



The Psychological Drivers of Impulsive Buying: Exploring the Roles of Perceived Stress and Social Media Addiction among Adults

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Abstract

Impulsive buying behavior has become a significant area of study due to its potential to influence consumer decision-making, particularly in the context of increasing stress and social media addiction. Perceived stress refers to the psychological experience of stress, while social media addiction involves excessive use of social media platforms, both of which can serve as drivers of impulsive purchasing behaviors. The current study aimed to explore the relationship between perceived stress, social media addiction, and impulsive buying tendencies among adults aged 18- 40 years. The study used three standardized scales for measuring social media addiction, perceived stress, and impulsive buying tendencies among adults. A total of 123 participants (33 males and 90 females) were surveyed using a mixture of snowball and convenience sampling methods. The results of the study revealed a significant positive correlation between social media addiction and impulsive buying tendencies. While perceived stress did not directly predict impulsive buying, its significant correlation with social media addiction suggests an indirect relationship. These findings indicate that social media addiction plays a more influential role in driving impulsive buying behavior than perceived stress.

Understanding these dynamics can help marketers tailor strategies to address impulsive buying, particularly through social media platforms. Additionally, the study highlights the need for interventions aimed at reducing social media addiction, as well as promoting better stress management practices to reduce impulsive purchasing behaviors in consumers.

Keywords: *Impulsive Buying, Perceived Stress, Social Media Addiction, Adults*

Introduction

“The greatest weapon against stress is our ability to choose one thought over another.”

-William James-

Stress is an omnipresent phenomenon in modern life, particularly among adults balancing professional, personal, and social responsibilities. It encompasses daily pressures such as financial strain, social expectations, and workplace demands, often pushing individuals to seek quick, gratifying escapes. These coping mechanisms frequently manifest in digital behaviors, such as compulsive social media use or impulsive buying, both of which have become pervasive in today's technologically driven society.

Perceived Stress reflects an individual's subjective appraisal of their ability to manage life's challenges. The chronic presence of stress, driven by demanding lifestyles and social expectations, significantly impacts emotional and cognitive functioning, often leading individuals to seek temporary relief in unproductive ways. Social Media Addiction, characterized by compulsive and excessive use of social platforms, has become one of the most pervasive issues among adults. It fosters a cycle of dependency through dopamine-driven rewards, increasing exposure to unrealistic standards, advertisements, and social comparisons. This creates an environment where individuals are not only addicted to social media but also more prone to external influences, including consumerist behaviors. Impulsive Buying, the tendency to make unplanned purchases based on emotional triggers, is another prevalent

phenomenon in today's consumer-driven culture. With the rise of online shopping and targeted advertisements on social media platforms, impulsive buying has become more accessible and tempting, often serving as an emotional escape for individuals under stress.

Existing literature highlights significant relationships between these variables. Jabutay and Limpachote's (2024) study focuses on the complex relationships that link perceived social isolation, stress, hedonic browsing, and impulsive buying behavior on social commerce platforms. Their findings demonstrate that perceived stress acts as a significant mediator, linking social isolation to hedonic browsing, which in turn fosters impulsive purchases. This model provides valuable insights into how stress and emotional coping strategies interplay to influence impulsive buying, particularly in a digitalized and socially connected world. The study underscores the importance of understanding psychological drivers like stress and hedonic tendencies to develop interventions aimed at curbing impulsive spending behaviors. Building on this foundation, the current study explores similar dynamics but extends the investigation to include the role of social media addiction, a variable closely tied to impulsive buying in the digital age. Unlike the focus on hedonic browsing in the context of social commerce, this research examines how stress and social media addiction interact to influence impulsive buying tendencies among adults. Similarly, Deborah et al. (2022) found that social media fosters hedonic motivations and shopping orientations, which positively influence impulsive buying, particularly in the fast fashion industry. Their findings underscored the dual impact of social media as both a marketing tool and a behavioral influence, driving impulsive consumption patterns.

The stressors faced by adults further complicate this landscape. Daily life is replete with challenges such as meeting deadlines, managing financial obligations, and maintaining social relationships, all of which amplify psychological stress. As a result, individuals often turn to

social media or shopping as coping mechanisms. In the lives of adults, stress is not merely a psychological phenomenon but a key driver of behavioral patterns that influence financial well-being and mental health. With the advent of social media, the line between need and desire has blurred, creating a fertile ground for impulsive purchases. While these behaviors may provide temporary relief, they can evolve into patterns of addiction or impulsivity, leading to long-term consequences such as financial instability or diminished psychological well-being.

