

Drivers of Online Impulse Buying Behaviour: The Effects of Social Media Promotion and Peer Interaction Among UiTM Rembau Undergraduates

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the influence of Social Media Promotion (SMP) and Social Media Peer Network (SMPN) on Impulse Buying Behaviour (IBB) among undergraduate students at Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) Rembau Campus, Malaysia. Grounded in the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) model, the research investigates how digital marketing stimuli and peer interactions on social platforms trigger spontaneous buying tendencies among young consumers. A quantitative cross-sectional survey design was employed, and data were collected from 202 undergraduate respondents using a structured online questionnaire. Statistical analysis was conducted using SPSS, involving descriptive statistics and multiple regression analysis. The findings reveal that both social media promotion and peer network interaction significantly influence impulse buying behaviour ($p < 0.001$). Social media promotion was identified as the stronger predictor ($\beta = 0.512$, $t = 9.038$), while peer network influence also had a positive yet lesser effect ($\beta = 0.276$, $t = 5.423$). The model accounted for 76.2% of the variance ($R^2 = 0.762$) in impulse buying behaviour, indicating a strong relationship between social media engagement and consumers' impulsive purchasing patterns. The results suggest that social media promotions, including influencer marketing, discounts, and limited-time offers, play a pivotal role in stimulating unplanned purchases, while peer engagement reinforces these behaviours through social validation. The study highlights how platforms such as TikTok and Instagram have evolved into powerful commercial spaces, shaping youth consumption habits. The findings emphasise the importance of digital awareness and ethical marketing, recommending strategies that encourage financial discipline and responsible online spending among youths.

Keywords: impulse buying, undergraduate students, social media, youths

INTRODUCTION

Researchers have started to recognise impulse buying behaviour as a modern illness among youths (Black, 2022). Recent estimates demonstrate that 76.5% of undergraduates shop online at least once a week, with 40% to 80% of those purchases becoming impulsive (Rodrigues et al., 2021). There have been detrimental psychological and financial effects from this problematic shopping practice, which has rapidly expanded in recent years, particularly among young adults. An overwhelming, uncontrollable, and persistent impulse to buy regardless of the consequences characterises compulsive purchasing, a chronic aberrant type of purchasing and spending (Ali et al., 2021). The tendency of consumers for impulsive buying is greatly increased by social networking sites (Pahlevan et al., 2022; She et al., 2021). Social networking site usage has expanded dramatically since the early 2000s, and companies have taken advantage of this trend through positioning social commerce strategies into place, which has contributed to increased revenue (Xiang et al., 2022).

Impulse purchasing behaviour (IBB) is defined as unplanned, spontaneous purchases motivated by emotional, hedonic, and situational reasons, typically influenced by external stimuli such as promotions, social cues, or online design elements (Santini et al., 2018; Amos et al., 2014). It is clear from current research that consumer purchasing behaviour is heavily impacted by impulse behaviour, which encompasses elements such as consumer attitude, social, economic, and psychological aspects. To put it another way, impulse buying is more than merely unforeseen purchases (Stern, 1962). According to Chen and Wang (2016) and Rook (1987), unintended purchasing occurs when a consumer feels motivated and has a persistent but irregular desire to make an impulse purchase because of an emotional interpretation. Inadequate consideration of the effects of expenditure can lead to unintentional purchases (Zafar et al., 2021).

In the context of social networking sites, consumer research has been concentrating on impulsive purchases (Rahman & Hossain, 2023). Although customers frequently make impulsive purchase decisions when using social media, social commerce has thus become intrinsically linked to impulse buying (Han, 2023; Madhu et al., 2023). Additionally, prior research has demonstrated that social networking sites frequently lead to impulsive purchasing behaviours by encouraging individuals to avoid standard decision-making assessment procedures (Han, 2023; Yi et al., 2023). Although they face the risk of developing an addiction to social media, youths are particularly responsible for their use (Al-Masri, 2020). Unlike other addictions, it is highly unlikely that youths would completely cease using the Internet (and, consequently, SMSs) because it is a crucial component of contemporary economic and recreational culture (Chawla, 2020).

