

CHINA IMPULSIVE PURCHASING BEHAVIOUR AND HEDONIC MOTIVATION: THE IMPACT OF ELECTRONIC WORD OF MOUTH

Liu Shukun¹
Ooi Kok Loang²

¹City Graduate School, City University Malaysia, Petaling Jaya, Malaysia.

²Department of Finance, Faculty of Business and Economics, Universiti Malaya, Malaysia.

Article history

Received date : 1-3-2024

Revised date : 2-3-2024

Accepted date : 29-6-2024

Published date : 15-7-2024

To cite this document:

Shukun, L., & Loang, O. K. (2024). China impulsive purchasing behaviour and hedonic motivation: The impact of electronic word of mouth. *International Journal of Accounting, Finance and Business (IJAFB)*, 9 (55), 293 - 308.

Abstract: *This study investigates the impact of electronic word of mouth (eWOM), user-generated content (UGC), and social media engagement on impulsive purchasing behavior within the context of the Chinese e-commerce market. As digital interactions increasingly shape consumer decision-making processes, this research aims to elucidate the complex relationships between these digital variables and impulsive buying tendencies, with a particular focus on the moderating role of hedonic motivation. Drawing on the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB), this study examines how attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control influence consumer trust and subsequent impulsive purchasing decisions. Utilizing a quantitative methodology, data were collected through structured questionnaires, and the analysis was conducted using SPSS and SMARTPLS 4.0. The findings reveal significant insights into the mechanisms through which eWOM, UGC, and social media engagement drive impulsive purchases, offering valuable implications for businesses seeking to optimize their digital marketing strategies in the competitive Chinese market.*

Keywords: *Electronic Word of Mouth, User-Generated Content, Social Media Engagement, Impulsive Purchasing Behaviour, Hedonic Motivation*

Introduction

The modern digital landscape has redefined the dynamics of consumer behaviour, and this transformation is particularly pronounced in the context of the Chinese market. Chinese consumers increasingly rely on electronic platforms and social media to inform their purchasing decisions. Understanding the intricate relationships between key variables, including electronic word-of-mouth, user-generated content, social media engagement, consumer trust, and impulsive purchasing behaviour in this unique cultural and economic environment, is imperative.

EWOM is disseminating consumer opinions, experiences, and recommendations through digital channels. UGC extends this phenomenon by encapsulating the content generated by users, including reviews, ratings, and posts on social media platforms (Jiang & Stylos, 2021). Social Media Engagement quantifies how Chinese consumers actively participate in digital communities, including liking, sharing, and commenting on the content. Consumer Trust, on the other hand, is the cornerstone of the consumer-brand relationship and plays a crucial role in the Chinese market's rapidly evolving e-commerce landscape. The heart of these interactions lies in impulsive purchasing behaviour, a phenomenon characterised by unplanned and spontaneous buying decisions. Given the increasing prevalence and significance of online shopping in China, understanding the factors that trigger impulsive purchasing behaviour is paramount.

Background of Study

China's E-commerce industry has witnessed unparalleled growth and transformation over the past few decades, positioning itself as a global leader in the digital commerce landscape (Nakawiroj et al., 2022). The meteoric rise of the Chinese E-commerce sector is characterised by a combination of factors, including robust technological infrastructure, a burgeoning middle class, an ever-expanding digital-savvy population, and a supportive policy environment.

A critical catalyst for the e-commerce boom in China has been its rapid advancement in technology and digital infrastructure (Nakawiroj et al., 2022). The widespread availability of high-speed Internet and the ubiquity of smartphones have paved the way for a seamless online shopping experience. Innovations such as mobile payment systems pioneered by companies such as Alibaba's Alipay and Tencent's WeChat Pay have revolutionised how consumers transact, fostering trust and convenience in digital commerce. China's economic growth and urbanisation have led to a robust middle class with increased purchasing power. This demographic shift has fuelled demand for a wide array of consumer goods, from everyday necessities to luxury products, all of which are readily accessible through online platforms. Consequently, E-commerce has emerged as the preferred shopping channel for this burgeoning consumer segment.

China has one of the world's largest and most digitally engaged populations (Nakawiroj et al., 2022). Chinese are avid social media users and active participants in the digital realm. This facilitates e-commerce through online marketing and social commerce and encourages user-generated content, reviews, and recommendations, which profoundly impact consumer decision-making. The digital ecosystem in China thrives on user-generated content and peer influence, further emphasising the significance of this study's focus on e-WOM and user-generated content. The Chinese government has been instrumental in nurturing the e-commerce industry. Favourable policies and regulations, such as tax incentives, have encouraged the growth of online businesses. Additionally, government-led initiatives like the "Double 11"

(Singles' Day) shopping festival have provided a platform for E-commerce platforms to showcase their products and offer discounts, resulting in record-breaking sales figures.

In this context, understanding the dynamics of consumer behaviour within the Chinese E-commerce landscape has become paramount (Nakawiroj et al., 2022). Because consumers are bombarded with information and choices online, factors such as eWOM, UGC, social media engagement, consumer trust, and hedonic motivation are pivotal in shaping their purchasing decisions. The Chinese E-commerce market is highly competitive, and e-commerce platforms constantly vie for consumer attention and loyalty. Therefore, understanding the nuances of these factors and their interplay, especially in the context of impulsive purchasing behaviour, can provide valuable insights for businesses and marketers operating in this dynamic environment.

