Influence of Instagram Influencers on Impulse Buying Behaviour in The Context of Fast Fashion

[1]Shobitha Kumari K & [2]Dr. Venkatesh Amin

[1] Research scholar, Institute of Management and Commerce Srinivas University, Mangalore- 575001, India
Google Scholar profile: Shobitha Kumari K - Google Scholar
[2]Professor, Institute of Management and Commerce Srinivas University, Mangalore- 575001, India
Google scholar profile: venkatesh S amin - Google Scholar

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ABSTRACT:

Study aims to examine the impact of Instagram influencers consumers impulse buying behaviour in fashion industry. Specifically, it investigates impacts of influencer credibility, authenticity and content characteristics in stimulating impulsive purchasing among Gen Z consumers. Quantitative approach was using survey methodology. Data was collected from 100 respondents within age group of 18 to 27, active Instagram users who have purchased products through social media platforms. Purposive random sampling was used to select participants. data analysis was conducted using SmartPLS 4.0 to test hypothesized relationship. The conceptual model includes four constructs influencer credibility, influencer authenticity, content informativeness and consumer impulsive buying behaviour. All the four constructs were measured using validated Likert scale items adopted from previous studies. Findings revealed that credibility and Authenticity of influencers have significant influence on impulse buying behaviour. Influencer authenticity has arrived as strongest predictor ($\beta = 0.496$, $p < 0.001$) followed by credibility. However, content informativeness dint not have significant impact on impulse buying behaviour. the model explained 51.5% of variance in impulse buying behaviour Indicating moderate predictive power. The sample size of study is limited to 95 and cross-sectional design restricting casual inferences. Future research should administer larger and more diverse sample across different age groups.

Keywords: Instagram influencers, impulsive buying behaviour, fast fashion, PLS-SEM, Gen Z, Instagram marketing, content informativeness.

1. Introduction

- Social media platforms have become inevitable part of day-to-day life of human beings. Which earlier was started for connecting people now has become market place where brands showcase their products. According to Kim and Ko (2012) social media enhances consumer engagement where in consumer will get to interact with the brands making them more confident about the brand. Social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, TikTok have become inevitable part in everybody's life. These strategies like sponsored post, paid promotions are becoming regular promotional strategies for the brands. Influencer marketing is one of the fast growing and most popular strategies implemented by the brands. Celebrity

influencers where mostly used before but currently there is huge rise in micro influencers who are considered as more credible and can be easily connected to day-to-day life. Djafarova and Rushworth (2017) have highlighted in their research how Instagram influencers are reaching a greater number of young consumers and by this increasing brand recognition. Fast fashion brands like Zara, H&M and Shein are mostly relying on influencer marketing to promote product and create brand awareness among consumers.

Exposure to fashion related content has drastically increased with the usage of advanced technologies. Some exposure often results in impulsive buying behaviour where consumers tend to make spontaneous and unplanned buying decision. Onofrei et al. (2022) has mentioned how social media exposure and interactions influence purchase decision of consumers.

Fashion trends are changing quickly which is encouraging the impulsive buying pattern among consumers. Other factors like affordable pricing strategy, aggressive digital marketing campaign also contributing to this. Instagram is one of the emerging market places which creates urgency and desire among followers by continuously sharing trendy outfits, haul videos, life style content etc. Trends like Get ready with me, Day in my life also gaining popularity enhancing purchase intention.

Present study aims to examine the influence of Instagram influencers on fast fashion consumers impulse buying behaviour. Specifically, study seeks to examine influence of influencer credibility on impulse buying behaviour, influence of authenticity on impulse buying behaviour and influence of content informativeness on consumers buying behaviour. By focusing on these objectives study contributes to existing literature on influencer marketing and provides valuable insights for both marketers and Instagram influencers.

Review of literature

Fast fashion and social media influencers

Fast fashion is defined as "business strategy which aims at reducing complexity in buying cycle and within short span of time getting new fashion into stores to satisfy consumer demand (Barnes & Lea-Greenwood, 2006). Emergence of technology has changed the fats fashion industry to great extend by enabling the direct communication between brands and the consumers, social media platforms like Instagram, Pinterest has become major channels where brands showcase their products and keep consumers updated about the latest trends.