This study is significant as it delves into the complex relationship between these variables. Exploring this triadic relationship is essential to understanding how daily stressors, magnified by social media addiction, contribute to impulsive buying tendencies. Despite existing research on individual variables like stress and impulsive buying or social media addiction, there is a notable gap in understanding their interconnectedness, especially in an Indian context. Limited studies explore how perceived stress interacts with social media addiction to amplify impulsive buying behaviors.

Stress

According to Lazarus and Folkman (1984), “Stress is a transactional process occurring when an event is perceived as relevant to an individual’s well-being, has the potential for harm or loss, and requires psychological, physiological, and/or behavioral efforts to manage the event and its outcomes.” According to Palmer et. al. (2003), “Stress occurs when the perceived pressure exceeds your perceived ability to cope.”

The study by ÇeliK and Peker (2023) explores the mediating role of flow experiences in the relationship between perceived stress and social media addiction among university students. The sample included 542 participants (377 female, 165 male), who completed the Social Media Addiction Scale, Perceived Stress Scale, and Flow State Scale. Results revealed a positive correlation between perceived stress and social media addiction, indicating that

higher stress levels are associated with greater addiction. Conversely, flow experiences, characterized by deep engagement and enjoyment in activities, are negatively correlated with social media addiction and perceived stress. Mediation analysis confirmed that flow experiences significantly reduce the impact of perceived stress on social media addiction, emphasizing their protective role. These findings highlight the potential of cultivating flow states to mitigate stress and curb social media addiction among students.

The study by Hou et al. (2019) provides valuable insights into the relationship between perceived stress and problematic social networking site (SNS) use, which can be extended to understanding their impact on impulsive buying behaviors. Their findings revealed that perceived stress serves as a risk factor for problematic SNS use, with depression and anxiety acting as significant mediators. This suggests that individuals experiencing high levels of stress are more likely to engage in excessive social media usage, particularly if they also struggle with depression and anxiety. Moreover, the study highlighted the moderating role of psychological resilience, with individuals possessing lower resilience exhibiting stronger mediating effects of depression and anxiety. This underscores the importance of psychological factors in mitigating the adverse effects of stress on behavioral outcomes.

Babayiğit et al. (2022) examined the predictive role of smartphone addiction in the relationship between metacognitive problems, social media addiction, general belongingness, and perceived stress among higher education students. Their findings provide valuable insights into the interplay of these variables, which are also central to understanding impulsive buying behaviors. They found a positive correlation between smartphone addiction and perceived stress, suggesting that higher levels of smartphone addiction are associated with greater perceived stress. Furthermore, the study established a positive association between smartphone addiction and metacognitive problems, highlighting how difficulties in regulating thoughts and behaviors may perpetuate problematic smartphone use.

Wartberg et al. (2021) investigated the association of emotion regulation, procrastination, and perceived stress with PSMU (Problematic Social Media Usage) in children and adolescents aged 10–17 years. Their findings provide valuable insights into the behavioral and emotional underpinnings of Problematic Social Media Usage, which are also applicable to adult populations and relevant to impulsive buying behaviors. The study found that PSMU is significantly linked to difficulties in impulse control and goal-directed behavior, key facets of emotion regulation. These difficulties suggest that individuals engaging in PSMU may struggle to manage their urges and delay gratification, leading to compulsive behaviors such as excessive social media use or impulsive purchases. In adults, similar patterns may emerge where challenges in impulse control, exacerbated by PSMU, could drive impulsive spending, particularly when triggered by online advertisements or social media-driven promotions. The study also identified a strong positive relationship between perceived stress and PSMU.

The study by Shams et al. (2021) explores the role of workplace stressors and stress in influencing impulsive buying behavior, with a focus on the moderating role of emotional intelligence. Drawing on the theories of social conformity, compliance, and reasoned action, the research delves into how chronic stress from workplace demands shapes consumer behaviors, particularly impulsive buying, and highlights the importance of emotional intelligence in mitigating these effects. The findings indicate that workplace stressors significantly contribute to stress levels, which in turn drive impulsive buying tendencies. Stressful environments, characterized by high demands and pressures, often push individuals toward impulsive consumption as a form of emotional regulation or coping mechanism.

