

TikTok Marketing and Impulse Buying Behavior Among Gen Z Consumers: A Case Study of SHEIN Malaysia

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the impact of TikTok marketing campaigns on impulse purchasing among Generation Z Malaysian consumers, specifically the fast-fashion retailer SHEIN. It seeks to uncover which aspects of marketing, including influencer endorsement, entertainment value, scarcity signals, and personalized recommendation, have the greatest impact on impulse buying intention. A quantitative method was undertaken by conducting an online survey of 200 Gen Z consumers to gather behavioral data. Results reveal the significant push of impulse buying by TikTok marketing, driven foremost by emotional excitement and felt urgency generated by influencer credibility and time-limited deals. Entertainment and content genuineness were also revealed to boost consumers' confidence and interaction towards the brand. Implications are drawn that the interactive TikTok environment weakens consumers' cognitive inhibiting power, inviting spontaneous, emotionally driven buying decisions. Findings present useful lessons for marketers that short video is required to enhance interaction and sales rate, and draw attention to the importance of responsible marketing communication targeting youth digital consumers.

Keywords: TikTok Marketing; Impulse Buying Behavior; Generation Z; Influencer Endorsement; Emotional Excitement; Fast Fashion; SHEIN Malaysia

INTRODUCTION

Throughout the past decade, the development of social media from a mere social interaction tool to a very effective marketplace for the assessment and purchase of goods has been remarkable. However, among the new and emerging social media networks that have both challenged and benefited from such development, the most remarkable one would be TikTok, which represents an innovative arena where entertainment, interaction, and e-commerce are engaged within the context of a single setting. The short-form video format and personalized content have shift consumers attention and brand communication. This is true especially among Generation Z consumers, people born between the mid-1990s and early 2010s who are starting to become a powerful consumer group. Thus, it is vital for marketers toward identification of how TikTok marketing can affect Gen Z purchase behavior.

To a certain extent, the engaging and immersive nature of TikTok encourages viewers' interaction in real-time, thus allowing brands to communicate personalized, relevant, and engaging marketing information to their viewers. SHEIN, a growing fast-fashion brand have exploited the benefits of social media marketing, including TikTok through collaborations with influencers, live broadcasts, hauls, and trends that automatically trigger quick purchasing decisions by viewers on the platform (Li, 2022). Unlike conventional advertising platform, the algorithms used on TikTok allow the content posted to naturally appear within the viewer's 'For You' page. Thus, the entertainment and the advertising boundaries are continually blurred for the viewer. As a result, many viewers, particularly Gen Z consumers find themselves engage in unplanned purchases that are driven by emotional excitement or social influence rather than rational evaluation.

The concept of impulse buying behavior refers to a buying situation in which the customer makes a spur-of-the-moment purchase and the decision to buy a product is made just a moment before the purchase is done without any planning or process (Gottumukkala et al., 2023). According to previous studies, emotional engagement brought forth from visual appeal and the Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) caused by limited time campaigns have become the factors that push impulsive purchase behavior (Syahputra et al., 2025). However, most of the existing research revolves around the influences of traditional online platform such as Instagram, Facebook, and other e-commerce portals such as Amazon, Shopee, and Lazada (Lim et al., 2025) whereas the influence of short-video in TikTok is given less attention by researchers despite the psychological and emotional appeal it provides.

Moreover, transformation of conventional retail business activities to e-commerce retail activities have been largely adopted by Malaysia entrepreneurs and consumers. As of 2023, statistics have reported that 78.5% of population in Malaysia were users of social media platforms and among these users, Gen Z and Millennials contributes a large portion of it which is approximately 99.8% (United Nations et al., 2024). This creates a unique market environment for businesses to leverage social media platforms to generate greater sales, which is known as e-commerce. E-commerce enables businesses and consumers to make transaction online (Singh et al., 2021) and online marketing campaigns help businesses to connect with consumers by providing information that consumers need (Tan et al., 2024). Businesses have utilize several leading Malaysia's digital marketing platforms, such as TikTok, Instagram, YouTube, and Facebook to engage with their consumers (Kee et al., 2025). The combination of Malaysia's e-commerce development and the dominance of Gen Z consumers creates a ideal setting to investigate the influence of social media marketing in shaping new purchase behavior. This paper focus on the global fast-fashion retailer, SHEIN where

online and social media marketing are the main contributor of the brand's success, making it an excellent case study for understanding this phenomenon.

