



## Impulse Buying in the Digital Age: A Dimensional Study on Influencer Marketing Impact on Millennials

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| Article History                                                          | Abstract                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
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| Received: 06 June 2023<br>Revised: 05 Sept 2023<br>Accepted: 12 Oct 2023 | <p><i>This study explores the relationship between influencer characteristics, consumer emotions, and self-construction in the context of impulse buying among millennials in the digital age. It examines how specific traits and qualities of influencers influence millennials' emotions and shape their self-identity during the process of impulse buying. The research investigates the dimensions of influencer marketing that have the most significant impact on millennials' emotional responses and their construction of self-image. By analysing the interplay between influencer characteristics, consumer emotions, and self-construction, this study provides valuable insights into the underlying mechanisms driving impulse buying behavior among millennials in the digital era. The results provide new insight into the power of influencers to sway customer behavior and suggest ways in which businesses may more successfully employ influencer marketing to connect with and convert young buyers.</i></p> <p><b>Keywords:</b> Influencer Marketing, Millennials, Impulsive buying behaviour, Influencer characteristics, consumer emotions, self-construction.</p> |
| CC License<br>CC-BY-NC-SA 4.0                                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |

### 1. Introduction

The growing popularity of influencer marketing in the digital era has significantly transformed the way businesses promote their products and connect with consumers. Among the various consumer segments, millennials, born between the early 1980s and late 1990s, have emerged as a key target for influencer marketing campaigns due to their significant purchasing power and active engagement on social media platforms. Understanding the dimensional impact of influencer marketing on millennials' impulse buying behaviour is crucial for marketers aiming to effectively engage this influential consumer group.

By exploring these facets, we hope to develop a holistic comprehension of the elements that shape and drive the impulsive purchasing decisions of millennials in the context of influencer marketing.

The first dimension we explore is influencer characteristics. Influencers are individuals who have amassed a substantial online following, often due to their expertise, relatability, authenticity, or likeability. By examining these influencer characteristics, we aim to understand how they influence millennials' perception, trust, and inclination to make impulsive purchases. Insights into the types of influencers that resonate most with millennials can inform marketers' strategies and help them identify the traits that effectively drive impulse buying behavior.

The second dimension we address is consumer emotions. Emotions play a crucial role in driving impulse buying behavior among millennials. Influencer marketing often employs emotional appeals to evoke desire, excitement, or FOMO (fear of missing out), triggering impulsive purchasing decisions. By analysing the emotional triggers utilized by influencers, we aim to understand how these emotions

influence millennials' impulse buying behavior. Additionally, we explore the emotional aftermath of impulse purchases, examining the feelings of satisfaction or regret that may impact future buying decisions.

The third dimension we investigate is self-construction. Millennials often use their consumption choices to construct and express their identity and personal brand. Influencer marketing allows them to align themselves with influencers who embody certain lifestyles, values, or aspirations. Millennials improve their social status and self-image by buying things that influencers recommend. Understanding the connection between influencer brand image, millennials' sense of self, and impulsive purchases makes it possible to better understand how influencer marketing affects consumer behavior.

**Problem Statement:** This study aims to understand how influencer marketing affects millennials' impulse buying behavior. Specifically, we will examine the characteristics of influencers, the emotions experienced by millennials, and how their self-image is influenced by influencer marketing. By investigating these dimensions, we aim to provide insights that will help marketers effectively engage millennials and drive impulsive purchases through influencer marketing campaigns.

**Research Gap:** While the constructs of influencer characteristics, consumer emotions, and self-construction have been separately explored in literature, there is a conceptual-empirical gap in understanding how these dimensions interact synergistically to impact millennials' impulsive buying behaviour in the digital sphere, especially in relation to influencer marketing. This work seeks to close this gap by offering empirical understandings of this complex interaction.

