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Exploring the Association between Social Media Marketing and Impulsive Buying Behaviour towards Clothing in Kanniyakumari District

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Abstract

The purpose of this research is to explore the association between social media marketing and impulsive buying behaviour towards clothing. This study also focuses on studying the social media marketing factors influencing their impulsive purchase of clothing. In this study, the social media marketing factors influencing consumers' impulsive purchases of clothing are discounts or limited deals, attractive content, trending or latest designs and ease of purchase. Further, the indicators of impulsive purchasing behaviour are purchase regret, unplanned purchases, strong urge to buy and purchase without thinking. This study is exploratory in nature and uses quantitative methods. It is based on primary data. The data were collected from 50 consumers in Kanniyakumari District, Tamil Nadu, India. It was collected online using a well-structured questionnaire. Judgemental sampling technique was used to gather data. The respondents were chosen based on the judgement that they are social media users and have purchased clothes through social media marketing impulsively. The statistical tools used were median, mode, mean score ranking and Spearman's rank correlation coefficient. The analyses were done using Jamovi v2.7.12 and MS Excel.

Major Findings: The findings of the study revealed that the major social media marketing factor influencing consumers' impulsive purchase of clothing is discounts or limited deals. Further, it was found that purchase regret is the main indicator of consumers' impulsive buying behaviour towards clothing. Moreover, the findings of the study highlighted that there is a very strong and positive association between social media marketing and impulsive buying behaviour towards clothing. It provides suggestions for consumers to overcome the impulsive buying of clothes in social media marketing.

Keywords: Discounts, Impulsive Buying Behaviour, Purchase Regret, Social Media Marketing, Trending or Latest Designs,

1. Introduction

Social media has transformed beyond its purpose of connecting people into a pivotal platform for marketing and influencing consumer behaviour (Ziyadin *et al.*, 2019). In the 21st century, social media has become a part of people's everyday lives (Mude & Undale, 2023). This makes social media marketing a massive opportunity for marketers to gain a large consumer base online in a cost-effective manner (Khanom, 2023). Social media marketing is a powerful type of digital marketing that utilises various social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Snapchat, Pinterest and WhatsApp to promote products and services (Nuseir, 2020). It involves activities such as advertising, interacting with consumers, sharing content and enhancing brand awareness (Plume & Slade, 2018). In this digital era, product purchase

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decisions are strongly influenced by social media platforms such as Facebook, YouTube, WhatsApp and Instagram (Alamsyah *et al.*, 2023). Social media networking is swiftly taking over the fashion industry and has shown to be a great way for consumers to get information before purchasing (Siddiqui *et al.*, 2025).

According to Soni *et al.* (2025), an impulse purchase is an unplanned decision to buy a product or service made before a purchase. It is a buying situation in which a consumer makes an immediate purchase decision to buy a product and buys without pre-planning. Impulsive buying behaviour refers to the patterns that a consumer follows to purchase impulsively (Karbasivar & Yarahmadi, 2011). Clothing retailers, in particular, have utilised social media marketing strategies to influence consumer behaviour, often targeting impulsive buying tendencies (Sudha & Bharathi, 2018). Factors including clothing design, discounted price, limited deals, season, trendy clothes and influencer marketing trigger consumers' impulsive purchase of clothing (Ciocodeică *et al.*, 2025). Most researchers have studied internal factors, such as emotional and psychological factors, influencing impulsive buying behaviour. Impulsive buying can lead to purchase regret and dissatisfaction (Sarwar *et al.*, 2024). Consumer dissatisfaction can drastically impact a business's profit, sales and brand image (Maqsood & Javed, 2019). Businesses need to maintain consumer satisfaction in the long run (Dovalienė *et al.*, 2007). Moreover, consumers struggle to overcome impulsive buying behaviour in social media marketing, especially while purchasing clothing. Hence, this is an issue that has to be addressed.

