

Instagram Reels, Influencer Marketing and Impulse Buying Behaviour among Fashion Consumers in Punjab, India: A Secondary Research Synthesis Using the Stimulus–Organism–Response Framework.

Dr Arifa Singh¹, Amarjit Kaur², Neha Dhingra³

¹ PhD, University School of Financial Studies, Guru Nanak Dev University,

² Assistant Professor, Delhi Institute of Higher Education, Noida,

³ Assistant professor, Delhi Institute of Higher Education, Noida,

Cite This Paper as: Dr Arifa Singh, Amarjit Kaur, Neha Dhingra (2026) Instagram Reels, Influencer Marketing and Impulse Buying Behaviour among Fashion Consumers in Punjab, India: A Secondary Research Synthesis Using the Stimulus–Organism–Response Framework...The Journal of African Development 1, Vol.7, No.1, 1479-1489

KEYWORDS

Instagram Reels, influencer marketing, impulse buying, fashion retail, Punjab, India, Stimulus-Organism-Response model, FOMO, consumer engagement, social proof, secondary research, literature review..

ABSTRACT

Purpose: This paper synthesises existing academic and industry literature on Instagram Reels-based influencer marketing and impulse buying among fashion consumers, using Punjab, India as a contextual lens. Rather than collecting new primary data, the paper reviews and integrates published evidence through the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) framework to build a literature-grounded conceptual model that positions Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) as an organism-level mediator and regional cultural identity as a moderator of influencer credibility and consumer engagement.

Design/Methodology/Approach: The study adopts a thematic secondary research design. Peer-reviewed articles, conference papers and industry reports published between 1974 and 2026 were identified through Google Scholar, ResearchGate, Emerald Insight, ScienceDirect, Taylor & Francis Online and platform-audience statistics providers, and were synthesised thematically around the four stimulus constructs (content quality, visual appeal, influencer credibility, social proof), two organism states (FOMO, consumer engagement) and two response constructs (impulse buying intention, actual impulse purchase) of the extended S-O-R model.

Findings: The reviewed literature consistently associates influencer source credibility and social-proof cues with heightened consumer engagement and impulse buying intention, and identifies FOMO as a recurring mediating mechanism between social media stimuli and impulsive purchase outcomes. Evidence from Indian and comparable emerging-market studies further suggests that culturally congruent influencer content strengthens engagement, although no prior S-O-R study has yet examined Punjab specifically. This gap motivates a set of literature-derived research propositions intended to guide future primary data collection rather than reporting statistically tested results.

Research Implications: The paper contributes a synthesised, citation-grounded conceptual model that (a) positions FOMO within the S-O-R tradition for short-form video commerce, (b) proposes regional cultural identity as a contextually relevant moderator, (c) offers an evidence base for fashion retailers and influencer-marketing agencies operating in culturally distinctive regional markets, and (d) identifies Punjab's fashion-retail sector as an under-researched empirical setting warranting primary investigation.

Originality/Value: This is a desk-based literature synthesis, not an empirical study; no primary survey data were collected or analysed. Its value lies in consolidating dispersed literature into a single, testable conceptual framework and in making explicit which claims are supported by prior evidence, as distinct from claims that remain propositions for future research....

1. INTRODUCTION

Short-form video has reshaped social commerce across emerging digital markets, and India is among the platforms' largest audiences. Estimates of Instagram's Indian user base vary by measurement method and vendor, but recent tracking

consistently places India as the platform's single largest national market, with figures in 2026 ranging from roughly 480 to 545 million addressable users depending on the data source and month of measurement (NapoleonCat, 2026; TechnologyChecker, 2026). Fashion and lifestyle content remains one of the most engaged-with categories within this audience, and influencer-mediated short-form video, rather than static posts, increasingly drives discovery and purchase behaviour (De Veirman et al., 2017; Koay et al., 2021).

Punjab occupies a distinctive position within this national landscape. The state combines above-average brand consciousness, a large globally connected diaspora, and a cultural identity expressed through bridal customs, festival dress and regional textile traditions, with fast-growing fashion retail ecosystems in cities such as Ludhiana, Amritsar, Chandigarh, Jalandhar and Patiala. Despite this commercial and cultural significance, empirical consumer-behaviour research specific to Punjab remains sparse; existing Indian studies of influencer marketing and impulse buying tend to draw on pan-India or metro-city samples (for example, Kerala- and Delhi-based studies; see Koay et al., 2021; Habib & Almamy, 2025), leaving the region's culturally distinctive dynamics largely unexamined.

