

The Role of Internet Usage in Shaping the Relationship between Consumer Tendencies and Life Satisfaction among Gen Z in Malaysia

FAIZ MASNAN*

SITI BALKIS MOHAMED IBRAHIM
Universiti Malaysia Perlis

MOHD SHAHIDAN SHAARI
Universiti Malaysia Sarawak

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the psychological and behavioural factors influencing life satisfaction among Generation Z, focusing on the roles of fear of missing out (FOMO), novelty seeking, and sale proneness as predictors, with impulse buying as a mediating variable and internet use as a moderator. Using a detailed quantitative approach and data analysed via SPSS and SmartPLS, the results reveal that both FOMO and novelty seeking significantly influence impulse buying, while sale proneness directly enhances life satisfaction. Furthermore, internet use significantly moderates the relationship between novelty seeking and impulse buying, intensifying impulsive behaviour in digital contexts. These findings contribute to the theoretical understanding of digital consumer behaviour, while providing practical insights for marketers and digital platforms to design ethically responsible and targeted strategies. Limitations and future research directions are also discussed to extend the scope of inquiry across generational and cultural contexts, highlighting the need for future research using longitudinal methods and broader age groups to better understand the digital era consumer's behaviour and their life satisfaction. Moreover, future studies should also incorporate additional psychological constructs such as emotional regulation, financial literacy, peer influence, and digital fatigue to provide a more comprehensive model of consumer behaviour life satisfaction.

Keywords: *Internet usage, fear of missing out, consumer's behaviour, life satisfaction, psychological and behavioural factors.*

INTRODUCTION

Rapid growth of internet technology has reengineered the way people act as consumers, focused particularly Generation Z (Gen Z), those born between 1997 and 2012. Having grown up entirely in the digital world, this generation is naturally more comfortable with and engaged in online platforms compared to their predecessors. In Malaysia, Gen Z is becoming an increasingly influential part of both the population and the workforce, playing a key role in driving the country's digital economy forward. According to the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission (MCMC, 2023), over 96% of Malaysians are connected to the internet, and Gen Z stands out as one of the most active groups online, frequently engaging with social media, online shopping platforms, and digital payment systems.

This always connected lifestyle constantly exposes them to online ads, influencer marketing, promotional offers, and social interactions. While these elements may enhance communication and provide easy access to information, they also come with psychological pressures. One common issue is the fear of missing out (FoMO), defined as the anxious feeling

*Corresponding author: faizmasnan@unimap.edu.my

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that others are enjoying experiences one is not part of. Social media often intensifies this feeling through polished and curated portrayals of life, which can lead people to make impulsive purchases in an attempt to keep up.

Consumer traits such as novelty product hunting or bargain hunting are then compounded further in the online setting. With constantly new emerging items and flash sale offers being marketed aggressively, impulse buying becomes so easy targeted into by engaging in impulse-driven, emotional purchasing that may or may not be well thought out and are often not really necessary. This commonly happened under the local platform such as TikTok and Shopee. Although purchases like these can be sources of short-run satisfaction, their impact on long-run economic well-being and satisfaction with life is less certain.

In the modern consumer world, the internet does not only unite people or enable transactions but is at the core of determining consumer behaviour. The use of the internet by people and how much they are dependent on it can strengthen or undermine the authority of their purchasing behaviour. For instance, heavy users would be more vulnerable to advertisement and hence prone to impulse purchase, whereas sophisticated users might utilize internet resources to make rational, well-thought-out decisions.

Conversely, life satisfaction as the most important component of well-being is constructed by a very broad array of elements such as security in finances, personal development, self-fulfilment, and meaningful relationships. In the present consumer society where consumption is associated with identity and lifestyle, shopping habits have a tendency to impact those aspects of life automatically. That is why it is so vital to examine how consumer behaviour, internet use, and satisfaction with life converge, particularly for Gen Z, who are so entrenched in digital life and also experiencing tremendous personal and social milestones.

Problem Statement

The rapid integration of internet technology into everyday life has created both opportunities and challenges for consumer well-being. For Malaysian Gen Z, who actively participate in online marketplaces and social media ecosystems, the digital environment shapes not only their purchasing habits but also their psychological states. Recent years have seen an upsurge in marketing practices that exploit psychological triggers like FoMO, novelty, and price sensitivity. Flash sales, influencer endorsements, and targeted ads are designed to capitalize on these tendencies, encouraging immediate purchases with minimal reflection.

Despite the prevalence of these practices, there remains a gap in understanding how these consumer tendencies affect overall life satisfaction, especially when mediated by impulse buying behaviour and moderated by internet usage. Most existing studies examine these variables in isolation rather than as part of an integrated model. Furthermore, while prior research has explored impulse buying among Gen Z, limited attention has been given to how internet usage moderates the effect of such behaviours on life satisfaction in the Malaysian context.