As a result of this, youths' possible misuse of social media platforms is expected to be a frequent problem. An increased tendency to engage in both traditional and online compulsive buying is an additional negative consequence of this phenomenon (Hashmi et al., 2019). Little is known about the relationship between these behaviours and the underlying mechanisms that underpin those behaviours, even though the consequences of social networking site usage on compulsive intention to buy have been studied (Djafarova & Bowes, 2021). Other negative consequences of this phenomenon include a greater proclivity to participate in both traditional and online obsessive. Although the influence of social networking site usage on compulsive intention to buy has been studied, little is known about the relationship between the two behaviours and the underlying mechanisms that drive these (Zhao et al., 2022).

The existing literature covers both offline and online contexts, including social commerce, e-commerce platforms, live-streaming ads, and consumer psychology. This review synthesises findings from a large number of studies to map the key antecedents, moderators, repercussions, and contextual nuances of IBB, identifying areas of agreement, disagreement, and needs for future research. Thus, the goal of this research is to examine the influence of social media promotion and social media peer network, such as those on Instagram and TikTok, on impulse buying behaviour among undergraduate youths at Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) Rembau Campus in Malaysia.

The study focused on young adults because of the significant impact of growing digitalisation on their consuming settings (Nyrhinen et al., 2023). According to Dhanesh and Duthler (2019), young adults tend to spend more time on social media and shop online than the elderly.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Social Media Promotion (SMP)

Social Media Promotion (SMP) has evolved from merely having a presence on social networking sites to a vital component of modern marketing strategies. In today's corporate environment, virtually every business is attempting to develop a digital footprint on various social media platforms. These platforms are not only great tools for promoting products and services but also play an important role in motivating users to make impulse purchases. The impact of social media on consumer behaviour has led to a shift in product discovery, comparison, and purchasing habits. Social media offers numerous benefits for organisations, including increased reach, real-time communication with clients, and the ability to modify marketing tactics based on data (Dabbous et al., 2020). Companies that rely solely on traditional methods sometimes experience sluggish growth and poor

customer relations. According to Jurgelane and Grizane (2016), going digital is crucial in today's corporate landscape.

According to Moran (2023), social media apps like Instagram and TikTok not only raise awareness of new products, but also create desire for previously unknown products. According to Wan et al. (2025), social media's seamless interaction through influencer endorsements, adverts, and in-app shopping leads to impulsive buying behaviour. According to Hanaysha (2022), customers overwhelmingly value community proof and influencers beyond promotion. Compared with traditional media, social media provides businesses with cost-effective and engaging advertising strategies. This not only raises brand recognition but also improves consumer loyalty (Koc & Koptler, 2022). Influencer marketing and native advertising are two tactics that rely on promoting items and services through trusted individuals.

Social media promotion focuses on transparency, enjoyment, credibility, and economic impact. Consumer impressions of ad campaigns and impulse purchase behaviour are heavily influenced by these factors (Yaprak & Keskin, 2020). Social media advertising is more effective than traditional advertising due to its advantages, including two-way communication, personalised content delivery, real-time feedback, and measurable results (Degirmencioglu & Kilicoglu, 2024). Consumer behaviour is a multidisciplinary field that examines how individuals purchase, use, and evaluate products and services. This field examines consumer decision-making mechanisms, drawing on disciplines such as marketing, psychology, and sociology (Peruze and Kocer, 2022).

Consumer behaviour involves recognising needs, searching for information, evaluating alternatives, and making a purchasing decision. It goes beyond just the transaction itself and post-purchase behaviours (Yang et al., 2024). Consumption refers to the use of products and services by individuals to meet their basic requirements. Psychological, social, and economic factors influence consumption patterns. For instance, a youth's level of satisfaction and personal beliefs have a direct impact on buying decisions (Bao & Yang, 2022).

Durmaz, Odabaşı, and Barış (2007) found that consumer behaviour is influenced by personal, social, psychological, and environmental aspects when allocating resources to meet demands. Individuals' purchasing experiences are impacted by their mental and emotional processes when making decisions (Xu et al., 2020). Purchasing behaviour usually includes five stages: problem awareness, information search, alternative appraisal, decision-making, and following the purchase (Feng et al., 2023). During the information search stage, consumers employ both internal (own experiences) and external sources (peer recommendations, commercials). Based on the above literature, the hypotheses of the studies are as follows:

H1: Social Media Promotion has a significant positive influence on Impulse Buying Behaviour among undergraduate students at UiTM Rembau.