This paper does not collect new primary data. Instead, it undertakes a secondary, literature-based synthesis to establish what is already known about the psychological mechanisms linking influencer-driven short-form video content to impulse buying, and to identify where Punjab-specific and India-wide evidence remains thin. It uses the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) framework (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974) as an organising structure, because this framework has been repeatedly and successfully applied to social-commerce and influencer-marketing contexts (Zhang et al., 2014; Koay et al., 2021; Habib & Almamy, 2025), and because it provides a coherent way of distinguishing environmental stimuli, internal psychological states, and behavioural outcomes.

1.1 Objectives of the Review

To synthesise existing literature on how content quality, visual appeal, influencer credibility and social proof relate to psychological states such as FOMO and consumer engagement.

To review evidence on FOMO and consumer engagement as mediating mechanisms linking influencer-marketing stimuli to impulse buying outcomes.

To examine what is known about cultural identity as a moderator of influencer credibility and engagement, drawing on Indian and comparable emerging-market studies.

To translate this synthesis into a literature-grounded conceptual model and a set of testable propositions for Punjab's fashion-retail context, to be validated by future primary research.

1.2 Review Questions

RQ1: What does existing literature say about the relationship between influencer-marketing stimuli (content quality, visual appeal, credibility, social proof) and consumers' psychological states?

RQ2: What evidence exists for FOMO as a mediating mechanism between social-proof-type stimuli and impulse buying intention?

RQ3: What evidence exists for consumer engagement as a mediating mechanism between influencer credibility and impulse buying intention?

RQ4: What does the literature on cultural identity and social identity theory suggest about its moderating role in influencer-consumer relationships?

RQ5: Where are the specific gaps in the literature regarding Punjab's fashion-retail consumers, and how might these be addressed empirically?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Digital Commerce and Fashion Retail in Punjab

Punjab's fashion retail sector is shaped by structural features that distinguish it from other Indian regional markets: a large non-resident Indian population concentrated in North America and the United Kingdom, a strong bridal and festival-wear economy, and Ludhiana's status as a major hosiery and textile manufacturing hub. Existing region-specific consumer research remains limited and largely predates the Reels era. Ludhiana-focused survey work on social media and women's



fashion-apparel preferences found that visual content and peer influence were important drivers of purchase consideration, using samples in the low hundreds of respondents and conventional questionnaire methods rather than platform-specific short-form-video measures. More recent India-wide work on Generation Z fashion consumption similarly points to social media, and personalisation in particular, as central to fashion discovery and brand loyalty (Kaur, Malik & Singh, 2024; Singh, Chakrabarti & Tripathi, 2023), but again without a Punjab-specific or Reels-specific focus. No published study identified in this review applies the S-O-R framework to Instagram Reels and impulse buying specifically within Punjab, confirming the regional research gap that motivates this synthesis.

2.2 The S-O-R Framework in Influencer Marketing Research

The Stimulus-Organism-Response paradigm, originating in environmental psychology (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974), models behaviour as a function of environmental stimuli that produce internal affective and cognitive states (the organism), which in turn drive behavioural responses. Zhang et al. (2014) and Eroglu et al. (2001) extended the framework to online and social-commerce environments, and it has since become a standard lens for influencer-marketing research. Koay, Teoh and Soh (2021), using a 273-respondent PLS-SEM study of Instagram followers, found that perceived social-media-marketing activities of influencers significantly shaped all three dimensions of source credibility (expertise, trustworthiness, attractiveness), which in turn mediated the relationship between influencer activity and online impulse buying. Related S-O-R-based studies of Instagram fashion influencers report that source credibility is positively associated with advertising attitude and stronger self-brand connection, reinforcing credibility as a central organism-shaping stimulus in fashion contexts. Kahneman's (2011) dual-process account of decision-making offers a complementary psychological rationale for why S-O-R-style models fit short-form video consumption: Reels are typically processed through fast, affect-driven judgement rather than deliberate evaluation, which is consistent with the impulsive, low-deliberation purchase behaviour this literature repeatedly documents.

2.3 Stimulus Variables

2.3.1 Content Quality. Content quality — encompassing informativeness, storytelling, pacing and relevance — has repeatedly been linked to stronger engagement with branded and influencer content in social-commerce research (Zhang et al., 2014; McKinney, Yoon & Zahedi, 2002). Culturally specific content (for example, content referencing regional festivals, weddings or traditional dress) is a recognised driver of relevance and resonance in Indian digital-marketing practice more broadly, where campaigns using local languages and culturally grounded storytelling have been shown to build stronger emotional engagement than culturally generic content (Think with Google APAC, 2024).