Problem Statement

In China today, the ever-growing presence of e-commerce and digital platforms has transformed consumers' purchasing decisions (Nakawiroj et al., 2022). Electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM), User-Generated Content, consumer trust, and Social Media Engagement have become integral parts of this transformation. However, the intricate interplay between these digital interactions and the development of trust among Chinese consumers remains unclear. Equally important is how this trust, nurtured or eroded by digital interactions, subsequently shapes impulsive purchasing behaviour. When navigating the digital marketplace, Chinese consumers are bombarded with information and recommendations through eWOM, UGC, consumer trust, and social media. The challenge lies in comprehending how these digital channels collectively affect trust, which is a crucial factor in purchase decisions (Nasser, 2023). By unravelling this complex relationship, this study can contribute to a more nuanced understanding of how digital interactions mould trust dynamics in China, ultimately influencing the prevalence of impulsive buying.

Impulsive Purchasing Behaviour has become more prevalent with the meteoric rise in online shopping in China (Nakawiroj et al., 2022). However, there is a distinct lack of understanding regarding the specific factors and mechanisms that trigger impulsive purchasing behaviour among Chinese consumers. Particularly in a context where eWOM, UGC, consumer trust and social media engagement are pervasive, it becomes imperative to delve into these underlying triggers. Impulsive buying is a multifaceted phenomenon with significant implications for consumers and businesses. In China, where digital information sources are abundant, it is essential to investigate what prompts consumers to make unplanned purchases. This problem statement underscores the necessity of dissecting the role played by eWOM, UGC, consumer trust and social media engagement in instigating impulsive buying tendencies among Chinese consumers, contributing to a more informed understanding of their buying behaviours.

Hedonic Motivation, characterised by pursuing sensory gratification and pleasure in consumption experiences, introduces an intriguing dimension to the study (Nakawiroj et al., 2022). It is proposed that HM may significantly influence Impulsive Purchasing Behaviour in China (Srivastava et al., 2023). However, it remains unclear how HM moderates the relationship between Consumer Trust and impulsive purchasing behaviour within the Chinese market and whether this moderation varies across consumer segments. The concept of hedonic motivation implies that consumers may derive pleasure from the products they purchase and from purchasing itself. Understanding how sensory pleasure and gratification influence impulsive buying tendencies within the unique Chinese market is intriguing. Furthermore,

recognising that consumer motivations can vary significantly among different segments adds depth to the study's objectives. By exploring the moderation effect of HM on the CT-IPB relationship, this research aims to offer insights into the conditions under which trust leads to impulsive buying, as well as how these conditions may differ among diverse consumer groups in China.

As the Chinese consumer landscape continues evolving, businesses seek effective strategies to establish and sustain Consumer Trust through digital channels (Kingsnorth, 2022). However, there is a gap in our understanding of how eWOM, UGC, consumer trust and social media engagement contribute to CT formation in the unique context of China's digital marketplace. Trust is a currency of immense value in the Chinese market, where digital interactions can profoundly influence brand loyalty. In this landscape, eWOM, UGC, consumer trust and social media engagement are essential tools for businesses to foster consumer trust. Recognising their influence on CT formation is pivotal for businesses navigating the intricacies of the Chinese digital environment. This problem statement underscores the study's practical implications, highlighting its potential to provide actionable insights for businesses aiming to build and maintain trust in the digital age.

Research Objectives

- **RO 1:** To examine the influence of eWOM sources on impulsive purchasing behaviour among Chinese consumers.
- **RO 2:** To examine the impact of different types of UGC on impulsive purchasing behaviour among Chinese consumers.
- **RO 3:** To examine the impact of social media engagement metrics on impulsive purchasing behaviour among Chinese consumers.
- **RO 4:** To examine the formation of consumer trust in impulsive purchasing behaviour among Chinese consumers.
- **RO 5:** To examine the moderating role of hedonic motivation in the relationship between eWOM, UGC, social media engagement, consumer trust, and impulsive purchasing behaviour among Chinese consumers.
 - **RO 5a:** To examine the moderating role of hedonic motivation in the relationship between eWOM and impulsive purchasing behaviour among Chinese consumers.
 - **RO 5b:** To examine the moderating role of hedonic motivation in the relationship between UGC and impulsive purchasing behaviour among Chinese consumers.
 - **RO 5c:** To examine the moderating role of hedonic motivation in the relationship between social media engagement and impulsive purchasing behaviour among Chinese consumers.
 - **RO 5d:** To examine the moderating role of hedonic motivation in the relationship between consumer trust and impulsive purchasing behaviour among Chinese consumers.

Research Questions

- **RQ 1:** What is the impact of Electronic word-of-mouth sources on impulsive purchasing behaviour among Chinese consumers?
- **RQ 2:** What is the impact of different types of User-Generated Content on impulsive purchasing behaviour among Chinese consumers?
- **RQ 3:** What is the impact of social media engagement metrics on impulsive purchasing behaviour among Chinese consumers?

- **RQ 4:** What is the impact of the formation of consumer trust on impulsive purchasing behaviour among Chinese consumers?
- **RQ 5:** What is the impact of hedonic motivation as a moderator in the relationship between eWOM, UGC, social media engagement, consumer trust, and impulsive purchasing behaviour among Chinese consumers?
 - **RQ 5a:** What is the impact of hedonic motivation as a moderator in the relationship between eWOM and impulsive purchasing behaviour among Chinese consumers?
 - **RQ 5b:** What is the impact of hedonic motivation as a moderator in the relationship between UGC and impulsive purchasing behaviour among Chinese consumers?
 - **RQ 5c:** What is the impact of hedonic motivation as a moderator in the relationship between Social Media Engagement and impulsive purchasing behaviour among Chinese consumers?
 - **RQ 5d:** What is the impact of hedonic motivation as a moderator in the relationship between consumer trust and impulsive purchasing behaviour among Chinese consumers?

