO on the investment decisions of investors in cryptocurrency markets reveals the need for such a study. In this context, this study aims to develop a valid and reliable scale that can be used to measure the impact of FOMO on investors' investment decisions in cryptocurrency markets.

2. Methods

2.1. Design and Participants

This methodological research aims to develop a scale measuring the fear of missing opportunities in the cryptocurrency market. The study's population consisted of investors who had active investments in the cryptocurrency market at the time of the research. The sample size was determined through a power analysis, which indicated that, with an effect size of 0.30, a margin of error of 0.05, a confidence level of 0.95, and a population representativeness of 0.95, a minimum sample size of 116 participants was required [17]. The study included a sample of 116 active cryptocurrency investors. Participants were selected using a convenience sampling method. Data were collected by disseminating an online survey link through various forums and social media channels aimed at cryptocurrency investors in Turkey. The data was obtained via an online Google Form in June 2021.

2.2. Instruments

Descriptive Characteristics Form; This form consists of 7 questions about some demographic and cryptocurrency market investment information (age, gender, education level, income level, marital status, monthly income utilization rate in cryptocurrency markets and duration of investment in cryptocurrency markets).

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Cryptocurrency Related Fear Of Missing Out Scale (CFOMO);

To develop the Fear of Missing Opportunities in the Cryptocurrency Market Scale (CFOMO), an item pool was first created. To determine these items, the FOMO scales developed by Przybylski et al. (2013) [9] and Zhang et al. (2020)[18] were utilized. A pool of 22 items (e.g., "I feel that I am missing out on what is happening in the cryptocurrency market", "I think that the people around me are happy thanks to the opportunities they seize in the cryptocurrency market") was created to measure the participants' fear of missing out on opportunities. To determine the participants' level of agreement with the statements in the scale, the scale was formed as a 5-point Likert scale as 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Partially Agree, 4 = Agree, and 5 = Strongly Agree. All statements in the scale are positive. As the score obtained from the scale increases, it is accepted that the fear of missing opportunities in the cryptocurrency market is high.

The scale, which was submitted to expert opinion for the content validity phase, was sent to 8 faculty members (4 business administration, 2 linguistics, 2 statistics experts) who are experts in their fields via e-mail. The experts were asked to rate each item on a scale of 1-4 (1=not appropriate, 4=very appropriate) and to evaluate the appropriateness and comprehensibility of the scale items. Kendall W analysis was used to examine the level of compatibility of expert opinions[19]. The pilot application of CFOMO, which was organized in line with the recommendations of experts, was carried out with 5 investors. The results obtained from the pilot application were not included in the sample. As a result of the pilot application, it was determined that there were no misunderstood questions in the scale. Thus, the final version of the CFOMO was created.

Psychometric testing of the CFOMO

Validity

Factor analysis was performed to determine the construct validity of the scale. Before factor analysis, Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) analysis was used to determine the adequacy of the sample and Barlett's Test of Sphericity test was used to determine the sample test size. For the sample size to be suitable for factor analysis, KMO should be above 0.60 and the result of Barlett's test of sphericity analysis should be statistically significant [20].

Principal Component Analysis, one of the most common factor analysis statistical techniques, was used to examine the factor structure of CFOMO. As a result of the factor analysis, the factor loading values of the items should be at least 0.30 and the items below this value should be removed[21]. After the exploratory factor analysis, Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was applied to support the findings regarding the sub-dimensions of the scale. X2/sd ratio ≤5, RMSEA value ≤0.08, and GFI, CFI, and IFI values higher than 0.90 were accepted as the lower limits of the data fit index of the model [22].

Reliability

Cronbach's α internal consistency coefficient technique is recommended for examining the reliability of Likert-type scales. The reliability coefficient that can be considered sufficient in a measurement tool should be as close to 1 as possible. If the Cronbach's α coefficient is less than 0.40, the instrument is considered unreliable, 0.40-0.59 is considered low reliability, 0.60-0.79 is considered highly reliable, and 0.80-100 is considered highly reliable [24].

