

Determinants of Impulsive Buying Among Students: Implications for Responsible Consumption and Sustainable Development

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ABSTRACT

Objective: This study aims to investigate the determinants of impulsive buying behavior among university students, focusing on low self-control, social networking impulsivity, and positive attitudes toward targeted advertising in Generation Z students in Indonesia. **Method:** The approach used is involving simple random sampling of 174 students from the Education Program at the Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Negeri Surabaya. Data were collected using a five-point Likert scale questionnaire, adapted from prior studies, and analyzed through Structural Equation Modeling (SEM-PLS) to assess direct and mediating effects. **Results:** The findings indicate that low self-control significantly affects impulsive buying both directly and indirectly through social networking impulsivity. While low self-control also influences positive attitudes toward targeted advertising, these attitudes do not mediate impulsive buying. Furthermore, social networking impulsivity significantly mediates the relationship between low self-control and impulsive buying, highlighting the dominant role of social media-related impulsivity. **Novelty:** This study offers an integrated perspective by simultaneously examining low self-control, social networking impulsivity, and attitudes toward targeted advertising in Indonesian Gen Z students. It extends the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) by demonstrating that, in the digital consumption context, attitudes may not always act as effective mediators, whereas social media-related impulsivity is crucial. The findings provide both theoretical contributions and practical guidance for improving students' digital economic literacy and managing impulsive buying behavior responsibly.

INTRODUCTION

The rise of digital technology, accelerated by the Industrial Revolution 5.0, has reshaped consumer purchasing behavior across the globe (Hou et al., 2021). Traditional shopping patterns have shifted toward digital platforms, making e-commerce and social media dominant channels for purchasing decisions. This transition became more pronounced during the COVID-19 pandemic, which intensified reliance on online shopping and digital communication. In Indonesia, 59.3% of internet users engaged in e-commerce in 2024, ranking the country among the top ten globally in online shopping frequency (Catherin, 2024; Yi et al. 2023; Cui 2022). Promotions such as discounts, cashback, free shipping, and influencer endorsements have amplified impulsive buying tendencies (Cano-Leiva et al. 2024; Ratchford et al. 2022).

Impulsive buying refers to spontaneous, unplanned purchases often driven by emotions rather than rational decision making (Bandyopadhyay et al. 2021; Rook, 1985). This behavior is prevalent among university students, who enjoy greater financial freedom yet often lack mature consumption patterns (Luo et al. 2021). Studies indicate that Gen Z consumers, who dominate the current student demographic, are highly exposed to digital marketing and social media influence, making them vulnerable to

unplanned spending (Rodrigues et al. 2021; Chan et al. 2017). Preliminary interviews with students from the Economics Education Study Program at Universitas Negeri Surabaya support these observations. Seven out of ten respondents admitted to frequent impulsive purchases mainly fashion and skincare products on platforms like Shopee, TikTok Shop, and Tokopedia. Discounts, free shipping, and influencer reviews were key triggers, confirming the role of digital marketing in shaping impulsive buying habits among students.

This study focuses on Generation Z students (born 1997–2012), who are digital natives highly influenced by technology and social media. Gen Z exhibits a strong tendency toward FOMO (Fear of Missing Out), contributing to impulsive consumption patterns (Yonatan, 2024; Dimock, 2019). This age group is also in a phase of identity formation, where social recognition is crucial. Social media platforms integrate commercial activities through social commerce, influencing users' purchasing decisions via peer recommendations, influencer endorsements, and personalized content (Park et al. 2021; Dodoo and Wu 2019).

The phenomenon of impulsive buying among students is associated with psychological and behavioral factors. One critical determinant is self-control, the ability to regulate impulses and align actions with long-term goals. Individuals with low self-control are more likely to engage in impulsive purchases due to their reduced capacity to delay gratification (Yim 2017; Kuhn 2013; D W Rook 1985). Individuals with low self-control are more likely to engage in impulsive purchases due to prioritizing immediate gratification over long-term benefits (Iyer et al. 2020; Baumeister, 2002). Empirical studies have confirmed that low self-control is significantly associated with impulsive buying (Fajri et al. 2023; Atunnisa' and Firdiansyah 2022). However, few studies integrate self-control, social network impulsivity, and positive attitudes toward targeted advertising among Generation Z (Rahmatullah, 2021; Dodoo & Wu, 2019).

