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Stressed and Shopping: Examining Social Media-Induced Stress and Online Impulsive Buying in Gen Z

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ABSTRACT
This study investigates how social media-induced stress influences online impulsive buying behavior among Gen Z consumers within a social commerce context. It further explores the mediating role of negative coping strategies and the moderating effect of self-control. Data was collected through online questionnaires targeting 300 Gen Z respondents selected via purposive sampling criteria, then analyzed using conditional process analysis with SPSS macro-PROCESS. Findings confirm that social media-induced stress, directly and indirectly, triggers impulsive buying through negative coping. Additionally, self-control significantly moderates this relationship, wherein lower self-control intensifies the effect of stress on impulsive buying. This research addresses gaps in the literature by highlighting the role of negative emotions, specifically stress, in driving consumer behavior. Findings contribute valuable insights into evolving digital consumerism patterns among Gen Z, emphasizing the need for self-control in digital environments while also highlighting how negative coping acts as the mechanism that channels stress into impulsive buying behavior.

Keywords: Gen Z; Negative Coping; Online Impulsive Buying; Self-Control; Social Media-Induced Stress

INTRODUCTION

The rise and fame of social media has significantly reshaped the landscape of communication and consumer behavior (Palalic et al., 2021), particularly among Gen Z. According to the latest survey from the Indonesia Internet Service Provider Association (APJII), Gen Z is the age group most connected to the internet (Riyanto & Putri, 2024), with the number reaching 34.4%. They mostly use the internet to look for information and access social media such as Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok. This generation's heavy reliance on social media for constant updates somehow creates a dynamic, albeit overwhelming, environment. With minute-by-minute posts, updates, and a relentless stream of information, Gen Z often finds itself grappling with social media-induced stress (Keles et al., 2020; H. Liu et al., 2021). This stress stems from various factors, including information overload, the pressure to maintain an online persona, and the fear of being left out of trending conversations (Brooks et al., 2017; Brooks & Califf, 2017; Keles et al., 2020).

In navigating these emotional pressures, many individuals turn to online impulsive buying as a form of relief. This behavior involves unplanned, spontaneous purchases that serve as a temporary escape from stress (Wells et al., 2011; Zhang et al., 2024). Within the context of social commerce, where social media dynamics heavily influence purchasing decisions, impulsive buying becomes more pronounced. Social commerce, a subset of modern e-commerce, utilizes social media to enrich business experience through, collaborative,

interactive, and community-driven features (Li, 2019; Xiang et al., 2022). In Indonesia, platforms such as TikTok Shop and Facebook Store have heightened the visibility of social commerce. In this regard, impulse buying serves as a coping strategy as it provides temporary satisfaction while bypassing rational evaluation. Understanding how stress triggers these behaviors is essential to addressing the emerging consumer patterns within the Gen Z demographic and the digitally evolving business landscape.

Despite the growing attention to impulse buying, several gaps remain in the literature. Studies in this field are heavily concentrated in the U.S., China, and Taiwan, limiting the generalizability of the findings to other cultural contexts (Brooks et al., 2017; Xiang et al., 2022; Zheng et al., 2020). Additionally, impulse buying research has largely focused on traditional retail and e-commerce settings (Gao et al., 2022; Sun et al., 2024; Wang et al., 2022), with limited exploration of social commerce, which is a rapidly emerging area where consumer behavior is shaped by social interactions, influencers, and peer feedback. This study addresses these gaps by investigating impulse buying in Indonesia's social commerce environment, specifically among Gen Z consumers.

Moreover, the emotional drivers of impulse buying are still not fully understood. Existing research emphasizes positive emotions such as joy and excitement as key triggers of impulsive buying (H. Liu et al., 2021; Ramadania et al., 2022), leaving negative emotions like stress and anxiety underexplored. Existing research conducted post- and during the COVID-19 pandemic has also highlighted how stress and uncertainty can lead to excessive and irrational purchasing behavior (Ahmed et al., 2020; Naeem, 2020). However, there is a need to understand how such negative emotional responses, especially stress arising from everyday social media use, influence impulse buying outside crisis contexts.