Understanding these dynamics is crucial as if FoMO, novelty seeking, and sale proneness lead to frequent impulse purchases that undermine financial security or induce regret, then life satisfaction could suffer in the long run. Conversely, if managed effectively, these tendencies might offer opportunities for self-expression, social inclusion, and short-term happiness. Thus, a nuanced investigation is required to unravel these relationships and provide actionable insights for policymakers, marketers, and mental health professionals.

Research Objectives

The main objective of this study is to examine the role of internet usage in shaping the relationship between consumer tendencies, specifically fear of missing out, novelty seeking, and sale proneness and life satisfaction among Malaysian Gen Z, with impulse buying as a mediating variable.

1. To investigate the impact of fear of missing out, novelty seeking, and sale proneness on impulse buying behaviour.
2. To examine the mediating effect of impulse buying on the relationship between consumer tendencies and life satisfaction.
3. To explore the moderating effect of internet usage on the relationship between impulse buying and life satisfaction.

Research Questions

1. How do fear of missing out, novelty seeking, and sale proneness influence impulse buying behaviour among Gen Z in Malaysia?
2. Does impulse buying mediate the relationship between these consumer tendencies and life satisfaction?
3. Does internet usage moderate the relationship between impulse buying and life satisfaction?

Theoretical Framework

This study is grounded in Social Comparison Theory (Festinger, 1954), which posits that individuals determine their self-worth based on comparisons with others. In digital spaces, these comparisons are frequent and highly visible, as users are constantly exposed to the curated experiences and possessions of their peers. This can lead to psychological discomfort, such as FoMO, which in turn motivates consumer behaviour aimed at closing perceived social gaps.

In the context of this study, FoMO arises from upward social comparisons. Novelty seeking reflects an intrinsic desire for new stimuli, often exacerbated by the constant flow of novel content online, while sale proneness denotes a tendency to respond to promotional stimuli. Next, impulse buying is posited as a behavioural outcome resulting from these psychological traits, and it acts as mediator in this study context.

Internet Usage is expected to moderate the intensity of these relationships, amplifying or buffering the effect on life satisfaction, the ultimate dependent variable. The theoretical model is a moderated mediation framework, where impulse buying mediates the relationship between consumer tendencies and life satisfaction, and internet usage moderates the pathway from impulse buying to life satisfaction.

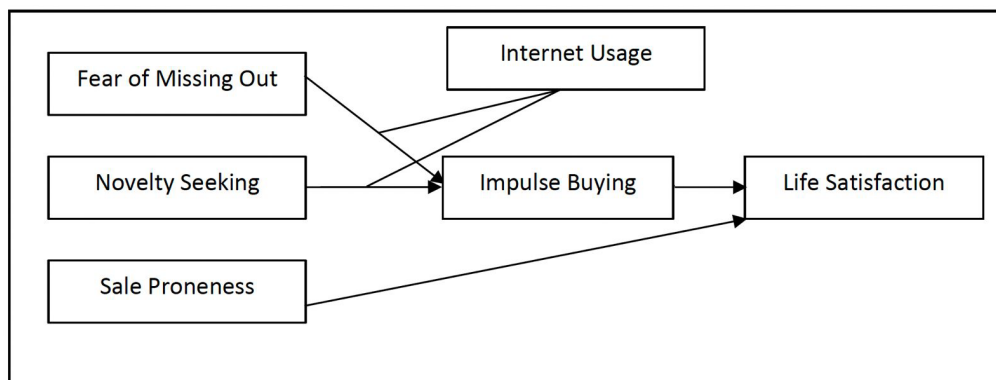


Figure 1: Consumer tendency, internet usage and life satisfaction

LITERATURE REVIEW

Fear of Missing Out (FoMO)

FoMO is considered a pervasive anxiety that other people are having fun at experiences to which one is not privy (Przybylski et al., 2013). This phenomenon is particularly prevalent among social media users, where the constant display of peers' activities triggers feelings of exclusion. Japutra et al. (2025) demonstrated that FoMO significantly influences both harmonious and obsessive brand passion, which in turn escalates compulsive and impulse buying behaviours. The digital environment fosters social comparison, leading individuals to purchase products they associate with social acceptance.

FoMO has also been linked to higher social media consumption, anxiety, and compulsivity (Rozgonjuk et al., 2020; Elhai et al., 2018). In Malaysia, where Gen Z utilizes Instagram and TikTok extensively, such conditions become particularly relevant. FoMO and near-instant availability of e-commerce are a powerful impulse-buy motivator. Scarcity marketing strategies and influencer endorsements have traditionally relied upon FoMO to instill tension and trigger impulses to purchase.

In the study by Deliana et al. (2024), FoMO was established to actually highly affect impulse buying by Gen Z online Shopee consumers. In accordance with studies, consumers that experience FoMO buy products in an immediate spontaneous way to be able to keep up with seemingly social fashion and norms. Hassan et al. (2020) further indicated that time-limited promotional sales and flash sales confirms FoMO and therefore facilitate impulsive shopping during consumption online among younger consumers in the country.

