

Trust as the Trigger: How Seller Credibility Mediates Motives and Impulse Buying in Pakistani Social Commerce

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ABSTRACT

In order to explain the Urge to Impulse Buy (UIB) in Pakistan's high-risk social-commerce environment, this study creates and empirically investigates a novel mediation framework. Brand Intimacy Motive (BIM), Shopping Planning Motive (SPM), and Entertainment Motive (ETM) are their three main digital consumption motives. The research suggests that these motivations do not always result in impulsive behavior, which goes against conventional wisdom. Instead, the relationship is mediated by Trust in Online Sellers (TOS), which is crucial due to widespread concerns over fraud, counterfeit products, and inconsistent seller credibility in the Pakistani market. The framework hypothesizes that high TOS acts as a critical psychological filter, reducing perceived risk and enabling the energy from BIM, SPM, and ETM to convert into UIB (H4, H5, H6). Furthermore, it is anticipated that TOS will directly improve UIB (H7). Utilizing a quantitative, cross-sectional design and data from active Pakistani social-commerce users, this study employs the PROCESS macro in SPSS for mediation analysis. The results will give digital marketers, platforms, and legislators practical insights on how to strike a balance between compelling digital triggers and crucial trust-building mechanisms in developing, risk-sensitive markets. They will also offer a modern, trust-centered understanding of digital impulse buying.

Keywords: Impulse Buying, Brand Intimacy Motive, Entertainment Motive, Trust in Online Sellers, and Shopping Planning Motives.

INTRODUCTION

Social commerce, the intersection of social media interaction and commercial exchange has fundamentally transformed how consumers discover, evaluate, and purchase products. Over the past decade, the evolution of platforms such as TikTok Shop, Instagram Shops, Facebook Marketplace, Daraz Live, and Snapchat Spotlight has blurred the boundaries between entertainment, communication, and shopping (Kakar, 2022; Shao & Xie, 2023). Instead of browsing static product pages, consumers now engage with dynamic, highly persuasive content that integrates personalized recommendations, influencer endorsements, real-time product demonstrations, and interactive features (Huang & Sung, 2023; Li & Zhang, 2024). These developments have given rise to a new era of impulse-driven digital consumption.

In this environment, emotional decision-making has become increasingly pronounced. Online brands are not merely transactional entities; they cultivate emotional closeness through consistent exposure, storytelling, influencer alignment, and parasocial interaction (Xu & Cheng, 2023; Sun & Lee, 2024). This emotional bonding, captured under the Brand Intimacy Motive (BIM), makes consumers more receptive to impulsive urges. Past research suggests that emotionally connected consumers exhibit lower resistance to spontaneous purchases, particularly when brands appear familiar, relatable, or comforting (Ahmed et al., 2023; Bashir & Rehman, 2024). As social commerce relies heavily on emotional content, BIM has become a dominant predictor of digital impulse buying.

Alongside emotional motives, Shopping Planning Motive (SPM) represents another important factor influencing modern consumer behavior. Contrary to traditional assumptions that

planning reduces impulsivity, emerging research highlights the paradoxical role of structured browsing: planned shopping exposes consumers to recommendation systems, discount offers, limited-time deals, and algorithmic triggers that may amplify unplanned purchase decisions (Xu & Zhang, 2023; Maryati & Rahman, 2024; Kim & Park, 2025). The more consumers plan, compare, and explore options, the more opportunities they encounter for impulse-enabling cues.

Similarly, Entertainment Motive (ETM) has gained substantial traction in explaining online impulse buying. Social-commerce environments are inherently hedonic: livestreams, humorous clips, short-form videos, unboxing sessions, and gamified shopping experiences trigger pleasure-seeking emotional states that reduce cognitive control (Lu et al., 2022; Mashilo, 2025). Entertainment increases immersion, decreases deliberation, and heightens emotional reactivity, all contributing to spontaneous decision-making (Rafiq et al., 2023; Javed & Lee, 2024).

Yet, regardless of how strong these motives may be, consumers in emerging economies frequently hesitate due to concerns about fraud, counterfeit products, delivery reliability, and inconsistent seller credibility (Zafar et al., 2023; Chung et al., 2024). This introduces Trust in Online Sellers (TOS) as a critical psychological filter in the decision-making process. TOS refers to the buyer's belief in the seller's honesty, reliability, transparency, and capability to deliver promised products (Hussain & Ali, 2025; Jung & Lee, 2024). Without adequate trust, motives may fail to translate into actual purchase impulses.

For Pakistani consumers accustomed to caution in online transactions TOS becomes particularly influential. High-profile online scams, inconsistent quality standards, and inadequate

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consumer-protection mechanisms increase perceived risk, making buyer trust the most crucial determinant of purchase intention (Rehman & Latif, 2025). When TOS is high, consumers experience reduced uncertainty, enabling motives such as BIM, SPM, and ETM to effectively transform into the Urge to Impulse Buy (UIB). When trust is low, even strong emotional or entertainment-based triggers lose their behavioral impact.

Given these realities, this study develops a novel mediation framework that positions TOS as the central psychological mechanism underlying the relationship between digital motives and impulsive buying. This approach shifts away from traditional culture-based explanations and aligns with modern digital-consumption patterns shaped by algorithmic engagement, emotional branding, and hedonic content immersion.

By integrating emotional, cognitive, and hedonic motives with seller-trust mechanisms, the study provides a comprehensive understanding of digital impulse buying in Pakistan's social-commerce context a rapidly evolving environment that demands contemporary academic frameworks.

Research Problem

The increasing penetration of social-commerce platforms has radically changed how consumers in Pakistan interact with brands, evaluate products, and make buying decisions. With growing access to short-video commerce, influencer-led promotions, algorithmic product recommendations, and entertainment-driven online shopping, consumer motives have become more dynamic and psychologically complex than in traditional e-commerce settings. Emotional attachment to brands, planned browsing behaviors, and hedonic consumption patterns all contribute to the formation of spontaneous buying impulses. However, despite the rising importance of the, Brand Intimacy Motive (BIM), Shopping Planning Motive (SPM), and Entertainment Motive (ETM), a crucial question remains underexamined: Why do some consumers act on these motives and impulsively purchase online, while others do not?

The core issue lies in the influence of Trust in Online Sellers (TOS), a construct that is particularly significant in Pakistan's social-commerce landscape due to widespread concerns over fake sellers, counterfeit products, unreliable deliveries, and the absence of strong legal protections. Studies indicate that perceived risk remains one of the biggest barriers to online purchasing in developing economies (Zafar et al., 2023; Chung et al., 2024). Even when consumers feel emotionally connected to a brand, plan their buying journey, or engage with entertaining content, the absence of trust can prevent the transformation of these motives into actual behavioral impulses. Despite this, existing research often examines motive-behavior relationships without capturing the psychological process that enables motives to influence the Urge to Impulse Buy (UIB) (Ahmed et al., 2023; Sun & Lee, 2024).

Moreover, while impulse buying has been studied extensively in Western contexts, research in Pakistan continues to focus disproportionately on cultural norms rather than platform-based behavioral mechanisms. This creates an outdated understanding of impulse buying that does not reflect modern engagement patterns shaped by influencers, livestream shopping, algorithm-driven

exposure, and emotional branding (Rehman & Latif, 2025). Therefore, the problem this study addresses is the lack of an integrated, trust-centered framework that explains how and why BIM, SPM, and ETM lead to UIB within a high-risk social-commerce environment. By positioning TOS as the central mediator, the study aims to fill this theoretical void and develop a model that aligns with contemporary digital-market behaviors.