This research is of paramount importance since the comprehension of social media marketing's psychological and behavioral effects on young customers is growing exponentially. This group of purchasers is more reactive to emotional signals that are transmitted via social media posts. Therefore, by the means of this study it would be possible to find out which elements of TikTok marketing like influencer endorsement, entertainment value, scarcity cues, and personalization, have the biggest impact on impulse buying behavior and to reveal the emotional and cognitive processes behind such behavior. Besides, the research will provide a wealth of knowledge to marketers that will enable them to execute social media marketing strategies that are both effective and ethical.

This study fills a relevant gap in the existing body of literature by examining TikTok as a marketing platform in contrast with its more general use as a social network. The uniqueness of TikTok lies in its algorithmic nature, audio and visual content, and emphasis on participatory activities. This has been well documented in previous research regarding influencer marketing and impulse purchasing in an online setting. However, very few empirical studies isolate or explicitly identify these characteristics in the context of TikTok as a fast-paced entertaining online portal targeting Generation Z. Thus, this research serves to address these gaps by integrating various elements of consumer behavior, social media marketing, and media engagement to better understand how TikTok marketing influences impulsive buying behavior of Gen Z Consumers.

To summarize, this research has several significant contributions. First, it has provided scientific evidence of the short-form video marketing influence on consumer's psychological processes and fashion buying decision-making. Secondly, through this study, the topic of TikTok's effect on Gen Z's impulse purchase decisions in the Malaysian digital economy's context was significantly enhanced. Thirdly, the empirical research gives the retailers a clue that the marketing strategies have to be persuasive and, at the same time, consumer management should be more responsible. This particular empirical piece is new in that focuses on the TikTok content that prompts emotionally driven instant purchasing decisions.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Influencer Endorsement

Recent studies have demonstrated the importance of the role that influencers play in promoting and strengthening brand engagement through short-form videos in platforms such as TikTok. Influencers are essentially opinion leaders who gain consumers' confidence in sponsored contents through authenticity and reliability (Liu, 2021). Influencers have significant followings across social media platforms and interact regularly with their audiences to shape trends (Mathea & Laksmidewi, 2024). Consequently, their endorsement often influences consumers' attitudes since Generation Z consumers recognize influencers as peers and not advertisers. Along similar reasoning, influencer's credibility and authenticity is also perceived as significant in enhancing consumers' evaluation of brand trust and hence increase the likelihood of impulsive buying behavior (Baghel, 2023). This effect becomes stronger when influencers demonstrate or review products in real time, thus offering a form of social proof. Besides that, studies also suggest that influencers' interaction with their followers will increase the chance of turning followers into potential buyers and shape potential buyers' perception and attitude towards a product (Ooi et al., 2023). In this respect,

strong influencer endorsement is expected to enhance consumers' emotional excitement and, by implication, influence their impulsive buying behavior.

H1: Influencer endorsement positively affects emotional excitement.

Entertainment Value

Entertainment value is one of the most powerful emotional excitement drivers on the TikTok platform. According to a recent study, people often pursue happiness and the entertaining atmosphere from videos or livestream provides satisfaction where people can release their emotions and escape from reality. As a consequence, happiness brought forth from entertaining value shapes consumers' impulse purchase decision (Lu et al., 2022). Moreover, study also suggest that brands should emphasize fun, joy, freedom, and lifestyle in building their marketing communication strategies (Madan et al., 2022). In this context, TikTok is an excellent platform to leverage entertainment value in the form of short videos. Short videos are able to draw consumers' attention as it combines visual and aural characteristics which is extremely effective in conveying brand messages and increase emotional excitement via a storytelling method (Thathsara & Roshani, 2024). Moving on to the fast fashion marketing aspect, entertainment-associated product demonstrations or styling challenge clips are very common in the aspect that they emotionally excite the users, eventually leading to the impulsive buying behavior.

H2: Entertainment value positively affects emotional excitement.

Scarcity Cues

In social media marketing, messages of scarcity such as "limited stock" or "flash sale" work effectively to build a sense of urgency. Moreover, when the quantity of product is limited, it often creates a sense of fear of missing out (FOMO) and competition among consumers. Therefore, by applying the first-come, first-serve basis, quantity scarcity may trigger consumers impulse buying (Qu et al., 2023). Studies also demonstrated the influence of scarcity cues on consumers' emotions. When people did not act to acquire the product, they can feel anxious, pressure, or regret because they missed out on a valuable opportunity (Dahmiri et al., 2023). This further leverage the desire to acquire the product or experience something that are limited. These urgency messages and scarcity cues are extremely effective in TikTok marketing campaigns because of the fast-paced nature of short video clips which triggers fast-track decision making.

