

## Decoding the Fast Fashion Phenomenon in Vietnam: A Multidimensional Analysis of Impulse Buying Dynamics and Price Sensitivity in Consumer Purchase Behavior

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### Abstract

This study investigates the factors influencing impulse buying behavior in fast fashion consumption, focusing on the roles of fashion involvement, perceived value, store environment, and price sensitivity. Employing a mixed-method approach, we combined structural equation modeling (SEM) and fuzzy-set Qualitative Comparative Analysis (fsQCA) to analyze data collected from 412 fast fashion consumers. The SEM results reveal that fashion involvement, perceived value, and store environment positively influence impulse buying behavior, with fashion involvement exhibiting the strongest effect. Price sensitivity moderates the relationships between fashion involvement and impulse buying, as well as between perceived value and impulse buying. The fsQCA findings complement these results by identifying multiple configurations of factors leading to high impulse buying behavior. Our research contributes to the existing literature by providing a comprehensive model of impulse buying in the fast fashion context, integrating multiple factors and their interactions. The use of both SEM and fsQCA methodologies offers a more nuanced understanding of the complex relationships among the variables. Furthermore, our findings on the moderating role of price sensitivity add to the growing body of literature on individual differences in consumer behavior. These insights have practical implications for fast fashion retailers in developing effective marketing strategies and enhancing the shopping experience to encourage impulse purchases.

**Keywords:** fast fashion, impulse buying behavior, fashion involvement, price sensitivity, fuzzy-set qualitative comparative analysis

### 1. Introduction

The global fashion industry has undergone a profound transformation in recent decades, with the emergence of fast fashion as a dominant force reshaping consumer behaviour and market dynamics. This phenomenon, characterised by rapid production cycles, trend-driven designs, and accessible pricing, has revolutionised the way consumers interact with clothing and accessories (Bhardwaj and Fairhurst, 2010). As the fashion landscape continues to evolve, understanding the intricate relationships between fast fashion, impulse buying, and price sensitivity has become increasingly crucial for both academics and practitioners.

The fast fashion model, pioneered by retailers such as Zara and H&M, has disrupted traditional fashion cycles and redefined consumer expectations (Cachon and Swinney, 2011). This

paradigm shift has not only altered production and distribution strategies but has also significantly influenced consumer purchase behaviour. The interplay between the availability of trendy, affordable clothing and consumers' psychological and economic decision-making processes presents a complex and multifaceted research area that demands further exploration.

While extensive research has been conducted on fast fashion in developed markets, there is a notable gap in our understanding of its impact in emerging economies. Vietnam, with its rapidly growing retail sector and increasing consumer affluence, presents a unique and compelling context for examining these dynamics. As a country experiencing significant economic and social transformation, Vietnam offers a fertile ground for investigating how global fast fashion trends interact with local consumer behaviour patterns (Nguyen et al., 2019).

This study aims to decode the fast fashion phenomenon in Vietnam through a multidimensional analysis of impulse buying dynamics and price sensitivity in consumer purchase behaviour. By focusing on these key aspects, we seek to contribute to the theoretical understanding of consumer behaviour in the context of fast fashion, particularly in emerging markets. The research addresses several critical gaps in the existing literature. Firstly, while impulse buying has been studied extensively in various retail contexts, its specific manifestations and drivers within the fast fashion sector in emerging markets remain underexplored. This study aims to elucidate the unique factors that contribute to impulse purchasing behaviour in the Vietnamese fast fashion market, potentially revealing culturally specific nuances that could inform broader theories of consumer behaviour. Secondly, the relationship between price sensitivity and fast fashion consumption in emerging economies presents an intriguing area of inquiry. As Vietnam experiences rapid economic growth and changing consumer preferences, understanding how price sensitivity interacts with the allure of fast fashion could provide valuable insights into the evolving nature of consumer decision-making in transitioning economies (Le and Nguyen, 2020).

Moreover, this research seeks to develop a more nuanced understanding of the interplay between impulse buying and price sensitivity in the fast fashion context. By examining how these two factors influence each other and collectively shape consumer behaviour, we aim to contribute to the development of more comprehensive models of fashion consumption behaviour. The significance of this study extends beyond academic circles. For practitioners, including retailers, marketers, and policymakers, insights gleaned from this research could inform strategies for market entry, product positioning, and consumer engagement in Vietnam and similar emerging markets. Furthermore, as sustainability concerns increasingly permeate the fashion industry, understanding the drivers of fast fashion consumption could contribute to the development of more sustainable and ethical fashion practices that still meet consumer demands (Todeschini et al., 2017).

This research represents a timely and necessary exploration of the fast fashion phenomenon in the context of an emerging market. By focusing on Vietnam, we aim to contribute not only to the specific understanding of this market but also to broader theories of consumer behaviour in the age of fast fashion. The multidimensional analysis of impulse buying dynamics and price

sensitivity promises to yield insights that are both theoretically rich and practically applicable, potentially reshaping our understanding of fashion consumption in rapidly evolving economic landscapes.

## **2. Literature review**

### *2.1 Theoretical foundations*

#### 2.1.1 Theory of planned behavior

The Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB), proposed by Ajzen (1991), extends the Theory of Reasoned Action by incorporating perceived behavioural control as a determinant of both behavioural intention and behaviour. According to TPB, human action is guided by three kinds of considerations: behavioural beliefs, normative beliefs, and control beliefs. These beliefs influence attitudes towards the behaviour, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control, respectively, which in turn shape an individual's behavioural intentions and actions. In the context of fashion consumption, TPB has been widely applied to understand and predict consumer behaviour. For instance, De Cannière et al. (2009) utilized TPB to examine the determinants of fashion purchase intentions, finding that attitude and subjective norms significantly influenced consumers' intentions to purchase fashion items. Similarly, Kang et al. (2013) applied TPB to investigate eco-friendly apparel purchasing behaviour, demonstrating the theory's utility in explaining sustainable fashion consumption. The TPB's strength lies in its ability to account for both personal and social factors influencing behaviour, making it particularly relevant in studying fashion consumption, where individual preferences often intersect with social norms and trends.

