Research Paper                                                                                          Open Access

# Factors Influencing Impulsive Buying Decisions of Vietnamese Youth on Social Network

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**ABSTRACT :** This study investigates the factor groups influencing impulsive buying behavior on social media among Vietnamese youth. Grounded in the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) theoretical model, the research targets individuals aged 14 to under 30 who frequently engage in online shopping on platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok. A mixed-method approach was employed, combining qualitative expert interviews with quantitative survey analysis. Using a sample of 390 valid responses collected through both online and offline channels, the study applied Cronbach's Alpha to assess measurement reliability and Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) to identify underlying constructs. The findings reveal seven main factor groups affecting impulsive buying behavior: visual stimulation, price and promotion, social network features, social influence, positive emotions, perceived product value, and impulsive buying tendency. These insights offer valuable implications for online businesses seeking to design targeted marketing strategies that enhance consumer engagement and drive unplanned purchases among young consumers in the digital age.
*KEYWORDS: Impulsive buying, social network, Vietnamese youth.* JEL Code: M31, L81.

## I. INTRODUCTION

As social media becomes a predominant shopping platform, impulsive buying behavior has drawn considerable attention from researchers due to its unique characteristics in the digital environment (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Unlike planned purchases, impulsive buying is often sudden, emotionally driven, and triggered by external stimuli (Rook, 1987). Understanding the underlying drivers of such behavior is critical for businesses to optimize marketing strategies and for consumers to better regulate their decisions (Kotler, 2009).

This study investigates the factors influencing impulsive buying behavior among Vietnamese youth on social media. Drawing upon the Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) model (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974), Stern's classification of impulse buying (Stern, 1962), and consumer behavior frameworks by Kotler (Kotler, 2009), the research explores how environmental cues, internal psychological states, and behavioral responses interact to shape spontaneous purchase decisions. In social media environments like Facebook, TikTok, and Instagram, young consumers are regularly exposed to visual stimuli, influencer content, peer reviews, flash sales, and emotionally engaging promotions—all of which can trigger impulsive actions.

Stern's theory identifies four types of impulse buying: pure, reminder, suggestion-based, and planned impulse purchases. These behaviors are frequently observed among Gen Z and young Millennials, who are more responsive to immediate gratification and influenced by digital trends. According to the SOR framework, external stimuli such as vibrant product visuals, social proof, and promotional cues affect the consumer's internal emotional and cognitive state (e.g., excitement, desire, urgency), leading to an unplanned purchase decision (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974).

While numerous global studies have explored impulse buying in e-commerce, localized insights into how Vietnamese youth respond to social media-specific cues remain limited. This research addresses that gap by applying both qualitative and quantitative methods—including expert interviews, consumer focus groups, and a survey of 392 valid respondents. Analytical techniques such as Cronbach's Alpha and Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) are used to identify key factors influencing impulsive buying behavior.

The study aims to offer practical implications for social commerce businesses, helping them design emotionally resonant, visually stimulating, and trust-enhancing marketing strategies. By decoding the psychological triggers behind impulsive purchases, companies can build deeper connections with their target audience and drive higher engagement and conversion rates in an increasingly competitive digital landscape.

## II. Theoretical basis and research model

### 2.1. Theoretical basis

**First, the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB)**

The Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) model, introduced by Mehrabian and Russell (1974), provides a foundational framework for explaining consumer responses to environmental stimuli. In this model, *Stimulus* refers to external factors in the environment; *Organism* denotes the internal emotional and cognitive processing; and *Response* refers to the consumer's behavior.

In the context of impulsive buying on social media, *Stimuli* may include vivid imagery, influencer promotions, interactive content, flash sales, and personalized recommendations. These elements attract consumer attention and create immediate interest (Chung et al., 2020; Kapoor et al., 2018). The *Organism* stage reflects users' psychological responses—such as excitement, joy, or curiosity—often triggered by engaging social media content (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974). These internal reactions serve as mediators that translate stimuli into actual behaviors. Finally, the *Response* stage results in impulsive buying behavior, particularly when emotional arousal is high and purchase decisions are made quickly without deliberation (Liu et al., 2013; Kim & Johnson, 2016).

**Second, Stern's Impulse Buying Theory**

Stern (1962) categorized impulsive buying into four types: pure impulse buying, reminder impulse buying, suggestion impulse buying, and planned impulse buying. This classification highlights the variety of spontaneous purchase behaviors and their different psychological triggers.