Significance of Study

In the contemporary milieu, characterised by the omnipresence of digital platforms, understanding consumer behaviour has acquired an unprecedented urgency. This research contributes substantially to the growing knowledge of digital consumer behaviour. While extant literature has shed light on facets of digital interactions, there remains a conspicuous paucity of comprehensive investigations into the synergistic influences of Electronic Word of Mouth, User-Generated Content, Social Media Engagement, Consumer Trust, and Impulsive Purchasing Behaviour (Li 2022). By scrutinising these variables within the distinctive milieu of China, the study enhances the theoretical foundations of digital consumer behaviour.

For businesses operating within the dynamic consumer landscape of China, the cultivation of Consumer Trust is imperative. Digital interactions, including eWOM, UGC, consumer trust and social media engagement, significantly impact this trust-building process. The research, therefore, has direct practical implications for businesses seeking to carve a niche in China's burgeoning digital marketplace. The insights gained into how these digital channels contribute to CT formation can guide businesses in devising more effective and targeted strategies for establishing and nurturing trust, an essential component of consumer-brand relationships.

Impulsive Purchasing Behaviour is a multifaceted phenomenon that carries implications of both economic and psychological significance. However, the triggers of impulsive purchasing behaviour in the context of China's digital landscape remain a puzzle yet to be fully unravelled. This study aims to delve into the intricate nexus of impulsive purchasing behaviour within the digital paradigm, focusing on eWOM, UGC, consumer trust and social media engagement. By dissecting the factors that incite impulsive buying decisions, this research offers an invaluable contribution to the repertoire of marketing and consumer behaviour knowledge. The findings can serve as a compass for businesses, guiding them in crafting strategies that harness impulsive tendencies effectively.

The introduction of Hedonic Motivation as a moderating variable in the relationship between CT and impulsive purchasing behaviour constitutes this study's novel and academically significant dimension. HM, premised on the pursuit of sensory pleasure and gratification derived from consumption experiences, introduces a captivating layer of analysis into consumer psychology. This exploration advances the understanding of the psychological underpinnings

of impulsive buying and trust formation and enriches the theoretical foundations of consumer motivation. The academic import of this facet is underscored by its potential to spawn further research inquiries into the interplay of hedonism and consumer behaviour.

The Chinese consumer market, with its colossal population, diverse consumer segments, and burgeoning middle class, profoundly influences the global economic stage. As China continues to ascend as a dominant force in the global economy, understanding its consumer landscape becomes indispensable. This study underscores the global significance of China's consumer market, acknowledging its role in shaping the trajectory of consumerism worldwide. The insights gleaned from this research carry reverberations that extend beyond China's borders, offering relevance for global enterprises seeking to engage effectively with the Chinese consumer base.

Underlying Theories

Theory of Planned Behaviour

The Theory of Planned Behaviour serves as a foundational theoretical framework underpinning this study, offering a robust lens to understand and interpret the intricate relationships among the study's variables. TPB, initially formulated by Ajzen in 1991 as an extension of the earlier Theory of Reasoned Action, posits that human behaviour is driven by a person's intentions, which are, in turn, shaped by three core components: attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control (Liu et al., 2022).

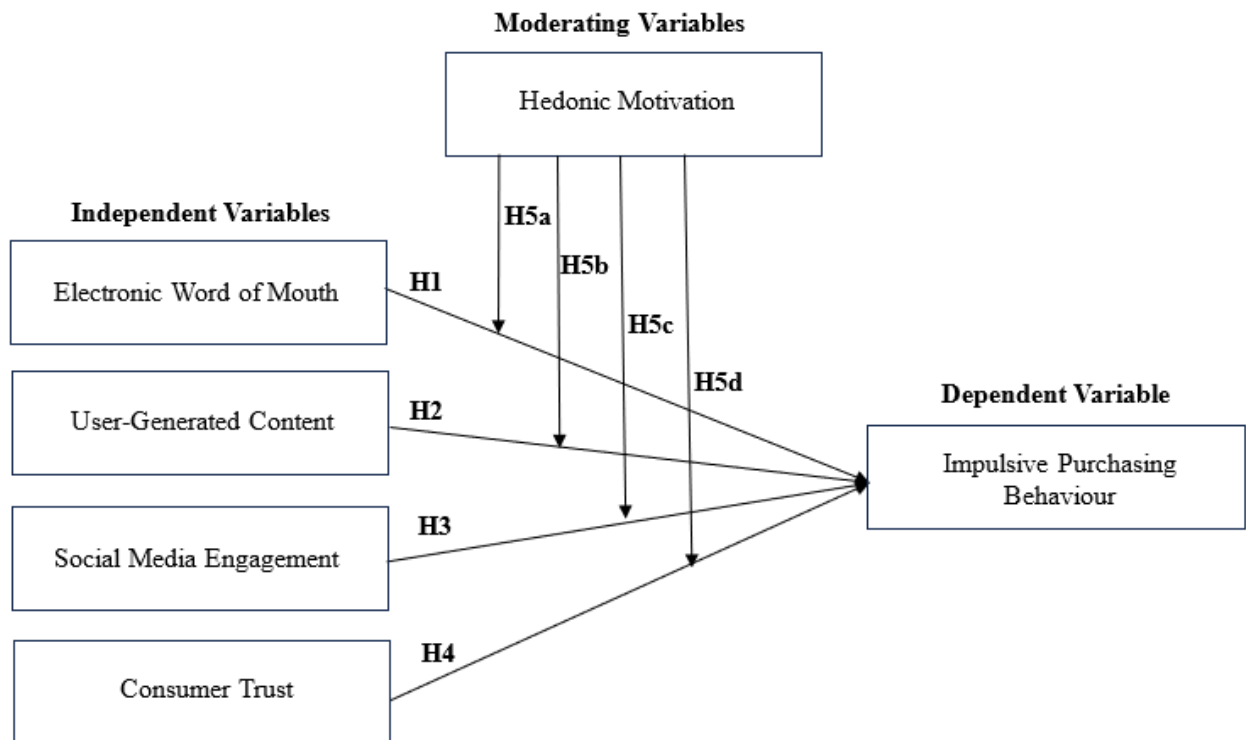
Firstly, attitudes are central to TPB. They represent an individual's evaluation of a specific behaviour, in this context, Impulsive Purchasing Behaviour. Within this study, attitudes towards impulsive purchasing behaviour are critical as they reflect consumers' cognitive and affective assessments of the impulsiveness of their buying decisions, possibly influenced by Electronic Word of Mouth, User-Generated Content, and Social Media Engagement. Positive attitudes may indicate a predisposition toward impulsive buying.