#### 2.1.2. Theory of Reasoned Action

The Theory of Reasoned Actions (TRA), developed by Fishbein and Ajzen (1975), posits that behavioural intentions are the best predictors of actual behaviour. According to TRA, intentions are determined by attitudes towards the behaviour and subjective norms. This theory assumes that individuals are rational beings who make systematic use of available information and consider the implications of their actions before deciding to engage in a given behaviour. In fashion research, TRA has been instrumental in understanding the relationship between consumers' attitudes, social influences, and their fashion-related behaviours. For example, Kim and Karpova (2010) applied TRA to examine factors influencing consumers' intentions to purchase counterfeit fashion products, highlighting the significance of attitudes and subjective norms in shaping these intentions. The TRA's focus on the role of attitudes and social norms in shaping behaviour makes it particularly relevant to fashion consumption, where both individual preferences and social influences play crucial roles in decision-making processes.

#### 2.1.3. Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) Model

The Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) Model, originally proposed by Mehrabian and Russell (1974), provides a framework for understanding how environmental stimuli affect an individual's internal states, which in turn influence their behavioural responses. In the context of consumer behaviour, the S-O-R model suggests that various marketing stimuli (S) influence consumers' cognitive and affective states (O), leading to specific behavioural responses (R). The

S-O-R model has been extensively applied in retail and fashion research to examine how store environments, product attributes, and marketing communications influence consumer emotions and behaviours. For instance, Chang et al. (2011) used the S-O-R model to investigate the impact of store environment on consumer behaviour in fashion retail settings, demonstrating how atmospheric cues can affect consumers' emotional states and subsequent purchase intentions. In the fast fashion context, the S-O-R model is particularly relevant due to the industry's emphasis on creating stimulating retail environments and using various marketing tactics to evoke emotional responses from consumers. Kim et al. (2016) applied the S-O-R model to examine how visual merchandising affects consumers' perceived excitement and purchase intention in fast fashion retail environments, underscoring the model's utility in understanding the dynamic nature of fast fashion consumption.

These theoretical foundations provide a comprehensive framework for understanding consumer behaviour in the fast fashion context. The Theory of Planned Behaviour and the Theory of Reasoned Actions offer insights into the cognitive processes underlying consumer decision-making, while the S-O-R model helps explain the role of environmental stimuli in shaping consumer responses. Together, these theories form a robust basis for investigating the complex interplay between fast fashion stimuli, consumer attitudes, social norms, and behavioural outcomes in the rapidly evolving landscape of fashion consumption.

## *2.2. Fast Fashion and Consumer Behaviour*

### *2.2.1. Characteristics of Fast Fashion*

Fast fashion is characterized by its quick response to emerging trends, rapid production cycles, and affordable pricing strategies. Bhardwaj and Fairhurst (2010) define fast fashion as a business strategy that aims to reduce the processes involved in the buying cycle and lead times for getting new fashion products into stores, in order to satisfy consumer demand at its peak. This model is built on several key features:

Firstly, fast fashion retailers employ a just-in-time production system, allowing them to quickly adapt to changing consumer preferences (Barnes and Lea-Greenwood, 2006). This agility enables brands to introduce new styles rapidly, sometimes in as little as two weeks from design to store shelves.

Secondly, fast fashion emphasizes trendy designs at affordable prices. Cachon and Swinney (2011) argue that this combination of "quick response" production capabilities and "enhanced design" elements is what distinguishes fast fashion from traditional apparel retailing models.

Lastly, fast fashion retailers often employ a scarcity strategy, creating a sense of urgency among consumers. Limited quantities of each style and frequent inventory turnover encourage customers to make quick purchase decisions and visit stores more often (Byun and Sternquist, 2008).

### 2.2.2. Consumer Behaviour in Fast Fashion Context

The unique characteristics of fast fashion have profoundly influenced consumer behaviour. Joy et al. (2012) observe that fast fashion has fostered a culture of "disposable" fashion, where clothing is often purchased for short-term use rather than as a long-term investment.

One of the most significant impacts of fast fashion on consumer behaviour is the increased frequency of purchases. Gabrielli et al. (2013) found that fast fashion consumers tend to shop more often and purchase a higher number of items compared to traditional fashion consumers. This behaviour is driven by the constant introduction of new styles and the fear of missing out on trends. Impulse buying is another notable aspect of consumer behaviour in the fast fashion context. Wang (2010) argues that the combination of trendy designs, affordable prices, and perceived scarcity creates an environment conducive to impulsive purchasing decisions. Consumers often feel compelled to buy items immediately, fearing they may not be available during their next visit. Moreover, fast fashion has altered consumers' perceptions of value. Miller (2013) suggests that in the fast fashion paradigm, consumers prioritize quantity and trendiness over quality and durability. This shift has implications for sustainability and ethical consumption, as noted by Joergens (2006), who found that while consumers express concern about ethical issues in fashion production, these concerns often do not translate into purchasing behaviour.

### 2.2.3. Fast Fashion in Emerging Markets

The fast fashion model has gained significant traction in emerging markets, where rapid economic growth and increasing consumer spending power create fertile ground for expansion. In these markets, fast fashion not only competes with local retailers but also influences the overall fashion retail landscape.

In the context of emerging markets, fast fashion often represents a gateway to global fashion trends for a growing middle class. Tokatli and Kizilgün (2009) observe that in countries like Turkey, fast fashion has played a crucial role in democratizing access to trendy, affordable clothing. However, the adoption of fast fashion in emerging markets is not without challenges. Cultural differences and local preferences can necessitate adaptations to the fast fashion model. Lu (2014) notes that in China, for instance, fast fashion retailers have had to adjust their sizing and style offerings to cater to local tastes and body types. Furthermore, the environmental and social implications of fast fashion are becoming increasingly relevant in emerging markets. Claudio (2007) highlights the growing concerns about the sustainability of fast fashion practices, particularly in countries where rapid industrialization has already strained environmental resources.