Social Media Peer Network (SMPN)

Social media has a substantial impact on consumer purchase behaviours, especially the growth of impulsive buying tendencies (Barger et al., 2016; Rydell & Kucera, 2021). This impact stems from the way social media platforms have transformed consumers' purchasing habits, with the Social Media Peer Network (SMPN) serving as the primary catalyst (Rydell and Kucera, 2021). Social media platforms have made it easier for individuals to create and share content, obtain vital information, and leverage the impact of their networks. This phenomenon has had a significant influence in encouraging impulsive purchasing behaviour among social media users (Rydell & Kucera, 2021). Online SMPNs have evolved into dynamic sociocultural frameworks in which members freely swap associations and connections, offering a forum for people with similar views, beliefs, attitudes, emotions, and feelings (Nohutle et al. 2022).

Moreover, SMPNs have fundamentally altered the traditional method to obtain product knowledge and recommendations (Olbrich & Holsing, 2011; Olbrich & Holsing, 2011). With SMPNs' growing popularity, their ability to distribute information, share product expertise, and influence impulsive purchasing habits has become more obvious (Lee & Chen, 2021). This progression is consistent with the increasing growth of internet users, driving firms to implement information systems that engage and attract customers via online communities (Singh

et al., 2023). The purpose of online communities inside social media platforms has grown extremely dynamic, allowing consumers to exchange product reviews and recommendations, influencing their purchasing decisions (Ngo et al., 2024). As a result, internet buyers now place greater confidence in reviews and opinions discovered on social media platforms than in information offered by businesses, believing these reviews are more genuine (Singh et al., 2023).

The relationship between the SMPNs and impulse buying behaviour among youths an active relationship that has a substantial impact on social media purchasing decisions. SMPNs function as thriving digital ecosystems in which people may connect, share, and participate, establishing a sense of community. Within these networks, the exchange of thoughts, product reviews, and recommendations significantly influences consumer purchasing decisions. As social media users interact with content provided by their peers and like-minded members of these communities, the attraction of spontaneous and unplanned purchases grows.

Lastly, the expression of purchasing behaviour in SMPNs can have a significant impact on social media users' shopping decisions. These digital communities not only form consumer preferences, but they also play an important role in guiding purchasing decisions, affecting the products and brands users purchase in the social media marketplace (Dan et al., 2025; Zhang & Shi, 2022). Based on the above literature, the hypotheses of the studies are as follows:

H2: Social Media Peer Network has a significant positive influence on Impulse Buying Behaviour among undergraduate students at UiTM Rembau.

Proposed Conceptual Framework

The framework positions Impulse Buying Behaviour (IBB) as the dependent variable, influenced by two independent variables: Social Media Promotion (SMP) and Social Media Peer Network (SMPN). SMP encompasses the marketing activities of businesses that deploy on platforms like Instagram and TikTok, such as advertisements, influencer advertisements, flash sales and in-app shopping features. The literature review above establishes that these promotional elements create desire for products, lower cognitive barriers to purchasing, and trigger emotional responses that bypass deliberate decision-making (Wan et al., 2025; Hanaysha, 2022; Yaprak & Keskin, 2020). SMPN refers to the digital communities and social connections users maintain on these platforms. Through user-generated content, product reviews, recommendations and shared shopping experiences, peers shape purchasing decisions, especially among youths. The above literature indicates that consumers trust peer opinions more than brand-generated content, and exposure to others' purchases creates social validation cues that encourage spontaneous buying (Rydell & Kucera, 2021; Singh et al., 2023; Dan et al., 2025). Based on the literature, here is a conceptual framework that captures the relationships:

Figure 1 Conceptual framework of the study

Impulse Buying Behaviour (IBB) Among Youth

A billion individuals can now freely discuss their shopping experiences on social media platforms due to the rapid growth in social media usage and the broad availability of internet-enabled devices. This increase in user-generated material has disrupted impulsive purchasing (Islam et al., 2021; Parsons et al., 2014; Prentice et al., 2020). Individuals can now share a variety of experiences, including their shopping adventures, on social networking sites, which has resulted in an unanticipated increase in impulsive shopping (Xiang et al., 2016). In order to effectively sell products and services on the market, marketers have realised the importance of social networking sites in connecting and interacting with their target audience (Tanuri, 2010).