Since social media marketing has gained popularity, it has been studied by many researchers, especially relating to consumer buying behaviour. Some researchers have explored consumers' impulsive buying behaviour in social media marketing. However, there is a research gap in exploring the association between social media marketing and consumers' impulsive buying behaviour towards clothing products in Kanniyakumari District. This study bridges the gap by exploring the association between social media marketing and impulsive buying behaviour towards clothing among consumers in Kanniyakumari District, Tamil Nadu, India. Another primary objective is to examine the social media marketing factors that influence consumers' purchase of clothing.

2. Literature Review

Social media has the potential to impact consumers' impulse buying (Singh *et al.*, 2023). According to Bansal and Kumar (2018), impulse buying refers to a drive-to-buy or motivation-driven purchase, an unprepared choice to purchase an item or service made just before a purchase. Shafiq *et al.* (2022) stated that impulsive purchasing is an unplanned purchase made at the moment and in response to a stimulus. The indicators of impulsive buying are purchase regret, strong urge to buy, unplanned purchases and purchase without thinking (Karbasivar & Yarahmadi, 2011; Gulfraz *et al.*, 2022). As per various studies revealed a significant association between social media factors and impulsive buying behaviour (Sudha & Bharathi, 2018; Abdul *et al.*, 2019; Kazi *et al.*, 2019). Meanwhile, Saputra and Amani (2023) noticed a significant effect of social media marketing on impulsive purchases among young consumers. The factors influencing impulsive purchase are lifestyle traits, emotions, gender, hedonic motivation, trust, website quality, comments and reviews, payment facility, variety-seeking options, clothing design, discounts or special offers, ease of purchase and others' opinion (Mathur, 2019; Akter & Rimu, 2020; Ciocodeică *et al*., 2025).

The previous studies consistently show that social media marketing activities shape consumers' impulsive buying behaviour. This aligns with the Stimulus-Organism-Response model. This model is a widespread framework for researching online impulsive buying because it has traditionally provided the foundation for consumer behaviour studies (Chan *et al.*, 2017). Building on these insights, the current study is theoretically grounded in the Stimulus-Organism-Response model. As per the model, social media marketing represents the external stimulus, which influences consumers' emotions (organism), which leads to impulsive buying behaviour as the response. This framework provides the basis for examining

the association between social media marketing and impulsive buying behaviour towards clothing.

However, there exists a conceptual, methodological, theoretical and geographical gap in this area. There is limited research on exploring the association between social media marketing and impulsive buying behaviour towards clothing. There are also a few studies using Spearman's Rank Correlation for analysing the degree of relationship among the indicators of impulsive buying behaviour. Furthermore, there is limited research with respect to the consumers in Kanniyakumari District. Hence, this study aims to bridge the research gap by exploring the association between social media marketing and impulsive buying behaviour towards clothing in Kanyakumari District.

Based on the Stimulus-Organism-Response model, this study conceptualises social media marketing activities (stimulus) as external triggers that influence consumers' emotions (organism). These emotions result in impulsive buying behaviour (response). Accordingly, the study examines how social media marketing factors (such as discounts, attractive content, trending designs and ease of purchase) act as stimuli that lead to impulsive buying behaviour. This provides a theoretical basis for the hypothesis tested.

Based on the previous literature and the Stimulus-Organism-Response theory, this study attempts to analyse the following hypothesis:

H_0: There is no significant association between social media marketing and impulsive buying behaviour towards clothing.

3. Methodology

The study is exploratory in nature as it employs judgmental sampling and a relatively small sample size. The study is based on primary data, which was taken from 50 consumers in Kanniyakumari District, Tamil Nadu, India. This study uses quantitative methods to understand consumers' impulsive buying behaviour and the influential factors.

The data was collected using judgmental sampling. The respondents were chosen based on the judgment that they are social media users and have purchased clothes from social media marketing impulsively. It was collected using a well-structured questionnaire (see Appendix). The data collection was done online using Google Forms. In the questionnaire, a 5-point Likert scaling technique was used to measure the respondents' level of agreement with the statements related to the social media marketing factors that influence clothing purchases and impulsive buying behaviour.