Social Media Addiction

Andreassen and Pallesen (2014) defined social media addiction as “being overly concerned about social network sites (SNSs), to be driven by a strong motivation to log on to or use SNSs, and to devote so much time and effort to SNSs that it impairs other social activities, studies/job, interpersonal relationships, and/or psychological health and well-being.” According to Wainner (2018), “social media addiction or excessive usage can be defined as any usage of social media that causes problems with daily functioning, completion of tasks, relationships, and/or psychological deficits.”

The study by Nikolinakou et al. (2023) examines the interplay between social media addiction, psychological well-being states, brand addiction, and impulsive buying behavior on social media platforms. It presents a nuanced understanding of how both negative and positive psychological factors contribute to addiction behaviors and their subsequent influence on consumer tendencies. The research reveals that social media addiction often stems from emotional challenges such as anxiety, loneliness, and emotional suppression. These negative well-being states drive individuals to engage excessively with social media as a coping mechanism, leading to compulsive behaviors like brand addiction and impulsive buying. Interestingly, the study also identifies a positive psychological route to brand addiction and impulsive buying on social media. Factors like mindfulness, happiness, and self-esteem, traditionally associated with psychological resilience, are shown to positively predict these behaviors. This suggests that even individuals with higher psychological well-being may develop dependencies when social media interactions are associated with pleasurable experiences or personal fulfillment.

The study by Mundel et al. (2023) investigates the mechanisms through which social comparison with influencers on social media influences impulsive buying behavior,

emphasizing the mediating roles of social anxiety and social media addiction. By drawing on Social Comparison Theory, this research highlights the psychological and behavioral implications of digital interactions in the consumer domain. The study identifies negative social comparison with influencers as a significant predictor of impulsive purchasing behaviors. Social media influencers often project idealized lifestyles that can elicit feelings of inadequacy among followers. This negative comparison triggers social anxiety, which, in turn, fosters an increased dependence on social media as individuals seek validation or escape from their discomfort. The resulting social media addiction amplifies exposure to marketing and persuasive content, further fueling impulsive buying tendencies. A key finding of the study is the mediating role of anxiety. The psychological discomfort caused by unfavorable comparisons intensifies individuals' urge to engage in impulsive purchasing as a form of self-soothing or as a means to emulate the perceived ideal. Anxiety serves as a psychological driver that transforms social comparison into actionable consumer behavior. Similarly, social media addiction acts as a critical mediator, amplifying the impact of social comparison on buying decisions. Addiction to social media creates a feedback loop where individuals are continually exposed to influencer-generated content and promotional material, heightening their vulnerability to impulsive buying.

The study by Saibaba (2024) focuses on understanding the online compulsive buying behavior of young Indian consumers, exploring the roles of smartphone addiction, social media addiction, Fear of Missing Out (FOMO), and impulsive buying behavior. This study highlights the interplay of psychological and technological factors that influence consumer behavior in the digital marketplace. The research reveals that smartphone addiction and social media addiction significantly contribute to compulsive buying tendencies. These addictions increase screen time, exposing consumers to persistent marketing efforts and creating a heightened state of impulsiveness. Additionally, FOMO emerges as a critical psychological driver of

compulsive online shopping. The study also underscores the strong positive correlation between impulsive buying behavior and online compulsive buying, suggesting that impulsive tendencies act as a precursor to more entrenched compulsive shopping habits. Impulsive buying is often driven by the emotional gratification associated with immediate purchases, which is amplified in the fast-paced online environment. By focusing on young Indian consumers, the study also contextualizes the role of cultural and regional influences on compulsive buying behavior, offering insights into the unique challenges faced by emerging economies in the digital age.

Impulsive Buying

Rook and Gardner (1993) defined impulse buying as "an unplanned, which is characterized by both relatively rapid decision making, and a subjective bias for immediate possession." Beatty and Ferrell (1998) defined impulse buying as "instantaneous purchase having no previous objective to buy the commodity." Rook (1987) suggests, "impulse buying occurs when a consumer experiences a sudden, often persistent urge to buy something immediately. The impulse to buy is hedonically complex and may stimulate emotional conflict. Also, impulse buying is prone to occur with diminished regard for its consequences."

The study by Moran (2015) examines the role of stress, materialism, and external stimuli in shaping online impulse-buying behavior, focusing on how psychological states influence unplanned purchases. Using a sample of 156 participants, the researchers experimentally manipulated stress through solvable and unsolvable anagram tasks and analyzed its effect on impulsive buying tendencies. The findings revealed that consumers under stress exhibited delayed but heightened impulsive buying tendencies, suggesting a priming effect where stress amplifies responses to subsequent stimuli. Additionally, a positive correlation was found between materialism and impulsive buying, indicating that individuals

with materialistic values are more prone to impulsive purchases, particularly under stress. Interestingly, external stimuli, such as promotional images, did not significantly influence impulsive buying behaviors, highlighting the dominant role of internal psychological factors over environmental triggers. This study underscores the importance of understanding emotional and cognitive mechanisms in consumer behavior, particularly the interplay of stress and materialistic tendencies in driving impulsive online shopping.