**Need for the Study:** Comprehensive understanding of how influencer characteristics, consumer emotions, and self-construction intersect to shape millennial impulse buying behaviours. Insights from this research will fill a significant gap in the existing literature, enabling marketers to strategize more effective influencer campaigns, while furthering scholarly knowledge of contemporary consumer behaviour.

#### **Research Objectives:**

1. To investigate how influencer qualities affect millennials' impulse purchasing behavior.
2. To explore the function of consumer emotions in determining the impulse purchasing behavior of millennials.
3. To investigate the conjunction between self-construction and the impulse buying behavior of millennials impacted by influencer marketing.
4. To give practical insights for marketers looking to engage millennials effectively through influencer marketing and refine their strategy to promote impulse purchases.

#### **2. Materials And Methods**

1. **Research Design:** Quantitative approach using cross-sectional design to collect primary data. The choice of a quantitative approach is appropriate given the study's objective to identify relationships between variables (influencer characteristics, consumer emotions, self-construction, and impulse buying behavior) and to confirm or refute the proposed hypotheses.
2. **Sample and Sampling Technique:** The target population consists of millennials. The study employs a convenience sampling technique due to the easy accessibility and proximity of the millennials engaged in various social media platforms. A sample of 351 millennials, who actively follow influencers and participate in online shopping, will be selected.
3. **Data Collection:** Online survey distributed via various social media platforms where millennials are active. The survey will consist of structured questions designed to measure influencer characteristics, consumer emotions, self-construction, and impulse buying behavior. The items in the questionnaire will be derived from existing scales used in previous studies, ensuring their validity and reliability. All responses will be collected on a Likert scale (ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree).

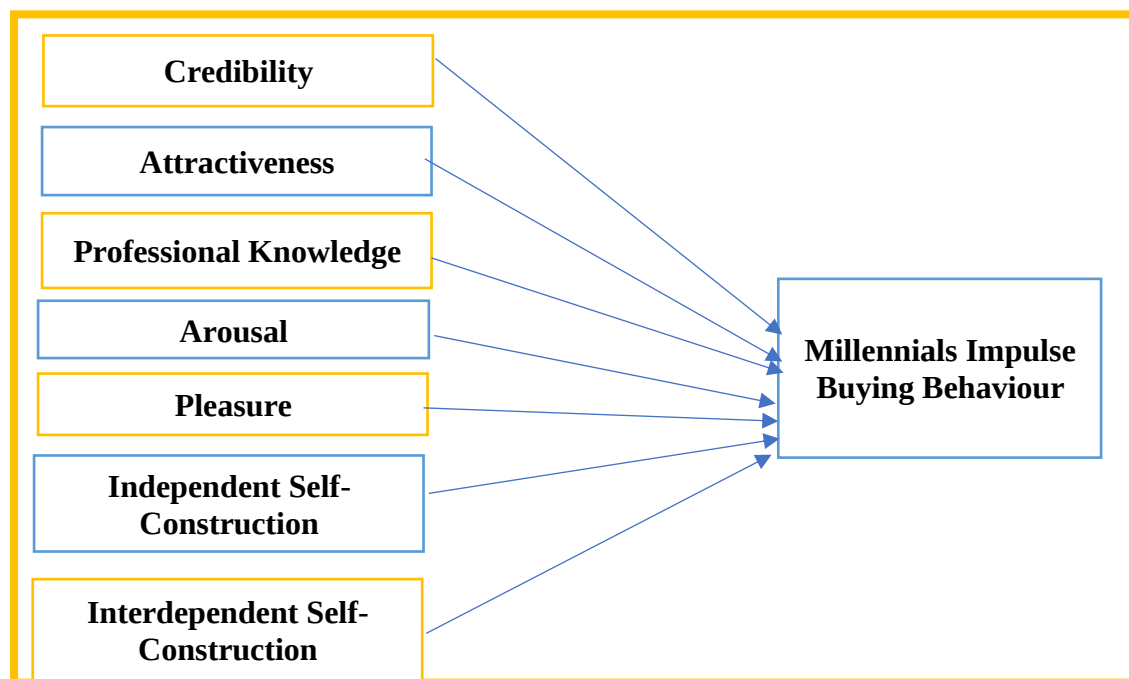
4. **Data Analysis:** The information will be analyzed using the Regression will be used to test the relationships between the latent variables. Regression allows for the simultaneous estimation of multiple interrelated dependence relationships and accounts for measurement error in the estimation process, making it an appropriate tool for this study. Regression will be used to validate the measurement model and assess the reliability and validity of the constructs. Prior Regression, the data will be checked for missing values, outliers, and the assumptions of normality will be verified. Descriptive statistics will be conducted to provide an overview of the respondents' demographics.