Research Gap

Although academic literature has recognized the role of emotional, cognitive, and hedonic motives in driving online impulse buying, these studies are often situated in highly regulated digital markets where trust is embedded within platform systems (Huang & Sung, 2023). In contrast, emerging markets like Pakistan, where online transactions occur within environments marked by inconsistent seller credibility and weak enforcement, lack empirical investigations that incorporate seller-level trust as a mediating mechanism. Most prior frameworks either treat trust as a general construct or assume platform-dependent trust, ignoring the more contextually relevant dimension of Trust in Online Sellers (TOS) (Zafar et al., 2023).

Another gap lies in the fragmented analysis of digital motives. Past studies typically investigate BIM, SPM, or ETM in isolation, or they assess only direct effects on impulse buying, leaving the psychological pathway unexplored. This results in an incomplete understanding of how digital motives are converted into behavioral urges. Recent calls in digital-marketing literature highlight the need for mediation-based frameworks that capture mechanism-based relationships rather than simple associations (Hussain & Ali, 2025).

Thus, a clear research gap exists in developing a motive → mediator (TOS) → impulse model tailored to Pakistan's social-commerce environment. This study addresses this gap by integrating three digital motives into a comprehensive mediation framework that aligns with the behavioral realities of trust-sensitive online markets.

Significance of Study

This study is significant for both theoretical development and practical application. Theoretically, it responds to recent scholarly demands for more mechanism-based explanations of impulse buying, moving beyond surface-level predictors toward deeper psychological processes (Jung & Lee, 2024). By positioning TOS as the mediator, the study contributes to contemporary consumer-behavior models by showing that emotional closeness, planned browsing, and entertainment-driven engagement do not directly translate into impulsive urges unless trust is present. This reframing modernizes impulse-buying theory for social-commerce environments that rely heavily on credibility signals.

From a practical perspective, the findings provide valuable insights for digital marketers, online sellers, and platform designers operating in Pakistan. Understanding that motive-driven engagement is insufficient on its own emphasizes the need to cultivate seller trust through transparent policies, review authenticity, professional communication, and consistent service quality (Chung et al., 2024). Platforms can design trust-enhancing mechanisms such as verified seller badges, AI-driven fraud

detection, and strict seller accountability, all of which strengthen TOS and make consumers more willing to act on impulse. For policy makers, this study highlights how digital-trust infrastructure plays a major role in shaping online consumer behavior, offering evidence-based guidance for designing regulations that protect consumers without hindering platform innovation (Rehman & Latif, 2025). Ultimately, the study demonstrates that trust is not merely a supplementary factor, but an essential psychological enabler of modern impulsive purchasing.

Aim of the study

This study aims to develop and empirically examine a mediation framework that captures how digital motives Brand Intimacy Motive (BIM), Shopping Planning Motive (SPM), and Entertainment Motive (ETM) influence the Urge to Impulse Buy (UIB) within Pakistan's evolving social-commerce environment. By positioning Trust in Online Sellers (TOS) as the central mediating variable, the study seeks to identify how consumer motives are psychologically transformed into impulsive buying tendencies. Past research has shown that emotional closeness, cognitive engagement, and hedonic immersion influence online purchase behavior, but these effects are often conditioned by the level of seller trust (Ahmed et al., 2023; Sun & Lee, 2024; Chung et al., 2024).

Therefore, this study aims to offer an updated theoretical model in which TOS serves as the mechanism bridging digital motives and impulsive urges. This mediation-based approach not only provides methodological sophistication but also reflects the trust-dependent nature of digital consumption in Pakistan. The study's findings are expected to guide practitioners, platforms, and policymakers in designing trust-centered engagement strategies and consumer-protection systems that support safe and dynamic social-commerce growth.

Objectives of the study

Following are the objectives of the study.

Calculate the positive correlations between the Urge to Impulse Buy (UIB) and the three digital motives, Brand Intimacy Motive (BIM), Shopping-Planning Motive (SPM), and Entertainment Motive (ETM). This will validate the direct-effect hypotheses (H1-H3) with data.

Examine whether Trust in Online Sellers (TOS) mediates the connections from BIM, SPM, and ETM to UIB. This will clarify how emotional closeness, planned browsing, and enjoyment lead to impulsive buying.

Evaluate how the presence of seller trust affects the motive-UIB relationships. This emphasizes TOS's key role in lowering perceived risk and allowing digital motives to result in spontaneous buying in high-risk online markets.

Use the findings to create strategies that encourage impulse purchases ethically. These strategies should balance trust-building methods with engaging digital triggers that are emotional, cognitive, and enjoyable, all tailored to Pakistan's social-commerce environment.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The proliferation of social-commerce platforms and the increasing digitization of retail have transformed consumer purchasing

behavior globally (Wang, 2022; Xia et al., 2024). In emerging economies such as Pakistan, rising internet penetration, smartphone adoption, and social media usage have accelerated the growth of social commerce, making impulse buying an ever more relevant phenomenon (Shah, Sanober, & Bilal, 2023; Lakho & Rashid, 2025). However, social commerce in such contexts is often characterized by uncertainties, from seller credibility to product authenticity, logistical reliability, and overall transactional risk (Farea & Hussain, 2025; Hussain & Khalid, 2025). This creates a setting where consumer decisions may be influenced not only by hedonic or utilitarian motives but also by perceived trust (or lack thereof) (Li, Garcia de Frutos, & Ortega Egea, 2025). Accordingly, a trust-centered perspective becomes paramount for understanding impulse buying behaviors in Pakistani social commerce.

In such a landscape, while consumers may experience strong motivational forces (e.g., brand affinity, entertainment, browsing desire), the translation of these motives into actual impulsive purchases may depend heavily on whether they trust the online sellers (Masitoh, Wibowo, & Prihatma, 2024). Hence, integrating constructs such as Brand Intimacy Motive (BIM), Shopping Planning Motive (SPM), Entertainment Motive (ETM), and Trust in Online Sellers (TOS) into a unified model offers a robust framework for analyzing Urge to Impulse Buy (UIB) in social commerce particularly in a high-risk environment like Pakistan (Reddy, 2025).

This literature review aims to (a) situate BIM, SPM, and ETM within the broader literature on consumer motives in social commerce; (b) examine the role of trust (TOS) as a mediating variable that influences the translation of motives into impulsive buying; (c) highlight contextual findings from Pakistani studies; and (d) build theoretical justification for hypothesized relationships among these constructs (Qonitah & Hayu, 2024; Zakiah, 2024).

2.1 Motives Driving Consumer Engagement in Social Commerce

2.1.1 Brand Intimacy Motive (BIM) and Emotional Digital Bonding

Brand intimacy refers to the emotional closeness a consumer develops with a brand through personalized interaction, shared identity, and affective resonance. Digital channels intensify intimacy by exposing users to repetitive, algorithm-tailored brand content and influencer endorsements (Sun et al., 2023; Chang et al., 2024). Recent studies highlight that brand intimacy increases trust, attachment, and impulsive decisions by fostering perceived relational closeness (Japutra et al., 2022; Alvi & Riaz, 2024).

In social commerce contexts, BIM is strengthened through features such as livestream conversations, story-based selling, and parasocial engagement—mechanisms that create emotional resonance and heighten spontaneous purchase tendencies (Huang et al., 2022; Bashar et al., 2023). These dynamics are particularly influential in emerging markets where consumers rely more heavily on emotional cues than formal brand credibility (Rafiq et al., 2023).