In social media settings, *pure impulse buying* often arises from emotionally charged, aesthetically appealing content. *Reminder impulse buying* is triggered by cues like past product exposure or promotions. *Suggestion impulse buying* results from influencer recommendations or peer content, while *planned impulse buying* is influenced by promotional opportunities that consumers were already anticipating.

This theory is particularly relevant in the current digital context, where social media feeds are designed to deliver real-time stimuli and interactive experiences. As a result, young consumers are often caught in a cycle of spontaneous decision-making driven by external triggers and internal gratification (Rook, 1987; Piron, 1991).

**Third, the Consumer Behavior Framework by Kotler**

Kotler (2009) defines consumer behavior as the set of activities related to the search, evaluation, purchase, use, and disposal of products to satisfy individual needs. This process includes not only rational decision-making but also emotional, social, and psychological components.

In the social media era, these behaviors are increasingly driven by factors such as platform convenience, fast-paced communication, social influence, and emotional resonance. The decision-making process is shortened due to real-time interactions, influencer engagement, and AI-driven product recommendations. Visual appeal, peer reviews, and social approval play a critical role in shaping perceptions and promoting immediate purchases (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010; Cheung et al., 2011).

Kotler's model also emphasizes the influence of culture, personal preferences, and social context—all of which are embedded in social network platforms. This framework supports the view that impulsive buying on social media among young Vietnamese consumers is the result of both rational motivations (e.g., convenience) and emotional drivers (e.g., excitement, FOMO).

### 2.2. Research model and hypothesis
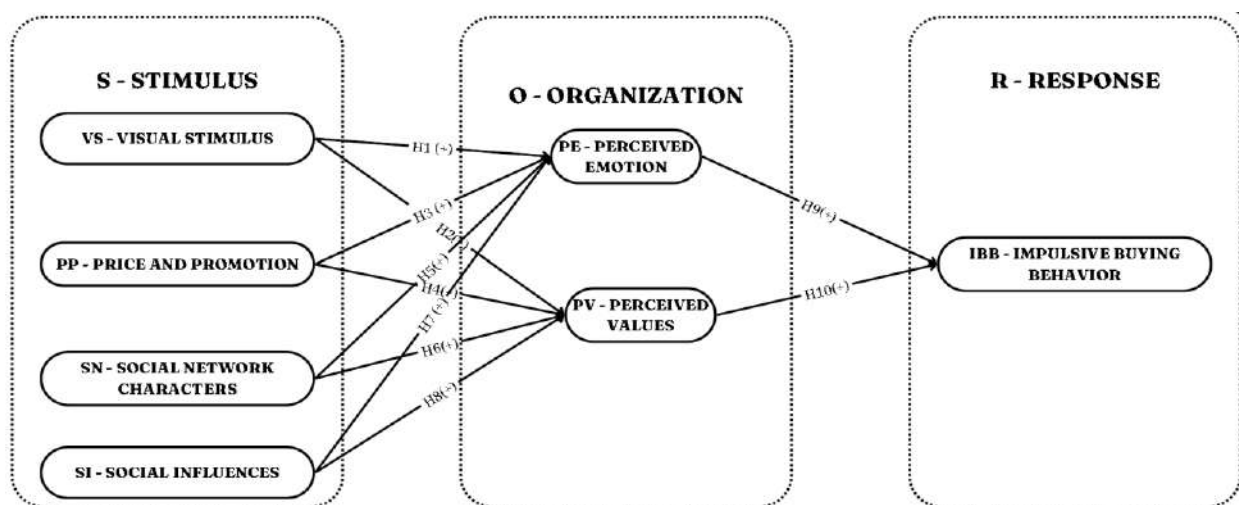
The research model is proposed in Figure 1.



**Figure 1: Proposal of research model**

**The proposed hypotheses are as follows:**

**H1:** Visual stimulation (VS) has a positive effect on positive emotions (PE).

Attractive product images, appealing colors, and professional designs on social media platforms can evoke excitement, joy, and the immediate desire to own the product. According to Eroglu et al. (2001), visual elements and aesthetically pleasing interfaces enhance the shopping experience, thereby stimulating consumer psychology.