Item-total correlation coefficients were examined to examine the relationship between the scores obtained from the test items of the CFOMO and the total score of the test. In item

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selection, the recommendation that the acceptable coefficient should be greater than 0.20 was taken into consideration [24].

3.Data analysis

The research data were analyzed using SPSS 16.0 for Windows software (SPSS Inc., Chicago, IL, USA) and AMOS 24.0. In addition to the descriptive statistics (number, percentage, mean, standard deviation) used in the descriptive characteristics of the participants, this software was also used to analyze the psychometric properties of CFOMO. The test-retest correlation was calculated by Pearson Product Moment correlation [25]. The significance level was accepted as 0.05.

Ethical issues

Approval (Decision No: 2017/4-10) was obtained from İnönü University Social Sciences Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Committee for the conduct of the research. In addition, the participants were informed about the research and it was stated that their personal information would be protected and those who volunteered were included in the study.

4. Findings

The average age of the investors participating in the research is 29.84±7.91 and their average income level is $371.36±320.4. 69.8% of the investors are male and 54.3% of them are single. Moreover, 87.9% of them are university graduates. 78.5% of the investors stated that they used less than half of their income in cryptocurrency markets and 62.9% of them have been investing in cryptocurrency markets for less than a year (Table 1).

Table 1. Descriptive Characteristics of the Investors (N = 116)

Characteristics	**(Mean ± SD)**
Age (years)	29.84±7.91
Income ($)(Mean ± SD)	371.36±320.4
Gender	**N (%)**
Woman	35(30.2)
Male	81 (69.8)
Marital Status	
Married	53 (45.7)
Single	63 (54.3)
Educational Level	
Primary school- High school	14 (22.1)
University	102 (87.9)
Rate of Using Monthly Income in Cryptocurrency Markets	
Less than half	91 (78.5)
Half	16 (13.7)
All of them	9 (7.8)
*** Time to Invest in Cryptocurrency Markets**	
One year and less	73 (62.9)
Two years	21 (18.1)

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Three years and above	22 (19.0)

*1.95±1.87 years (min:1 month, Max:11 years)

Validity

In the study, the KMO coefficient of the scale was 0.882 and the X2 value was 433.775 as a result of Barlett's Test of Sphericity analysis and the test results were found significant at p=0.001 significance level. The results showed that the sample size for the CFOMO scale was sufficient and appropriate for factor analysis. It was observed that the scores obtained from the experts regarding the items of the scale were not statistically different (Kendall W=0.241; p>0.05) and there was agreement between the experts.

As a result of the exploratory factor analysis (EFA) conducted for the validity of the CFOMO developed for crypto investors, it was seen that the factor loadings of thirteen of the 22 items were very low and the analysis was renewed by removing these statements. The factor loadings of the nine-item scale ranged between 0.62-0.85. It was also determined that it explained 57.58% of the total variance. As a result of the EFA analysis of the scale, a 9-item CFOMO scale with two sub-dimensions (six items of personal FOMO and three items of social FOMO) was obtained (Table 2).

Table 2. Distribution of Means, Factor Loadings and Item Total Correlations of CFOMO (N: 116)

CFOMO	**Mean(SD)**	**Factor Loadings**	**Corrected Item-total Correlations**	**Cronbach's α**
Personal FOMO				**Cronbach alpha:** 0.88
I feel like I'm missing out on what's happening in the cryptocurrency market.	2.93(1.2)	0.77	0.69	
I think I am lagging in the cryptocurrency market compared to others	2.93(1.2)	0.67	0.53	
I get worried about the possibility that important events may have occurred in the cryptocurrency market.	2.58(1.0)	0.78	0.64	
I'm afraid that I won't be able to seize the opportunities that others will seize in the cryptocurrency market.	2.57(1.1)	0.81	0.74	
I feel guilty for missing opportunities in the cryptocurrency market.	2.33(1.1)	0.85	0.70	
I can't help but think about the missed opportunities in the cryptocurrency market.	2.53(1.1)	0.81	0.62	
Social FOMO				**Cronbach alpha:** 0.71