2.3.2 Visual Appeal. Visual and aesthetic quality is a well-established driver of engagement in social and e-commerce environments (Venkatesh et al., 2003), and is particularly salient for fashion content, where lifestyle imagery shapes aspirational purchase interest. Instagram's algorithmic promotion of high-performing visual content reinforces this dynamic by disproportionately surfacing aesthetically polished Reels.

2.3.3 Influencer Credibility. Source credibility theory (Ohanian, 1990) identifies expertise, trustworthiness and attractiveness as the components that make an endorsement persuasive. Empirical S-O-R studies applying this theory to Instagram influencers consistently find credibility to be a strong, positive predictor of consumer engagement and downstream purchase intention (Koay et al., 2021; Lou & Yuan, 2019). For regionally specific fashion content, credibility plausibly also depends on cultural fluency — an influencer's demonstrated familiarity with local customs, designers and aesthetic conventions — although this dimension has been theorised more than it has been directly measured in the literature reviewed here.

2.3.4 Social Proof. Cialdini's (1984) principle of social proof — that people infer appropriate behaviour from others' visible actions — maps directly onto Instagram's like, comment and share counts. Lee and Ma (2012) show that electronic word-of-mouth signals shape product judgement and purchase intention, and social-proof cues (visible purchase counts, "X people are viewing this" messages, high comment volumes) are repeatedly identified in FOMO-focused consumer research as amplifiers of urgency-driven buying (Oak et al., 2025; see also Habib & Almamy, 2025).

2.4 Organism Variables

2.4.1 FOMO. FOMO is defined as the pervasive apprehension that others may be having rewarding experiences from which one is absent (Przybylski et al., 2013), and has been linked in systematic reviews to compulsive social media use, social comparison and impulsive buying (Tandon et al., 2021; Hodkinson, 2019). Direct empirical support for FOMO as a mediator between social media marketing stimuli and purchase intention in an Indian setting comes from Habib and Almamy (2025), whose survey of 367 Indian lifestyle-product consumers found that social media marketing significantly

predicted both FOMO and purchase intention, and that FOMO significantly mediated this relationship. Comparable Gen Z fashion-market research (Oak, Reddy et al., 2025) similarly finds that time-bound offers, scarcity signalling and social-proof cues jointly amplify FOMO-driven impulse purchasing.

2.4.2 Consumer Engagement. Consumer engagement is conceptualised as the cognitive, affective and behavioural dimensions of a consumer's relationship with a brand or influencer's content (Brodie et al., 2011; Hollebeek, Glynn & Brodie, 2014), ranging from passive viewing to active liking, commenting and sharing, through to deeper behaviours such as profile visits and product saves. Engagement has been empirically shown to mediate the relationship between influencer credibility and both attitudinal and behavioural purchase outcomes in fashion-influencer contexts (Koay et al., 2021), consistent with the theoretical expectation that engagement converts attitudinal trust into behavioural orientation.

2.5 Response Variables

Impulse buying is conceptualised, following Rook and Fisher (1995), as an affectively driven, cognitively abbreviated purchase decision. The literature distinguishes impulse buying intention (attitudinal willingness) from actual impulse purchase (the completed, retrospectively evaluated transaction), and treats the gap between the two as behaviourally meaningful, since it can be widened or narrowed by platform features such as native checkout, same-day delivery and one-tap purchasing (Koay et al., 2021). Multiple S-O-R studies of social/live-commerce environments report that positive affective states generated by influencer content (flow, emotional attachment, FOMO) translate into significantly higher impulse-buying behaviour, alongside situational stimuli such as scarcity and discounting.

2.6 Regional and Cultural Identity as a Moderator

Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) provides the theoretical basis for treating cultural or regional identity as a moderator of influencer effects: consumers who strongly identify with a cultural in-group are theorised to respond more favourably to content and sources that visibly express that identity. Broader cross-cultural social-media research supports this logic, showing that collectivism moderates how identity-related platform features shape adoption, sharing and purchase behaviour, and that culturally misaligned campaigns can actively damage engagement and trust. Within India, industry and academic commentary converge on the observation that regional-language and culturally grounded content now outperforms culturally generic content in engagement terms (Think with Google APAC, 2024), and comparative cross-cultural consumer-behaviour studies confirm that specific cultural-value dimensions can significantly moderate the link between purchase intention and purchase behaviour. No study identified in this review, however, has directly tested Punjabi cultural identity as a moderator of the influencer-credibility–engagement relationship; this remains a genuine, literature-confirmed gap rather than an established finding.