This study proposes that social media-induced stress acts as an independent variable influencing online impulse buying behavior. Additionally, negative coping strategies, such as impulsive purchasing are examined as a mediator in this process. Since self-control can moderate the extent to which stress drives impulsive decisions, the model also explores the buffering effect of self-control. By focusing on Gen Z consumers in Indonesia, this research provides a fresh perspective on the relationship between stress, coping, and impulse buying within social commerce settings.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Self-Regulation Theory

Self-regulation theory is highly relevant to understanding the dynamics of social media-induced stress and online impulsive buying. This theory posits that individuals use self-control to manage their behavior and emotions, especially when faced with stressors or temptations (Baumeister et al., 2007). In the context of social media, stressors such as social comparison or cyberbullying may overwhelm an individual's self-regulatory capacity, leading to the adoption of negative coping strategies. These coping mechanisms, while offering temporary relief, often undermine long-term emotional well-being and contribute to impulsive behavior (Costa Pacheco et al., 2021; Hoang, 2020). The breakdown of self-regulation when facing emotional distress results in the use of maladaptive behaviors, such as impulse buying, as individuals seek immediate gratification to escape negative emotions (Gao et al., 2022).

The moderating role of self-control further strengthens the application of self-regulation theory in this study. Individuals with high levels of self-control can effectively manage emotional stress and resist the urge to engage in impulsive consumption (Zhang et al., 2024). Conversely, those with lower self-control are more susceptible to impulsive behaviors as they struggle to regulate their emotions in response to social media-induced stress (Efendi et al., 2019). Thus, self-regulation theory provides a comprehensive framework to understand how stress, negative coping, and self-control interrelate in driving impulsive buying behavior, offering insights into how consumers' ability to manage their emotions can mitigate or exacerbate online shopping tendencies (Baumeister et al., 2007).

Social Media-Induced Stress and Online Impulsive Buying

Social media has become an integral part of many people's daily lives. This platform is a forum for communication, sharing information, and entertainment (Pekkala & van Zoonen, 2022). However, this also has the potential to cause stress due to various factors such as social comparison, cyberbullying, and pressure to maintain one's personality in cyberspace (Yurdakul & Ayhan, 2023) This stress can cause individuals to make impulsive purchases as a coping mechanism (Maharani & Utami, 2023). Social media users often compare their personal lives with the lives of other people. This can lead to feelings of inadequacy or low self-esteem when individuals feel that they are not equal to others (Y. Liu et al., 2022).

Online impulse buying is characterized by spontaneous purchases made without planning or consideration of the consequences that will occur (Yolcu & Meyer, 2023). When an individual experiences stress, they may shop as a form of escape. Impulse buying behavior may be a person's way of managing negative emotions related to stress (Ahn & Kwon, 2022). This behavior makes a person feel happy temporarily and reduces the distraction of their feelings of stress.

Research shows that social media-induced stress can encourage impulse buying behavior, as individuals tend to seek escape from the stress or discomfort they feel through impulsive consumption. For example, users who feel anxious or stressed by social interactions on social media are often driven to make impulse purchases as a mechanism to relieve negative emotions (Ahn & Kwon, 2022). Additionally, a study by Chen et al. (2022) stated that emotional factors, such as anxiety triggered by social media, can activate the urge to shop impulsively as a form of emotional escape. This trend is also supported by recent research showing that emotion-provoking elements of social media are often a major factor in driving impulse buying behavior (Zhang et al., 2024).

H1. Social media-induced stress positively influences online impulsive buying

Social Media-Induced Stress and Negative Coping

Social media platforms have become central to daily life, but their potential to induce stress is well-documented. Stressors such as social comparison, cyberbullying, and the pressure to maintain an idealized online persona often overwhelm users emotionally (Hoang, 2020; Keles et al., 2020). When individuals experience high levels of stress due to these triggers, they may struggle to manage their emotions constructively. Negative coping

strategies, such as avoidance, distraction, or unhealthy emotional diversion, often emerge as a means of alleviating stress (Gao et al., 2022). These mechanisms provide a sense of temporary relief but fail to address the root causes of the stress, potentially reinforcing a cycle of maladaptive behavior (Moore et al., 2022).

Research suggests that individuals experiencing stress from social media tend to resort to negative coping mechanisms as an emotional shortcut to manage their discomfort (Costa Pacheco et al., 2021). For instance, a person who feels inadequate due to social comparison may withdraw from social interactions or immerse themselves in superficial distractions to reduce cognitive dissonance. These behaviors are often counterproductive and can worsen long-term emotional well-being (Keles et al., 2020). Moreover, studies highlight how the overwhelming nature of social media exacerbates these tendencies. The constant exposure to emotionally charged content or social scrutiny amplifies users' vulnerability to stress, leading them to seek relief through maladaptive coping methods (Hoang, 2020; Moore et al., 2022). Thus, social media-induced stress plays a significant role in fostering negative coping strategies, creating a feedback loop where stress and maladaptive responses reinforce each other.