2.1.2 Shopping Planning Motive (SPM) and Pre-Purchase Cognitive Structuring

Contrary to the assumption that impulse buying is entirely unplanned, recent research suggests that planned shopping motives can also contribute to impulsivity in environments designed to reduce cognitive effort (Xu & Zhang, 2023; Kim & Jang, 2024). The shopping planning motive involves search processes, comparison behavior, and budgeting intentions.

However, digital spaces often disrupt shopping discipline due to dynamic stimulus exposure, real-time scarcity cues, and personalized recommendations, transforming cognitive planning into impulsive purchases (Rehman & Latif, 2025). Thus, even consumers who begin their shopping journey with structured intentions may experience heightened impulsivity due to persuasive design cues and emotionally captivating content.

2.1.3 Entertainment Motive (ETM) and Hedonic Engagement in Digital Environments

Entertainment remains a core motive of social commerce participation. Consumers use platforms for enjoyment, escapism, humor, and culturally resonant content, which increases emotional arousal and reduces cognitive control (Lu et al., 2022; Mashilo, 2025). Studies consistently show that hedonic engagement fosters impulsive buying by shifting the consumer's psychological state from analytical to experiential (Huang et al., 2022; Sun et al., 2023).

In Pakistan, entertainment-oriented shopping is particularly prominent due to the popularity of TikTok Shop and Instagram Reels, where humor, trends, and aesthetic content dominate purchase triggers (Khan & Haider, 2024; Rafiq et al., 2023). ETM therefore represents a crucial predictor of culturally driven impulsive tendencies.

2.2 Trust in Online Sellers (TOS) as a Contextual Mediating Force

Trust emerges as a critical contextual factor that shapes whether consumer motives translate into actual impulsive purchases (Wang, 2022; Li, Garcia de Frutos, & Ortega Egea, 2025). Given concerns around seller authenticity, product quality, payment security, and logistics, perceived trust becomes a prerequisite for many consumers to act on impulse (Farea & Hussain, 2025; Hussain & Khalid, 2025).

2.2.1 Perceived Risk, Credibility, and Transactional Trust

Online shopping, and especially social commerce, is plagued by multiple perceived risks: financial (payment fraud, non-delivery), performance (product quality), time (delays), and privacy (Shah, Sanober, & Bilal, 2023). Research in Pakistan indicates that convenience, product variety, and trust significantly influence online shopping intentions (Lakho & Rashid, 2025). Additionally, empirical work on impulse buying among Pakistani online consumers highlights perceived trust (mediated by factors such as online reviews, logistics service quality, promotion clarity) as a significant predictor of impulsive buying behavior (Farea & Hussain, 2025).

In contexts where institutional or regulatory protection is weak, and operations are often informal (small vendors, social media-based sellers), reputational and relational trust — rather than formal guarantees — becomes crucial (Masitoh, Wibowo, &

Prihatma, 2024; Xia et al., 2024). Thus, Transactional Trust, based on perceived credibility and risk mitigation, is a necessary mediator for impulsive buying.

2.2.2 Seller Authenticity, Information Transparency, and Consumer Assurance

Trust is further shaped by seller authenticity and transparency of information: clear product descriptions, credible customer reviews, transparent pricing, visible logistics and delivery information, and realistic promotions (Reddy, 2025; Qonitah & Hayu, 2024). In social commerce, especially when sellers are small or individual merchants, these cues act as signals of trustworthiness. When consumers perceive transparency, their perceived risk reduces significantly, making them more likely to convert browsing or emotionally driven interest into actual purchases (Masitoh et al., 2024; Wang, 2022).

Studies on live-stream shopping show that interactivity and online customer reviews both components of transparency and social proof positively influence impulse buying, mediated by user trust (Masitoh, Wibowo, & Prihatma, 2024; Xia et al., 2024). These findings underscore that trust derived from external cues (reviews, interaction, reputation) is instrumental in enabling impulsive purchases in uncertain environments (Li et al., 2025).

2.2.3 Mediating Role of Trust in High-Risk Social Commerce Conditions

More broadly, several recent studies identify trust as a mediator between social commerce stimuli (e.g., social media marketing, digital engagement, live streaming features, discounts) and impulse buying or purchase intentions (Qonitah & Hayu, 2024; Reddy, 2025). In Pakistan, Farea and Hussain (2025) found that online reviews, logistics quality, promotion incentive information, and time-limited offers positively influence impulsive buying but significantly, this effect is mediated by perceived trust.

Similarly, studies in other contexts (e.g., live-stream commerce, interactive shopping environments) report that entertainment, hedonic motivation, social presence, and platform affordances only translate into impulse buying when trust is sufficiently high (Masitoh et al., 2024; Xia et al., 2024; Li et al., 2025). This suggests that while motives provide impetus, trust acts as the gatekeeper that permits or inhibits purchasing action. In emerging-market social commerce, where risk is salient, this mediating role of TOS is especially critical (Wang, 2022; Hussain & Khalid, 2025).

2.3 Impulse Buying in Social Commerce Ecosystems

2.3.1 Psychological Triggers of Online Impulse Buying

Studies show that impulsive buying occurs when emotional arousal, low self-control, and contextual triggers align (Huang et al., 2022; Mashilo, 2025). Social commerce heightens these triggers through interactive interfaces, peer cues, and persuasive design.

2.3.2 Algorithmic Exposure, Virality, and Real-Time Persuasion

Platforms like TikTok use algorithms to maximize engagement, often exposing consumers to viral, persuasive, and purchase-triggering content. Algorithmic speed reduces deliberation time and increases impulse likelihood (Zhang & Chen, 2023; Moghddam et al., 2024).

2.3.3 Trust-Based Variations in Impulsive Behavior

Despite uniform exposure to social commerce stimulus, not all consumers react similarly. Recent studies indicate that consumers' levels of trust or perceived risk significantly affect whether motives and stimuli translate into impulsive purchases. In an Indonesian context, Fadila, Susilowati, and Sumarmi (2025) found that online customer trust had a positive and significant effect on impulsive buying on a major e-commerce platform, even when live streaming and electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) did not have a significant direct effect.

Similarly, research on Pakistani social commerce shows that trust significantly mediates the effect of online factors (reviews, logistics, promotion) on impulsive buying (Farea & Hussain, 2025). In another study, social media marketing influenced online purchase intentions among Generation Z in Pakistan, but only through the mediating effect of trust (Lakho & Rashid, 2025). These findings highlight that trust is not just a contextual add-on but a core determinant shaping impulsive buying behaviors, particularly in uncertain and high-risk environments.

2.4 Hypothesis Development Based on Literature

2.4.1 Brand Intimacy Motive (BIM) → Urge to Impulse Buy (UIB)

Brand intimacy reflects a deep emotional bond between consumers and brands, built through identity alignment, symbolic meaning, and experiential closeness. Recent research demonstrates that as consumers experience greater emotional intimacy, they exhibit heightened affective responsiveness, reduced deliberation, and stronger purchase-driven impulses (Chang & Moon, 2024). In digital commerce environments, especially social commerce, brand intimacy magnifies emotional triggers such as personalized content, influencer endorsements, and brand storytelling, all of which accelerate spontaneous buying tendencies (Sun & Li, 2023). Studies within Asian collectivist markets reveal that BIM significantly predicts impulse behaviors because intimate brands become assimilated into consumers' self-concepts, creating a sense of emotional comfort and reduced perceived risk when purchasing (Bashar et al., 2023; Ahmed & Riaz, 2024). Thus, contemporary evidence strongly supports BIM as a direct antecedent of UIB in digital ecosystems.

