The Influence of Social Media Exposure and Influencers on Generation Z's Impulsive Buying of Fast Fashion Through Brand Awareness

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Abstract

Keywords:
Social Media Exposure, Influencers, Impulse Buying, Brand Awareness

This study aims to examine the influence of social media exposure and influencers on impulsive buying among Generation Z in the context of fast fashion products, with brand awareness as a mediating variable. The background of this study is based on the increasing trend of spontaneous purchases triggered by social media content and promotional activities carried out by influencers on social media platforms such as Instagram and TikTok. The research approach used a quantitative method with a survey design. The population for this study was fast fashion product buyers, with a sample size of 130 respondents. Data were obtained using a purposive sampling method, with the criteria being Generation Z aged 18–27 who are active on social media, follow at least one influencer, and have purchased a fast fashion product in the past six months. Data analysis was conducted using the SEMPLS software approach. The results showed that social media exposure and influencers have a direct positive and significant influence on impulsive buying. However, exposure to social media and influencers did not have a positive and significant influence on impulsive buying through brand awareness. Furthermore, brand awareness also did not have a positive and significant influence on impulsive buying. These results indicate that Generation Z tends to make impulsive purchases due to factors other than brand awareness.

INTRODUCTION

Social media has brought changes to consumer consumption patterns, such as how consumers recognize, evaluate, and purchase products (Amri et al., 2023). Social media platforms like Instagram and TikTok are now a key platform for marketers to help build emotional connections with consumers. According to a Jakpat survey published in a GoodStats article (2025), Generation Z is the dominant group using social media, including Instagram (81%), TikTok (70%), and YouTube (69%), indicating that Generation Z tends to prefer short-form content.

Generation Z is the generation born between 1997 and 2012 (BPS, 2021). Social media exposure doesn't just consist of single-focused content consumption; it also includes interactions with influencers, promotional content, discounts, flash sales, and live streaming features, all of which can trigger impulsive behavior. The development of social media has also significantly influenced the fashion industry, particularly fast fashion (Utami & Dewi, 2024). Fast fashion is a business strategy that prioritizes production speed and affordability. The goal is to enable consumers to adapt to the latest fashion trends easily without incurring high costs, in response to their lifestyle demands. As active social media users, Generation Z is a primary target for various fast fashion brands such as Uniqlo, Zara, H&M, Shein, and others in marketing their products. Through engaging content and constantly changing trends, Generation Z is frequently exposed to fashion promotions that encourage them to purchase products, even when they don't necessarily need them.

The phenomenon of fast fashion product use demonstrates a trend where social media users, such as TikTok and Instagram, regularly share inspiration for their own style. This is not only a

form of self-expression but also a means of influencing and inspiring other social media users. Visually appealing content can spark interest and encourage changes in individual fashion preferences. Repeated exposure to this type of content can trigger emotional impulses that lead to unplanned purchasing behavior. In this context, previously rational and planned shopping behavior can shift to impulsive behavior, as purchasing decisions are influenced by the visual and emotional appeal of the trend (Hikmah et al., 2025).

Various studies have shown that the impulsive buying phenomenon among Generation Z is increasingly influenced by social media and influencers in shaping brand perceptions and awareness. Research conducted by Maulani (2020) and Wiranata et al. (2023) highlights the dominant contribution of brand awareness and impulsivity to spontaneous purchasing decisions on social media platforms. Influencers' creative content has been shown to trigger consumer behavior and emotional appeal, particularly in the trend-driven and image-driven fast fashion industry (Damanik et al., 2025; Madinah et al., 2025). Purwanto et al. (2025) also found that hedonism strengthens the relationship between social media exposure and impulsivity through enjoyable shopping experiences.

Studies specifically examining the interaction between influencers, social media exposure, and brand awareness as mediating variables in the context of fast fashion products are still limited. Most existing research tends to focus on industries such as cosmetics or e-commerce in general, making it ineffective in tracking the dynamics of trends in the fast fashion industry. Of the five previous literatures, no study has explicitly examined the relationship between social media exposure and influencer influence on impulsive behavior, using brand awareness as a mediating variable in the specific context of fast fashion products. Therefore, this study aims to address this gap by integrating these three key variables into a conceptual model framework.

