



Buy now or regret later! How does peer influence, reviews, and viral marketing affect online impulse buying behaviour? A study of gender differences

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Abstract. Over the last few of decades, technology improvements have sped dramatically, particularly in the domain of social media. Social media has altered consumer behaviour and the ways in which companies conduct their business. Though previous evidence from practical and academic literature shows that peer influence, online reviews, and viral marketing may lead impulse buying, very little is used social media e-commerce marketplace as an object of the study. Hence, this study makes a novel attempt to explore whether these factors influence consumers to buy impulsively within social media e-commerce marketplace context namely TikTok Shop with the regards of gender differences. The study used a two-step sampling procedure which is purposive and snowball sampling. Thus, a five-point Likert scale survey employed as a data collection method. The study was conducted with 217 participants. The study used regression modelling analysis to validate the proposed hypothetical model. The findings suggest that peer influence, reviews, and viral marketing affect online impulse buying simultaneously for both gender segmentations within study. However, the role of viral marketing failed to influence impulse buying for both gender segmentations within study. Even though viral marketing is faster than traditional marketing campaign as well as less expensive but not preeminent way for creating effective marketing campaign. In sum, this study is thought an additional stage in understanding consumer attitudes and behaviour in social media e-commerce marketplace in the age of new media with multidirectional, linked, and unpredictable flow of information.

Keywords: Peer influence, Online review, Viral marketing, Impulse buying, Online shopping.

1 Introduction

Digital marketing was greatly aided by the social media trend, which altered and revolutionized traditional marketing activities (Piñeiro-Otero & Martínez-Rolán, 2016). The prominence of social media has grown significantly since the arrival of millennial generation, notably in recent years. Social media is becoming more integrated into personal, social, and professional life and is altering how we interact with people (Alalwan, Rana, Dwivedi, & Algharabat, 2017; Teng, Khong, Chong, & Lin, 2016, Feito & Brown, 2018). Xu, Islam, Liang, Akhtar, & Shahzad (2021) added that social media platforms has enabled hyper-connectivity that gives significant impact

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on consumer behaviour. The change prompted by the emergence of social media also applies to the consumer decision making process and marketing communications (Wang, Yu, & Wei, 2012). Social commerce has evolved into a wide range of business models, including the mixing of online and offline business processes. Social commerce connects buyers and sellers over websites and social platforms using the business ideas of online shopping and social networks. With online social networks, social commerce not only relies on commerce, but social networking is also important, and online social media can promote the sale of goods or services online and offline (Riyahi, 2020, Tewari, 2020, Liao, Widowati, Hsieh 2021). Social commerce has revolutionized the consumption experience due to complex interactive factors. Even more, growing evidence suggests that in such a setting, people are more likely to make impulsive buying (Zafar, Qiu, Li, Wang, & Shahzad 2021). Liu, Li, & Hu (2013) stated that there was around 40% of all online consumer expenditure considered as impulsive.

One of the most popular social media commerce platforms in the recent days was TikTok. China's social media platform was confirmed to be fourth among the top five social media platforms as of January 2021 (Indrawati, Yones, & Muthaiyah, 2022). This ranking was based on users' cumulative time spent, which was 13.8 hours per month on average (Kemp, 2021). Handy & Wijaya (2020) and Barta, Belanche, Fernandez, & Flavian (2023) stated that Tiktok has triumphed over a number of other well-known platforms, including YouTube, Facebook, and Instagram as the most downloaded application globally in 2020 and 2021, achieving 1506 million downloads. In Indonesia itself, they have more than 106.9 million adult users with the chemical, pharmaceutical and traditional medicine industries (including cosmetics) experienced positive growth of around 5.59% (Yuliatuti, 2020).

Existing studies on social media has predominantly focussed on rational buying behavior (Hajli, 2013, Shin, 2013), even though impulse buying may also occur in social commerce context. According to Chan, Cheung, & Lee (2017), the literature on online impulse buying has two main research streams. While the first research stream examines how website cues affect online impulse buying, the second stream of research explores into characteristics that influence offline impulse buying and how they relate to online impulse buying. However, researchers have argued that the online shopping atmosphere is now more beneficial to impulse buying behaviour compared to the traditional/conventional store since it frees consumers from the constraints (such as in-store marketing and peer pressure from staff and other customers) that they could experience during physical shopping activities (Eroglu, Machleit, & Davis, 2001; Melović, Šehović, Karadžić, Dabić, & Ćirović, 2021; Xi, Cao, & Zhen, 2020; Eger, Komárková, Egerová, & Mičík, 2021). There hasn't been much studies have explored impulse buying behaviour in the online context, despite the advances of information technology and the tremendous growth of e-commerce types, including social commerce.

