Hashtags to Purchases: A Bibliometric Exploration of the Impact of Social Media in Impulse Buying Behavior

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ABSTRACT

This study presents a bibliometric analysis of the impact of social media on impulse purchasing, which can lead to impulsive purchasing due to its ability to carry personal content, influencer support, and interactivity. Collected data from Scopus database and advanced bibliometric analysis using Biblioshiny, VOSviewer, and Citespace were used. It also examined annual scientific production, most relevant authors, and network visualization of co-citation among cited authors. It also investigates the most relevant sources, timezone network visualization of co-citation among cited journals, and countries' scientific contributions. The most globally cited documents, trend topics, and thematic map of research clusters are also identified in the analysis. Co-occurrence of author keywords and bibliographic coupling of documents provide further insights into the intellectual structure and evolving themes in the field. The findings highlight the dominating trends of emotional triggers and influencer-driven strategies, followed by significant dominance in designing impulse buying. Some of the shortcomings of the study include longitudinal studies and cross-cultural analysis. Also presented are the practical implications of marketers and researchers. This provides comprehensive insight into bibliometric exploration as to how social media is interacting dynamically with consumer behavior, thereby opening several vistas for new avenues of future research and innovative strategies for marketing.

1. INTRODUCTION

Social media has revolutionized the way individuals interact, communicate, and make decisions in their daily lives (Banjongprasert, 2024; Tuten, 2013). It has been used for many purposes other than being a means of social connective platform and has also become part and parcel of modern commerce in that it greatly influences consumer preferences and behavior on an unparalleled scale (Aragoncillo & Orus, 2018; Liu et al., 2025). Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, YouTube WhatsApp and Pinterest integrate shopping features that let social interaction combine seamlessly with online retail (Atta et al., 2023; Zafar et al., 2021a). This is the juncture that has given way for social media to clearly emerge as a key determinant in buying behavior, impulsive buying particularly, where emotionally and situationally unplanned purchases are triggered (Dodoo & Wu, 2019a; Nuseir, 2020).

Impulse buying refers to a type of purchase in which the decision to buy is made on the spur of the moment (Muruganantham & Bhakat, 2013; Vishnu & Raheem, 2013). In contrast to planned purchases that require a deliberation process and evaluation, impulsive buying results from external triggers, including product presentation, emotional arousal, and time-limited offers (Han et al., 1991; Rodrigues et al., 2021). Easy access to products associated with the psychological appeal of novelty and gratification causes consumers to buy what they have not planned for (Abdelsalam et al., 2020). This phenomenon has been increasingly conspicuous in the digital age, where the visual and interactive relation of online platforms has come to play a central role in influencing consumer impulses (Chan et al., 2017; K. Z. Zhang et al., 2018).

Social media platforms are designed to promote impulsive purchases through their algorithms, which generate content in tune with the preferences and surfing history of the individual user (Singh et al., 2023). Rich visual content, influencer postings, and targeted ads seamlessly take users from discovery to purchase. "Shop Now" buttons, swipe-up links, and special offers drive urgency further (Dodoo & Wu, 2019b; Sharma et al., 2018). Social media additionally influences people because it leverages the psychological driving factors of FOMO and social proof: people usually are influenced to try something if it has already been adopted by most people around them (Aslam et al., 2021; Deborah et al., 2022).

The influencers and the content developers play an very important role in motivating impulsive purchases through social media platforms (Budree et al., 2021; Koay et al., 2021). These individuals, who have garnered large, dedicated followings, become trusted intermediaries between brands and consumers (Zafar et al., 2021b). Their ability to display products in an authentic and relatable way builds emotional connections that traditional advertisements often do not (Shamim & Azam, 2024). The sponsored posts, product reviews, and unboxing videos are aspirational in the sense that followers set out to emulate certain lifestyles other than those showcasing the utilities of products (Koay & Lim, 2024). Often, such an emotional engagement causes unplanned purchases-a craving to align with the image projected by an influencer (Koay & Lim, 2024; Roy et al., 2024).

Considering the fast increase in the prevalence of impulse buying driven by social media, there is an increasing need for a deeper understanding of the consequences of such behavior for both consumers and businesses in general (Singh et al., 2023). While businesses might apply such insights in continuous refinement in their marketing efforts, one cannot be completely oblivious to the ethical dimensions of probably manipulative advertising and consumer vulnerability (Abdelsalam et al., 2020). The research contributes to the related academic debates on consumer behavior in the digital era, emanating from the use of technology, psychology, and commerce. With each passing day, social media platforms are evolving continuously, and so will their impact on buying decisions (Goel & Diwan, 2022). This is one field that will always require continuous updating of research and scrutiny over ethical issues. In this context, the analysis of existing research through bibliometric tools provides valuable insights into the evolution, trends, and thematic focus of studies exploring the intersection of social media and impulsive buying behaviour (Abbas et al., 2021; Ali et al., 2022; Amaliasita et al., 2024).

Bibliometric analysis is a systematic and quantitative method that allows researchers to outline the intellectual structure and emerging trends in a particular field (Agac et al., 2023; Aldy Purnomo et al., 2024). It thus helps researchers to study the main characteristics of the literature on the issue under scrutiny by means of software like Biblioshiny, VOSviewer, and CiteSpace, among others, regarding citation patterns, influential authors and journals, and collaborative networks (John et al., 2024; Lukose et al., 2025; Mathew et al., 2024). These tools provide the ability to recognize knowledge gaps, identify the most influential research contributions, and discover theoretical and methodological developments related to the domain of social media-induced impulsive buying behaviour (Salila et al., 2025; Shacheendran et al., 2025).

Biblioshiny is a web application embedded in the R programming environment and provides a user-friendly interface for comprehensive bibliometric analysis (Aria & Cuccurullo, 2017; Fahamsyah et al., 2023; Komperda, 2017; Souza de Cursi, 2023). It allows the visualization of citation networks, keyword co-occurrences, and thematic mapping of research topics (Joseph et al., 2024; Thangavel & Chandra, 2023). Similarly, VOSviewer focuses on visualizing bibliometric networks, enabling the study of author collaboration, institutional linkages, and keyword clustering (Kumar et al., 2024; Van Eck & Waltman, 2010). Among these tools, CiteSpace finds its place by focusing on the identification of burst keywords and the detection of research frontiers that further complement insights into emerging trends and transformative contributions within the field (Chen et al., 2023; Yang et al., 2017; M. Zhang, 2023).

