

THE INFLUENCE OF INFORMATION QUALITY AND ONLINE RECOMMENDATIONS ON IMPULSIVE BUYING DECISION THROUGH E-TRUST IN SOCIAL E-COMMERCE

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine the influence of information quality and online recommendations on impulsive buying decisions through e-trust among Indonesian social e-commerce users. A quantitative approach was conducted using a survey involving 120 students from Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia who had purchased products via Shopee, TikTok Shop, Tokopedia, Lazada, or Instagram. Participants were selected using purposive sampling, aged 17 years or older with prior online shopping experience. Data were collected using a five-point Likert-scale online questionnaire and analyzed using PLS-SEM with SmartPLS 3.0. The results reveal that both information quality and online recommendations have significant positive effects on e-trust, which subsequently increases impulsive buying decisions. Furthermore, e-trust fully mediates the relationship between the two antecedents and impulsive buying decisions. These findings confirm the applicability of the S-O-R framework, suggesting that e-trust functions as a key cognitive mechanism that transforms informational and social stimuli into spontaneous purchasing actions. Practically, social e-commerce marketers are advised to enhance product information accuracy and emphasize authentic online recommendations to build consumer trust and encourage responsible impulsive buying behavior.

Key words: Information Quality; Online Recommendations; E-Trust; Impulsive Buying Decision; Social E-Commerce

INTRODUCTION

The rapid growth of e-commerce has transformed consumer shopping behavior, where digital platforms increasingly stimulate unplanned or impulsive purchases (Abdelsalam et al., 2020; Febrilia et al., 2024). According to We Are Social (2024), around 59.3% of Indonesian internet users shop online weekly, and over half (51%) admit to making impulsive purchases during online shopping (Populix, 2023). Understanding the drivers of this behavior is crucial (Sanapang et al., 2024), as impulsive buying intensified by social commerce interactions and technological advances, has become a socially constructed phenomenon shaped by digital engagement, peer influence, and trust-based decision processes (Dang et al., 2025).

Social commerce represents a form of e-commerce that integrates social media interactions into online buying and selling processes, emphasizing a community-driven business model (Nadeem et al., 2020). In Indonesia, the adoption of social commerce has grown rapidly, with an increasing number of consumers preferring to shop via social media platforms (Huwaida et al., 2024). Social commerce integrates Web 2.0 features into e-commerce platforms, creating interactive and personalized shopping experiences that foster social proof through user reviews, influencer endorsements, and live interactions, ultimately shaping consumer trust and purchase decisions (Maia et al., 2018; Moghddam et al., 2024). Prior studies indicate that trustworthy online recommendations can foster consumer trust and lead to impulsive purchases (Chen et al., 2020). It is also influenced by cognitive factors such as information credibility and the level of trust consumers place in online platforms, which are reinforced through social media feedback loops that amplify social proof and peer influence (Chaudhary et al., 2025).

Information quality and online recommendations are key cognitive stimuli that shape consumer perceptions and trust (Al-kfairy et al., 2024; Chaudhary et al., 2025). High-quality information, accurate, relevant, and complete, reduces uncertainty and enhances confidence in purchase decisions (Busalim et al., 2021; Sanapang et al., 2024). Online recommendations such as user reviews, ratings, and influencer endorsements act as social proof that increases credibility, reduces perceived risk and information asymmetry between buyers and sellers (Hajli, 2020). When consumers perceive product information and peer recommendations as trustworthy, they are more likely to develop confidence in the platform and engage in impulsive buying behavior (Ampadu et al., 2022).

Despite extensive studies on impulsive buying, most focus on emotional or hedonic triggers (Gulfraz et al., 2022; Ngo et al., 2024), while fewer address the cognitive mechanisms that link information quality and social proof to trust and behavior (Chen et al., 2020). Thus, limited attention has been paid to how cognitive mechanisms, particularly e-trust mediate the relationship between informational and social stimuli and impulsive buying behavior, especially in emerging markets like Indonesia. Previous research has primarily been conducted in Western contexts (Attar et al., 2021; Hajli, 2020), where digital maturity and consumer trust differ significantly from emerging markets such as Indonesia (Juwaini et al., 2022). Some studies confirm that online information and

recommendations positively influence trust and impulse buying (Ampadu et al., 2022; Huwaida et al., 2024), others suggest that consumer trust requires further engagement to shape decisions (Qin et al., 2023). These inconsistencies indicate a theoretical and empirical research gap concerning the mediating role of e-trust in explaining how information quality and online recommendations influence impulsive buying in Indonesian social e-commerce.

