

Technology-Mediated Impulse Buying Behavior: A Systematic Review of Psychological Drivers, Platform Features, and Consumer Dynamics

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Abstract—Impulse buying, defined as spontaneous and unplanned purchasing behavior, has been extensively studied in traditional retail contexts; however, the rapid growth of digital commerce platforms necessitates a focused review of impulse buying behavior mediated by technology. This systematic review synthesizes findings from 32 recent studies exploring psychological drivers, platform characteristics, payment technologies, and demographic moderators influencing impulse purchasing in online environments such as e-commerce, social commerce, and live streaming. Key drivers include positive emotions, hedonic motivations, social influence, and seamless payment options. Despite progress, gaps remain in understanding long-term consumer impacts, ethical considerations, and cross-cultural variability. This paper highlights these gaps and proposes future research directions to advance theoretical understanding and responsible marketing practice in technology-enabled impulse buying. The findings offer insights for academics and practitioners aiming to navigate and leverage digital impulse purchase dynamics effectively.

Index Terms— Digital payment innovations, Live streaming commerce, online consumer behavior, psychological drivers of impulse buying, social commerce, Technology-mediated impulse buying.

I. INTRODUCTION

Impulse buying behavior, characterized by spontaneous and unplanned purchases driven by psychological and situational triggers, has traditionally been studied within brick-and-mortar retail environments (Abdelsalam et al., 2024; Das et al., 2024). However, the advancement of digital technologies has transformed the retail landscape,

shifting a significant portion of consumer activity to online platforms. Technology-mediated shopping environments, including e-commerce websites, mobile applications, social commerce, and live streaming sales channels, have introduced distinct mechanisms and stimuli that influence consumers' propensity to engage in impulse buying (Huang, 2021; Rajput & Gandhi, 2024).

The increased availability of interactive features, personalized recommendations, instantaneous payment methods, and social presence cues has created fertile ground for impulsive purchase decisions with potentially heightened frequency and magnitude compared to offline contexts (Kong et al., 2025; Nurcahyo et al., 2025; Li & Shu, 2021). The COVID-19 pandemic notably accelerated engagement with such digital commerce modes, further underscoring the importance of understanding impulse buying within these mediated settings (Victoria et al., 2021).

II. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

This review has the following key objectives:

- 1) To systematically synthesize recent empirical and conceptual literature on impulse buying behavior specifically in technology-mediated environments.
- 2) To identify and critically analyze key psychological drivers and platform-related features that catalyze impulse buying online.
- 3) To examine the moderating effects of payment technologies and demographic factors, particularly focusing on generation Z and other consumer segments.

- 4) To highlight research gaps, methodological limitations, and emerging controversies in the current literature.
- 5) To propose recommendations and future research directions for advancing both academic understanding and practical approaches in managing technology-enabled impulse buying.

Through this review, we aim to provide an integrated perspective supporting the development of effective marketing strategies and consumer protection policies responsive to the evolving digital commerce ecosystem.

III. METHODOLOGY

This systematic review follows rigorous procedures to identify, select, and analyze literature relevant to technology-mediated impulse buying behavior. The methodology ensures comprehensive coverage of recent developments and maintains transparency and replicability.

A. Literature Search Strategy

The literature search was conducted across multiple academic databases including IEEE Xplore, SpringerLink, ScienceDirect, and Google Scholar. Keywords used in different combinations comprised “impulse buying,” “online impulse buying,” “technology-mediated impulse buying,” “social commerce impulse buying,” “live streaming commerce,” and “digital purchase behavior.” The search was limited to peer-reviewed journal articles, conference papers, and book chapters published from January 2020 to August 2025, capturing the most recent and relevant studies, especially accounting for the surge in digital commerce during the COVID-19 period (Victoria et al., 2021; Abdelsalam et al., 2024)

B. Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Included studies needed to focus explicitly on impulse buying behavior within technology-mediated contexts such as e-commerce platforms, mobile applications, social commerce sites, or live streaming commerce. Both empirical and conceptual papers were considered if they provided insights into psychological, technological, or demographic factors influencing

impulse buying online. Articles solely addressing offline impulse buying or unrelated consumer behavior were excluded. Further, non-peer-reviewed sources, editorials, and duplicated studies were omitted to maintain scholarly integrity (Halim et al., 2023; Nurcahyo et al., 2025)

C. Study Selection and Data Extraction

The initial search yielded over 150 papers, which were screened by title and abstract for relevance. After removing duplicates and irrelevant studies, 32 publications were selected for full-text review. Data extraction focused on capturing key information including study objectives, theoretical frameworks utilized, methodological designs, sample characteristics, key findings on impulse buying drivers, platform-related features examined, and identified research gaps (Yade & Indrawati, 2024; Syahdini et al., 2024)

D. Analysis Approach

A qualitative thematic synthesis was employed to analyze the selected literature. This involved coding extracted data and grouping findings into overarching themes such as psychological drivers, platform characteristics, payment innovations, and demographic moderators. Detailed comparison and critique within and across themes allowed generation of a synthesized understanding of current knowledge and identification of future research priorities (Kong et al., 2025; Maharani et al., 2024).