The bibliometric analysis tools will, therefore, help the present study to identify the trend and the extent of research into the role of social media in impulsive buying behavior. This analysis will, therefore, be able to highlight the intellectual structure of this domain, the dominant theoretical underpinning, and the practical implications for marketers and consumers alike. The findings will also provide a base for future research, enabling further insight into how social media continues to shape consumer behavior in an increasingly digitalized marketplace.

This study will fill in the gaps in five critical RQs that help gain further insight into social media's role in impulsive buying. RQ1: What are the core research themes and emerging trends? This question focuses on the identification of recurring topics and novel ideas characterizing the research field. RQ2: Who are the key contributors, and what are their collaborative networks in the field? This study attempts to map the most influential scholars and institutions in this area by mapping the author's contributions and collaborations. RQ3: What is the temporal growth of the publication output concerning the research area of social media's role in impulsive buying? The question explores the temporal growth of the scholarly output, showing the trajectory of the interest in the intersection of topics. RQ4: What are the most influential publications? Citations and impact show which works identify the most pivotal studies that are really shaping this body of academic discourse. RQ5: Which research gaps do currently exist? This is the last question, which attempts to reveal some blank spots that can be explored by further research.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The main source of bibliographic data for this study is Scopus, selected for its inclusion of a wider range of high-quality journals compared to other databases (Gavel & Iselid, 2008; Harzing & Alakangas, 2016; Mongeon & Paul-Hus, 2016). We retrieved publications using the query (TITLE-ABS-KEY ("Social media") AND TITLE-ABS-KEY ("impulse buying") OR TITLE-ABS-KEY ("impulsive buying") The search was not limited to any specific language, and the data included articles from peer-reviewed journals, book chapters, and conference papers. We collected 132 articles from 95 different sources, covering the years 2013 to 2025. To ensure accuracy, we screened the Scopus records to eliminate any duplicates. figure 1 illustrates the PRISMA approach for selecting papers for bibliometric analysis through a three-phase procedure, where we initially identify and extract the necessary data from the databases for analysis (Wang et al., 2014). We excluded reviews, editorials, books, short notes, retracted articles, errata, letters, and shot surveys in the second phase. The documents included are articles, conference papers, and book chapters. The findings were saved as CSV and RIS files and bibliometric analysis was conducted on the data using CiteSpace version 6.2.R3 (Advanced), VOSviewer, and Bibloshiny software.
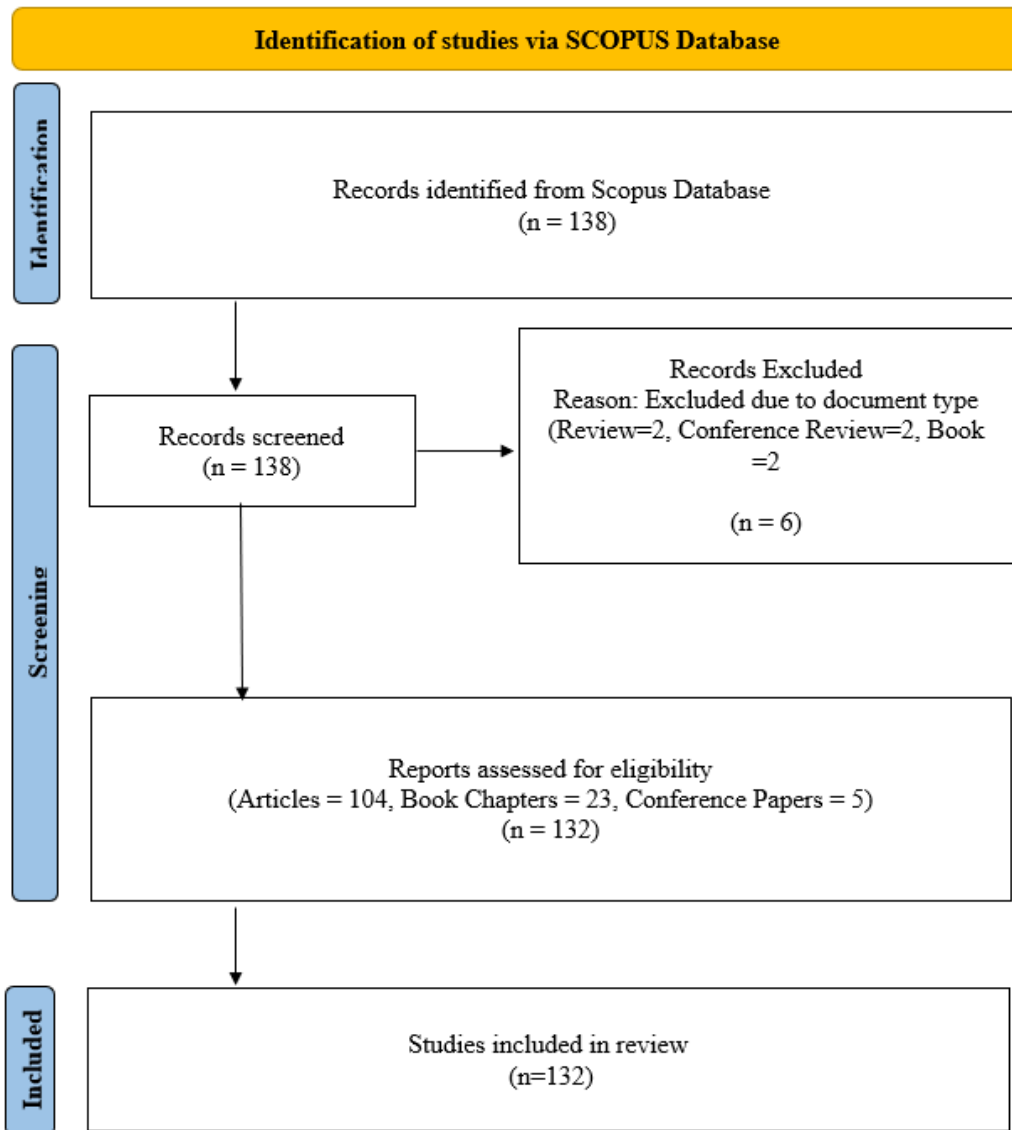

Figure 1 PRISMA flow diagram used to identify, screen, and include papers in the bibliometric analysis.