Secondly, subjective norms entail the social pressure and influence exerted on an individual to perform or refrain from a certain behaviour. In consumer behaviour, these norms can be instrumental in shaping Consumer Trust. EWOM, UGC, consumer trust, and social media engagement may significantly influence the subjective norms surrounding trust formation. Understanding how these digital interactions impact the social norms associated with trust is a pivotal aspect of the TPB framework in this study.

Thirdly, perceived behavioural control represents an individual's perception of their ability to engage in a particular behaviour. In the context of this research, it can manifest in the consumer's perception of control over their Impulsive Purchasing Behaviour. Hedonic Motivation (HM) plays a key role here, as it introduces sensory gratification and pleasure as motivational factors that might enhance or hinder perceived control over impulsive buying. Furthermore, TPB acknowledges that intentions do not always translate directly into behaviour. External factors and constraints may intervene, affecting the actual enactment of behaviour (Leong et al., 2022). In this study, TPB acts as a lens to examine the intentions to engage in impulsive purchasing behaviour shaped by attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control. These intentions are modulated by the moderating influence of Hedonic Motivation, adding depth to our understanding of how intentions and behaviours align or diverge.

The Theory of Planned Behaviour offers a structured and comprehensive framework that helps elucidate the complexities of consumer behaviour, particularly concerning impulsive purchasing behaviour and CT within the digital ecosystem. It enables a systematic examination subsequent impact on consumer actions, providing a strong theoretical foundation for this study's exploration of the interplay of digital interactions, trust, and impulsive buying tendencies in the Chinese consumer landscape.

Conceptual Framework



The conceptual framework of this study revolves around the intricate relationships between Electronic Word of Mouth, User-Generated Content, Social Media Engagement, Consumer Trust, Hedonic Motivation, and Impulsive Purchasing Behaviour. These variables collectively constitute a comprehensive model for understanding consumer behaviour in the context of online shopping and the digital information environment.

Electronic word-of-mouth represents the digital manifestation of traditional word-of-mouth communication. The Information Adoption Model posits that eWOM influences consumers due to its informational and social value. Positive eWOM is often perceived as credible and persuasive, potentially driving consumers to purchase impulsively based on online recommendations or reviews. This aligns with the Theory of Reasoned Action, suggesting that attitudes and subjective norms shape behavioural intentions, which, in this context, can lead to impulsive buying.

User-generated content encompasses various consumer-generated media, including product reviews, images, videos, and social media posts. The Uses and Gratifications Theory posits that consumers engage with UGC to satisfy specific needs, such as entertainment, information, or

social connection. UGC can create hedonically motivated consumer experiences, triggering their emotional responses and desire for instant gratification. The concept of flow, as defined by Csikszentmihalyi, may also be relevant here, as consumers may become absorbed in the content and subsequently make impulsive purchase decisions to maintain that state of flow.

Social Media Engagement involves consumers' active participation and interaction with brands or products on social media platforms. The Social Identity Theory posits that individuals derive part of their self-concept from social group memberships. In social media, consumers engage with brands to strengthen their online identities. High social media engagement levels can lead to identification with a brand or product, possibly influencing impulsive purchases. The Elaboration Likelihood Model suggests that peripheral route processing, driven by social influence, can lead to persuasion and impulsive behaviour.

Consumer Trust is foundational to online interactions and decision-making. The Trust Transfer Model suggests that trust can be transferred between entities. Trust in the information provided online can reduce perceived risk, which is a critical factor in impulsive purchasing behaviour (Suresh & Loang, 2024). The Protection Motivation Theory posits that consumers are motivated to protect themselves from harm or risk. Trust in digital information can enhance consumers' sense of protection and subsequently promote impulsive purchases.

Hedonic Motivation represents consumers' pursuit of pleasure and emotional satisfaction in their shopping experiences. According to the Hedonic Consumption Model, individuals seek hedonic value through consumption activities. High hedonic motivation may lead to impulsive purchasing behaviour, as consumers are more inclined to prioritise immediate emotional satisfaction over rational considerations. This is consistent with the Affect-as-Information Theory, which suggests that emotions play a crucial role in decision-making.

Impulsive Purchasing Behaviour refers to unplanned and spontaneous buying decisions. The literature on impulsive buying often draws on the Impulse Buying Tendency scale, which measures consumers' propensity for impulsive behaviour (Loang and Ahmad, 2024). Impulsive buying can be viewed through the Dual-Process Theory, which posits that it results from a quick, automatic, and emotional decision-making process rather than a deliberate, controlled, and rational one.