H2. Social media-induced stress positively influences negative coping

Negative Coping and Online Impulsive Buying

Negative coping mechanisms often manifest through behaviors aimed at temporarily reducing emotional discomfort. Impulse buying, in particular, serves as a form of emotional diversion for individuals struggling with stress (S. Chen et al., 2022; Gao et al., 2022). This behavior allows individuals to momentarily escape feelings of anxiety or frustration by indulging in unplanned purchases that bring short-term pleasure (Ahmed et al., 2020). As a result, impulsive consumption becomes a habitual response to unresolved emotional stress, especially when healthier coping mechanisms are absent (Moore et al., 2022).

Empirical studies show a strong connection between negative coping strategies and online impulsive buying. Ahn and Kwon (2022) argue that individuals who turn to impulsive buying view it as a quick and convenient outlet for alleviating emotional distress. The immediate gratification of purchasing provides a psychological "reward" that temporarily masks the negative emotions triggered by social media stress. Additionally, the accessibility of online platforms makes it easier for individuals to act on these impulses without considering long-term consequences (Gao et al., 2022).

Furthermore, negative coping amplifies the emotional vulnerabilities that drive impulsive buying. When individuals lack the ability to process or regulate their emotions effectively, they are more likely to view consumption as a viable escape route (Moore et al., 2022). The act of shopping, particularly in an online context, serves as both a distraction and a source of comfort, reinforcing the link between maladaptive coping and impulsive behavior (Ahmed et al., 2020). These dynamic underscores the critical role of negative coping in channeling social media-induced stress into consumer actions.

H3. Negative coping positively influences online impulsive buying

Negative Coping as Mediating Variable

Negative coping is often identified as behavior that attempts to reduce the emotional impact of stress but in ways that are not constructive and can even worsen long-term well-

being (S. Chen et al., 2022). In the context of social media use, negative coping can include behaviors such as avoiding direct social interactions, consuming content excessively, or trying to divert attention from stress in unhealthy ways, such as impulsive shopping (Zheng et al., 2020). Studies show that users who experience anxiety or dissatisfaction due to social comparisons on social media tend to turn to impulse purchases to relieve their emotional distress (Mundel et al., 2024). This negative coping functions as a temporary form of escape that provides short-term satisfaction but does not address the underlying root of the problem (Moore et al., 2022). Other research shows that negative coping can trigger consumer behavior, especially when individuals feel unable to control or process stress in a more positive way (Hoang, 2020). For example, consumers who feel pressured by interactions or expectations on social media tend to use impulse buying as a means to reduce cognitive dissonance, namely the mismatch between the desire to appear perfect on social media and the reality of life that they experience. Impulse buying becomes a kind of "reward" or distraction from negative emotions that arise as a result of social interactions in the media (Costa Pacheco et al., 2021).

Research on negative coping shows that individuals who respond to social media stress with negative coping methods (e.g., avoiding or seeking unhealthy escapes) are more likely to engage in impulse buying. Negative coping, such as making impulse purchases to escape stress, amplifies the influence of social media stress on these behaviors. Mariani et al. (2017) found that cognitive and emotional reactions to stress can drive impulsive consumption, while research by Zheng et al. (2020) shows that strong emotional responses to e-commerce content on social media increase the likelihood of impulse purchases. The study by Zhang et al. (2024) found that individuals who experience high levels of stress tend to make impulse purchases as a form of coping.

H4. Negative coping mediates the influence of social media-induced stress on online impulsive buying

Self-Control as Moderating Variable

Self-control is considered the ability to inhibit or control negative impulses and emotions, which allows individuals to choose appropriate actions, even when facing situations that trigger stress or pressure (Werner & Ford, 2023). In the context of impulse buying triggered by social media stress, self-control plays a protective role by reducing an individual's tendency to respond to stress through impulsive consumption (Efendi et al., 2019). The study conducted by Gulfraz et al. (2022) shows that individuals with high levels of self-control have a better ability to resist the urge to make impulse purchases, even though they are exposed to triggers such as stress or anxiety generated by social media. This research highlights that self-control can act as a "buffer" or barrier against impulsive consumer behavior.