3. FINDINGS

3.1 Main information of the investigation

Table 1 summarizes the main findings of a bibliometric analysis on social media influences on impulse buying over the period 2013–2025. The study includes 132 documents sourced from 95 journals, books, and other outlets, with an annual growth rate of 21.15%, indicating a rapidly expanding research field. The documents have an average age of 2.76 years,

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reflecting the recent nature of this research area, and each document averages 23.85 citations, showcasing their academic impact. The study analyzes 8,949 references and identifies 386 Keywords Plus and 465 author-provided keywords, demonstrating the diversity of the research themes. Contributions came from 400 authors, with only 14 single-authored documents. Collaboration is evident, with an average of 3.29 co-authors per document and 24.24% international co-authorships. The majority of contributions are in the form of articles (104), followed by conference papers (23) and book chapters (5), illustrating a focus on scholarly dissemination in journals and conferences.

Table 1. Primary information of the investigation

Description	Results
MAIN INFORMATION ABOUT DATA	
Timespan	2013:2025
Sources (Journals, Books, etc)	95
Documents	132
Annual Growth Rate %	21.15
Document Average Age	2.76
Average citations per doc	23.85
References	8949
DOCUMENT CONTENTS	
Keywords Plus (ID)	386
Author's Keywords (DE)	465
AUTHORS	
Authors	400
Authors of single-authored docs	14
AUTHORS COLLABORATION	
Single-authored docs	14
Co-Authors per Doc	3.29
International co-authorships %	24.24
DOCUMENT TYPES	
article	104
book chapter	5
conference paper	23

3.2 Annual Scientific Productions

Figure 1 illustrates the annual scientific production trends in publications from 2013 to 2025. The data shows a gradual increase in publications over the first several years, with a single article produced annually in 2013, 2014, 2016, and 2017. A notable growth trend begins in 2018 with five articles, followed by steady increases in 2019 (7 articles) and 2020 (10 articles). The most significant acceleration occurs from 2021 onward, with 16 articles in 2021 and a peak of 40 articles in 2024, indicating heightened research activity and interest. Although the production for 2025 appears lower (10 articles), it only accounts for the publications up to January, suggesting that the trend may continue upward. This trend reflects the increasing academic focus and relevance of the topic in recent years.
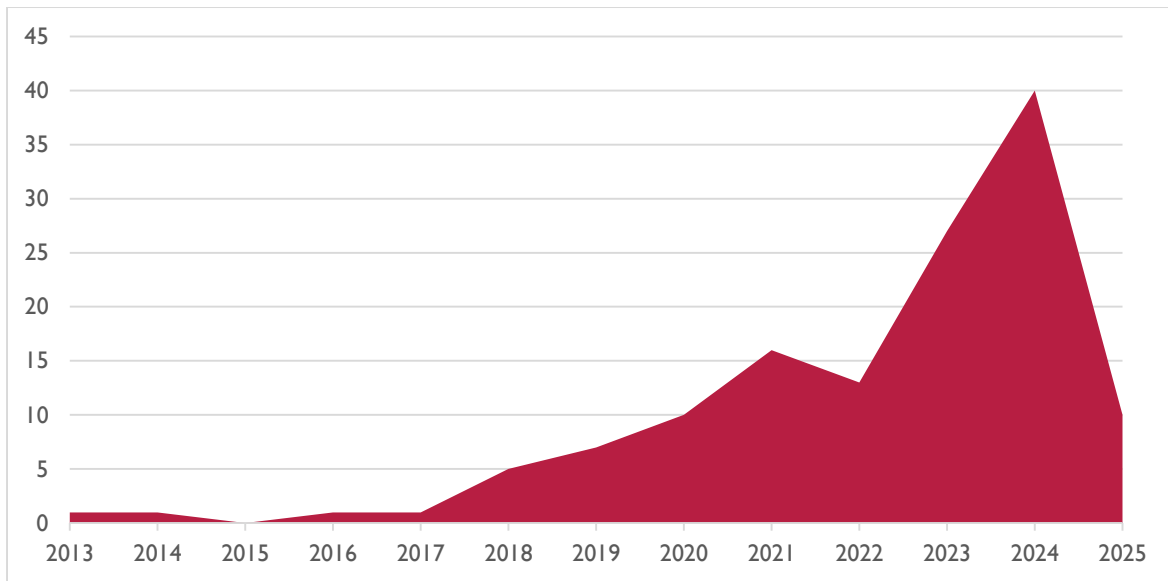
Figure 2. Significant growth trajectory from 2013 to 2025

3.3 Most Relevant Authors

Figure 3 presents the most relevant authors contributing to research based on their publication outputs. Shahzad Mohsin and Zafar Abaid Ullah emerge as the most prominent authors, each contributing around 4 publications. Akram Umair follows with approximately 3.5 publications, reflecting a significant level of involvement. Other key contributors, including Kumar Satinder, Lins Samuel, Tanveer Yasir, and Tariq Anum, have each authored around 3 publications. Authors such as Wang Changfeng and Aquino Sibele have slightly fewer contributions, while Brengman Malaika rounds out the list with close to 2 publications. These contributions underline the diverse authorship and collaborative efforts driving advancements in this research field.
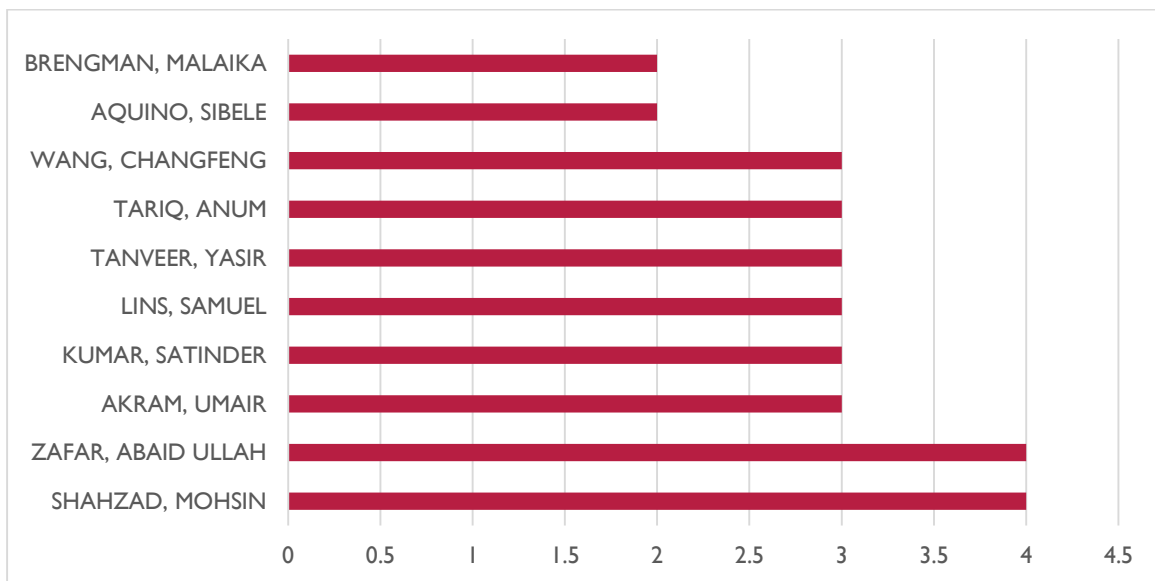