In a study conducted by Zheng et al. (2019), the relationship between perceived stress and online compulsive buying (OCB) among women was explored, with a focus on the mediating role of negative coping and the moderating role of self-esteem. The research involved 548 female participants (mean age 21.41 years) who completed surveys measuring perceived stress, self-esteem, negative coping strategies, and OCB while controlling for the frequency of online purchases and monthly spending. The findings revealed that perceived stress was positively linked to OCB, and this association was partially mediated by the use of negative coping mechanisms. Additionally, self-esteem moderated both the direct and indirect effects, with the impact of stress and negative coping on OCB being weaker among women with higher self-esteem. These results highlight how stress and coping strategies influence compulsive buying behavior and suggest that fostering self-esteem may help reduce OCB in women.

The study by Zia (2019) investigates the impact of psychosocial stressors on impulsive buying behavior, focusing on the mediating role of stress and the moderating effect of consumer emotional intelligence. Conducted across multiple provinces in Pakistan, the study targeted consumers with varying education levels who had engaged in impulsive buying at least once. Data was collected through surveys and analyzed using the Process Macro for regression, which enabled the examination of direct, mediated, and moderated mediation

relationships. The findings revealed that psychosocial stressors such as interpersonal influence, bullying, social comparison, and interdependent self-construal were significantly associated with impulsive buying. However, bullying did not show a direct link to stress, and interdependent self-construal, which was expected to negatively correlate with impulsive buying, showed a positive association instead. This unexpected result suggests that stress might overpower the typical negative influence of interdependent self-construal on impulsive buying behavior. The study also confirmed that emotional intelligence plays a moderating role, helping consumers manage stress and reduce the likelihood of impulsive buying. This research highlights the complex dynamics between stress, emotional intelligence, and impulsive buying, suggesting potential interventions for consumers and marketers alike.

The scoping review by Thomas et al. (2024) investigates the relationship between stress and compulsive buying-shopping disorder (CBSD), exploring stress as both a vulnerability factor and a potential trigger for CBSD symptoms. A total of 16 studies were analyzed, revealing that most studies found significant correlations between perceived stress and CBSD symptom severity, with individuals exhibiting problematic buying behaviors reporting higher stress levels compared to controls. Large effects were noted in mean comparison studies, while regression analyses and ecological momentary assessments yielded mixed results. Only one experimental study found that individuals exposed to stress or negative mood induction displayed more CBSD symptoms in a high-stress group than in a low-stress group. The research highlights heterogeneity in study designs, measures, and samples, with most studies relying on cross-sectional correlational data, limiting causal inferences. The authors recommend future longitudinal and experimental studies to better understand the dynamics between stress and CBSD and to include objective stress markers for deeper insights.

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to explore the psychological and behavioral factors contributing to impulsive buying behaviors among adults (18- 40 years), with a specific focus on the roles of perceived stress and social media addiction.

Hypothesis

H1: There will be a significant positive relationship between perceived stress, social media addiction, and impulsive buying behaviors among adults.

Methodology**Sample**

The study utilized a diverse sample of 123 participants, including 33 males (26.8%) and 90 females (73.2%), falling within the age group of 18- 40 years. Among the participants, 85 individuals (69.1%) identified pocket money as their primary source of shopping funds, while the remaining 38 (30.9%) relied on earnings from business or employment. Participants were selected based on the eligibility criterion that they were active social media users, ensuring relevance to the research objectives. The sample represented individuals from various cities across India, providing a comprehensive view of impulsive buying behavior across diverse socio-economic backgrounds.

Measures

Data collection was conducted through a Google Forms survey, which included three standardized scales: the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS), the Bergen Social Media Addiction Scale (BSMAS), and the Impulse Buying Tendency Scale.