Previous research shows that people with higher self-control tend to choose more positive or adaptive coping mechanisms, which ultimately reduce impulsive buying behavior (Iyer et al., 2020). Additionally, Zhang et al. (2024) highlight that self-control not only suppresses impulsive urges directly but also influences how individuals handle stress, thereby preventing the use of negative coping that triggers impulse buying.

H5. Self-control negatively moderates the influence of social media-induced stress on online impulsive buying, in which the influence is weaker when self-control is high
H6. Self-control negatively moderates the indirect influence of social media-induced stress on online impulsive buying through negative coping, in which the influence is weaker when self-control is high.

Based on the previous studies and the arrangement of hypothesis, the conceptual framework of this research is presented in Figure 1.

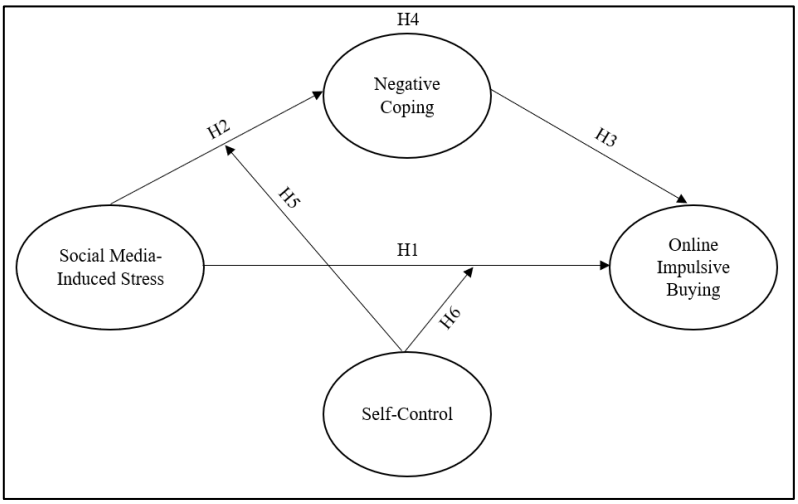

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

RESEARCH METHOD

The present study employs a quantitative approach with a cross-sectional design to investigate the relationship between social media-induced stress and online impulsive buying among Generation Z. Using survey-based research, the data was collected via an online questionnaire distributed to the participants, which then allows an analysis of behavior patterns associated with impulsive buying.

The target population for this study consists of Gen Z social media users in several cities in Indonesia. The participants were selected based on several criteria, which include: (1) participants fall within the Gen Z age range, which is born between 1997 and 2012; (2) participants actively use social media and frequently engage with its content, as they are more likely to experience social media-induced stress; and (3) participants have purchased product online through social commerce at least twice within the last month.

A sample size of 300 respondents was chosen to ensure the robustness and reliability of mediation and moderation analyses, as statistical power in such studies is significantly enhanced by sample sizes between 200 and 300 (Fritz & MacKinnon, 2007; Hayes, 2018). This size enables adequate detection of effects, especially when examining complex models with multiple variables (Wolf et al., 2013). Additionally, larger samples help to produce stable estimates, reduce standard errors, and improve the generalizability of findings across the wider population (Maxwell, 2000). In studies of social media-induced behavior and impulsive buying, similar sample sizes have successfully yielded precise and reliable results, reinforcing the appropriateness of 300 respondents for this study (Gao et al., 2022; Maxwell, 2000; Wang et al., 2022).

Data was collected using an online Google Forms questionnaire distributed through social media platforms, including TikTok, Instagram, and X. This approach ensured that participants were social media users, aligning with the study's focus. The questionnaire, which items were measured on a 5-point Likert scale, was structured as follows:

1. Demographic Information: Age, gender, and social media usage habits.
2. Independent Variable (IV): social media-induced stress (SMIS), measured using an 8-item scale (Gong et al., 2010).
3. Mediator: Negative coping (NC), assessed via a 7-item scale (Xie, 1998; Zheng et al., 2020).
4. Moderator: Self-control, evaluated with a 4-item scale (X. Chen et al., 2019; Luo et al., 2022).
5. Dependent Variable (DV): Online impulsive buying, measured with a 4-item scale (Sun et al., 2024; Wells et al., 2011).