Literature Review
S-O-R Theory
Mehrabian and Russell (1974) were the original proponents of the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) Model in the context of environmental psychology. This model essentially states that any external stimulus (S) will trigger changes in an individual's internal psychological state (Organism/O), and this internal process is then manifested as a behavioral response (R). In its application, the exposure Generation Z receives from social media and influencers can be positioned as a stimulus that influences their internal state. This psychological process, mediated by factors such as brand awareness, ultimately triggers specific behavioral responses, such as impulse buying.

S-O-R theory in marketing is able to explain how the overall framework for understanding consumer behavior during the decision-making process. Analysis of consumer purchase intentions through the S-O-R model shows that purchase intentions are influenced internally and externally by factors including factors within the consumer (hedonic value, utility value, etc.), environmental stimuli, such as community interactions, product factors, etc. By stimulating consumers' psychological perceptions, consumers are encouraged to experience emotional states of purchase motivation and are guided by these motivations to increase their purchase intentions, thus leading to purchase behavior (Lin & Shen, 2023). The SOR framework is relevant in analyzing how various environmental cues influence consumer attitudes and behavior (Chang et al., 2011).

Social Media Exposure and Impulsive Buying
Social media exposure is defined as the level of engagement a person experiences in consuming digital content through various platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, or YouTube. Social media has significant potential to shape consumer behavior and views due to its highly visual, interactive, and social experience-oriented nature. According to Daulay et al. (2025), when individuals are exposed to digital content, the tendency to make impulse purchases increases. This occurs because the content triggers strong emotional arousal and creates a desire to buy

spontaneously (the urge to buy impulsively). This effect is particularly pronounced among Generation Z, who are accustomed to high digital media exposure and are prone to Fear of Missing Out (FoMO), a fear of missing out on trends. As a result, they often make purchases without careful rational consideration.

Pratama et al. (2023) added that simple actions such as scrolling, browsing, and interacting with content, especially fashion content, can trigger a sudden urge to buy, especially if the displayed product is visually appealing or implies a certain social status. Therefore, social media exposure serves as an external stimulus that evokes an internal emotional drive, which then drives impulsive behavior. This positive relationship between social media exposure and impulse buying is further strengthened by the platform's characteristics of offering intense sensory and social experiences.

Social Media Exposure and Brand Awareness

Social media contributes significantly to increasing brand awareness thanks to its ability to provide a channel for brands to consistently communicate with consumers. A study by Efendioğlu and Durmaz (2022) showed that the more frequently consumers are exposed to brand advertisements and content on social media, the stronger their brand recall and recognition. For Generation Z, these digital platforms are a crucial resource for exploring brand identity and fashion trends, not just a recreational tool.

Febriyantoro (2020) emphasized that utilizing visual and narrative aspects in marketing communications via Instagram and YouTube is highly effective in increasing brand awareness through repeated experiences when consuming content. This is supported by Mariah and Pertiwi (2022), whose research shows that promotional activities on social media significantly increase brand awareness, which can then trigger impulsive purchasing behavior. Therefore, strong social media exposure leads to consumer familiarity with the brand, strengthens brand associations in memory, and forms a cognitive foundation that influences purchasing behavior.

Influencers and Impulse Buying

Influencers play a central role in building social proof, which significantly influences the speed of purchasing decisions. According to Andreani et al. (2021), Generation Z determines an influencer's credibility based on the authenticity of their content and perceived value alignment. When a parasocial relationship, a one-sided emotional bond between followers and influencers, is formed, audience trust increases, making promotional messages more readily accepted without in-depth critical evaluation. This finding is supported by research by Koay et al. (2021), which shows a positive correlation between influencer marketing strategies on Instagram and online impulse buying behavior. Aesthetically presented content, an engaging delivery style, and the use of personal narratives by influencers can indirectly create social pressure on audiences to immediately purchase the advertised product.

A study by Shamim et al. (2024) explains that, in the context of social commerce, influencers act as desire mediators. They stimulate audiences' sense of belonging through digital symbolism and social interaction. In this case, influencer influence is not only informational but also affective (emotional), significantly increasing spontaneous purchasing impulses among Generation Z. Thus, the influence of influencers on impulse buying can be understood as a psychological mechanism that bridges the gap between social factors and consumption behavior. The higher the emotional involvement and level of trust placed in an influencer, the greater the impulsive urge to purchase the products they promote.