Perceived Stress Scale (PSS): The Perceived Stress Scale (PSS), developed by Cohen et al., (1983), was employed to measure participants' perceived levels of stress over the past month. The PSS is the most widely used psychological instrument for measuring the perception of stress. It is a measure of the degree to which situations in one's life are appraised as stressful. Items were designed to tap into how unpredictable, uncontrollable, and overloaded respondents find their lives. The scale consists of 10 items, each rated on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 0 ("Never") to 4 ("Very Often"). Scores on the PSS range from 0 to 40, with higher scores indicating higher levels of perceived stress. The PSS-10 demonstrates high internal consistency, with Cronbach's alpha values consistently exceeding .70. It also shows good test-retest reliability, with correlation coefficients typically above .70 over a 2-week to 4-week period. The PSS-10 has strong construct validity, correlating well with other measures of stress, anxiety, and depression (Lee, 2012).

Bergen Social Media Addiction Scale (BSMAS): The Bergen Social Media Addiction Scale (BSMAS), developed by Andreassen et al., (2016) was used to measure the extent of participants' addiction-like behaviors related to social media use. The BSMAS evaluates how social media impacts daily functioning, emotional well-being, and priorities, making it highly relevant to understanding technology's role in impulsive purchasing behavior. The scale includes six items, rated on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 ("Very Rarely") to 5 ("Very Often"). Higher scores indicate a greater likelihood of social media addiction. The BSMAS has demonstrated good reliability and validity and has been used in studies on social media addiction in various populations.

Impulse Buying Tendency Scale: The final measure used was the Impulse Buying Tendency Scale, developed by Ezgi Merdin Uygur in 2018. This scale was designed to capture the hedonic, lack of planning, and cognitive dimensions of impulsive buying behavior, assessing tendencies to make unplanned and spontaneous purchases. This scale consists of 10

items rated on a five-point Likert scale, where 1 represents “Completely Disagree” and 5 represents “Completely Agree.” Higher scores on this scale reflect stronger impulsive buying tendencies, making it an essential tool for examining the influence of stress and social media addiction on consumer behavior.

Procedure

The data collection process for this study involved the creation of Google Forms, which were designed to gather responses efficiently and securely. The form was shared widely through social media platforms such as WhatsApp, and LinkedIn, and via networks of friends and family, utilizing a combination of snowball sampling and convenience sampling methods to recruit participants. Before beginning the survey, participants were informed about the purpose of the study, its voluntary nature, and the assurance of privacy and confidentiality for their responses. Informed consent was obtained through an option provided within the form, ensuring that participants agreed to partake in the study willingly. Throughout the process, care was taken to maintain ethical standards, and participants were thanked at the conclusion of the survey for their valuable contributions to the research.

Data Analysis

The collected data was analyzed using Jamovi, a user-friendly statistical analysis software. Descriptive statistics were calculated to summarize the demographic characteristics of the participants. To explore the relationships between Perceived Stress, Social Media Addiction, and Impulsive Buying Tendency, a correlation analysis was conducted. This statistical method allowed us to measure the strength and direction of relationships among these variables. The results of the correlation matrix were then used to draw insights into the interplay between stress, social media addiction, and impulsive buying behaviors in the sample.

Results

Table 1: *N, Mean & SD of variables*

	Perceived Stress	Social Media Addiction	Impulsive Buying Tendency
N	123	123	123
Mean	19.7	14.6	27.3
Standard deviation	5.15	5.06	8.86

Table 2: *Correlation between Perceived Stress, Social Media Addiction, and Impulsive Buying Tendency*

	Perceived Stress	Social Media Addiction	Impulsive Buying Tendency
Perceived Stress	—		
Social Media Addiction	0.251**	—	
Impulsive Buying Tendency	0.078	0.387***	—

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

A significant positive correlation ($r = 0.251$, $p < .01$) was found between perceived stress and social media addiction. This indicates that higher levels of perceived stress are associated with increased social media addiction among participants. A strong and highly significant positive correlation ($r = 0.387$, $p < .001$) was observed between social media addiction and impulsive buying tendency. This suggests that individuals with higher levels of social media addiction are more likely to engage in impulsive buying behavior. No significant correlation ($r = 0.078$) was detected between perceived stress and impulsive buying tendency.

Discussion of Results

The results of this study provided mixed support for the proposed hypotheses, shedding light on the nuanced interplay between perceived stress, social media addiction, and impulsive buying behaviors among adults.

