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Article

Online social enterprise customer behaviour: influences of e-commerce, social media, and altruism on online impulsive buying

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Online social enterprise customer behaviour: influences of e-commerce, social media, and altruism on online impulsive buying

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ABSTRACT

Many studies have considered online consumer behaviour topics. The growth of e-commerce and social media leads us to examine their effects on online customer behaviour, especially online impulsive buying behaviour. In addition, online customers buying commercial and social enterprise (SE) products are likely to be different, as they have different attitudes towards organisations and brands. Thus, this study investigates the association between SE customers' attitudes towards online platforms (e-commerce and social media) and impulsive buying behaviour and examines the effect of SE customers' altruism on such behaviour. Furthermore, it evaluates whether the tendency to buy impulsively mediates the association between SE customers' attitudes to e-commerce and online impulsive buying behaviour. This study tests the mediating effect of impulse buying tendency on SE customers' attitudes to social media and impulse buying behaviour. It also examines the role of impulse buying tendency as a mediator between SE customers' altruism and impulse buying behaviour. We researched 423 SE customers in Thailand using survey data. The analysis method is structural equation modelling with AMOS. Results are discussed regarding the hypothesised relationships and mediating effects. The guidelines for academia and their implications are outlined.

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1. Introduction

Global retail sales through all channels were valued at \$21 trillion in 2019. The retail e-commerce market size and share report (Grand View Research Inc., 2020) show that the global retail e-commerce market size accounted for 20% of the total retail sales value or \$4.25 trillion in 2019 and is expected to grow by 9.4% for 2020–2027. The market value and growth rate indicate that e-commerce plays an important economic role. E-commerce is also significant to businesses selling products or services online because it offers a new channel to generate sales 24/7 comfortably and conveniently for global customers. Items are sold through the website, so online channels are vital in increasing sales (Hiranrithikorn & Banjongprasert, 2022). An in-depth understanding and empirical investigation of e-consumer behaviour are increasingly in demand to enhance the marketing knowledge in this research area (Ha & Perks, 2005). Digital technology has driven marketing to different levels, from the one-way marketing stream to real-time and one-to-one marketing. The exponential growth of the Internet network and devices, such as smartphones, has resulted in a marketing transaction revolution. The Internet and evolving technologies have significantly transformed customer behaviour. Customers get better exposure, more choices, and more power because they can easily access useful information. They have a new, comfortable way of searching for information and easy shopping methods. Massive changes in customer behaviour caused by digital technology have been studied to identify and develop effective digital marketing strategies (Alghizzawi, 2019; Bala & Verma, 2018). Customers are prompted by easy access to products and services, direct ordering, and convenient delivery services; impulse buying is estimated to account for 40% of all

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online transactions (Chan et al., 2017, as cited in Liu et al., 2013; Lee & Kacen, 2008; User Interface Engineering, 2001, as cited in Verhagen & Van Dolen, 2011). Clover (1950) initially proposed the concept of impulse buying behaviour to explore customer attitudes to promotional activities in retail stores. Impulse buying plays an important role in the retail sector and online transactions. With the increase in online shopping, research on online impulse buying behaviour has become necessary (Floh & Madlberger, 2013). Impulse buying behaviour has captivated researchers and practitioners for 70 years (Muruganantham & Bhakat, 2013). Studies on impulse buying usually focus on the products of profit-seeking enterprises. Few studies look at impulse buying *per se*, especially online impulse buying of goods supplied by social enterprises or SEs (Redine et al., 2023).

Online technologies enable brick-and-mortar companies to transform their operations into click-and-order businesses. Many businesses use online technologies, especially e-commerce as their retail channel. E-commerce empowers businesses to execute transactions and interact with customers in real-time. It can be considered a website trading products or services directly to customers and a communication platform providing them with information (Jain et al., 2021). Liu et al. (2013) indicated that internet buyers are more impulsive than non-internet customers. Furthermore, online impulse buying behaviour is vital to e-commerce (Wiranata & Hananto, 2020). Thus, many studies examine the utilisation of e-commerce by commercial companies and its impact on online impulse buying (Bahrah & Fachira, 2021; Huang & Suo, 2021; Putra et al., 2022). E-commerce as a communication medium and commercial platform has changed the way in which companies operate their businesses worldwide. Therefore, it could be a potential managerial tool for the success of SE. Using digital technology for business and exploiting it for society contribution is the new opportunity of social entrepreneurship (Short et al., 2009, as cited in Ghatak et al., 2023). While social media creates a new commercial platform for organisations, it also offers customers convenient access to product or service information and opportunities to buy products or services online. However, there is a significant gap concerning the best ways an enterprise should integrate or adapt to the new social media phenomenon (Weinberg et al., 2013). The different characteristics of SEs and commercial enterprises lead to differences in marketing (Wenhe, 2020). However, there is a dearth of studies on social entrepreneurship regarding online marketing strategies (Mitchell et al., 2015). Therefore, studies should explore e-commerce and social media as communication and commerce mediums in this context. This could create an effective utilisation of e-commerce and social media to enhance SEs' performance. Furthermore, effective communication and commerce mediums increase product purchasing opportunities and impulse buying (Wei et al., 2017, as cited in Azizah Mt & Octavia, 2021). Previous research has provided useful information about e-commerce (Bashar et al., 2022; Harahap et al., 2021) and social media (Aragoncillo & Orus, 2018; Nuseir, 2020) in consumer products and profit-oriented businesses. Nonetheless, these studies did not look into the key determinants of e-commerce and social media used for communication and a medium for commerce to develop online impulse purchases for SEs.