This study adopts the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), which emphasizes attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control to explain intentional behavior (Bosnjak et al. 2020). TPB allows integration of psychological factors and digital marketing influences, making it suitable for understanding impulsive buying in social commerce. Despite extensive research, gaps remain in understanding the combined effects of low self-control, social network impulsivity, and positive attitudes toward targeted advertising in Indonesian university contexts. Addressing this gap also contributes to responsible consumption and SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production, as impulsive buying can lead to overconsumption and waste. By exploring self-control and mediating factors, this study identifies ways to encourage conscious purchasing, reduce unnecessary consumption, and foster sustainable consumption habits among digital native students.

Previous studies show that low self-control directly increases impulsive buying and fosters positive attitudes toward targeted advertising (Nyrhinen et al., 2024). Research by Anggraini (2024) and Fauzan et al. (2024) confirmed a negative relationship between self-control and impulsive buying among students. Chen et al. (2022) reported that social media use correlates with user enjoyment, while self-control mitigates negative emotions affecting impulsive purchases. Xu et al. (2020) emphasized the influence of social media and targeted advertising on online consumer decisions, while Nasir et al. (2021) highlighted that certain consumer segments are more susceptible to social network influence and impulsive purchases.

Building on these findings, this study investigates how low self-control affects impulsive buying among Generation Z students at the Education Program Study, Universitas Negeri Surabaya, while examining the mediating roles of social network impulsivity and positive attitudes toward targeted advertising. By focusing on a specific population and local context, this research fills gaps in the literature and offers practical insights for educators, policymakers, and digital marketers to promote responsible online consumption.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a quantitative approach with an explanatory design to examine the causal relationships among the variables in the research model. The quantitative approach allows for structured measurement using numerical data, supporting objective analysis, while the explanatory design is suitable because the study aims to explain both direct and indirect effects, including those mediated by the specified variables (Creswell, 2014).

The population consisted of 306 active students from the Education Study Program, Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Negeri Surabaya, class of 2021, covering Accounting Education, Office Administration Education, Business Education, and Economic Education. The sample size was determined using Slovin's formula with a 5% margin of error, resulting in 174 respondents. Slovin's formula was chosen because it effectively determines a representative sample from a known population while maintaining sufficient precision. A probability sampling technique with proportional random sampling was applied to ensure that every member of the population had an equal chance of selection while maintaining proportional representation across study programs. This approach was selected to enhance the representativeness of the sample and support the external validity of the findings (Sugiyono, 2017).

The research instrument consisted of a five-point Likert scale questionnaire ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), measuring four variables with different numbers of items. Low self-control was measured using 19 items adapted from Nyrhinen et al. (2024) and Susanne et al. (2021), example items included "I often make purchases

without considering the consequences" and "I feel more confident buying a product after seeing and touching it directly." Social networking impulsivity was measured using 8 items adapted from Aragoncillo and Orus (2018) including statements like "I am often tempted to buy something because I see my friends buying it on social media" and "Social media networks serve as a source of inspiration for my purchasing decisions." Positive attitudes toward targeted advertising were measured with 10 items adapted from Kim and Han (2014), such as "Targeted advertisements make me more interested in buying a product" and "I feel targeted ads provide useful and relevant information for my needs as a consumer." Impulse buying behavior was measured with 10 items adapted from Beatty and Ferrell (1998); Rook and Fisher (1995); Verplanken and Herabadi (2001), including statements like "I often buy items that I had not planned to purchase" and "I plan my purchases before deciding to buy."

Content validity was confirmed through expert review by lecturers to ensure clarity, relevance, and appropriateness of indicators. A pilot test was conducted with 30 respondents outside the main sample, and the data were analyzed using SPSS version 25. Pearson correlation was applied for item-total validity, and Cronbach's Alpha ($\alpha > 0.7$) was used to assess reliability. The final questionnaire was distributed online via Google Form through WhatsApp, ensuring convenience, voluntary participation, and adherence to ethical standards.