The data was analysed using median, mode, percentage analysis, mean score ranking and Spearman's rank correlation coefficient. All the statistical analyses were performed using Jamovi v2.7.12, except the mean score ranking, which was done using MS Excel.

3.1 Reliability

The reliability of the questionnaire was tested using Cronbach's alpha. The Cronbach alpha value $\alpha > 0.70$ of the instrument indicates the reliability of the questionnaire. The reliability was checked using Jamovi v2.7.12. Table 1 depicts the Cronbach's alpha value of 0.945, which indicates excellent internal consistency. Hence, the questionnaire is highly reliable.

Table 1. Scale reliability statistics

Number of items	Cronbach's α
8	0.945

Source of Data: Jamovi Output

Table 2. Item reliability statistics

Constructs	Variables	If the item dropped, Cronbach's α
Social media marketing	Discounts or limited deals	0.938
	Attractive content	0.938
	Trending or latest design	0.939
	Ease of purchase	0.943
Impulsive buying behaviour	Unplanned purchases	0.935
	Strong urge to buy	0.934
	Purchase without thinking	0.935
	Purchase regret	0.937

Source of Data: Jamovi Output

The item-wise Cronbach's alpha values were computed to check the internal consistency of the scale, and the results are shown in Table 2.

4. Results

Table 3. Demographic profile of respondents

Demographic Variables	Categories	Frequency	Percent
Age	Less than 18 years	2	4
	18 – 28 years	26	52
	29 – 39 years	19	38
	Above 40 years	3	6
	TOTAL	50	100
Gender	Male	16	32
	Female	34	68
	TOTAL	50	100
Area	Rural	15	30
	Semi-urban	12	24
	Urban	23	46
	TOTAL	50	100
Occupation	Private Employee	23	46
	Self-employed	3	6
	Unemployed	7	14
	Student	17	34
	TOTAL	50	100

Source of Data: Primary Data

Table 3 highlights that most of the respondents are within the 18 – 28 age group. A majority of 68 per cent of the respondents are female. A majority of 46 per cent of the respondents are residing in urban areas. A majority of 46 per cent of the respondents are private employees. Therefore, the results show that most of the respondents are young female adults, working in the private sector and residing in urban areas.

Table 4. Descriptive statistics

Constructs	Variables	Median	Mode
Social Media Marketing	Discounts or limited deals	4	5
	Attractive content	4	4
	Trending or latest designs	4	5
	Ease of purchase	3	3[a]
Impulsive Buying Behaviour	Unplanned purchases	4	4
	Strong urge to buy	3.5	4
	Purchase without thinking	3	4
	Purchase regret	4	4

Note: [a]More than one mode exists; only the first is reported.
Source of Data: Jamovi Output

Table 4 presents the descriptive statistics of the social media marketing factors influencing the impulsive purchase of clothing and the indicators of impulsive buying behaviour of consumers towards clothing. It is revealed that most of the respondents strongly agree and more than half of the respondents agree that discounts or limited deals and trending or latest designs are influential factors of impulsive clothing purchase (Median = 4 and Mode = 5). Most respondents and more than half of the respondents agree that attractive content is an influential factor (Median and Mode = 4). Further, the majority of the respondents are neutral, that is, they neither agree nor disagree that ease of purchase is an influential factor.

Moreover, Table 4 highlights that most of the respondents agree that unplanned purchases and purchase regret are indicators of their impulsive buying behaviour. The majority of the respondents agree that a strong urge to buy is an indicator of impulsive buying behaviour (Mode = 4 and Median = 3.5). Meanwhile, most respondents agree, and more than half of the respondents neither agree nor disagree that purchase without thinking is an indicator of impulsive buying behaviour (Median = 3 and Mode = 4).