Influencers and Brand Awareness

Influencers are a highly effective channel for increasing brand awareness due to their ability to convey brand messages with a more personal and relevant touch than traditional advertising formats. (Andreani et al., 2021) found that collaborations between brands and influencers directly

contribute to increased brand awareness among Generation Z. This is because Gen Z tends to trust figures they perceive as similar or on the same level as themselves.

Influencer marketing can be a pioneering tool, both small and large, that can be used to increase brand awareness and boost sales within a defined target market. An influencer is a person or public figure on social media with a large following, and what they convey can impact their followers' behavior (Windi & Tampenawas, 2023). Content produced by influencers increases the perceived value of advertising, while creating strong brand associations in the minds of consumers. Furthermore, Ilyas et al. (2020) added that this increased brand awareness has the potential to shape purchasing behavior. Consumers who are familiar with a brand tend to show a higher preference for that brand compared to less familiar brands. Therefore, the frequency with which consumers see influencers review or use certain products, especially fashion products, increases the likelihood that the brand will be recognized and embedded in their minds. This relationship is crucial to this study because it confirms that influencer influence not only drives purchases but is also highly effective in strengthening brand recall in consumers' minds.

Brand Awareness and Impulse Buying

Brand awareness acts as a psychological variable that mediates the relationship between external stimuli (such as influencers and social media) and impulse buying. Ilyas et al. (2020) found that consumers with high brand awareness identify products more quickly and tend to make purchases without in-depth rational evaluation. This occurs because brand awareness creates positive perceptions that effectively lower the decision-making threshold.

Research by Mariah and Pertiwi (2022) shows that brand awareness has a significant influence on impulse buying. Consumers who are familiar with a brand are more easily influenced by product visualizations and promotional offers on social media. In the fast-paced fast fashion industry, brand awareness is crucial because rapidly changing trends encourage consumers to rely on brand familiarity when making spontaneous decisions. Therefore, brand awareness functions not only as a cognitive element but also as an emotional trigger that facilitates unplanned transactions. In other words, Generation Z's high awareness of certain fast fashion brands makes it easier for them to make impulse purchases when they see those products advertised on social media platforms.

Hypothesis

H1: Social media exposure has a positive and significant effect on impulsive buying
H2: Influencers have a positive and significant effect on impulsive buying
H3: Brand awareness has a positive and significant effect on impulsive buying
H4: Social media exposure has a positive and significant effect on impulsive buying through brand awareness
H5: Influencers have a positive and significant effect on impulsive buying through brand awareness

METHODS

This research is quantitative. It aims to test the established hypothesis to determine the effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable in the presence of a mediating (intervening) variable. The sampling technique used in this study was non-probability sampling. The type of non-probability sampling used was judgmental or purposive. Purposive sampling is a technique that determines the sample based on certain considerations, namely selecting individuals who are suitable as data sources based on the sample criteria studied (Paramita et al., 2021).

The study population was Generation Z in Indonesia aged 18-27 who had purchased fast fashion products through digital platforms or social media. The sampling technique used was purposive sampling, with the criteria being active social media users (TikTok, Instagram, etc.), following at least one influencer, and having purchased a fast fashion product at least once in the last six months.

The sample size in this study was determined based on several criteria. Based on the rule of thumb in quantitative research using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), the minimum sample size is 5-10 times the number of indicators (Hair et al., 2014). In this study, the minimum sample size used was 130 respondents. The data collection technique used in this study was a questionnaire. The data used was primary data collected through the distribution of online questionnaires using Google Forms. The instrument was designed to measure variables of social media exposure, influencers, brand awareness, and impulsive buying behavior with a Likert scale of 1-5, meaning strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, and strongly agree.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
Respondent Profile
Based on the research results, the majority of respondents were female (97 respondents) (74.6%), while 33 respondents were male (25.3%). In terms of age, the majority of respondents were between the ages of 21 and 23 (89 respondents) (68.4%), 24 respondents were between the ages of 18 and 20 (18.4%), and 17 respondents were between the ages of 24 and 27 (13.08%). The majority of respondents were students (101 respondents) (77.6%).