Though such FoMO-driven impulse buying may provide momentary satisfaction, it can be followed by post-purchase regret and reduced life satisfaction in the long run. The fleeting pleasure of indulging in such buying never warrants the underlying anxiety, fear and dissatisfaction of FoMO. Therefore, the first hypothesis is proposed;

Hypothesis 1: Fear of Missing Out is positively related to impulse buying.

Novelty Seeking

Novelty seeking is a personality that is defined as novelty experience seeking and exploratory behaviour (Zuckerman, 1994). Novelty seeking has direct correlations with impulsivity and risk-taking. Novelty seekers as consumers are responsive to new product introductions, extreme styles, and new technology. Internet stores regularly introduce new items and tailored recommendations, therefore being of specific interest to novelty seekers.

Studies have found novelty seeking is positively related to spontaneous buying and diminished decision-making contemplation (Darrat et al., 2016). For Gen Z in Malaysia, who often surf virtual worlds for enjoyment and entertainment, novelty-seeking behaviour is easily translated into buying action, which is commonly triggered by pleasure. Chan (2023) study amplified that Gen Z shoppers are very spontaneous, as is the tendency for novel experience. The research establishes that the allure of novelty in new products and novelty of experience of doing something new can hijack rational thinking patterns, triggering compulsive purchases.

Novelty seeking may enhance life satisfaction by fulfilling the desire for new experiences, yet it can also lead to negative outcomes if it results in frequent impulsive purchases that strain financial resources. The balance between satisfying the need for novelty and maintaining financial well-being is crucial for overall life satisfaction. Therefore, a hypothesis is proposed;

Hypothesis 2: Novelty seeking is positively related to impulse buying.

Sale Proneness

Sale proneness is the consumer's disposition to react favourably to price reductions and promotion offers (Lichtenstein et al., 1990). It usually gives the customer a feel of achievement and intelligent purchasing. Online, e-commerce websites often use flash sales, time-limited offers, and special coupons to take advantage of this behaviour.

Cengiz and Senel (2024) established that perceived scarcity and urgency of online promotions are key predictors of impulsive buying. For Gen Z consumers whose buying is preceded by social validation and peer influence, susceptibility to sales is an emergent psychological effect managed by marketers. It not only generates sales but also supports automatic impulsive responding, particularly when promotion is positioned in terms of limited opportunity.

Fumar et al. (2023) coined sales promotions significantly impact impulsive buying behaviour among consumers seeking hype-beast products. The research indicates that the emotional appeal of getting a good deal can prompt consumers to make unplanned purchases. Additionally, the study done by Deliana et al. (2024) supports the notion that sales promotions, along with FoMO, may lead to increased impulsive buying among Gen Z consumers.

However, taking advantage of sales can lead to immediate gratification, excessive impulsive buying driven by sale proneness may result in financial strain and buyer's remorse, negatively affecting life satisfaction. It's essential for consumers to balance the appeal of promotions with thoughtful purchasing decisions to maintain overall well-being, focusing on Gen Z.

Hypothesis 3: Sale proneness is positively related to life satisfaction.

Impulse Buying

Impulse buying is defined as a spontaneous, immediate purchase without pre-shopping intentions, driven by emotional and external stimuli (Rook & Fisher, 1995). It serves as a behavioural bridge linking consumer tendencies to psychological outcomes. While impulse buying can offer short-term pleasure, it is also associated with financial strain, regret, and diminished life satisfaction. Japutra et al. (2025) emphasize that consumers experiencing FoMO or brand passion often resort to impulse buying as a coping mechanism. Similarly,

novelty seekers and sale-prone individuals make quick purchase decisions, often bypassing rational evaluation. In this study, impulse buying mediates the influence of psychological traits (FoMO, novelty seeking, sale proneness) on life satisfaction.

It is well-known that impulse buying, characterized by spontaneous, emotionally driven purchasing behaviour, is a widespread phenomenon among Gen Z, especially in this digital era. The impulsive buying condition is often triggered by psychological factors such as FoMO, novelty seeking, or sensitivity to promotions, and its consequences extend beyond momentary gratification.

Impulse buying can yield immediate emotional benefits such as excitement, pleasure, and relief from stress. These momentary highs contribute to short-term positive affect, making consumers feel good immediately after a purchase. For instance, Gen Z may perceive impulse purchases as rewards or coping mechanisms in response to emotional stimuli encountered online (Dittmar et al., 2014).

However, this behaviour often comes at a psychological and financial cost. The unplanned nature of impulsive purchases can lead to buyer's remorse, feelings of guilt, financial strain, and cognitive dissonance, particularly if the purchases are misaligned with personal goals or exceed budgetary limits. These negative consequences can diminish an individual's long-term life satisfaction. Over time, frequent engagement in impulse buying may reinforce a cycle of emotional spending, where temporary emotional relief is thus followed by regret and dissatisfaction.