EWOM, UGC, Social Media Engagement, Consumer Trust, Hedonic Motivation, and Impulsive Purchasing Behaviour are interconnected through various theoretical lenses. The study seeks to elucidate how these factors interact and how hedonic motivation moderates their influence on impulsive purchasing behaviour. By examining these dynamics, the research contributes to our understanding of online consumer behaviour, shedding light on the mechanisms that drive impulsive buying in the digital age and providing practical insights for businesses and marketers. This study can potentially inform marketing strategies that harness the power of digital platforms and consumer motivations to drive impulsive purchases.

Hypotheses Development

- **H1:** There is a significant impact of Electronic Word of Mouth sources on impulsive purchasing behaviour among Chinese consumers.
- **H2:** There is a significant impact of different types of User-Generated Content on impulsive purchasing behaviour among Chinese consumers.

- **H3:** There is a significant impact of social media engagement metrics on impulsive purchasing behaviour among Chinese consumers.
- **H4:** There is a significant impact of the formation of consumer trust on impulsive purchasing behaviour among Chinese consumers.
- **H5:** There is a significant moderating effect of hedonic motivation in the relationship between eWOM, UGC, social media engagement, consumer trust, and impulsive purchasing behaviour among Chinese consumers.
 - **H5a:** There is a significant moderating effect of hedonic motivation in the relationship between eWOM and impulsive purchasing behaviour among Chinese consumers.
 - **H5b:** There is a significant moderating effect of hedonic motivation in the relationship between UGC and impulsive purchasing behaviour among Chinese consumers.
 - **H5c:** There is a significant moderating effect of hedonic motivation in the relationship between social media engagement and impulsive purchasing behaviour among Chinese consumers.
 - **H5d:** There is a significant moderating effect of hedonic motivation in the relationship between consumer trust and impulsive purchasing behaviour among Chinese consumers.

Literature Review

Electronic Word of Mouth

The phenomenon of EWOM has become a significant influence in moulding consumer choices on a global scale (Akdim, 2021). Digital communication facilitates opinions over various goods and services through online platforms, reviews, and social media. Multiple research investigations have consistently shown that EWOM substantially impacts customer perceptions and buying behaviour.

The legitimacy of a source is a fundamental element of EWOM, as highlighted frequently by academics (Rani & Shivaprasad, 2021). Consumers tend to place faith in suggestions and evaluations perceived as possessing credibility. Nevertheless, the concept of trustworthiness may exhibit distinct attributes in the context of the Chinese consumer market (Wang et al., 2020). China places significant importance on personal and professional networks, familial ties, and *guanxi*, which refers to the cultivation of maintaining. As a result, suggestions originating from intimate social networks and personal relationships may be more significant than anonymous evaluations found online (Loang, 2023). Gaining insights into how Chinese customers perceive and evaluate the trustworthiness of various EWOM sources is paramount for firms that aim to traverse this market successfully.

The valence of EWOM messages is an additional crucial determinant (Ismagilova et al., 2021). Positive EWOM can bolster brand reputation and stimulate purchase intent, whereas negative EWOM may adversely influence both outcomes. Nevertheless, it is essential to consider the influence of cultural subtleties in China. Preserving one's reputation and avoiding public humiliation have significant significance within Chinese cultural norms, potentially influencing how unfavourable evaluations are conveyed and accepted (Dong & Loang, 2023). Businesses must be cognizant of these cultural subtleties when understanding the influence of valence in EWOM.

Furthermore, the choice of a platform for disseminating EWOM is significant (Ali et al., 2020). China has a distinctive digital environment characterised by a diverse array of social media platforms, e-commerce websites, and virtual communities. Different platforms may have unique user demographics, features, and conventions that impact EWOM sharing and consumption. For example, in China, notable venues such as WeChat, Weibo, and the Little Red Book provide distinct content and target diverse audiences. Gaining a comprehensive understanding of these chat platforms is crucial for firms that want to use EWOM successfully.

User-Generated Content

UGC contains diverse material individuals generated, including product evaluations, ratings, online journals, and postings on social networking platforms (Zhuang et al., 2023). The influence of this material on brand perception, trust, and purchase intention is significant, making it a key area of interest in consumer behaviour research (Dangi et al., 2020).

In the specific setting of China, where social networks and online communities often exhibit distinct traits, the reliability and trustworthiness of UGC sources may show variability (Wei et al., 2023). Chinese consumers are more likely to have greater confidence in the material generated by those with whom they have developed internet relationships or shared interests. Hence, the prominence of key opinion leaders (KOLs) and influencers is particularly notable in China, as customers often depend on esteemed individuals for product endorsements.

Moreover, the proliferation of UGC platforms in China introduces a heightened level of intricacy (Zhang, Gao, Cole & Ricci, 2021). Various digital media, such as Douyin (commonly known as TikTok) and Xiaohongshu (often referred to as Little Red Book), have distinct ecosystems and user demographics. Companies must properly adjust their tactics by comprehending the specific locations and methods through which Chinese customers interact with UGC.

It can be concluded that both EWOM and UGC play a significant role in shaping consumer behaviour across different contexts (Muda & Hamzah, 2021). However, it is essential to acknowledge that the specific cultural subtleties, credibility dynamics, valence concerns, and platform intricacy in China need a tailored and specialised approach. To successfully use the influence of EWOM and UGC in moulding customer views and driving purchase choices, businesses operating in China must adeptly negotiate these elements.

Social Media Engagement

Social media platforms are pivotal in influencing Impulsive Purchasing Behaviour among Chinese consumers (Hu et al., 2019). Platforms like WeChat, Weibo, and the Little Red Book have seamlessly integrated into the daily routines of Chinese consumers, shaping their digital interactions and purchase decisions. In this context, social media engagement refers to individuals' active participation and interaction with content across various digital channels.