H3: Scarcity cues positively affects emotional excitement.

Personalization

Personalization improves the relevance and utility of marketing messages by targeting consumers according to their preferences. TikTok's algorithm analyses more than one billion video views daily, employing sophisticated machine learning models to anticipate user tastes and maintain high engagement levels (Kang & Lou, 2022). By combining the component of collaborative filtering and content-based filtering, TikTok creates a highly personalized content feed, which is the "For You" page, fostering users' engagement (Zhou, 2024). The personalization algorithm is essential in enhancing consumers' emotional attachment because consumers feel they are valued and recognized (Roy et al., 2025). According to a previous study, personalized recommendations in fast fashion ads or platforms such as SHEIN is able to leverage platform experience and enhance customer loyalty towards the brand (Du & Yin, 2024). In this context, personalized recommendation can increase the possibility of unplanned purchase especially when consumers have emotional connection with the brand.

H4: Personalization positively affects emotional excitement.

Emotional Excitement and Impulse Buying Behavior

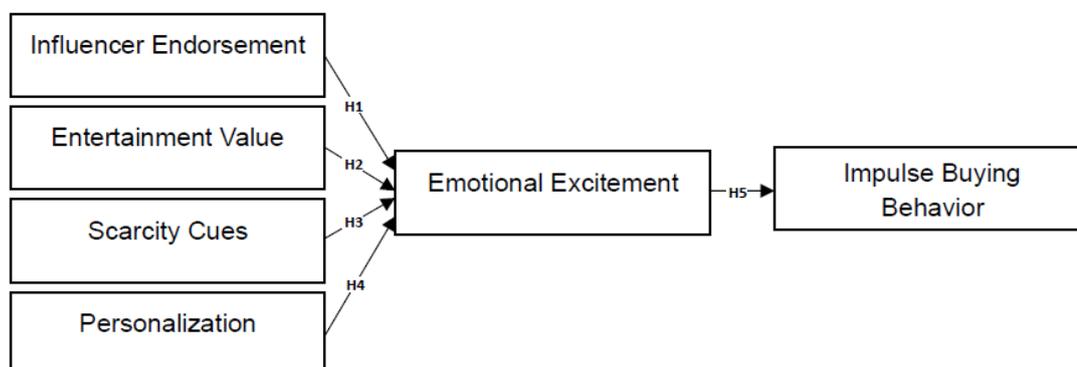
Emotional excitement is defined as the heightened level of emotions that drives a person's preparedness to take action or influence the choice people make (Reisenzein, 1994). The Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) model proposed by Mehrabian and Russell states that external stimuli trigger internal emotional responses, which in turn generate external behaviors (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974). This is supported by studies conducted within the field of digital marketing. Emotional messages in advertisements shared across social media, search engines, streaming lines, and mobile devices have a higher likelihood to be remembered and acted upon by consumers (Singh et al., 2024). Likewise, a study by Ngo et al. (2024) identifies emotional excitement mediates the relationship existing between digital marketing stimuli in social networking platforms and the impulsive buying intention among Gen Z consumers. The use of TikTok as a marketing platform for SHEIN increases emotional excitement with visual transitions, upbeat background music, and peer influences drives impulse purchase decisions (Freire et al., 2023). Impulse buying behavior is defined as engaging in a spontaneous decision to buy an item without any earlier intention or plan, and without reflecting on the long-term consequences (Nyrhinen et al., 2023). Numerous studies have proven that social networking sites, especially TikTok, increase the probability of impulse purchase. Fast fashion brands such as SHEIN utilize the 'fast content' atmosphere of TikTok by promoting affordable and trendy products that triggers consumers to buy on impulse (Qu, 2024). Among the Malaysia Gen Z consumers group, Khalid et al. (2023) discovered a robust connection between ads within TikTok and impulse purchase decisions due to entertainment value, credibility of influencers, and the hyper-relevant personalized content. Likewise, emotional excitement becomes a key driver of impulse buying behavior because such positive emotions provides gratification for consumers and lead them to reward themselves for having favourable emotions (Lee et al., 2023).

H5: Emotional excitement positively affects impulse buying behavior.

Conceptual Framework

The study framework model is depicted in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Research Framework



RESEARCH METHOD

Research Design

This study used a quantitative method to measure the impact of TikTok marketing and impulse buying behavior among Gen Z consumers that focusing on SHEIN in Malaysia. The survey approach allows the collection of numerical data that can be statistically

analyse to identify relationships between TikTok marketing elements and impulse buying intention.