#### Literature Review:

1. **Influencer Marketing:** According to Freberg, Graham, McGaughey, and Freberg (2011), influencer marketing has emerged as a form of celebrity endorsement, where social media influencers leverage their fame to influence their followers' purchasing decisions. The effectiveness of influencers has been attributed to their perceived authenticity and relatability compared to traditional celebrities (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017).
2. **Millennials and social media:** Studies have shown that millennials are the largest group of social media users. According to Pew Research Center (2018), a significant majority of millennials are on platforms like Instagram, YouTube, and Snapchat where influencer marketing thrives. This, coupled with the fact that millennials tend to value experiences and authenticity (Fromm & Garton, 2013), makes them particularly susceptible to influencer marketing.
3. **Impulse Buying Behavior:** Rook (1987) defined impulse buying as a sudden, often powerful, and persistent urge to buy something immediately. This behavior is typically spontaneous and involves experiencing an intense desire to buy, followed by feelings of pleasure and satisfaction on buying the item. Impulse buying can be stimulated by various factors, including emotional states, promotions, and, notably, external influences.
4. **Influencer Marketing and Impulse Buying:** Research has started to show the link between influencer marketing and impulse buying behavior. A study by Anesbury, Nenycz-Thiel, Dawes, and Kennedy (2017) suggested that influencer marketing can induce impulse purchases by creating a sense of urgency or need. Lin, Bruning, and Swarna (2020) also found that the perceived authenticity and relatability of influencers can lead to impulse buying, particularly amongst millennials. Despite these findings, there is still a need for more research into understanding the specific aspects of influencer marketing (like authenticity, popularity, engagement) that affect millennials' impulse buying behavior and the long-term impact of this type of marketing on consumer behavior (De Veirman, Cauberghe, & Hudders, 2017).
5. **Credibility:** Hovland, Janis, and Kelley (1953) posited that a message's effectiveness heavily depends on the source's credibility, implying that consumers are more likely to be persuaded by influencers they perceive as credible. Djafarova and Rushworth (2017) found in their research that an influencer's credibility significantly influences consumers' purchase intentions. Similarly, Lou and Yuan (2019) demonstrated that trust in an influencer's credibility positively affects attitudes towards the endorsed product, subsequently increasing purchase intentions.
6. **Attractiveness:** The concept of "source attractiveness" has long been recognized in marketing and advertising. Kahle and Homer (1985) found that attractive endorsers were more effective in shaping consumer attitudes towards an advertisement and the product it presents. In the digital age, Amos, Holmes, and Strutton (2008) found that an influencer's attractiveness could directly influence their persuasiveness, thereby affecting consumer behaviors such as purchase intentions.
7. **Professional Knowledge:** Expertise or professional knowledge is another critical component of influencer characteristics. According to Ohanian (1990), perceived expertise was one of three critical dimensions (alongside trustworthiness and attractiveness) of source credibility in a persuasion context. In a recent study by Hwang and Zhang (2020), influencers' perceived expertise was found to significantly impact consumers' purchase intentions.