Traditional business entrepreneurship usually aims to maximise profits. This leads to a fundamental difference between traditional business enterprises and SEs. SEs value positive societal changes and are committed to achieving their social/environmental objectives. They are motivated by social/environmental purposes, generating profits solely for reinvestment in their operations. Notably, SEs are shaped by this altruistic orientation (Tshikovhi & Shambare, 2015). Indeed, altruism is a critical factor in the sustainability of SEs (Kadir & Sarif, 2015). As altruism impacts purchasing behaviour, business firms have increasingly paid attention to online purchase behaviour (Shiau & Chau, 2015). In their investigation of online impulse buying behaviour, Thakur et al. (2020) explained that impulse buying can be altruistic. They found that the motives for impulse buying could include helping other people. Moreover, Moes et al. (2022, p. 2267) indicated that people can have altruistic reasons for buying a product impulsively and use them to justify purchasing the product morally. These results suggest that sustainability-driven companies should encourage altruistic feelings to stimulate impulse buying. Much research examines online impulse buying (Chan et al., 2017; Gao & Yee, 2022). However, future research on altruism and consciousness of impulsive online purchasing is recommended. Moreover, Lavuri (2021) argued that future research on altruism and impulsive purchasing is required. Therefore, the current study aims to investigate online customer attitudes towards online SE platforms. As e-commerce and social media have become pervasive, SE should leverage business opportunities by using social media and e-commerce to influence

customers' purchase behaviour. E-commerce websites and social media are widely used in digital marketing. This research examines online customers' perceptions of e-commerce websites and social media as communication and commercial platforms used by SEs. As SEs address social and environmental problems in operating their businesses, specific customer motives for buying their products are expected. Customers can make decisions driven by altruism or concern for others' well-being (Borzaga et al., 2009). Thus, this study explores online customers' internal motivation, which is altruism, when buying SE products. Specifically, this research investigates whether online customers' perceptions of e-commerce websites, social media, and altruism can lead to online impulse buying behaviour.

The theoretical framework is based on adapting the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) Model (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974). According to Albarq (2021) and Hashmi et al. (2019), environmental stimulus (S) influences consumers' behavioural responses (R) through the organism (O). Stimulus refers to external factors or environmental inputs. Organisms are the internal processes, structures, or outcomes of the stimulus intervening between the stimulus and responses. Hence, responses are the final outcomes. In this study, stimuli are SE's e-commerce, social media, and customers' altruism. The organism is represented by online impulse tendency, and online impulse is considered the response (Figure 1).

2. Materials and methods

2.1. Literature reviews

2.1.1. Online SE customers

SEs address social issues and simultaneously operate as businesses to generate profits. According to the book *Social Enterprises* (OECD, 1999), SEs are nongovernmental organisations aiming to accomplish social objectives through market-oriented approaches. Thus, SEs are businesses concerned about their social impact (Tsai et al., 2020). They offer products and services to tackle social difficulties, so customers patronising their products and services are likely to have different attitudes and behaviours from those patronising commercial enterprises. The value propositions offered by SE products may shorten customers' buying decisions through positive attitudes towards social benefits. Despite allowing customers to gain social value, SEs face new challenges from digital technology, which is critical for all businesses: it significantly impacts consumer behaviour. Technology shifts power away from companies or manufacturers to consumers. It transforms the way customers search for information, buy and pay. Moreover, customers gain bargaining power, leading to high-level expectations. Recent studies on SEs have explored social contributions, social innovation, and management orientation (Hillman et al., 2018; Kelly et al., 2019; Pinheiro et al., 2021). Although previous studies contributed new knowledge on SEs, their relationship with the online context requires further investigation. Given that research from the customer perspective is still limited, investigating online SE customers from this perspective is important, focusing on the online platforms used by SEs. Furthermore, the idea that customers generally support SE products and services because of goodwill (Hibbert et al., 2005) is questionable when generalising online customers. Performing good deeds as a motivation to patronise SE products and services should also be explored from the online customer perspective. Over the years, e-commerce has replaced

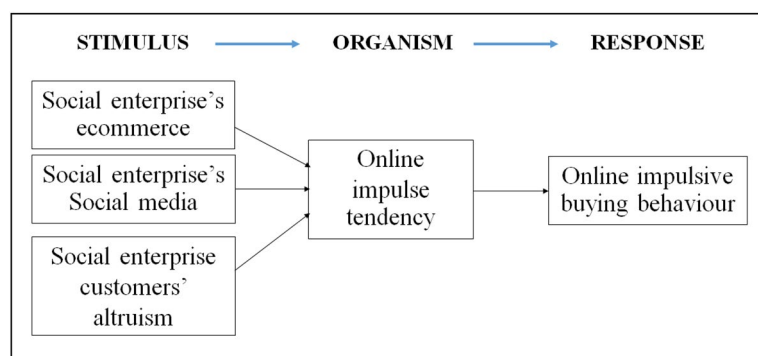


Figure 1. Theoretical framework.

brick-and-mortar stores and increased sales globally. Indeed, online shopping channels and impulse buying should enable companies to increase their sales. Several studies investigate the determinants of impulse buying as internal psychological factors and external or market-related factors trigger it. Iyer et al. (2020) suggested three main determinants of impulse buying: (1) individual traits, (2) motives and resources, and (3) marketing drivers. This study explores the effect of two triggers, online SE platforms and altruism, considered marketing drivers and motives. Furthermore, this study found a gap in research regarding the association between online platforms and impulse buying in SEs. Therefore, this study further investigates the role of online platforms in the impulse buying behaviour of SE customers.