Sample and Procedures

The data was administered through Google Forms. To achieve a diverse and representative sample, the survey link was shared by the research team across multiple social media platforms, such as TikTok, WhatsApp, and Telegram. A total of 200 respondents aged between 13 years old to 28 years old are surveyed and the collected data were analyzed using SPSS software.

Measures

The survey is structured into six section, which is Section A to F to capture relevant information. Section B, C, D, and F in this study employed a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). This rating allows the respondent to express the level of agreement or disagreement with each item and therefore allow the measurement of individual perceptions and attitudes.

TikTok Marketing Elements Impact: In this section, the different marketing variables available in TikTok, which could possibly have an effect on consumer behavior pertaining to SHEIN products, are measured. There are four significant variables, including influencer endorsement, entertainment value, scarcity cues, and personalization.

How TikTok Marketing Drives Impulse Buying Behaviour: This section explores the psychological processes through which TikTok marketing drives impulse buying. There is a core constructs that are explored in this context, namely, emotional excitement.

TikTok Usage Frequency and Impulse Buying Intention: This section indicates the frequency of respondents' usage of TikTok and the extent to which respondents have purchased impulsively from TikTok. Respondents indicate how frequently they use TikTok (several times a day, once a day, once a week, etc.) and rate on a 5-point Likert scale to investigate the likelihood of purchasing fast fashion items, specifically SHEIN products without pre-planning after engaging in TikTok marketing.

Past Impulse Purchase Behaviour: This section assesses respondents' previous behaviors toward impulsive purchase from TikTok. In particular, the respondents indicate how many unplanned purchases they made during the last six months. Additionally, respondents indicate whether their last purchase was an impulsive buy from SHEIN after seeing it on TikTok.

Comparative Perception Across Social Media Platforms: The last section of the survey assesses respondents' perceptions of TikTok compared to other leading social media sites when making impulse buying decisions. Respondents rank a single statement regarding whether they feel TikTok is more influential than other social media platforms when deciding whether to purchase something impulsively.

RESULTS

Table Format

Table 1. Summary of Respondents' Demographic Information (N=200)

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age		
13	10	5.00
14	10	5.00
15	11	5.50

16	10	5.00
17	11	5.50
18	15	7.50
19	12	6.00
20	13	6.50
21	20	10.00
22	15	7.50
23	11	5.50
24	12	6.00
25	11	5.50
26	10	5.00
27	15	7.50
28	14	7.00
Gender		
Male	87	43.50
Female	113	56.50
Current Status		
Employed	61	30.50
Self-employed	5	2.50
Student	123	61.50
Unemployed	11	5.50
Average Time Spent on TikTok Per Day		
Less than 1 hour	87	43.50
1 hour to 2 hours	74	37.00
3 hours to 4 hours	29	14.50
More than 4 hours	10	5.00
Monthly Spending on Fashion		
Less than RM100	66	33.00
RM100 to RM199	72	36.00
RM200 to RM299	38	19.00
RM300 to RM399	14	7.00
RM400 to RM499	5	2.50
RM500 and more	5	2.50

Table 1 presents the demographic characteristics of the 200 respondents. The gender composition reflects an imbalanced distribution, with a majority of female respondents (N=113, 56.50%) compared to male respondents (N=87, 43.50%). The average age of respondents is 20.82 years with a standard deviation of 4.46 years. The current status of respondent in majority is student (N=123, 61.50%), followed by those who are employed (N=61, 30.50%), and unemployed respondents are at the second last position (N=11, 5.50%). A minimal proportion reported respondents are self-employed (N=5, 2.50%). In term of average time spent on TikTok per day, majority respondents are spending less than 1 hour on TikTok per day (N=87, 43.50%), followed by respondents that spend 1 to 2 hours (N=74, 37.00%) and 3 to 4 hours on TikTok per day (N=29, 14.50%). The least respondents are spending more than 4 hours (N=10, 5.00%) on TikTok per day. Regarding the monthly spending on fashion, the largest spending proportion of respondents is between RM100 to RM199 (N=72, 36.00%). Next is followed by respondents' monthly spending on fashion less than RM100 (N=66, 33.00%), monthly spending on fashion between RM200 to RM299 (N=38, 19.00%), between RM300 to RM399 (N=14, 7.00%). Lastly, respondents' monthly spending on fashion between RM400 to RM499 (N=5, 2.50%) is same as the respondent monthly spending on fashion that hit RM500 and above (N=5, 2.50%).