Table 5. Mean score ranking of social media marketing factors influencing the impulsive purchase of clothing

S. No.	Factors	Mean Score	Rank
1	Discounts or limited deals	3.6	I
2	Trending or latest design	3.56	II
3	Attractive content	3.42	III
4	Ease of purchase	3.2	IV

Source of Data: Primary Data

The social media marketing factors influencing impulsive clothing purchases are discounts or limited deals, trending or latest design, attractive content and ease of purchase (Mathur, 2019; Akter & Rimu, 2020; Ciocodeică *et al.*, 2025). Table 5 represents the mean score ranking results of the social media marketing factors that influence impulsive clothing purchases. It is evident that discounts or limited deals are the top social media marketing factor that influences the impulsive purchase of clothing. Trending or latest design holds the second rank. Attractive content holds the third rank. Ease of purchase holds the fourth rank.

Table 6. Mean score ranking of indicators of impulsive buying behaviour

S. No.	Indicators	Mean Score	Rank
1	Purchase regret	3.4	I
2	Strong urge to buy	3.34	II
3	Unplanned purchases	3.16	III
4	Purchase without thinking	3.14	IV

Source of Data: Primary Data

The indicators of impulsive buying behaviour are purchase regret, strong urge to buy, unplanned purchases and purchase without thinking (Karbasivar & Yarahmadi, 2011; Gulfraz *et al.*, 2022). Table 6 presents the results of the mean score ranking of the indicators of consumers' impulsive buying behaviour towards clothing. Purchase regret holds the topmost rank. Strong urge to buy holds the second rank. Unplanned purchases hold the third rank, and purchases without thinking hold the fourth rank. Hence, it is clear that purchase regret is the main indicator of consumers' impulsive buying behaviour towards clothing.

H_0: There is no significant association between social media marketing and impulsive buying behaviour towards clothing.

Table 7 presents the correlation between social media marketing and impulsive buying behaviour towards clothing. Since the p value is less than the significance value of 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected. Hence, there is a significant association between social media marketing and impulsive buying behaviour towards clothing. It is revealed that there is a very strong and positive correlation of 0.929. Thus, there is a very strong and positive association between social media marketing and consumers' impulsive buying behaviour towards clothing.

Table 7. Spearman's rank correlation coefficient

Variables	Correlation	p value
Social media marketing – Impulsive buying behaviour	0.929	<0.001

Source of Data: Jamovi Output

5. Discussions

The percentage analysis of the demographic profile revealed that most of the respondents were within the age group of 18 – 28 years, female, residing in an urban area and were private employees. This shows that the young female consumers who were working in the private sector, residing in an urban area, were mostly triggered to purchase impulsively through social media marketing.

The descriptive statistics indicated that most of the respondents strongly agree that discounts or limited deals and trending or latest designs influence their impulsive clothing purchase. This result is proven in earlier studies (Ciocodeică *et al*., 2025). In addition to that, most respondents agree that attractive content influences their impulsive clothing purchase. The descriptive statistics also highlighted that discounts or limited deals were the most influential factor.

The mean score rankings also confirmed that discounts or limited deals are the most influential factor in the impulsive purchase of clothing. This highlights the power of promotional strategies in digital platforms. Furthermore, the respondents in Kanyakumari District are clearly attracted to offers which trigger impulsive purchases. The second most vital factor was the trending or the latest designs. This indicates respondents' strong preference for fashionable clothing. Further, it was found that attractive content was the third major influencing factor, followed by ease of purchase. These results align with the prior research by Ciocodeică *et al.* (2025), who identified similar variables as key factors influencing impulsive purchase in the Romanian clothing industry.

Purchase regret was found to be the top impulsive buying behaviour towards clothing. This result may be interpreted in relation to the socio-economic and cultural context of Kanniyakumari District. The financial pressures, unmet high expectations and dissatisfaction are likely to contribute to this outcome. The prominence of purchase regret reflects both a psychological tendency and tension between

aspirational consumption and economic realities. Strong urge to buy was the second major impulsive buying behaviour, followed by unplanned purchases and purchases without thinking.

