EXPLORING A STRUCTURED INFLUENCE FRAMEWORK OF IMPULSIVE BUYING BEHAVIOR AMONG TEENAGERS IN THE FAST-FASHION SECTOR

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Abstract: The current paper examines how different influences come together to share impulsive buying among teenagers in the fast-fashion sector. This study focuses social, personal and emotional factors that quietly guide and build their choices. The method used in this study is ISM which includes expert views to understand each factor is related to each-other. These inputs were then formed into matrices and arranged in clear levels. The final digraph represents the way peer influence, social media content, materialism, and self-control impact impulsive buying. This study explains why teenagers react so quickly to trends, especially for fast-fashion brands. This study offers a simple structure that can support future work in this area and also gives practical insights that can help managers, society and common people to understand the teenage buying habits in a clear and organized way.

Keywords: Impulsive buying; teenagers; fast-fashion; social media; ISM model.

INTRODUCTION:

Fast Fashion brands have become very popular now-a-days specially among teenagers because they offer new styles with very reasonable and affordable prices. In the stage, when teenagers try to shape their identity and the way they choose their clothing becomes a way to express themselves. Because of this, they react strongly to emotional signals and easily make decision of purchasing. They enjoy shopping because it lifts their mood and gives them relief from their mundane life. Some teenagers have a desire to match with the attires, clothing styles of their friends and some have the urge to follow the trend online.

In today's era when fashion-trends change so quickly, teenagers are prone to buy things the moment they see them. These purchases are instant and doesn't require much of planning. It makes impulsive buying an important behavior to study in this age group.

In the previous studies, researchers have noted the strong triggers for unplanned buying in fast-fashion environment, especially among teenagers (Rook & Fisher, 1995). Previous studies have shown that teenagers make shopping decisions out of excitement, peer approval, or sudden emotional reactions (Park et al., 2006). The exposure to social media also contributes to this behavior as young consumers spend a large time of their day on social media platforms. They come across various influencer, advertisements on these platforms which expose them to new fashion trends. Such content create desire in them to buy similar clothes. This exposure plays an important role in encouraging fashion-related impulse buying among young consumers (Djafarova & Bowes, 2021). The purpose of this paper is to build a simple, structured framework that shows these influences shape impulsive buying behavior among teenagers. This study hopes to offer clearer insights that can help parents, educators, policymakers and brands to understand such behavior in a better way.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Previous researches have shown that impulsive buying among teenagers is closely affected by their personal motives and emotional triggers. The values related to materialistic things generally make teenagers more attracted to new fashion items; because it makes them feel very much associated with the belongings with self and social acceptance (Dittmar, 2005). Sometimes teenagers want something so strongly that they find it difficult to resist and think before buying that stuff, this is referred to as lack of self-control. It has been studied in various studies that when emotions rise quickly, it weakens the decision-making of thoughtful decisions (Vohs & Faber, 2007).

This behavior is also shaped by social and environmental factors. Teenagers tend to seek their friend's approval which lead them to imitate and adopt their friend circle's fashion choices. This practice encourages them to quickly purchase and make the shopping experience enjoyable and exciting (O'Cass, 2004). Social media platforms also expose young shopper to influencers, trending styles and fashion updates. It has been studied in the previous researches that repeated exposure to online fashion content can arise desire in teenagers and can push them towards spontaneous buying decisions (Verhagen & van Dolen, 2011). When the effects of these factors combine, teenagers become more likely to buy fast-fashion items even without planning.

Although various studies have explained the factors separately but there is still a need to bring them altogether in one model. There is also a limited research that focuses on teenagers and their behavior as a result of strong emotional and social cues during shopping. Although recent work marks the increasing role of social media

platforms in impulsive buying, yet the combines effect with psychological and social factors have still not been clearly mapped (Djafarova & Bowes, 2021; Park etal., 2006; Rook & Fisher, 1995).