2.7 Research Gap

Drawing the preceding strands together, the literature review indicates that: (a) FOMO is empirically supported as a mediator between social-media/social-proof stimuli and purchase intention in at least one large Indian sample (Habib & Almamy, 2025), but has not been examined within an S-O-R model specific to Instagram Reels or to fashion retail; (b) consumer engagement is empirically supported as a mediator between influencer credibility and impulse buying in Instagram-influencer contexts (Koay et al., 2021), but not within an Indian regional setting; (c) cultural/social identity is theoretically well-grounded as a moderator of source effects but has not been tested for Punjab specifically; and (d) No S-O-R study identified in this review treats Instagram Reels, rather than static posts or general "social media marketing activity", as the stimulus platform in an Indian fashion-retail context. This paper's conceptual model is built directly from these four gaps.

3. CONCEPTUAL MODEL AND LITERATURE-DERIVED PROPOSITIONS

3.1 Conceptual Model

Building on the literature reviewed above, this paper proposes an extended S-O-R conceptual model in which four stimulus variables — content quality, visual appeal, influencer credibility and social proof — are hypothesised, on the basis of prior empirical findings in adjacent contexts, to shape two organism states (FOMO and consumer engagement), which in turn are expected to influence two response constructs (impulse buying intention and actual impulse purchase). The model also incorporates a moderation path (regional cultural identity acting on the influencer credibility–consumer engagement relationship) and two mediation paths (FOMO between social proof and impulse buying intention; consumer engagement between influencer credibility and impulse buying intention). Because this is a desk-based synthesis, the model below should be read as a literature-grounded proposal for empirical testing, not as a set of statistically confirmed relationships.

Table 1: Extended S-O-R Framework for Instagram Reels and Impulse Buying (Literature-Derived)

S — Stimulus	O — Organism	R — Response
Content Quality (informativeness, storytelling, cultural relevance)	FOMO (Fear of Missing Out)	Impulse Buying Intention (attitudinal willingness)
Visual Appeal (aesthetics, production quality, lifestyle imagery)	Consumer Engagement (affective and cognitive)	Actual Impulse Purchase (completed transaction)
Influencer Credibility (expertise, trustworthiness, cultural fluency)		
Social Proof (likes, comments, shares, follower count)		

Note: The moderating role of regional cultural identity is proposed to act on the influencer credibility → consumer engagement path. FOMO is proposed to mediate the social proof → impulse buying intention path. Consumer engagement is proposed to mediate the influencer credibility → impulse buying intention path.

3.2 Research Propositions

Table 2 sets out ten literature-derived propositions. Propositions P1–P7 restate relationships for which reasonably direct empirical support exists in adjacent (non-Punjab, non-Reels-specific) contexts; P8–P10 are the paper's more novel contributions, extending established mediation and moderation logic to a setting — Punjab's Reels-based fashion retail — that has not yet been empirically tested.

Table 2: Research Propositions — Extended S-O-R Model for Punjab Fashion Retail

No.	Proposition (derived from literature synthesis)	Theoretical Basis
P1	Content quality is positively associated with FOMO.	S-O-R model; information quality literature
P2	Visual appeal is positively associated with consumer engagement.	Affect theory; social commerce literature
P3	Influencer credibility is positively associated with consumer engagement.	Source Credibility Theory (Ohanian, 1990)
P4	Social proof is positively associated with FOMO.	Social Comparison Theory (Festinger, 1954)
P5	FOMO is positively associated with impulse buying intention.	FOMO literature (Przybylski et al., 2013)
P6	Consumer engagement is positively associated with impulse buying intention.	Engagement-behaviour literature (Hollebeek et al., 2014)

P7	Impulse buying intention is positively associated with actual impulse purchase.	Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen, 1991)
P8	FOMO mediates the relationship between social proof and impulse buying intention.	Mediation logic; FOMO literature
P9	Consumer engagement mediates the relationship between influencer credibility and impulse buying intention.	Engagement literature; source credibility literature
P10	Regional cultural identity moderates the relationship between influencer credibility and consumer engagement, such that the relationship is stronger among consumers with high identification.	Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979)

Note: P8 and P10 draw primarily on theory and adjacent-context evidence rather than direct empirical precedent and should be treated as the propositions most in need of primary testing.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY: A SECONDARY RESEARCH DESIGN

4.1 Research Philosophy and Approach

This paper adopts an interpretivist-analytical desk research design rather than a positivist survey design (cf. Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2019). No primary data were collected; the analysis instead synthesises secondary sources — peer-reviewed journal articles, conference papers, and reputable industry/platform statistics — to build and justify a conceptual model. This approach is appropriate where, as established in Section 2.7, the empirical literature on a specific regional-platform-industry combination (Punjab, Instagram Reels, fashion retail) does not yet exist, but substantial adjacent evidence does.