With the growth of social media there is also emergence of influencers who can influence people to grate extend acting as mediators between brand and consumers. Unlike celebrity influencers. Social media or micro influencers can connect in better way with the consumers by establishing close relationship with their followers. According to Djafarova and Rushworth (2017), Instagram influencers can influence young set of people in a better way compared to other traditional modes of advertisement due to perceived reliability and trustworthiness. Campbell and Farrell (2020) also argued that authentic communication by influencers will create stronger consumer engagement.

Influencer credibility and impulse buying behaviour

In digital marketing environment, credibility plays a crucial role and acts as major determinant of consumer behaviour. According to Ohanian (1990), has defined credibility with the help of three determinants namely Expertise, trustworthiness and attractiveness. In social media era, credibility is perceived as knowledgeable and reliable recommendations which increases consumer confidence.

Lou and Yuan (2019) have demonstrated how influencer credibility significantly enhances consumer trust which will enhances consumers purchase decision. Similarly, Sokolova and Kefi (2020) also has argued that recommendations from influencers who are perceived as trustworthy is what consumers usually rely on before taking any purchase decision.

In the context of Fast fashion, where product life cycle is short, decisions are to be made quickly credibility has a very important role to play. When consumers want to take any decisions influencer recommendations can reduce uncertainty on

quality and trend relevance. Highly credible influencers can stimulate spontaneous purchase decision.

Influencer Authenticity and impulse buying behaviour

Authenticity is defined as extend to which influencer is perceived a genuine and authentic. in recent years authenticity has emerged the critical factor influencing consumer buying behaviour. With the growth of social media, where lot of contents are being showcased and in the era of excessive commercialization, consumers are valuing authentic content rather than sponsored or paid promotion.

According to Audrezet et al. (2020) authentic influencers are capable of maintaining stronger relationship with their followers. Authenticity enhances consumers trust and emotional attachment leading to perceiving of influencer recommendations. similarly, Trehan et al. (2025) also argued authenticity has the power of fostering higher levels of trust positively influencing consumer behaviour.

From the impulse buying behaviour perspective, authenticity can help in creating emotional connections with the followers encouraging spontaneous decisions on purchase. Once the influencers are perceived as genuine, urge to rely on their recommendations also increases,

Content informativeness and impulse buying behaviour.

Content informativeness refers to degree to which influencer contents provides information which is accurate and relevant. Information helps consumers in comparing the products and taking final decision regarding purchase. It also gives glimpse of quality of the products and influencers experience using those products.

Lou and Yuan (2019) have argued that content informativeness positively influences consumer trust and enhances purchase intention eliminating information asymmetry. Likewise, Andika et al. (2024) also found out that high quality information improves consumer engagement and strengthens communication effectiveness. However, there is mixed review regarding content informativeness obtained from previous studies especially pertaining to impulse buying behaviour. According to (Beatty & Ferrell, 1998), informativeness supports rational decision-making process whereas as impulse buying behaviour is often concerned with emotional responses and rational triggers.

Theoretical Foundation (S-O-R)

The Stimulus–Organism–Response (SOR) theory proposed by Mehrabian and Russell (1974) is one of the major theories for understanding consumer behaviour in digital environment. According to the theory external stimuli will have influence on consumers internal psychological states which is determinant of consumer behaviour.

In the present study, in the context of influencer marketing influencer credibility, Authenticity and content informativeness acts as external stimuli that shapes consumers cognitive evaluations. These evaluations result in behavioural responses such as impulse buying behaviour. Majority of the previous studies have integrated SOR framework to understand how social media interactions affect decision making process (Jacoby, 2002; Onofrei et al., 2022).

Determinants of impulsive buying behaviour

Rodrigues et al. (2021) has examined various factors influencing impulsive buying behaviour. He stated that factors like psychological, emotional and situational has greater impact on consumers buying behaviour which often results in spontaneous purchase decision.

Majority of the researches on impulsive buying behaviour have implemented Big Five personality model to explain impulsive buying tendencies. Previous studies also highlighted neuroticism has positive association with impulse buying behaviour, where in individuals with anxiety and mood fluctuations are more likely to make spontaneous purchase decision. The characteristics of impulsive buyers have identified as low self-esteem, anxiety, negative emotional states and stronger tendency towards obsessive compulsive buying g behaviour (Verplanken & Herabadi, 2001; Farid & Ali, 2018; Ahmed et al., 2023).

Psychological factors also play crucial role in influencing consumer impulse buying behaviour.

