

A test of moderated serial mediation model of compulsive buying among Gen Z fandoms moderated by trash talking

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Abstract

Purpose – *The study aims to identify the factors that influence young consumers' compulsive buying, particularly Gen Z consumers who exhibit fandom qualities such as sharing the same interests and being willing to collaborate with others. This study investigates the direct and indirect impact of brand love and brand addiction on the relationship between social media addiction and compulsive buying.*

Design/methodology/approach – *The study collected data from 338 Gen Z fandoms. The snowball sampling approach is used to determine and collect data from the sample. To test for hypotheses, the study used the PROCESS macro with bootstrapping techniques to explore the direct and indirect relationships, as well as the moderated serial mediation model in this study.*

Findings – *The study found that social media addiction influences compulsive buying via the hierarchical linkages between brand love and brand addiction. Trash talking functions as a stimulant, amplifying the effect of brand addiction on compulsive buying.*

Research limitations/implications – *The data were collected from young Thai consumers; thus, the generalizability aspect of the research is limited and needs to be tested in different countries and cultures.*

Originality/value – *This research provides several key contributions to the understanding of compulsive buying behavior among Gen Z, particularly within the context of a developing country. By integrating the stimulus-organism-response framework and psychological theories, this study offers a nuanced understanding of how social media addiction influences emotional and behavioral outcomes. Previous studies have primarily focused on these variables in isolation. The study fills this gap by demonstrating the sequential pathway through which social media addiction translates into compulsive buying behavior via brand love and brand addiction.*

Keywords *Social media addiction, Compulsive buying, Brand love, Brand addiction, Gen Z, Trash talking*

Paper type *Research paper*

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1. Introduction

The widespread availability of mobile devices and smartphones has dramatically altered many parts of our lives. Social media is used by 4.95 billion people, or 61.4% of the global population, where Asia had the most online users worldwide, with over 2.93 billion at the most recent figure. Smartphones have changed consumer shopping habits so significantly that industry insiders predict mobile commerce revenues could reach \$700bn by 2025 (Bloomberg, 2022). Research has identified smartphones and social media addiction as major triggers for online purchasing (Djafarova and Bowes, 2021; Sharif and Khanekharab, 2017).

The Sprout Social Q4 Pulse Survey (2023) indicates that Gen Z, also known as “Gen Z,” usage on social media is continuously increasing with no signs of slowing down. Gen Z, referring to individuals born in 1995 or later, has never known a world without digital technology. They are tech-savvy and exposed to social media and mobile technology

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