Data was analyzed using SPSS with the PROCESS macro with Hayes Model 4 and 8, which allows for conditional process analysis. This analysis is a robust approach that enables the examination of both mediating and moderating effects (Hayes, 2018). This method was chosen over Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) techniques such as SEM PLS or SEM AMOS, as the PROCESS macro offers a more direct approach to conditional analyses. To ensure data reliability, Cronbach's alpha was calculated for each scale, assessing internal consistency. Validity was evaluated through correlation coefficients, verifying that each scale adequately measured the intended constructs.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Respondents Characteristics

Table 1 presents key demographic and behavioral traits of the Gen Z respondents, which are relevant for examining social media-induced stress and impulsive buying.

Table 1. Respondents' Profile

Characteristics	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	135	45
	Female	165	55
Age Group	18-20	69	23
	21-23	116	39
	24-26	115	38
Monthly Social Media Usage	Less than 20 hours	45	15
	20-40 hours	147	49
	More than 40 hours	108	36
Social Media Platforms Used Most Often	Instagram	84	28
	TikTok	117	39
	Facebook	39	13
	X	60	20
Frequency of Purchases on Social Commerce	Never	30	10
	Occasionally	147	49
	Frequently	90	30
	Very frequently	33	11

Gender distribution is fairly balanced, with females making up 55% and males 45%. Age ranges include 18-20 (23%), 21-23 (39%), and 24-26 (38%), covering the core Gen Z

segment. Social media usage varies, with 15% online less than 20 hours per month, 49% between 20-40 hours, and 36% exceeding 40 hours, reflecting different levels of social media exposure. Instagram is the most used platform (39%), followed by TikTok (28%), Facebook (20%), and X (13%), showing preferences likely influencing engagement patterns. Regarding social commerce, 49% of respondents occasionally make purchases, 30% buy frequently, 11% very frequently, and 10% do not buy at all.

Descriptive Statistics

Based on the results of descriptive statistical tests, the social media-induced stress (SMI) variable has an average value of 33.48 with a standard deviation (SD) of 4.754, (skewness = -1.095) with positive kurtosis (kurtosis = 1.032). The negative coping (NC) variable has a mean value of 29.10 and SD 4.408, with skewness -0.789 and kurtosis 1.432. Online impulsive buying (OIB) shows a mean of 16.30 with SD 2.502, skewness -0.266, and kurtosis -0.548, which means the distribution is quite symmetrical. Finally, self-control (SC) had a mean of 14.33, SD 4.192, skewness -0.470, and kurtosis -0.294, indicating a relatively normal data distribution. From the skewness and kurtosis values, it is known that the data is distributed normally because these numbers are in the range of -2 to 2. Furthermore, from the correlation coefficient, it can be seen that SMI is strongly correlated with NC (r = 0.747), OIB (r = 0.546), and SC (r = 0.271). In addition, NC is also positively correlated with OIB (r = 0.584) and SC (r = 0.406), while OIB and SC have a strong correlation of r = 0.700 (Table 2).

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics

Variable		Descriptive Statistics						Correlation Coefficients (r)			
		Min	Max	Mean	SD	Skew	Kurt	1	2	3	4
1	SMI	16	40	33.48	4.754	-1.095	1.032	1	0.747	0.546	0.271
2	NC	11	35	29.10	4.408	-0.789	1.432		1	0.584	0.406
3	OIB	9	20	16.30	2.502	-0.266	-0.548			1	0.700
4	SC	4	20	14.33	4.192	-0.470	-0.294				1

Note: SMI: Social media-induced stress, NC: Negative coping, OIB: Online impulsive buying, SC: Self-control

Results of the Validity and Reliability Test

The validity test results indicate that all items within each variable exhibit correlation coefficients above 0.5, which confirms the validity in accurately measuring its construct. In terms of reliability, each variable surpasses the reliability threshold of 0.6, as recommended by Malhotra (2010). Specifically, the Cronbach's Alpha values for all variables are as follows: social media-induced stress at 0.861, negative coping at 0.855, online impulsive buying at 0.666, and self-control at 0.941. These values affirm the reliability of the instruments used, as they exceed the acceptable threshold. While Cronbach's Alpha for online impulsive buying is slightly lower at 0.666, it remains within an acceptable range for exploratory social research (Hair et al., 2019). These results presented in Table 3 demonstrate that the instruments are consistent and reliable for the study.