According to (Baumeister, 2002; Beatty & Ferrell, 1998; Dholakia, 2000; Rook, 1987), youths frequently feel impulsive impulses during their purchasing journeys, both online and offline, and are frequently unable to resist these drives despite their best efforts. Impulsive purchases are made easier by online marketing, particularly through social media (Madhavaram & Laverie, 2004). Youth impulse buying is a well-researched phenomenon that is influenced by a confluence of environmental circumstances, individual dispositions, and internet stimuli that specifically converge in younger groups (Yaprak & Coban, 2023). When young people in

digital-native cohorts come across vivid marketing materials, influencer testimonials, and user-generated cues inside social media ecosystems, hedonic motives and social-software affordances increase impulsive purchases (Bell et al., 2020).

Moreover, Fahriansah (2023), the stimulus and organism will lead to response and dual-process approaches help explain why youths are especially vulnerable: opportunities for quick assessment and low perceived risk on platforms lower the cognitive barriers to action, while uplifting affect and perceived value generated by advertisements, reviews, and welcoming formats activate automatic, affect-laden routes to purchase, which is the urge to buy impulsively. Online endorsements, time-limited deals, and visually appealing content on platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and Threads consistently elicit strong positive feelings and arousal, which mediate the interpretation of being exposed to impulsive purchases among undergraduate youths who show increased susceptibility to novelty, scarcity promotions, and social validation cues, as demonstrated by empirical research (Muhammad et al., 2023).

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study used a cross-sectional survey to examine the factors influencing impulse purchase among young consumers. This research approach collects data from a broad sample of individuals, revealing correlations between variables at a given point in time (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). A cross-sectional design offers benefits such as efficiency, representativeness, and adaptability. This study follows the positivist approach, which suggests that systematic and empirical observation is the most effective way to understand impulse purchasing behaviours. This technique enhances the cross-sectional design, which promotes objective measures and measurable data. The data were collected through a Google Form questionnaire answered by 200 undergraduate young consumers, examining demographics, social media engagement and buying habits.

Population and Sample Size

The target population for this research is undergraduate students at Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) Rembau who engage in social media, preferably, specifically those aged between 18 until 25. This group is selected because undergraduate students are generally highly exposed to digital environments, are tech-savvy, and frequently engage in online shopping through social media platforms, making them particularly susceptible to impulse buying behaviour.

In order to achieve a representative sample of this population, this study aims to recruit approximately 200 undergraduate students who frequently engage in online shopping through platforms. The sample size of 200 participants is determined based on the recommendations of previous research, which suggests that a sample of this size is sufficient to detect medium-sized effects in multiple regression analyses (Cohen, 1992). Additionally, larger samples are likely to yield more accurate and reliable results, increasing the statistical power and precision of the study (Vabalas et al., 2019).

Sampling Technique

This study adopts a convenience sampling technique, which is a form of non-probability sampling. Purposive sampling involves selecting respondents based on specific characteristics that are relevant to the research objectives. In this study, the respondents are undergraduate students at Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) Rembau who actively engage in online shopping and demonstrate impulse buying behaviour.

Data Analysis

The data collected from 202 undergraduate students at Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) Rembau Campus were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistical techniques to examine the influence of Social Media Promotion (SMP) and Social Media Peer Network (SMPN) on Impulse Buying Behaviour (IBB). The analysis was conducted through SPSS, and it involved several key phases: descriptive statistics, reliability analysis, and multiple regression analysis to test the hypotheses.