E-trust, which refers to consumer confidence in the reliability and security of e-commerce platforms, plays a crucial role in mediating the relationship between social e-commerce features and impulse buying decisions (Fernández-Bonilla et al., 2022; Hong & Anh, 2023; Lu et al., 2016). According to Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) framework, information quality and online recommendations act as stimuli, e-trust functions as the organism representing internal cognitive evaluation, and impulsive buying decision serves as the response (Chen et al., 2020; Sanapang et al., 2024). Trust built through reviews and recommendations from other users can reduce uncertainty and perceived risks in online transaction (Handoyo, 2024; Lin et al., 2019). This theoretical approach provides a holistic view of how cognitive and social stimuli drive impulsive behavior through trust formation.

This study aims to examine the influence of information quality and online recommendations on impulsive buying decisions through e-trust as a mediator. This study offers several novel contributions. Theoretically, it extends the S-O-R model by integrating cognitive (information quality) and social (online recommendation) cues within a trust-based decision-making framework, particularly relevant for emerging digital markets. Empirically, it provides evidence from Indonesia, emphasizing how e-trust transforms online information and recommendations into impulsive purchase decisions in the context of social e-commerce (S-Commerce) platforms such as Shopee and TikTok Shop. Practically, it highlights how marketers can strengthen product information credibility and leverage authentic recommendations to build trust and responsibly encourage purchase behavior.

Based on the theoretical background and research objectives, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H1: Information quality has a positive and significant effect on e-trust.

H2: Online recommendations have a positive and significant effect on e-trust.

H3: E-trust has a positive and significant effect on impulsive buying decisions.

H4: E-trust mediates the relationship between information quality and impulsive buying decisions.

H5: E-trust mediates the relationship between online recommendations and impulsive buying decisions.

METHOD

This study adopted a quantitative explanatory research design. The approach was selected to test the causal relationships among information quality, online recommendations, e-trust, and impulsive buying decisions within Indonesia's social e-commerce context. Using S-O-R framework, this method enables statistical validation of how cognitive and social stimuli (information and recommendations) influence behavioral outcomes (impulsive buying decision) through e-trust. The population of this study consisted of 85,854 students of Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia (UPI) in the 2024/2025 academic year who had purchased products through social e-commerce platforms. University students were considered suitable respondents as they represent digitally active consumers with high online shopping engagement and a tendency toward impulsive buying. Using purposive sampling techniques, 120 respondents were selected based on the following criteria: (1) aged 17 years or older, and (2) had purchased products via social e-commerce platforms such as Shopee, TikTok Shop, Tokopedia, Lazada, or Instagram within the past six months. The final sample distribution comprised 46.7% Shopee users, 27.5% TikTok Shop users, 16.7% Tokopedia users, 6.7% Lazada users, and 2.5% Instagram users. Primary data were collected through an online questionnaire distributed via Google Form. The questionnaire consisted of four main constructs measured using a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree). All constructs demonstrated acceptable reliability (Cronbach's $\alpha > 0.70$). Data were analyzed using PLS-SEM with SmartPLS 3.0. This technique was selected due to its suitability for predictive modeling and testing mediation effects in relatively small samples.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Characteristics and Experience of Respondents. This study surveyed 120 respondents. The majority of respondents were female (88%) and aged between 17-25 years (83%). Most respondents were undergraduate students (97%). Most respondents reported a monthly income below Rp 2,000,000 (62%), indicating a young, digitally active consumer group. Nearly all respondents had experience using Shopee (99%) and had shopped via e-commerce more than five times (76%). Cosmetics and skincare (66%) dominated the types of products purchased impulsively, and typically spent between Rp 101,000 and Rp 250,000 per transaction (49%).

Evaluation of the Measurement Model. Before testing the structural relationships, the reliability and validity of all constructs were assessed. The results indicated that all outer loading values exceeded 0.70, confirming strong convergent validity. Discriminant validity was also achieved as the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for each construct was greater than 0.50, and the square roots of AVE exceeded the inter-construct correlations, fulfilling the Fornell-Larcker criterion. Internal consistency was confirmed, with Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability values above the 0.70 threshold. Table 1 demonstrate that the measurement model met all reliability and validity requirements.

Table 1. Construct Reliability and Validity

	Cronbach's Alpha	Rho-A	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
ET	0.801	0.818	0.869	0.624
IBD	0.871	0.887	0.901	0.603
IQ	0.808	0.816	0.874	0.634
OR	0.778	0.782	0.871	0.692

(Source: Author's work)

Evaluation of the Structural Model. A test of the inner model was subsequently performed to determine the statistical significance of the correlations (see Fig. 1).