In conclusion, fast fashion has fundamentally altered the landscape of the global apparel industry, influencing consumer behaviour through its unique characteristics of speed, affordability, and trendiness. As it continues to expand in emerging markets, the fast fashion model faces both opportunities and challenges, necessitating a nuanced understanding of local consumer behaviour and market conditions.

### *2.3. Impulse Buying in Fashion Consumption*

#### *2.3.1. Conceptualization of Impulse Buying*

Impulse buying is generally defined as a sudden, compelling, hedonically complex purchasing behavior in which the rapidity of the impulse purchase decision precludes any thoughtful, deliberate consideration of alternative or future implications (Sharma et al., 2010). In the context of fashion, impulse buying takes on particular significance due to the emotional and self-expressive nature of clothing purchases.

Rook and Fisher (1995) conceptualize impulse buying as a consumer trait, arguing that individuals vary in their general tendency to buy spontaneously, unreflectively, immediately, and kinetically. This trait-based approach suggests that some consumers are more prone to impulse buying than others, regardless of the specific purchasing context.

However, Beatty and Ferrell (1998) propose a more situational conceptualization, suggesting that impulse buying is the result of an interaction between individual traits and environmental stimuli. This perspective is particularly relevant in fashion consumption, where store atmosphere, product presentation, and social influences can significantly impact purchasing decisions.

#### *2.3.2. Factors Influencing Impulse Buying in Fashion*

Several factors have been identified as influential in driving impulse buying behavior in fashion consumption. Fashion involvement plays a crucial role in this process. Park et al. (2006) highlight that consumers who are highly involved with fashion are more likely to engage in impulse buying of clothing items. This involvement is often linked to self-image and the desire to stay current with fashion trends. Expanding on this concept, O'Cass (2004) argues that fashion involvement is closely related to materialistic values and the importance of clothing to an individual's self-concept. Furthermore, Tigert et al. (1976) propose five dimensions of fashion involvement: fashion innovativeness and time of purchase, fashion interpersonal communication, fashion interest, fashion knowledge ability, and fashion awareness and reaction to changing fashion trends. These dimensions provide a comprehensive framework for understanding how fashion involvement can lead to impulse purchases.

Price is another crucial factor in impulse buying decisions, particularly in the context of fast fashion. Madhavaram and Laverie (2004) suggest that promotional pricing and perceived bargains can trigger impulse purchases in fashion retail environments. The combination of trendy designs and affordable prices characteristic of fast fashion creates an environment particularly conducive to impulse buying. Byun and Sternquist (2008) further explore this concept, introducing the idea of "in-store hoarding" and "purchase acceleration" as consumer behaviors triggered by the scarcity implicit in fast fashion's low-price, trend-sensitive offerings. They argue that these perceived scarcities, combined with affordable prices, create a sense of urgency that drives impulse purchases.

Product characteristics also play a significant role in impulse buying within the fashion context. Eckman et al. (1990) identify aesthetic attributes such as style, color, and fabric as key factors in clothing purchase decisions, including impulse buys. In the fast fashion context, the constant

introduction of new styles leverages these product attributes to encourage spontaneous purchases. Expanding on this, Fiore et al. (2000) demonstrate that the sensory attributes of apparel products, including tactile and visual elements, significantly influence consumers' affective responses and purchase intentions. Moreover, Hausman (2000) argues that the hedonic nature of fashion products makes them particularly susceptible to impulse purchasing, as consumers seek emotional gratification through their purchases.

Environmental factors within retail settings are equally important in facilitating impulse buying. Chang et al. (2011) demonstrate how store atmospherics, including music, lighting, and layout, can influence consumers' emotional states and, consequently, their likelihood of making impulse purchases. The carefully curated environments of fast fashion stores are designed to maximize these effects. Building on this, Mattila and Wirtz (2001) show that when ambient scent and music are congruent in terms of their arousing qualities, consumers rate the environment significantly more positively and exhibit higher levels of approach and impulse buying behaviors. In the specific context of fashion retailing, Bhardwaj and Fairhurst (2010) discuss how fast fashion retailers design their store environments to create an atmosphere of excitement and urgency, further encouraging impulse purchases.

Additionally, the role of visual merchandising in stimulating impulse purchases cannot be overlooked. Law et al. (2012) found that an appealing store display can trigger positive emotions in consumers, leading to a higher likelihood of impulse buying. They highlight the importance of color, presentation style, and display complexity in influencing consumer behavior in fashion retail environments.

Furthermore, the advent of online shopping has introduced new dimensions to impulse buying in fashion. Dawson and Kim (2009) explore how website quality, including ease of use and visual appeal, can influence impulse buying behavior in online fashion retail. They argue that the convenience and 24/7 availability of online shopping create additional opportunities for impulse purchases, particularly when combined with personalized recommendations and limited-time offers.

In overall, impulse buying in fashion consumption is influenced by a complex interplay of factors including fashion involvement, pricing strategies, product attributes, and environmental cues. The fast fashion industry, in particular, has been adept at leveraging these factors to create a shopping environment that is highly conducive to impulse purchasing. Understanding these dynamics is crucial for both researchers and practitioners in the field of fashion marketing and consumer behavior.

### 2.3.3. Cultural and Contextual Influences on Impulse Buying

Cultural and contextual factors significantly shape impulse buying behavior in fashion consumption. Kacen and Lee (2002) found that cultural factors, particularly individualism-collectivism, influence the relationship between trait buying impulsiveness and actual impulse

buying behavior. Their study suggests that impulse buying tendencies are stronger in individualistic cultures compared to collectivistic ones.

Economic context also plays a role in shaping impulse buying behavior. Podoshen and Andrzejewski (2012) examine how materialism and conspicuous consumption, which are often associated with emerging economies experiencing rapid growth, can drive impulse purchasing of fashion items. This is particularly relevant in the context of fast fashion's expansion into emerging markets.