According to Roberts and David (2020), heavy digital engagement often leads to increased impulsivity and dissatisfaction, particularly when purchases are driven by social comparisons and internalized peer expectations. Thus, it becomes crucial to examine how impulse buying serves as both a mediator and a potential disruptor in the relationship between consumer tendencies and life satisfaction.

In this study, impulse buying is conceptualized as a mediating variable that channels the effects of FoMO, novelty seeking, and sale proneness on life satisfaction. By understanding the dual nature of impulse buying, its capacity to both elevate and erode well-being. This research aims to offer a balanced perspective on its role in the digital consumer experience of Gen Z. As such, this study proposed that;

Hypothesis 4: Impulse buying mediates the relationship between fear of missing out, novelty seeking and life satisfaction.

Internet Usage

Internet usage intensity that has been measured by frequency, duration, and type of engagement has a moderating influence on consumer behaviour. Heavy users are more likely to encounter digital marketing stimuli, thereby increasing their exposure to triggers for impulse buying. Conversely, moderate users may exercise more control and engage in deliberate decision-making.

Roberts and David (2020) argue that digital overexposure can diminish cognitive control, making consumers more susceptible to persuasive techniques. In Malaysia, Gen Z spends several hours daily on digital platforms, making them vulnerable to both informational and emotional triggers. It shows high digital consumption, where Malaysians demonstrate significant digital consumption, with averaging 8 hours and 17 minutes online daily, with 2 hours and 48 minutes allocated particularly to social media platforms, referred to Kemp (2024).

This high level of engagement is particularly pronounced among Gen Z, who are digital natives and exhibit significant online activity (Kemp, 2024). As a moderator, internet usage is expected to either amplify or buffer the relationship between impulse buying and life satisfaction, depending on user literacy and control towards buying tendencies.

The Internet has become an integral part of daily life, particularly for Gen Z, whose digital engagement is unmatched by previous generations. In Malaysia, Gen Z individuals often spend several hours daily on digital platforms, as stated in Kemp (2024). While the internet provides unparalleled access to information, social connections, and convenience, its overuse or misuse may have adverse consequences on emotional well-being and life satisfaction.

Moderate internet use may positively affect life satisfaction by facilitating meaningful social interactions, access to educational resources, job searches, entertainment, and even economic opportunities through e-commerce and remote work. These digital tools empower Gen Z with autonomy, efficiency, and self-expression. Moreover, platforms like YouTube, TikTok, and Instagram allow users to explore interests, develop skills, and gain social recognition which are recognized as key elements linked to well-being and identity formation.

On the other side, excessive internet usage, particularly passive scrolling or addictive use of social media can have detrimental effects. Moreover, overexposure to idealized lifestyle, comparisons with peers, and personalized adverts can create unrealistic ideals, discontentment, and psychological disturbance (Roberts & David, 2020). Prolonged screen time is also linked with low physical activity, disrupted sleep, and decreased attention span, which indirectly influence lower satisfaction with life.

Furthermore, when Internet use becomes a means of ingrained impulse buy or escapism, it has a tendency to increase regret or economic worry, especially to Gen Z teens faced with economic independence. With digital media moving towards eroding divisions between entertainment, marketing, and social acceptance, the potential for emotional burnout or less happiness increases proportionally.

It is not simply the amount of internet use but the purpose and awareness behind that usage that determines its impact. Gen Z individuals who use the internet constructively, with a purpose to gain information, to network responsibly, or to shop intentionally, will be likely to exhibit higher scores of satisfactions. In contrast, those devouring it mindlessly, or addicted, will be likely to receive the worst effects of it. This subtlety makes the internet a moderating influence in consumer behaviour. Its impact can either strengthen the virtues of value-based, educated habits or amplify the vices of impulsiveness and peer-consumption. Thus, life satisfaction by Gen Z is linked with the quality and intensity of internet usage and engagement. As such, this study hypothesized that;

Hypothesis 5: Use of the internet moderate the relationship between fear of missing out and impulse buying.

Hypothesis 6: Use of the internet moderate the relationship between novelty seeking and impulse buying.

Life Satisfaction

Life satisfaction refers to a cognitive, judgmental process whereby individuals assess the quality of their lives based on personal criteria (Diener et al., 1985). It encompasses multiple domains including financial well-being or independence, academic pressures, relationships,

and personal growth as well fulfillment. Consumer behaviours, especially those involving financial expenditure, can significantly influence perceived life quality.

Dittmar et al. (2014) mentioned there are studies that suggest that retail therapy can improve mood and satisfaction temporarily, others highlight the adverse effects of chronic impulse buying, such as debt and emotional exhaustion. For Gen Z, who are navigating early adulthood responsibilities, the balance between consumption and well-being is delicate. This study examines how consumer tendencies in the concept of FoMO, novelty seeking and sale proneness, mediated by impulse buying and moderated by internet usage, influence life satisfaction in this study demographic.