FINDINGS

Respondents Demographic Background

The total number of respondents was analysed, and for this study is 202 undergraduate students. Their demographic details were collected and presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1 Respondents' Demographic Background

Variable	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	90	44.6
Female	112	55.4
Social Media Account That You Have		
Instagram	66	32.7
TikTok	120	59.4
Shopee	16	7.9
Device to Browse Social Media		
Smartphone	180	89.1
Laptop	20	9.9
Tablet	1	0.5
iPad	1	0.5
Total Hours Spent on Social Media		
1 – 4 hours a day	44	21.8
4 h 1 minute – 8 hours	56	27.7
More than 8 hours	102	50.5
Use Social Media for Online Shopping		
Yes	178	86.1
No	24	11.9
Products That Were Bought Online		
Mobiles, Tablets and Accessories	44	21.8
Footwear	30	14.9
Movies, Music and Video Games	13	6.4
Fashion and Accessories	89	44.1
Holiday Packages	26	12.9

The analysed results showed that undergraduate students who consist of 202 respondents, comprising 90 males (44.6%) and 112 females (55.4%). Regarding social media usage, TikTok emerged as the most prevalent platform, with 120 respondents (59.4%) maintaining an account, followed by Instagram (N = 66, 32.7%) and Shopee (N = 16, 7.9%). Smartphones were the predominant device for accessing social media, used by 180

respondents (89.1%), while laptops accounted for only 9.9% (N = 20), and tablets and iPads were each used by merely 0.5% of participants.

In terms of daily social media engagement, over half of the respondents (N = 102, 50.5%) reported spending more than eight hours on these platforms, with 27.7% (N = 56) spending between four and eight hours and 21.8% (N = 44) spending one to four hours daily. A substantial majority of respondents (N = 178, 86.1%) indicated that they utilise social media for online shopping purposes. Among the product categories purchased online, fashion and accessories were the most popular (N = 89, 44.1%), followed by mobiles, tablets, and accessories (N = 44, 21.8%), footwear (N = 30, 14.9%), holiday packages (N = 26, 12.9%), and movies, music, and video games (N = 13, 6.4%).

Table 2 Frequency Distribution of Social Media Promotion (SMP) on Impulse Buying Behaviour Among Undergraduate Students

Items	5-point Likert Scale (%)					Mean	SD
	1	2	3	4	5		
1. I had no intention to buy anything before seeing a social media promotion.	7.25	7.25	11.3	40.1	39.4	4.13	1.09
2. I agree that product promotion on social networking sites make I think about making a purchase.	7.9	21.2	15.2	26.5	29.2	3.48	1.25
3. I sometimes buy products because the discounts and promotions on social media that really attract me and are not available in physical stores.	6.3	17.5	15.2	42.1	45.5	4.82	0.95
4. Continuous promotional deals offering instant rewards like cashback often trigger my spontaneous purchases.	4.5	4.5	13.6	35.4	42.1	4.06	1.03
Total						4.12	1.08

The results in Table 2 examining the influence of Social Media Promotion (SMP) on impulse buying behaviour among undergraduate students indicate a generally high level of agreement across all items, with an overall mean score of 4.12 (SD = 1.08). This suggests that promotional activities on social media platforms significantly affect students’ tendency to make unplanned purchases. The highest agreement was observed for the statement “I sometimes buy products because the discounts and promotions on social media really attract me and are not available in physical stores” (M = 4.82, SD = 0.95), highlighting the persuasive impact of online-exclusive promotions and discounts. The statement “I had no intention to buy anything before seeing a social media promotion” also recorded a high mean score (M = 4.13, SD = 1.09), underscoring the strong role of social media advertisements in generating purchase interest.

Similarly, “Continuous promotional deals offering instant rewards like cashback often trigger my spontaneous purchases” achieved a mean of 4.06 (SD = 1.03), suggesting that reward-based offers stimulate impulsive buying. In contrast, a comparatively lower mean was observed for “Product promotion on social networking sites makes me think about making a purchase” (M = 3.48, SD = 1.25), indicating that while exposure to promotions initiates consideration, it is the incentive-based and exclusive offers that most effectively drive impulsive consumer behaviour. Overall, the results demonstrate that social media promotions, particularly discounts, limited availability, and reward mechanisms, play a substantial role in influencing students’ spontaneous purchasing tendencies.