4.2 Literature Search and Selection Strategy

Sources were identified through Google Scholar, ResearchGate, ScienceDirect, Emerald Insight, Taylor & Francis Online, First Monday and platform-audience-statistics providers (NapoleonCat, DataReportal-derived estimates), using search terms combining "Instagram", "Reels", "influencer marketing", "impulse buying", "FOMO", "S-O-R"/"stimulus-organism-response", "consumer engagement", "social proof" and "cultural identity", together with geographic qualifiers ("India", "Punjab") where relevant. English-language academic sources published between 1974 (the original S-O-R formulation) and 2026 were included; sources were prioritised where they (a) applied the S-O-R framework to social or influencer marketing, (b) examined FOMO or consumer engagement as psychological mediators, (c) examined cultural or social identity as a moderator of consumer response, or (d) reported on Indian or Punjab-specific fashion/social-media consumer behaviour.

4.3 Analytical Approach

Sources were synthesised thematically, organised around the constructs of the extended S-O-R model (Section 2), with findings coded as either (i) directly supported by empirical evidence, (ii) supported by closely adjacent evidence requiring contextual extrapolation, or (iii) theoretically grounded but empirically untested. This three-way distinction is preserved throughout Sections 2, 3 and 5 so that readers can distinguish established findings from the paper's own literature-derived propositions.

Table 3: Secondary Research Methodology Summary

Parameter	Details
Research philosophy	Interpretivist–analytical desk research, synthesising existing peer-reviewed and industry evidence (secondary data)
Research design	Narrative-thematic literature review structured around the Stimulus–Organism–Response framework
Unit of analysis	Published empirical and conceptual studies on Instagram/short-form-video influencer marketing, FOMO, consumer engagement, impulse buying and cultural identity in consumer behaviour
Geographic focus	Punjab, India, situated within the wider Indian and Global South digital-commerce literature
Data sources	Peer-reviewed journal articles, conference papers, industry/market reports, and platform-audience statistics (2011–2026)
Search databases	Google Scholar, ResearchGate, ScienceDirect, Emerald Insight, Taylor & Francis Online, First Monday, and publisher repositories
Selection criteria	English-language sources addressing influencer marketing, S-O-R-based consumer behaviour, FOMO, social commerce or cultural-identity moderation, published 1974–2026
Analytical approach	Thematic synthesis organised around the stimulus, organism and response constructs of the conceptual model

5. SYNTHESIS OF FINDINGS FROM EXISTING LITERATURE

Synthesising across the sources reviewed, three patterns recur consistently enough to be treated as reasonably well-established rather than merely suggestive. First, influencer source credibility is repeatedly and positively associated with consumer engagement and, in turn, with impulse buying outcomes; Koay et al.'s (2021) 273-responder Instagram study found that perceived influencer marketing activity significantly shaped all three credibility dimensions, which fully mediated the path to online impulse buying. Second, FOMO functions as a robust mediator between social-media exposure and purchase intention in Indian samples specifically: Habib and Almamy's (2025) 367-responder study of Indian lifestyle-product consumers found social media marketing significantly predicted both FOMO and purchase intention, with FOMO significantly mediating the relationship — the clearest direct Indian evidence available for the FOMO-mediation logic this paper's model relies on. Third, social-proof cues (visible likes, comments, shares, "others are buying/viewing" signals) are consistently identified across FOMO and impulse-buying studies as amplifiers of urgency and reduced deliberation, consistent with Cialdini's (1984) original social-proof logic.

Two further patterns are theoretically plausible but only indirectly supported. Cultural or regional identity is well established in general cross-cultural consumer research as a moderator of engagement with identity-congruent content, and Indian digital-marketing evidence specifically documents stronger engagement with regional-language and culturally grounded content than culturally generic content (Think with Google APAC, 2024). However, no source identified in this review tests regional cultural identity as a statistical moderator of the influencer-credibility–engagement relationship in the

way Proposition P10 specifies; this link is therefore best described as theoretically well-motivated rather than empirically confirmed. Similarly, while content quality and visual appeal are consistently linked to engagement in general social-commerce and fashion-influencer literature (Zhang et al., 2014; Venkatesh et al., 2003), the specific claim that culturally themed Reels content (weddings, festivals, regional dress) outperforms generically produced content has clear face validity given the broader Indian evidence but has not been isolated and tested as a distinct variable in the fashion-Reels literature reviewed here.

Taken together, this synthesis supports treating Propositions P1 through P7 (Table 2) as reasonably consistent with prior findings in adjacent contexts, while flagging P8–P10 as the elements of the model that most clearly require primary data collection in Punjab before they can be treated as established rather than proposed.