Figure 3. Most relevant authors

3.4 Network visualization of co-citation of cited authors

Figure 4 illustrates the network visualization of the co-citation among the cited authors, revealing the thematic structure of research on social media influences on impulse buying, with 10 distinct clusters representing various subfields. Cluster #0: Virtual World is the largest, comprising 99 members with a silhouette value of 0.911. This cluster emphasizes the role of virtual environments and social commerce in influencing impulse buying. Key works, such as Zafar (2021) and Chung (2017), highlight how social media influencers and contextual interactions drive consumer behavior. Foundational authors like Bagozzi RP and Ajzen I are frequently cited, providing a theoretical base for studies on consumer decision-making

within virtual contexts.

Cluster #1: Customer Psychology (60 members) and Cluster #2: Purchase Intention (59 members) focus on psychological and motivational aspects of impulsive buying. Cluster #1 explores emotional intelligence, social media influencers, and neuroticism as key drivers of impulse buying, with notable contributions from Zafar (2021) and Hu (2023). Cluster #2 delves into the influence of technical and situational cues, such as live-streaming ads and macro-influencers, on purchase intent, with works like Shamim (2024) and Yan (2023) leading the discourse. Cited authors like Rook DW and Beatty SE provide foundational insights into impulse buying and emotional triggers, underscoring the behavioral components of this phenomenon.

Smaller clusters, such as Cluster #3: Buying Behavior and Cluster #6: Organic Food, explore specific aspects like sustainable consumption and online organic food purchases. Cluster #4 examines the role of brand-related user-generated content, with Kim AJ (2016) being a prominent work addressing the influence of social media on consumer engagement. Cluster #9 highlights the role of materialism and emotional responses in consumption behavior. Together, these clusters provide a comprehensive view of the field, connecting foundational theories with emerging areas like influencer marketing, virtual gifting, and the effects of social commerce on consumer behavior, offering valuable insights for future research directions.
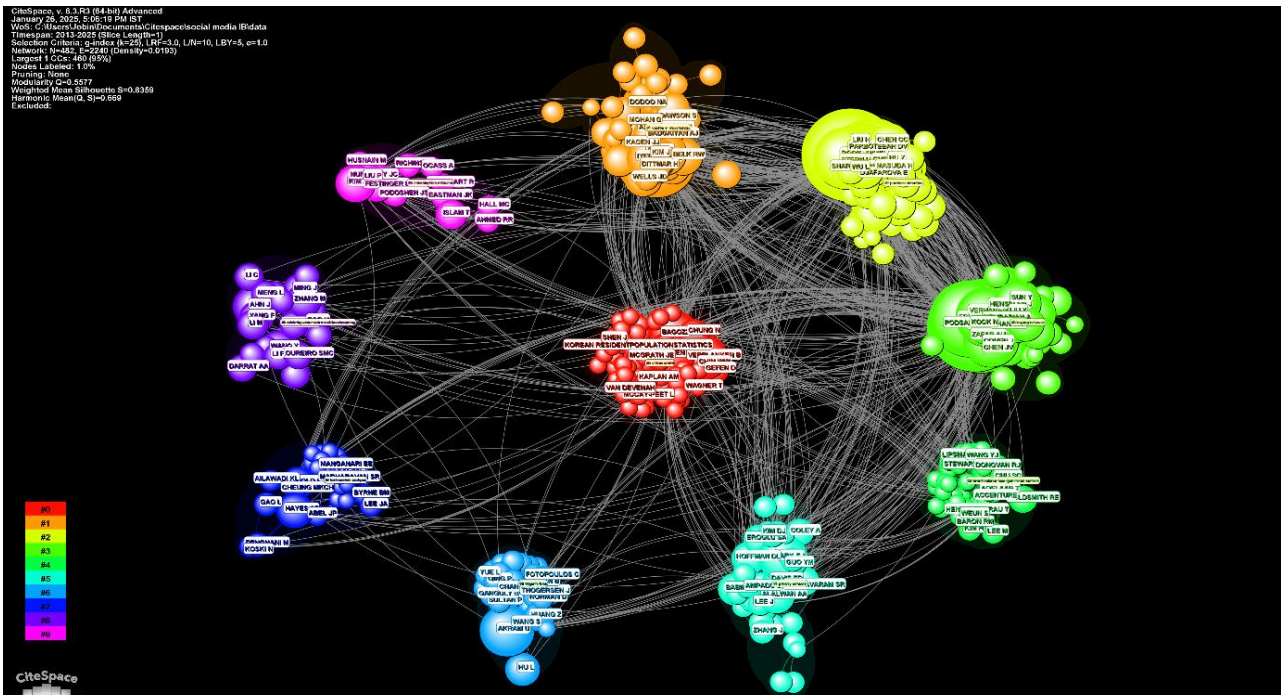

Figure 4. Network visualization of co-citation of cited authors

3.5 *Most Relevant Sources*

Table 2 lists the most relevant sources contributing to the research on social media influences on impulse buying. Frontiers in Psychology leads with 5 articles, highlighting its prominence in addressing psychological aspects of impulse buying within the social media context. Following closely, Computers in Human Behavior, Journal of Research in Interactive Marketing, and Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services each contribute 4 articles, indicating their focus on digital behavior, marketing strategies, and consumer services. Several journals, including ACM International Conference Proceeding Series, Asia Pacific Journal of Marketing and Logistics, International Journal of Internet Marketing and Advertising, Journal of Content, Community and Communication, Journal of Internet Commerce, and Young Consumers, have each published 3 articles. These sources reflect a diverse range of interdisciplinary perspectives, encompassing psychology, marketing, e-commerce, and communication, which are central to understanding the role of social media in influencing impulse buying behavior.