Table 1. Outer Loading Test Results

Variable	Indicator	Outer Loading	Average Variance Extract (AVE)	Status
Social Media Exposure	SME1	0,806	0,850	Valid
	SME2	0,740		Valid
	SME3	0,845		Valid
	SME4	0,763		Valid
	SME5	0,780		Valid
Influencer	I1	0,894	0,707	Valid
	I2	0,867		Valid
	I3	0,768		Valid
	I4	0,836		Valid
	I5	0,832		Valid
Impulsive buying	IB1	0,860	0,744	Valid
	IB2	0,879		Valid
	IB3	0,897		Valid
	IB4	0,868		Valid
	IB5	0,804		Valid
Brand awareness	BA1	0,735	0,634	Valid
	BA2	0,854		Valid
	BA3	0,825		Valid
	BA4	0,859		Valid
	BA5	0,778		Valid
	BA6	0,715		Valid

The initial stage of this research focused on evaluating the measurement model through validity and reliability tests. External model assessment included examining convergent validity, discriminant validity, and the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value. Convergent validity was evaluated based on the magnitude of the outer loading of each indicator or questionnaire item on the related latent variables: Social Media Exposure, Influencers, Impulsive Buying, and Brand Awareness. According to Carlson & Herdman (2012), convergent validity is considered adequate if the outer loading value exceeds 0.7, indicating a strong relationship between the measurement

and the same construct. Furthermore, the AVE value must exceed the threshold of 0.5 to ensure representative reliability and construct validity (Henseler et al., 2015).

Based on the analysis, indicators 1 through 5 for the Social Media Exposure variable (SME1 to SME5) consistently demonstrated external loading values above 0.7, confirming the construct's convergent validity. The AVE value for SME was also very satisfactory, at 0.850, exceeding the minimum threshold of 0.5. The Influencer (I) variable also demonstrated good validity, with its four indicators having external loading values between 0.768 and 0.894, and an AVE value of 0.707. Similarly, the Impulsive Buying (IB) variable showed external loading values in the range of 0.804 to 0.897, with an acceptable AVE value of 0.744. Finally, the Brand Awareness (BA) variable showed external loading values between 0.715 and 0.859, exceeding the 0.7 criterion, and supported by an AVE value of 0.634. Overall, the results of the outer loading test indicate that all indicator variables meet the criteria for good convergent validity, as evidenced by outer loading values consistently above 0.7 and AVE values for all constructs exceeding 0.5.

Table 2. Composite Reliability Test Results

No.	Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	Criteria Test	Description
1.	Social Media Exposure	0,850	0,912		Reliable
2.	Influencer	0,896	0,935	> 0,70	Reliable
3.	Impulsive buying	0,914	0,923		Reliable
4.	Brand awareness	0,883	0,891		Reliable

Composite Reliability (CR) berfungsi sebagai instrumen untuk menguji dan menilai sejauh mana indikator yang digunakan secara akurat mengukur variabel laten yang dihipotesiskan. Penggunaan Composite Reliability sangat penting karena nilai Cronbach's Alpha sering cenderung meremehkan validitas konstruk dibandingkan dengan Composite Reliability. Dengan kata lain, Reliabilitas Komposit menawarkan metrik yang lebih unggul untuk mengukur konsistensi internal variabel laten. Kriteria ambang batas yang dapat diterima untuk Reliabilitas Komposit ditetapkan serupa dengan kriteria Cronbach's Alpha, yaitu ≥ 0,7, yang menunjukkan bahwa variabel tersebut memiliki tingkat reliabilitas internal yang memadai.

Berdasarkan data yang disajikan pada Tabel 2, setiap variabel dalam penelitian ini menunjukkan nilai reliabilitas (baik melalui Reliabilitas Komposit maupun Cronbach's Alpha) yang melebihi ambang batas 0,7. Temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa semua variabel pengukuran memiliki konsistensi internal dan reliabilitas yang memadai dalam mengukur konsep laten yang dimaksud. Nilai reliabilitas di atas 0,7 dianggap tinggi, yang berarti instrumen pengukuran yang digunakan menghasilkan temuan yang stabil dan memiliki kemampuan untuk direplikasi.