Table 3 Frequency Distribution of Social Media Peer Network (SMPN) on Impulse Buying Behaviour among Undergraduate Students

Items	5-point Likert Scale (%)					Mean	SD
	1	2	3	4	5		
1. Social media allows me to stay connected with others.	14.9	19.5	11.3	23.96	30.2	3.65	1.38
2. I enjoy engaging with people on social media platforms.	15.8	21.2	7.1	26.5	29.2	3.71	1.41
3. It's easy to meet people who share my interests on social media.	8.29	17.5	15.2	29.7	29.3	3.54	1.20
4. Social media communities influence my purchasing decisions through their likes and comments on products and services.	12.7	19.6	13.6	24.2	29.9	3.39	1.33
Total						3.57	1.14

The findings of Table 3 indicate the frequency distribution of Social Media Peer Network (SMPN) on impulse Buying Behaviour among undergraduate students. The results showed that the influence of the Social Media Peer Network (SMPN) on impulse buying behaviour among undergraduate students reveals an overall mean score of 3.57 (SD = 1.14), indicating a general agreement among respondents regarding the role of social media in shaping social interactions and purchasing tendencies. The item with the highest mean score, “I enjoy engaging with people on social media platforms” (M = 3.71, SD = 1.41), suggests that students are highly active in online social interactions and derive enjoyment from these engagements. This is followed closely by “Social media allows me to stay connected with others” (M = 3.65, SD = 1.38), indicating that social media serves as an important channel for maintaining relationships.

Meanwhile, the statement “It’s easy to meet people who share my interests on social media” recorded a mean score of 3.54 (SD = 1.20), showing moderate agreement that social media facilitates interest-based connections. The lowest mean score was observed for “Social media communities influence my purchasing decisions through their likes and comments on products and services” (M = 3.39, SD = 1.33), implying that while peer interactions impact consumer behaviour, this effect is less pronounced compared to the social aspects of media usage. Overall, these results suggest that undergraduate students perceive social media as an effective tool for social connectivity and engagement, which in turn moderately influences their purchasing behaviour.

Table 4 Frequency Distribution of Impulse Buying Behaviour among Undergraduate Students

Items	5-point Likert Scale (%)					Mean	SD
	1	2	3	4	5		
1. “Just go for it” reflects how I make my purchasing decisions.	6.8	6.8	19.4	28.9	38.2	3.85	1.15
2. “Purchase first, think later” fits my buying style.	6.5	6.5	21.3	26.5	39.2	3.86	1.11
3. I often feel the urge to make spontaneous purchases.	5.2	5.2	20.5	35.2	33.9	3.87	1.04
4. If I believe I’ll need something, I can buy it immediately.	7.7	7.7	20.9	33.8	29.9	3.70	1.08
5. I often end up making more unplanned purchases than I expected.	13.6	19.4	10.4	25.3	31.3	3.41	1.29
6. I frequently buy things without intending to beforehand.	16.7	18.4	12.6	24.8	27.5	3.28	1.33

7. I buy items I didn't even know existed until I saw them while shopping.	15.7	18.8	14.1	26.8	24.6	3.26	1.28
8. Making spontaneous purchases is something I find enjoyable.	5.5	5.5	15.0	39.4	34.5	3.91	1.09
Total						3.82	1.17

The findings in Table 4 regarding the impulse buying behaviour among undergraduate students reveal a high level of agreement across the eight measured items, with an overall mean score of 3.64 (SD = 1.17). This suggests that impulse buying is a relatively common behavioural tendency among respondents, characterised by spontaneous and emotionally driven purchase decisions. The highest mean score was observed for the item “Making spontaneous purchases is something I find enjoyable” (M = 3.91, SD = 1.09), indicating that many students derive satisfaction and enjoyment from impulsive buying experiences. Similarly, statements such as “I often feel the urge to make spontaneous purchases” (M = 3.87, SD = 1.04) and “Purchase first, think later’ fits my buying style” (M = 3.86, SD = 1.11) reflect a strong tendency toward unplanned decision-making patterns.

In contrast, lower mean scores were found for “I frequently buy things without intending to beforehand” (M = 3.28, SD = 1.33) and “I buy items I didn't even know existed until I saw them while shopping” (M = 3.26, SD = 1.28), suggesting that while impulse behaviour is evident, it is often influenced by prior awareness or need anticipation rather than complete spontaneity. Overall, the results indicate that emotional satisfaction, enjoyment, and situational triggers on social and retail platforms serve as primary drivers of impulse buying behaviour among undergraduate students.

Table 5 Multiple regression results of the study.