8. **Arousal:** Arousal, or emotion intensity, affects customers' emotions. This hypothesis is also used online. Fortin and Dholakia (2005) found that arousal may affect internet browsing and buying. Lim, Radzol, Cheah, and Wong (2017) discovered that influencer marketing material that evokes high-arousal emotions (excitement, joy) increases influencer engagement and consumer response.
9. **Pleasure:** Pleasure—whether it is positive or negative—affects consumer behavior as well. In retail, Donovan, Rossiter, Marcoolyn, and Nesdale (1994) found that pleasant emotions (pleasure) increase shopping time, in-store spending, and consumer satisfaction. Tandoc Jr. and Ferrucci (2017) found that social media enjoyment could affect users' views, behaviors, and purchases. In influencer marketing, Drossos, Giaglis, Vlachos, Zamani, and Lekakos (2013) found that positive influencer content experiences improved customer engagement and purchase intention.
10. **Independent Self-Construction:** An individualistic worldview values one's own interests, qualities, and accomplishments over those of the group or society as a whole. This type of self-concept, according to Markus and Kitayama (1991), is more common in Western societies. According to research by Lee and Watkins (2016), influencers who highlight originality and individuality are more likely to sway the opinions of their followers, who place a premium on independent self-construction.
11. **Interdependent Self-Construction:** This term describes a way of thinking prevalent in East Asian cultures that prioritizes group dynamics over individual concerns. People who have interconnected self-concepts, according to Markus and Kitayama (1991), are more susceptible to outside pressures. In terms of influencer marketing, this may show up as a fan base's preference for leaders who stress the importance of working together. According to a study by Djafarova and Rushworth (2017), followers were more likely to trust and listen to influencers who demonstrated a communal and less individualistic attitude.

#### Conceptual Model:



### Hypothesis Formulation:

1. **H<sub>1</sub>:** Credibility and Millennials' tendency to purchase the things are related in a good way.
2. **H<sub>2</sub>:** Millennials are high favoured to buy something on the spot if they find it attractive.
3. **H<sub>3</sub>:** There is a link between professional knowledge and the way millennials buy things on the spot.
4. **H<sub>4</sub>:** Millennials are more likely to buy things on the spot when they are excited.
5. **H<sub>5</sub>:** There is a good link between pleasure and the fact that millennials buy things on the spot.
6. **H<sub>6</sub>:** There is a link between Millennials' tendency to buy things on the spot and their desire to be independent.
7. **H<sub>7</sub>:** Interdependent self-construction and impulsive buying by millennials are linked in a good way.

### 3. Results and Discussion

| Reliability Statistics |              |
|------------------------|--------------|
| Cronbach's Alpha       | No: of Items |
| .941                   | 43           |

The CA value of 0.94 is exceptionally high. In general, a Cronbach's Alpha value greater than 0.90 is regarded as outstanding. This suggests that the 43 items measure the same fundamental concept or construct with high consistency and reliability. In essence, the items on the scale are interrelated, so respondents who score highly on one item are likely to score highly on others, and vice versa.

### Hypothesis Testing

| Regression Weights                                                      | Beta Coefficient | R <sup>2</sup> | F Value | P Value |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|----------------|---------|---------|
| Credibility - Millennials Impulse Buying Behaviour                      | 0.718            | 0.516          | 372.038 | 0.00    |
| Attractiveness - Millennials Impulse Buying Behaviour                   | 0.594            | 0.352          | 189.785 | 0.00    |
| Professional Knowledge - Millennials Impulse Buying Behaviour           | 0.586            | 0.344          | 182.964 | 0.00    |
| Arousal - Millennials Impulse Buying Behaviour                          | 0.477            | 0.277          | 102.565 | 0.00    |
| Pleasure - Millennials Impulse Buying Behaviour                         | 0.587            | 0.345          | 183.695 | 0.00    |
| Independent self-construction - Millennials Impulse Buying Behaviour    | 0.705            | 0.496          | 344.025 | 0.00    |
| Interdependent self-construction - Millennials Impulse Buying Behaviour | 0.739            | 0.546          | 419.545 | 0.00    |

The variable "Credibility" has a regression weight of 0.718, indicating a positive relationship with the impulse purchasing behavior of Millennials. For every one unit increase in credibility, Millennials' impulse purchasing behavior increases by 0.718% units. The beta coefficient of 0.516 indicates that credibility is a significant predictor for elucidating impulse purchasing behavior. The model using credibility as a predictor account for approximately 51.6% of the variance in the impulsive purchasing behavior of Millennials. The extremely low p-value of 0.00 indicates that this association is highly significant.