Numerous research studies have underscored the significance of active social media engagement as a key driver of consumer behaviour (Ali, Ullah, Ahmad, Cheok & Alenezi, 2023). Within the realm of impulsive purchasing behaviour, it is evident that heightened levels of social media interaction can lead to more impulsive buying tendencies (Lina et al., 2022). For instance, when consumers actively share product recommendations or reviews within their social networks, this can trigger a ripple effect, expanding the reach and magnifying the impact of such content. Similarly, engaging with real-time updates on limited-time offers, flash sales,

or exclusive promotions on social media platforms can prompt immediate and unplanned purchasing decisions.

Social media engagement encompasses various user-generated content and interactions (Yang et al., 2019). When consumers share visual content, such as images or videos, showcasing their experiences with a particular product or service, it often conveys a sense of urgency and excitement that resonates with potential buyers. The extent and nature of social media interactions significantly influence how Chinese consumers perceive and respond to impulsive purchasing behaviour triggers in the digital environment.

Consumer Trust

Trust is foundational in shaping consumer decision-making processes in the digital age, marked by abundant information and choices (Osburg, 2019). Consumer trust extends its influence across digital platforms, encompassing various facets such as online reviews, peer recommendations, and influencer-generated content. Research studies consistently underscore the pivotal role of trust in influencing consumer behaviour, particularly within the context of Impulsive Purchasing Behaviour.

Like their global counterparts, Chinese consumers place immense value on information and recommendations sourced from channels perceived as credible and dependable (Reitsamer & Brunner-Sperdin, 2021). Evaluations originating from verified purchasers, endorsements by acquaintances or relatives, or content endorsed by reputable influencers carry significant weight in the eyes of consumers. Trust-building is facilitated by transparency regarding the source of information, including a forthright acknowledgement of potential biases or conflicts of interest. Information that authentically mirrors real-life experiences and genuine customer perspectives consistently garners higher trust than promotional or biased content.

Furthermore, the convergence of opinions and recommendations from diverse sources or individuals amplifies the establishment of trust (Osburg, 2019). The validation and refinement of information often result from consensus-building among peers or within online communities. A comprehensive understanding of the significance of customer trust is imperative for organisations seeking to harness the potential of digital channels. By cultivating trust in their brand and products, companies can enhance the persuasiveness of digital content and elevate the likelihood of Chinese consumers engaging with the recommendations and information disseminated through these channels.

In this dynamic and culturally distinctive consumer environment, the synergy between customer trust and impulsive purchasing behaviour emerges as a critical determinant of consumer behaviour (Chakraborti & Bardhan, 2022). Gaining profound insights into the intricate interplay between these variables and their collective influence on impulsive purchasing behaviour is paramount for businesses aspiring to leverage the potential of social media to enhance consumer engagement.

Hedonic Motivation

Hedonic motivation, rooted in hedonism, the pursuit of pleasure and avoidance of pain, has garnered significant attention in psychology, consumer behaviour, and marketing literature (Kastanakis et al., 2022). Understanding the dynamics of hedonic motivation is essential for comprehending various aspects of human behaviour, particularly in the context of consumer choices and decision-making processes. Hedonic motivation finds its roots in ancient

philosophical traditions, notably the concept of hedonism advocated by philosophers like Epicurus and Bentham. In contemporary psychology, hedonic motivation is framed within the broader spectrum of motivation theories, distinguishing between hedonic (pleasure-seeking) and utilitarian (goal-oriented) motivations.

At the core of hedonic motivation lies the pursuit of pleasure and gratification derived from certain activities or experiences (Kastanakis et al., 2022). In consumer behaviour, this often means pursuing products or services that provide sensory pleasure, emotional satisfaction, or enjoyable experiences. This pursuit of pleasure can manifest in various ways, from indulging in fine dining to seeking out aesthetically pleasing products. Hedonic motivation is closely tied to emotional and experiential aspects of consumption. Consumers are motivated to engage with products or services that elicit positive emotions, enhance their well-being, or create memorable experiences. For example, the pleasure derived from savouring a gourmet meal goes beyond mere sustenance; it encompasses the emotional and sensory experience associated with it.

Hedonic motivation profoundly influences consumer choices and behaviour (Kastanakis et al., 2022). It can lead to impulsive buying decisions, as consumers seek instant gratification and emotional rewards. Marketers often tap into hedonic motivations by designing products, advertisements, and shopping environments that evoke pleasurable sensations or emotional connections.

Methodology

The chosen research methods are fundamental to the credibility and rigour of any empirical study (Peng & Xiao, 2022). In this research, a quantitative approach has been selected, employing a questionnaire-based data collection method and data analysis using SPSS and SMARTPLS 4.0. This section elaborates on these aspects and their implications.

The quantitative questionnaire method is a well-established technique for collecting structured data from a large sample of respondents (Peng & Xiao, 2022). In this study, the use of a questionnaire is aptly suited to measure and analyse variables such as Electronic Word of Mouth, User-Generated Content, Social Media Engagement, Consumer Trust, and Impulsive Purchasing Behaviour. This method allows for the systematic collection of numerical data, which is essential for statistical analysis. A carefully designed questionnaire ensures the consistency of data collection and reduces potential biases in responses. The questionnaire in this study is likely to include items related to participants' perceptions, attitudes, and behaviours regarding the variables under investigation. Questions may be framed using Likert scales or other appropriate response formats to quantify participants' opinions and preferences.

The quantitative questionnaire method offers several advantages (Peng & Xiao, 2022). It enables the collection of a significant amount of data from a diverse sample, facilitating statistical analysis to test hypotheses and draw meaningful conclusions. However, it is essential to ensure the validity and reliability of the questionnaire through pre-testing and piloting to enhance the accuracy of the collected data. Subsequent to data collection, data analysis plays a pivotal role in deriving meaningful insights from the gathered information. In this research, the software packages SPSS and SMARTPLS 4.0 are chosen for data analysis, each serving distinct purposes.