The objective of this study is to develop a clear, simple and structured framework that explains how materialism, self-control, hedonic motives, peer influence, social media exposure and impulsive buying tendency affect impulsive buying behavior among teenagers. This study intends to examine how these factors work together in the fast-fashion environment.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The technique used in this study to understand the interconnectedness among different factors related to teenager's impulsive buying behavior, is Interpretative Structural Modelling (ISM). ISM helps to arrange factors in a simple and clear order of their affecting relationships as which factor have influence on another factor. The first step in ISM is to select the key factors through literature review and expert opinion (Table 1). Then the experts are asked to set contextual relationships among the factors. With the help of these contextual relationships, a VAXO matrix is created that show how one factor influences another. Experts choose symbols V, A, X, O to describe the type of relationships between two factors. If factor X influences factor Y, then they mark 'V'. If Y factor influences X factor, then they mark 'A'. If both factors influence each other, they mark 'X'. And, if there is no relationship between both the factors, they mark 'O'. This matrix becomes the starting point for further steps in ISM techniques. These responses in the form of symbols - V, A, X, O are used to create a Self-Structural Interaction Matrix (SSIM). SSIM is formed by converting these symbols into 1 and 0 and it shows direct relationships among these factors (Warfield, 2010).

After forming the SSIM, the matrix is converted into a reachability matrix that helps in identifying the levels of hierarchy among the identified factors. From reachability matrix a final reachability matrix is formed after removing the transitivity. Transitivity is added to include the indirect relationships in this model. After several iterations, the matrix becomes stable and helps in identifying the ISM hierarchy. It helps in creating a clear digraph or model that aids in identifying which factors are dependent ones and which drive another factor. The created digraph or directed graph gives a structured view of how these factors interact (Sage, 1977; Attri et al., 2013). This method is quite useful especially when human judgements and expert knowledge are important for understanding complex behavioral issues.

TABLE 1
Identified Key Factors

SN	Name of Antecedents	Abbreviation	Definition of the Antecedent
1	Materialism	MAT	Materialism refers to the belief that possessing more materialistic things like clothes, gadgets or accessories makes a person happier and more successful.
2	Reduced Self-Control	RSC	Reduced self-control is the condition when someone finds it hard to stop them from acting on sudden wants or emotions.
3	Impulsive Buying Behavior	IBB	Impulsive Buying Behavior is the pattern of actions when someone buys something without planning and thinking about its need.
4	Hedonic Shopping Motivation	HSM	Hedonic Shopping Motivation means to enjoy shopping because it feels fun or exciting.
5	Peer Influence	PI	Peer Influence takes place when friends and peers affect what a teenager should buy by affecting their likes and preferences.
6	Social Media Exposure	SME	Social Media Exposure refers to the time someone spent on social media platforms like Instagram, Snapchat, Facebook while seeing other's post, advertisements, trends, etc.
7	Impulsive Buying Tendency	IBT	Impulsive Buying Tendency is a natural habit when someone ends up buying things without much thought.

Data Analysis

The contextual relationships for this study were collected from a group of 19 experts from academic and industry background who have experience with consumer behavior, fast-fashion, and teenage buying patterns. Each expert was asked to share how one factor affected another on the basis of their knowledge and its practical understanding. For every factor, the responses given by majority of the experts were considered and entered in the VAXO matrix

(Table 2). Then these responses were furnished in SSIM which showed the influence of one factor on another (Table 3). After this, the SSIM was converted into a reachability matrix by making the necessary adjustments.

TABLE 2VAXO Matrix

	MAT	RSC	IBB	HSM	PI	SME	IBT
MAT	--	V	V	A	A	A	A
RSC		--	V	A	A	A	A
IBB			--	A	A	A	A
HSM				--	A	A	X
PI					--	O	V
SME						--	V
IBT							--

TABLE 3 Self- Structured Interaction Matrix (SSIM)

	MAT	RSC	IBB	HSM	PI	SME	IBT
MAT	--	1	1	0	0	0	0
RSC	0	--	1	0	0	0	0
IBB	0	0	--	0	0	0	0
HSM	1	1	1	--	0	0	1
PI	1	1	1	1	--	0	1
SME	1	1	1	1	0	--	1
IBT	1	1	1	1	0	0	--

There were no indirect links found in the system, so final reachability matrix was developed after checking for transitivity (Table 4). After forming the final reachability matrix, the factors were placed into different iteration levels to check which one drives another factor and which one depends on another (Table 5- Table 9). Then checking iteration levels for all the factors, different levels were achieved. On the basis of those levels, a digraph or directed graph was formed which helped in identifying the hierarchy among the factors.