The variable "Attractiveness" has a regression weight of 0.594, indicating a positive correlation with the impulse purchasing behavior of Millennials. For each one-unit increase in attractiveness, Millennials' impulse purchasing behavior increases by 0.594%. The beta coefficient of 0.352 indicates that attractiveness plays a substantial role in predicting impulse purchasing behavior. The model that uses attractiveness as a predictor account for approximately 35.2% of the variance in impulse purchasing behavior. The low p-value of 0.00 indicates that the relationship is highly significant.

The variable "Professional Knowledge" has a regression weight of 0.586, indicating a positive effect on the impetuous purchasing behavior of Millennials. For every one unit increase in professional knowledge, Millennials' impulse purchasing behavior increases by 0.58 units. The beta coefficient of 0.344 indicates that professional knowledge is a significant predictor of impulsive purchasing. The model based on professional knowledge explains approximately 34.4% of the variance in impulse purchasing behavior. The extremely low p-value of 0.00 suggests that the relationship is highly significant.

The variable "Arousal" has a regression weight of 0.477%, indicating a positive correlation with the impetuous purchasing behavior of Millennials. For each one-unit increase in arousal, Millennials' impulse purchasing behavior increases by 0.47 units. The beta coefficient of 0.27 indicates that arousal is a significant predictor for explaining impulse purchasing behavior. The model incorporating arousal as a predictor account for approximately 27.7% of the variance in impulsive purchasing behavior. The extremely low p-value of 0.00 indicates that the relationship is highly significant.

The variable "Pleasure" has a regression weight of 0.587, indicating a positive effect on the impulse purchasing behavior of Millennials. For every one unit increase in pleasure, Millennials' impulse purchasing behavior increases by 0.58 units. The beta coefficient of 0.345 indicates that enjoyment is a significant predictor of impulsive purchasing behavior. The model using enjoyment as a predictor account for approximately 34.5% of the variance in impulsive purchasing. The extremely low p-value of 0.00 suggests that the relationship is highly significant.

The variable "Independent self-construction" has a regression weight of 0.705, indicating a positive correlation with the impulse purchasing behavior of Millennials. For every one unit increase in autonomous self-construction, Millennials' impulse purchasing behavior increases by 0.705%. The beta coefficient of 0.496 indicates that independent self-construction is a significant predictor for explaining impulse purchasing behavior. The model that utilizes independent self-construction as a predictor accounts for approximately 49.6% of the variance in impulsivity purchasing behavior. The extremely low p-value of 0.00 indicates that the relationship is highly significant.

The variable "Interdependent self-construction" has a regression weight of 0.739, indicating that it has a positive effect on the impulse purchasing behavior of Millennials. For every one unit increase in interdependent self-construction, Millennials' impulse purchasing behavior increases by 0.739%. The beta coefficient of 0.546 indicates that interdependent self-construction is a highly significant predictor for elucidating impulse purchasing behavior. The model that utilizes interdependent self-construction as a predictor accounts for approximately 54.6% of the variance in impulsive purchasing behavior. The extremely low p-value of 0.00 indicates that the relationship is highly significant.

Increased credibility increases the likelihood that Millennials will make impulsive purchases. According to prior research, perceptions of credibility and trustworthiness can influence consumer behavior positively. To attract and retain impulsive Millennial buyers, businesses and marketers must focus on establishing and sustaining their credibility.