SPSS is a widely used statistical software that is exceptionally suited for conducting descriptive and inferential statistical analyses (Peng & Xiao, 2022). It allows for examining relationships

between variables, hypothesis testing, and exploring patterns and trends within the dataset. For this study, SPSS will likely be utilised for several purposes. Descriptive statistics, such as means, standard deviations, and frequency distributions, will provide an initial overview of the data. Correlation analyses may be employed to investigate the strength and direction of relationships between variables, helping to identify potential associations. Additionally, inferential statistical techniques like regression analysis may be used to test hypotheses and ascertain the significance of predictors on impulsive purchasing behaviour, with a focus on the moderating role of Hedonic Motivation.

SMARTPLS 4.0, on the other hand, is a structural equation modelling (SEM) software (Peng & Xiao, 2022). SEM is particularly well-suited for analysing complex relationships among multiple variables, which is a key aspect of this research. It allows for examining latent constructs and can handle both reflective and formative measurement models. In this study, SMARTPLS 4.0 will likely be employed to build and test the structural model based on the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB). SEM facilitates the assessment of the direct and indirect effects of EWOM, UGC, Social Media Engagement, and Consumer Trust on Impulsive Purchasing Behaviour while accounting for the moderating influence of Hedonic Motivation. By utilising SEM, the study can provide a more comprehensive understanding of the intricate relationships among these variables.

The research methods chosen for this study, including the quantitative questionnaire method for data collection and the planned use of SPSS and SMARTPLS 4.0 for data analysis, are well-aligned with the study's objectives (Peng & Xiao, 2022). The questionnaire method enables the systematic collection of data, while SPSS and SMARTPLS 4.0 provide the analytical tools necessary to effectively investigate the relationships between variables and test hypotheses. These methods are robust and have the potential to yield valuable insights into the influence of EWOM, UGC, Social Media Engagement, Consumer Trust, and Hedonic Motivation on impulsive purchasing behaviour in the Chinese consumer market.

Conclusion

In China's dynamic digital marketplace, where consumer behaviours continuously evolve, this study has delved into the intricate web of factors influencing impulsive purchasing behaviour. With a specific focus on the interplay between Electronic Word of Mouth, User-Generated Content, Social Media Engagement, Consumer Trust, and the moderating variable of Hedonic Motivation, our research has uncovered valuable insights with far-reaching implications for businesses, marketers, and policymakers.

One of the central findings of this study is the fundamental role that trust plays in shaping consumer decisions. Just as consumers globally, Chinese consumers place unwavering trust in credible and reliable sources. Verified purchaser evaluations, acquaintances' or relatives' endorsements, and reputable influencers' content hold substantial sway in shaping their choices. Transparency in content sources, including candidly acknowledging potential biases or conflicts of interest, emerged as a trust-building imperative. This trust extends far beyond information consumption; it significantly influences the impulsive purchasing tendencies of Chinese consumers.

Furthermore, our exploration of social media engagement unveiled its dynamic impact on impulsive purchasing behaviour among Chinese consumers. Platforms like WeChat, Weibo, and the Little Red Book have become pivotal catalysts for consumer interactions with digital

content. Actively sharing product recommendations and reviews or participating in discussions can trigger cascading effects, magnifying the reach and impact of such content. Visual content, such as images and videos shared on social media, effectively conveys authenticity, creating resonant connections that ignite impulsive purchasing tendencies.

The synthesis of trust, social media engagement, and the moderating influence of Hedonic Motivation within the context of impulsive purchasing behaviour is a pivotal revelation. Trust and engagement are not merely standalone elements but interwoven consumer behaviour drivers. Cultivating trust in digital content and the strategic orchestration of engagement on social media platforms, especially in the context of hedonically motivated impulsive buying, can exponentially enhance impulsive purchasing behaviour.

Reference

- Ali, M., Ullah, S., Ahmad, M. S., Cheok, M. Y., & Alenezi, H. (2023). Assessing the impact of green consumption behaviour and green purchase intention among Millennials Toward Sustainable Environment. *Environmental Science and Pollution Research*, 30(9), 23335-23347.
- Chakraborti, T., & Bardhan, K. K. (2022). An empirical study on the influence of UGC & web talk on brand attitude. *International Journal of Creative Research Thoughts (IJCRT)*, 10(4), 405-409.
- Jiang, Y., & Stylos, N. (2021). Triggers of consumers' enhaconsumers'al engagement and the role of digital technologies in transforming the retail ecosystem during COVID-19 pandemic. *Technological Forecasting and Social Change*, 172, 121029.
- Kohler, E., Mogaji, E., & Erkan, İ. (2023). Save the Trip to the Store: Sustainable Shopping, Electronic Word of Mouth on Instagram and the Impact on Cosmetic Purchase Intentions. *Sustainability*, 15(10), 8036.
- Leong, L. Y., Hew, T. S., Ooi, K. B., Metri, B., & Dwivedi, Y. K. (2022). Extending the Theory of Planned Behaviour in the Social Commerce Context: A Meta-Analytic SEM (MASEM) Approach. *Information Systems Frontiers*, 1-33.
- Li, F. (2022). Sustainable competitive advantages via temporary advantages: Insights from the competition between American and Chinese digital platforms in China. *British Journal of Management*, 33(4), 2009-2032.
- Liu, H., Shaalan, A., & Jayawardhena, C. (2022). The Impact of EWOM on Consumer Behaviours. *The SAGE Handbook of Digital Marketing*, 136.
- Nasser, L. (2023). *Credibility of Electronic Word of Mouth in the Social Commerce Context: The Case of TripAdvisor* (Doctoral dissertation, Université d'Ottawa/University of Ottawa).
- Rani, A., & Shivaprasad, H. N. (2021). Revisiting the antecedent of EWOM during COVID-19 Pandemic. *Decision*, 48(4), 419-432.
- Reitsamer, B. F., & Brunner-Sperdin, A. (2021). It's all about It'sbrand: place brand credibility, place attachment, and consumer loyalty. *Journal of Brand Management*, 28, 291-301.
- Rodríguez-López, N. (2021). Understanding value co-creation in virtual communities: The key role of complementarities and trade-offs. *Information & Management*, 58(5), 103487.
- Tariyal, A., Bisht, S., Rana, V., Roy, S., & Pratap, S. (2022). Utilitarian and hedonic values of eWOM media and online booking decisions for tourist destinations in India. *Journal of Open Innovation: Technology, Market, and Complexity*, 8(3), 137.
- Voicu, M. C., Sirghi, N., & Toth, D. M. M. (2023). Consumers' ExpeConsumers' Satisfaction Using Augmented Reality Apps in E-Shopping: New Empirical Evidence. *Applied Sciences*, 13(17), 9596.