Individuals who experience FoMO frequently compare themselves to others and feel anxious about being excluded from rewarding experiences. For Gen Z, who are constantly exposed to curated content on social media, this anxiety can lead to negative self-evaluations and reduced overall life satisfaction. As declared by Roberts and David (2020), high levels of FoMO are associated with diminished well-being, especially when social comparison drives impulsive consumerism and emotional fatigue.

Next, novelty seeking may offer opportunities for self-expression and excitement, excessive pursuit of newness can destabilize satisfaction. Novelty-driven individuals may continuously chase fleeting pleasures, leading to an unstable sense of contentment. Chan (2023) noted that Gen Z consumers often find themselves in a loop of repeated novelty consumption, where the initial excitement quickly fades, leaving them emotionally unfulfilled and prone to further impulse purchases.

Sale proneness often encourages consumers to make purchases based on price incentives rather than genuine need. While this may yield short-term gratification or a sense of achievement, repeated impulsive purchases prompted by sales can result in financial dissatisfaction or regret. Fumar et al. (2023) found that sale-driven consumption habits, especially among Gen Z purchasing hype-beast products, correlated with lower post-purchase satisfaction due to mismatched expectations and financial pressure.

However, impulse buying bridges emotional triggers and behavioural responses. Although some impulsive purchases may temporarily boost mood to a certain level, they often fail to provide long-term value. Over time, this dissonance between consumer action and outcome can diminish life satisfaction. As Dittmar et al. (2014) explain, when buying is driven by identity-related or emotional motives, it can result in a cycle of dissatisfaction, particularly if the consumer lacks financial self-regulation.

Finally, the moderating role of internet usage underscores its influence on all these variables. High internet usage tends to magnify the emotional impact of FoMO, novelty, and sales exposure, thereby reinforcing impulse buying. Without conscious regulation, this digital immersion can lower subjective well-being. On the other hand, when managed intentionally, internet usage can enhance self-expression and facilitate value-aligned consumption, thereby supporting life satisfaction.

In a nutshell, life satisfaction among Malaysian Gen Z is deeply intertwined with their psychological tendencies, online behaviours, and consumption habits. By understanding these interdependencies, stakeholders can better promote healthy consumer practices and well-being initiatives. Thus, it is important that responsible authorities, such as policymakers, educators, and digital platform providers collaborate to design targeted interventions, promote digital literacy, and encourage mindful consumption habits that align with sustainable well-being.

METHODOLOGY

Sampling

The target population of this research consists of individuals under the age of 30, classified as Generation Z (Hoxha & Zeqiraj, 2019). This study includes approximately 280 respondents, the majority of whom are Malaysians who participated in the questionnaire. All participants strictly fall within the Generation Z cohort, born between 1995 and 2012 (Hoxha & Zeqiraj, 2019; Reeves & Oh, 2008).

Generation Z was selected due to their distinct characteristics, which may influence purchasing decisions and, in turn, affect their overall life satisfaction. Compared to previous generations such as Generation Y, Generation X, and Baby Boomers, this younger generation demonstrates greater technological proficiency. They are highly familiar with digital innovations, internet use, and online platforms, making them adept at using advanced applications and gadgets that streamline everyday tasks, including online shopping, food delivery, and travel bookings.

Their extensive exposure to technology not only facilitates online purchases but also correlates with higher education levels, as Generation Z exhibits increased college enrolment compared to Millennials and Generation X at similar ages. This digitally integrated lifestyle has made them more vocal in expressing their opinions and perceptions. Influencers and young celebrities from Generations Y and Z, in particular, are known for sharing candid product reviews and brand experiences on social media platforms. As a result, viewers, especially internet users within the same generational cohort that may be influenced by these opinions, leading them to purchase specific products based on trust in the influencers.

Despite these observable trends, there is still no definitive understanding of Generation Z's consumer behaviour or spending patterns, nor how these habits relate to their overall life satisfaction. This gap highlights the importance of further investigation into the unique characteristics and motivations driving Generation Z's purchasing decisions.

Unit of Analysis

Data collection can be categorized based on individuals, organizations, households, geographical regions, objects, departments, or any other measurable units. In this study, the individual is selected as the unit of analysis, as it aligns with the research objectives of examining the relationships between factors influencing impulse buying and life satisfaction.

RESULTS

Data Coding and Treatment

The survey method was used in the data collection process. Each questionnaire was adapted from previous studies and underwent a screening process after being returned by the respondents. To facilitate data handling, responses were transferred into SPSS for preliminary analysis. After thorough inspection, approximately 286 responses were found to be usable for further analysis.

Descriptive Analysis

In total, 286 participants were selected from a total number of questionnaires distributed. All participants of the questionnaire were strictly those that fall under Generation Z category that born between 1995 and above. To ensure anonymity, no sensitive identity data were requested during the process of data collection.