Table 2. Most relevant sources

Sources	Articles
PROCEEDINGS OF SPIE - THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR OPTICAL ENGINEERING	114
JOURNAL OF MARINE SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING	57
OCEANS CONFERENCE RECORD (IEEE)	49
LECTURE NOTES IN COMPUTER SCIENCE (INCLUDING SUBSERIES LECTURE NOTES IN ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND LECTURE NOTES IN BIOINFORMATICS)	40
IEEE ACCESS	38
SENSORS	35
MULTIMEDIA TOOLS AND APPLICATIONS	29
FRONTIERS IN MARINE SCIENCE	28
ACM INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE PROCEEDING SERIES	26
IEEE JOURNAL OF OCEANIC ENGINEERING	24

3.6 Timezone network visualization of Co-citation of Cited Journals

Figure 5 presents the timezone network visualization of co-cited journals, revealing 10 distinct clusters, highlighting thematic areas and their evolution in the study of social media influences on impulse buying. Cluster #0: Top Review, the largest with 65 members, emphasizes consumer behavior in social commerce. Articles like Chung (2017) and Zafar (2021) explore how social media influencers and contextual interactions drive impulsive purchases. The cluster features highly cited journals such as Journal of Business Research and Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services, which form the backbone of this domain by focusing on retail and consumer decision-making in digital environments.

Cluster #1 is Empirical Study, with 54 members, providing a psychological and behavioral study on impulsive buying, including such powerful works as Kimiagari (2021) on cognitive and effective factors, and Yan (2023) focused on the role of live-streaming advertisements. Prominent journals, such as the European Journal of Personality and the Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing, show an interdisciplinary approach, tending to bridge such sciences as psychology, marketing, and tourism. Cluster #2, Virtual World, will focus on how virtual worlds influence customer behavior; it would include articles on purchasing in virtual worlds, such as Kaplan. Personality and Individual Differences and Business Horizons are just some of the journals utilized for this that really pinpoint the emphasis on psychological and managerial aspects.

The other notable clusters include Cluster #3: Social Media Influencer and Cluster #6: Parasocial Interaction, which dive into the mechanism of trust and influence that social media celebrities use to affect purchase behavior. Such aspects are contributed to by clusters from journals like Tourism Management and the Journal of Advertising Research. Small clusters like Cluster #7: Online Convenience focus on more minor or niche areas that materialism and online convenience are affecting Generation Z in terms of impulsive buying. The network displays a temporal overview, which gives an indication of the integration between consumer behavior and technological advances in the field of marketing strategies, and presents established and emergent themes of this developing field.

Figure 5. Timezone Network visualization of co-citation of cited journals

3.7 Countries Scientific Productions

Table 3 shows the scientific production by country/territory in research on social media influences on impulse buying. China tops the ranking with 25 documents, reflecting the strong interest of that country in this subject. Indeed, considering its huge e-commerce and social media market, it is expected that researches dealing with such an important business sector will have a high priority order. Next comes India with 21 publications, reflecting the recent interest of the country in understanding consumer behavior in its fast-digitizing economy. The United States is third, with 19 documents, indicating that the country remains one of the valuable contributors to research in consumer psychology and digital marketing. Indonesia and Malaysia contribute 15 publications each, reflecting the relevance of this topic to fast-growing e-commerce sectors in Southeast Asia. Taiwan has 10 documents, while Pakistan contributed 6. Lastly, Portugal, Turkey, and the United Kingdom have each contributed 5 documents, reflecting regular research interest from these countries. This geographical distribution shows the worldwide interest in explaining how social media drives impulsive buying, especially when focusing on Asian markets.

Table 3. Countries Scientific Productions

Country/Territory	Documents
China	25
India	21
United States	19
Indonesia	15
Malaysia	15
Taiwan	10
Pakistan	6
Portugal	5
Turkey	5
United Kingdom	5

3.8 Most Globally Cited Documents

Table 4 highlights the most globally cited documents in the realm of research, showcasing their total citations, citations per

year (TC per Year), and normalized citation counts (Normalized TC). The paper by Islam T (2021) in the Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services leads with 383 total citations, a remarkable 76.60 TC per year, and a normalized TC of 5.05, reflecting its significant global influence. Kim AJ (2016) in Computers in Human Behavior follows with 326 citations and 32.60 TC per year, showing enduring relevance. Chen Y (2019) in Information Management and Zafar AU (2021) in Computers in Human Behavior also stand out with 240 and 223 citations, respectively, and high annual and normalized citation metrics, emphasizing their impact in the field.Other notable works include Chung N (2017) and Aragoncillo L (2018), with 148 and 144 citations respectively, demonstrating their contributions to hospitality and marketing contexts. Papers by Kimiagari S (2021), Naeem M (2021), and Ahmed RR (2020) reflect robust annual citation rates, highlighting their growing influence. Finally, Lins S (2020) in Heliyon contributes with 96 citations and a normalized TC of 2.49, indicating strong relevance despite being a more recent publication. These highly cited works underscore the interdisciplinary appeal and academic significance of this research domain.

Table 3. Most globally cited documents

Paper	DOI	Total Citations	TC per Year	Normalized TC
ISLAM T, 2021, J RETAIL CONSUM SERV	10.1016/j.jretconser.2020.102357	383	76.60	5.05
KIM AJ, 2016, COMPUT HUM BEHAV	10.1016/j.chb.2015.12.047	326	32.60	1.00
CHEN Y, 2019, INF MANAGE	10.1016/j.im.2018.09.002	240	34.29	4.35
ZAFAR AU, 2021, COMPUT HUM BEHAV	10.1016/j.chb.2019.106178	223	44.60	2.94
CHUNG N, 2017, INT J CONTEMP HOSP MANAGE	10.1108/IJCHM-10-2015-0608	148	16.44	1.00
ARAGONCILLO L, 2018, SPANISH J MARKETING - ESIC	10.1108/SJME-03-2018-007	144	18.00	3.55
KIMIAGARI S, 2021, J RETAIL CONSUM SERV	10.1016/j.jretconser.2021.102567	143	28.60	1.89
NAEEM M, 2021, INT J RETAIL DISRTIB MANAGE	10.1108/IJRDM-08-2020-0317	138	27.60	1.82
AHMED RR, 2020, J COMPET	10.7441/joc.2020.03.01	118	19.67	3.06
LINS S, 2020, HELIYON	10.1016/j.heliyon.2020.e04746	96	16.00	2.49