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I think the people around me in the cryptocurrency market are happy with the opportunities they get.	3.52(1.1)	0.72	0.35	
I need to understand the conversations, jokes, and conversations of people around me about the cryptocurrency market.	3.16(1.0)	0.71	0.38	
When I'm on vacation, I continue to follow the cryptocurrency markets.	3.66(1.0)	0.62	0.34	
Total variance: %57.58		**Total Cronbach alpha: 0.82**		

Confirmatory Factor Analysis

As a result of the CFA analysis of CFOMO, the fit index values were X2=27.396, df=26 ($p<0.05$), X2/df=1.054, RMSEA=0.022, GFI=0.95, CFI=0.99 and IFI=0.99 (Table 3).

Table 3. CFOMO Scale CFA Goodness of Fit Indexes

CFOMO	X^2	p	AGFI	NFI	df	X^2/df	RMSEA	GFI	CFI	IFI
Model	27.396	0.00	0.916	0.93	26	1.054	0.022	0.95	0.99	0.99

Reliability

As a result of the Cronbach's α reliability analysis performed to measure the internal consistency of CFOMO; Cronbach's α = 0.88 in the personal CFOMO dimension and Cronbach's α = 0.71 in the social FOMO dimension. The total internal consistency coefficient was 0.82 (Table 2). CFOMO was found to be highly reliable in terms of total and all sub-dimensions (p=0.001).

The item-total correlation coefficients of CFOMO were analyzed. The item-total correlation coefficients of CFOMO ranged between r=0.34-0.74 and were found to be at an acceptable level. The correlation between each item and the total score was found to be statistically significant (p=0.001) (Table 2).

Table 4. Relationship Between CFOMO Test-Retest Score Averages (n:30)

	CFOMO Total Score	Personal FOMO	Social FOMO	Statistical significance
Test-Retest	0.78	0.76	0.44	p=0.001

In the study, it was determined that the correlation values between the mean scores of the first application of CFOMO and the second application with an interval of 3 weeks ranged between r=0.44-0.78 (Table 4). A positive and highly statistically significant relationship was found in CFOMO total and sub-dimensions (p=0.001).

5.Discussion

Rapid price increases in financial markets may increase investors' fear of missing out on opportunities with the desire to earn more profits and thus cause them to make more transactions. On the other hand, investors' behavior in the cryptocurrency market is associated with herd psychology [16], but its relationship with FOMO cannot be expressed quantitatively.

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In this framework, it is aimed to quantitatively measure the FOMO behavior of cryptocurrency market investors and to develop a scale that is lacking in the field and to conduct validity and reliability analyses. It has been determined that there is no measurement tool in the literature to determine the fear of missing opportunities of investors investing in cryptocurrency markets. In the study, it was determined that CFOMO, which was developed to determine the fear of missing opportunities of investors investing in cryptocurrency markets, is a valid and reliable tool.

Validity

Factor analysis was performed for construct validity, which is defined as the ability of the scale to measure the entire relevant concept and conceptual structure. In our study, the factor loading values of CFOMO were found between 0.62-0.85. Items with factor loadings below 0.30 were removed from the scale. In our study, it was determined that CFOMO had two dimensions and explained 57.58% of the total variance. Considering 30% and above as a criterion for the explained variance ratio in scale development and adaptation studies [22], it is seen that the construct validity of the scale is provided.

CFA supported the two-factor scale structure that emerged as a result of EFA. Goodness of fit indices were taken into consideration to evaluate whether the model established with CFA was appropriate for the data. In the literature, it is stated that an X2/df value of ≤3 indicates excellent fit, and a value between ≤3 and ≤5 indicates good fit. An RMSEA value of 0.08 or less is acceptable [23]. In the CFA analysis conducted within this framework, the fit index values were X2=27.396, df=26 ($p<0.05$), X2/df=1.054, RMSEA=0.022, GFI=0.95, CFI=0.99 and IFI=0.99. It was determined that the model showed acceptable fit.