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics, Cronbach's Coefficients Alpha, and Zero-order Correlations for All Study Variables

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6
Influencer Endorsement	0.972					
Entertainment Value	0.728**	0.934				
Scarcity Cues	0.703**	0.648**	0.960			
Personalization	0.780**	0.669**	0.662**	0.978		
Emotional Excitement	0.730**	0.806**	0.744**	0.591**	0.966	
Impulse Buying Behavior	0.642**	0.707**	0.713**	0.449**	0.863**	0.975
Number of items	3	3	3	3	4	4
Mean	3.9283	4.1983	3.9467	4.2050	4.0350	3.8525
Standard Deviation	1.10320	1.02732	1.10349	0.99786	1.12616	1.26491

Note. N=200; *p < 0.05, **p < 0.01, ***p < 0.001. The diagonal entries indicate Cronbach's alpha.

The result in Table 2 shows descriptive statistics, measures of reliability and zero-order correlations among the study variables. All tested variables demonstrate high levels of reliability with Cronbach's coefficients alpha ranging from 0.934 to 0.978.

The mean scores (M = 3.8525-4.1983) indicates that respondents generally agreed with the above variables, which are influencer endorsement, entertainment value, scarcity cues, personalization, emotional excitement and impulse buying behavior. Standard deviations ranging from 0.99786 to 1.26491 reflects a moderate level of variability among participant responses.

For the correlations, all variables are positively and significantly related at the p<0.01 level. Impulse buying behavior shows that strong positive correlations with emotional excitement (r = 0.863), entertainment value (r = 0.707), influencer endorsement (r = 0.642), scarcity cues (r = 0.713) and personalization (r = 0.449). These findings suggest that higher exposure to persuasive social media stimulus is associated with greater tendencies toward impulse buying.

Table 3. Regression Analysis

Variables	Emotional Excitement	Impulse Buying Behavior
1. Influencer Endorsement	0.244***	0.110
2. Entertainment Value	0.520***	0.103
3. Scarcity Cues	0.357***	0.241***
4. Personalization	-0.183**	-0.265***
5. Emotional Excitement		0.677***
R-Square	0.755	0.780
F-Value	150.024	137.804
Durbin-Watson Statistic	1.248	1.577

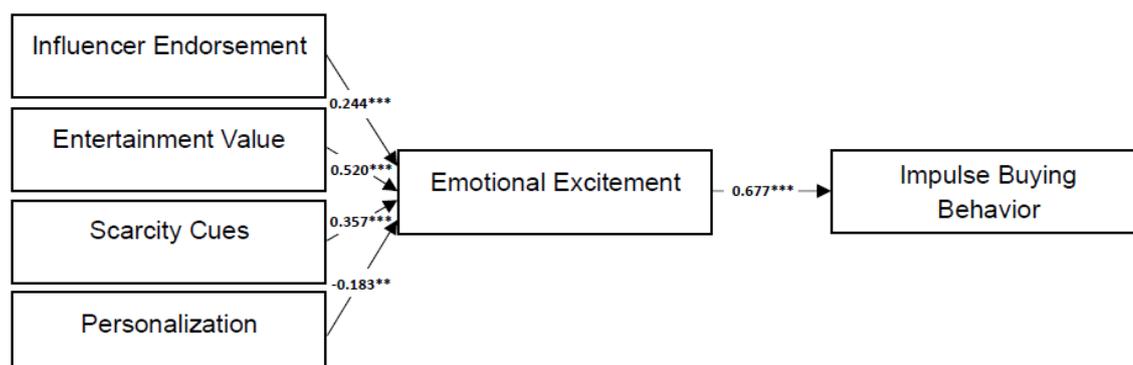
Note. N=200; *p < 0.05, **p < 0.01, ***p < 0.001. Standardized coefficients Beta are reported.

The data provided in Table 3 outlines how TikTok marketing elements impact emotional excitement and impulse buying among generation Z consumers. TikTok marketing models predicting emotional excitement have been tested using multiple regression analysis and indicated a high level of explanatory power with a R-squared of 0.755, indicating 75.5% of the variance of emotional excitement can be explained by the TikTok marketing elements, and the model is highly significant (F = 150.024, p < 0.001). Among the four TikTok marketing elements, three were found to statistically significantly predict emotional excitement. Specifically, entertainment value of TikTok content had the

strongest positive relationship to emotional excitement ($\beta = 0.520$, $p < 0.001$), which provide support for H2. Scarcity cues had the second strongest positive relationship to emotional excitement ($\beta = 0.357$, $p < 0.001$), indicating its critical role in leveraging emotional excitement, thereby supporting H3. Moreover, influencer endorsement was also found to exert positive influence on emotional excitement ($\beta = 0.244$, $p < 0.001$), supporting H1. Personalization did not support the proposed hypothesis of H4 and had a statistically significant negative effect on emotional excitement ($\beta = -0.183$, $p < 0.01$).