2.1.2. Online SE platforms and online impulse buying tendency

We define e-commerce as using cyberspace and the online community to buy, trade, and exchange tangible and intangible products (Rainer & Cegielski, 2011, as cited in Bt Mohd & Zaaba, 2019). This definition is consistent with that of Shahjee (2015), who described e-commerce as providing the capability to purchase and trade products and information on the Internet. Chong and Ali (2022) stated that it connects companies, producers, consumers, and the general public in electronic transactions by using electronic technology. This implies that e-commerce is a buying and selling platform. Communication technology development has enhanced e-commerce visuals, audio, and videos, encouraging significant customer participation. Thus, enterprises can utilise e-commerce to make the most of communication. Moreover, e-commerce allows consumers to buy products anytime from anywhere, so enterprises benefit from accessing potential markets, efficiently transferring relevant product information, and selling transactions through online payments. Therefore, SEs should consider using e-commerce to expand their online marketplace opportunities. E-commerce enables businesses to serve customers by performing round-the-clock buying and selling transactions. It provides easy accessibility at a convenient time for customers, fast information exchange speed, online business transactions, and low-cost operations. E-commerce is a significant component of communication and sales strategies. According to Jain et al. (2021), e-commerce provides information from a communication viewpoint while offering online shopping and automating business transactions from an online selling perspective. Thus, e-commerce is a medium of communication and a commercial platform. The success of an online shopping site or e-commerce depends on a high-quality website, increasing e-commerce usage (Putri & Pujani, 2019; Shin et al., 2013). As a communication and commercial platform, e-commerce should have high-quality information and trading systems. According to Khristianto et al. (2012), most customers preferred easy access to information. Furthermore, they will purchase products online when a website provides adequate information (Kuo & Chen, 2011). According to the success factors of e-commerce, websites should provide accurate, useful, and required information easily and quickly (Liu & Arnett, 2000). Moreover, e-commerce should facilitate customer buying as purchase convenience is a vital quality aspect of e-commerce (Lee & Chen, 2021). Past research has suggested the positive effect of e-commerce on impulse buying behaviour. Impulse buying is an unplanned behaviour involving the quick or immediate purchase of a specific product (Beatty & Ferrell, 1998; Rook & Gardner, 1993). Bressolles et al. (2007) demonstrated the indirect relationship between e-commerce and online impulse buying. Wu et al. (2016) argued that usefulness perception is significantly associated with impulse buying. The goodness and usefulness of e-commerce in terms of communication and trading platforms should result in impulse buying. Additionally, other studies suggest that a tendency to buy impulsively plays a critical role in explaining impulse buying behaviour (Flight et al., 2012; Mohan et al., 2013; Xuanxiaqing et al., 2012). Hence, e-commerce as a communication and commerce platform with high-quality information and buying facilitation should lead to impulse buying. Thus, this research hypothesises the following:

Hypothesis 1 (H1): SE e-commerce positively impacts online impulse buying tendency.

Nowadays, social media is considered a critical marketing channel for many businesses. Approximately 80% of companies share content on social media, and 52% of marketers believe that social media can increase company sales and revenues (Marketing Insider Group, 2018). People use social media every day. They use it for information searching, knowledge acquisition, communication, community connection, and entertainment media consumption. Social media allows users to access, share, and create

information or content. Marketers can obtain useful attitudes or opinions from their target audiences about products/services *via* social media usage and content. Indeed, social media platforms can be powerful communication and marketing tools because of their interactive communication characteristics. Social media allows users to create and share their contents among and between organisations and individuals (Filo et al., 2015). This extends to a marketing application called social media marketing. It involves utilising social media technologies to generate, transfer, and exchange value offerings for organisation stakeholders (Tuten & Solomon, 2015). Companies increasingly invest in social media, as customers rely on product information on social networking sites (Suresh et al., 2016). Many studies have identified social media usage in searching for product information (Ferencová et al., 2015; Zhao & Zhang, 2017). Therefore, social media websites are valuable platforms for customers regarding products, services, and information. Social media platforms serve as marketing communication channels and new selling channels. Previous studies have explained the role of social media in sales (Guesalaga, 2016). Lindsey-Mullikin and Borin (2017) showed that social media reduces the time consumers spend on their purchases. They also demonstrated that consumers will likely purchase products immediately through social media. While social media is increasingly used as an information source (Westerman et al., 2014), businesses utilise it as a sales tool for products or services at a cheaper cost (Ainin et al., 2015). Nuseir (2020) examined the role of a social media platform in influencing behaviour on impulse buying opportunities. In addition, Aragoncillo and Orus (2018) argued that consumers receive information from social media that can consequently result in purchase transactions. Thus, this research proposes that social media utilises technologies, channels, and software for communication and sales among and between organisations and individuals. El-Den et al. (2017) suggested that social entrepreneurs increasingly rely on social media applications to promote their businesses. Moreover, consumer engagement has increased in impulsive online decision-making (Verhagen & Van Dolen, 2011). If an SE uses social media as a marketing tool, consumers gain access to products quickly and order them instantaneously (Jeffrey & Hodge, 2007). Sharma et al. (2018) showed that social media communities and advertisements affect impulse purchasing intentions positively. Various studies have provided insights into the antecedent role of social media on customer's online impulse tendency (Dodoo & Wu, 2019; Liu et al., 2019). Moreover, Das, Roy, et al. (2022) focused on the factors shaping impulsive buying on e-commerce platforms. This research emphasises the communication and selling functions of social media, aligning with e-commerce platform features. Thus, this study proposes the following:

Hypothesis 2 (H2): SE social media positively correlates with online impulse buying tendency.

2.1.3. Online SE customers' altruism and impulse buying tendency

SEs apply traditional business operations to earn revenues and address social problems. A survey by The Guardian (Seager, 2014) asked why customers buy products from SEs. The results showed that patronising SEs made customers feel they were giving back to society. They felt satisfied and happy because they contributed to the community by purchasing. This feeling can be considered an altruistic motivation. Hibbert et al. (2005) explained individual internal motives for helping generally contain rewarding factors and altruistic components, which play an important role as buying motivations in the SE context. Their study also illustrated that 75% of respondents bought SE products as an altruistic exchange because they wanted to help the homeless. Altruism, a subset of prosocial behaviour and a motivational concept refers to the motivation to improve another person's welfare (Millon & Lerner, 2003; Yadav, 2016). One of the fundamental missions of SEs is to address social problems. Therefore, SE customers need to be motivated by altruistic factors influencing their purchase behaviour. Given that altruism is the motivation according to which individuals pay their money in exchange for products and services to improve others' wellbeing (Konrath & Handy, 2018, p. 4), the desire of SE customers to contribute to society may process impulsiveness when considering buying SE products or services. According to Hodge (2004), charitable donations influence the likelihood of impulse buying in an online retail environment because they provide a good reason to buy an impulse offer. There is a growing awareness of a positive relationship between altruism and impulse buying (Khalil & Khalil, 2022). Furthermore, much research has revealed that the impulse buying tendency influences impulse buying positively (Liao et al., 2016; Ozer & Gulteki,

2015). Moes et al. (2022) suggested that consumers nowadays expect social responsibility from companies. Their study showed that advertisements focusing on the contribution to society affected impulse purchases directly and indirectly. Moreover, Bhardwaj et al. (2023) proposed that altruism acting as a stimulus impacts the attitude towards green products (organisms), which further affects the green purchase intention (response). Their results demonstrated that altruism significantly indirectly affects green purchase intention *via* values in determining it. From this perspective, the current study assumes that altruistic factors are critical to impulse buying in the SE context. Thus, this study hypothesises the following:

Hypothesis 3 (H3): Online SE customers' altruism positively correlates with impulse buying tendency.