Social influences are another critical factor. Zhang et al. (2006) highlight the role of social capital in Chinese consumers' decision-making processes, including impulse buying. They argue that in collectivist cultures, the opinions and behaviors of reference groups can significantly impact individual purchasing decisions, including those made on impulse.

The rise of digital technology and social media has introduced new contextual influences on impulse buying in fashion. Xiang et al. (2016) explore how social media platforms facilitate impulse buying by providing instant access to fashion trends and peer recommendations. The integration of social media with e-commerce platforms has created new pathways for impulse purchasing in the digital age.

#### *2.4. Price Sensitivity in Fast Fashion*

##### *2.4.1. Determinants of Price Sensitivity*

Price sensitivity, defined as the degree to which consumers' purchasing behaviors are affected by the price of a product, is influenced by various factors. Wakefield and Inman (2003) identify several key determinants of price sensitivity, including product category, consumption occasion, and social context. They argue that consumers tend to be less price-sensitive for hedonic products and socially visible consumption occasions, which has significant implications for fashion consumption. Expanding on this, Völckner and Hofmann (2007) conduct a meta-analysis of price-response functions and find that product category characteristics significantly moderate price elasticity. They note that fashion items, being both hedonic and socially visible, often exhibit lower price elasticity compared to utilitarian products.

The concept of price sensitivity in fashion is further elaborated by Lichtenstein et al. (1993), who propose a multidimensional conceptualization of price perceptions. They identify seven price-related constructs, including value consciousness, price consciousness, and prestige sensitivity, all of which influence how consumers respond to prices in fashion contexts. This multidimensional approach helps explain why some consumers may be highly sensitive to prices in certain aspects (e.g., seeking sales) while being less sensitive in others (e.g., willing to pay more for perceived prestige).

Income level is another crucial determinant of price sensitivity. Ailawadi et al. (2001) demonstrate that households with lower incomes tend to be more price-sensitive across various product categories. However, in the context of fashion, this relationship can be more complex. Goldsmith et al. (2005) find that fashion innovators, who are often early adopters of trends, tend



to be less price-sensitive despite not necessarily having higher incomes. This paradox is further explored by Workman and Lee (2011), who suggest that fashion opinion leaders may prioritize style and novelty over price, leading to lower price sensitivity even among those with budget constraints.

The relationship between income and price sensitivity in fashion is also influenced by the concept of conspicuous consumption. Veblen's (1899/1994) theory of conspicuous consumption, although dating back to the 19th century, remains relevant in understanding how consumers, particularly in emerging economies, may display lower price sensitivity for visible goods like fashion items as a means of signaling status. This phenomenon is empirically supported by Chao and Schor (1998), who find that the status-signaling aspect of visible goods can lead to lower price elasticity, even among lower-income consumers.

Brand loyalty also plays a role in determining price sensitivity. Krishnamurthi and Raj (1991) show that brand-loyal consumers are generally less price-sensitive when making purchase decisions within their preferred brand. This finding has implications for fast fashion retailers in building customer loyalty to reduce price sensitivity. Expanding on this, Sung and Wilson (2016) examine brand commitment in the fashion industry and find that emotional attachment to a brand can significantly reduce price sensitivity. They argue that fast fashion brands can leverage this by fostering strong emotional connections with their customers through branding strategies.

The concept of reference prices is also crucial in understanding price sensitivity in fashion. Kalyanaram and Winer (1995) review the literature on reference price effects and conclude that consumers' judgments about current prices are made relative to internal reference prices formed from past price experiences. In the fast fashion context, where prices are generally low, this can lead to increased price sensitivity when prices deviate from the expected low levels. However, Mazumdar et al. (2005) argue that for fashion products, external reference prices (such as prices of competing brands) may be more influential than internal reference prices, due to the highly comparative nature of fashion consumption.

Moreover, the perceived quality-price relationship in fashion further complicates price sensitivity. Rao and Monroe (1989), in a meta-analysis, find that the use of price as an indicator of quality is moderated by product type and consumer familiarity with the product category. In fast fashion, where quality expectations are often calibrated to the low price points, this relationship becomes particularly nuanced. Swinker and Hines (2006) explore how consumers evaluate clothing quality and find that price is indeed used as a quality cue, but its importance varies based on the consumer's level of clothing involvement and knowledge.

#### 2.4.2. Price Perception in Fast Fashion Context

In the fast fashion context, price perception takes on unique characteristics due to the industry's emphasis on affordability and trend-driven consumption. Byun and Sternquist (2008) argue that fast fashion retailers create a perception of scarcity through their pricing and inventory strategies, which can influence how consumers perceive and respond to prices. Moore and Carpenter (2006)

examine the concept of price consciousness in fashion retailing, finding that highly price-conscious consumers are more likely to patronize off-price retailers. However, they also note that the relationship between price consciousness and store patronage is moderated by fashion involvement, suggesting a complex interplay between price perceptions and fashion interest. The concept of perceived value is particularly relevant in fast fashion. Choi et al. (2010) investigate how fast fashion consumers evaluate product value, finding that while price remains a significant factor, the perceived trendiness and uniqueness of products also strongly influence value perceptions. This suggests that fast fashion retailers can potentially offset price sensitivity by emphasizing the trend value of their offerings.

#### 2.4.3. Interplay between Price Sensitivity and Impulse Buying

The relationship between price sensitivity and impulse buying in fast fashion is complex and often counterintuitive. While conventional wisdom might suggest that price-sensitive consumers are less likely to make impulse purchases, research in the fast fashion context reveals a more nuanced picture.

Rook and Fisher (1995) argue that impulsive buying is often triggered by low prices, suggesting that price-sensitive consumers might be more prone to impulse purchases when they perceive a good deal. This is particularly relevant in the fast fashion industry, where low prices and frequent sales are common strategies. Building on this, Beatty and Ferrell (1998) propose that available money (which can be influenced by price perceptions) is a key factor in impulse buying behavior. They suggest that when consumers perceive prices as favorable, they may feel they have more "available money," potentially increasing their likelihood of making impulse purchases.