TABLE 4 FINAL REACHABILITY MATRIX (FRM)

	MAT	RSC	IBB	HSM	PI	SME	IBT	Driving Power
1. MAT	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	3
2. RSC	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	2
3. IBB	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
4. HSM	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	5
5. PI	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	6
6. SME	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	6
7. IBT	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	5
Dependence	5	6	7	4	1	1	4	

TABLE 5 Level Iteration 1

SN	Reachability Set	Antecedent Set	Intersection Set	Level Iteration
1	MAT, RSC, IBB	MAT, HSM, PI, SME, IBT	MAT	
2	RSC, IBB	MAT, RSC, HSM, PI, SME, IBT	RSC	
3	IBB	MAT, RSC, IBB, HSM, PI, SME, IBT	IBB	**LEVEL 1**
4	MAT, RSC, IBB, HSM, IBT	HSM, PI, SME, IBT	HSM, IBT	
5	MAT, RSC, IBB, HSM, PI, IBT	PI	PI	
6	MAT, RSC, IBB, HSM, SME, IBT	SME	SME	
7	MAT, RSC, IBB, HSM, IBT	HSM, PI, SME, IBT	HSM, IBT	

TABLE 6 Level Iteration 2

SN	Reachability Set	Antecedent Set	Intersection Set	Level Iteration
1	MAT, RSC	MAT, HSM, PI, SME, IBT	MAT	
2	RSC	MAT, RSC, HSM, PI, SME, IBT	RSC	**LEVEL 2**
4	MAT, RSC, HSM, IBT	HSM, PI, SME, IBT	HSM, IBT	
5	MAT, RSC, HSM, PI, IBT	PI	PI	
6	MAT, RSC, HSM, SME, IBT	SME	SME	
7	MAT, RSC, HSM, IBT	HSM, PI, SME, IBT	HSM, IBT	

TABLE 7 Level Iteration 3

SN	Reachability Set	Antecedent Set	Intersection Set	Level Iteration
1	MAT	MAT, HSM, PI, SME, IBT	MAT	**LEVEL 3**
4	MAT, HSM, IBT	HSM, PI, SME, IBT	HSM, IBT	
5	MAT, HSM, PI, IBT	PI	PI	
6	MAT, HSM, SME, IBT	SME	SME	
7	MAT, HSM, IBT	HSM, PI, SME, IBT	HSM, IBT	

TABLE 8 Level Iteration 4

SN	Reachability Set	Antecedent Set	Intersection Set	Level Iteration
4	HSM, IBT	HSM, PI, SME, IBT	HSM, IBT	**LEVEL 4**
5	HSM, PI, IBT	PI	PI	
6	HSM, SME, IBT	SME	SME	
7	HSM, IBT	HSM, PI, SME, IBT	HSM, IBT	**LEVEL 4**

TABLE 9 Level Iteration 5

SN	Reachability Set	Antecedent Set	Intersection Set	Level Iteration
5	PI	PI	PI	**LEVEL 5**
6	SME	SME	SME	**LEVEL 5**

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The final digraph shows a clear flow of influence among the factors that cause impulsive buying among teenagers (Figure 1). At the base, social media exposure and peer influence work as the primary trigger. These two factors act like initial points because teenagers notice fashion ideas through friends or online. It has also been recorded in the previous studies that online content and peer approval push teenagers toward impulsive buying decisions (Djafarova & Bowes, 2021; Hu et al., 2019). These two factors shape impulsive buying tendency and hedonic shopping motivation. In layman language, teenagers who are very much engaged on social media platforms or are extensively guided by their friends generally starts shopping in a more spontaneous way. It leads them to develop impulse buying tendency (Verplanken & Herabadi, 2001).