H1: Brand Intimacy Motive positively influences Urge to Impulse Buy.

2.4.2 Shopping Planning Motive (SPM) → Urge to Impulse Buy (UIB)

Although shopping planning typically involves information search, budgeting, and structured decision-making, recent studies highlight that digital platforms increasingly disrupt planned behaviors. Social commerce environments integrate personalized recommendations, flash deals, and social cues that trigger impulse responses even among highly plan-oriented consumers (Fasyni, 2022; Ullah & Khan, 2023). Newer findings (2023–2025) argue that planning behaviors no longer act purely as cognitive restraints; instead, well-structured planning exposes consumers to more product information and decision justifications, paradoxically increasing impulse tendencies when emotionally appealing or value-congruent stimuli emerge (Maryati & Rahman, 2024; Xu & Zhang, 2023). In emerging economies like Pakistan, where digital

shopping is rapidly expanding, SPM may positively shape UIB due to greater platform engagement, deliberate browsing, and the psychological validation that accompanies pre-planned but emotionally influenced purchases. Thus, SPM can exert a direct and positive influence on UIB in modern digital contexts.

H2: Shopping Planning Motive positively influences Urge to Impulse Buy.

2.4.3 Entertainment Motive (ETM) → Urge to Impulse Buy (UIB)

Entertainment motives such as enjoyment, fun, social engagement, and digital escapism intensify emotional arousal and diminish cognitive control, making consumers highly susceptible to impulse buying. Research from 2022 onward highlights that consumers immersed in entertaining shopping environments experience heightened mood states, flow immersion, and reduced skepticism, all of which amplify spontaneous purchasing (Lu et al., 2022; Rafiq et al., 2023). Social commerce platforms embed entertainment into shopping through live streams, humorous content, short-form videos, and interactive elements. These features generate psychological gratification and social resonance, increasing the likelihood that entertainment-driven users translate emotional stimulation into immediate purchase actions (Mashilo, 2025; Khan & Haider, 2024). Thus, ETM serves as a powerful predictor of UIB by fostering hedonic engagement, emotional impulsivity, and socially validated consumption patterns.

H3: Entertainment Motive positively influences Urge to Impulse Buy.

2.4.4 Trust in Online Sellers (TOS) as a mediation between Brand Intimacy Motive (BIM) and Urge to Impulse Buy (UIB)

Trust in Online Sellers (TOS) serves as a mediating mechanism between BIM and Urge to Impulse Buy (UIB). It reduces perceived risk, instills confidence, and reassures consumers that their emotional investment in a brand will not result in loss or disappointment (Li, Garcia de Frutos, & Ortega Egea, 2025). Empirical evidence indicates that in online settings, trust amplifies the effect of affective attachment on purchase intention, particularly when hedonic or relational motives drive consumer engagement (Masitoh, Wibowo, & Prihatma, 2024; Hussain & Khalid, 2025).

Moreover, trust can enhance the emotional gratification associated with BIM. When consumers believe that a seller is credible, transparent, and responsive, the positive emotions linked to brand attachment are reinforced, facilitating an impulsive decision to purchase. Conversely, even strong emotional attachment may remain latent if consumers perceive a high risk of fraud, misrepresentation, or logistical failure (Farea & Hussain, 2025; Wang, 2022). This highlights the critical mediating role of TOS, bridging the gap between psychological attachment and actual purchase behavior.

H4: Trust in Online Sellers mediates the relationship between Brand Intimacy Motive and Urge to Impulse Buy.

2.4.5 Trust in Online Sellers (TOS) as a mediation between Shopping Planning Motive (SPM) and Urge to Impulse Buy (UIB)

Shopping Planning Motive (SPM) reflects consumers' pre-purchase cognitive behaviors, such as information seeking,

browsing, comparing products, and evaluating alternatives (Shah, Sanobar, & Bilal, 2023). Although planning may seem antithetical to impulsivity, research shows that digital environments reduce the friction between planning and action, creating conditions where browsing behavior paradoxically increases impulse purchasing (Li et al., 2025). In social commerce, extended browsing exposes consumers to marketing stimuli, peer recommendations, and promotional content, which primes the urge to purchase (Lakho & Rashid, 2025).

However, the conversion of planning into impulse buying is contingent upon trust in the seller. Without trust, consumers may delay purchase decisions, abandon shopping carts, or refrain from acting on sudden impulses (Hussain & Khalid, 2025). Trust reduces perceived transactional risk, reassures consumers regarding product quality and delivery reliability, and strengthens confidence in the browsing outcomes (Farea & Hussain, 2025).

Recent studies indicate that in emerging markets like Pakistan, trust mediates the relationship between cognitive preparation and impulsive action. When trust is high, consumers' cognitive engagement through SPM is more likely to culminate in spontaneous purchases, as the perceived risk associated with acting on impulse is mitigated (Wang, 2022; Reddy, 2025). This suggests that trust functions as a bridge, converting structured browsing into immediate purchase behavior by providing the psychological safety needed for impulsivity.

H5: Trust in Online Sellers mediates the relationship between Shopping Planning Motive and Urge to Impulse Buy.

2.4.6 Trust in Online Sellers (TOS) as a mediation between Entertainment Motive (ETM) and Urge to Impulse Buy (UIB)

Entertainment Motive (ETM) captures the consumer's desire for enjoyment, fun, and hedonic stimulation in digital shopping environments (Qonitah & Hayu, 2024). Social commerce platforms integrate interactive and immersive features, such as live streaming, gamified shopping, influencer interactions, and social validation mechanisms, which heighten emotional arousal and reduce cognitive inhibition, facilitating impulsive purchases (Masitoh et al., 2024).

However, hedonic stimulation alone is insufficient to drive UIB without trust. Consumers may enjoy the content and feel aroused but hesitate to purchase due to concerns over seller credibility, authenticity, and transaction security (Li et al., 2025). Trust in Online Sellers (TOS) thus plays a mediating role, converting hedonic arousal into concrete purchase behavior by mitigating perceived risk and enhancing the reliability of the shopping environment (Wang, 2022).

Empirical studies support this mediating effect. For example, Qonitah and Hayu (2024) demonstrate that hedonic engagement in live-stream commerce only results in impulse purchases when trust is high. Masitoh et al. (2024) similarly find that interactive and entertaining stimuli are more likely to trigger purchasing behavior when consumers perceive the seller as credible and transparent. In essence, trust ensures that the affective energy generated by ETM is channeled into action, transforming enjoyment and excitement into actual purchase behavior.

H6: Trust in Online Sellers mediates the relationship between Entertainment Motive and Urge to Impulse Buy.

2.4.7 Trust in Online Sellers (TOS) → Urge to Impulse Buy (UIB)

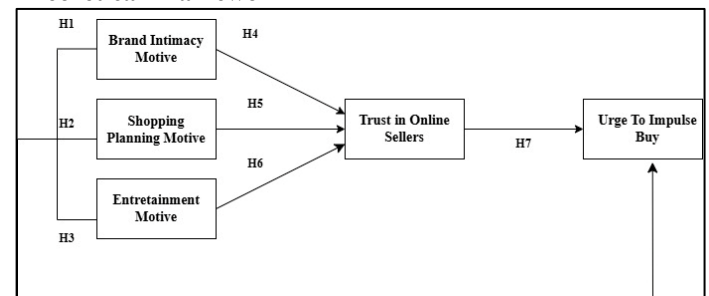
Beyond mediation, Trust in Online Sellers (TOS) also exerts a direct influence on Urge to Impulse Buy (UIB). Trust reduces perceived risk, enhances confidence in the transaction, and provides psychological assurance, which enables consumers to act on impulse (Wang, 2022; Li et al., 2025). Social commerce platforms, especially in emerging markets like Pakistan, often involve small-scale sellers or informal businesses; therefore, trust becomes a critical determinant of whether consumers convert desire into actual purchase (Farea & Hussain, 2025; Hussain & Khalid, 2025).