One of the major triggers being instant gratification, which means immediate satisfaction of desire without considering long term impacts of the same. Fear Of Missing Out (FOMO) is one of the major triggers especially in fashion industry due to limited time offers, exclusive offers and extensive promotion by influencers. Its is also identified from previous studies that consumers also often engage in impulse buying behaviour to improve mood and reduce stress (Beatty & Ferrell, 1998; Zheng et al., 2019; Verplanken & Herabadi, 2001).

Research gap

Despite of growing literature on influencer marketing, still there is lot of gap exists.

First majority of the studies predominantly focused on influence of social media influencers on consumer characteristics, attitudes and purchase intention (Lou & Yuan, 2019; Sokolova & Kefi, 2020). Limited studies focused on impulse buying behaviour particularly withing Fast fashion industry.

Secondly previous studies have focused individual influencer characteristics like credibility or authenticity, but to understand the exact consumers Reponses studding of combined impact of these influencer attributes which shapes consumer behaviour. Consequently, there is limited study examining effect of credibility, authenticity and content informativeness on impulse buying behaviour.

Thirdly, majority of the previous studies extensively investigated in western countries and studies in emerging economies like India still is under process. Since there is rapid growth of social media usage and expansion of Fast fashion market among youngsters, findings from western countries cannot be generalizable to Indian consumers.

Fourth, previous studies which were conducted focusing on content informativeness, there were mixed opinions regarding the effectiveness of informative content influencing consumer behaviour, wherein few studies suggest informative content enhances consumer trust and purchase decision in turn and few studies argues that impulse buying behaviour is driven by emotional and psychological triggers. These contradictory findings indicate further coper for research on the same.

Finally, application of Stimulus–Organism–Response (SOR) in the context of fast fashion is remains limited.

Addressing these gaps, present study examines influence of influencer credibility, authenticity and content informativeness on impulse buying behaviour among consumers in Bengaluru.

Hypotheses development

H1: Influencer credibility positively influences impulse buying behaviour.

H2: Influencer Authenticity positively influences impulse buying behaviour.

H3: Content informativeness positively influences impulse buying behaviour

Conceptual framework:

The conceptual framework of the present study is based on S-O-R framework proposed by Mehrabian and Russell (1974).

In the present study credibility authenticity and content informativeness are considered as external stimuli that influence consumers behavioural aspects in the form of impulse buying behaviour. The study is widely applied in studies related to consumer behaviour in digital environment as study focuses on how external stimuli influences induvial cognitive and emotional evaluations.

In the context of influencer marketing influencers act as external stimuli who shapes consumers perception and behaviour. Influencer Credibility, Authenticity and content informativeness are major determinants considered in the study and how they influence consumers in evaluating influencer generated content.

Credibility represents expertise, trustworthiness and attractiveness of influencers, Authenticity represents degree to which influencers are perceived as genuine and content informativeness refers to usefulness and relevance of information provided by influencer.

Previous studies have demonstrated credibility and expertise as most influential determinants in developing trust and favourable consumer responses (Lou & Yuan, 2019; Audrezet et al., 2020; Sokolova & Kefi, 2020). Even content informativeness is found out to be important dimension in enhancing consumer engagement.

Present study conceptualizes credibility , authenticity and content informativeness as external stimulus influencing consumer behaviour.

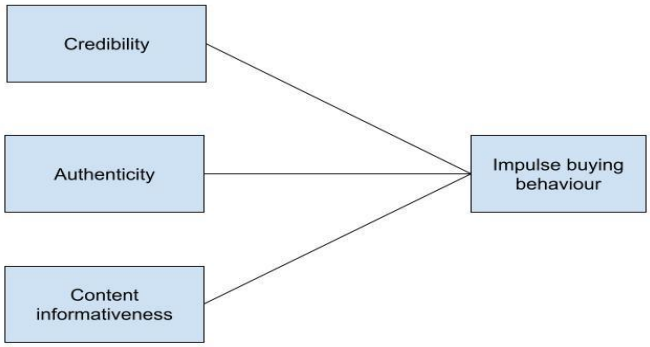

Figure 1: proposed conceptual framework of the study

2. Methodology

- **Design:** The present study adopted quantitative approach to examine the influence of Instagram influencer characteristics on impulse buying behaviour. A cross-sectional survey approach was employed it enables collection of data from large number of respondents and facilitates examination of variables.

- **Participants/Sample:** The study was conducted keeping Bengaluru as base location, wherein Bengaluru is one of the leading metropolitan cities in India major hub of technology and innovations. One of the major characteristics of the city is it's the city with large population of young consumers who are active social media users. City even witnessed growing importance of social media influencers. Fast fashion brands are also very popular in the city wherein people have huge exposure to new fashion trends.