2.1.4. Online impulse tendency and online impulsive buying behaviour

Several online business studies identify the online-purchase motivation factors (Lee, 2002), the probability of customers making unplanned purchases (Koufaris, 2002), and antecedents of spontaneous buying or impulse buying (Ahmad et al., 2019). Kollat and Willett (1967) defined impulse buying as unplanned purchasing, whereas Rook (1987, p. 191) explained impulse buying as an unintended reaction to a relatively extraordinary and exciting phenomenon. Later, Rook and Gardner (1993) referred to impulse buying as an unintended purchase with fast decision-making, consistent with Beatty and Ferrell (1998), who defined impulse buying as rapid and prompt. Consistent with forgoing research, Das et al. (2023) highlighted that impulsive purchases refer to consumers buying spontaneously. The rapid growth of online technologies overcome the limitations of brick-and-mortar retail shops. Online technologies enable shopping whenever convenient for customers, increasing the possibility of impulse buying. Impulse buying tendency and behaviour are interchangeable; however, impulse buying tendency is the antecedent of impulse buying behaviour. Badgaiyan et al. (2016) reported a significant positive relationship between impulsive buying tendencies and behaviour. Moreover, Dawson and Kim (2009) showed a positive impact of impulse buying tendency on online impulse buying behaviour. Thus, impulsive buying tendency correlates with impulsive buying behaviour in SE businesses. Hence, we hypothesise the following:

Hypothesis 4 (H4): SE customers' online impulse tendency positively impacts online impulsive buying behaviour.

2.1.5. Mediating relationships

E-commerce and social media are now essential communication and trading tools for all business sectors. They provide crucial information about products and online payment channels for customers. E-commerce provides product descriptions with various choices and social media allows customers to create their content. Both online platforms facilitate information exchange in real-time. Furthermore, supported by the Internet, e-commerce and social media allow customers to shop from any place at their most convenient time. Miller et al. (2009) stated that social media can influence customers' purchasing decisions because they are motivated by other customers' opinions on products shared on social media. Moreover, e-commerce and social media extend customers' buying options through increased availability of goods and services and easy buying (Sharma et al., 2018). As e-commerce and social media eliminate pressure regarding shopping places and time, they may encourage customers to purchase products or services impulsively. E-commerce and social media are critical to the growth of businesses and SEs. Brahma and Dutta (2020) studied the roles of social media and e-commerce in business entrepreneurship, indicating that they have evolved into communication and commercial platforms. They described how social media and e-commerce make it easy to reach customers, acquire customers, and make sales. Further attention has been paid to the way in which online media affects impulse purchasing (Adelaar et al., 2003; Bansal & Kumar, 2018). The roles of e-commerce and social media in the commitment to impulse buying have been examined (Akram et al., 2018; Sharma et al., 2018). Most research suggests that online impulse buying positively affects online impulse buying behaviour (Badgaiyan et al., 2016; Dawson & Kim, 2009). Hence, we propose that with SEs, e-commerce and social media influence customers' impulse buying tendencies, leading to impulse buying behaviour. Consumers with a higher level of impulse buying tendency are more expected to be influenced by marketing tools, such as

advertisements; they tend to buy impulsively (Youn & Faber, 2000, as cited in Saad & Metawie, 2015). E-commerce and social media as communication and commerce platforms providing product information and purchasing systems should increase impulse buying. As new shopping tools, e-commerce and social media help consumers search for products and pricing information anywhere (Silveria & Marreiros, 2014, as cited in Bellini et al., 2017). Hence, consumers can shop for products quickly and impulsively. Customers' altruism may encourage them to buy SEs' products impulsively. Konrath and Handy (2018) described altruism as the individual motivation to improve others' wellbeing by patronizing products and services. Mendini et al. (2022) argued that consumers of corporate social responsibility sectors are also willing to contribute to others' well-being. In addition, doing something good, such as donation, is considered a potential trigger for the impulsive purchase of products with ethical claims (Iweala & Lemken, 2019). E-commerce, social media, and customers' altruism should generate impulse buying tendencies, ultimately leading to impulse buying behaviour (Figure 2). Therefore, impulse buying preferences may mediate in the following ways.

Hypothesis 5 (H5): Online impulse tendency mediates the relationship between SE e-commerce and online impulsive buying behaviour.

Hypothesis 6 (H6): Online impulse tendency mediates the relationship between SE social media and online impulsive buying behaviour.

Hypothesis 7 (H7): Online impulse tendency mediates the relationship between customers' altruism and online impulsive buying behaviour.

2.2. Research methodology

2.2.1. Sample and data collection

SEs in Thailand emerging from the non-profit sector have a long history, going back to the 1970s. The differences between social- and economic-oriented organisations have raised concerns about the country's sustainability (Panyakul, 2013). Nowadays, the emergence and growth of many SEs in Thailand have shown their development. These factors also attract the attention of academics and practitioners on enterprises that conduct their businesses sustainably by focusing on social problems and profit maximisation. The Social Enterprise Thailand Association (SE Thailand) indicates a range of SEs, including tangible and consumer products and services (tourism and leisure). This study focuses on SE selling products, including consumer products, personal products and pharmaceuticals, fashion, food and beverage, and agribusinesses through e-commerce and social media platforms. Moreover, it investigates the effect of SE e-commerce, social media, and customers' altruism on impulse buying behaviour, where impulse buying tendency is a mediator. Hence, the research follows a quantitative approach undertaken with SE customers in Thailand. Data were collected through a questionnaire survey to achieve the research objectives. This study conducted the questionnaire survey from February to March 2021 in Bangkok and Chiang Mai, major cities in Thailand. Sampling was carried out in a non-probability manner. Purposive sampling selected the sample, with the criteria of active e-commerce and social media consumers. Only those with e-commerce and social media experience could answer the