- Zhang, Y., Gao, J., Cole, S., & Ricci, P. (2021). How the spread of user-generated contents (UGC) shapes international tourism distribution: Using agent-based modeling to inform strategic UGC marketing. *Journal of Travel Research*, 60(7), 1469-1491.
- Zhuang, W., Zeng, Q., Zhang, Y., Liu, C., & Fan, W. (2023). What makes user-generated content more helpful on social media platforms? Insights from creator interactivity perspective. *Information processing & management*, 60(2), 103201.
- Akdim, K. (2021). The influence of eWOM. Analysing its characteristics and consequences, and future research lines. *Spanish Journal of Marketing-ESIC*, 25(2), 239-259.
- Ali, Y. S., Hussin, A. R. C., & Dahlan, H. M. (2020). Electronic Word of Mouth engagement in social commerce platforms: An empirical study. *Information Development*, 36(3), 438-456.
- Dangi, N., Gupta, S. K., & Narula, S. A. (2020). Consumer buying behaviour and purchase intention of organic food: A conceptual framework. *Management of Environmental Quality: An International Journal*, 31(6), 1515-1530.
- Hu, X., Chen, X., & Davison, R. M. (2019). Social support, source credibility, social influence, and impulsive purchase behaviour in social commerce. *International Journal of Electronic Commerce*, 23(3), 297-327.
- Ismagilova, E., Rana, N. P., Slade, E. L., & Dwivedi, Y. K. (2021). A meta-analysis of the factors affecting eWOM providing behaviour. *European Journal of Marketing*, 55(4), 1067-1102.
- Kastanakis, M. N., Magrizos, S., & Kampouri, K. (2022). Pain (and pleasure) in marketing and consumption: An integrative literature review and directions for future research. *Journal of Business Research*, 140, 189-201.
- Kingsnorth, S. (2022). *Digital marketing strategy: an integrated approach to online marketing*. Kogan Page Publishers.
- Lina, Y., Hou, D., & Ali, S. (2022). Impact of online convenience on generation Z online impulsive buying behaviour: The moderating role of social media celebrity. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 13, 951249.
- Muda, M., & Hamzah, M. I. (2021). Should I suggest this YouTube clip? The impact of UGC source credibility on eWOM and purchase intention. *Journal of Research in Interactive Marketing*, 15(3), 441-459.
- Nakawiroj, W., Veerastien, P., & Rutchatorn, B. (2020). The E-commerce Landscape in ASEAN and China: A Virtual Bridge between the World's Largest Market and ASEAN's Emerging Markets. *China's Rise in Mainland ASEAN: Regional Evidence and Local Responses*, 365.
- Osburg, T. (2019). Changing relevance of trust in digital worlds. *Media trust in a digital world: Communication at crossroads*, 15-33.
- Peng, Y., & Xiao, J. (2022). Is the empirical research we have the research we can trust? A review of distance education journal publications in 2021. *Asian Journal of Distance Education*, 17(2).
- Wang, J., Tao, J., & Chu, M. (2020). Behind the label: Chinese consumers' trust in food certification and the effect of perceived quality on purchase intention. *Food Control*, 108, 106825.
- Wei, D., Wang, Y., Liu, M., & Lu, Y. (2023). User-generated content may increase urban park use: Evidence from multisource social media data. *Environment and Planning B: Urban Analytics and City Science*, 23998083231210412.
- Yang, M., Ren, Y., & Adomavicius, G. (2019). Understanding user-generated content and customer engagement on Facebook business pages. *Information Systems Research*, 30(3), 839-855.

- Suresh, G., & Loang, O. K. (2024). The Rationality Conundrum: Exploring Herd Mentality among Individual Investors in the Indian Stock Market. *Indian Journal of Finance*, 18(6), 26-45.
- Dong, W. X., & Loang, O. K. (2023). The influence of salary compensation on employee performance in Shengshitongda: a qualitative investigation. *The Influence of Salary Compensation on Employee Performance in Shengshitongda: A Qualitative Investigation*, 8(53), 100-113.
- Loang, O. K. (2023). Risk-averse behaviour in emerging markets: the role of economic indicators, bank characteristics and developed markets. *Jurnal Ekonomi Malaysia*, 57(1), 1-16.
- Loang, O. K., & Ahmad, Z. (2024). Does volatility cause herding in Malaysian stock market? Evidence from quantile regression analysis. *Millennial Asia*, 15(2), 197-215.