Predictor	β (Beta Coefficient)	T-value	p-value	VIF
Constant	0.845			
SMP	0.512	3.112	0.001	1.211
SMPN	0.276	9.038		
		5.423		

Significant at the level $p < 0.001$

Table 5 presents the results of the multiple regression analysis conducted to examine the influence of Social Media Promotion (SMP) and Social Media Peer Network (SMPN) on Impulse Buying Behaviour (IBB) among undergraduate students at UiTM Negeri Sembilan, Rembau Campus. The results indicate that both predictors, SMP and SMPN, have a significant positive effect on IBB, with $p < 0.001$. The Beta coefficient (β) for SMP is 0.512, with a t-value of 9.038, indicating that SMP is the stronger predictor of IBB compared to SMPN.

Meanwhile, the Beta coefficient (β) for SMPN is 0.276, with a t-value of 5.423, also showing a statistically significant relationship with IBB. The Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values are below 2.0 (VIF = 1.211), confirming the absence of multicollinearity and supporting the reliability of the regression estimates. These findings suggest that both social media promotion and peer interaction through social networks substantially influence students' impulse buying behaviour, with promotional content exerting a comparatively greater impact.

Table 6 Model Summary

Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	F	p
1	0.727 ^a	0.762	0.576	135.46	<.001

Significant at the level $p < 0.001$

As illustrated in Table 6, the regression model demonstrates a strong overall relationship between the independent variables (SMP and SMPN) and the dependent variable (IBB), with a correlation coefficient (R) of 0.727. The coefficient of determination (R^2) is 0.762, indicating that approximately 76.2% of the variance in impulse buying behaviour can be explained by social media promotion and peer network influence. The adjusted R^2 of 0.576 further supports the model's robustness after accounting for the number of predictors. The F-statistic ($F = 135.46$, $p < 0.001$) confirms that the overall regression model is statistically significant, meaning that the predictors collectively have a meaningful effect on impulse buying behaviour. These results provide empirical support for both hypotheses of the study:

- H1: Social Media Promotion significantly influences Impulse Buying Behaviour
- H2: Social Media Peer Network significantly influences Impulse Buying Behaviour

Overall, the model underscores the substantial role of digital promotional activities and peer-mediated influence in shaping the impulsive purchasing patterns of undergraduate youths within social media environments.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study offer significant insights into the impact of Social Media Promotion (SMP) and Social Media Peer Network (SMPN) on Impulse Buying Behaviour (IBB) among undergraduate students at Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) Rembau Campus. The results indicate that both SMP and SMPN exert a positive influence on students' propensity for impulse purchasing, suggesting that social media platforms function not merely as channels for communication and entertainment, but also as influential mechanisms shaping consumer behaviour within the context of digital commerce.

The results presented in Table 2 indicate that social media promotions have a significant influence on students' impulse buying behaviour, with an overall mean score of 4.12 ($SD = 1.08$), reflecting a high level of agreement among respondents. This finding is consistent with the arguments of Hanaysha (2022) and Wan et al. (2025), who assert that social media campaigns, flash sales, and influencer endorsements can stimulate immediate purchase intentions by minimising cognitive deliberation and appealing to consumers' emotional gratification. Notably, the highest-rated item, which emphasised the attractiveness of discounts and online-exclusive promotions ($M = 4.82$), further supports the notion that perceived value and scarcity cues play a crucial role in driving impulsive purchasing behaviour. These results are also in line with Yaprak and Keskin (2020), who reported that perceived transparency, credibility, and enjoyment in social media advertising enhance consumers' propensity to make spontaneous purchase decisions.

The findings from Table 3 reveal that Social Media Peer Network (SMPN) exerts a significant, albeit comparatively weaker, influence on impulse buying behaviour, with an overall mean score of 3.57 ($SD = 0.14$). This indicates that although promotional content serves as the primary catalyst for impulse purchases, peer interactions, social connectivity, and mechanisms of social validation continue to function as important reinforcing factors. Respondents reported a positive inclination toward online engagement with others ($M = 3.71$) and perceived social media as an effective platform for maintaining relationships and sharing interests ($M = 3.65$).

These results are aligned with prior studies by Rydell and Kucera (2021) and Lee and Chen (2021), which suggest that online peer networks facilitate both informational and emotional exchanges that influence purchase intentions. Moreover, peer influence appears to intensify impulsive buying behaviour by providing social reassurance and establishing perceived norms that legitimise unplanned purchases. Nevertheless, the relatively lower mean score for the influence of social media communities on actual purchasing decisions ($M = 3.39$) implies that while peers contribute to shaping awareness and attitudes, individual promotional stimuli, such as discounts and advertisements, remain the decisive factors in driving purchase behaviour.