The target population of study consisted of gen Z consumers aged between 18 to 27 who are highly exposed to latest technology and digital media trends. A convenience sampling technique was used collect data from respondents. A total of 100 responses were collected and after data screening and removal of incomplete responses, 95 responses were included for final analysis.

- **Instruments:** Data was collected through structured questionnaire administered through online platforms. The questionnaire consisted demographic profile, measurement items related to credibility, authenticity, content informativeness and impulse buying behaviour.

- **Procedure:** The measurement model was analysed through reliability and validity test, including factor loading, composite reliability (CR), Average Variance Extracted (AVE), and discriminant validity. Structural model was evaluated using path co efficient

- **Data Analysis:** Collected data was analysed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) through SmartPLS software.

When the sample size is small PL-SEM will be most suitable for data analysis.

3. Results

Indicator reliability

Indicator reliability was measured through outer loading. According to Hair et al. (2022) 0.70 is considered to be satisfactory indicator reliability. The outer loading ranged from 0.837 to 0.940 which exceeded the limit demonstrating satisfactory indicator reliability.

Particularly the loadings of constructs credibility ranged from 0.872 to 0.910, authenticity ranged from 0.837 to 0.880, content informativeness ranged between 0.839 to 0.891, and impulse buying from 0.848 to 0.940. therefore, all the indicators are retained for further analysis.

Internal consistency reliability

Internal consistency reliability was measured using Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) was used for assessing convergent validity.

Tabel 1: Table showing Internal consistency reliability

	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability	Average variance extracted (AVE)
Impulse Buying	0.918	0.942	0.803
Credibility	0.910	0.937	0.787
Authenticity	0.887	0.922	0.748
Content Informativeness	0.882	0.918	0.736

Recommended range for Cronbach's alpha is above 0.70 and all the dimensions exceeds this limit showing excellent internal consistency. Even composite reliability value exceeds the recommended limit.

The recommended limit for AVE is 0.50 and results which exceeds this limit ranging from 0.736 to 0.803, indicate convergent validity.

Discriminant validity

Fornell-Larcker criterion was used to assess discriminant validity. The results of the study indicates that all the constructs are empirically distinct from each other establishing adequate discriminant validity.

Structural model assessment

Evaluation of structural model was done through multicollinearity, coefficient of determination (R^2), path coefficients, and hypothesis testing.

Collinearity Assessment

This assessment was done through Variance Inflation Factor (VIF).

Table 2: table showing Collinearity assessment

	VIF
Authenticity -> Impulse Buying	2.686
Content Informativeness -> Impulse Buying	2.292
Credibility -> Impulse Buying	2.485

The results of the study show VIF values below 5, which indicates absence of multicollinearity issues among the constructs.

Coefficient of Determination (R^2)

This is used to measure the predictive power of model. The R2 value obtained was 0.515, which

indicates credibility, authenticity and content informativeness collectively explained 51.5% of variance in impulse buying behaviour.

Hypothesis testing

Hypothesis	Path	β	t-value	P values	Results
H1	Credibility -> Impulse Buying	0.362	3.237	0.001	Supported
H2	Authenticity -> Impulse Buying	0.496	4.013	0.000	Supported
H3	Content Informativeness -> Impulse Buying	-0.118	0.993	0.321	Not Supported