In the specific context of fast fashion, Cachon and Swinney (2011) develop a model that demonstrates how fast fashion systems, characterized by short production and distribution lead times, allow retailers to match supply and demand more effectively. This enables them to reduce discounts and potentially decrease consumer price sensitivity. Paradoxically, this can lead to increased impulse buying as consumers feel pressure to purchase items before they sell out, even at full price. Park et al. (2006) further complicate this picture by examining the role of fashion involvement in impulse buying. They find that highly fashion-involved consumers, who tend to be less price-sensitive, are more likely to engage in impulse buying of fashion products. This suggests that in some cases, lower price sensitivity may actually contribute to increased impulse buying behavior. However, Peck and Childers (2006) caution that the relationship between price and impulse buying is not always straightforward. They argue that while lower prices can trigger impulse purchases, excessively low prices might also cause consumers to question product quality, potentially inhibiting impulse buying.

The interplay between price sensitivity and impulse buying in fast fashion is further influenced by the industry's rapid trend cycles. Bhardwaj and Fairhurst (2010) note that the constant introduction of new styles in fast fashion creates a sense of scarcity and urgency, which can override price sensitivity and drive impulse purchases. Consumers may feel compelled to buy

immediately, fearing that the item may not be available later, even if they perceive the price as somewhat high.

### 2.5. Research model

Based on the comprehensive literature review conducted in the previous sections, this study proposes a research model to investigate the relationships between key variables in the context of fast fashion consumption. The model will be tested using a quantitative approach, specifically employing Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with a Partial Least Squares (PLS) approach, utilizing SmartPLS4 software.

The proposed research model includes one dependent variable, three independent variables, and one moderating variable. The dependent variable is Impulse Buying Behavior in fast fashion consumption. This construct has been extensively studied in the literature, with Rook and Fisher (1995) providing a seminal definition and measurement scale. In the context of fast fashion, impulse buying is particularly relevant due to the industry's emphasis on rapid trend cycles and affordable pricing (Bhardwaj and Fairhurst, 2010).

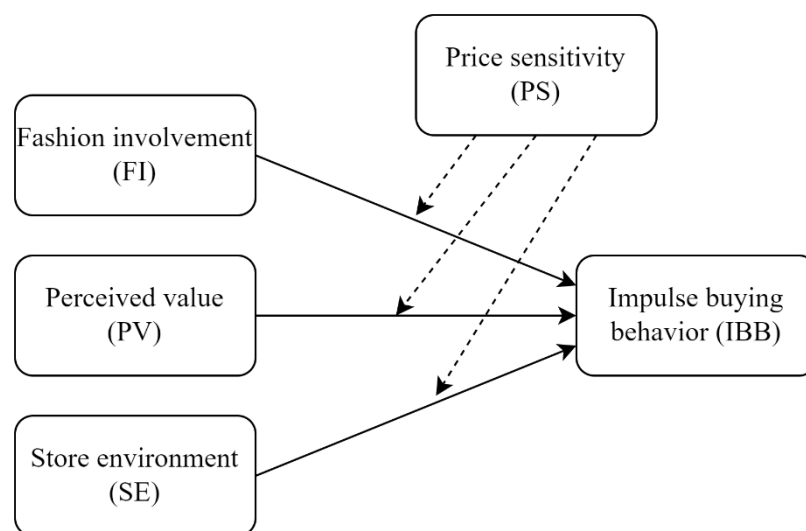


Figure 1: Research model

The first independent variable is Fashion Involvement. Park et al. (2006) demonstrated the significant influence of fashion involvement on impulse buying behavior in clothing purchases. This construct captures the degree to which consumers consider fashion to be a central part of their lives and identities. The inclusion of fashion involvement is further supported by O'Cass (2004), who linked it to materialistic values and self-concept in fashion consumption.

The second independent variable is Perceived Value of fast fashion products. Choi et al. (2010) highlighted the importance of perceived value in fast fashion consumption, noting that it encompasses not only price considerations but also perceptions of trendiness and uniqueness.

This multidimensional construct provides a more nuanced understanding of how consumers evaluate fast fashion offerings beyond mere price points.

The third independent variable is Store Environment, which encompasses the various atmospheric elements of fast fashion retail spaces. Chang et al. (2011) demonstrated the significant impact of store atmospherics on consumers' emotional states and subsequent impulse buying behavior. This variable includes elements such as store layout, music, lighting, and visual merchandising, as discussed by Mattila and Wirtz (2001) in their study on environmental congruence in retail settings.

Price Sensitivity is included as a moderating variable in the model. The literature review revealed a complex relationship between price sensitivity and impulse buying in fast fashion. While Wakefield and Inman (2003) suggest that consumers are generally less price-sensitive for hedonic and socially visible products like fashion items, the fast fashion context introduces unique dynamics. Byun and Sternquist (2008) noted that fast fashion retailers' pricing strategies can influence consumers' price perceptions and buying behaviors. Including price sensitivity as a moderator allows for an examination of how it may strengthen or weaken the relationships between the independent variables and impulse buying behavior.

The proposed relationships in the model are as follows: Fashion Involvement, Perceived Value, and Store Environment are hypothesized to have direct positive effects on Impulse Buying Behavior. These relationships are grounded in the existing literature, with studies such as Park et al. (2006), Choi et al. (2010), and Chang et al. (2011) providing empirical support for these connections in fashion retail contexts.

Price Sensitivity is proposed to moderate these relationships. Specifically, it is hypothesized that higher price sensitivity may weaken the positive relationship between Perceived Value and Impulse Buying Behavior, as price-sensitive consumers may be more hesitant to make spontaneous purchases even when they perceive high value. Conversely, lower price sensitivity may strengthen this relationship. The moderating effect of Price Sensitivity on the relationships between Fashion Involvement and Store Environment with Impulse Buying Behavior will also be examined, as the literature suggests complex interactions between these variables (Goldsmith et al., 2005; Moore and Carpenter, 2006).