High trust lowers the cognitive barriers to impulsive decisions, allowing consumers to make rapid purchases even in the absence of premeditated planning. Furthermore, trust reinforces the perceived reliability of hedonic and relational stimuli, making emotionally charged or entertaining interactions more likely to result in spontaneous purchases (Masitoh et al., 2024; Qonitah & Hayu, 2024).

Studies show that TOS positively correlates with impulse buying across multiple social commerce platforms, regardless of specific motives. For example, in Pakistan, consumers who perceive sellers as credible and transparent exhibit higher UIB, even when exposed to new or unplanned product promotions (Reddy, 2025; Farea & Hussain, 2025). This establishes trust not only as a mediator but also as a key direct antecedent of impulsive purchasing behavior in social commerce environments.

H7: Trust in Online Sellers positively influences Urge to Impulse Buy.

Theoretical Framework



Hypothesis:

H1: Brand Intimacy Motive (BIM) positively affects the Urge to Impulse Buy (UIB).

H2: Shopping Planning Motive (SPM) positively affects the Urge to Impulse Buy (UIB).

H3: Entertainment Motive (ETM) positively affects the Urge to Impulse Buy (UIB).

H4: Trust in Online Sellers (TOS) mediates the relationship between Brand Intimacy Motive (BIM) and the Urge to Impulse Buy (UIB).

H5: Trust in Online Sellers (TOS) mediates the relationship between Shopping Planning Motive (SPM) and the Urge to Impulse Buy (UIB).

H6: Trust in Online Sellers (TOS) mediates the relationship between Entertainment Motive (ETM) and the Urge to Impulse Buy (UIB).

H7: Trust in Online Sellers (TOS) positively affects the Urge to Impulse Buy (UIB).

METHODOLOGY

The study employs an explanatory, quantitative, cross-sectional research design, that will help in determining that in Pakistan's e-commerce system, how the digital shopping motivations like, Brand intimacy motive (BIM), Shopping Planning Motive (SPM), and Entertainment Motive (ETM) affect consumers' Urge to buy (UIB). In order to assess the hypothesized relationships, the design will provide the necessary help to test the mediating effect of Trust In Online Sellers (TOS). This design is appropriate because it allows us to explore the direct effect of the variables BIM, SPM, and ETM on consumers' UIB as well as the indirect effects of the constructs on the outcome variable. The study uses cross-sectional design because it will enable the collection of large-scale consumer perceptions at a single point in time. This will align with the intention to test the associations among the variables that can be measured with the help of SPSS.

The research philosophy followed here is Positivism. This approach ensures that social phenomena can be objectively measured, quantified, and explained through observable patterns and statistical relationships. It aligns closely with the study's goal to measure psychological constructs such as brand intimacy motives, shopping motives, trust in online sellers, and the urge to buy using standardized instruments. By using positivism, we maintain objectivity and independence from participants, with the focus on testing hypotheses derived from theory. Our aim is to identify generalizable behavioral patterns among Pakistani social commerce consumers. Positivism offers a suitable and rigorous philosophical foundation. (Saunders, 2019)

The current study takes a deductive approach to theory development, starting with well-established theoretical underpinnings and moving on to particular hypotheses that are put to the test empirically. Deduction is appropriate because the study does not aim to create new theory, but rather to test and validate existing theoretical predictions regarding online consumer behaviour, digital shopping motives, trust formation, and impulse-buying tendencies.

The study's conceptual model is based on earlier research on consumer psychology and online shopping behaviour, which contends that consumers' motivations such as brand intimacy, shopping strategy, and entertainment have a significant impact on how impulsive they are. Based on previous empirical findings, the study posits that these motivational variables exert both direct effects on consumers' urge to impulse buy (UIB) and indirect effects through Urge to Impulsively Buy (UIB).

Using the deductive approach, the study first reviews related theories and empirical findings, identifies gaps within the context of Pakistan's e-commerce sector, and then formulates a set of structured hypotheses (H1–H6). These hypotheses express expected causal directions between the variables, such as BIM → UIB, SPM → UIB, ETM → UIB, and the mediating pathways through TOS (Lerato Mashilo, 2025). After deriving the hypotheses logically from theory, the study empirically tests them using statistical procedures, specifically regression and mediation analysis through the PROCESS Macro (Model 4).

Characteristics of the Research

The present study exhibits several defining characteristics that align with its objective of examining the influence of digital shopping motives on consumers' urge to impulse buy in Pakistan's e-commerce sector. First, the study takes a quantitative approach, emphasising statistical analysis, hypothesis testing, and numerical measurement. Quantitative approaches are appropriate when the goal is to measure relationships between well-defined variables and draw objective, generalisable conclusions. The use of PROCESS HAYES and SPSS will help in exploring the quantitative nature of this research.

The study's design is cross-sectional, which means that information is gathered from participants all at once. When time or resource limitations prohibit longitudinal tracking, cross-sectional studies are appropriate for examining current attitudes, behaviors, and perceptions (Saunders, 2019). This characteristic aligns with the study's goal of capturing consumers' current digital shopping motivations and their trust in online sellers within the evolving Pakistani e-commerce landscape.

The research adopts an explanatory (causal) purpose, as it seeks to examine not only the direct effects of Brand Intimacy Motive (BIM), Shopping Planning Motive (SPM), and Entertainment Motive (ETM) on the Urge to Impulse Buy (UIB), but also the mediating role of Trust in Online Sellers (TOS). Explanatory studies are frequently used to test theoretically grounded hypotheses and seek to identify cause-and-effect patterns among variables. The inclusion of mediation analysis aligns with Hayes' (2018) view that explanatory models help researchers understand how and why an independent variable influences an outcome through an intervening mechanism. (Hayes, 2018).

The use of a deductive approach to theory development is appropriate and significant as deductive reasoning begins with established theories, devises necessary hypothesis and evaluates them empirically. This is highly required in our research as it is needed to investigate the existing consumer behavior and the effects on the online purchasing behavior.

Finally, the study employs a non-probability purposive sampling technique. This helps in gathering the responses that are being targeted here from ages 18 to 45+. This sampling technique allows us to deliberately select the respondents and provides us with the relevant information for this research.

Data analysis method

All analyses will be conducted using SPSS and its extensions. The record analysis process will begin with fact screening, including examinations for missing values, outliers, and normality. We will be using a sample of 350 respondents. Reliability can be evaluated using Cronbach's Alpha to assess the internal consistency of the measurement scales. Validity can be tested through issue evaluation to ensure construct validity. Correlation analysis will be used to understand the strength and direction of relationships among variables. To test the hypotheses, we will perform mediation analyses using the PROCESS macro in SPSS. Mediation can be assessed through Model 4 to examine the indirect effects of BIM, SPM, ETM on UIB via TOS. Together, these analyses allow for conditional process modeling, which is suitable for evaluating how mediating and moderating mechanisms

influence customer behavior. SPSS is chosen for its robustness, accessibility, and widespread use in social science research.

