

THE EFFECT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ADVERTISING ON IMPULSE BUYING AMONG UK MILLENNIALS: A SURVEY-BASED SPSS STUDY

Background and Rationale:

Social media platforms, especially Instagram, have transformed consumer behaviour by creating immersive, visual shopping environments. Among millennials in the UK, impulsive purchases are increasingly driven by emotionally engaging and strategically timed ads. While brands aggressively target this demographic, limited academic research exists on the psychological and behavioural impact of such ads. This study investigates how exposure to social media advertisements affects impulse buying tendencies.

Research Objectives:

- To examine the relationship between Instagram ad exposure and impulse buying behaviour among UK millennials.
- To identify key ad characteristics (e.g., visual appeal, frequency, call-to-action) that influence impulsive decisions.
- To assess the role of emotional response and product relevance as mediating factors.

Hypotheses:

- **H1:** Frequency of Instagram ad exposure is positively associated with impulse buying behaviour.
- **H2:** Emotional response to ads mediates the relationship between ad exposure and impulse buying.
- **H3:** Product relevance strengthens the effect of emotional response on buying behaviour.

Survey Design:

- **Target Population:** UK-based millennials (aged 25–40) who actively use Instagram
- **Sampling Method:** Convenience and snowball sampling through Instagram ads and university mailing lists
- **Survey Platform:** Qualtrics

- **Number of Responses:** 180 valid responses
- **Questionnaire Structure:**
 - Section A: Demographics and Instagram usage frequency
 - Section B: Ad Exposure Scale (frequency, recall, duration)
 - Section C: Emotional Response Scale (adapted from PANAS)
 - Section D: Product Relevance Perception
 - Section E: Impulse Buying Tendency Scale (Rook & Fisher, 1995)

SPSS Analysis Plan:

- **Descriptive Statistics:** Mean, SD, and percentage breakdowns
- **Reliability Testing:** Cronbach's alpha for multi-item scales
- **Correlation Analysis:** Pearson's r for preliminary relationships
- **Multiple Regression:**
 - Model 1: Impulse Buying = f(Ad Exposure, Emotional Response, Product Relevance)
- **Mediation & Moderation Testing:**
 - Hayes Process Macro:
 - Model 4 (mediation by Emotional Response)
 - Model 14 (moderation by Product Relevance)

Key Results:

- **Descriptive Findings:**
 - 82% of participants reported making at least one Instagram-driven purchase in the last three months
 - Most recalled categories: fashion, beauty, and tech accessories
- **Reliability:**
 - All key scales had Cronbach's alpha > 0.80
- **Regression Results:**

- Ad Exposure significantly predicted Impulse Buying ($\beta = 0.41, p < 0.001$)
- Emotional Response was also a strong predictor ($\beta = 0.39, p < 0.001$)
- Product Relevance showed a significant interaction effect ($p < 0.05$)
- **Process Macro Results:**
 - Emotional Response fully mediated the effect of Ad Exposure on Impulse Buying
 - Product Relevance moderated the Emotional → Impulse path: stronger effect when relevance was high

Conclusion and Managerial Implications:

The findings confirm that Instagram ads strongly influence impulse buying among UK millennials, particularly when emotionally resonant and perceived as relevant. Brands should focus on optimizing visual appeal, emotional triggers, and audience-product alignment. Retailers can use this insight to build segmentation strategies that personalize ad content based on behavioural data.

Report Structure (as submitted):

1. Introduction
2. Literature Review
3. Research Model and Hypotheses
4. Methodology
5. Survey Design
6. SPSS Analysis and Results
7. Discussion
8. Managerial Implications
9. Limitations and Future Research
10. References
11. Appendices (Survey Instrument, SPSS Output)

Academic and Corporate Suitability:

- **Academic:** Suitable for dissertations in marketing analytics, digital consumer behaviour, and advertising research.
- **Corporate:** Informs social media marketing teams, D2C brands, and advertising consultants seeking insight into millennial purchase drivers.

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