

## **“A STUDY ON THE EFFECT OF SOCIAL MEDIA, ONLINE REVIEWS, AND PRICE DISCOUNT ON IMPULSE BUYING BEHAVIOUR”**

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### **Abstract**

The rapid growth of social media has significantly transformed consumer purchasing behavior in the digital era. Platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok have evolved into powerful marketing ecosystems that influence consumer attitudes, preferences, and buying decisions. This study examines the impact of social media exposure on impulse buying behavior, focusing on emotional triggers, influencer marketing, electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM), and promotional strategies. The research identifies that continuous exposure to targeted advertisements, time-limited offers, and peer reviews stimulates emotional arousal, urgency, and fear of missing out (FOMO), which significantly increases spontaneous purchase decisions.

The findings indicate a positive relationship between social media engagement and impulse buying intention, particularly among younger consumers. Additionally, situational factors such as increased online usage during the COVID-19 pandemic have intensified impulsive purchasing patterns. While social media marketing provides opportunities for businesses to enhance sales and customer engagement, ethical considerations and responsible consumption are essential for sustainable growth. The study concludes that social media acts as a powerful behavioral influence system shaping modern consumer decision-making.

### **Keywords**

Social Media Marketing, Impulse Buying Behavior, Consumer Behavior, Influencer Marketing, Electronic Word-of-Mouth (e-WOM), Emotional Triggers, Online Advertising, Digital Marketing, Purchase Intention, COVID-19 Impact

## Introduction

The digital revolution has reshaped global commerce. Traditional shopping patterns that once required physical store visits have gradually shifted toward online platforms. Social media is no longer merely a communication tool; it has become a powerful marketing ecosystem that directly influences consumer decisions.

Consumers today spend a substantial portion of their time browsing social networking sites. During this exposure, they encounter advertisements, influencer endorsements, peer reviews, flash sales, and limited-time offers. These elements collectively create emotional arousal, urgency, and fear of missing out (FOMO), leading to impulse buying behavior.

Impulse buying is not purely irrational behavior. It is often driven by psychological, emotional, and situational factors. The COVID-19 pandemic further intensified this trend by increasing online activity and digital consumption patterns.

## Concept Of Impulse Buying

Impulse buying is defined as a sudden, spontaneous purchase decision without prior planning. Unlike planned purchases, impulse buying is emotional rather than rational.

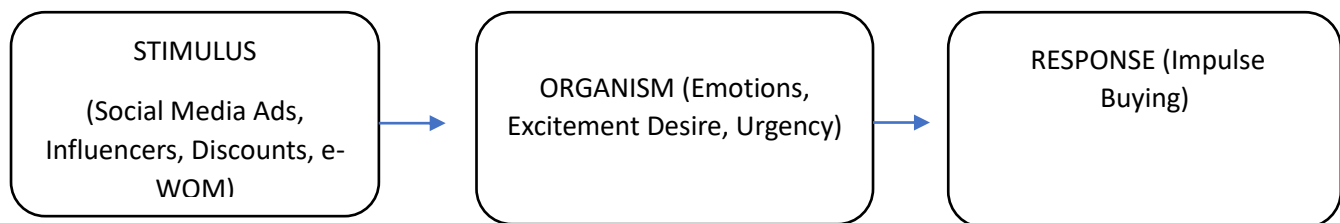
According to classical consumer behavior theories, impulse buying is characterized by:

- Immediate urge to buy
- Lack of pre-purchase evaluation
- Emotional dominance over cognitive reasoning
- Post-purchase regret in some cases

The concept was first widely discussed by retail researchers who observed that a significant percentage of purchases were unplanned. Modern digital platforms have amplified this behavior by providing one-click purchase options and instant payment systems.

## Theoretical Framework – Stimulus Organism Response (S-O-R) Model

The Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) Model explains how environmental stimuli influence internal emotional states, which then result in behavioral responses.



## Social Media as a Marketing Ecosystem

Social media platforms have evolved into integrated digital marketplaces. Businesses now use data analytics to target consumers based on browsing history, interests, and demographics.

**These platforms enable**

- Personalized advertisements
- Influencer collaborations
- Real-time customer engagement
- Electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM)

Unlike traditional advertising, social media marketing is interactive and emotionally engaging. Consumers are not just viewers; they actively participate by liking, sharing, commenting, and reviewing products.