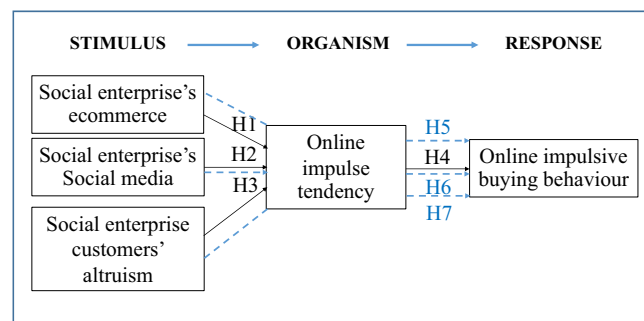


Figure 2. Hypothesis framework.

questionnaires. Generally, 100–500 respondents are considered sufficient to represent the population (Hair et al., 2010, as cited in Azizah Mt & Octavia, 2021). The researcher distributed the questionnaire to 500 respondents by using purposive sampling. Out of 500, 423 usable questionnaires were used for the analysis.

2.2.2. Instrument and measurement development

Most variables were measured using scales validated in previous studies, with minor modifications to ensure contextual consistency (Aragoncillo & Orus, 2018). Next, this study created reflective indicators for SEs' e-commerce, social media, altruism, online impulse tendency, and buying. The reflective indicators were assessed for their reliability and validity. Then, all constructs were validated as formative second-order constructs, with the relevant dimensions as the reflective first-order factors, followed by statistical analyses to test the second-order constructs. SE e-commerce, focusing on its roles as a communication and sales channel, was measured using a seven-item scale modified from the works of Brown and Jayakody (2009), Harrison et al. (2002), Rai et al. (2002) and an eight-item scale adopted from Lekhanya (2016) and Suh and Han (2002). The seven-item scale of Yadav and Rahman (2017) was applied to measure SE social media, focusing on communication. The scales of Aragoncillo and Orus (2018) and Nuseir (2020), with seven items, measured social media used as sales channels. A measurement scale for customers' altruism was adapted from Ali et al. (2020), Bigné-Alcañiz et al. (2009), and Konrath and Handy (2018). Following Badgaiyan et al. (2016), Beatty and Ferrell (1998), and Weun et al. (1998), we modified the items of online impulse buying tendency. The online impulse buying behaviour scale, with five items, was modified from the measures of Aragoncillo and Orus (2018) and Rook and Fisher (1995). In addition, Shopee and Lazada are the leading e-commerce platforms in Thailand. The section about e-commerce asks the respondents whether they are users of Shopee and Lazada. This question determines their eligibility for the survey. SEs use social media, Facebook and Line application, for communication and trading. Therefore, the filter question checks whether customers have used it previously. All items were rated on five-point Likert scales anchored from 'strongly disagree' (1) to 'strongly agree' (5). A panel of five members in the SE field reviewed the questionnaire. Item Objective Congruence (IOC) verified the content validity. All items were rated higher than 0.75. Construct reliability and validity tests were conducted in the measurement model. The Cronbach's alpha value measured the internal consistency at an acceptable level of 0.7 or higher (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). A confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was performed using AMOS 21.0 through maximum likelihood estimation. This study considered convergent validity comprising composite reliability (CR) and average variance extracted (AVE). The CR value ranges from 0 to 1, indicating a higher reliability. A minimum value of 0.50 for AVE must be adequate for convergent validity (Hair et al., 2014). Structural equation modelling (SEM) was used to test the hypotheses.

2.2.3. Common method bias

Common method bias (CMB) can occur because the same respondents provide data for the dependent and independent variables. Therefore, statistical and procedural methods were used to confirm the non-occurrence of CMB before testing the hypotheses (Das, Saha, et al., 2022). Firstly, the survey was conducted anonymously to receive honest opinions from the respondents. Respondents were free to withdraw from the survey at any time. Statistically, Podsakoff and Organ (1986) suggested that Harman's one-factor test appropriately identifies common method variance. They also proposed exploratory factor analysis (EFA) results in which a single construct explained more than 50% of the variance among variables demonstrates the common method variance in the data. Thus, this study used Harman's one-factor on all items of measured constructs to check CMB. The results showed that the common latent component accounted for 33.49% of the variance, indicating no significant common method variance in the data. Secondly, the CMB was tested based on variance inflation factors (VIF). A VIF of <5 (Hair et al., 2010) was found for latent constructs, which are SEs' e-commerce focusing on communication (2.399) and sales (3.429), SEs' social media focusing on communication (1.336) and sales (3.288), customers' altruism (2.305), online buying tendency (1.758), and online impulse buying behaviour (1.435). Additionally, the differences in item factor loadings between the factors, with and without the method factors, were

less than the threshold value of 0.2 (Podsakoff et al., 2003), confirming that no CMB occurred (Das, Saha, et al., 2022).

3. Results

3.1. Descriptive statistics

The final sample comprised 423 respondents. The number of women (294) was higher than that of men (126). Most respondents were between 26 and 40 (51%), showing that working people are likely to buy SE products. Company employees were the significant respondents to this research, amounting to 34.5%. Approximately 13.7% of participants were business owners, whereas 12.3% were state enterprise employees. Most respondents have bachelor's degrees (63.4%) or master's (19.1%). The number of participants buying online products/services once a week (39%) was higher than that of those buying three to four times per week (18.7%) and two times per week (16.8%). Table 1 shows the demographic characteristics of the respondents.