**H2:** Visual stimulation (VS) has a positive effect on perceived product value (PV).

High-quality images, detailed descriptions, and well-known brand presentation often increase consumer trust. Park et al. (2012) found that when a product is professionally presented, consumers tend to perceive it as more valuable and are more willing to make a purchase.

**H3:** Price and promotion (PP) have a positive effect on positive emotions (PE).

Discounts, special promotions, and flash sales can create excitement and happiness, encouraging immediate purchasing decisions. Liao et al. (2016) emphasized that attractive pricing and promotions can stimulate shopping enjoyment and enhance buying motivation.

**H4:** Price and promotion (PP) have a positive effect on perceived product value (PV).

When a product is reasonably priced, offers free shipping, or is significantly discounted, consumers tend to perceive it as having higher value relative to its cost. Priporas et al. (2017) highlighted that pricing strategies and promotions enhance perceived value.

**H5:** Social network features (SN) have a positive effect on positive emotions (PE).

User-friendly interfaces and quick shopping integration on social media platforms can make the shopping experience more comfortable and satisfying. Kim & Johnson (2016) suggested that a seamless shopping experience on digital platforms increases user satisfaction.

**H6:** Social network features (SN) have a positive effect on perceived product value (PV).

Features such as product reviews, integrated shopping carts, and online payments help consumers feel more secure about their purchasing decisions. Cheung et al. (2009) concluded that platform convenience reduces perceived risk and increases perceived value.

**H7:** Social influence (SI) has a positive effect on positive emotions (PE).

Positive reviews from other consumers, suggestions from influencers or celebrities can increase consumer excitement and trust. Wang et al. (2019) found that consumers tend to trust community feedback more than traditional advertising.

**H8:** Social influence (SI) has a positive effect on perceived product value (PV).

When products are endorsed by celebrities or receive favorable community reviews, consumers tend to view them as more valuable. Dholakia (2002) noted that electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM) plays a key role in enhancing perceived product value.

**H9:** Positive emotions (PE) have a positive effect on impulsive buying behavior (IBB).

When consumers feel excited, happy, or enthusiastic, they tend to make purchasing decisions without much deliberation. Verplanken & Sato (2011) showed that positive emotions reduce behavioral control, leading to impulsive buying.

**H10:** Perceived product value (PV) has a positive effect on impulsive buying behavior (IBB).

When consumers perceive a product to have high value (based on brand, quality, or community reviews), they are more likely to buy immediately to avoid missing the opportunity. Kim & Forsythe (2008) found that high perceived value reduces perceived risk and increases impulsive buying intentions.

## III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In the first stage, the authors conducted desk research by reviewing secondary materials and proposing an initial research model. Expert interviews were then carried out to refine the theoretical framework and questionnaire. The draft questionnaire was developed based on the proposed model using a 5-point Likert scale to measure the influence of selected factors. In the second stage, one-on-one expert interviews (approx. 30 minutes each) were conducted to assess the clarity and relevance of measurement items. Based on expert feedback, the model and questionnaire were revised accordingly.

The official survey was implemented from September to November 2024 via both online (229) and offline (209) channels. Out of 438 responses, 390 valid responses were retained.

Data were cleaned, coded, and analyzed using SPSS 20 to process Cronbach's Alpha and EFA test

## IV. RESEARCH RESULT

*(1) Sample description*

The total number of valid survey responses used in this study is 490. Regarding gender, the sample is relatively balanced, with 226 males (46.2%) and 264 females (53.8%). Participants' ages are mainly concentrated in the 18–23 age group (47.2%), followed by 14–18 (28.2%) and 23–30 (24.6%), accurately reflecting the study's target demographic—Vietnamese youth.

In terms of occupation, 45% of respondents are university students, 28% are high school students, and 27% are employed. Regarding marital status, the majority of participants are single (77.6%), while 6% are married without children, and 16.4% are married with young children.

Personal income levels are predominantly low, with 63.2% earning under 3 million VND per month. Other income brackets include 8.4% (3–5 million VND), 6.6% (5–10 million VND), 12% (10–15 million VND), and 9.8% earning over 15 million VND.

Concerning place of residence, 51.2% of respondents live in rural areas, while 48.8% live in urban areas. Daily social media usage is mainly distributed among the 1–2 hours group (47.8%), 3–5 hours (24.8%), and over 5 hours (23%). Only 4.4% of participants reported using social media for less than one hour per day.