In comparison, these findings are consistent with prior empirical studies by Rahman and Hossain (2023) and Madhu et al. (2023), which demonstrate that social media exposure, peer interactions, and hedonic

motivations significantly influence young adults' impulse buying tendencies. The predominance of promotional cues in shaping purchasing behaviour highlights the pivotal role of marketing stimuli, aligning with the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) framework proposed by Mehrabian and Russell (1974). Within this framework, online promotions function as external stimuli that trigger internal emotional and cognitive responses, subsequently leading to purchasing actions. Additionally, the social context within peer networks further strengthens this process by providing validation and a sense of belonging, thereby normalising impulsive consumption behaviour.

CONCLUSION

The findings affirm that social media addiction and sustained exposure to marketing stimuli significantly amplify impulsive buying tendencies among undergraduate students, a group particularly predisposed due to their high levels of digital engagement, need for social validation, and propensity for novelty-seeking. These outcomes further enrich the growing body of literature that highlights the psychosocial and environmental antecedents of consumer impulsivity within digital contexts. In conclusion, the results indicate that social media promotions act as the principal catalysts of impulse buying behaviour among undergraduate students, while peer networks function as complementary reinforcers that perpetuate such behaviour through mechanisms of emotional satisfaction and social affirmation. These insights contribute to both theoretical advancement and practical application in consumer psychology, underscoring the importance of promoting financial self-regulation and responsible digital consumption among youth. Additionally, the findings call attention to the need for ethical marketing practices among brands operating within highly interactive and socially embedded digital platforms.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

While this study provides a valuable insight into social media promotion and social media peer network towards impulse buying behaviour among undergraduate students, this study has several limitations that should be considered when interpreting the findings. First, it is limited by a cross-sectional design, which restricts the ability to establish causal relationships between the variables. In addition, it only focuses on a single institution, which is Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) Rembau campus. In future studies, this study should be conducted among the youths across different cultural or demographic contexts. Furthermore, reliance on self-reported questionnaire data may introduce response bias, particularly in measuring impulse buying behaviour, where social desirability or recall inaccuracies can affect response validity. The study also does not sufficiently explore the role of moderating variables such as income level, personality traits, or financial literacy, which may meaningfully influence the relationship between social media use and impulsive purchasing behaviour.

In light of these limitations, several recommendations are proposed for practitioners, educators, and policymakers. First, educational institutions should integrate digital financial literacy programmes into their curricula to equip students with the knowledge and self-regulatory skills needed to manage online spending impulses. Given that social media promotions, particularly exclusive discounts, cashback rewards, and influencer endorsements, universities should collaborate with student welfare departments to raise awareness of manipulative marketing tactics employed on platforms such as TikTok and Instagram. Second, marketers and digital platform designers should be encouraged to adopt ethical marketing standards that are transparent in intent and sensitive to the psychological vulnerabilities of young consumers. Regulatory bodies may also consider implementing guidelines that limit the use of high-pressure promotional techniques, such as flash sales and artificial scarcity cues, which are particularly effective in triggering unplanned purchases among youth. Third, financial service providers and consumer protection agencies should develop targeted outreach campaigns that address the financial consequences of impulse buying, especially among young adults who are still forming their spending habits and may lack financial independence.

For future research, several directions are proposed to address the limitations of the current study and to advance the theoretical and empirical understanding of impulse buying behaviour in digital contexts. Future studies should consider adopting longitudinal or experimental research designs to better capture causal dynamics and the evolution of impulse buying tendencies over time. A longitudinal approach would allow researchers to observe how prolonged exposure to social media platforms shapes purchasing behaviour across different life stages of undergraduate students. Expanding the sample to include students from multiple universities or across

different regions in Malaysia and beyond would enhance the external validity of the findings and enable meaningful cross-cultural and cross-institutional comparisons. Such comparative research could reveal whether the influence of SMP and SMPN on IBB varies according to cultural attitudes toward spending, collectivist versus individualist values, or platform usage norms.

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