Tabel 3 . Hasil Uji HTMT

No.	Variable	Brand awareness	Impulsive buying	Influencer	Social Media Exposure
1.	Social Media Exposure	0,532			
2.	Influencer	0,684	0,675		
3.	Impulsive buying	0,407	0,394	0,485	
4.	Brand awareness				

Discriminant validity was evaluated using the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT), which reflects the average correlation between all indicators measuring different constructs. The absence of discriminant validity is indicated by an HTMT value exceeding 0.9. Based on the analysis presented in Table 3, it was found that all HTMT values for all relationships between the research

variables were below 0.9. In addition, the squared correlation between a construct and itself was proven to be greater than the correlation between that construct and other constructs in the model. Therefore, the measurement model for all research variables was consistently considered discriminant valid. Next, the bootstrapping method was applied to evaluate the structural model and test the hypotheses. In this procedure, the t-test was used as the main statistical test. For a two-tailed test at a significance level of 0.05, the critical value (t-table) was set at 1.96. For the hypothesis to be accepted, the t-test result (t-statistic) must exceed the critical value (t-statistic > t-table) or the significance value (p-value) must be less than 0.05 (significance < 0.05).
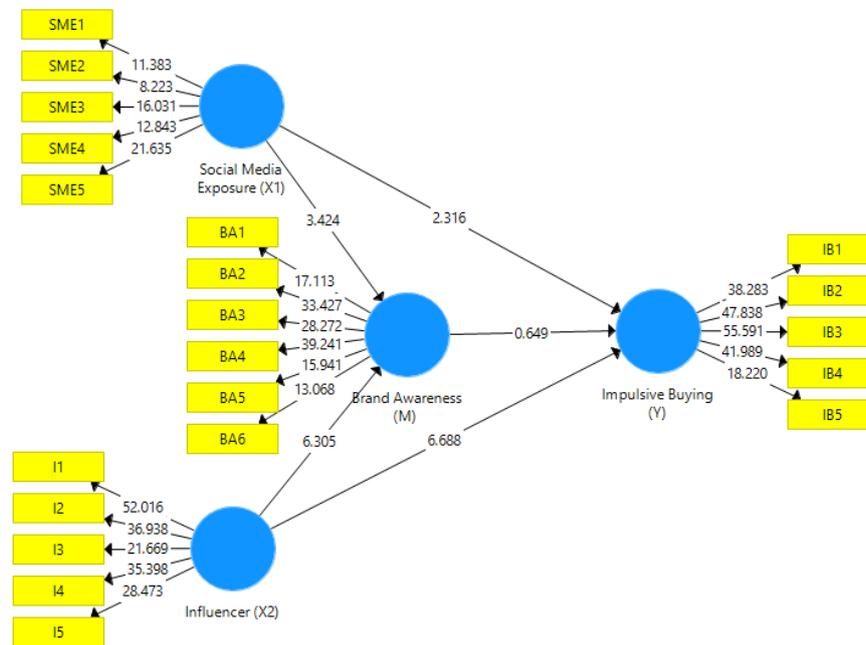

Figure 2.Bootstrapping

Table 4. Hypothesis Test Results

No.	Relationship Between Variables	Original Sample (O)	T Statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P Value	Description
1.	Social Media Exposure (X1) > Impulsive buying (Y)	0,140	2,316	0,021	Positive and Significant
2.	Influencer (X2) > Impulsive buying (Y)	0,617	6,688	0,000	Positive and Significant
3.	Brand awareness (M) > Impulsive buying (Y)	-0,088	0,649	0,517	Negative and Insignificant
4.	Social Media Exposure (X1) > Brand awareness (M) > Impulsive buying (Y)	-0,023	0,616	0,538	Negative and Insignificant
5.	Influencer (X2) > Brand awareness (M) > Impulsive buying (Y)	-0,045	0,613	0,0540	Negative and Insignificant

Figure 2 and Table 4 present the path coefficients and significance values (p-values) for each hypothesized relationship, including direct and indirect effects. The path coefficient indicates the strength and direction (positive or negative) of the influence (positive or negative) of the independent variable on the dependent variable. Meanwhile, the p-value is used to determine the statistical significance of the influence, with the influence considered significant if the p-value is less than 0.05. Based on the empirical data presented in Figure 2 and Table 4, the following conclusions can be drawn regarding the acceptance or rejection of the research hypotheses.