Table 1: The structure of respondents

	Total Number	Percentage (%)
Gender		
1 Male	77	26.9
2 Female	209	73.1
Total	286	100
Age		
1 Below 19	1	0.3
2 From 19 to 25 years old	283	99
3 From 26 to 29 years old	2	0.6
Total	286	100
Location of Living / Residence		
1 Urban	93	32.5
2 Suburban	120	42
3 Rural	73	25.5
Total	286	100
Ethnicity		
1 Malay	129	45.1
2 Chinese	64	22.4
3 Indian	25	8.7
4 Others	68	23.7
Total	286	100

Table 1 represents the number of participants based on their respective ages, gender, location of residence and ethnicity that live in Malaysia. This is the first part of the questionnaire that reveals demographic information of the respondents. The second part was composed of two sections, whereby one is about life satisfaction, and the second one is about factors affecting Generation Z to make impulse buying.

The data collected were subject to statistical analysis with IBM SPSS statistic version 28, which is used to access the basic data such as descriptive statistics and reliability analysis. Furthermore, the data were subject to SmartPLS version 4 for further detail analysis, including measurement model and structural model. This model is used to measure the strength of the relationship and other verification necessary.

Measurement Model

This section presents the results obtained from the questionnaire used in this study. The first part represents the validation of the instrument used and the second part deals with the relationship among variables for hypothesis testing.

The most important analysis prior to testing the hypotheses is the internal consistency reliability test. It was measured by using two main indicators, namely Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability. Two approaches were employed to assess internal consistency reliability, primarily because of certain limitations associated with Cronbach's alpha. While Cronbach's alpha is commonly used to demonstrate that items within a construct convey a similar meaning, its results are influenced by the number of items involved, which can lead to an undervaluation of internal consistency. Therefore, Cronbach's alpha is often considered a conservative estimate of reliability.

To address this limitation, this study also incorporated composite reliability. Acceptable composite reliability values are generally above 0.60, or ideally within the range of 0.70 to 0.90. A value above 0.60 is typically acceptable in exploratory research, whereas values between 0.70 and 0.90 are appropriate for studies using well-established instruments. This study adopted a threshold of 0.70 and above to confirm sufficient convergent validity and internal consistency, following the criteria proposed by Gefen et al. (2000).

Table 2: Internal consistency reliability

No. of items	Study Variables	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability (ρ_c)
1	Fear of Missing Out	0.957	0.964
2	Impulse Buying	0.889	0.931
3	Life Satisfaction	0.823	0.879
4	Novelty seeking	0.899	0.928
5	Sale Proneness	0.834	0.888
6	Use of Internet	0.808	0.857

Convergent Validity

Convergent validity refers to the extent to which a set of indicators accurately represents a single underlying construct. It also serves as a basis for comparison with indicators measuring other constructs. This is typically evaluated using the Average Variance Extracted (AVE), which reflects the squared factor loadings of indicators linked to a given construct. In essence, it measures how much of the indicators' variance is captured by the latent variable. An AVE value of 0.50 or higher is generally recommended, indicating that at least half of the variance in the observed variables is accounted for by the construct (Hair et al., 2017). In line with this standard, the present study adopted an AVE threshold exceeding 0.50, confirming that the latent construct explains more than 50% of the variance in its associated indicators. The value for convergent validity on each variable can be seen in Figure 2.