Reliability

The reliability of the CFOMO was assessed using Cronbach's α internal consistency coefficient, item-total correlation and test-retest analysis [19]. The Cronbach's α reliability coefficient, which can be considered adequate in a measurement tool, should be as close to 1 as possible [19]. In our study, the total Cronbach's α reliability coefficient of the nine-item total CFOMO was 0.82, the Cronbach's α reliability coefficient of the personal CFOMO was 0.88, and the reliability coefficient of the social CFOMO was 0.71, indicating that the scale was quite reliable.

Item-total score correlation coefficients explain the relationship between the scores obtained from the test items and the total score of the test. A positive and high item-total score correlation indicates that the items sample similar behaviors and the internal consistency of the test is high. In a test using Likert-type rating scales, the item-total score correlation is calculated by Pearson correlation coefficient. A high correlation obtained for each item indicates that the connection of that item with the theoretical structure measured is also high, in other words, the item is effective and sufficient in measuring the intended behavior. It is recommended that the acceptable coefficient for item selection should be greater than 0.20 [19]. The reliability coefficients of CFOMO ranged between r=0.34-0.74 and the correlation between each item and the total score was statistically significant (p=0.001). For the test-retest analysis of the CFOMO, a positive and highly statistically significant relationship was found in the total and two sub-dimensions of the CFOMO applied to 30 investors at 3-week intervals. This finding revealed that the internal consistency of the scale is high for investors and reliable results can be obtained in multiple applications.

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5. Conclusion

In line with the results obtained from the research, it can be said that CFOMO is a valid and reliable tool for assessing Fear of Missing Opportunities in the cryptocurrency market. It is recommended that the scale can be used in studies evaluating the fear of missing opportunities of cryptocurrency investors, however, studies testing the validity and reliability of the scale in different samples are recommended.

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Appendix

Kripto Para Piyasasında Fırsatları Kaçırma Korkusu Ölçeği (Cryptocurrency Related Fear Of Missing Out Scale -CFOMO)
Bu anket Kripto Para Piyasasında olan yatırımcıların fırsatları Kaçırma korkusunu belirlemeye yönelik bazı ifadeler içermektedir. Lütfen durumunuza tam olarak en uygun cevabı işaretleyiniz. Lütfen her soru için **yalnızca bir** kutuyu işaretleyiniz.
(This questionnaire contains some statements to identify the fear of missing opportunities among traders in the Cryptocurrency Market. Please check the answer that best fits your exact situation. Please check only one box for each question.)

İfadeler (Expressions)	**Kesinlikle katılmıyorum (Strongly disagree)**	**Katılmıyorum (Disagree)**	**Kısmen Katılıyorum (Partially Agree)**	**Katılıyorum (I agree)**	**Kesinlikle katılıyorum (Absolutely agree)**
Kişisel FOMO					
Kripto para piyasasında olup bitenleri kaçırdığım hissine kapılırım.					
Kripto para piyasasında başkalarına kıyasla geride kaldığımı düşünürüm.					
Kripto para piyasasında önemli olayların meydana gelmiş olabileceği ihtimalini düşünerek endişeye kapılırım.					
Kripto para piyasasında başkalarının yakalayacağı fırsatları yakalayamayacağımdan korkuyorum.					
Kripto para piyasasında fırsatları kaçırdığım için kendimi suçlu hissederim.					
Kripto para piyasasında kaçırılan fırsatları düşünmeden edemem.					
Sosyal FOMO					
Kripto para piyasasında çevremdeki insanların yakaladıkları fırsatlar sayesinde mutlu olduklarını düşünürüm.					
Çevremdeki insanların kripto para piyasası hakkındaki konuşmalarını,					

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şakalarını, muhabbetlerini anlamak benim için önemlidir.					
Tatildeyken kripto para piyasalarını takip etmeye devam ederim.					