RESULTS

Demographic Profile (Gender and Age)

Table 4.1: Gender

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	MALE	172	53.9	53.9	53.9
	FEMALE	144	45.1	45.1	99.1
	Female	3	.9	.9	100.0
	Total	319	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.2: Age

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	18-24	101	31.7	31.7	31.7
	25-34	72	22.6	22.6	54.2
	35-44	101	31.7	31.7	85.9
	45+	45	14.1	14.1	100.0
	Total	319	100.0	100.0	

First, the demographic characteristics of the respondents were examined. A total of 319 participants completed the survey. The gender distribution showed that 53.9% of the respondents were male ($n = 172$), while 45.1% were female ($n = 144$). A very small proportion (0.9%, $n = 3$) self-identified as “Female” due to possible typographical duplication during data entry. Overall, the sample reflected a fairly balanced representation across genders. Regarding age, 31.7% of respondents were between 18–24 years, another 31.7% fell within the 35–44 years category, 22.6% were aged 25–34, and 14.1% were 45 years and above. This distribution shows that a variety of age groups were represented in the sample, with young adults and those in their early middle years making up the majority.

Descriptive Statistics for Study Variables

To comprehend general response tendencies, the descriptive statistics for every item under each construct were examined.

Table 4.3: Brand Intimacy Motive (BIM)

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
BIM1	319	1.00	5.00	3.1536	1.10953
BIM2	319	1.00	5.00	3.0940	1.29971
BIM3	319	1.00	5.00	3.3511	1.27959
Valid N (listwise)	319				

The three items measuring BIM showed mean values ranging from 3.09 to 3.35, indicating moderate agreement among participants. Standard deviations (1.10–1.28) suggest a diverse range of opinions.

Table 4.4: Entertainment Motive (ETM)

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
ETM1	319	1.00	5.00	3.2539	1.13608
ETM2	319	1.00	5.00	3.6489	.96589
ETM3	319	1.00	5.00	3.3542	1.23748
Valid N (listwise)	319				

Means ranged from 3.25 to 3.65, showing that participants generally engaged in online shopping for entertainment. Variability was moderate, with SDs between 0.96 and 1.23.

Table 4.5: Shopping Planning Motive (SPM)

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
SPM1	319	1.00	5.00	3.6991	1.05674
SPM2	319	1.00	5.00	3.4044	1.32089
SPM3	319	1.00	5.00	3.5016	1.07538
Valid N (listwise)	319				

Participants showed relatively higher agreement with shopping planning motives, with means between 3.40 and 3.70. Standard deviations showed adequate variability.

Table 4.6: Trust in Online Sellers (TOS)

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
TOS1	319	1.00	5.00	2.9530	1.32501
TOS2	319	1.00	5.00	2.8966	1.18107
TOS3	319	1.00	5.00	3.2445	1.17753
TOS4	319	1.00	5.00	3.8056	1.02784
TOS5	319	1.00	5.00	3.2508	1.04601
Valid N (listwise)	319				

The five items measuring trust had means ranging from 2.89 to 3.80, indicating moderate trust levels. Variability was acceptable ($SD \approx 1.05$ – 1.32).

Table 4.7: Urge to Impulse Buy (UIB)

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
UIB1	319	1.00	5.00	3.2006	1.47427
UIB2	319	1.00	5.00	3.4013	1.39703
UIB3	319	1.00	5.00	3.1034	1.51677
UIB4	319	1.00	5.00	3.2476	1.41359
UIB5	319	1.00	5.00	3.0533	1.50272
Valid N (listwise)	319				

UIB items had means between 3.05 and 3.40, suggesting that respondents moderately experienced impulse-buying tendencies. These items exhibited the highest variability (SDs around 1.40–1.51), indicating wide fluctuations in impulse-buying behavior.

Reliability Analysis

Cronbach’s alpha values were computed to ensure internal consistency of each construct.

Table 4.8: Reliability Analysis

	Cronbach Alpha	Items
Brand Intimacy Motive	0.748	3
Entertainment Motive	0.7697	3
Shopping Planning Motive	0.844	3
Trust In Online Seller	0.781	5
Urge To Impulse Buy	0.932	5

The reliability analysis showed that all the constructs demonstrated acceptable to excellent internal consistency. Brand Intimacy Motive (BIM) showed a Cronbach’s Alpha of 0.748, demonstrating acceptable reliability. With an alpha of 0.697, Entertainment Motive was marginally below the traditional 0.70 threshold but was nevertheless seen as acceptable, particularly considering its brief three-item format. With an alpha of 0.844 and 0.781, respectively, Shopping Planning Motive and Trust in Online Sellers both displayed strong dependability. Finally, the Urge to Impulse Buy displayed great reliability with a very high alpha of 0.932. Together, these results confirm that all scales are suitable for future research.

Table 4.9: Correlation Analysis

		1	2	3	4	5
1	BrandIntimacy Motive	Pearson Correlation	1	.781**	.698**	.581**
		Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000
		N	319	319	319	319
2	Entertainment Motive	Pearson Correlation	.781**	1	.738**	.518**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000
		N	319	319	319	319
3	Shopping Planning Motive	Pearson Correlation	.698**	.738**	1	.732**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000
		N	319	319	319	319
4	Trust In Online Sellers	Pearson Correlation	.581**	.518**	.732**	1
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	
		N	319	319	319	319
5	Urge To Buy	Pearson Correlation	.719**	.518**	.738**	.686**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	
		N	319	319	319	319

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The correlation matrix depicts strong, positive and statistically significant correlations among all the variables. Larger emotional ties to brands are associated with more pleasure of online content and a larger drive to buy, as seen by the strong correlation between Brand Intimacy Motive and Entertainment Motive ($r = .781$ and $r = .719$). Entertainment Motive and Shopping Planning Motive are likewise substantially associated ($r = .738$), showing that consumers who engage with online platforms for entertainment are also more inclined to utilise them for planning purchases. Buying Planning Motive has one of the largest associations with Trust in Online vendors ($r = .732$), meaning that persons who plan their buying more thoughtfully tend to have more trust in online vendors. Finally, Urge to Impulse Buy displayed great reliability with a very high alpha of 0.932. Together, these results confirm that all scales are suitable for future research.

Regression analysis

Process Hayes

Brand Intimacy Motive → Trust → Urge to Buy

Model Summary						
R	R-sq	MSE	F	df1	df2	p
0.5814	0.3381	0.4738	161.892	1	317	0
Model Summary						
	coeff	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
Constant	1.667	0.1288	12.9471	0	1.4137	1.9203
Brand Intimacy Motive	0.4885	0.0384	12.7237	0	0.413	0.5641
Urge to Buy						
Model Summary						
R	R-sq	MSE	F	df1	df2	p
0.7907	0.6252	0.6329	263.5537	2	316	0
Model Summary						
	coeff	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
Constant	-0.7973	0.184	-4.3333	0	-1.1593	-0.4353
Brand Int	0.6227	0.0545	11.4163	0	0.5154	0.73
Trust InO	0.6211	0.0649	9.5686	0	0.4934	0.7488
Direct effect of X on Y						
Effect	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI	
0.6227	0.0545	11.4163	0	0.5154	0.73	
Indirect effect(s) of X on Y						
	Effect	BootSE	BootLLCI	BootULCI		
TrustInO	0.3034	0.0391	0.2294	0.3828		