Data analysis was conducted using Structural Equation Modeling-Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) with SmartPLS version 4.1. The analysis involved two stages, testing the outer model to assess construct validity and reliability, and testing the inner model to examine relationships among variables. SEM-PLS was selected for its suitability for complex models with moderate sample sizes, tolerance for non-normal data distributions, and ability to accurately assess both direct and indirect effects. The analysis followed Hair et al. (2017) guidelines to ensure valid and reliable results.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Based on the questionnaire distribution, 174 respondents met the criteria: active students in the Education Study Program, Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Negeri Surabaya, intake 2021, aged 18–24, and with active social media accounts. Respondent characteristics analyzed included gender, age, and study program. The distribution of respondents based on study program is presented in detail in table 1.

Table 1. Distribution of Respondent Characteristics

| | Criteria | Amount | Percentage (%) |
|---------------|---------------------------------|--------|----------------|
| Gender | Female | 25 | 27.59% |
| | Male | 149 | 86.13% |
| Study Program | Office Administration Education | 47 | 27.12% |
| | Accounting Education | 44 | 25.16% |
| | Business Education | 37 | 21.24% |
| | Economic Education | 46 | 26.47% |

| Criteria | | Amount | Percentage (%) |
|----------|---------|--------|----------------|
| Age | 21 year | 9 | 5.20% |
| | 22 year | 143 | 82.66% |
| | 23 year | 24 | 13.87% |
| | 24 year | 2 | 1.16% |

Source: Results processed by researchers, 2025

Based on the analysis, the majority of respondents to this study were female students, 149 of whom comprised 85.63% of the total. There were significantly fewer male students, 25 of whom comprised 14.37%. This confirms the preponderance of female participation in this study. By study program, the largest contribution came from Office Administration Education with 47 students (27.01%), followed by Economics Education with 26.47%, Accounting Education with 25.29%, and Business Education with the lowest contribution at 21.26%. This distribution reflects a fairly proportional representation across each study program, resulting in a fairly diverse range of student perspectives. In terms of age, the majority of respondents, 143, were 22 years old, representing 82.18% of the total. Meanwhile, there were 24 students aged 23 (13.79%), 9 students aged 21 (5.20%), and 2 students aged 24 (1.16%). This distribution shows that the majority of respondents are final year students who are in the productive age range.

The analysis results show that all indicators in the variables of low self-control, social networking impulsivity, positive attitudes towards targeted advertising, and impulsive buying have loading factor values above 0.70 and AVE above 0.50, thus meeting the criteria for convergent validity. The HTMT values for all inter-variable relationships are also below 0.90, indicating that discriminant validity is met. In addition, the Cronbach's Alpha and composite reliability values for all variables are above 0.90, which indicates that each construct in this study has high reliability and is suitable for use as a measuring tool. The results of the convergent validity test discriminant validity test, and reliability test can be seen in tables 2, 3, and 4.

Table 1. Outer Model Test Result (Convergent Validity)

| Variable | Indicator | Convergent Validity | |
|----------|-----------|---------------------|-------|
| | | Loading Factor | AVE |
| IJS | M1.1 | 0.779 | 0.595 |
| | M1.2 | 0.707 | |
| | M1.3 | 0.841 | |
| | M1.4 | 0.751 | |
| | M1.5 | 0.844 | |
| | M1.6 | 0.716 | |
| | M1.7 | 0.752 | |
| SPTIB | M2.1 | 0.735 | 0.540 |
| | M2.10 | 0.722 | |
| | M2.2 | 0.742 | |
| | M2.3 | 0.712 | |
| | M2.4 | 0.782 | |

| Variable | Indicator | Convergent Validity | |
|----------|-----------|---------------------|-------|
| | | Loading Factor | AVE |
| KD | M2.5 | 0.736 | |
| | M2.6 | 0.729 | |
| | M2.7 | 0.772 | |
| | M2.8 | 0.700 | |
| | M2.9 | 0.717 | |
| | X1 | 0.724 | 0.594 |
| | X2 | 0.826 | |
| | X3 | 0.861 | |
| | X4 | 0.770 | |
| | X5 | 0.863 | |
| PI | X6 | 0.714 | |
| | X7 | 0.702 | |
| | X8 | 0.720 | |
| | X9 | 0.732 | |
| | Y1 | 0.847 | 0.706 |
| | Y2 | 0.880 | |
| | Y3 | 0.871 | |
| | Y4 | 0.823 | |
| | Y5 | 0.791 | |
| | Y6 | 0.825 | |