3.2. Measurement model

Following Hair et al. (2019), the measurement model was evaluated by analysing the internal consistency reliability of each construct, convergent and discriminant validity. Litwin (1995) and Cohen (1988) suggested that Cronbach's alpha and the CR values should be higher than 0.7, respectively. In addition, the AVE value should be higher than 0.5 (Hair et al., 2010). Table 2 reports the results. The Cronbach's alpha of each construct was above 0.931. The AVE was higher than 0.50, and the CR was above 0.7. Thus, these values were above the threshold, indicating that the construct variables are considered satisfactory regarding their internal consistency and reliability for use as measurements. Discriminant validity was evaluated according to Fornell and Larcker (1981) to examine if a construct differed from other constructs by comparing the square roots of the AVE of each construct and the correlations with the constructs. Table 3 shows that the square roots of AVE were all higher than their correlation among the constructs. Therefore, the constructs indicate moderate discriminant validity.

CFA assessed the validity of the measurement model. The model fit indices show that the model resulted in a good fit to the data [goodness-of-fit index: $\chi^2/df=2.9$; comparative fit index (CFI)=0.947; normed fit index (NFI)=0.920; Tucker–Lewis Index (TLI)=941; goodness-of-fit statistic (GFI)=0.824; and root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA)=0.056]. CFI and NFI above .90 are considered good fits (Bentler & Bonett, 1980; Hu & Bentler, 1999). The cut-off value of TLI and GFI is 0.90, considered a satisfactory fit (Hair et al., 2010), even though the GFI values are not above the cut-off of 0.90. However,

Table 1. Characteristics of respondents.

Demography	Category	Percentage
Gender	Male	29.78%
	Female	69.50%
Age	18–25 years old	6.1%
	26–30 years old	17%
	31–35 years old	18.7%
	36–40 years old	16.1%
	41–45 years old	13.9%
	46–50 years old	12.8%
	>50 years old	20%
Occupation	Company employees	34.5%
	Government officers	15.1%
	Business owners	13.7%
	State enterprise employees	12.3%
Education	Bachelor degrees	63.4%
	Master's degrees	19.1%
Buying online products/services	Once a week	39%
	Two times per week	16.8%
	Three to four times per week	18.7%

Table 2. Measures and statistics summary for scales.

Items	Factor loading	AVE	CR	α
Altruism		0.785	0.970	0.971
1. I buy online products from SE because I feel compassion towards people in need.	0.875			
2. When we do online shopping, people should be willing to help others who are less fortunate.	0.859			
3. I buy online products from SE because I am concerned about those less fortunate than myself.	0.839			
4. When it comes to buying SE online products, SE is motivated by an interest in society.	0.868			
5. When it comes to buying SE online products, SE is socially motivated.	0.923			
6. When it comes to buying SE online products, SE is altruistically motivated.	0.918			
7. SE motivation is to implement social responsibilities.	0.917			
8. SE motivation is to give feedback.	0.896			
9. SE motivation is to help others.	0.874			
SE's e-commerce		0.603	0.962	0.966
SE's e-commerce (communication focus)				
1. Finding the information I wanted from this site was easy.	0.779			
2. This site clearly shows how I can contact or communicate with the SE.	0.751			
3. This site provides the precise information I need.	0.801			
4. This site provides responses to questions and queries that are exactly what I need.	0.779			
5. This site provides sufficient information to enable me to perform my tasks.	0.817			
6. I am satisfied with the accuracy of the information provided by this online retail site.	0.773			
7. The information provided by this site is helpful regarding my questions or problems.	0.756			
SE's e-commerce (sale focus)				
1. This site changed the way I used to buy products from the SE.	0.802			
2. This site can make me choose and purchase almost anything from the SE.	0.789			
3. This site is cost-effective, safe and improves the way I use it to buy goods/services from the SE.	0.824			
4. This site plays a critical role in supporting my shopping activities.	0.813			
5. This site makes it easy to do my shopping activities.	0.801			
6. This site enables me to accomplish shopping activities quickly.	0.862			
7. This site improves my performance (e.g. saving time or money) in shopping activities.	0.888			
8. I find this site useful for my shopping activities.	0.788			
SE's social media		0.757	0.978	0.978
Social media (communication focus)				
1. SE social media offers accurate information on products.	0.860			
2. SE social media offers useful information on products.	0.880			
3. Information on products provided by SE social media is comprehensive.	0.894			
4. I use SE social media as a source of information on products.	0.885			
5. SE social media allows me to share and update existing content.	0.808			
6. SE social media interacts regularly with its members.	0.867			
7. SE social media facilitates a two-way interaction with members.	0.828			
Social media (sale focus)				
1. Online support from SE social media affects my buying behaviour.	0.864			
2. Comments on SE social media from friends influence my buying behaviour.	0.841			
3. The display of SE social media advertisements/product designs affects my buying behaviour.	0.878			
4. The popularity of the products mentioned on SE social media affects my buying behaviour.	0.908			
5. SE social media is a good source to inspire my purchases of organisation products.	0.895			
6. When I see an SE product on social media, I often search for more information to buy it.	0.874			
7. I feel attracted to SE products shared by my contacts on social media.	0.890			
Online impulse buying tendency		0.787	0.971	0.972
1. When I do online shopping, I buy things that I do not intend to purchase.	0.900			
2. I am a person who makes unplanned online purchases.	0.894			
3. I tend to buy things online that are not on my shopping list.	0.880			
4. Most of my online purchases are not planned in advance.	0.913			
5. I tend to have no plans for my online purchases.	0.885			
6. I tend to buy things online without considering the consequences.	0.913			
7. Buying online spontaneously is fun.	0.819			
8. I tend to buy things online because I like to do so, rather than because I need them.	0.941			
9. I tend to buy online products and services according to how I feel at that moment.	0.835			
Online impulse buying behaviour		0.721	0.928	0.931
1. I often buy things online spontaneously.	0.866			
2. 'Just do it' describes the way I buy things online.	0.859			
3. I often buy things online without thinking.	0.839			
4. 'I see it, I buy it' describes me when shopping online.	0.814			
5. 'Buy now, think about it later' describes me when shopping online.	0.865			

Baumgartner and Homburg (1996) and Doll et al. (1994) suggested that GFI values exceeding 0.80 are acceptable. The last indicator, RMSEA, is acceptable if it is <0.80 (Browne & Cudeck, 1993; Hair et al., 2010). Thus, RMSEA is an acceptable fit.