Following the mentioned gap above, this study aims to investigate online impulse buying determinants. Previous literature proposed three dominant factors that may affect online impulse buying, namely peer influence (Chen, Lu, Wang, & Pan, 2019; Balakrishnan, Foroudi, & Dwivedi, 2020, Zafar, Qiu, Li, Wang, & Shahzad, 2021), online reviews (Chan, Cheung, Lee, 2017; Ampadu, Jiang, Debrah, Antwi, Amankwa,

Gyamfi, & Amoako, 2022; Tata, Prashar, & Gupta, 2020; Bigne, Chatzipanagiotou, & Ruiz, 2020), and viral marketing (Mochalova & Nanopoulos 2014; Koch & Benlian, 2015, Sung, 2021). Moreover, gender is important in distinguishing online impulse buying as male or female may have different interactional approaches in make such consumer decision process (Chen, Lu, Wang, & Pan, 2019; Wu, Chiu, & Chen, 2020; Zhang, Shao, Li, & Feng, 2021; Liang, Yu, & Le, 2021). Therefore, this study tried to address the gap with the main question: Whether and how peer influence, online reviews, and viral marketing arouse consumer to buy impulsively in the online social commerce?

2 Literature Review

2.1 Impulse Buying

Impulse buying has been growing topic in the past few decades. Rook (1987) stated that Impulse buying occurs when a consumer experiences a sudden, often powerful and persistent urge to buy some-thing immediately. The impulse to buy is hedonically complex and may stimulate emotional conflict. In addition, impulse buying is prone to occur with diminished regard for its consequences. In 1998, Beatty and Ferrell argued that impulse buying refers to the purchase consumers carry out immediately without any pre-shopping intention to purchase a particular product or to satisfy a specific need. Early approaches, taking a marketing perspective, defined impulse buying as any unplanned purchase and accordingly focussed on specific product categories or product features (Stern, 1962) that may increase the likelihood of impulse buying. Research then assumed the perspective of the consumer and investigated personal characteristics related to impulse buying, including demographics (Kollat and Willett, 1967) and personality (Rook,1987). In general, consumers' impulse buying tendencies were instinctive, and indicated a general inclination for impulse buying. Previously, impulsive customers valued online reviews for their hedonic values, whereas now impulsive customers value online reviews for their utility values (Zhang et al., 2018). External stimuli are marketing indicators used by marketers to entice customers to make a purchase (Yoon and Faber, 2000), whereas internal stimuli are aspects of a person's personality (Luo et al., 2018). Furthermore, in the context of live-stream commerce, social presence also affects impulse buying (Ming et al., 2021). Impulse buying also created when other consumer post and comment in social media as regard their feeling and cognition about product and service (Chang, 2017; Ju & Ahn, 2016; Zhao et al., 2019) and likewise they will see review about this product or service (Zafar, Qiu, Shahzad, et al., 2021).

2.2 Peer Influence

Peer influence refers to recommendations and support obtained from social network members such as family members and friends (Thoits,2011). According to Bristol and

Mangleburg (2005), peer influence stands for the extent peers exert influence on the attitude thoughts and action of an individual. For instance peer influence varies on the extent of its effect on the buying behaviour and decision to purchase different product (Bearden and Etzel (1982). Sacerdote (2014) argued that peer influence is an umbrella term that refers to when the attitudes, values or behaviours of an individual are influenced by the behaviours of members within a peer group. There are other cases where the peer group is defined more narrowly, based on connections within a social network or membership in a group, such as employees within an organization or members of a church congregation (Graham,2018). While browsing social commerce platforms, consumers are likely to encounter and interact with various social cues and engage in impulse buying as a result (Kimiagari & Malafe, 2021; Zafar et al., 2020). Posts and comments on social media make shoppers feel connected to an online community activating emotions of pleasure and arousal and leading to impulse buying (Chang, 2017; Ju & Ahn, 2016; Zhao et al., 2019). Furthermore, digital celebrities' endorsements on social media can induce impulse buying among young adults during hedonic browsing (Chen, Kassas, & Gao, 2021; Zafar, Qiu, Shahzad, et al., 2021). Based on the background we proposed the following hypotheses:

H1 : Peer influence has significant effect on impulse buying behaviour

2.3 Viral Marketing

Terms such as "word of mouth marketing" or "buzz marketing" are often used synonymously instead of "viral marketing" (Stevenson, 2008). According to Palka et al. (2009), the term Viral explained as "a type of marketing in which advertising messages are spread from one customer to others like a spread of a flu virus". Kim and Lowrey (2010) also stated that viral marketing is a "marketing tool or marketing phenomenon to encourage and urge people to share messages". Viral marketing is known as word-of-mouth or buzz marketing as well and it is basically about consumers sharing information with each other (Kozinets et al., 2010). Viral marketing includes any strategy that persuades individuals to transfer a marketing message to others, and build the potential for exponential growth in the message's disposal and penetration (Kirby, 2006). Like viruses, such strategies use fast multiplication to spread the message to potential costumers (Vilpponen et al., 2006). In other words, viral marketing entails the consumers' function of electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) on social network and media (SNM) sites (Gunawan and Huarng, 2015). Studies indicate that the product information gained product information from online discussions of internet users is more interesting than the information provided by marketing companies (such as web pages of big companies) (Bickart and Schindler, 2001). Viral Marketing is a strategy involving digital content that has the ability to create rapid growth in a short time. The previous research studies confirmed that there is a positive relationship between viral marketing and impulse buying (Abdullah & Artanti,2021; Baker et al.,2019; Khokar et al., 2019; Husnain et al.,2016). Based on the previous study we proposed the following hypothesis:

H2 : Viral Marketing has significant effect on impulse buying behaviour

2.4 Online Review

The influence of online reviews has been widely explored in the literature of consumer behavior, marketing, and information systems. Due to the potential risks of online shopping (e.g. product performance risk and financial risk), many consumers infer product quality and reduce uncertainty by referring to online reviews from other consumers. Chen Yubo (2008) argues that online reviews, which acts as a free "marketing" function, are usually describe product attributes according to the usage of reviewers and reviews products performance from the perspective of the user, which can help consumers especially novices of network shopping to find the products which can meet their specific needs. Zhang et al (2012) make a more comprehensive definition of online word of mouth that the masses can get potential, real evaluations of the quality of goods, services, and enterprise and experiences of using a product or service, which are mainly in the form of text, via the Internet, positive or negative. Online reviews can trigger impulse buying urges during browsing (Ampadu et al., 2022). They also increase positive affect, enticing impulse buying if the review is of good quality, that is, highly useful to a consumer and originating from a credible source (Xu et al., 2020). In particular, online reviews with a strong hedonic message are more effective in triggering impulse buying than those that emphasize utilitarian information (Zafar, Qiu, Shahzad, et al., 2021; Zhang et al., 2018). Park et al. (2007) used an experimental method and found that consumer purchase behavior is closely associated with online reviews. Affective component of online reviews plays a more important role in driving consumer browsing and impulse buying behavior. Marketers and retailers traditionally utilize external stimuli, such as in-store promotions and advertising, to trigger impulse shopping (Grigsby et al., 2021; Yi & Jai, 2020). We propose that online review can drive consumers to buy impulsively. The following hypothesis is provided:

H3 : Online review has significant effect on impulse buying behavior

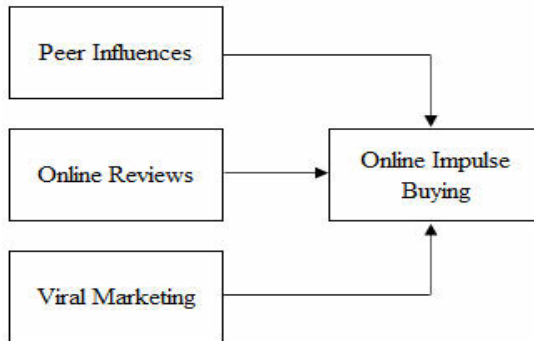


Fig. 1. Research Framework

3 Methods

Popular Chinese social commerce, namely TikTok Shop, were selected as the object of the study as this platform had a massive user growth since the COVID pandemic and