Source : Data processed by researchers, 2025

Table 2. Outer Model Result (Discriminant Validity)

| Variable | (HTMT) |
|--|--------|
| Positive Attitude Toward Targeted Advertising <-> Social Network Impulsivity | 0.882 |
| Low Self-Control <-> Social Network Impulsivity | 0.758 |
| Low Self-Control <-> Positive Attitude Toward Targeted Advertising | 0.709 |
| Impulsive Buying <-> Social Network Impulsivity | 0.884 |
| Impulsive Buying <-> Positive Attitude Toward Targeted Advertising | 0.742 |
| Impulsive Buying <-> Low Self-Control | 0.880 |

Source : Data processed by researchers, 2025

Table 3. Reability Test Result

| Variable | Cronbach's Alpha | Composite Reliability |
|--|------------------|-----------------------|
| Low Self-Control | 0.913 | 0.929 |
| Social Network Impulsivity | 0.886 | 0.911 |
| Positive Attitudes Toward Targeted Advertising | 0.906 | 0.922 |
| Impulsive Buying | 0.916 | 0.935 |

Source : Data processed by researchers, 2025

The next stage is inner model analysis, which is used to examine the relationships between latent variables. This testing is conducted through hypothesis testing, and the results of the direct and indirect effects are shown in table 5.