Regarding online shopping frequency, most respondents shop 1–3 times (37.5%) or 3–5 times (38.1%). A smaller portion reported shopping 5–10 times (18.4%) or more than 10 times (6%) within a given time frame. These figures suggest that online impulse purchases via social media are relatively common among young consumers.

*(2) Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Test*

Table 1 presents the results of Cronbach's Alpha reliability testing for the variables in the model. The results show that after removing observed variables with item-total correlations lower than 0.3, the remaining variables all have Cronbach's Alpha coefficients greater than 0.6 and item-total correlations above 0.3. This indicates that the independent and dependent variables included in the model are reliable and suitable for further analysis.

After the preliminary assessment of the measurement scales using Cronbach's Alpha, a total of 31 observed variables belonging to 7 factor groups met the reliability conditions and were included in the Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA)..

**Table 1. Crobach's Alpha testing**

Item-Total Statistics

| | Scale Mean if Item Deleted | Scale Variance if Item Deleted | Corrected Item-Total Correlation | Squared Multiple Correlation | Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Variable VS: Cronbach's Alpha: 0.894 | | | | | |
| VS1 | 13.3082 | 18.790 | .744 | .577 | .870 |
| VS2 | 13.3163 | 18.638 | .751 | .606 | .868 |
| VS3 | 13.6143 | 18.389 | .785 | .657 | .860 |
| VS4 | 13.4041 | 19.714 | .679 | .481 | .884 |
| VS5 | 13.2959 | 18.581 | .737 | .592 | .871 |
| Variable PP: Cronbach's Alpha: 0.886 | | | | | |
| PP1 | 10.2612 | 11.416 | .701 | .493 | .871 |
| PP2 | 10.3980 | 11.205 | .713 | .521 | .867 |
| PP3 | 10.2143 | 10.680 | .819 | .705 | .827 |
| PP4 | 10.2327 | 10.694 | .770 | .657 | .845 |
| Variable SN: Cronbach's Alpha: 0.871 | | | | | |
| SN1 | 14.7347 | 15.602 | .703 | .514 | .843 |
| SN2 | 14.7816 | 15.144 | .712 | .555 | .840 |
| SN3 | 14.8571 | 14.875 | .747 | .593 | .831 |
| SN4 | 14.9408 | 15.271 | .695 | .519 | .844 |
| SN5 | 14.7837 | 15.884 | .630 | .397 | .860 |
| Variable SI: Cronbach's Alpha: 0.891 | | | | | |
| SI1 | 10.6408 | 8.975 | .772 | .602 | .856 |
| SI2 | 10.7204 | 9.102 | .730 | .534 | .872 |
| SI3 | 10.5633 | 9.289 | .765 | .585 | .859 |
| SI4 | 10.7735 | 8.601 | .779 | .612 | .853 |
| Variable PE: Cronbach's Alpha: 0.909 | | | | | |
| PE1 | 17.0980 | 27.753 | .745 | .723 | .893 |

| PE2 | 16.8898 | 28.021 | .715 | .643 | .897 |
|-----|---------|--------|------|------|------|
| PE3 | 17.3163 | 26.638 | .782 | .766 | .887 |
| PE4 | 17.0306 | 27.069 | .777 | .734 | .888 |
| PE5 | 17.0388 | 28.684 | .681 | .630 | .902 |
| PE6 | 17.3510 | 27.394 | .778 | .783 | .888 |
| | Variable PV: Cronbach's Alpha: 0.904 | | | | |
| PV1 | 6.4245 | 4.494 | .788 | .640 | .881 |
| PV2 | 6.3367 | 4.535 | .786 | .636 | .882 |
| PV3 | 6.4224 | 4.339 | .855 | .730 | .824 |
| | Variable IBB: Cronbach's Alpha: 0.887 | | | | |
| IBB1 | 9.2490 | 13.611 | .618 | .397 | .905 |
| IBB2 | 8.7857 | 12.312 | .841 | .831 | .821 |
| IBB3 | 8.8286 | 12.461 | .811 | .813 | .832 |
| IBB4 | 9.1184 | 12.608 | .751 | .568 | .855 |

*(2) Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA)*

The objective of Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) is to explore the underlying structure of the measurement scales for the following factors: Visual Stimulation (VS), Price & Promotion (PP), Social Network Features (SN), Social Influence (SI), Positive Emotions (PE), Perceived Value (PV), and Impulsive Buying Behavior (IBB). After ensuring the proper EFA procedure, the factors were examined for data purification.