6. DISCUSSION AND THEORETICAL CONTRIBUTION

Theoretical Integration of the S-O-R and FOMO Literatures

This study represents the first attempt to synthesise, within a single explanatory model, the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) tradition in influencer-marketing scholarship (Koay et al., 2021; Zhang et al., 2014) with the emergent Indian literature on FOMO as a mediating psychological mechanism (Habib & Almamy, 2025; Tandon et al., 2021). These two bodies of work, though conceptually complementary, have hitherto evolved along largely independent trajectories; their integration constitutes the study's principal theoretical contribution.

Establishment of a Substantiated Regional Research Gap

In contrast to assertions of novelty grounded in mere claim rather than demonstration, the research gap articulated in this study — namely, the absence of an S-O-R-based investigation into Instagram Reels, impulsive purchasing behaviour, and the Punjabi fashion-retail sector — is empirically substantiated through a systematic absence of corresponding studies across the databases consulted, rather than presumed a priori.

Delineation of Evidentially Supported Relationships from Theoretically Derived Propositions

By explicitly distinguishing relationships that are substantiated within the extant literature (P1–P7) from those that are theoretically plausible yet empirically untested (P8–P10), the study furnishes subsequent researchers with a prioritised agenda for primary data collection, in place of an undifferentiated set of hypotheses.

Contextualisation of a Global South Regional Market within International Marketing Scholarship

The confluence of diasporic linkages, festival-driven consumption cycles, and accelerated platform adoption characteristic of Punjab constitutes an instructive comparative case for scholarship examining digital consumer markets across other culturally cohesive, diaspora-connected regions of the Global South, wherein analogous dynamics between platform reach, cultural identity, and impulsive digital consumption behaviour are increasingly documented in the literature.

7. MANAGERIAL AND PRACTITIONER IMPLICATIONS

1. Prioritise Engagement Metrics that Signal Genuine Peer Validation

Engagement metrics reflecting active peer validation (comments, shares) are more strongly linked to credibility and purchase outcomes than passive metrics (views) in the reviewed studies, amplification strategies should prioritise the former over simple reach or view-count optimisation.

2. Favour Culturally Fluent Influencers over Pan-National Reach

Credibility in the literature depends partly on perceived cultural fluency, retailers may see stronger returns from collaborating with influencers who demonstrably understand local customs and aesthetics rather than relying solely on pan-national influencers — although this specific comparison has not yet been isolated empirically for Punjab, and should therefore be treated as an inference rather than a confirmed effect.

3. Leverage FOMO through Time-Limited and Culturally Anchored Offers

Given the consistent evidence that FOMO mediates social-proof effects on purchase intention, time-limited offers, festival-specific collections, and visible scarcity signalling are likely to be effective levers, consistent with findings from comparable Gen Z fashion-FOMO research conducted outside the Punjabi context specifically.

4. Invest in Production Quality as a Secondary but Supported Driver

Investment in production quality (lighting, colour grading, culturally relevant styling) is supported as a driver of engagement by the broader visual-appearance literature, even though its Reels-specific, Punjab-specific effect size remains untested and should be regarded as the weakest-evidenced of the four implications offered here.

8. LIMITATIONS AND DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE (PRIMARY) RESEARCH

Limitations and Directions for Future Research

The principal limitation of this paper is definitional in nature: it constitutes a secondary, literature-based synthesis rather than an empirical investigation, and it is therefore unable to report effect sizes, model-fit statistics, or statistically tested mediation or moderation results specific to the Punjab context. Consequently, the propositions advanced in Table 2 — particularly P8–P10 — should be interpreted as constituting a research agenda rather than as empirical findings.

8.1 Recommended Design for Primary Empirical Validation

A logical subsequent step is the conduct of a primary, cross-sectional or longitudinal survey of Punjab-based Instagram users who actively follow fashion influencers. Such a study should employ validated multi-item measurement scales for each construct under investigation — for instance, Ohanian's (1990) source-credibility scale, Przybylski et al.'s (2013) FOMO scale, and Hollebeek et al.'s (2014) engagement scale — appropriately adapted and translated into Punjabi in accordance with established scale-development protocols, such as the paradigm proposed by Churchill (1979). The resulting data should be analysed via an established structural equation modelling (SEM) approach, incorporating rigorous assessment of reliability, validity, and mediation/moderation effects (Hair et al., 2019; Hayes, 2018).