frequently offer discount price to their consumers. Therefore, in this kind of situation, we assume that impulse buying is likely to take place. In our study, only participants who are classified as younger adult and had previously purchase experience in TikTok Shop were considered. Since it was difficult for us to find those match people, we conducted a snowball sampling (also known as chain-referral sampling) approach Leighton, Kardong-Edgren, Schneidereith, & Foisy-Doll (2021), allowing participants to propose other participants by submitting their email addresses. We also posted the survey link on many social media platforms including TikTok, Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp to aid in snowball recruiting. Before the final survey, we did a pre-test by inviting 30 TikTok Shop consumers to participate in filling out the questionnaire and provide feedback. During this process, the questionnaire was further improved. Moreover, to avoid response biases, we also compared the demographic profiles of the first 50 and the last 50 participants in the sample to examine the non-response bias. Fortunately, there is a no significant differences between these comparison, indicating that bias might not have been a major issue in this study. A total of 315 participants agreed to take part in the survey. Of these, however, 33 participants never had online impulse experience, 15 participants never buy in TikTok Shop, and 50 participants failed to complete the questionnaire, resulting in a total of 217 usable surveys for analysis. Table 1 of demographics profile shows that over half of the participants were female (52 percent) while 48 percent were male. The majority of participant of the study were in the age range of less than 20 to 30 years old (69 percent). And lastly, 75.6 percent of our participants are university students and graduates. This demographic profile, however, aligned with Wu, Ing-Long; Chiu, Mai-Lun; Chen, Kuei-Wan (2020) study that described online consumers are generally younger and higher education than conventional consumers.

Table 1. Demographic Profiles

Characteristics	Frequency	Percent (%)
Gender		
Male	104	48
Female	113	52
Age		
< 20	74	34
20 – 30 (less than)	85	39
30 – 40 (less than)	41	19
> 40	17	8
Education		
Higher School	24	11
College	193	89

The current study has adapted the scale items validated in the prior studies to measure the study constructs. We made minor modifications on the measures to fit our context. Responses to all items of the study were measured by using a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). For instance, peer influences asked “My friends/family members recommend that I should buy product from TikTok Shop”, “My friends/family members would be happy if they knew that I

buy product from TikTok Shop” (Ozdemir, Sena; Zhang, ShiJie; Gupta, Suraksha; Bebek, Gaye (2020); Mohd Suki, Norazah (2019). While online reviews had been adapted from Jiménez, Fernando; Mendoza, Norma (2013) scale of items (“I typically read the reviews before making a decision”, “I think consumer reviews are helpful”, and “Consumer reviews often influence my purchase decisions”), viral marketing was measured with the scale items developed by Hendijani Fard, Morteza; Marvi, Reza (2020) like “I always get product promo-message in my TikTok”, “I think the person who produce video promo-message in TikTok, is trustworthy”, and “The arguments of video promo-message in TikTok are convincing” . Furthermore, the scale of online impulse buying tendency measured by using three items of Wu, Ing-Long; Chiu, Mai-Lun; Chen, Kuei-Wan (2020). The items were “When shopping online, I often have the idea "buy now and think about it later", “When shopping online, I often buy things without thinking”, and “When shopping online, I often buy things according to how I feel at the moment”. The results of the reliability of the study revealed that all the values of Cronbach’s α are higher than 0.7 (0.88, 0.91, 0.85, 0.94). Therefore, according to Cronbach (1951) and Nunnally (1978), it can be concluded that the research measure has good reliability. Following that, in order to test our hypotheses systematically, we utilize multiple regression analysis (MRA) to prove our hypothesis and to make comparisons results between gender classification. Because it allows researchers to explicitly control for numerous different factors that simultaneously affect the dependent variable, multiple regression analysis is more amenable to ceteris paribus analysis (Das (2019).

4 Result AND DISCUSSION

In this study we report result of study examining the relationship between peer influence, online review and viral marketing toward impulse buying behaviour in social commerce namely Tiktok. To testing the hypothesis we used regression analysis. We first provide comprehensive, but simple regression for the research. We also distinguish between male and female whether both genders had differences toward impulse buying behavior.

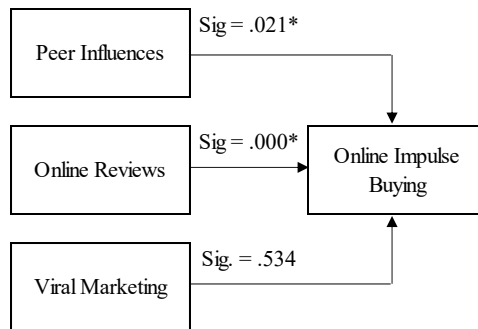


Fig. 2. : Regression Result for Male

Figure 2 shown the result of regression analysis for male. Based on the data peer influences had significant effect on impulse buying with p-value 0.021. Thus, online review also had significant effect on impulse buying with p-value 0.000. However, in this research we found interesting finding to wit viral marketing had no significant effect on impulse buying behavior with p-value 0.534. This indicates male is more rational consumer, when to bough product or service they used cognitive affirmation to make buying decision. They were not influence with trend or viral toward product or service.