In terms of the impulse buying behavior model, the findings show a high level of explanatory power (R-square = 0.780; $F = 137.804$; $p < 0.001$). As hypothesized, emotional excitement is identified as the strongest predictor of impulse buying behavior, with a highly significant positive standardized coefficient ($\beta = 0.677$, $p < 0.001$), confirming H5. Furthermore, the table reveals two significant direct effects from the stimuli to the response. Scarcity cues has a significant positive direct effect on impulse buying behavior ($\beta = 0.241$, $p < 0.001$), while personalization has a significant negative direct effect on impulse buying behavior ($\beta = -0.265$, $p < 0.001$). Neither influencer endorsement nor entertainment value were found to directly affect impulse buying behaviour. Overall, the analysis confirms that emotional excitement acts as a critical mediator, channelling the positive effects of entertainment value, scarcity cues, and influencer endorsement towards impulse buying behavior.

Figure 2. Overview Result



Note: Standardized coefficients are reported.

DISCUSSION

This research delves deeper into how marketing signals produced from TikTok, such as influencer endorsement, entertainment value, scarcity cues, as well as personalization, affect the emotional excitement and impulse buying behavior of Generation Z consumers in Malaysia, particularly concentrating on SHEIN Malaysia. This research contributes towards a better comprehension of video commerce by analyzing how psychological processes translate TikTok videos into impulse purchases. There have been previous studies on impulse purchases triggered by online marketing messaging from online shopping sites such as Shopee and Instagram (Iskamto & Gunawan, 2023; Djafarova & Bowes, 2020). This research, however, provides empirical evidence specifically for TikTok marketing for SHEIN Malaysia, contributing towards a better comprehension of the Generation Z market for Malaysia.

Results indicate that influencer endorsement, entertainment value, and scarcity cues are important predictors of increasing emotional excitement, thereby supporting H1, H2, and H3. Contrary to expectations, personalization shows a significant negative effect on emotional excitement, thereby violating H4. On the other hand, emotional excitement

was established as the most important predictor of impulse buying behavior, resulting in a significant confirmation of hypothesis H5. Furthermore, it was ascertained that the impact of scarcity cues and personalization was direct on impulse buying behavior, and that the effect of endorsement by influencers, as well as entertainment, was indirect on impulse buying behavior.

The Influence of Influencer Endorsement on Emotional Excitement

The strong positive effects of influencer endorsement on the experience of emotional excitement (H1) are consistent with the literature on endorsement effects reported by [Azhar et al. \(2025\)](#), suggesting that the endorsement effects of influencers on consumers were found to have strong authenticity and credibility with a significant positive emotional impact on viewers. TikTok's influencer community is peer-based and is consistent with literature that has found Gen Z consumers identifying with influencer peers rather than with more commercial types of actors ([Isler, 2024](#)). These outcomes are consistent with the effective potential of influencer endorsement in generating and increasing emotional excitement.

The Influence of Entertainment Value on Emotional Excitement

Entertainment value was shown to be the most influential factor in determining emotional excitement (H2). The finding is consistent with previous studies, with interactive and entertaining content resulting in increased customer engagement and emotional stimulation ([Tan et al., 2024](#)). The entertainment value and short storytelling on TikTok are consistent with existing studies, indicating how entertainment-driven content increases pleasure and lowers cognitive resistance, leading viewers to make impulsive buying decisions ([Rahimah et al., 2025](#)).

The Influence of Scarcity Cues on Emotional Excitement

The strong positive correlation for the relationship of scarcity cues to emotional excitement (H3) reestablishes previous findings that limited-time offers and limited quantity create fear of missing out (FOMO), urgency, anxiety, and emotional stress ([Rodrigues, 2025](#)). The above finding reflects the contemporary study that identifies the persuasive power of scarcity within the context of Gen Z consumers who predominantly interact with fast-paced decision-making environments in social media platforms ([Oak & Markandeya, 2025](#)).