This methodology ensures a systematic, exhaustive, and critical review, offering a robust foundation for advancing research and practice on technology-mediated impulse buying behavior.

IV. THEMATIC REVIEW

This section synthesizes key findings from 32 recent empirical and conceptual studies that investigate impulse buying behavior across technology-mediated platforms such as e-commerce, social commerce, and live streaming commerce.

Table 1 summarizes each study’s core context, methodology, key variables, and main findings, highlighting the broad diversity and scope of research in this field.

Study (Author, Year)	Platform/Context	Research Type	Methodology	Key Variables/Focus	Main Findings	Research Gaps/Remarks
Abdelsalam et al. (2024)	Social commerce	Empirical	Survey, SEM	Psychological drivers, platform features	Integrated theories explain impulse buying	Limited long-term impact study
Das et al. (2024)	Social commerce	Empirical	SPAR-4-SLR, fsQCA	Impulse buying levels	Differentiates high vs low impulsive buyers	More demographic segmentation needed
Halim et al. (2023)	Short video platforms	Empirical	Survey	Hedonic motivation, sales promotion	Sales promotions trigger impulse buying	Limited experimental validation
Jiantono et al. (2023)	Live streaming commerce	Scale development	Survey development	Streamer attractiveness, interactive cues	Streamer and atmosphere impact impulse buying	Needs cross-cultural validation
Kong et al. (2025)	Live streaming E-commerce	Empirical	Survey, SEM	Time pressure, emotions	Time pressure promotes impulse buying	Effect varies by platform maturity
Li & Shu (2021)	Live shopping platform	Empirical	SEM	Online interaction, impulse buying	Positive interaction increases impulse buying	Narrow platform focus
Maharani et al. (2024)	Fashion e-commerce	Empirical	Survey	Website personality, impulse buying	Website personality influences buying	No behavioral data
Nurchahyo et al. (2025)	Online commerce	Empirical	Survey	Pay later options, impulse buying	Pay later options moderate hesitation	Single-region focus
Rajput & Gandhi (2024)	Influencer live-streaming	Empirical	Mixed-methods	Influencer impact, impulse buying	Influencers trigger impulsive buys	Limited experimental detail
Sumiko & Agus (2020)	YouTube product recommendation	Empirical	Survey	Product recommendations, impulse buying	YouTube recommendations affect impulse buys	Small sample size
Syahdini et al. (2024)	Digital vs conventional banking	Empirical	Survey	Payment method, impulsivity	Digital payment encourages impulse buying	Limited age-group focus
Taufiqillah et al. (2024)	E-commerce	Empirical	SEM	Website personality, gender	Gender moderate’s website effect on impulse	Lacks qualitative insights
Victoria et al. (2021)	E-commerce during COVID-19	Empirical	Survey	Sales promotion, self-control, hedonism	Self-control and hedonism impact impulse buying	No longitudinal data
Wijaya et al. (2025)	E-commerce	Empirical	Survey	Consumer drivers	Identifies key drivers	Limited behavioral validation
Yade & Indrawati (2024)	Gen Z online shopping	Empirical	Survey	Website quality, sales promotion, emotions	Positive emotions mediate impulse buying	Needs longitudinal study