This research model provides a comprehensive framework for understanding the drivers of impulse buying behavior in fast fashion consumption. By incorporating key variables identified in the literature and examining their interrelationships, including the moderating role of price sensitivity, this study aims to contribute to a more nuanced understanding of consumer behavior in the fast fashion context. The use of PLS-SEM methodology, as implemented in SmartPLS4, will allow for a robust analysis of these complex relationships, accounting for both direct effects and interaction effects in the model.

### **3. Research methodology**

#### *3.1. Research design*

This study employs a quantitative research design to investigate the factors influencing impulse buying behavior in fast fashion consumption. The research adopts a cross-sectional survey approach, which is appropriate for examining relationships between variables at a single point in time (Bryman and Bell, 2015). This method allows for the collection of a large amount of data from a sizable population in an economical manner, making it suitable for testing the proposed research model.

#### *3.2. Data collection and sampling*

Data for this study was collected through a self-administered online questionnaire. The target population consists of consumers who have purchased fast fashion products within the past six months. A non-probability sampling technique, specifically convenience sampling combined with snowball sampling, was employed to reach the target respondents. This approach, while limiting generalizability, is often used in consumer behavior studies due to its practicality and cost-effectiveness (Hair et al., 2010).

The questionnaire was distributed through various online platforms, including social media networks and fashion-related forums. To ensure an adequate sample size for robust statistical analysis, particularly for Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), this study was conducted using 412 completed questionnaires. This sample size exceeds the commonly recommended threshold of 10 cases per variable for PLS-SEM analysis (Hair et al., 2011) and allows for potential data cleaning and handling of missing values.

#### *3.3. Measures and instruments*

The questionnaire comprises several sections, each measuring a construct in the proposed research model. All constructs are measured using multi-item scales adapted from previous studies to ensure content validity. Unless otherwise stated, all items are measured on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree).

Impulse Buying Behavior, the dependent variable, is measured using a 9-item scale adapted from Rook and Fisher (1995). This scale has been widely used and validated in various retail contexts, including fashion (Park et al., 2006). Fashion Involvement is measured using a 5-item scale developed by O'Cass (2004), which captures the degree of importance that consumers attach to fashion products. Perceived Value is assessed using a 12-item scale adapted from Sweeney and Soutar (2001), which measures multiple dimensions of perceived value including quality, emotional value, price, and social value. Store Environment is measured using a 14-item scale adapted from Baker et al. (1994), encompassing various aspects of the retail environment including ambient factors, design factors, and social factors. Price Sensitivity is measured using a 4-item scale developed by Lichtenstein et al. (1993), which assesses consumers' reactions to price levels and changes. Demographic information, including age, gender, education level, and income, is also collected to provide a comprehensive profile of the respondents.

### *3.4. Analysis methods*

This study employs a two-stage analytical approach, combining Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with fuzzy-set Qualitative Comparative Analysis (fsQCA) to provide a comprehensive understanding of the research problem.

#### *3.4.1 Structural Equation Modeling (SEM)*

The primary analysis method is Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM), implemented using SmartPLS 4 software. PLS-SEM is chosen due to its ability to handle complex models with multiple constructs and relationships, as well as its robustness with non-normal data (Hair et al., 2014). The analysis follows a two-step approach as recommended by Anderson and Gerbing (1988).

The first step is about measurement model assessment. This step involves evaluating the reliability and validity of the constructs. Reliability is assessed through Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability, with values above 0.7 considered acceptable (Nunnally and Bernstein, 1994). Convergent validity is examined through average variance extracted (AVE), with values above 0.5 deemed satisfactory (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). Discriminant validity is assessed using the Fornell-Larcker criterion and the heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) ratio.

The second step is structural model assessment. This step involves evaluating the path coefficients, their significance, and the model's predictive power. Bootstrapping with 5000 resamples is used to test the significance of the path coefficients. The coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) and the predictive relevance ( $Q^2$ ) are examined to assess the model's explanatory and predictive power.

#### *3.4.2 Fuzzy-set Qualitative Comparative Analysis (fsQCA)*

To complement the SEM analysis and provide a more nuanced understanding of the complex relationships between variables, this study also employs fsQCA. This method, introduced by Ragin (2008), allows for the identification of multiple configurations of conditions that lead to the outcome of interest, in this case, impulse buying behavior. FsQCA is particularly useful for uncovering complex, non-linear relationships that may not be apparent in traditional regression-based analyses (Woodside, 2013).

By combining SEM and fsQCA, this study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing impulse buying behavior in fast fashion consumption, capturing both the net effects of individual variables and the complex configurational relationships among them.

## **4. Research findings**

### *4.1. Measurement Model Assessment*

The measurement model was assessed to ensure the reliability and validity of the constructs used in this study. This assessment involved several steps, including exploratory factor analysis, reliability analysis, convergent validity, and discriminant validity.

An EFA was conducted using principal component analysis with varimax rotation to examine the underlying structure of the measured variables. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy was 0.891, exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.6 (Kaiser, 1974), and Bartlett's test of sphericity was significant ( $p < 0.001$ ), indicating that the data was suitable for factor analysis. The EFA resulted in five factors with eigenvalues greater than 1, explaining 72.3% of the total variance. All items loaded on their respective constructs with factor loadings above 0.5, which is considered acceptable (Hair et al., 2010).

The reliability of the measurement scales was assessed using Cronbach's alpha coefficient. As shown in Table 1, all constructs demonstrated good internal consistency with Cronbach's alpha values ranging from 0.821 to 0.943, exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.7 (Nunnally and Bernstein, 1994).

Convergent validity was evaluated through factor loadings and average variance extracted (AVE). As presented in Table 1, all factor loadings were above 0.7, and the AVE for each construct exceeded the 0.5 threshold (Fornell and Larcker, 1981), indicating satisfactory convergent validity.