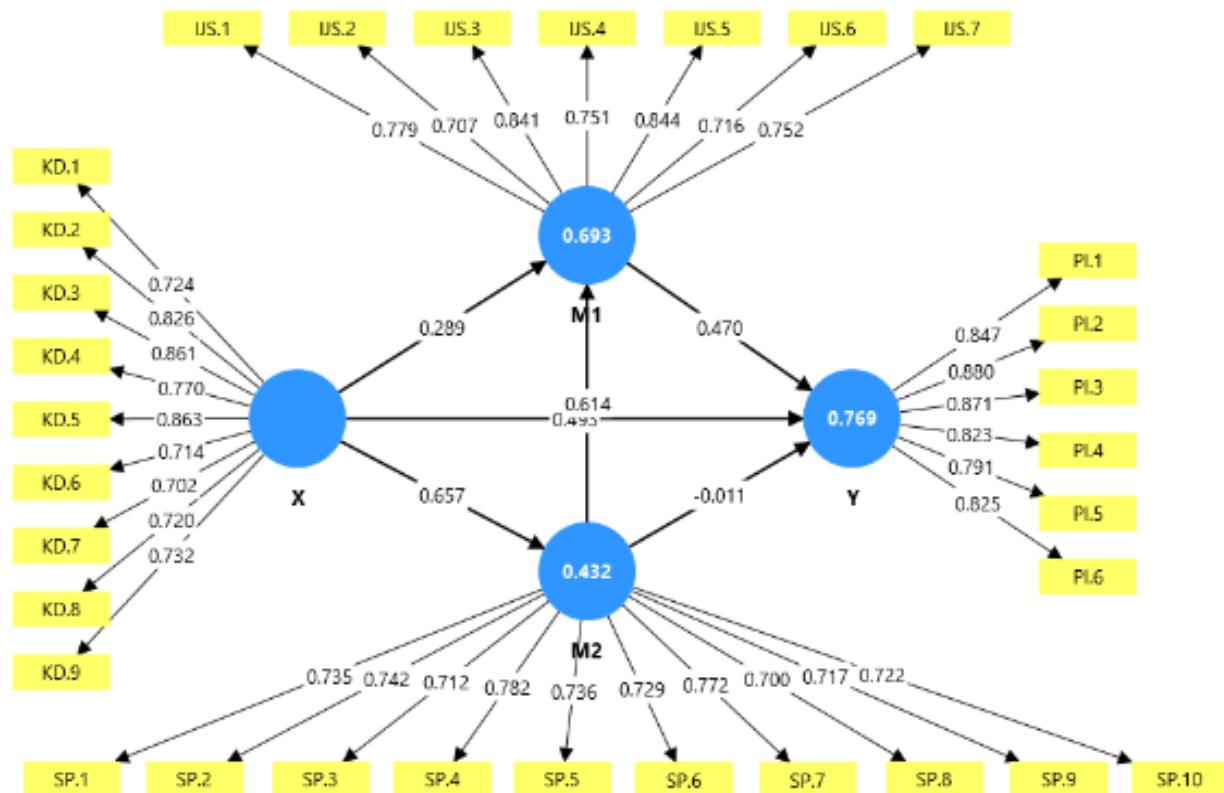


Figure 1. Structure Model

Table 4. Inner Model Result

| Hypothesis | T-Statistic | P-Value |
|---|-------------|---------|
| Direct Effect | | |
| Positive Attitude Toward Targeted Advertising -> Social Network Impulsivity | 10.381 | 0.000 |
| Low Self-Control -> Social Network Impulsivity | 4.379 | 0.000 |
| Low Self-Control -> Positive Attitude Toward Targeted Advertising | 12.498 | 0.000 |
| Low Self-Control -> Impulsive Buying | 6.689 | 0.000 |
| Positive Attitude Toward Targeted Advertising -> Social Network Impulsivity | 10.381 | 0.000 |
| Low Self-Control -> Social Network Impulsivity | 4.379 | 0.000 |
| Low Self-Control -> Positive Attitude Toward Targeted Advertising | 12.498 | 0.000 |
| Low Self-Control -> Impulsive Buying | 6.689 | 0.000 |
| Indirect Effect | | |
| Low Self-Control -> Positive Attitude Toward Targeted Advertising -> Impulsive Buying | 0.151 | 0.880 |
| Low Self-Control -> Social Networking Impulsivity -> Impulsive Buying | 3.617 | 0.000 |

Source : Data processed by researchers, 2025

Based on the results of the table above, all direct effects are significant. Low self-control positively influences social networking impulsivity ($T = 4.379$; $p = 0.000$), positive attitudes toward targeted advertising ($T = 12.498$; $p = 0.000$), and impulsive buying ($T = 6.689$; $p = 0.000$). Furthermore, a positive attitude toward targeted advertising also significantly influences social networking impulsivity ($T = 10.381$; $p = 0.000$). This confirms that the lower an individual's self-control, the greater their tendency to have a positive attitude toward personalized advertising, be more impulsive in social networking use, and be driven to make impulsive purchases. Regarding the indirect effect, the path through positive attitudes toward targeted advertising was not significant ($T = 0.151$; $p = 0.880$). Conversely, the path through social networking impulsivity was significant ($T = 3.617$; $p = 0.000$). Thus, social network impulsivity acts as a mediator explaining the relationship between low self-control and impulsive buying.

Discussion

The Influence of Low Self-Control on Impulsive Buying

The results of hypothesis testing confirm that low self-control has a significant positive effect on students' impulsive buying behavior. This finding suggests that when individuals experience lower levels of self-control, they are more likely to engage in spontaneous and unplanned purchasing decisions. This result can be understood through the lens of Ajzen (1991) theory of planned behavior (TPB), particularly the component of perceived behavioral control. In the context of consumer behavior, self-control reflects the individual's capacity to regulate impulses and delay gratification. When self-control is weakened, perceived behavioral control over purchasing behavior diminishes, making individuals more susceptible to impulsive tendencies.

Self-control functions as an internal mechanism that supports reflective decision-making before acting. According to Giner-Sorolla (2001), self-control enables individuals to evaluate potential consequences before executing a behavior. A decline in self-control disrupts this evaluative process, reducing the individual's ability to anticipate negative outcomes and leading to a higher likelihood of impulsive purchasing. This mechanism is particularly relevant among university students, who often experience financial autonomy combined with minimal parental supervision (Ranasari & Fajriantyi, 2021). These conditions foster greater exposure to marketing stimuli and peer influence while simultaneously demanding independent financial decisions.

Although shopping is a normal activity to satisfy needs, students frequently struggle to differentiate between essential and non essential items (Nurudin, 2020). This difficulty, coupled with easy access to online shopping platforms and targeted advertising, creates an environment where gratification becomes immediate, and decision-making becomes less rational. Consequently, consumption choices tend to be driven more by emotional impulses rather than logical necessity, reinforcing the role of self-control as a critical factor in regulating such behaviors.

The significance of self-control in purchasing decisions has been widely acknowledged in the literature. Faber (2004), emphasized that declining self-control affects consumer

decision making patterns, particularly in contexts where purchasing opportunities are easily accessible. Sultan et al., (2012) further highlighted that self-control can be improved through behavioral training, thereby reducing impulsive buying tendencies. Similarly, Roberts & Manolis (2012) confirmed that self-control exerts a significant influence on impulsive buying, positioning it as a central psychological determinant in consumption behavior.