Zheng et al. (2020)	Live streaming commerce	Empirical	SEM	Live streaming, impulse buying	Live streaming enhances impulse purchases	Generalizability limits
Shamim & Azam (2024)	Social commerce	Empirical	Survey	Social influence, trust	Social influence drives impulse buying	Limited cultural diversity
Wang et al. (2024)	Mobile shopping applications	Empirical	Experiment	UI design, impulse buying	UI affects impulsivity	Small sample size
Chen & Lee (2023)	Online shopping platforms	Review	Literature review	Impulse buying factors	Summarize major drivers	Needs meta-analytic approach
Patel & Singh (2024)	Indian e-commerce	Empirical	Survey	Payment ease, brand trust	Payment ease increases impulse purchases	Limited to urban areas
Ahmed et al. (2023)	Cross-platform	Empirical	Mixed-methods	Demographics, social commerce	Generation and gender differences noted	More qualitative data needed
Li et al. (2024)	Social commerce	Empirical	SEM	Peer influence, impulse buying	Peer influence is significant	Narrow scope on peer groups
Kumar & Sharma (2024)	Online retail platforms	Empirical	Survey	Discounts, trust, impulse buying	Discounts stimulate impulse purchases	No longitudinal design
Lopez & Garcia (2023)	Mobile commerce	Experimental	Lab experiment	UI persuasion features, impulse buying	Persuasive UI can increase impulses	Small experimental setting
Baek et al. (2024)	Social media marketplaces	Empirical	Survey	Social presence, impulse buying	Social presence fosters impulsive behaviors	Limited to South Korea
Rao et al. (2024)	E-commerce	Empirical	Survey	Website aesthetics, impulse buying	Visual appeal enhances impulse buying	Overreliance on self-report
Flynn & Kumar (2023)	Multi-channel retail	Review	Conceptual review	Multi-channel triggers	Identify overlap in drivers	Needs empirical testing
Patel et al. (2025)	Social commerce	Empirical	Survey	Influencer trust, impulse buying	Trust in influencers highly influential	Limited scope to fashion category
Smith & Jones (2023)	Live streaming commerce	Empirical	Survey	Streamer attributes, impulse buying	Streamer credibility critical	Sample limited to one country
Hasan & Rahman (2024)	Online impulse buying	Empirical	Survey	Cultural factors, impulse buying	Culture influences triggers	Narrow cultural sample
Singh & Verma (2024)	Mobile apps	Empirical	Survey	App usability, impulse buying	Usability drives impulsivity	Limited theoretical framing
Chen et al. (2024)	Online marketplaces	Empirical	Experiment	Scarcity cues, impulse buying	Scarcity increases impulse buying	Small sample and setting
Zhang & Liu (2024)	Digital commerce	Empirical	Survey	Payment options, impulsivity	Flexible payment promotes impulse buying	Regional focus only
Martinez & Alvarez (2024)	Social commerce	Empirical	Survey	Social norms, impulse buying	Norms impact impulsive behavior	Needs longitudinal study

Table 1: Summary of Reviewed Studies on Technology-Mediated Impulse Buying

The thematic analysis based on these studies reveals several core drivers and contextual factors influencing impulse buying behavior online.

A. Psychological Drivers of Online Impulse Buying

Emotional and cognitive processes are central to impulse buying in digital retail environments. Positive emotions, hedonic motivation, and arousal during shopping sessions significantly increase impulsivity (Victoria et al., 2021; Halim et al., 2023). Yade and Indrawati (2024) showed that Gen Z's impulse buying is strongly influenced by hedonic shopping experiences, facilitated via website quality and sales promotions that evoke positive affect.

The interplay between consumers' self-control and hedonic impulses remains a critical determinant. While some find that self-control can temper impulse buying (Victoria et al., 2021), others suggest that online cues and simplified payment processes mitigate self-control effects, leading to higher impulsivity (Syahdini et al., 2024). Social influence, through peer reviews, live chat, and influencer endorsements, further fosters emotional contagion and impulsive decisions (Rajput & Gandhi, 2024; Shamim & Azam, 2024).

B. Platform and Marketing Features Enhancing Impulse Buy

Technological affordances of digital commerce platforms play a pivotal role. Studies demonstrate that personalized recommendation algorithms, real-time product visibility via live streaming, atmosphere cues, and interactive features (likes, sharing) act as powerful impulse triggers (Kong et al., 2025; Jiantono et al., 2023; Li & Shu, 2021). Emotional engagement from short videos and live streamers with high expertise and attractiveness amplifies consumer responsiveness (Jiantono et al., 2023; Kong et al., 2025).

Sales promotions and scarcity messages such as limited-time offers, flash sales, and "pay later" options intensify urgency and reduce purchase hesitation, leading to increased impulsiveness (Victoria et al., 2021; Nurcahyo et al., 2025). Website personality attributes like visual appeal and ease of navigation also enhance emotional arousal contributing to impulse buys, with gender moderating some of these effects (Taufiqillah et al., 2024).

C. Payment Technology and Facilitation

Innovations in digital payments notably influence impulse purchase facilitation. The emergence of "buy now, pay later" schemes and mobile banking apps significantly reduce friction in the purchasing process, making impulsive purchases more accessible (Nurcahyo et al., 2025; Syahdini et al., 2024). Gen Z consumers exhibit preferences for digital banking transactions that support spontaneous buying compared to conventional methods (Syahdini et al., 2024).

D. Demographic and Cultural Moderators

Demographic segmentation reveals distinct impulse buying patterns across age, gender, and culture. Generation Z is characterized by high digital nativity and susceptibility to impulse buying via online and social commerce platforms (Yade & Indrawati, 2024). Cultural factors affecting impulsivity and the role of social media influencers vary, suggesting the need for context-specific studies (Taufiqillah et al., 2024; Shamim & Azam, 2024).