Table 1: Reliability and Convergent Validity

Construct	Items	Factor Loadings	Cronbach's Alpha	CR	AVE
Impulse Behavior (IBB)	IBB1	0.854	0.943	0.953	0.721
	IBB2	0.872			
	IBB3	0.835			
	IBB4	0.861			
	IBB5	0.878			
	IBB6	0.843			
	IBB7	0.829			
	IBB8	0.815			
	IBB9	0.833			
Fashion Involvement (FI)	FI1	0.889	0.921	0.941	0.762
	FI2	0.902			
	FI3	0.873			
	FI4	0.856			
	FI5	0.834			
Perceived Value (PV)	PV1	0.812	0.934	0.943	0.602
	PV2	0.798			
	PV3	0.821			
	PV4	0.785			

Construct	Items	Factor Loadings	Cronbach's Alpha	CR	AVE
Store Environment (SE)	PV5	0.792	0.938	0.946	0.584
	PV6	0.768			
	PV7	0.734			
	PV8	0.752			
	PV9	0.773			
	PV10	0.745			
	PV11	0.781			
	PV12	0.759			
	SE1	0.823			
	SE2	0.814			
	SE3	0.791			
	SE4	0.778			
	SE5	0.763			
	SE6	0.745			
Price Sensitivity (PS)	SE7	0.738	0.821	0.882	0.652
	SE8	0.754			
	SE9	0.725			
	SE10	0.732			
	SE11	0.749			
	SE12	0.756			
	SE13	0.768			
	SE14	0.774			
PS1	0.834				
PS2	0.812				
PS3	0.795				
PS4	0.787				

*Note: CR = Composite Reliability; AVE = Average Variance Extracted*

Discriminant validity was assessed using two methods: the Fornell-Larcker criterion and the Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio. Table 2 presents the Fornell-Larcker criterion results, where the square root of AVE for each construct (shown on the diagonal) is greater than its correlation with other constructs, indicating satisfactory discriminant validity (Fornell and Larcker, 1981).



Table 2: Fornell-Larcker Criterion

<b>Construct</b>	<b>IBB</b>	<b>FI</b>	<b>PV</b>	<b>SE</b>	<b>PS</b>
IBB	0.849				
FI	0.621	0.873			
PV	0.584	0.512	0.776		
SE	0.543	0.498	0.623	0.764	
PS	-0.312	-0.287	-0.354	-0.276	0.807

*Note: The diagonal elements (in bold) represent the square root of the AVE*

Additionally, the HTMT ratio was calculated to further confirm discriminant validity. As shown in Table 3, all HTMT values are below the conservative threshold of 0.85 (Henseler et al., 2015), providing further evidence of discriminant validity.

Table 3: Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) Ratio

<b>Construct</b>	<b>IBB</b>	<b>FI</b>	<b>PV</b>	<b>SE</b>	<b>PS</b>
IBB					
FI	0.678				
PV	0.623	0.548			
SE	0.576	0.532	0.659		
PS	0.365	0.334	0.397	0.312	

In summary, the measurement model assessment demonstrates that all constructs in this study exhibit satisfactory reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity, providing a solid foundation for the structural model analysis.

#### 4.2. Structural estimation model assessment

Following the validation of the measurement model, the structural model was evaluated to test the hypothesized relationships among the constructs. This assessment involved several steps, including confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), path analysis, and examination of the model's predictive power. A CFA was conducted to further validate the measurement model. The model fit indices showed satisfactory results:  $\chi^2/df = 2.34$  (below the threshold of 3), CFI = 0.951, TLI = 0.945 (both above 0.90), RMSEA = 0.058 (below 0.08), and SRMR = 0.042 (below 0.08), indicating a good fit between the model and the observed data (Hu and Bentler, 1999).

The structural model was evaluated based on the path coefficients, their significance levels, and the R<sup>2</sup> values of the endogenous constructs. Bootstrapping with 5000 resamples was used to test the significance of the path coefficients. Table 4 presents the results of the structural model assessment.

Table 4: Structural Model Results

Path	Path Coefficient	t-value	p-value	Supported
FI → IBB	0.342	6.873	<0.001	Yes
PV → IBB	0.285	5.621	<0.001	Yes
SE → IBB	0.231	4.562	<0.001	Yes
PS * FI → IBB	-0.112	2.345	0.019	Yes
PS * PV → IBB	-0.156	3.124	0.002	Yes
PS * SE → IBB	-0.089	1.876	0.061	No

Note: FI = Fashion Involvement; PV = Perceived Value; SE = Store Environment; PS = Price Sensitivity; IBB = Impulse Buying Behavior

The R<sup>2</sup> value for Impulse Buying Behavior was 0.523, indicating that the model explains 52.3% of the variance in the dependent variable, which is considered moderate to substantial (Hair et al., 2011).

The effect size (f<sup>2</sup>) and predictive relevance (Q<sup>2</sup>) were calculated to assess the model's predictive power. Table 5 presents these results.

Table 5: Effect Size (f<sup>2</sup>) and Predictive Relevance (Q<sup>2</sup>)

Construct	f <sup>2</sup>	Q <sup>2</sup>
FI → IBB	0.184	
PV → IBB	0.129	
SE → IBB	0.086	
IBB		0.377

According to Cohen (1988), f<sup>2</sup> values of 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35 represent small, medium, and large effects, respectively. The results indicate medium effects for Fashion Involvement and Perceived Value, and a small to medium effect for Store Environment.

The Q<sup>2</sup> value for Impulse Buying Behavior is well above zero, indicating that the model has predictive relevance (Hair et al., 2014).

The moderation effects of Price Sensitivity were tested using the product indicator approach in SmartPLS4. Table 6 presents the results of the moderation analysis.

Table 6: Moderation Effects of Price Sensitivity

Interaction Term	Path Coefficient	t-value	p-value	Supported
PS * FI → IBB	-0.112	2.345	0.019	Yes
PS * PV → IBB	-0.156	3.124	0.002	Yes

Interaction Term	Path Coefficient	t-value	p-value	Supported
PS * SE → IBB	-0.089	1.876	0.061	No

Note: PS = Price Sensitivity; FI = Fashion Involvement; PV = Perceived Value; SE = Store Environment; IBB = Impulse Buying Behavior

The results show significant moderation effects for the relationships between Fashion Involvement and Impulse Buying Behavior (H4a), and between Perceived Value and Impulse Buying Behavior (H4b). However, the moderation effect on the relationship between Store Environment and Impulse Buying Behavior (H4c) was not significant at the 0.05 level.