Table 3. Results of Validity and Reliability Test

Variable	Item	Validity	Cronbach's Alpha
Social media-Induced Stress	SMI1	0.557	0.861
	SMI2	0.746	
	SMI3	0.669	
	SMI4	0.707	
	SMI5	0.788	
	SMI6	0.736	
	SMI7	0.738	
	SMI8	0.776	
Negative Coping	NC1	0.664	0.855
	NC2	0.838	
	NC3	0.671	
	NC4	0.729	
	NC5	0.793	
	NC6	0.797	
	NC7	0.625	
Online Impulsive Buying	OIB1	0.600	0.666
	OIB2	0.609	
	OIB3	0.811	
	OIB4	0.787	
Self-Control	SC1	0.907	0.941
	SC2	0.934	
	SC3	0.925	
	SC4	0.925	

Test of Classical Assumptions

The assumptions of normality, multicollinearity, and heteroscedasticity were evaluated, and the results are summarized in Table 4.

Table 4. Summary of Results of Classical Assumption Test

Test	Method	Results	Conclusion
Normality	Kolmogorov-Smirnov	Asymp. Sig. = 0.123 ($p > 0.05$)	Residuals are normally distributed.
Multicollinearity	Tolerance, VIF	Tolerance = 0.443, VIF = 2.259	No multicollinearity was detected.
Heteroscedasticity	Breusch-Pagan	$p > 0.05$	No heteroscedasticity was observed.

The Kolmogorov-Smirnov normality test indicated an Asymp. Sig. value of 0.123, which is greater than the 0.05 threshold, suggesting that the residuals are normally distributed. This finding confirms that the normality assumption for linear regression is met. For multicollinearity, the tolerance values for social media-induced stress (SMI) and negative coping (NC) were both 0.443, exceeding the minimum threshold of 0.1. Additionally, the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values for these variables were 2.259, which is well below the critical threshold of 10. These results confirm that multicollinearity is not a concern in this model. Lastly, the heteroscedasticity assumption was tested using the Breusch-Pagan test, which yielded results indicating no significant heteroscedasticity ($p > 0.05$). This finding supports the homoscedasticity assumption. Together, these tests affirm the suitability of the data for linear regression analysis.

Results of the Multicollinearity Test

Based on the results of the multicollinearity test presented in Table 5, the tolerance value for the two variables, namely social media-induced stress (SMI) and negative coping (NC), is 0.443, which is above the minimum threshold of 0.1. This value indicates that there are no serious problems with multicollinearity. In addition, the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) value for both variables is 2,259, which is below the threshold of 10. This indicates that the level of multicollinearity is still within reasonable limits (Hair et al., 2019). Thus, there is no indication of worrying multicollinearity in this model.

Table 5. Results of the Multicollinearity Test

Variable	**Collinearity Statistics**	
	Tolerance	VIF
Social media-induced stress	0.443	2.259
Negative coping	0.443	2.259

Results of Hypothesis Test

The results of the hypothesis test (Table 6) show that the regression model used is significant with a value of F = 130.722, p < 0.001, and is able to explain 63.9% of the variability in online impulsive buying (OIB) (R^2 = 0.639). For H1, social media-induced stress has a positive and significant effect on OIB (b = 0.212, p = 0.009), supporting H1 that the higher the social media-induced stress, the higher the impulsive buying. For H2, social media-induced stress significantly increases negative coping (b = 0.450, p < 0.001), supporting that stress prompts maladaptive coping behaviors.

Table 6. Results of Hypothesis Test

R	**R-Sq**	**MSE**	**F**	**Df1**	**Df2**	***p***
.800	.639	2.288	130.722	4.000	295.000	.000
Model						
	b	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
Constant	8.766	2.530	3.465	0.001	3.787	13.745
Social media induced -stress → Online impulsive buying (H1)	.212	.078	2.718	0.009	.634	1.058
Social media induced -stress → Negative coping (H2)	.450	.090	5.000	0.000	.272	.628
Negative coping → Online impulsive buying (H3)	.380	.085	4.470	0.000	.212	.548
Social media induced -stress → Online impulsive buying (moderated by self-control) (H5)	-.110	.025	-4.400	0.000	.340	.120

The results for H3 show that negative coping significantly predicts online impulsive buying (b = 0.380, p < 0.001), confirming that negative coping drives impulsive consumption. Furthermore, the effect of social media-induced stress was moderated by self-control, with significant and negative results (b = -0.110, p < 0.001). This supports H5, which states that the effect of social media-induced stress on online impulsive buying will be lower when the level of self-control is high. Overall, this model supports the significant influence

of social media-induced stress on negative coping and online impulsive buying, as well as the negative moderating role of self-control.