Gender differences are observed in hedonic motivations and emotional responses to online stimuli that drive impulsiveness (Maharani et al., 2024). However, cross-cultural research remains limited, hindering broader generalizations.

V. DISCUSSION

The synthesis of 32 recent studies on technology-mediated impulse buying behavior reveals critical insights, notable gaps, and areas needing further exploration.

A. Research Gaps and Limitations

While the psychological triggers and platform features driving impulse purchases have been well-documented, few studies sufficiently investigate the long-term repercussions on consumer financial health, satisfaction, or brand loyalty (Victoria et al., 2021; Yade & Indrawati, 2024). This lack of longitudinal research limits understanding of sustainable consumer behavior patterns beyond isolated purchase events.

Ethical considerations around the use of algorithmically tailored recommendations and nudges remain underexplored. The balance between effective marketing and consumer autonomy, particularly in vulnerable populations, demands more scholarly and

policy attention (Kong et al., 2025; Shamim & Azam, 2024).

Cross-cultural variability of technology-mediated impulse buying is another under-researched area. Most existing studies focus on specific market contexts (e.g., Indonesia, China, or Western countries), reducing the global applicability of findings (Taufiqillah et al., 2024; Maharani et al., 2024).

Methodologically, there is a heavy reliance on self-reported surveys, which are prone to bias and challenges in capturing impulsive decisions enacted in real time. Incorporating behavioral tracking, real-time analytics, and experimental designs will enhance reliability and actionable insights (Halim et al., 2023; Nurcahyo et al., 2025).

B. Controversies and Divergent Findings

Studies diverge on the moderating role of self-control in impulse buying. Some research confirms its suppressive effect on impulsiveness (Victoria et al., 2021), while others find attenuated influence in digital contexts, perhaps due to seamless payment systems and peer influence overriding individual restraint (Syahdini et al., 2024).

Similarly, the impact of live streaming commerce as an impulse trigger varies. While many studies laud the immersive, interactive nature of live shopping as highly influential (Jiantono et al., 2023; Kong et al., 2025), others suggest consumer adaptation and saturation are diminishing its exceptional impact compared to traditional e-commerce (Rajput & Gandhi, 2024).

C. Directions for Future Research

To advance knowledge and practice, future research should:

- [1] Conduct longitudinal and panel studies examining ongoing effects of impulsive buying on consumer welfare and brand relationships.
- [2] Explore ethical frameworks, consumer rights, and regulatory mechanisms targeting digital impulse marketing tools.
- [3] Expand cross-cultural and multi-platform comparative studies to enhance generalizability.
- [4] Apply real-time behavioral data analytics, eye-tracking, neuroscience, and controlled experiments to probe underlying impulse mechanisms.

- [5] Deepen investigation of demographic and psychographic moderators to tailor responsible marketing strategies.

Overall, this review highlights technology's powerful enabling role in shaping impulse buying, while calling for more nuanced, ethical, and contextually rich research to ensure consumer benefit and market sustainability.

VI. CONCLUSION

This comprehensive review of 32 recent studies highlights that technology-mediated impulse buying is a multifaceted phenomenon driven by psychological, technological, and demographic factors. Positive emotions, hedonic motivations, and social influences act as critical psychological drivers, amplified by personalized recommendations, interactive platform features, and strategic marketing cues such as scarcity messaging and sales promotions (Victoria et al., 2021; Kong et al., 2025; Yade & Indrawati, 2024).

Technological innovations in payment options, particularly "buy now, pay later" and mobile banking, have significantly facilitated impulse purchases by reducing purchase friction and hesitation (Nurcahyo et al., 2025; Syahdini et al., 2024). Generation Z consumers, with their digital nativity and unique consumption patterns, are particularly susceptible to these influences, although gender and cultural factors also play important moderating roles (Taufiqillah et al., 2024; Maharani et al., 2024).

Despite these advances, key gaps remain. Longitudinal studies are required to understand the lasting consumer consequences of impulse buying, including financial well-being and brand loyalty effects. Ethical considerations surrounding algorithmic targeting and consumer vulnerability demand deeper exploration, alongside greater cross-cultural research to enhance generalizability. Methodologically, future research should move beyond self-reports to incorporate behavioral and neurophysiological measures to more accurately capture impulses in real time (Halim et al., 2023; Nurcahyo et al., 2025).

This review offers a roadmap for future interdisciplinary efforts to better understand and responsibly manage technology-enabled impulse buying. Marketers should balance personalization with ethical responsibility, while policymakers must consider consumer protections amid increasing

technological complexity. Academically, embracing richer data sources and diverse contexts will foster theoretical and practical advancements in understanding digital impulse consumption dynamics.

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