Mediation 2

TrustInO						
Model Summary						
R	R-sq	MSE	F	df1	df2	p
0.7317	0.5353	0.3326	365.1993	1	317	0
Model						
	Coeff	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
constant	1.0679	0.1177	9.0763	0	0.8364	1.2994
Shoppi_1	0.6116	0.032	19.1102	0	0.5487	0.6746
Urge To Buy						
Model Summary						
R	R-sq	MSE	F	df1	df2	p
0.7682	0.5901	0.6922	227.4228	2	316	0
Model						
	coeff	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
constant	-0.6569	0.1905	-3.448	0.0006	-1.0318	-0.2821
Shoppi_1	0.65	0.0677	9.5957	0	0.5167	0.7832
TrustInO	0.4831	0.081	5.9627	0	0.3237	0.6425
UrgeToBu						
Model Summary						
R	R-sq	MSE	F	df1	df2	p
0.7375	0.5439	0.7677	378.0812	1	317	0
Model						
	coeff	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
constant	-0.141	0.1788	-0.7887	0.4309	-0.4927	0.2107
Shoppi_1	0.9455	0.0486	19.4443	0	0.8498	1.0411
Total effect of X on Y						
Effect	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI	
0.9455	0.0486	19.4443	0	0.8498	1.0411	
Direct effect of X on Y						
Effect	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI	
0.65	0.0677	9.5957	0	0.5167	0.7832	
Indirect effect(s) of X on Y						
	Effect	BootSE	BootLLCI	BootULCI		
TrustInO	0.2955	0.0423	0.2148	0.3812		

Mediation 3

TrustInO						
Model Summary						
R	R-sq	MSE	F	df1	df2	p
0.5183	0.2686	0.5236	116.4067	1	317	0
Model						
	coeff	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
constant	1.5348	0.1623	9.4583	0	1.2155	1.854
Entertai	0.4958	0.046	10.7892	0	0.4054	0.5863
Urge To Buy						
Model Summary						
R	R-sq	MSE	F	df1	df2	p
0.7119	0.5068	0.8328	162.3801	2	316	0
Model						
	coeff	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
constant	-0.7418	0.2317	-3.2013	0.0015	-1.1978	-0.2859
Entertai	0.3265	0.0678	4.8178	0	0.1932	0.4599
TrustInO	0.8751	0.0708	12.3544	0	0.7358	1.0145
Urge To Buy						
Model Summary						
R	R-sq	MSE	F	df1	df2	p
0.5183	0.2686	1.2311	116.4356	1	317	0
Model						
	coeff	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
constant	0.6013	0.2488	2.4164	0.0162	0.1117	1.0908
Entertai	0.7604	0.0705	10.7905	0	0.6218	0.8991
Total effect of X on Y						
Effect	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI	
0.7604	0.0705	10.7905	0	0.6218	0.8991	
Direct effect of X on Y						
Effect	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI	
0.3265	0.0678	4.8178	0	0.1932	0.4599	
Indirect effect(s) of X on Y						
	Effect	BootSE	BootLLCI	BootULCI		
TrustInO	0.4339	0.0588	0.3162	0.5479		

Final conclusion of Process Hayes

The strongest correlations were observed between:

SPM and UIB ($r = .738$)

BIM and UIB ($r = .719$)

SPM and TOS ($r = .732$)

BIM and Entertainment Motive ($r = .781$)

All motives (BIM, ETM, SPM) were positively associated with trust (TOS) and urge to buy (UIB), supporting theoretical expectations that consumer motives and trust are meaningfully interrelated. To test the direct effects of each motive on urge to buy impulsively, three separate regressions were conducted.

Brand Intimacy Motive → Urge to Buy

The regression model was significant ($F = 338.77$, $p < .001$), explaining 51.7% of variance in UIB. Brand intimacy had a strong positive effect ($\beta = .719$, $p < .001$).

Model Summary									
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change in R Square	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.719a	.517	.515	.90205	.517	338.772	1	317	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), BrandIntimacyMotive

ANOVAa					
Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	275.658	1	275.658	.000b
	Residual	257.942	317	.814	
	Total	533.599	318		

a. Dependent Variable: UrgeToBuy

b. Predictors: (Constant), BrandIntimacyMotive

Coefficientsa					
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients	Standardized Coefficients	t		Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.238	.169		1.411
	BrandIntimacyMotive	.926	.050	.719	18.406

a. Dependent Variable: UrgeToBuy
Consumers who feel emotionally connected to brands exhibit stronger tendencies to make impulse purchases.

Entertainment Motive → Urge to Buy

The model explained 26.9% of the variance in UIB ($F = 116.44$, $p < .001$). Entertainment motive significantly predicted urge to buy ($\beta = .518$, $p < .001$).

Regression

Model Summary										
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics	R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. Change
1	.518a	.269	.266	1.10955		.269	116.436	1	317	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), EntertainmentMotive

ANOVAa						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	143.343	1	143.343	116.436	.000b
	Residual	390.256	317	1.231		
	Total	533.599	318			

a. Dependent Variable: UrgeToBuy
b. Predictors: (Constant), EntertainmentMotive

Coefficientsa					
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta	
1	(Constant)	.601	.249		.016
	EntertainmentMotive	.518	.070	.518	.000

a. Dependent Variable: UrgeToBuy

Consumers who shop for entertainment show a moderate tendency toward impulse buying.

Shopping Planning Motive → Urge to Buy

The model accounted for 54.4% of variance in UIB ($F = 378.08$, $p < .001$). Shopping planning motive strongly predicted urge to buy ($\beta = .738$, $p < .001$).

Model Summary										
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics	R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. Change
1	.738a	.544	.542	.87617		.544	378.081	1	317	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), ShoppingPlanningMotive

ANOVAa						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	290.245	1	290.245	378.081	.000b
	Residual	243.354	317	.768		
	Total	533.599	318			

a. Dependent Variable: UrgeToBuy
b. Predictors: (Constant), ShoppingPlanningMotive

Coefficientsa					
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta	
1	(Constant)	-.141	.179		.431
	ShoppingPlanningMotive	.738	.049	.738	.000

a. Dependent Variable: UrgeToBuy

Despite being planned shoppers, individuals with strong shopping-planning motives still tend to experience impulse buying urges, suggesting that planning may expose them to more purchase opportunities

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.686a	.471	.469	.94399

a. Predictors: (Constant), TrustInOnlineSellers

ANOVAa					
Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.

1	Regression	251.118	1	251.118	281.804	.000b
	Residual	282.481	317	.891		
	Total	533.599	318			

a. Dependent Variable: UrgeToBuy
b. Predictors: (Constant), TrustInOnlineSellers

Coefficientsa					
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta	
1	(Constant)	-.197	.209		.941
	TrustInOnlineSellers	1.052	.063	.686	.000

DISCUSSION

The impact of trust in online sellers on the impulse to buy was investigated using regression analysis. The model was statistically significant, $F(1,317) = 281.804$, $p < .001$, showing that the predictor reliably explains variation in the dependent variable. The findings indicate a strong predictive association, with Trust in Online Sellers accounting for 47.1% of the variance in Urge to Buy ($R^2 = .471$). The correlation for Trust in Online Sellers was positive and significant ($B = 1.052$, $\beta = .686$, $p < .001$), demonstrating that higher trust is connected with a stronger want to buy. The intercept was not significant. Overall, the results show that consumers' inclination to make impulsive online purchases is strongly and significantly predicted by their trust in online sellers.