The results of the mediation test indicate that negative coping significantly mediates the influence of social media-induced stress on online impulsive buying. The mediation effect value is 0.156, with BootSE = 0.032 and bootstrap confidence interval [0.093, 0.219], which does not include the zero value. This shows that the indirect effect of social media-induced stress on online impulsive buying through negative coping is significant. Thus, the findings confirm that negative coping mediates the relationship between social media-induced stress and online impulsive buying, supporting H4. Here, social media-induced stress increases negative coping (Table 7), which in turn increases online impulsive buying.

Table 7. Negative Coping as Mediator

Indirect Effect: SMI → NC → OIB				
	Effect	BootSE	BootLLCI	BootULCI
Negative coping	.156	.032	.093	.219

The moderated mediation test results (Table 8) indicate that self-control moderates the indirect effect of social media-induced stress on online impulsive buying through negative coping. At a low level of self-control (10.138), the mediation effect is 0.056, which is significant with a confidence interval of [0.008, 0.113]. At an intermediate level of self-control (14.330), the mediation effect decreases slightly to 0.052, remaining significant with a confidence interval of [0.008, 0.101]. At a high level of self-control (18.522), the mediation effect further decreases to 0.047 yet remains significant with a confidence interval of [0.008, 0.090]. These findings support H6, confirming that higher self-control weakens the indirect effect of social media-induced stress on online impulsive buying through negative coping.

Table 8. Moderated-Mediation of Self-Control

Indirect Effect: SMI → NC → OIB				
Self-Control	Effect	BootSE	BootLLCI	BootULCI
10.138	.056	.027	.008	.113
14.330	.052	.023	.008	.101
18.522	.047	.021	.008	.090

Discussion

The findings of this study reveal that negative emotional responses, particularly stress induced by social media, play a significant role in prompting impulsive buying behavior on online platforms, especially within the context of social commerce. This relationship, confirmed by Hypothesis 1, aligns with the idea that social media use can create emotional pressures among Gen Z consumers. This kind of stress is often triggered by elements such as FOMO (fear of missing out) or the tendency to compare oneself to others curated idealized content. These pressures then increase the likelihood of stress-driven impulsive purchases as a way to cope. Consistent with the findings from prior studies (Ahn & Kwon, 2022; S. Chen et al., 2022; Zhang et al., 2024), this behavior reflects the distinct consumption patterns of Gen Z, which are known for their high engagement with social media and propensity for digital consumerism.

The findings related to hypothesis 2 highlight the critical role of negative coping as a mediator in the relationship between social media-induced stress and online impulsive buying (OIB). Specifically, the results confirm that social media-induced stress leads to the adoption of negative coping mechanisms, which in turn increase impulsive buying tendencies. This aligns with prior research by Gao et al. (2020) and Keles et al. (2020) that suggesting that when individuals experience emotional distress, they often resort to behaviors like impulsive purchases as a maladaptive coping strategy. These findings emphasize the psychological underpinnings of consumer behavior in the digital era, particularly for Gen Z, who are not only frequent users of social media but also more susceptible to the emotional pressures and curated realities presented online (Hoang, 2020; Moore et al., 2022).

For hypothesis 3, the results indicate that social commerce plays a significant role in amplifying the link between social media-induced stress and impulsive buying, as platforms within this domain are specifically designed to encourage engagement and consumption. Social commerce environments combine social interaction with commercial activity, creating unique conditions that heighten emotional triggers and foster impulsive purchases (Ahn & Kwon, 2022; S. Chen et al., 2022). For example, features like instant feedback from peers, limited-time promotions, and personalized advertisements may compound the stress experienced by users and make impulsive buying an attractive outlet. These findings contribute to understanding how the characteristics of social commerce environments act as catalysts for stress-driven consumer behavior, reinforcing previous studies on the distinct impact of digital platforms on purchasing decisions (Ahmed et al., 2020; Moore et al., 2022).