The analysis in table 2 yielded a KMO coefficient of 0.891 and a Significance (Sig.) value of 0.000, indicating that the KMO value confirms the adequacy of the data for EFA, and the dataset is statistically significant for factor extraction. The Chi-Square value of Bartlett's Test was 465, with Sig. = 0.000, which is less than 0.05, reaffirming the suitability of the data for factor analysis.

**Table 2. KMO and Bartlett's test**

| KMO and Bartlett's Test | | |
|---|---|---|
| Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy. | | .891 |
| Bartlett's Test of Sphericity | Approx. Chi-Square | 11120.393 |
| | df | 465 |
| | Sig. | 0.000 |

The extracted variance in table 3 explained reached 73.541%, a relatively high value, indicating that seven factors account for 73.541% of the data variance. Factor extraction stopped at the seventh factor, with an eigenvalue of 1.306, greater than 1, confirming that the variables were effectively grouped into seven distinct factors.

**Table 3. Total Variance explained**

**Total Variance Explained**

| Component | Initial Eigenvalues | | | Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings | | | Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings[a] |
|-----------|-------|-------------|-----------|-------|-------------|-----------|-------|
| | Total | % of Variance | Cumulative % | Total | % of Variance | Cumulative % | Total |
| 1 | 10.720 | 34.580 | 34.580 | 10.720 | 34.580 | 34.580 | 7.406 |
| 2 | 3.322 | 10.717 | 45.297 | 3.322 | 10.717 | 45.297 | 6.857 |
| 3 | 2.624 | 8.463 | 53.761 | 2.624 | 8.463 | 53.761 | 7.392 |
| 4 | 1.753 | 5.654 | 59.415 | 1.753 | 5.654 | 59.415 | 5.224 |
| 5 | 1.613 | 5.204 | 64.619 | 1.613 | 5.204 | 64.619 | 3.790 |

| 6 | 1.460 | 4.710 | 69.329 | 1.460 | 4.710 | 69.329 | 5.909 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 7 | 1.306 | 4.213 | 73.541 | 1.306 | 4.213 | 73.541 | 5.865 |
| 8 | .775 | 2.501 | 76.043 | | | | |
| 9 | .629 | 2.030 | 78.073 | | | | |
| 10 | .577 | 1.860 | 79.933 | | | | |
| 11 | .557 | 1.797 | 81.731 | | | | |
| 12 | .520 | 1.677 | 83.407 | | | | |
| 13 | .487 | 1.570 | 84.977 | | | | |
| 14 | .450 | 1.451 | 86.428 | | | | |
| 15 | .436 | 1.406 | 87.834 | | | | |
| 16 | .418 | 1.349 | 89.184 | | | | |
| 17 | .366 | 1.179 | 90.363 | | | | |
| 18 | .348 | 1.124 | 91.487 | | | | |
| 19 | .303 | .979 | 92.465 | | | | |
| 20 | .299 | .964 | 93.430 | | | | |
| 21 | .276 | .890 | 94.320 | | | | |
| 22 | .264 | .853 | 95.173 | | | | |
| 23 | .257 | .828 | 96.001 | | | | |
| 24 | .223 | .718 | 96.719 | | | | |
| 25 | .217 | .700 | 97.420 | | | | |
| 26 | .171 | .550 | 97.970 | | | | |
| 27 | .163 | .524 | 98.494 | | | | |
| 28 | .155 | .500 | 98.994 | | | | |
| 29 | .128 | .412 | 99.406 | | | | |
| 30 | .105 | .339 | 99.745 | | | | |
| 31 | .079 | .255 | 100.000 | | | | |

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

a. When components are correlated, sums of squared loadings cannot be added to obtain a total variance.

The rotated component matrix is presented in Table 4. Based on the matrix, all variables have factor loadings above 0.5, and each observed variable loads on its respective factor. No new factors emerged, and the original seven-factor model remained intact.