The Effect of Social Media Exposure on Impulsive Buying

Results of Hypothesis 1 Testing: The Effect of Social Media Exposure on Impulsive Buying. Structural model analysis revealed that Social Media Exposure has a positive and significant influence on impulsive buying. The estimated path coefficient is 0.140. This influence is statistically significant, as indicated by a t-statistic of 2.316 (exceeding the critical value of 1.96) and a p-value of 0.021 (less than 0.05). Based on these criteria, Hypothesis 1 (H1) is accepted.

The results of this study indicate a positive relationship, where increasing intensity of Gen Z's exposure to various content on social media platforms is directly proportional to their tendency to engage in unplanned fast fashion transactions. Within the context of Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) Theory, social media exposure acts as a powerful external stimulus. This stimulus initiates a series of internal processes within the organism (i.e., Gen Z consumers) through specific psychological mechanisms, such as the formation of scarcity perceptions, triggering Fear of Missing Out (FoMO), and providing instant visualizations of attractive products. This strengthening of internal emotional processes ultimately translates into a behavioral response, namely Impulse Buying. Although the estimated path coefficient (0.140) indicates that this impact may not be as strong as other variables tested, its significance and consistency remain. This finding supports and strengthens the results of previous studies (Aditya & Widagdo, 2024; Daulay et al., 2025), which also confirmed a significant influence between social media exposure and impulsive buying behavior. This confirms that social media plays a dominant and effective marketing role in facilitating emotionally driven and impulsive purchasing decisions among digitally savvy Gen Z consumers.

The Influence of Influencers on Impulsive Buying

The results of the hypothesis testing indicate that the Influencer variable has a positive and significant influence on impulsive buying. The estimated path coefficient is very high, reaching 0.617, suggesting that an increase in Influencers will contribute to a 0.617 increase in impulsive buying. The statistical significance of this effect is very strong, as evidenced by the significant t-statistic (6.688) and the very low p-value (0.000). Thus, Hypothesis 2 (H2) is accepted.

The hypothesis testing indicates that Influencers play a very dominant and significant role as the primary determinant of impulsive buying behavior among Generation Z for fast fashion products. The very high path coefficient (0.617) strengthens the Influencer variable's position as the most influential factor in the analyzed structural model. This strong impact can be effectively explained using the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) Theory framework. In this scheme, interactions with influencers and their recommended content serve as an external stimulus (S). This stimulus then triggers changes in the organism (O), the internal psychological state of Generation Z. Consumers tend to perceive influencers as authentic and trustworthy sources of information through parasocial appeal, thus triggering instant desires. This internal psychological process directly results in a behavioral response (R), namely an unplanned purchase decision. Influencers' ability to visualize products attractively and in real-time significantly contributes to triggering this impulse.

The findings regarding the central role of influencers are consistent with and supported by previous research (Shpautra et al., 2024; Surbakti et al., 2022), which also confirmed the effectiveness of influencers in driving impulsive buying decisions. Given the significance and

strength of this extraordinary impact, this study recommends that fast fashion companies adopt marketing strategies that involve influencers in a planned manner to achieve optimal sales growth.

The Influence of Brand Awareness on Impulsive Buying

A structural model analysis shows that brand awareness does not have a statistically significant effect on impulsive buying. This variable has a path coefficient of -0.088. This insignificant effect is supported by the t-statistic (0.649) and p-value (0.517), both of which failed to meet the criteria for statistical significance ($p < 0.05$ or $t > 1.96$). Therefore, Hypothesis 3 (H3) is rejected.

The results of this study found that Brand Awareness is not a primary driver of Generation Z's impulse buying behavior toward fast fashion, and even tends to show a negative relationship. Theoretically, this pattern can be explained because impulse buying is generally based on spontaneous emotional reactions and triggered by situational factors, so cognitive components, such as Brand Awareness, have a smaller influence on the decision-making process. In contrast, external factors such as social media exposure or influencer advice (which often create a perception of scarcity or Fear of Missing Out (FoMO)) have proven much more effective in stimulating these unplanned transactions.