In the next step, impulsive buying tendency and hedonic shopping motivation lead to materialism. This means at this stage, teenagers start giving more importance to brand, labels and fashionable items. When materialism grows, the effects of online trends and peer pressure becomes stronger. It has also been found in previous studies that materialistic teenagers depend more on possessions for experiencing emotional comfort (Podoshen et al., 2011). This model demonstrates that when materialistic values rise, teenagers generally find it harder to reject tempting offers or products. It has also been studies in previous studies that low self-control generally leads to unplanned and fast buying, especially when attractive offers are found (Baumeister et al., 2002). As an effect of these social, emotional and personal factors, the impulsive buying behavior develops. The ISM model in this study explains how simple, everyday influences like friends, online content, personal cues lead teenagers to buy fast-fashion products impulsively.
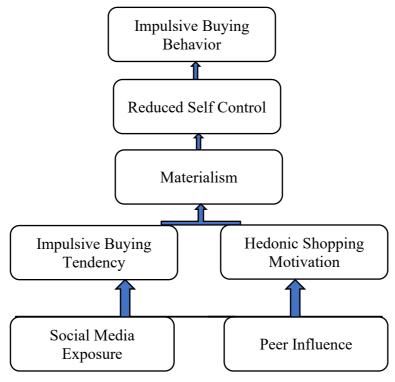
Figure 1: Structured Influence Framework of Impulsive Buying Behavior Among Teenagers

Implications
Theoretical Implications
• This study shows how different factors link together which help researchers understand that impulsive buying is a process not a single reaction.
• This model also adds clarity by placing social, emotional and personal influences in clear and simple system.
• This study also supports existing literature that says social media, peer influences and materialism shape buying habits, in a structured way.
• The ISM approach used here gives a simple framework that can be used to test with more factors and the results can also be compared across different age groups.

Managerial Implications
• This study can help fast-fashion brands that teens react strongly to social media content and peer influences. Therefore, it is important for them to consider responsible marketing.
• Fast-fashion companies can use these insights to design campaigns that do not push impulsive choices aggressively. Rather they should promote safer and thoughtful shopping messages.
• Retailers can also create store or app layouts that guide teenagers towards planned purchases, such as they need to show them need-based suggestions at first.
• Fast-fashion brands may focus on transparency and education in their promotions. It cannot be ignored that teenagers gets easily influenced by trends and emotional triggers.

Social Implications
• The findings indicate that the teenagers slip into impulsive buying practices very easily. This can help parents, teachers and societies to discuss more openly about healthy spending habits.
• When we understand how much social media and friends influence teenagers, it becomes easier for school and families to teach them the use of social media with more care.
• This study also shows that how materialism and low self-control affect young consumers. This understanding may inspire societies to organize awareness programs on emotional well-being and social media pressure.
• The insights from this study can help societies in thinking how fast-fashion trends shape youth values. It can encourage healthy discussions on sustainable and responsible consumption.

CONCLUSION

This study helped in establishing the relationship among the identified factors and the way they build up and shape impulse buying behavior among teenagers in the fast-fashion sector. It explains that impulsive buying behavior is developed through varied daily experiences including exposure to social media content, friends, development of

hedonic shopping motivations, materialistic approach and low self-control. This pattern can help researchers and practitioners in understanding that how these factors interacts and where teenagers require support and guidance. This study also adds a clear structure to previous studies and offers a simple way to look at teenager's buying behavior.

The model in this study shows that every factor has its own significance in shaping the overall shopping behavior of a teenager but real effect appears when they all come together. Even insignificant things like what friends say, how they think, what they like, what they see online, how much they like shopping, can build their own choices. These every-day influences make look harm-less on their own but with time they push teenagers towards making quick decisions that too without thinking and planning. This study also helps in looking at the whole picture together where it can be understood why fast-fashion feels so tempting to young people. These insights can help adults, brands and even teenagers in noticing these pressures and think more carefully about the way they affect real-life buying habits.

Limitations and Future Research Scope

There are certain limitations of this study that need to be kept in mind. The ISM method depends on expert opinions, so the result may vary if different experts are involved. This study focuses on only teenagers in the fast-fashion context. It means that the finding may not full applicable across other age-groups or product categories. Future researches can use larger surveys or statistical models to test these relationships among a wider group of teenagers. Researchers can also include new factors such as family environment, social media fatigue, or sustainable thinking to understand how teenage buying behavior is changing with time.

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