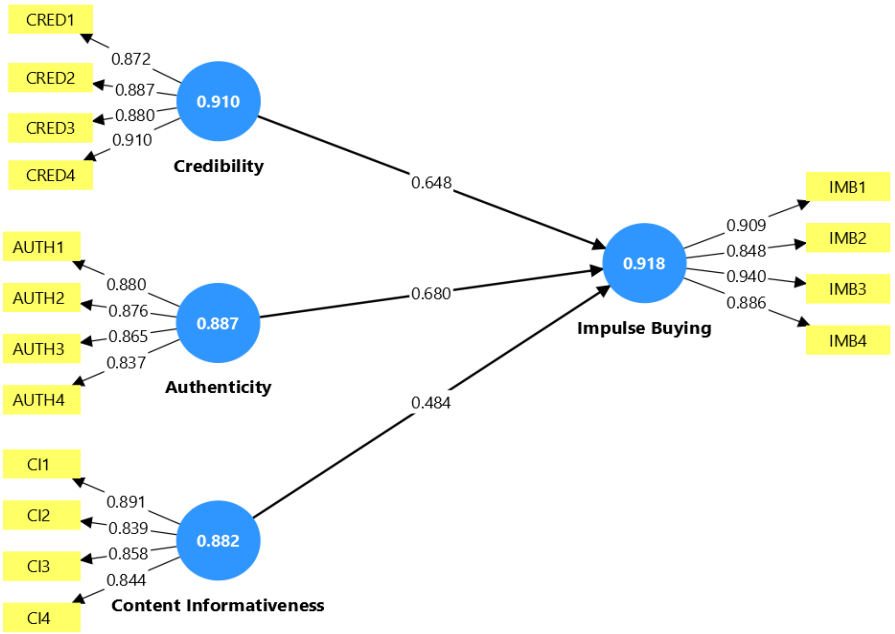

Figure 2: PLS-SEM Structural Model with Outer Loadings and Path Coefficients

4. Discussion

The results of the study clearly indicate credibility and Authenticity has significant influence on consumers impulse buying behaviour, Authenticity being strongest predictor the same. Its is clear from this that consumers are more likely to engage in impulse buying when influencers are perceived to be authentic and genuine. It also indicates that credible influencer's opinion will have positive impact on impulse buying behaviour.

Contrary to expectations, content informativeness did not significantly influence impulse buying behaviour. The findings can be interpreted as impulse buying behaviour is majorly driven by psychological factors and emotional factors informativeness comes secondary when any decisions are taken for

purchase. Trust what consumers have on influencers may make consumers take spontaneous decision rather that information about the product.

4.1 Implications of the study

Theoretical Implication

The present study adds to the body of existing literature on influence of Credibility, Authenticity and content informativeness on impulse buying behaviour of consumers. The findings extend the application of Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) theory highlighting that credibility and authenticity serve as important stimuli in impulsive purchase behaviour. Authenticity arrived as strongest predictor indicating genuine and transparent influencer communication can be best way to reach consumers and make them take spontaneous decision on purchase.

4.2 Managerial implications

The study provides valuable insights for fats fashion brands and social media influencers. since the authenticity emerged as strongest predictor of impulsive buying behaviour, brands should collaborate with those influencers who are genuine and transparent. Brands should also concentrate on encouraging genuine contents rather than just focusing on promotion of the product. Credibility construct throws light on fact that consumers will respond to recommendations of influencers those who are perceived to be expert and knowledgeable in their respective field.

Insignificant effect of content informativeness suggest that providing of excess information may not be necessary instead marketers can focus on emotional engagement with the consumers through story telling or sharing of authentic product experience which will enhance impulse buying.

4.3 Practical implication

The study highlights then role of Instagram influencers in enhancing impulse buying behaviour of consumers. It's clear from the results of the study that collaboration with credible and authentic influencers is major criteria in enhancing impulse buying behaviour.

5. Conclusion

The present study focused on three major aspects namely credibility, authenticity and content informativeness and their influence on impulse buying behaviour of Gen Z consumers. The findings of the study provide valuable insights on growing role of influencer marketing in digital environment. In particular results highlighted Authenticity and credibility as major dimensions in enhancing impulse buying behaviour suggesting the importance of being genuine and transparent when implementing influencer marketing for the brands.

Contrary to expectations, content informativeness arrived as not significant which strongly suggests especially in fast fashion concept where trends keep changing on seconds basis, its not information matters but the emotional and psychological connection with the influencer drives a greater number of consumers towards the brands promoted by them. The study further demonstrates that the influencer marketing has become beyond just promotional toll. It is psychological process where bond is formed with the influencers based on which trust is developed and results in the purchase decision. While study provided valuable insights on influence of Instagram influencers on fast fashion consumers impulse buying behaviour study is not free from limitation. First and foremost, the research population included in the study was 95, which is small number which may limit the generalizability of the results. Although the sample size was for PL-SEM analysis, future studies should employ larger and more diverse population to increase the reliability of the results. Secondly study included only three influencer related characteristics credibility, authenticity and content informativeness. Though these constructs explained the substantial proportion of variance, clear structure of the same will be available only when other related factors like attractiveness, para social interactions etc are considered. Future studies should incorporate these variables also to develop more

comprehensive model. Study focused exclusively on Instagram as social media platform. Future studies could consider conducting comparative analysis across multiple platforms to examine whether the influencer characteristics affect impulse buying behaviour differently across various platforms.

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7. Author Declaration

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