The Influence of Personalization on Emotional Excitement

Unexpectedly, the result for personalization was negative for emotional excitement, going against H4. A possible reason is that excessive personalization could lead to algorithmic fatigue or foster feelings of intrusive advertising which becomes an increasing concern in AI-driven platforms ([Yang et al., 2024](#)). This is because Gen Z consumers may feel overwhelmed or have reservations about being too personally targeted with ads, thereby reducing any potential positive emotions ([Balaskas et al., 2025](#)). Moreover, another potential reason is that SHEIN's frequent tailored suggestions might seem repetitive or excessively promotional, thus reducing any potential enthusiasm rather than boosting it. Current evidence indicates that hyper-personalized advertisements and product suggestions can have the reverse effect on Gen Z consumers and make them feel skeptical or concerned about their online privacy, ultimately resulting in lower levels of emotional engagement with the platform ([Lovitskaya, 2025](#); [Ukatu, 2025](#)).

The Influence of Emotional Excitement on Impulse Buying Behavior

The result confirms that emotional excitement is an important mediator (H6), which supports the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) model ([Mehrabian & Russell, 1974](#)). This is consistent with recent studies which show that emotional engagement enhances impulsiveness during decision making in online settings ([Chaudhary, 2025](#); [Ngo et al.,](#)

2025). The hedonic aspects that are driven by emotions and pleasure experienced by consumers will, in return, provoke impulsive purchase (Khatimah et al., 2024). The direct influence of scarcity on impulse buying supports the observation of urgency signals acting instantly, without going through a cognitive process. The negative direct influence of personalization on impulse buying continues with the trend previously established on emotional excitement, where intrusiveness negatively influences impulse buying.

Managerial Implications

The results of the study provide several practical implications for marketers who are seeking to leverage TikTok as a persuasive marketing platform. To begin with, the fact that the entertainment value had a strong effect on emotional excitement suggests that brands should prioritize in developing content that is visually appealing, funny, and interactive, especially for short-form video environment. Research has consistently shows that entertaining content increases users' hedonic enjoyment and emotional immersion, which leads to a higher engagement with the brand and a lower resistance of consumers towards the marketing messages (Papagiannidis et al., 2014; He et al., 2025). For fast-fashion brands like SHEIN, this suggests the need for a significant amount of money to be allocated to the production of high-quality creative productions, trend-based editing styles, and engaging formats such as "outfit challenge", "get ready with me" and "style transformation" videos. By creating content in line with Gen Z's swift and entertainment-driven expectations, brands can easily trigger emotional excitement and influence impulse buying decisions.

Secondly, influencer endorsement also acts as a strong positive predictor on young consumers' emotional reactions towards products. This study confirms the power of the influencer who is both credible and relatable to immensely boost emotional excitement that will in turn stimulates the impulse buying behavior. Baghel (2023) recent study point-out that micro-influencers, in particular, maintain strong parasocial ties with their followers, thus making their suggestions feel reliable. Hence, the management team must collaborate with influencers whose lifestyle, tone, and values align with the brand's identity. Instead of focusing on the number of followers, brands should look for influencers who are very interactive, strong storytelling ability, and have significant TikTok presence in the fast-fashion community. The partnership created can attract more consumers through authenticity and emotional impact, thus making it more probable that the consumers will purchase unplanned items and at the same time preserving brand credibility.

Thirdly, the significant impact of scarcity cues on emotional excitement and impulse buying behavior points to the fact that urgency-based marketing remains effective, especially in the fast-fashion segment. Time-limited offers, flash sales, countdown timers, and limited-stock notifications can produce a mental pressure that pushes consumers to make quick decisions, which is in line with the results from Dahmiri et al. (2023) and Qu et al. (2023). Nevertheless, marketers need to apply scarcity tactics in an ethical manner, by making sure that the scarcity claims are real and not artificially manipulated. Misuse of urgency cues can result in consumer distrust and harm the brand reputation in the long run, particularly among Gen Z, who are very alert to and intolerant of any manipulative advertising strategies. Thus, managers need to apply scarcity cues in a tactical way during the peak shopping seasons or product launches, but at the same time, they have to be transparent and authentic.

Finally, the unanticipated detrimental impact of personalization indicates that brands ought to refine the incorporation of algorithmic recommendations into TikTok advertising strategies for various campaigns. On the other hand, hyper-personalized and repetitive content could trigger consumer fatigue, concerns about privacy or even getting the wrong

perception of being intruded upon, especially where Gen Z is concerned, since they have become the most informed about data tracking practices (Yang et al., 2024). This implies that instead of just relying on algorithmic targeting, brands can alternate the manner by which their content is delivered. Brand managers can adopt some measures such as combining both personalized suggestions and trend-related information, which is more general in nature to ensure some form of variety and, as such, reduce psychological reactance. Furthermore, openness about the data utilized for this purpose may eventually promote trust and curb negative emotions associated with personalization. By striking a balance between algorithm-driven content and authentic, user-centered communication, brands could maintain engagement without overwhelming their audiences.