**Key Factors Influencing Impulse Buying**

**Psychological and Marketing Factors**

Factor	Descriptive	Impact On Consumer
Emotional Appeal	Attractive Visuals and storytelling	Increases excitement
Scarcity	Limited Stock or time	Created urgency
Discounts	Price reductions	Perceived savings
Social Proof	Reviews & ratings	Builds trust
Influencer Promotion	Celebrity endorsement	Reduces risk perception
Flash Sales	Time-bound offers	Accelerates Decisions

These factors collectively reduce rational evaluation and strengthen emotional decision-making.

**Psychological Triggers of Impulse Buying**

Impulse buying is largely driven by psychological triggers such as:

- Emotional arousal
- Scarcity perception
- Social proof
- Instant gratification
- Fear of missing out (FOMO)

These elements reduce rational thinking and accelerate purchase decisions.

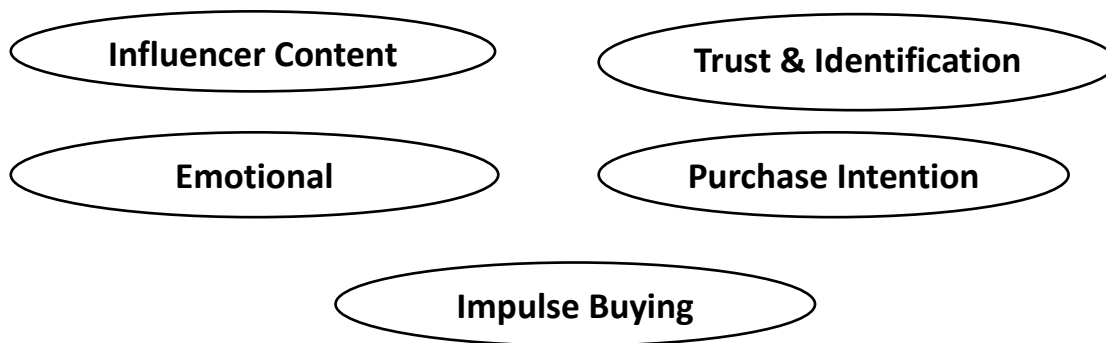
**Role of Influencer Marketing**

Influencer marketing plays a crucial role in triggering impulse purchases. Influencers build trust and credibility with their followers. When they promote products, consumers perceive the recommendation as authentic rather than commercial.

Micro-influencers, especially in beauty, fashion, and lifestyle industries, have a strong emotional connection with audiences. Their product demonstrations and personal experiences reduce perceived risk and increase purchase intention.

This parasocial relationship significantly influences young consumers.

Influencer Impact Factors



Young consumers, particularly those aged 18–30, are highly influenced by influencer-generated content.

### Impact of Discounts and Promotions

Price discounts are one of the strongest external stimuli influencing impulse buying. Research shows that limited-time discounts increase perceived value and reduce decision-making time. For example, beauty e-commerce platforms frequently provide promotional discounts, leading to spontaneous purchases. Consumers often justify impulse purchases by perceiving them as savings rather than expenses. It Includes

**Boost Short-Term Sales & Traffic:** Promotions create a sense of urgency, leading to immediate spikes in volume and increased store traffic. **Customer Behavior & Perception:** They trigger mental accounting, where consumers feel they are gaining extra value, increasing satisfaction. They can entice price-sensitive customers to try a new brand. **Inventory Management:** Promotions are effective for clearing out slow-moving or excess inventory to make room for new products.

The integration of e-commerce features such as in-app shopping, live streaming sales, and instant payment options has shortened the consumer decision-making process. As a result, social media not only creates brand awareness but also directly influences purchase intention and impulse buying behavior. By combining content, community, technology, and commerce, social media functions as a dynamic and powerful marketing ecosystem in the modern digital economy.

### Electronic Word-of-Mouth (e-WOM)

Electronic word-of-mouth refers to online reviews, ratings, and customer feedback. Consumers heavily rely on peer opinions before purchasing.

Positive reviews reduce uncertainty and increase confidence. Even when consumers did not initially intend to buy, exposure to strong positive feedback can create a sudden desire to purchase.

**Impact Of e-WOM on Buying Behavior**

Type of Review	Consumer Reaction	Buying Outcome
Positive Reviews	Trust increase	Higher impulse buying
Mixed Reviews	Hesitation	Delayed Purchase
Negative Reviews	Risk perception	Purchase avoidance

Research findings consistently indicate that strong positive reviews significantly increase impulse buying tendencies.

**Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic**

The COVID-19 pandemic significantly altered consumer behavior. Lockdowns increased screen time and online shopping dependency.