The present findings are consistent with previous studies by Nyrhinen et al (2024), found that young adults in Finland with lower levels of self-control displayed stronger tendencies toward impulsive purchases. Comparable patterns were observed by Atunnisa (2022), Muzammil et al (2023), Fajri et al (2023), Anggraini (2024), and Fauzan et al (2024), all of which reported a negative relationship between self-control and impulsive buying behavior. These studies collectively demonstrate that diminished self-control contributes to less deliberate and more emotionally driven purchasing decisions. However, the literature also documents contradictory findings. For instance, such as Iyer et al (2020), Pranidia dan Anasrulloh (2023), Artadita & Firmialy (2024), and Narwastu & Ayunda Ramadhani (2024) found that self-control did not significantly influence impulsive buying behavior. One possible explanation for these inconsistencies is the moderating role of situational and emotional factors. Individuals with low self-control may not always engage in impulsive buying when other variables such as financial constraints, social norms, or mood regulation strategies counteract their impulsive tendencies. This suggests that while self-control is a crucial predictor, its influence may fluctuate depending on contextual conditions.

Overall, the findings of this study reinforce the conceptualization of self-control as a key determinant of purchasing behavior. Weak self-control amplifies vulnerability to external cues such as advertising, peer influence, and platform personalization, resulting in unplanned and spontaneous buying. Conversely, individuals with strong self-control demonstrate greater capacity to resist these pressures and align their choices with long-term goals (Dewanti and Haryono 2021). From a practical perspective, these insights highlight the need for interventions aimed at strengthening self-control among students, such as financial literacy programs, digital consumption awareness, and behavioral training. Such measures can serve as preventive strategies to reduce impulsive spending and promote responsible financial management within the student population.

The Influence of Low Self-Control on Social Network Impulsivity

Based on the results of hypothesis testing, it was found that low self-control has a significant effect on social network impulsivity. This indicates that the lower the level of self-control possessed by students, the higher their tendency to display impulsive behavior in using social networking platforms. This finding is consistent with the Theory of Planned Behavior Ajzen (1991), particularly with the component of *subjective norm*, which refers to social pressures or expectations that influence an individual's behavior. In this study, social network impulsivity is considered a representation of subjective

norms that manifest through online shopping trends, influencer recommendations, and peer pressure within digital communities.

The result also supports previous studies that identified a positive relationship between low self-control and social network impulsivity. Nyrhinen et al (2024) emphasized that low self-control weakens consumers' ability to resist persuasive influences on social media. Similarly, Setiawan and Rully (2025), Pilatti et al. (2021), Aragoncillo & Orús (2018), Kim & Johnson (2016), and Xiang et al. (2016), pointed out that poor self-regulation, including dysfunctional emotional regulation, can drive individuals to use social media impulsively. This finding is further reinforced by Chika & Fahmawati (2024), who reported a significant negative relationship between self-control and social media addiction, meaning that higher self-control reduces the likelihood of excessive social media use. In line with this, Safitri & Merdiaty (2023), also identified self-control as a protective factor that reduces the risk of digital addiction. These studies collectively highlight low self-control as a key determinant of impulsive behavior in digital environments.

However, this result contrasts with studies by Zahrai et al (2022), Mile (2023) and Helisastri (2022) argued that self-control does not always significantly influence excessive social media use, particularly among individuals with positive implicit attitudes toward social platforms. Such discrepancies may be attributed to contextual factors, including differences in sample characteristics and cultural settings. In Indonesia's collectivist culture, where conformity to group norms is emphasized, the role of self-control in mitigating social pressures appears to be more pronounced.

In conclusion, this study confirms that low self-control increases students' tendency to engage in impulsive behavior on social networks. Within the TPB framework, weakened self-control diminishes an individual's capacity to resist normative social pressures, thereby encouraging spontaneous and unplanned actions. Practically, these findings suggest the importance of promoting digital literacy and self-regulation training among students to help them better navigate social influences in online environments.