3.3. Hypothesis test results

SEM with AMOS was used to test the hypotheses. The model showed a moderate good fit ($\chi^2/df=3.205.43$; CFI = 0.940; NFI = 915; TLI = 0.931; GFI = 0.809 and RMSEA = 0.06). In Table 4, the regression weight outputs indicate the direct effect and the significant value of the construct without the mediator construct. SE e-commerce positively correlated with online impulse buying tendency ($b=.246, p<0.01$), supporting H1. Moreover, SE social media positively correlated with online impulse buying tendency ($b=.375, p<0.01$), supporting H2. SE customers' altruism positively correlated with impulse buying tendency ($b=.482, p<0.01$), confirming H3. In addition, SE customers' online impulse tendency positively impacted online impulsive buying behaviour ($b=.823, p<0.01$), supporting H4.

According to Zainudin (2012), partial mediation occurs when an independent variable (IV) relates to a dependent variable (DV) through a mediating (M) variable and when an IV has a direct effect on a DV. The standardised indirect effect shown in Table 5 demonstrates that all exogenous latent constructs partially mediate online impulse buying behaviour.

The indirect effect was significant ($p<0.01$), confirming the partial mediation of online impulse buying tendency in the relationship between SE e-commerce and online impulse buying behaviour. The path from SE social media to online impulse buying tendency was significant ($p<0.01$), similar to the path from SE social media to online impulse buying behaviour ($p<0.05$). Furthermore, the path from SE customers' altruism to online impulse buying tendency was significant ($p<0.01$), similar to the path from SE customers' altruism to online impulse buying behaviour ($p<0.01$). These findings suggest that H5, H6, and H7 were supported (Table 6). Figure 3 illustrates the path analysis of the final model.

Table 3. Discriminant validity of the construct.

	ECOM	ASMC	ALTR	AOT	AOB
ECOM	0.777*				
ASMC	0.776	0.870*			
ALTR	0.786	0.884	0.886*		
AOT	0.773	0.798	0.783	0.887*	
AOB	0.798	0.721	0.769	0.732	0.849*

Note: *The square roots of the AVE.

Table 4. Regression weights.

			Estimate	S.E	C.R	<i>p</i>	Results
AOT	<---	ECOM	.246	.019	12.913	***	Significant
AOT	<---	ASMC	.375	.020	18.919	***	Significant
AOT	<---	ALTR	.482	.022	22.278	***	Significant
AOB	<---	AOT	.823	.059	14.030	***	Significant

Note: ***Indicate a high significance at <0.001.

Table 5. Standardised indirect effects—two-tailed significance.

	ASMC	ECOM	ALTR	AOT	AOB
AOT
AOB	.015	.003	.007		

Table 6. The mediation impacts.

	IV-DV	IV-M-DV		
	Direct	Direct	Indirect	Mediation type
ECOM—AOT—AOB	.318	.246**	.318**	Partial mediation
ASMC—AOT—AOB	.557	.375**	.557**	Partial mediation
ALTR—AOT—AOB	.767	.482**	.767**	Partial mediation

Note: $p < 0.001$.

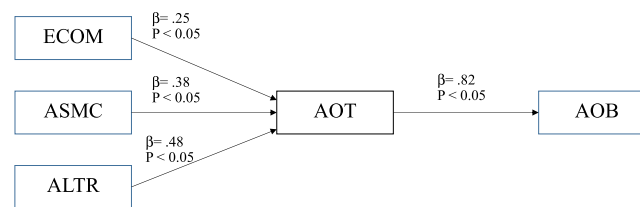


Figure 3. The structural model.

4. Discussion and conclusion

4.1. General discussion

This study investigates online consumer behaviour, specifically impulsive buying, in the SE context following the S-O-R framework. Therefore, the relationship between SE e-commerce as communication and sales channels and online impulse buying behaviour is empirically explored. In addition, the association between SE social media as communication and sales channels and online impulse buying behaviour is also examined. Hypotheses 1 and 2 are supported. That is, e-commerce and social media effectiveness affect online impulse-buying tendencies. This illustrates that the information and selling roles of SE's e-commerce and social media support customers' shopping experiences, enabling an unprompted tendency in their online shopping activities. Based on the results, SE e-commerce and social media can be considered product information sources. As SE's communication tools, e-commerce and social media provide accurate, useful, and comprehensive information that allows interactions between the SE and the customers. These influence customers to likely purchase products spontaneously. Besides, SE e-commerce and social media used as selling channels can enable customers to shop quickly, easily, and conveniently. Their role as a sales channel with current customers' comments, opinions, and shared content stimulates customers' propensity to make unplanned purchases. Broadly, the results highlight the perspective of Sihombing et al. (2020), suggesting that social media's information quality and social interaction influence impulse buying. Furthermore, the results are consistent with Turkyilmaz et al. (2015) and Wells et al. (2011), indicating that website factors, such as usefulness, ease of use, and convenience—significantly affect impulsive buying. Hence, H1 and H2 are fully supported. Contrary to past research, Wiranata and Hananto (2020) indicated that e-commerce factors, such as ease of use and usefulness, did not affect impulse buying. Lo et al. (2016) added that website ease of use, usefulness, and entertainment, necessary conditions at the times of purchase, do not necessarily stimulate consumers' purchase impulses. Nonetheless, Akram et al. (2018), Sharma et al. (2018), Shiao and Chau (2015), and Wiranata and Hananto (2020) supported the current findings.