The mediation effect found in hypothesis 4 further underscores the role of negative coping as a pathway through which social media-induced stress translates into impulsive buying behavior. In this context, impulsive buying serves as a temporary escape or coping mechanism that can provide momentary relief from stress without necessarily addressing emotions. This finding supports the previous studies by Mariani et al. (2017), Zhang et al. (2024), and Zheng et al. (2020) and adds to the understanding of coping behaviors by confirming that Gen Z may resort to quick-fix solutions like online shopping to alleviate their discomfort from stress. This impulse-driven consumer behavior is especially prevalent in social commerce environments, as the interactive and community-oriented features of the platforms intensify the exposure to social comparisons and promotional influences.

The moderating role of self-control, as explored in hypotheses 5 and 6, reveals critical nuances in how social media-induced stress translates into impulsive buying behaviors. The findings in hypothesis 3 confirm that high self-control mitigates the direct influence of social media-induced stress on impulsive buying. It supports the concept that individuals with stronger self-control are more resilient against immediate emotional triggers (Efendi et al., 2019; Gulfraz et al., 2022). This aligns with self-regulation theory, which suggests that those with greater self-control are better equipped to resist the allure of impulsive purchases even in emotionally charged situations.

The moderated mediation findings in hypothesis 6 provide further insight into how and when social media-induced stress is most likely to lead to impulsive buying. Specifically, the results show that for individuals with low self-control, the pathway from stress to impulsive buying through negative coping is significantly stronger. In this case, low self-

control not only weakens one's resistance to impulsive actions but also enhances reliance on negative coping mechanisms, such as impulsive buying, as a way to alleviate stress. When self-control is low, individuals are more prone to adopting immediate but maladaptive responses, using impulsive purchases to manage their emotional discomfort. This supports the notion from previous studies regarding the mediated-moderating role of self-control (Iyer et al., 2020; Zhang et al., 2024). This conditional indirect effect underscores the complex interplay between emotional regulation and coping mechanisms, especially in the digital context of social commerce.

CONCLUSION

This study provides a comprehensive examination of how social media-induced stress drives impulsive buying behavior among Gen Z, particularly within social commerce contexts. The findings reveal that stress from social media has both a direct and indirect impact on impulsive buying, mediated by negative coping mechanisms. This highlights how negative emotional responses, such as stress, can lead individuals to engage in impulsive purchases as a form of immediate relief. The results also emphasize the moderating role of self-control, demonstrating that high self-control weakens the direct and indirect effects of stress on impulsive buying through negative coping, while low self-control amplifies these effects. These insights align with and expand upon self-regulation and coping with theories, providing fresh perspectives on digital consumer behavior.

Overall, this research underscores the importance of understanding the psychological drivers behind impulsive buying, particularly in a demographic heavily influenced by social media dynamics. By focusing on Gen Z, a group uniquely shaped by digital environments, this study offers valuable insights into the interactions between stress, coping, and self-control. The findings contribute not only to academic knowledge but also offer practical considerations for managing impulsive buying behaviors in the rapidly growing field of social commerce.

This study offers significant implications for both practice and theory. For marketers and social commerce platforms, understanding that social media-induced stress can lead to impulsive buying, especially among Gen Z, presents opportunities for creating more responsible marketing strategies. By fostering positive and transparent interactions, platforms can mitigate stress-driven impulsive purchases and encourage more mindful consumption. Additionally, features that promote self-control, such as purchase reminders or optional spending limits, could help consumers exercise self-control. For consumers, these findings underscore the importance of promoting digital literacy and self-control strategies among young consumers to help them manage the emotional influences of social media effectively.

Theoretically, this study advances theories of self-regulation, coping, and impulsive buying by emphasizing the role of negative emotional responses and the conditional indirect effects through self-control. The findings suggest that impulsive buying in a digital environment is not solely driven by positive emotional triggers but also by stress and other negative responses, offering a more nuanced understanding of impulsive buying behavior in social commerce contexts.

Despite these contributions, this study has several limitations. First, the use of self-reported data may introduce biases, as respondents may underreport or misinterpret their impulsive buying behaviors. Future studies could integrate behavioral tracking data to gain more objective insights. Additionally, the study's focus on Gen Z in Indonesia limits the generalizability of the findings to other demographic groups or cultural contexts. Research in other age groups and cultural settings could validate these findings and reveal whether similar patterns hold across diverse populations. Moreover, this study did not account for other potential moderators or mediators, such as individual personality traits or different types of coping strategies, which could further clarify the pathways between social media stress and impulsive buying. Future research could explore these variables to enrich our understanding of the complex dynamics between digital stress and consumer behavior.

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