Studies observed:

- Increased panic buying
- Higher online engagement
- Emotional stress leading to impulsive decisions
- Growth of e-commerce sectors

Consumers used online shopping as both necessity and emotional coping mechanism.

**Comparative Analysis: Pre and Post COVID-19**

Aspect	Before COVID-19	During COVID-19
Online Usage	Moderate	High
Impulse Buying	Occasional	Frequent
Emotional Stress	Normal	Elevated
Online Shopping Dependency	Limited	Essential

**Research Methodology**

The research methodology adopted in the reviewed studies was primarily quantitative. Data was collected through online questionnaires distributed among social media users.

Common characteristics:

- Sample size: 300–500 respondents
- Age group: 18–35 dominant
- Statistical tools: Regression analysis, Structural Equation Modeling (SEM)

The findings consistently indicated a positive relationship between social media exposure and impulse buying behavior.

The studies reviewed primarily used quantitative research designs. Data was collected using structured questionnaires distributed among active social media users.

#### Research Design Table

Component	Descriptive
Research Type	Descriptive
Data Type	Primary & Secondary
Sample Size	300-500 respondents
Age Group	18-35 dominant
Tools Used	Regression Analysis, SEM
Software	SPSS / AMOS

#### Detailed Findings and Analysis

The analysis of the collected data and reviewed studies clearly indicates a significant positive relationship between social media exposure and impulse buying behavior. Statistical results from multiple research papers show that higher levels of time spent on social media platforms are directly associated with increased unplanned purchases. Correlation and regression analyses in the studies consistently reported significant values ( $p < 0.05$ ), confirming that social media usage is a strong predictor of impulse buying intention. This suggests that continuous exposure to advertisements, influencer content, and promotional messages stimulates spontaneous purchasing decisions.

Overall, the detailed analysis confirms that social media acts as a powerful environmental stimulus that shapes consumer psychology. Emotional engagement, trust in influencers, promotional strategies, and situational factors collectively contribute to impulse buying behavior. These findings emphasize the need for businesses to adopt responsible marketing strategies while leveraging digital platforms effectively.

(Expanded explanation)

#### Statistical results across studies indicate:

- Social media advertising significantly influences impulse buying intention.
- Emotional engagement mediates purchase behavior.
- During COVID-19, impulse buying increased significantly.
- Social media community effects vary across cultures.

Regression analysis often showed significant p-values ( $<0.05$ ), indicating strong relationships.

Youth consumers and females were more influenced by social media promotions compared to other demographic groups.

## Statistical Findings

Most studies found a significant positive relationship between social media exposure and impulse buying.

### Example Statistical Summary

Variable	Correlation Value (r)	Significance Level
Social Media Usage & Impulse Buying	0.60 - 0.70	$p < 0.05$
Influencer Trust & Purchase Intention	0.55	$p < 0.05$
Discounts & Impulse Buying	0.68	$p < 0.01$

These values indicate a strong positive association.

## Comparative Analysis

The present study conducts a comparative analysis of three major factors influencing impulse buying behavior: social media, online reviews, and price discounts. Each of these variables plays a distinct yet interconnected role in shaping consumer purchase decisions, particularly in the digital marketplace. While all three factors stimulate unplanned purchases, the nature, intensity, and sustainability of their impact differ significantly.

Social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube primarily influence impulse buying through emotional and visual appeal. The use of influencer marketing, targeted advertisements, reels, and engaging content creates desire and aspiration among consumers. Social media marketing operates largely on psychological triggers such as social proof, lifestyle association, and fear of missing out (FOMO).

In conclusion, the effect of social media, online reviews, and price discounts on impulse buying varies in terms of psychological mechanism, speed of influence, and long-term effectiveness. An integrated marketing strategy that combines emotional engagement through social media, credibility through online reviews, and urgency through price discounts is likely to maximize impulse purchasing behavior in the competitive digital marketplace.

## Managerial Implications

Businesses can leverage impulse buying tendencies to increase sales. However, ethical marketing practices must be maintained. The findings of this study provide important implications for managers and marketing professionals operating in the digital environment. Since social media significantly influences impulse buying behavior, organizations must strategically design their marketing campaigns to capture consumer attention while maintaining ethical standards. Managers should focus on creating emotionally engaging content that connects with the target audience. High-quality visuals, storytelling techniques, short-form videos, and interactive posts can stimulate consumer interest and increase purchase intention. However, such strategies should be aligned with brand values to ensure long-term credibility rather than short-term sales spikes. Managers must also implement responsible promotional strategies.