Moreover, this study investigated the relationship between SE customers' altruism and online impulse buying behaviour. Hypothesis 3 is supported. The results are similar to those of Moes et al. (2022), who found that altruistic justification can cause an impulse buying tendency. Choi and Kim (2016) proposed that customers value societal contributions generated by the SE but may be reluctant to buy due to concerns about inferior product quality. Based on the results, it is concluded that customers adopt altruistic reasons to buy SE's products. They use them to justify their impulsive buying tendency through other benefits. Therefore, H3 was accepted. Furthermore, the results prove that the online impulse tendency is positively associated with impulsive buying. This finding supports past research (Ahmad et al., 2019; Saad & Metawie, 2015); the impulsive buying tendency significantly correlated with impulse buying behaviours, supporting H4. This means that the more a customer engages in impulse buying, the more likely the consumer will buy a product without a plan (Zafar et al., 2021). This finding contradicts previous research that there was no positive relationship between the impulse buying intention and impulse buying (Sharma & Nanda, 2012). Nonetheless, while all impulsive tendencies are unlikely to be acted upon, the more impulsive tendencies experienced, the higher the likelihood that impulse purchases will occur (Badgaiyan et al., 2016; Dawson & Kim, 2009). This study also explores the mediating role of online impulse tendency. The results support the assumptions of the indirect SE e-commerce-online impulsive buying link, the indirect SE social media-online impulsive buying association, and the indirect

altruism-online impulsive buying relationship mediated by the online impulsive tendency. Hence, H5, H6, and H7 were supported. Extending the previous studies (Evangelin & Vasantha, 2022; Kwon & Ahn, 2021), this research uncovered the mediating role of online impulse tendency influencing the relationship between online marketing stimuli and online impulse behaviour. The findings also show that the customers' altruism interacts with the online impulse tendency (mediator) to significantly influence online impulsive buying behaviour. However, evidence exists that altruism affects impulse buying directly and indirectly (Moes et al., 2022). Although this research determined that customers' online impulse tendency partially mediates the connection between altruism and impulsive buying behaviour, the dependencies between altruism and impulse buying behaviour are possible, as some factors can mediate these constructs' associations.

4.2. Academic implications

Recent literature has demonstrated a growing interest in impulse buying in the online environment. However, little is known about SE online channels and customers' altruism. The results draw attention to SE e-commerce, social media, and customers' altruistic value by validating and testing these factors on impulsive purchasing behaviour. Few studies (Badgaiyan et al., 2016; Dawson & Kim, 2009) have proposed that impulse buying tendencies are antecedents to impulse buying behaviour. This result also confirms the relationship between online impulse buying tendencies and behaviour. It suggests that the degree to which people are likely to make unintended, unplanned, and thoughtless purchases (Jones et al., 2003) online influences impulse buying behaviour. Furthermore, customers' altruism motivates spontaneous buying. This result is consistent with Strahilevitz and Myers (1998), who suggested that tying a donation to a purchase can increase sales and encourage customers to visit a store. Altruism provides a good reason to make a purchase. Although altruism in charity has been extensively researched, little has been conducted on altruism in SEs. A novel aspect of this research is that altruism in the online context relates to online impulse tendency, leading to impulse buying. In addition, this study applied the stimulus-organism-response (SOR) structure to study online impulse buying. Since previous research has investigated the interactions between environmental factors (stimulus), consumers' motivation (organism), and the resulting behaviour (response), the current research proposed that the SOR model could be used to examine online impulse buying behaviour. The results demonstrate that internal and external stimuli (SE online platforms and customers' altruism) are triggers arousing organisms (online impulse tendency), resulting in customers' responses (online impulse buying behaviour). Therefore, the results indicate an empirically valid extension of the SOR in the context of online impulsiveness, altruism, and SE.

4.3. Managerial implications

Given the growing number of online retailers, SEs must manage various marketing stimuli that can amplify the online impulse buying tendency to encourage buying behaviour. The mediating role of the online impulse buying tendency is hypothesised and tested. Although H5, H6, and H7 are supported, the relationship between e-commerce and online impulse buying behaviour is partially mediated by online impulse buying tendency, partially mediating the relationship between SE social media and online impulse buying behaviour, similar to the relationship between SE customers' altruism and online impulse buying behaviour. The findings demonstrate that SE e-commerce, social media, and customers' altruism indirectly contribute to online impulse buying behaviour through online impulse buying tendencies. The results also suggest that SEs should consider their e-commerce, social media, and customers' altruism to increase online impulse buying tendency and buying tendency as the inducement of online impulse purchase behaviour. These findings suggest that SEs should consider using e-commerce and social media to provide product information and facilitate online purchasing. They can drive traffic to online SE platforms and stimulate potential customers to make unplanned purchases. Moreover, SEs can use the proposed e-commerce dimensions to build quality websites, resulting in impulsive purchases. SEs aim to improve the quality of life of society. Hence, customers' altruism motivates them to patronise SEs to help others. The motivation to help others in society increases the degree of unplanned purchases in online

shopping activities. Thus, SEs should emphasise their contributions to society, influencing customers' altruism. Failure to focus on this area can affect the opportunity to make online impulse purchases.

4.4. Conclusion

In summary, the current study explores the direct effects of SE e-commerce, social media, and customers' altruism on online impulse tendency, along with the mediating impacts of the online impulse tendency on online impulse buying behaviour. Examining these stimuli (SE e-commerce, SE social media, and customers' altruism) reveals their connection with the organism (online impulse tendency) and response (online impulse buying behaviour). The findings will extend the academic knowledge of SE, online impulsiveness, and SOR literature. Furthermore, practitioners can apply these insights when designing effective online strategies to enhance online commerce performance.

5. Limitations and future research

This study has contributed new findings focusing on online impulse buying behaviour in SEs. However, further research should consider some limitations. Firstly, data are collected from customers in Bangkok, the capital city of Thailand, and Chiang Mai, a major city in Thailand which limit the generalisation of the results geographically. Future endeavours may consider other cities and countries with large sample sizes. Secondly, Shopee and Lazada, the largest e-commerce websites, and SE social media (Facebook and Line application) are used. Therefore, future research should employ other e-commerce websites and social networks. Thirdly, this study considered three shopping motivation factors. This research can be extended by exploring other stimulus factors, such as digital marketing strategies, online store design elements, and personal characteristics. Lastly, future research should consider the qualitative approach and other moderating effects.

Ethical approval

Silpakorn University Research Ethics Committee approval was exempted for this study (Ref No: REC 63.0513-038-1947).

Disclosure statement

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Data availability statement

The data will be made available upon reasonable request.

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