3.9 Bibliographic Coupling of Documents

Figure 6 illustrates the bibliographic coupling of documents with a minimum citation threshold of 5. Out of 132 sources analyzed, 57 documents meet this threshold, and the resulting network consists of 54 items grouped into 8 distinct clusters. Bibliographic coupling reflects how frequently two documents cite the same sources, thereby highlighting shared research foundations and thematic connections among publications. The network's prominent clusters reveal key thematic areas and influential contributors. For instance, the green cluster, which includes authors such as Islam T., Pitafi A.H., and Arya V., appears central and well-connected, indicating its significance in the field. This cluster likely represents research on critical topics such as impulse buying behavior, trust, and social media's role in influencing consumer decisions. Other clusters, such as the orange and blue groups, demonstrate the diversity of research topics, including emotional triggers, marketing strategies, and cultural dimensions of online consumer behavior. The visual layout of the network shows dense interconnections between clusters, indicating substantial overlap and collaboration across research themes. Some peripheral nodes, such as individual authors or less-central clusters, point to niche topics or emerging areas of study. This bibliographic coupling map highlights influential works and thematic intersections, offering valuable insights for researchers looking to identify foundational studies or explore collaborative opportunities within the domain of social media and impulse buying.
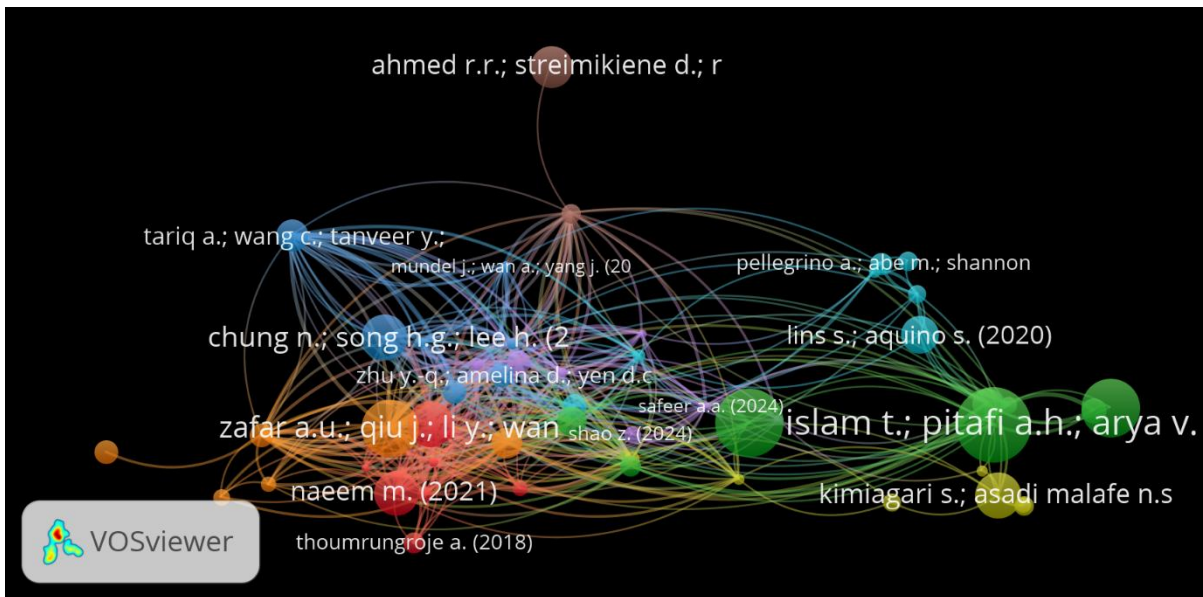
Figure 6. Bibliographic coupling of documents

3.10 Co-occurrence of all keywords

Figure 7 shows the co-occurrence network of author keywords for 465 in total, with 78 keywords surpassing the minimum occurrence threshold of 2. There are 12 clusters with different sizes, as indicated by the various colors. The structure in the network will therefore show how connected these keywords are and shed light on the major thematic areas of research into the influences of social media on impulse buying. The most representative cluster is the first cluster in red color and has 11 keywords. Big topics of "consumer behavior" and "social media usage" are covered by the centroid of this cluster, which actually reflects the overarching focus of how digital platforms impact purchasing behavior. Cluster 2: This cluster in green color consists of 9 keywords. These consist of terms like "hedonic browsing" and "urge to buy impulsively," indicating that there is a high level of attention towards psychological and behavioral dimensions of impulsive buying. Cluster 3, colored in blue and containing 8 keywords, is about digital marketing strategies, including "eWOM" and "social media advertising." Similarly, Cluster 4, colored in yellow, discusses concepts such as "materialism" and "hedonic value," whereby emotional and materialistic factors play a big role in making impulse-buying decisions. The rest of the clusters are relatively small and detail categories within the categories. For instance, Cluster 5 (purple) and Cluster 6 (cyan), each with 6 keywords, talk about influences regarding "trust" and "Instagram," respectively. Cluster 8 (brown) addresses the very practical aspect of "convenience stores." The smaller clusters are represented, for example, by Cluster 12 in light blue color, with 4 keywords, which very often stand for emerging themes or less explored geographical and cultural dimensions, such as "India.". This network map comprehensively depicts the field, connecting the core topics to specialized and new emerging research areas that provide a direction for future inquiries.
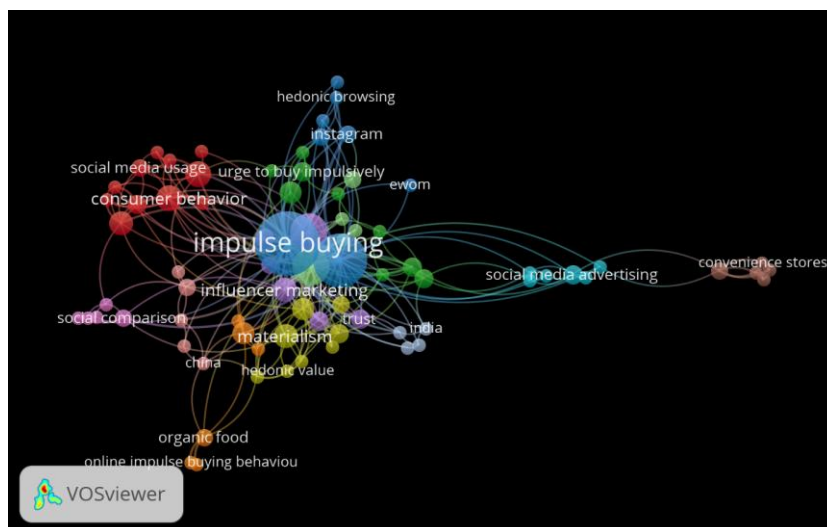