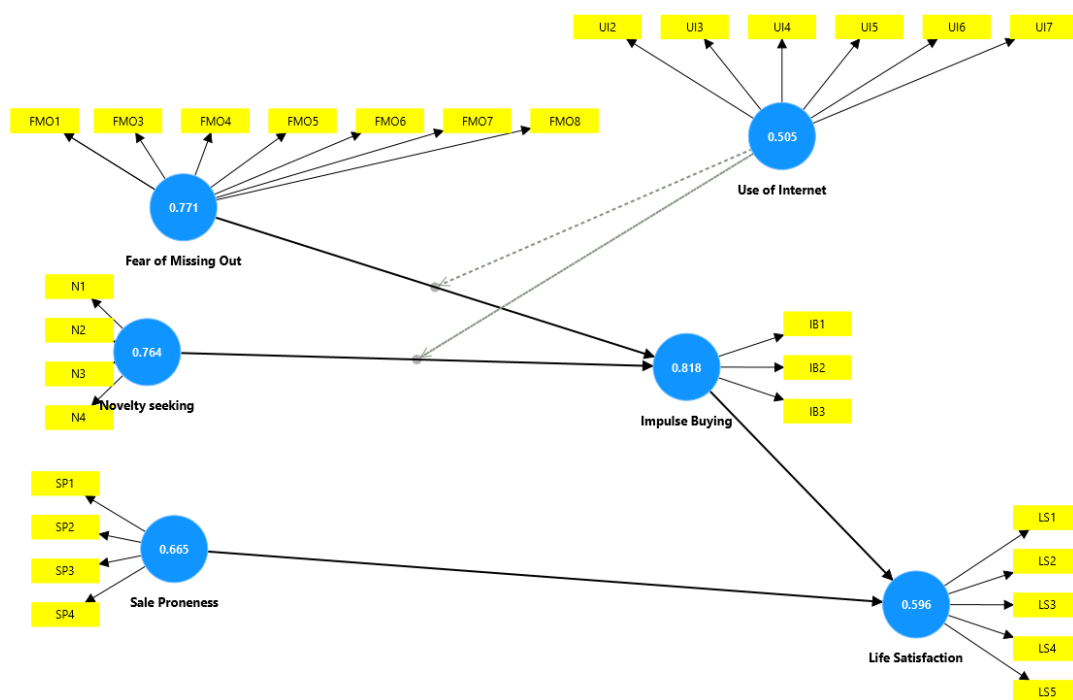


Figure 2: Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for each variable

Discriminant Validity

Discriminant validity is one of the assessments used to confirm that each set of variables is distinct from the others. This analysis evaluates the degree of correlation among measures to identify any potential overlap, thereby verifying that the constructs being studied are empirically distinct. Although each latent variable is conceptually different, statistical testing was conducted to confirm discriminant validity. In SmartPLS version 4, several method or benchmark are used to assess discriminant validity, namely cross-loading criterion, Fornell and Larcker's criterion, and Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio of correlation (HTMT).

Although researchers can use all three criteria to measure validity, Henseler et al. (2015) proposed the latest and more reliable method, which is known as Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio of correlation (HTMT). The value reflects the average of all indicator correlations between constructs in relation to the average of their internal correlations. For discriminant validity to be established, this estimate should remain below 1, as values approaching 1 suggest that the constructs are not sufficiently distinct. Currently, two benchmark thresholds are commonly applied in evaluating discriminant validity: HTMT.85 (0.85) and HTMT.90 (0.90). Table 3 shows that values of HTMT were all below the threshold value of HTMT.90 and HTMT.85, indicating that it has met the validity needed.

Table 3: Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio of correlation (HTMT)

	Fear of Missing Out	Impulse Buying	Life Satisfaction	Novelty seeking	Sale Proneness	Use of Internet	Use of Internet x Fear of Missing Out	Use of Internet x Novelty seeking
Fear of Missing Out								
Impulse Buying	0.178							
Life Satisfaction	0.121	0.155						
Novelty seeking	0.077	0.269	0.336					
Sale Proneness	0.151	0.21	0.416	0.302				
Use of Internet	0.388	0.197	0.121	0.163	0.159			
Use of Internet x Fear of Missing Out	0.346	0.079	0.164	0.063	0.138	0.246		
Use of Internet x Novelty seeking	0.043	0.197	0.101	0.08	0.036	0.201	0.103	

Structural Model

The next procedure following the measurement model is the structural model assessment. The current study employs a standard bootstrapping procedure with 5000 bootstrap sample on 286 cases. The results of PLS bootstrapping procedures are summarized in Table 4.

Table 4 Path coefficient

	Beta	Standard Deviation	T values	P values	Findings
Fear of Missing Out – Impulse Buying	0.123	0.066	1.875	0.03	Significant
Impulse Buying – Life Satisfaction	-0.09	0.073	1.24	0.107	Not significant
Novelty Seeking – Impulse Buying	0.227	0.052	4.346	0.00	Significant
Sale Proneness – Life Satisfaction	0.372	0.047	7.945	0.00	Significant

Use of Internet – Impulse Buying	0.11	0.069	1.594	0.056	Not significant
Use of Internet – Fear of Missing Out – Impulse Buying	-0.013	0.063	0.209	0.417	Not significant
Use of Internet – Novelty Seeking – Impulse Buying	0.122	0.05	2.431	0.008	Significant

Out of the six hypotheses proposed in this study, only four were supported. Fear of missing out and novelty seeking were found to significantly and positively influence impulse buying. Sale proneness was also found to be significant and positively related to life satisfaction. Regarding the moderating effect, use of the internet was found to moderate the relationship between novelty seeking and impulse buying, but no moderation was observed between fear of missing out and impulse buying. Additionally, impulse buying did not show any significant relationship with life satisfaction. A similar result was observed for the relationship between internet use and impulse buying, as well as between novelty seeking and impulse buying, with no moderating effect recorded. Therefore, H1, H2, H3, and H6 were accepted, while H4 and H5 were rejected.

DISCUSSION

Conclusion

The aim of this study is to determine whether the existence of technology for communication, such as internet could play a role in affecting decision for Gen Z to make purchase online, which could subsequently affect their satisfaction in life. To fulfil the objectives of this study, an extensive review of relevant theories concerning Generation Z was conducted, along with an examination of existing literature on how their preferences affect the broader real estate sector. Additionally, a structured questionnaire was employed to test the proposed hypotheses. The findings confirmed the validity of four hypotheses, indicating that Generation Z's preferences on keeping up to date with trends significantly shape their behaviour when purchasing products online.

As discussed in the previous section on the theoretical background, Gen Z exhibits distinct behavioural patterns. Their recent purchasing decisions are largely influenced by communication from and information shared by influencers on social media platforms. This indicates that Gen Z has developed unique and unconventional purchasing habits, particularly in the online environment.