CONCLUSION

This research yields rich findings about the determinants of impulse buying among Gen Z consumers when exposed to TikTok marketing, specifically using SHEIN as a case study. Findings from the research reveal that influencer endorsement, entertainment value, and scarcity cues are major predictors of rising emotional excitement to persuade impulse buying among TikTok users. Findings from the research fully support the S-O-R model. It shows that marketing stimuli on TikTok trigger consumers' internal emotive state, influencing resultant behavioral responses of impulse buying. Among the variables tested, it is clear that emotional excitement plays a key part in fully explaining impulsive buying, as supported by theories surrounding impulse buying with regards to short-form social media marketing.

Findings suggest that entertainment-driven content is very effective in heightening the degree of emotional excitement among consumers. Since these types of content are able to trigger positive emotions, they are indeed effective at heightening the level of users' engagement as well as reducing their cognitive-resistant behavior regarding unplanned purchases. Furthermore, the research also indicates that personalization strategies, at times, yield negative results as well. Even though personalization is known as a strategy that enhances consumer experience, excessive personalization could hamper the experience and make the users feel invasive and aggressive. Therefore, personalization must be implemented in moderation to avoid triggering privacy concerns or emotional fatigue among users.

This research also emphasizes the importance of influencer endorsement towards activating a response through emotional excitement, leading to impulse buying. In fact, a consumer who regards influencer as credible, trustworthy, and reliable increases their likelihood of purchasing a product endorsed by influencer. Another major aspect of impulse buying identified by this research includes the importance of scarcity cues towards emotional excitement, as well as direct impulse purchasing behaviors. Unlike other factors, scarcity acts as a stimulus with an effect towards emotional excitement and a direct effect towards impulse purchases, making it an effective marketing technique.

As a conclusion, this paper examined social media marketing and impulse purchasing and has contributed to the literature on impulse purchasing, social media marketing and TikTok. It also provides an analysis of the S-O-R model with regards to fast fashion as applied to Malaysia. Practically, this study's findings will help marketers develop an emotionally appealing and ethical TikTok marketing campaign that will reach their target audience. The sample characteristics and the focus on TikTok provide some limitations, but they also provide a foundation for future research in the areas of comparative cross-platform studies and the long-term effects of marketing, as well as the ethical issues

related to algorithmic marketing. Thus, it can be concluded that TikTok will change consumer behaviour and provide insight into the importance of implementing a balanced marketing strategy that is both effective and takes into account consumers' welfare.

LIMITATION

Although this research provides useful insights related to impulsive purchase behaviour which is driven by TikTok marketing amongst Malaysian Gen Z consumers, there were several limitations of this study. To begin with, while 200 sample respondents is adequate for the purposes of this study, it limits the results' ability to be generalized beyond the sample. The sample population consists mostly of young adults, between 18 and 26 years old, of whom a large proportion are working or studying, which creates a demographic homogeneity that does not necessarily reflect how older customers will behave or what they will perceive. Consequently, demographic homogeneity within the sample creates the opportunity for potential bias to occur, given that younger users likely have different purchasing tendencies relative to older consumers.

Next, the research team implemented a non-probability purposive sampling method for this research. The research team focused on participants that fell into the parameters of being a TikTok user who has engaged with SHEIN content. Although this allowed for relevance to our research objectives, it excludes those users who may not use TikTok as frequently as well as those that engage with other fashion labels which limits the generalizability of our findings to the broader Generation Z group and other online purchasers of fashion brands.

Another limit to this study arises from using self-reported data obtained through an online survey. This mode of collecting data limits the reliability and validity of the findings due to social desirability bias, recall bias, and how respondents interpret items in the survey. Some respondents could have overreported their engagement with TikTok, influencers, and impulse purchases.

This study focuses on the key constructs of influencer endorsement, entertainment value, scarcity cues, personalization, and emotional excitement, whereas other factors could also have an impact on impulse buying behaviour. For example, variables including promotional incentives, peer influence, perceived value for money, platform algorithms and brand reputation could also be a factor in impulse purchasing behaviour. It will potentially provide a more holistic understanding in impulse buying behavior if these variables are included in future research.

Lastly, this study was limited to the TikTok platform and the SHEIN brand, which restricts the ability of the findings to be generalized to other social media platforms or fashion retailers. Consumer behavior on platforms such as Instagram, Shopee, or Facebook may differ due to variations in content formats, interaction methods, and also marketing strategies. Similarly, different brands may evoke different emotional or trust responses from users.

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The authors have declared no potential conflicts of interest concerning the study, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

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