The Influence of Positive Attitudes toward Targeted Advertising

The hypothesis testing results indicate that low self-control has a significant effect on positive attitudes toward targeted advertising. This means that students with weaker self-regulation tend to perceive personalized advertisements as more appealing and useful. This finding can be explained through the framework of the Theory of Planned Behavior Ajzen (1991), particularly the component of attitude toward behavior. Attitudes are shaped by individuals' beliefs and perceptions about the consequences of a behavior. In this study, students with low self-control are more likely to view targeted advertising as relevant to their consumer needs, thereby forming positive attitudes even without deep rational consideration.

This result is consistent with Nyrhinen et al. (2024), who found a positive association between low self-control and attitudes toward targeted advertising. Similarly, Rose & Dhandayudham (2014) and Janssen et al. (2010) emphasized that individuals with

weaker self-control are more easily influenced by persuasive stimuli, particularly when these are personally tailored. In other words, limited ability to resist consumption impulses makes them more responsive to digital advertisements customized to their preferences. However, not all studies support this finding. (Nicola, 2022) and Janssen (2017), reported that individuals with low self-control may also show resistance to advertising, especially when the content creates feelings of saturation or conveys strong rejection cues. These discrepancies suggest that the influence of self-control on advertising attitudes is not universal but rather contextual, depending on the form, frequency, and style of advertisement presentation.

Considering these findings, it can be concluded that low self-control plays an important role in shaping positive attitudes toward targeted advertising, although certain conditions may produce the opposite effect. This study extends the understanding that psychological factors, particularly self-control, not only influence impulsive behavior directly but also shape individuals' attitudes toward personalized digital marketing stimuli.

The Influence of Positive Attitude toward Targeted Advertising on Social Network Impulsivity

The results of hypothesis testing indicate that a positive attitude toward targeted advertising has a significant effect on social network impulsivity. This finding suggests that the more favorable students perceive personalized advertising, the greater their tendency to act impulsively while engaging on social media. This supports the Theory of Planned Behavior Ajzen (1991), particularly the attitude toward behavior component, which emphasizes that attitudes can strengthen behavioral intentions and ultimately lead to actual behavior. In this context, a positive attitude toward targeted advertising encourages students to be more receptive to digital content, which subsequently manifests in impulsive actions on social networking platforms.

This result is in line with previous studies. Nyrhinen et al. (2024) confirmed a positive relationship between favorable attitudes toward targeted advertising and impulsive behavior on social media. Similarly, Dodoo and Wu (2019), Keipi et al. (2016), and Bakshy et al (2012) highlighted that individuals with positive attitudes toward targeted ads are more susceptible to visual appeal, product recommendations, and personalized reviews. These findings indicate that positive attitudes not only increase acceptance of advertising messages but also strengthen the likelihood of acting without careful consideration.

The phenomenon becomes even more relevant in the Indonesian Gen Z context. Research by Erwin et al. (2023) demonstrated that social media influencers significantly shape consumer behavior among Indonesian Gen Z, as advertising delivered in a personal and authentic manner is more persuasive and directly affects purchase decisions. These findings emphasize that students, as part of Gen Z, are highly responsive to relevant and engaging advertising content. Therefore, a positive attitude toward targeted advertising plays a crucial role as a gateway for external influences that drive social network impulsivity among students.

The Influence of Low Self-Control on Impulsive Buying through Positive Attitudes toward Targeted Advertising

The results reveal that the indirect effect of low self-control on impulsive buying through positive attitudes toward targeted advertising is not significant. This finding suggests that although students may hold favorable views of digital advertising, such attitudes do not serve as a bridge between weak self-control and impulsive buying tendencies. From a theoretical standpoint, this outcome is inconsistent with the Theory of Planned Behavior Ajzen (1991), which posits that attitudes toward behavior play a central role in shaping intentions and actual behavior. In this study, however, positive attitudes toward advertising did not mediate the effect of low self-control on impulsive buying. This inconsistency can be explained by the fact that students' attitudes toward ads are more cognitive (viewing ads as informative) rather than affective, which limits their impact on behavior. Moreover, external factors such as price promotions, FOMO, and peer influence appear to play a stronger role in driving impulsive purchases than advertising attitudes.

This finding is consistent with Asbar & Siregar (2021), who found that online advertising had no significant effect on impulsive buying behavior. Similarly, Anggraini et al. (2025) reported that advertising did not significantly affect impulsive buying among Gen Z in Bengkulu, while fear of missing out (FOMO) emerged as the dominant predictor. In line with this, Putri & Astuti, (2024) showed that online customer reviews did not significantly influence impulsive buying, whereas sales promotions and social conformity played more substantial roles.