The positive correlation between attractiveness and the impulse purchasing behavior of Millennials demonstrates the significance of aesthetics and allure in consumer decision-making. Companies that invest in creating aesthetically pleasing products, packaging, and marketing campaigns are likely to attract impulse-driven Millennial consumers. Findings from the study indicate that the emotive aspect of attractiveness can stimulate impulsive purchasing behavior.

The correlation between Millennials' professional knowledge and their willingness to buy on the spot suggests that well-informed consumers are more inclined to make spontaneous purchases. When they feel knowledgeable about the offered products or services, Millennial consumers may be more inclined to make purchases. This finding highlights the significance of providing comprehensive information and demonstrating expertise to influence impetuous purchasing decisions.

The positive correlation between arousal and the impulsive purchasing tendencies of Millennials suggests that emotional arousal can drive these tendencies. Excitement and emotional stimulation may prompt impulsive purchasing decisions among Millennials. This finding can be utilized by marketers to design engaging and emotionally compelling advertising campaigns to induce impulsive purchases.

The result of the study shows how happiness affects Millennials' tendency to buy things on the spot. Having a good time with a product, service, or shopping setting can make you more likely to buy something on the spot. Millennials who are more spontaneous are likely to shop at stores that make shopping fun and satisfying.

The finding that independent self-construction is a significant predictor of Millennials' impulse-buying behavior suggests that self-expression and individuality are pertinent factors in impulse purchases. Millennials may indulge in impulsive purchasing to express their unique identities and preferences. Brands that align with Millennials' sense of independence and self-expression can use this to attract impulse purchasers.

The strong positive relationship between interdependent self-construction and the impulsive purchasing behavior of Millennials demonstrates the impact of social and cultural factors on impulsive purchases. To conform to their social circles or fulfill societal expectations, Millennials may make rash purchasing decisions. To motivate impulsive purchasing among Millennials, marketers can appeal to their sense of community and belonging.

#### 4. Conclusion

This research is helpful because it sheds light on the characteristics that cause Millennials to make spontaneous purchases. Credibility, attractiveness, professional knowledge, arousal, delight, independent self-construction, and interdependent self-construction are all associated with impulsive purchasing among Millennials. This suggests that both cognitive and emotional factors play crucial roles in moulding impulsive purchasing decisions among this segment of consumers.

**Limitations:** Although this study illuminates Millennial impulse-buying tendencies, its limits must be acknowledged. First, the study was limited to a certain demographic and may not apply to other age groups or customer sectors. The research may also have been done in a unique cultural and regional context; therefore, the results may not apply to others.

Moreover, the study relied on self-report measures to collect data on impulse purchasing behavior and independent variables, which could have introduced response biases. Additional validation of the findings could be achieved through the use of more objective measures or behavioural data in future studies.

**Social Implications:** Influencer marketing's multifaceted impact on millennials' spontaneous purchases has societal ramifications. This may affect millennial social norms and purchasing behavior. Second, millennials' social media interactions with influencers and other customers build community. Influencer marketing efforts allow millennials to share experiences, recommendations, and views, influencing impulse purchases. To sustain influencer-consumer trust and integrity, ethical issues like transparency and sincerity are essential. Social implications show how influencer marketing shapes consumer culture, fosters community participation, and requires ethical behaviours to sustain a positive social impact.

**Scope for future research:** The future research scope includes investigating the psychological factors driving impulse buying among millennials in the digital age, evaluating the effectiveness of different influencer marketing strategies, examining the long-term consequences of impulse buying, and exploring interventions to mitigate its negative effects.

#### Key features of this study:

- a) **Focused Study:** Concentrates on digitally native millennials and their response to influencer marketing.
- b) **Depth of Analysis:** Explores influencer characteristics, consumer emotions, and self-construction's impact on impulse buying.
- c) **Practical Value:** Provides actionable strategies for marketers engaging with millennials.
- d) **Relevant Data Collection:** Uses online surveys, aligning with the digital context of the study.

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