Although this finding contradicts several previous studies (Maulani, 2020; Prasetya et al., 2024) that showed a significant impact of brand awareness in the e-commerce context, the results of this study are consistent with other research (Fitria and Apriyanti, 2024) that also found insignificant Brand Awareness in the online shopping environment. This underscores that, although Generation Z consumers have brand awareness, the main triggers that cause impulsive actions come from situational variables outside themselves. This conclusion is in line with the S-O-R (Stimulus-Organism-Response) Model framework, which views external exposure (Stimulus) as an initiator that is ultimately mediated by internal psychological states (Organism, including Brand Awareness) before producing a behavioral response.

The Effect of Social Media Exposure on Impulsive Buying Through Brand Awareness

Based on the hypothesis test, the indirect path coefficient for social media exposure on impulsive buying through brand awareness was -0.023. The statistical test results showed a t-statistic of 0.616 (<1.96) and a p-value of 0.538 (>0.05). These findings indicate that brand awareness does not significantly mediate the relationship between social media exposure and impulsive buying behavior. Therefore, Hypothesis 4 (H4) in this study is rejected.

The results indicate that even high levels of social media exposure do not automatically drive impulsive buying behavior through brand awareness. Brand awareness falls within the cognitive (knowledge) realm, while impulsive buying falls within the affective realm, often triggered by fleeting emotions. A person may be highly familiar with a brand due to its frequent appearance on social media, but this brand awareness is not strong enough to create a buying urge without additional incentives such as discounts or limited-time offers.

The Influence of Influencers on Impulsive Buying Through Brand Awareness

The results of the hypothesis test indicate an indirect effect between influencers and impulsive buying among Generation Z through brand awareness, with a path coefficient of -0.045. The significance test results showed a t-statistic of 0.613 (<1.96) with a p-value of 0.540 (>0.05). The test results conclude that brand awareness does not mediate the relationship between influencers and impulsive buying, thus rejecting Hypothesis 5 (H5).

Influencers currently function more as sources of trust than simply as brand identifiers. Consumers may already be familiar with the brand through official advertising, so the influencer's presence no longer serves to increase awareness but rather as persuasion. If influencers only build brand awareness without creating boundaries, impulse buying will not occur. Most consumers today, especially Generation Z, are starting to experience influencer recommendations fatigue.

When an influencer introduces a brand, consumers tend to realize it's paid content (endorsement). This awareness triggers critical thinking that inhibits impulsive impulses. Influencers may be successful in promoting a brand, but they don't have enough power to trigger impulsive buying behavior.

CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis and discussion, this study concludes that social media and influencer exposure have a positive and significant effect on Generation Z's impulse buying behavior for fast fashion products. These findings suggest that the intensity of social media and influencer content consumption can encourage spontaneous and unplanned purchasing decisions. Therefore, hypotheses H1 and H2 are accepted. Conversely, brand awareness does not have a significant effect on impulse buying, thus rejecting hypothesis H3. These results suggest that brand awareness is not the primary driver of Gen Z's impulse buying behavior, which tends to be influenced by emotional and situational stimuli rather than cognitive considerations.

Furthermore, the results of the indirect effect test indicate that brand awareness does not mediate the relationship between social media and influencer exposure and impulse buying. Therefore, hypotheses H4 and H5 are rejected. These findings indicate that the influence of social media and influencer exposure on impulse buying occurs directly, without going through the mechanism of brand awareness. Overall, the results of this study support the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) framework, where social media and influencer exposure serve as external stimuli that directly trigger behavioral responses in the form of impulse buying. However, this study has limitations, including the use of purposive sampling techniques, a relatively small number of respondents, and limitations on the mediating variables studied, making the results inaccurate.

Recommendations

Based on the study's findings, fast fashion businesses are advised to optimize digital marketing strategies that focus on social media and influencers, particularly through engaging visual content that creates an emotional impact. Influencer selection should consider credibility, suitability to the characteristics of the Generation Z audience, and ability to build trust, rather than solely based on follower count.

Future researchers are advised to develop the research model by adding other variables, such as hedonic shopping motivation or Fear of Missing Out (FoMO), as mediating and moderating variables. Future research could also expand the research object to various product categories or generational groups to obtain more comprehensive results and stronger generalizability.

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