Figure 7. Co-occurrence of author keywords

3.11 *Trend Topics*

Figure 8 highlights the trend topics in research on social media influences on impulse buying, showing term frequency across different years. Terms such as "social media," "electronic commerce," and "impulsive buying" have seen consistent interest, with their frequency increasing significantly after 2020. This reflects the growing impact of social media platforms and e-commerce on consumer behavior, particularly during and after the COVID-19 pandemic, which accelerated the adoption of online shopping. Topics like "buying behavior" and "consumer behavior" have also gained traction, indicating a broader focus on understanding psychological and behavioral aspects tied to digital shopping environments. In recent years, specific terms like "social networking (online)" and "social commerces" have emerged as areas of interest, suggesting a shift toward exploring community-driven and platform-specific commerce strategies. The term "sales" sees a peak toward the later years, signaling its importance as a business outcome in these studies. The consistent growth across these topics highlights the interdisciplinary nature of this research, involving elements of marketing, psychology, and technology. The term frequency also emphasizes the dynamic evolution of the field, with newer trends complementing foundational research on impulse buying and digital commerce.
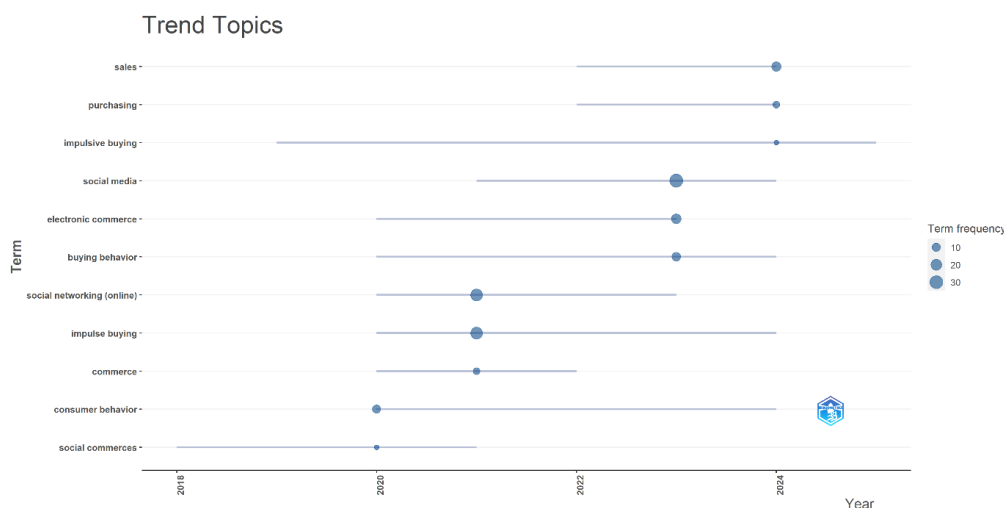

Figure 8. visualization of trending topics in the realm of research

3.12 *Thematic Map*

Figure 9 presents a thematic map categorizing research topics related to social media influences on impulse buying based on their development density and relevance. In the motor themes quadrant (upper-right), topics such as "impulse buying behavior," "consumer behavior," "COVID-19," and "materialism" exhibit high centrality and strong development. These themes are well-established and integral to the field, representing key areas of active and impactful research. For instance, the inclusion of "COVID-19" highlights how the pandemic influenced online shopping behaviors, making these topics pivotal to understanding the interplay between external events and consumer psychology.

In the basic themes quadrant (lower-right), topics like "impulse buying," "social commerce," "influencer marketing," and "trust" hold high relevance but are less developed in terms of density. These foundational themes form the core of the research domain and emphasize the mechanisms driving impulse buying on social media, such as influencer endorsements, trust in platforms, and the growing significance of social commerce. These topics suggest fertile ground for further exploration, particularly in how digital platforms and marketing strategies foster impulsive purchasing behavior.

The niche themes quadrant (upper-left) includes specialized topics such as "social media advertising," "impulse buying tendency," and "emotional responses," which exhibit high development but limited relevance to the broader field. These areas indicate focused subfields, such as the role of emotions and tailored advertising in influencing buying behaviors. Conversely, the emerging or declining themes quadrant (lower-left) includes "fashion," which appears less central to current research, signaling either waning interest or untapped potential for growth. Together, the thematic map offers valuable insights into the research landscape, highlighting dominant areas of study, foundational concepts, and emerging opportunities within the domain of social media and impulse buying.
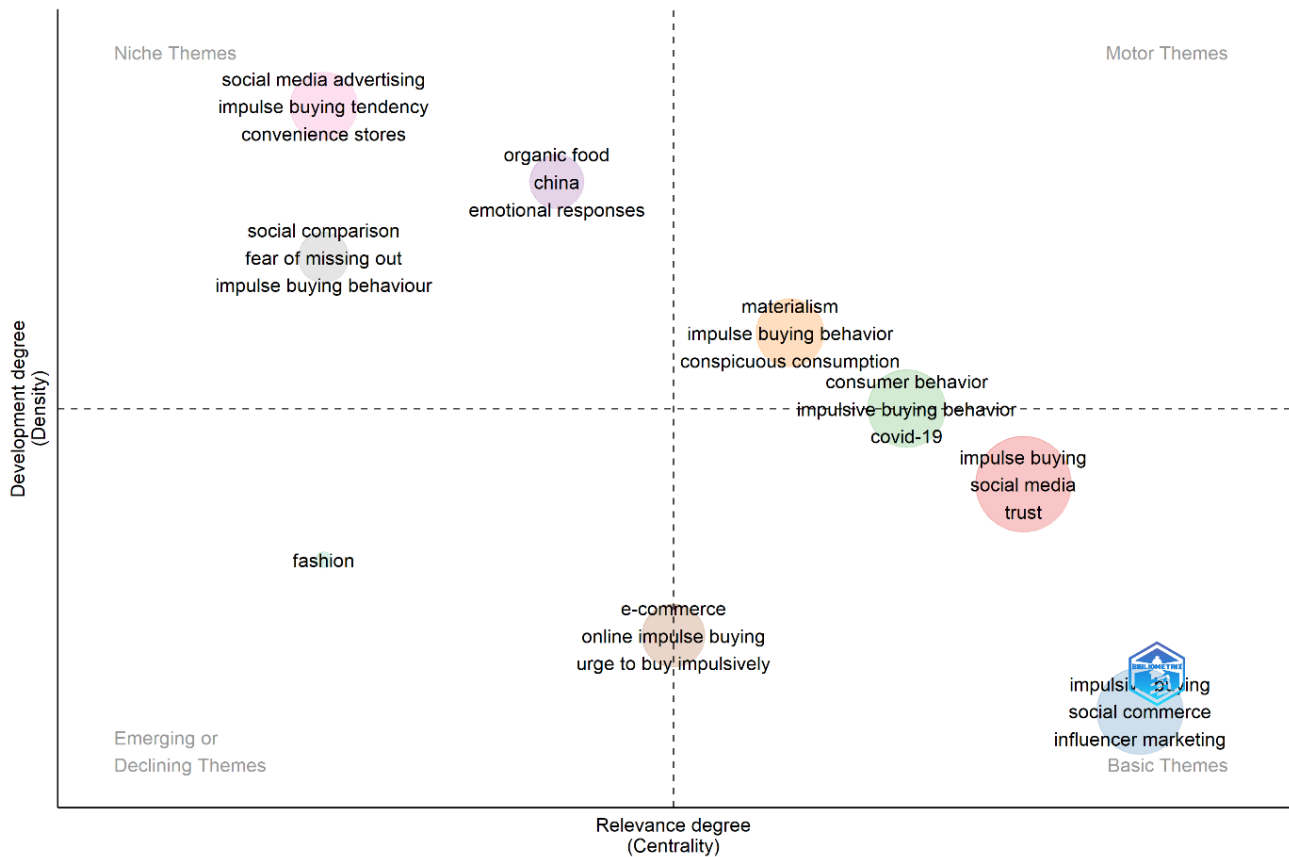
Figure 9. Thematic visualization of keywords