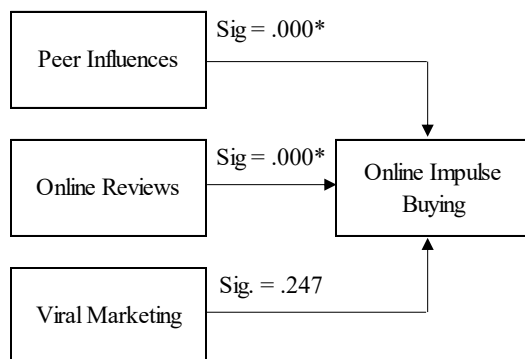


Fig. 3. Regression Result for female

Figure 3 describe the result of regression analysis for female. In this study we found that peer influence had significant effect on impulse buying behavior with p-value 0.000. furthermore, online review had significant effect on impulse buying behavior with p-value 0.000. Thus viral marketing had no significant effect on impulse buying behavior with p-value 0.247. In female perception there was a lot of information about current viral product or service, they could browsing through the internet to found match information about newest viral so as they could not prone against viral marketing.

Table 2. Summary of Hypothesis

Hypothesis	Male (n =104)		Female (n =113)	
	Sig.	Decision	Sig.	Decision
Peer Influence -> Online Impulse Buying	0.021	Accepted	0.000	Accepted
Online Reviews -> Online Impulse Buying	0.000	Accepted	0.000	Accepted
Viral Marketing -> Online Impulse Buying	0.534	Rejected	0.247	Rejected

There were no differences between male and female toward peer review and online review to impulse buying behavior. The present research indicates that peer influence on impulse buying leads to automated responding. Beyond peer influence on impulse buying, the present research has implications for consumer behavior more generally. Much of what consumers do is automatic. In addition, online review also had no differences between male and female. Online reviews can trigger impulse buying urges during browsing (Ampadu et al., 2022). In other words, these consumers are more likely to focus on the fun part of online reviews and are easier to develop the impulse buying while browsing shopping websites.

A lot of research on viral marketing supports the positive relationship between impulse buying behavior. Previous research suggested viral marketing has a positive impact on impulse buying. This complies with the existing literature which stated, viral marketing positively impacts impulse buying (Abdullah & Artanti, 2021; Baker et al., 2019; Khokar et al.,). However this research were slightly different stated that viral marketing had no significant effect between male and female. Both genders perceived that viral marketing cannot influence them to buy impulsively. This indicates because they could find a lot information on internet about the happening issue such viral marketing. Even though viral marketing is faster than traditional marketing campaign as well as less expensive but not preeminent way for creating effective marketing campaign. In sum, this study is thought an additional stage in understanding consumer attitudes and behaviour in social media e-commerce marketplace in the age of new media with multidirectional, linked, and unpredictable flow of information.

In addition to the theoretical implications, we believe that our findings can also provide several practical implications. First, a recent review moreover concludes that sharing information and opinions about products (i.e. word of mouth) is driven by self-serving motives that people may not be aware. So that, retailer should utilize this kind of information to take marketing campaign with encourage customer to write good comment through online store or store website. Second, this study emphasizes the importance of online reviews in driving consumers online impulse buying behavior. Online retailers may consider using these reviews as marketing tools to act as effective environmental and social influence and to promote consumers impulse buying behavior. Third, actually viral marketing can enhance impulse buying behavior. It is important for e-commerce to make sure that messages sent through viral marketing are informative to the customer. This should be reflected in social media and emails sent to customers. Information sent to customers related to products and services should be useful to customers, and customers should respond positively. In addition, it is important to manage to make sure that messages sent through viral marketing are fun. This helps maintain customer interest.

5 Conclusion

In a fiercely competitive world market, customers have increasingly more choices and power, and customer psychology changes accordingly. Impulse shopping has become increasingly popular. People buy something that is not based on their original intention. Impulse buying is influenced by many direct and indirect factors such that peer influence, online review and viral marketing. Hence, this study makes a novel attempt to explore whether these factors influence consumers to buy impulsively within social media e-commerce marketplace context namely TikTok Shop with the regards

of gender differences. The findings suggest that peer influence, reviews, and viral marketing affect online impulse buying simultaneously for both gender segmentations within study. However, the role of viral marketing failed to influence impulse buying for both gender segmentations within study. Even though viral marketing is faster than traditional marketing campaign as well as less expensive but not preeminent way for creating effective marketing campaign. In sum, this study is thought an additional stage in understanding consumer attitudes and behaviour in social media e-commerce marketplace in the age of new media with multidirectional, linked, and unpredictable flow of information.

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