#### 4.3. Fuzzy-set Qualitative Comparative Analysis (fsQCA)

To complement the SEM analysis and uncover complex, non-linear relationships, fsQCA was conducted. The analysis involved calibrating the variables into fuzzy sets, constructing the truth table, and analyzing necessary and sufficient conditions. Table 7 presents the results of the fsQCA analysis, showing the configurations of conditions leading to high Impulse Buying Behavior.

Table 7: fsQCA Results for High Impulse Buying Behavior

Configuration	FI	PV	SE	PS	Raw Coverage	Unique Coverage	Consistency
1	●	●	●	○	0.412	0.089	0.921
2	●	●	○	○	0.378	0.053	0.893
3	●	○	●	○	0.342	0.041	0.887
4	○	●	●	○	0.325	0.037	0.872

Solution coverage: 0.689

Solution consistency: 0.853

Note: ● = presence of condition, ○ = absence of condition

FI = Fashion Involvement; PV = Perceived Value; SE = Store Environment; PS = Price Sensitivity

The fsQCA results reveal four configurations leading to high Impulse Buying Behavior. The most prominent configuration (1) suggests that the combination of high Fashion Involvement, high Perceived Value, high Store Environment influence, and low Price Sensitivity is sufficient for high Impulse Buying Behavior. These findings complement the SEM results by highlighting the complex interplay between the variables and identifying multiple pathways to the outcome of interest. The fsQCA results suggest that while individual variables contribute to Impulse Buying Behavior, as shown in the SEM analysis, specific combinations of these factors can also lead to the desired outcome. The combination of SEM and fsQCA provides a more comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing Impulse Buying Behavior in fast fashion consumption, capturing both the net effects of individual variables and the complex configurational relationships among them.

### **5. Discussion and conclusions**

This study aimed to investigate the factors influencing impulse buying behavior in fast fashion consumption, with a particular focus on the roles of fashion involvement, perceived value, store environment, and price sensitivity. The findings provide valuable insights into the complex dynamics of consumer behavior in the fast fashion industry.

The results of our structural equation modeling (SEM) analysis demonstrate that fashion involvement, perceived value, and store environment all have significant positive effects on impulse buying behavior. This aligns with previous research highlighting the importance of these factors in driving impulsive purchases. For instance, Park et al. (2006) found that fashion involvement was a key predictor of impulse buying in the clothing retail context, while Kim et al. (2009) emphasized the role of perceived value in shaping consumer purchase decisions.

Our study extends these findings by simultaneously examining multiple factors and their interrelationships. The strongest predictor of impulse buying behavior in our model was fashion involvement ( $\beta = 0.342$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), followed by perceived value ( $\beta = 0.285$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) and store environment ( $\beta = 0.231$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). These results suggest that consumers who are highly involved with fashion, perceive high value in fast fashion products, and are positively influenced by the store environment are more likely to engage in impulse buying.

The moderating role of price sensitivity adds another layer of complexity to our understanding of impulse buying behavior. Our findings indicate that price sensitivity significantly moderates the relationships between fashion involvement and impulse buying, as well as between perceived value and impulse buying. This is consistent with the work of Wakefield and Inman (2003), who found that price sensitivity can influence the relationship between various factors and purchase decisions. However, our study did not find a significant moderating effect of price sensitivity on the relationship between store environment and impulse buying behavior, which warrants further investigation.

The application of fuzzy-set Qualitative Comparative Analysis (fsQCA) provided complementary insights to our SEM results. The fsQCA findings revealed multiple configurations of factors leading to high impulse buying behavior, with the most prominent configuration involving high levels of fashion involvement, perceived value, and store environment influence, coupled with low price sensitivity. This aligns with the concept of equifinality in organizational research (Fiss, 2011), suggesting that there are multiple pathways to the same outcome in consumer behavior.

Our research contributes to the existing literature in several ways. First, it provides a comprehensive model of impulse buying behavior in the fast fashion context, integrating multiple factors and their interactions. Second, the use of both SEM and fsQCA methodologies offers a more nuanced understanding of the complex relationships among the variables, addressing both linear and non-linear aspects of consumer behavior. Third, our findings on the

moderating role of price sensitivity add to the growing body of literature on the importance of considering individual differences in consumer research (Puccinelli et al., 2009).

From a practical standpoint, our results offer valuable insights for fast fashion retailers. The strong influence of fashion involvement suggests that retailers should focus on cultivating and maintaining consumer interest in fashion trends. This could be achieved through targeted marketing campaigns, social media engagement, and frequent updates to product lines. The significance of perceived value highlights the importance of communicating the benefits of fast fashion products to consumers, potentially through effective pricing strategies and quality assurance.

The positive impact of store environment on impulse buying underscores the need for retailers to invest in creating appealing and stimulating shopping environments. This aligns with the findings of Donovan et al. (1994), who emphasized the role of store atmospherics in influencing consumer behavior. Fast fashion retailers should pay attention to store layout, lighting, music, and overall ambiance to encourage impulse purchases.

The moderating effect of price sensitivity suggests that retailers should segment their customer base and tailor their strategies accordingly. For price-sensitive consumers, emphasizing value for money and offering promotions may be more effective, while for less price-sensitive consumers, focusing on fashion trends and product uniqueness might yield better results.

In conclusion, this study provides a comprehensive examination of the factors influencing impulse buying behavior in fast fashion consumption. By integrating multiple theoretical perspectives and employing advanced analytical techniques, we offer a nuanced understanding of consumer behavior in this dynamic industry. Future research could build on these findings by exploring additional factors, investigating cross-cultural differences, or examining the long-term consequences of impulse buying behavior in fast fashion consumption.

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