While flash sales, limited-time offers, and scarcity tactics can increase impulse purchases, excessive or misleading promotions may damage brand reputation. Transparent pricing, clear return policies, and customer support services are essential for maintaining long-term customer relationships. Furthermore, companies should develop customer retention strategies such as loyalty programs and post-purchase engagement to transform impulse buyers into repeat customers. By balancing profitability with ethical responsibility, managers can sustainably leverage social media as a powerful marketing tool in the competitive digital marketplace.

Companies should:

- Use transparent pricing
- Avoid misleading scarcity tactics
- Focus on customer satisfaction
- Encourage responsible consumption

Sustainable marketing builds long-term brand loyalty.

### Managerial Strategy Table

Strategy	Expected Outcome
Personalized Ads	Higher Engagement
Authentic Influencers	Increased trust
Transparent Pricing	Long-term loyalty
Ethical Scarcity Tactics	Sustainable Branding

### Future Scope of the Study

The relationship between social media and impulse buying behavior is expected to grow stronger with technological advancements. Future research can examine the impact of Artificial Intelligence–based personalized advertising, algorithm-driven recommendations, and data analytics in shaping spontaneous purchase decisions. As digital platforms become more customized, understanding how targeted content influences emotional triggers will be an important area of study.

Another important direction for future research is the role of emerging technologies such as virtual reality shopping, augmented reality product trials, and immersive digital environments. Longitudinal research can help determine whether impulse buying becomes habitual over time. Additionally, examining consumer protection policies and ethical marketing practices will be essential to ensure a balance between business growth and responsible consumption in the digital era. In conclusion, the future scope of research in this area is vast and dynamic. With continuous technological advancements and changing consumer psychology, the study of social media’s impact on impulse buying will remain highly relevant for academics, marketers, policymakers, and businesses alike.

## Advantages and Disadvantages

### Social Media

Advantages	Disadvantages
Creates strong emotional connection with consumers	Impact may be short-term due to changing trends
Increases brand awareness quickly	Advertisement fatigue among users
Influencer marketing boosts impulse buying	Risk of misleading promotions
Cost-effective compared to traditional media	Negative comments spread quickly
Highly targeted advertising	Overexposure reduces credibility

Examples: Platforms like Instagram and YouTube.

### Online Reviews

Advantages	Disadvantage
Builds consumer confidence through real customer experiences	Fake reviews can damage trust
Helps consumers make informed and faster decisions	Negative reviews may discourage potential buyers
Provides feedback for product and service enhancement	Public criticism may harm brand reputation
Acts as free promotion through positive word-of-mouth	Competitors may post misleading reviews
Improves online ranking and attracts more customers	Difficult to control spread of negative comments

Example :customer posts a 5-star review praising fast delivery and product quality, encouraging others to buy.

### Limitations of the Study

This study has several limitations that should be considered while interpreting the findings. First, the research is primarily based on self-reported data collected through questionnaires, which may lead to response bias. Participants might not accurately report their actual buying behavior due to memory errors or social desirability bias. Therefore, the results may not fully reflect real-time consumer behavior. Second, the study is limited to a specific geographic region and demographic group, mainly focusing on young social media users. Consumer behavior can vary across cultures, income levels, and age groups.

Hence, the findings cannot be fully generalized to all populations or international markets without further cross-cultural research. Finally, the research mainly adopts a short-term and cross-sectional approach, which does not examine long-term behavioral changes. Impulse buying behavior may evolve over time as consumers become more aware of digital marketing strategies. Future studies using longitudinal methods would provide deeper insights into how social media influence changes over an extended period.

## Conclusion

The study concludes that social media plays a significant role in shaping modern consumer purchasing behavior, particularly in influencing impulse buying decisions. Continuous exposure to digital advertisements, influencer promotions, online reviews, and time-limited offers creates emotional stimulation that reduces rational evaluation and encourages spontaneous purchases. The integration of social media with e-commerce platforms has made the buying process faster and more convenient, further increasing the likelihood of impulsive purchases. The findings also highlight that emotional engagement, trust in influencers, electronic word-of-mouth, and promotional strategies are key drivers of impulse buying. Demographic factors such as age and gender influence the intensity of this behavior, with younger consumers being more susceptible to digital marketing stimuli. However, ethical marketing practices and consumer awareness are essential to ensure responsible consumption. A balanced approach between strategic promotion and consumer protection is necessary for sustainable growth in the digital marketplace.

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