However, these findings contradict those of Nyrhinen et al. (2024) and Dodoo and Wu (2019), who emphasized that personalization, relevance, and emotional appeal of digital advertising can enhance consumers' susceptibility to unplanned purchases. Such discrepancies may be explained by the cultural and generational context. Indonesian Gen Z, who are digital natives accustomed to constant exposure to online content, tend to be more skeptical toward advertisements. Thus, while they may hold generally positive attitudes toward advertising, these attitudes do not necessarily translate into impulsive buying. Instead, social influences (such as FOMO and peer recommendations) and tangible promotional cues (e.g., discounts) appear to have stronger impacts.

From a practical standpoint, these results highlight that reducing students' impulsive buying behavior should not focus solely on regulating digital advertisements. More effective strategies include strengthening self-control, promoting digital literacy, and fostering critical awareness of online promotional tactics. In conclusion, positive attitudes toward targeted advertising do not play a significant mediating role in the relationship between low self-control and impulsive buying behavior.

The Effect of Low Self-Control on Impulsive Buying through Social Network Impulsivity

The results indicate that social network impulsivity significantly mediates the relationship between low self-control and impulsive buying. This finding suggests that students with lower self-control are more vulnerable to impulsive behaviors when

interacting on social media. Within the framework of the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991), low self-control reflects weaker perceived behavioral control, while social media interactions shape *subjective norms* by creating social pressure and exposure to consumerist content. The combination of these factors explains why low self-control increases the likelihood of impulsive buying.

This result aligns with studies by Nyrhinen et al. (2024), Narwastu and Ayunda (2024), Fitriani et al (2023), Fayyaz et al (2023), Anindito & Handarkho (2022), Savolainen et al (2021), which confirmed the role of social networks in strengthening the influence of low self-control on consumption-related decisions. Social media cultivates norms and consumer attitudes that pressure individuals to conform to their peers. However, these findings contradict studies by Murniawaty et al (2023) and Zahrai et al. (2022), which reported that self-control could weaken the effects of social media and conformity on consumer behavior. Such differences may be attributed to cultural and sample characteristics. Indonesian students, particularly Generation Z, spend more time on social media and are more intensively exposed to consumerist content, making low self-control less effective as a protective mechanism.

From a practical standpoint, this study highlights that social network impulsivity serves as a critical pathway linking low self-control to impulsive buying. Therefore, interventions should not only focus on strengthening self-control but also on enhancing digital literacy and critical awareness of online consumerist content. Programs that teach self-regulation, mindful social media use, and digital literacy could help students respond more wisely to online stimuli that encourage impulsive purchases. In conclusion, the lower an individual's self-control, the higher their tendency to display impulsivity in social networking contexts, which in turn increases the likelihood of impulsive buying.

CONCLUSION

Fundamental Finding: This study demonstrates that: (1) Low self-control significantly affects students' impulsive buying behavior. (2) Low self-control also significantly influences social networking impulsivity. (3) Low self-control has a significant impact on positive attitudes toward targeted advertising. (4) Positive attitudes toward targeted advertising significantly affect impulsive buying. (5) However, positive attitudes do not mediate the relationship between low self-control and impulsive buying. (6) Social networking impulsivity significantly mediates the relationship between low self-control and impulsive buying. These results demonstrate that low self-control and social media-related impulsivity are dominant psychological factors driving impulsive buying among students in the digital era. They support the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), highlighting the importance of perceived behavioral control and social influence, while showing that attitudes toward behavior may not always serve as effective mediators in digital consumption contexts. **Implication:** Educational programs should prioritize enhancing students' self-control, fostering critical awareness of targeted advertising, and encouraging responsible social media usage. **Limitation:** These measures can help

students manage impulsive buying behavior more rationally and responsibly, contributing to improved digital economic literacy. **Future Research:** This study is limited to students in the Education Program at the Faculty of Economics and Business, so findings cannot be fully generalized to other populations. Future research should include students from a broader range of programs and institutions, and consider additional variables such as emotional influences, prior digital consumption experiences, and social environmental factors to develop a more comprehensive understanding of impulsive buying in the digital context.

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