8.2 Further Research Directions Arising from Identified Gaps

Beyond primary validation of the proposed model, several additional avenues for future research follow directly from the gaps identified within this review:

(a) Adoption of Probability-Based Sampling

The implementation of probability-based sampling procedures would support population-level inference regarding Punjab's fashion-consumer base, thereby enhancing the generalisability of subsequent findings.

(b) Cross-Platform Comparative Investigation

Comparative research is warranted to examine whether the mechanisms identified within this review vary across alternative short-form-video platforms, including YouTube Shorts, Moj, and Josh.

(c) Disaggregation of Regional Cultural Identity

Given that the extant literature conceptualises cultural identity as a multidimensional construct, future research should disaggregate "regional cultural identity" into constituent sub-dimensions, including age cohort, degree of NRI/diaspora exposure, and bridal-consumption-specific identity.

(d) Analysis by Product Subcategory

Future research should undertake analysis disaggregated by product subcategory — namely bridal wear, casual fashion, accessories, and ethnic wear — on the grounds that the mechanisms underlying impulsive purchasing behaviour plausibly differ across these categories.

(e) Influencer Tier as a Contextual Moderating Variable

Further investigation is warranted into influencer tier (mega, macro, micro, and nano) as a contextual moderating variable, given extant evidence indicating that micro- and nano-influencers achieve comparatively stronger engagement outcomes within regionally specialised markets (Brown & Fiorella, 2013; Audrezet, de Kerviler & Moulard, 2020).

9. CONCLUSION

This paper set out, through a secondary, literature-based synthesis, to establish what is currently known about the psychological mechanisms linking Instagram Reels-based influencer marketing to impulse-buying behaviour among fashion consumers, employing Punjab, India as a contextual anchor. The review confirms reasonably robust, albeit geographically dispersed, empirical support for influencer credibility and social proof as antecedents of engagement and FOMO, and for FOMO and engagement as mediating mechanisms in the relationship between influencer marketing and



impulse-buying intention. At the same time, the review confirms that no existing study has examined these mechanisms in conjunction, with specific reference to Instagram Reels, within the culturally distinctive fashion-retail market of Punjab.

Accordingly, the conceptual model and associated propositions developed herein are offered as a literature-grounded point of departure for future primary research, rather than as a claim to novel empirical discovery. The distinction maintained throughout this paper between relationships that are evidentially supported (P1–P7) and those that remain theoretically plausible but empirically untested (P8–P10) — is intended to furnish subsequent researchers with a disciplined and prioritised agenda for empirical inquiry, in place of an undifferentiated set of assumptions presented as established fact.

Beyond its immediate contribution to the Punjab context, this synthesis carries broader relevance for scholarship on digital commerce in developing and transitional economies. Insofar as diaspora-linked, culturally cohesive regional consumer markets are increasingly documented as sites of distinctive digital-consumption behaviour, the conceptual and methodological framework advanced here may be of comparative value to researchers examining analogous dynamics — namely, the interplay of platform reach, cultural identity, and impulsive digital consumption — in other regionally distinctive markets across the Global South. In this sense, the paper's principal contribution lies not in the resolution of an empirical question, but in the careful articulation of one that current scholarship has yet to address..

References

1. Ajzen, I. (1991). The theory of planned behavior. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 50(2), 179–211.
2. Anderson, J. C., & Gerbing, D. W. (1988). Structural equation modeling in practice: A review and recommended two-step approach. *Psychological Bulletin*, 103(3), 411–423.
3. Audrezet, A., de Kerviler, G., & Moulard, J. G. (2020). Authenticity under threat: When social media influencers need to go beyond self-presentation. *Journal of Business Research*, 117, 557–569.
4. Brodie, R. J., Hollebeck, L. D., Juric, B., & Ilic, A. (2011). Customer engagement: Conceptual domain, fundamental propositions, and implications for research. *Journal of Service Research*, 14(3), 252–271.
5. Brown, D., & Fiorella, S. (2013). *Influence marketing: How to create, manage, and measure brand influencers in social media marketing*. Que Publishing.
6. Churchill, G. A. (1979). A paradigm for developing better measures of marketing constructs. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 16(1), 64–73.
7. Cialdini, R. B. (1984). *Influence: The psychology of persuasion*. Harper Collins.
8. De Veirman, M., Cauberghe, V., & Hudders, L. (2017). Marketing through Instagram influencers: The impact of number of followers and product divergence on brand attitude. *International Journal of Advertising*, 36(5), 798–828.
9. Eroglu, S. A., Machleit, K. A., & Davis, L. M. (2001). Atmospheric qualities of online retailing: A conceptual model and implications. *Journal of Business Research*, 54(2), 177–184.
10. Festinger, L. (1954). A theory of social comparison processes. *Human Relations*, 7(2), 117–140.
11. Habib, S., & Almamy, A. (2025). Impact of FOMO on social media engagement and impulse buying of lifestyle products: Mediation analysis. *Journal of Innovative Digital Transformation*, 2(2), 176–195.
12. Hair, J. F., Risher, J. J., Sarstedt, M., & Ringle, C. M. (2019). When to use and how to report results of PLS-SEM. *European Business Review*, 31(1), 2–24.
13. Hayes, A. F. (2018). *Introduction to mediation, moderation, and conditional process analysis: A regression-based approach* (2nd ed.). Guilford Press.
14. Hodgkinson, C. (2019). Fear of missing out (FOMO) marketing appeals: A conceptual model. *Journal of Marketing Communications*, 25(1), 65–88.
15. Hollebeck, L. D., Glynn, M. S., & Brodie, R. J. (2014). Consumer brand engagement in social media: Conceptualization, scale development and validation. *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, 28(2), 149–165.
16. Kahneman, D. (2011). *Thinking, fast and slow*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux.
17. Kaur, J., Malik, P., & Singh, S. (2024). Generational cohort analysis to purchase fashion products in India. In *Data-Driven Decision Making* (pp. 139–150). Springer.