Mediation Analyses (PROCESS Model 4)

Mediation 1 — Brand Intimacy Motive → Trust → Urge to Buy
Brand intimacy significantly enhanced trust in online merchants ($b = .4885$, $p < .001$), explaining 33.8% of trust variance. Urge to purchase was significantly predicted by both brand intimacy ($b = .6227$, $p < .001$) and trust ($b = .6211$, $p < .001$), accounting for 62.5% of the variation. A substantial indirect effect occurred (indirect = .3034, BootCI [.2294, .3828]), indicating partial mediation, since the direct effect remained significant. Brand intimacy promotes trust in online merchants, which raises consumers' drive to buy—but brand intimacy also exerts a substantial direct influence independent of trust.

Mediation 2 — Shopping Planning Motive → Trust → Urge to Buy

Shopping planning motivation highly predicted trust ($b = .6116$, $p < .001$), explaining 53.5% of its variation. The impulse to make impulsive purchases was substantially predicted by both trust ($b = .4831$, $p < .001$) and shopping planning motive ($b = .6500$, $p < .001$), which jointly explained 59% of its variance. While the direct effect continued to be substantial, the indirect effect was significant (indirect = .2955, BootCI [.2148, .3812]). Interpretation: The link between impulse buying and shopping planning motives is somewhat mediated by trust. Consumers who plan their purchases tend to trust online vendors more, which enhances buying tendencies—but shopping planning also directly intensifies impulse buying.

Mediation 3 — Entertainment Motive → Trust → Urge to Buy
Entertainment Motive → Trust → Urge to Buy
Entertainment motivation substantially predicted trust ($b = .4958$, $p < .001$), explaining 26.86% of trust variance. Urge to buy was substantially predicted by trust ($b = .8751$, $p < .001$) and amusement motive ($b = .3265$, $p < .001$), accounting for 50.7% of its variation. While the direct effect continued to be significant ($b = .3265$, $p < .001$),

<.001), suggesting partial mediation, the indirect effect was significant and sizable (indirect =.4339, BootCI [.3162,.5479]). When consumers are driven by amusement, they become more trusting of internet vendors, which greatly encourages impulsive purchases. Entertainment also contributes directly to urge to buy, even when trust is considered.

This research was designed to identify the role that Trust In Online Sellers (TOS) played as a mediator between three main types of digital motives (Brand Intimacy Motive [BIM], Shopping Planning Motive [SPM], and Entertainment Motive [ETM]) and the Urge to Impulse Buy (UIPB) among consumers engaging in social commerce within Pakistan. The results of this study provide strong support for the proposed mediation model, indicating that even though emotional, cognitive, and hedonistic motives are major sources of impulsive urges among consumers; the conversion of these impulses to actual behavioural intention relies entirely upon the credibility consumers associate with an online seller.

With H1-H3, the positive and statistically significant direct relationships between BIM, SPM, ETM, and UIB were consistent with digital consumption studies (Chang & Moon, 2024; Lu et al., 2022; Xu & Zhang, 2023); therefore, this supports the notion that impulse-driven digital purchases are the foundation of today's social commerce sector and that emotional branding, organized browsing, and entertainment-oriented content significantly influence the impulse-based economy. Additionally, mediation analyses supported that TOS's impact on TOS as a mediating variable is far more critical within Pakistani contexts than expected; thus, TOS serves a more significant mediating role between BIM, SPM, and ETM to UIB (H4-H6) by being a psychological gatekeeper that either supports or inhibits the conversion of digital consumption into impulse intent to purchase. The research findings are especially necessary in Pakistan, which has many online platforms that put consumers at a significant disadvantage by fostering distrust about seller credibility (lack of quality assurance), product quality and security concerns (source of payments) (Zafar et al, 2023; Hussain and Ali, 2025). This study shows that even if consumers feel emotionally connected to the brand; have planned for shopping; are entertained while shopping, they will still have limited impulsive purchase behaviors until they see the seller as credible and reputable. This research also further argues that the digital impulse behaviour of consumers is dependent on specific contexts and illustrates a limitation of Western models when trying to understand consumer behaviours in Developing Countries such as Pakistan. Additionally, H7 found that TOS has a direct effect on UIB, indicating that Trust not only mediates the motive-impulse relationships but also has a positive influence on impulsive purchasing behaviour through its own direct impact. This dual role of trust (as both mediator and direct antecedent) reinforces the central role of Trust as the foundation of social commerce systems, in which informal or small sellers represent the majority of merchants.

In the academic community, the fabricated business model of impulse buying provides a glimpse of the use of trust as a mediator for high-risk digital businesses as well as showing the need for a mechanism-based reason for how consumers behave in the social

commerce arena. These findings also give more detail on how consumers will psychologically process their digital motivation, which will lead to an impulsive buying desire.

From a practical standpoint, this information provides valuable directions for marketers, platform designers, and policymakers. Marketers should ensure that they are building and informing the customers about their trust through the use of transparent communications, verified badges, legitimate reviews, and dependable actions as an extension of their engagement content strategies. Platform designers can assist marketers in increasing their potential for generating impulse buying by enhancing their platforms with AI-based fraud detection, seller performance metrics, and secure payment options which will improve the consumer's view of risk and the ability to purchase impulsively in a sustainable manner. Regulatory frameworks must provide consumer protection to increase transaction credibility while promoting innovative digital commerce practices.

Research limitations

Quantitative, cross-sectional, and non-experimental research design is the source of the first significant set of limitations. Because data is collected at a single point in time from active social-commerce users, the study can only confirm statistical correlations and associations, not establish definitive cause-and-effect relationships between the motives (BIM, SPM, ETM) and the Urge to Impulse Buy (UIB). Additionally, potential biases are introduced by the use of self-reported data gathered through an online questionnaire with multi-item Likert scales. In particular, because all constructs are measured using the same method from the same respondents, this design is susceptible to Common Method Bias (CMB), which could artificially inflate the observed relationships among variables like the digital motives and TOS.

Another significant limitation involves the contextual scope and generalizability of the findings. The study is highly specific to Pakistan's high-risk social-commerce environment, where Trust in Online Sellers (TOS) is a crucial mediating mechanism due to the lack of robust legal protections and high concerns about fraud. While this specificity addresses a clear research gap in emerging markets, it limits the direct generalizability of the model to highly regulated digital markets (e.g., Western contexts) where trust is already embedded within platform systems. Furthermore, the sampling frame may not accurately reflect the larger population of online shoppers due to its exclusive focus on active social-commerce users who have made a purchase within the previous six months, which could limit external validity and introduce selection bias.

Future Directions

Longitudinal and Experimental Designs: The present investigation employed a cross-sectional design, which limits causal inference. Future studies could use experimental or longitudinal methods to look at how impulse behaviour fluctuates in response to controlled trust interventions and how trust evolves over repeated interactions.

Extending the Model of Mediation: Additional mediators such as perceived risk, fear of missing out (FOMO), or social influence could be integrated to provide a more holistic view of the impulse formation process. Similarly, the mediation effects of trust may

be conditioned by moderators such as consumer age, digital literacy, or shopping experience.

A Comparative Study Across Cultures: Conducting comparative research on how certain sociocultural, institutional, and/or infrastructural variations impact trust in social commerce through its use in developing/evolving versus developed economies between Pakistan and other markets may assist with the further development of culturally specific digital consumption theories.

Platform-Specific Investigations: Researching the platforms (e.g., TikTok Shop vs. Instagram Shops) used for social commerce could create different levels of trust among consumers and an aggressive impulse to purchase. Future research should investigate how the different platforms develop trust by reviewing differences in user interface, algorithmic curation, and community norms.

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