4. DISCUSSIONS

The analysis highlights the rapid growth of research on social media's influence on impulsive buying behavior, with an annual growth rate of 21.15% from 2013 to 2025. This surge demonstrates increasing academic and practical interest, particularly after 2020, likely fueled by the acceleration of e-commerce during the COVID-19 pandemic. The thematic trends emphasize the integration of social media platforms and consumer behavior theories, illustrating the dynamic evolution of the field. Key topics such as influencer marketing, materialism, and the role of emotional responses remain central, reflecting a multi-disciplinary approach involving psychology, marketing, and technology.

The study underscores significant collaboration among researchers, with an average of 3.29 co-authors per document and a 24.24% international co-authorship rate. China, India, and the United States lead in scholarly contributions, reflecting their substantial digital commerce markets. Southeast Asia also emerges as a key region, with countries like Indonesia and Malaysia contributing notable research. This geographic distribution highlights the global relevance of social media's impact on impulsive buying, with Asian markets standing out as critical drivers of research due to their high social media penetration and dynamic e-commerce ecosystems.

The bibliometric analysis done shows several thematic clusters, most relevant being related to virtual environment, consumer psychology, and purchase intention. Foundational clusters were on emotional intelligence, social media influencers, and trust; and as for the niche areas: sustainable consumption and organic food buying provide focused insights. Emerging clusters give a highlight of influencer marketing, live-streaming ads, and the role of parasocial interactions. These findings represent a balanced research landscape, which connects well-established theories with state-of-the-art digital marketing practices and underlines the ever-intricating nature of impulsive buying behavior online.

Research Gaps and Practical Implications

Despite the growing body of literature on social media's influence on impulsive buying, significant research gaps persist. Key foundational themes like "trust" and "social commerce" are underexplored, particularly concerning the mechanisms through which platforms foster consumer trust and ensure ethical influencer marketing. While trust is central to impulsive buying, studies addressing issues such as data privacy, transparency in endorsements, and manipulative advertising are limited. Similarly, niche themes such as "emotional responses" and "impulse buying tendency" lack integration into broader research frameworks. These specialized topics provide an opportunity to explore how personalized advertising and emotional

triggers influence impulsive behavior across diverse consumer segments. Additionally, themes like "fashion" appear under-researched, suggesting untapped potential for examining how real-time features, such as virtual try-ons and fashion influencers, drive impulsive purchases. Finally, the long-term impacts of COVID-19 on digital consumer behavior remain largely unaddressed, despite its inclusion as a motor theme, calling for a deeper understanding of post-pandemic trends in social commerce.

On a practical level, businesses can apply these insights into better strategies to more effectively engage consumers. A focus on ethical ways of marketing-like transparency in influencer deals and labeling advertisements-helps to build trust in consumers, leading toward brand loyalty. Emotional cues and AI-powered personalization tools create the potential to craft business campaigns in targeted ways that deeply resonate with consumers, thereby increasing impulsive buying. Third, the integration of all platform-specific features, which include live streaming or gamification in shopping experiences, drives consumers to engage even more and brings in more sales. Cross-cultural research across regions brings us to understand regionally nuanced approaches in the realm of marketing strategies in emerging markets such as Asia, where there is tremendous social media penetration and fast e-commerce growth. It will further be important to invest in predictive analytics that monitor the trends that emerge in such a dynamic environment, so that timely and impactful campaigns can be designed to meet the consumer's expectations. This would, therefore, bridge the research gaps identified and also ensure full practical potential is achieved through social media to influence impulsive buying.

5. CONCLUSION

This bibliometric analysis will study the growing role of social media in influencing impulsive buying, especially through personalized content, influencer endorsement, and interactive elements that elicit emotional responses. The limiting trends in key research will then be outlined through the study of co-citation networks, keyword co-occurrence, and bibliographic coupling in order to outline the intellectual boundaries of this ever-evolving field. However, research gaps - including limited longitudinal studies, a need for more cross-cultural comparisons, and underexplored ethical concerns-call for further exploration. In investigating these gaps, future studies are encouraged to cover the following topics: the effects of social media strategies on consumer behaviour in the longer term; Cross-cultural analysis will explain cultural variations in results. Ethical frameworks explore how manipulation could be minimized and responsible marketing promoted. On the other side, marketers could also use such insights from analysis to develop a consumer-oriented strategy by properly balancing personalization with transparency. From trend analysis and thematic mapping, innovation opportunities in influencer collaborations and curated contents can be viewed. The general contribution this study makes is within the advancement of theoretical and practical understanding of the nexus between social media and impulse buying.

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