18. Koay, K. Y., Teoh, C. W., & Soh, P. C.-H. (2021). Instagram influencer marketing: Perceived social media marketing activities and online impulse buying. *First Monday*, 26(9).
19. Lee, M., & Ma, L. (2012). Electronic word of mouth (eWOM): How eWOM platforms influence consumers' product judgement and purchase intention. *Decision Support Systems*, 54(1), 432–443.
20. Lou, C., & Yuan, S. (2019). Influencer marketing: How message value and credibility affect consumer trust of branded content on social media. *Journal of Interactive Advertising*, 19(1), 58–73.
21. McKinney, V., Yoon, K., & Zahedi, F. M. (2002). The measurement of web-customer satisfaction: An expectation and disconfirmation approach. *Information Systems Research*, 13(3), 296–315.
22. Mehrabian, A., & Russell, J. A. (1974). *An approach to environmental psychology*. MIT Press.
23. NapoleonCat. (2026). Instagram users in India — 2026 (monthly statistics). NapoleonCat Social Media Statistics. <https://stats.napoleoncat.com/instagram-users-in-india/>
24. Oak, P. P., Reddy, S., et al. (2025). FOMO and impulse buying: A behavioral study of Gen Z in the fashion market. *International Journal of Engineering and Management Research*.
25. Ohanian, R. (1990). Construction and validation of a scale to measure celebrity endorsers' perceived expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness. *Journal of Advertising*, 19(3), 39–52.
26. Przybylski, A. K., Murayama, K., DeHaan, C. R., & Gladwell, V. (2013). Motivational, emotional, and behavioral correlates of fear of missing out. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 29(4), 1841–1848.
27. Rook, D. W., & Fisher, R. J. (1995). Normative influences on impulsive buying behavior. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 22(3), 305–313.
28. Saunders, M., Lewis, P., & Thornhill, A. (2019). *Research methods for business students* (8th ed.). Pearson.
29. Singh, N., Chakrabarti, N., & Tripathi, R. (2023). Factors determining fashion clothing interest and purchase intention: A study of Generation Z consumers in India. *Fashion, Style & Popular Culture*.
30. Tajfel, H., & Turner, J. C. (1979). An integrative theory of intergroup conflict. In W. G. Austin & S. Worchel (Eds.), *The social psychology of intergroup relations* (pp. 33–47). Brooks/Cole.
31. Tandon, A., Dhir, A., Almugren, I., AlNemer, G. N., & Makkawi, M. (2021). Fear of missing out (FOMO) among social media users: A systematic review and future research directions. *Internet Research*, 31(6), 2112–2140.
32. TechnologyChecker. (2026). Instagram user statistics 2026: Demographics, growth & country rankings. <https://technologychecker.io/blog/instagram-user-statistics>
33. Think with Google APAC. (2024). 7 ways digital is shaping cultural and consumer behavior in India. <https://www.thinkwithgoogle.com/intl/en-apac/>
34. Venkatesh, V., Morris, M. G., Davis, G. B., & Davis, F. D. (2003). User acceptance of information technology: Toward a unified view. *MIS Quarterly*, 27(3), 425–478.
35. Zhang, K. Z. K., Zhao, S. J., Cheung, C. M. K., & Lee, M. K. O. (2014). Examining the influence of online reviews on consumers' decision-making: A heuristic-systematic model. *Decision Support Systems*, 67, 78–89.

..

..