Theoretical Implications

This study contributes to the growing body of literature on consumer behaviour, particularly among Gen Z, by providing empirical insights into how psychological and behavioural factors influence life satisfaction, with impulse buying as a mediator and internet use as a moderator. The findings support and extend theories related to consumer decision-making and Social Comparison Theory by showing that not all impulsive behaviours translate into long-term satisfaction, a nuance that often goes overlooked in simplified models of gratification.

Notably, the significant influence of Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) and novelty seeking on impulse buying reinforces the relevance of Social Comparison Theory, which suggest that individuals determine their self-worth based on comparisons with others. FOMO, driven by a desire to stay socially connected and not be left out, appears to trigger impulsive consumption

patterns, yet its lack of direct impact on life satisfaction signals that such behaviour may provide only temporary relief or gratification. Theoretically, this finding challenges the assumption in some consumer psychology models that fulfilling a hedonic need automatically enhances subjective well-being.

Managerial Implications

The findings of this study carry several important implications for marketers, e-commerce platforms, and consumer well-being strategists targeting Gen Z consumers. Understanding the nuanced relationships between communication platform apart from psychological factors such as Fear of Missing Out (FOMO), novelty seeking, and sale proneness with impulse buying and life satisfaction can help managers develop more targeted and responsible marketing strategies.

Firstly, the significant effect of FOMO and novelty seeking on impulse buying suggests that marketers can effectively appeal to these psychological triggers through real-time marketing tactics. Strategies such as limited-time offers, exclusive content, and social proof elements can be particularly effective in stimulating impulsive behaviour among Gen Z consumers. However, while such tactics may drive short-term sales, it is critical for brands to balance these efforts with ethical marketing practices to avoid encouraging buyer's remorse or dissatisfaction, which, as shown in the study, does not contribute to long-term life satisfaction.

Secondly, the strong influence of sale proneness on life satisfaction highlights that value-conscious consumers derive genuine satisfaction from getting a good deal. This underscores the importance of promotional campaigns, bundled discounts, and personalized reward systems. Retailers and digital platforms should leverage data analytics to identify sale-prone consumers and tailor promotions accordingly, enhancing customer experience while reinforcing brand loyalty and satisfaction.

Limitation and Future Research

Although the findings offer valuable insights into Generation Z's behaviour, they should be viewed in light of certain limitations. Recognizing these constraints is essential for guiding future research on the topic. The primary limitations stem from the study's design and the characteristics of the sample used. First, the study is cross-sectional in nature, which restricts the ability to infer causality among the variables examined. While significant associations were found between factors such as fear of missing out, novelty seeking, and impulse buying, it is not possible to determine how these relationships evolve over time. Future research should consider employing longitudinal or experimental designs to better capture the temporal dynamics of impulse behaviour and life satisfaction, particularly in a digitally saturated environment.

Second, the study sample was confined to Gen Z consumers, which limits the generalizability of the findings to other generational cohorts. Different age groups may have distinct psychological, technological, and consumption traits. Therefore, future studies should explore inter-generational comparisons to assess whether the influencing factors and mediating/moderating relationships differ across demographic segments. Third, while the study incorporated impulse buying as a mediator and internet use as a moderator, it did not account for other potential mediators or moderators that may enrich the theoretical framework. Variables such as emotional regulation, financial literacy, peer influence, or digital

fatigue may further clarify how psychological tendencies translate into actual consumer behaviour and life satisfaction. Expanding the model with additional constructs can provide a more holistic understanding of consumer decision-making in the digital era.

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BIODATA

Faiz Masnan is a senior lecturer at Universiti Malaysia Perlis (UniMAP) with academic qualifications in business and entrepreneurship. He holds a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) and a Master's degree in Business and International Entrepreneurship from Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM). With five years of experience in academia, he is actively involved in teaching, research, and supervision. His main research interests include international business, business, entrepreneurship, and international entrepreneurship. He is particularly passionate about exploring global business trends and strategies, especially in the context of emerging markets and the development of small and medium enterprises (SMEs). Through his research and academic work, he aims to bridge the gap between theory and practice, offering valuable insights to industry players and policymakers. Email: faizmasnan@unimap.edu.my

Siti Balkis Mohamed Ibrahim has a strong interest in the field of Human Resource Management. The author has enrolled in Universiti Selangor (UniSEL) to pursue her first degree in Bachelor of Human Resource Management (Hons.). Subsequently, the author pursued her master's degree studies in the same discipline at Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM). In addition to her academic credentials, she is an associate member of the Malaysia Institutes of Human Resource Management (MIHRM). Currently, the author serves as lecturer in northern region university. Email: sitibalkis@unimap.edu.my

Mohd Shahidan Shaari is an associate professor at the Faculty of Economics and Business, Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS). He holds doctor's, master's, and bachelor's degrees in economics from Universiti Utara Malaysia, and has over 13 years of experience in lecturing and research. He has published numerous articles in journals and newspapers and received several research awards from his university, fueled by his passion for writing. Email: smshahidan@unimas.my

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