The present study revealed a very strong and positive association between social media marketing and impulsive buying behaviour. So, the null hypothesis was rejected. Hence, there is a significant association between social media marketing and impulsive buying behaviour towards clothing. This result agrees with earlier studies (Kazi *et al.*, 2019; Shafiq *et al.*, 2022). Nevertheless, unlike the earlier research, this study focuses on clothing products with reference to consumers in Kanniyakumari District. This extends the geographical and sectoral scope of impulsive buying literature. The result also suggests that social media marketing is a powerful external stimulus that has a strong association with the impulsive buying response.

The findings of this study are exploratory in nature and cannot be generalised to the entire population because of the limited sample size (n = 50). Furthermore, the study's small sample size limits the robustness of Spearman's rank correlation results, which should therefore be interpreted with caution. The associations identified through Spearman's rank correlation are indicative rather than definitive, reflecting only the experiences of consumers in Kanniyakumari District. In addition to that, there exists a selection bias because of judgmental sampling, where the respondents were chosen based on the judgment that they are social media users and have made impulsive clothing purchases. Consequently, the findings should be considered preliminary. Future research employing a larger sample size can examine the impact of social media marketing and impulsive buying behaviour towards clothing using statistical tools such as structural equation modelling (SEM) or regression analysis.

6. Conclusion

The results of this study have revealed that discounts or limited deals are the key factors that influence respondents' impulsive buying behaviour towards clothing. Moreover, the key finding is that impulsive buying of clothes has led to purchase regret. In order to overcome this, consumers can plan before purchasing, evaluate and research products before purchase, pause at least for a single day before making a purchase, create a shopping list and follow it and avoid emotional purchases.

Social media marketing is a type of digital marketing that can be a boon and a bane for consumers. It provides benefits including personalised social media advertisements and content, purchasing directly from brands, comparing products easily, as well as purchasing quickly and easily. Nevertheless, consumers tend to purchase without thinking or evaluating the product in social media marketing. This study has explored the association of social media marketing with consumers' impulsive buying behaviour towards clothing in Kanniyakumari District. Nevertheless, the findings are exploratory in nature and cannot be generalised to the entire population. It has also analysed the social media marketing factors influencing the impulsive purchase of clothes on social media marketing. Eventually, this research has provided suitable suggestions for consumers to avoid impulsive buying.

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Author Contribution

Jensy Devadhas undertook the conceptualisation, methodology, data collection, validation, data analysis and interpretation, presentation of data, writing the original draft and writing the review as well as editing. **S. Pushpalatha** provided supervision, guidance and feedback throughout the research process.

Appendix

Questionnaire

Section I

Demographic Profile

Age : ☐ Less than 18 years ☐ 18 – 28 years ☐ 29 – 39 years ☐ Above 40 years
Gender : ☐ Male ☐ Female
Area : ☐ Rural ☐ Urban ☐ Semi-urban
Occupation : ☐ Private employee ☐ Self-employed ☐ Unemployed ☐ Student

Section II

Impulsive Buying Behaviour

What are the factors that influence you to purchase clothes impulsively through social media marketing? *Rate your level of agreement with the following statements.*

Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Neutral (N), Disagree (D), Strongly Disagree (SD)

S. No.	Factors	SA	A	N	D	SD
1	Discounts or limited deals					
2	Trending or latest design					
3	Attractive content					
4	Ease of purchase					

What is your impulsive buying behaviour towards clothing in social media marketing? *Rate your level of agreement with the following statements.*

Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Neutral (N), Disagree (D), Strongly Disagree (SD)

S. No.	Indicators	SA	A	N	D	SD
1	Unplanned purchases					
2	Strong urge to buy					
3	Purchase without thinking					
4	Purchase regret					