In conclusion, the observed variables show sufficient intercorrelation within the overall dataset, validating the presence of seven latent constructs. The model consists of seven key factors to be used in subsequent regression analysis. As shown in the Pattern Matrix (Table 3.4), the analysis confirms that the 40 observed variables are structured into the seven predefined groups: VS, PP, SN, SI, PE, PV, and IBB, which will proceed to further testing in the next stages of the research.

**Table 4. Rolated component matrix**

**Pattern Matrix**[a]

| | Component | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| PE6 | .952 | | | | | | |
| PE3 | .912 | | | | | | |
| PE4 | .819 | | | | | | |
| PE5 | .783 | | | | | | |
| PE1 | .696 | | | | | | |
| PE2 | .670 | | | | | | |

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| SN3 | .877 | | | | | |
| SN2 | .830 | | | | | |
| SN4 | .825 | | | | | |
| SN1 | .754 | | | | | |
| SN5 | .695 | | | | | |
| VS5 | | .932 | | | | |
| VS3 | | .885 | | | | |
| VS1 | | .776 | | | | |
| VS2 | | .774 | | | | |
| VS4 | | .744 | | | | |
| SI4 | | | .890 | | | |
| SI1 | | | .877 | | | |
| SI2 | | | .860 | | | |
| SI3 | | | .843 | | | |
| IBB2 | | | | .917 | | |
| IBB3 | | | | .904 | | |
| IBB4 | | | | .861 | | |
| IBB1 | | | | .789 | | |
| PP4 | | | | | .935 | |
| PP3 | | | | | .923 | |
| PP1 | | | | | .789 | |
| PP2 | | | | | .775 | |
| PV3 | | | | | | .912 |
| PV1 | | | | | | .882 |
| PV2 | | | | | | .844 |

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.
 Rotation Method: Promax with Kaiser Normalization.
 a. Rotation converged in 6 iterations.

## V. DISCUSSIONS & IMPLICATIONS

In the context of increasing social media usage among Vietnamese youth, shopping behavior is shaped by a range of psychological and experiential factors. Survey results suggest that purchasing decisions on platforms such as Facebook, TikTok, and Instagram are often influenced by emotional responses and perceived convenience rather than deliberate evaluation. This section discusses implications for social commerce businesses aiming to improve customer engagement and conversion through digital platforms.

**Product presentation** plays an essential role in forming initial impressions and triggering purchase interest. Visually appealing product images and videos may contribute to positive emotions and influence how consumers perceive product value (Kim & Lennon, 2008; Eroglu, Machleit, & Davis, 2001). Therefore, businesses are encouraged to invest in professional product photography and video production. Emphasizing key visual elements—such as detail shots, context-of-use visuals, and clear size references—can help consumers make quicker decisions.

Choosing the right products is also important. Items that are trending, visually attractive, or suited to social media content formats tend to perform better. Utilizing tools like Google Trends or platform-specific insights can help businesses identify timely, seasonal, or high-demand items.

A consistent and professional brand identity across platforms supports recognition and trust. This includes the use of coherent visual themes, clear logos, and a communication style that aligns with the target audience (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).

On the pricing side, flexible and creative strategies can enhance perceived shopping value. Promotional techniques—such as time-limited discounts, flash sales, or volume-based pricing—could create a sense of urgency and motivate spontaneous purchasing (Liao et al., 2016; Priporas, Stylos, & Fotiadis, 2017). Methods like free shipping or bundled offers might also reduce hesitation during the decision-making process.

Promotional efforts should be adapted to the characteristics of each platform. TikTok, for instance, favors short, engaging video content that reflects trending formats such as unboxing or transformation videos. Collaborations

with influencers, interactive campaigns, and emotional storytelling are also potentially effective in generating interest and reach (De Veirman, Cauberghe, & Hudders, 2017; Kim & Johnson, 2016).

Community influence is another factor worth considering. Positive comments, reviews, or peer endorsements may contribute to emotional engagement (Wang, Yu, & Fesenmaier, 2019). Businesses could leverage user-generated content and build online communities to encourage sharing and discussion. Referral programs and viral campaigns can extend brand visibility through natural social interactions.

Finally, creating emotionally engaging experiences is key. Interactive elements such as reward systems, gamified purchases, or livestream giveaways can make shopping more exciting and memorable. Incorporating human stories and real-life narratives into marketing content may also deepen emotional connection and strengthen customer-brand relationships (Sohn & Ko, 2021; Verplanken & Sato, 2011).

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