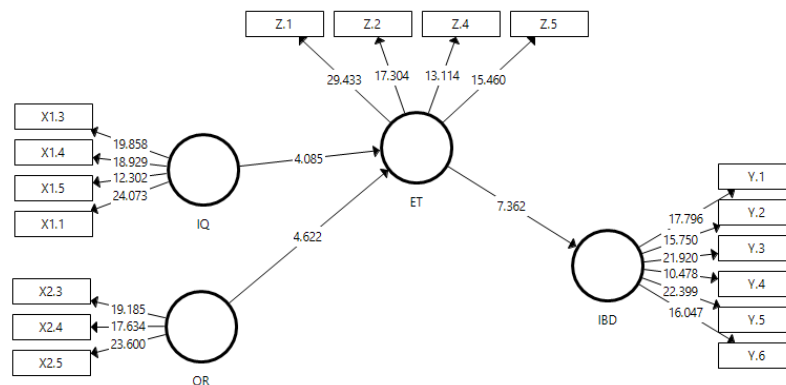


Figure 1. Research Model

(Source: Author's work)

The structural model was evaluated to test the hypothesized relationships among constructs. The model achieved satisfactory explanatory power, with $R^2 = 0.442$ for E-Trust and $R^2 = 0.205$ for Impulsive Buying Decision, indicating that information quality and online recommendations explain 44.2% of the variance in e-trust, while e-trust explains 20.5% of impulsive buying decision.

Table 2. Hypothesis Testing Results

	Path Coefficient (β)	T Statistics ($ O/STDEV $)	P Values	Hypothesis
H1: IQ - ET	0.354	4.085	<0.001**	Supported
H2: OR - ET	0.413	4.622	<0.001**	Supported
H3: ET - IBD	0.453	7.362	<0.001**	Supported
H4: IQ - ET - IBD	0.161	3.257	0.001**	Supported
H5: OR - ET - IBD	0.187	3.626	<0.001**	Supported

*Significant at $p < 0.05$; **Significant at $p < 0.001$. All hypotheses were supported at the 0.05 significance level

(Source: Author's work)

The results of hypothesis testing using the bootstrapping method confirmed that all proposed hypotheses were supported, as shown in Table 2. The structural model demonstrates a strong explanatory power, with all path coefficients showing significant and positive effects ($p < 0.05$). Both information quality and online recommendations significantly enhance e-trust, confirming that cognitive and social cues are critical determinants of trust in social e-commerce. This finding is consistent Al-kfairy et al. (2024), who emphasized that accurate, relevant, and complete information reduces uncertainty and strengthens consumer confidence in online transactions. Similarly, Ampadu et al. (2022) found that online consumers tend to rely on other consumers' reviews before making a purchase decision, in an effort to reduce the perceived risk associated with recommended products. E-trust exerts a significant positive influence on impulsive buying decisions (Hong & Anh, 2023), aligning with the S-O-R model (Chen et al., 2020), information quality and online recommendations act as external stimuli (S) that trigger internal cognitive responses (O) in the form of trust, which subsequently lead to behavioral outcomes (R) such as impulsive buying decision, consistent with Sanapang et al. (2024). When consumers perceive the information and recommendations on social commerce platforms as credible and reliable, they experience reduced cognitive risk and higher emotional comfort, encouraging them to make spontaneous purchase decisions (Chaudhary et al., 2025; Lu et al., 2016). The results confirm that e-trust fully mediates the relationship between

information quality, online recommendations, and impulsive buying behavior. This supports prior findings by Hajli (2020) and Attar et al. (2021), who highlighted the central role of digital trust as a cognitive mechanism that transforms informational and social stimuli into purchase actions. These findings also provide new empirical evidence that e-trust fully mediates the relationship between information quality, online recommendations, and impulsive buying behavior in the context of Indonesian social e-commerce.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that both information quality and online recommendations collectively enhance consumer trust which in turn stimulates impulsive buying decisions in social e-commerce. The findings confirm that e-trust functions as a key mediating mechanism that transforms cognitive and social stimuli into spontaneous purchase responses, consistent with the S-O-R model. Theoretically, this study extends the understanding of digital consumer behavior by integrating information credibility and social proof cues within a trust-based decision model. Practically, it emphasizes the importance of improving the information accuracy and online recommendations to strengthen consumer trust and encourage responsible impulse purchases. These results also contribute new empirical evidence to the understanding of digital trust mechanisms in Indonesia's social e-commerce context. Future research could further explore the role of emotional or situational factors, such as live-streaming intensity, to provide a more comprehensive understanding of impulsive buying in S-commerce contexts.

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