The first hypothesis, which proposed that higher levels of perceived stress and social media addiction would significantly predict higher impulsive buying behaviors among adults, was partially supported. The correlation between perceived stress and impulsive buying was positive but not statistically significant ($r = 0.078$). This finding suggests that perceived stress alone may not directly drive impulsive buying behaviors. While stress is often theorized as a driver of impulsive buying, the findings suggest that its direct impact may be limited or conditional. Previous research has similarly highlighted the complex and multidimensional nature of impulsive buying, which often involves emotional, cognitive, and situational factors beyond mere stress. For instance, Gardi and Darmawan (2022) emphasized that impulsive buying is significantly influenced by external factors such as shopping lifestyle and sales promotion rather than internal psychological stressors alone. Consumers with a pronounced shopping lifestyle and those drawn to sales promotions are more likely to engage in impulsive purchases, suggesting that external triggers may mediate or amplify the relationship between stress and impulsive buying tendencies. This divergence from the hypothesis underscores the need to consider external influences such as marketing strategies and environmental stimuli when examining the pathways connecting stress to impulsive buying. Stress, while potentially a contributing factor, may only indirectly affect consumer behaviors, mediated by other variables such as mood regulation or contextual cues like sales and advertisements.

The second variable in the first hypothesis, which posited that greater social media addiction would significantly predict higher impulsive buying behaviors, was supported. A strong positive correlation was observed between social media addiction and impulsive buying

($r = 0.387$, $p < 0.001$). This finding aligns with prior research, which underscores the role of social media platforms as catalysts for impulsive purchases by creating highly engaging and often personalized shopping experiences. For instance, Maccarrone-Eaglen and Schofield (2022) demonstrated that social media addiction strongly influences compulsive buying behaviors, particularly through mechanisms such as constant exposure to targeted advertisements and the fear of missing out (FOMO). Their study further highlighted that even non-compulsive consumers are susceptible to these effects, suggesting that the pervasive and immersive nature of social media platforms makes them a potent driver of impulsive purchasing. Features like influencer endorsements, flash sales, and personalized advertisements create an environment where users are continuously tempted to make unplanned purchases. Moreover, the social comparison and instant gratification fostered by these platforms amplify the urgency to buy, reinforcing impulsive tendencies.

While perceived stress did not directly predict impulsive buying, its significant correlation with social media addiction ($r = 0.251$, $p < 0.01$) suggests an indirect relationship. This finding highlights the possibility that stress might contribute to impulsive buying behaviors indirectly, mediated by social media addiction. For instance, individuals under stress may turn to social media as a coping mechanism, which in turn fosters impulsive purchases. This underscores the interplay between psychological and digital factors in shaping consumer behavior. Furthermore, we failed to accept the null hypothesis since we found significant correlations between social media addiction and impulsive buying behaviors as well as perceived stress and social media addiction.

Despite these contributions, this study is not without limitations. The reliance on self-reported data may have introduced biases, as participants might underreport or exaggerate their stress levels, social media usage, or impulsive buying tendencies. The relatively small sample

size ($N = 123$), with a majority being young adults, may limit the generalizability of the findings to other age groups or cultural contexts. Additionally, while this study identifies significant correlations, it does not establish causation. Future research could employ longitudinal designs to explore temporal relationships and causal pathways between these variables.

Future studies should also investigate potential mediators and moderators, such as financial literacy, emotional regulation, or coping styles, to better understand the mechanisms linking perceived stress and impulsive buying behaviors. Expanding the sample to include diverse populations across different socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds would enhance the applicability of the findings. Moreover, experimental designs or interventions targeting social media addiction and stress management could provide practical solutions to mitigate impulsive buying behaviors. By addressing these limitations and directions, future research can deepen the understanding of how psychological and digital factors interact to shape impulsive consumer behaviors, offering insights for individuals, policymakers, and businesses alike.

Conclusion

This study investigated the psychological underpinnings of impulsive buying behaviors among adults, focusing on the roles of perceived stress and social media addiction. The results revealed a significant positive relationship between social media addiction and impulsive buying tendencies, while no significant correlation was found between perceived stress and impulsive buying. These findings suggest that social media addiction is a stronger predictor of impulsive buying behaviors compared to perceived stress, emphasizing the critical role of social media platforms in shaping consumer purchasing patterns. The strong association between social media addiction and impulsive buying points to the need for interventions

promoting digital well-being and emotional regulation strategies. For mental health practitioners, the results underscore the importance of addressing compulsive behaviors stemming from social media use in therapy and counseling. Psychoeducation programs targeting stress management and mindful consumption could help individuals better regulate their purchasing decisions. Future studies should explore additional variables like emotional regulation, personality traits, or coping mechanisms, which may mediate or moderate the observed relationships, offering deeper insights into the psychological drivers of impulsive buying behaviors.

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