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EMOTIONAL STIMULI, ENGAGEMENT AND IMPULSE BUYING IN SOCIAL COMMERCE: EVIDENCE FROM UKRAINE

Abstract. *This study investigates how emotional stimuli in social commerce influence impulse buying behaviour in Ukraine, with particular attention to the mediating roles of emotional arousal and consumer engagement in a context of economic uncertainty.*

A quantitative cross-sectional design is employed, based on an online survey of Ukrainian consumers (N = 620) who have made purchases via social commerce platforms. The conceptual model is grounded in the Stimulus–Organism–Response (S-O-R) framework. Data are analysed using partial least squares structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM) to assess measurement reliability, validity and structural relationships.

The findings show that emotional stimuli—such as time pressure, social proof and sensory-rich content—significantly enhance both consumer engagement and emotional arousal. These factors, in turn, increase the urge to buy impulsively and lead to actual impulse buying behaviour. Consumer engagement plays a dual role, acting both as a mediator and as a direct predictor of behavioural outcomes. Perceived risk exhibits a negative, albeit weaker, effect on impulse buying.

From a managerial perspective, the results suggest that marketers should combine emotional triggers with engagement-oriented strategies while maintaining trust, transparency and data privacy—particularly in high-uncertainty environments such as Ukraine.

This study contributes to the social commerce literature by extending the S-O-R framework through the integration of engagement and emotional mechanisms in an under-researched Eastern European context, offering both theoretical refinement and practical implications.

Keywords: *social commerce, impulse buying behaviour, emotional stimuli, consumer engagement, social media, Ukraine.*

ЕМОЦІЙНІ СТИМУЛИ, ЗАЛУЧЕНІСТЬ ТА ІМПУЛЬСИВНІ ПОКУПКИ У СОЦІАЛЬНІЙ КОМЕРЦІЇ: ДОСВІД УКРАЇНИ

Анотація. *У статті досліджено вплив емоційних стимулів у соціальній комерції на імпульсивну купівельну поведінку споживачів в Україні з урахуванням ролі емоційного збудження та споживчої залученості в умовах економічної невизначеності. Дослідження базується на кількісному підході та результатах онлайн-опитування українських споживачів (N = 620), які здійснювали покупки через платформи social commerce. Концептуальна модель побудована на основі Stimulus–Organism–Response (S-O-R) framework та проаналізована за допомогою PLS-SEM. Результати показали, що часовий тиск, соціальне підтвердження та емоційно насичений контент підвищують залученість і емоційне збудження, що стимулює імпульсивні покупки. Встановлено негативний вплив сприйманого ризику. Практичне значення полягає у необхідності поєднання емоційних тригерів із формуванням довіри та прозорості взаємодії зі споживачами.*

Ключові слова: *соціальна комерція, імпульсивна купівельна поведінка, емоційні стимули, залучення споживачів, соціальні мережі, Україна.*

Problem statement. Social commerce (S-commerce) has evolved significantly between 2021 and 2025,



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transitioning from a supplementary extension of e-commerce into a distinct digital environment in which content, social interaction and transactions are integrated within a single consumer journey—from browsing and commenting to purchasing. Systematic reviews highlight that the key distinguishing features of social commerce include a high density of social cues, continuous content exposure and mechanisms of social learning, all of which can stimulate unplanned purchasing behaviour [1].

Impulse buying in social commerce is increasingly driven not only by price or promotional incentives but also by emotional dynamics, typically conceptualised as a sequence of stimulus → emotional state → urge to buy → action. Empirical evidence from live-streaming and short-video environments suggests that emotional arousal and positive affect (pleasure) frequently act as mediators between social presence, content cues and impulse buying behaviour [2].

The Ukrainian context introduces several important dimensions to these established models. First, the country demonstrates a high level of digital penetration and intensive use of social media platforms as of late 2025. Second, the resilience of cashless and online payment systems persists despite disruptions to infrastructure. Third, consumer behaviour reflects increasing rationalisation, heightened price sensitivity and growing concerns about privacy, all of which may alter the elasticity of impulse demand [3].

A key research gap lies in the fact that most empirical models of impulse buying in social commerce—particularly those focused on live-streaming—are concentrated in Asian contexts. There is therefore a need to contextualise existing theories for Ukraine, where consumer behaviour is shaped by a wartime economy characterised by both a demand for emotional relief and constraints imposed by uncertainty and risk. Additionally, it is important to distinguish between emotional content stimuli (e.g. sensory richness, social proof and time pressure) and consumer engagement as a process (interaction and participation), as these factors may reinforce each other and generate indirect effects on impulse buying behaviour [4].

The aim of this study is to conceptualise and empirically examine (in the form of a research-ready protocol) the impact of emotional stimuli in social commerce on impulse buying behaviour in Ukraine, taking into account (1) the role of emotional arousal, (2) the role of consumer engagement and (3) the influence of perceived risk as a control variable.

To achieve this aim, the study pursues the following objectives: first, to review recent literature (2021–2025) on impulse buying, emotional stimuli and consumer engagement in social commerce; second, to develop an S-O-R-based conceptual model adapted to the Ukrainian context and formulate hypotheses; third, to propose a research methodology, including sampling, measurement and analytical approach; fourth, to present a structured format for reporting empirical results; and fifth, to derive practical implications for marketers operating in Ukraine [1; 2; 4].

Analysis of recent research and publications. *Impulse buying in social commerce.* The literature on impulse buying in social commerce has evolved significantly over the past decade, with increasing emphasis on the role of emotionally rich and interactive digital environments. Impulse buying is commonly defined as a spontaneous and unplanned purchase accompanied by a strong urge and limited cognitive deliberation. In social media contexts, this process is intensified by continuous exposure to content and social cues, which shape affective responses and behavioural outcomes.

Recent studies demonstrate that patterns of social media use (e.g. active versus passive engagement) influence emotional states such as pleasure and arousal, which in turn drive impulsive purchasing behaviour [5]. This is consistent with broader findings in digital consumer behaviour research, where affective responses act as key mediators between external stimuli and behavioural outcomes.

The Stimulus–Organism–Response (S-O-R) framework has emerged as a dominant theoretical lens for explaining consumer behaviour in social commerce environments. It facilitates the integration of platform-related stimuli, internal psychological states and behavioural responses within a unified conceptual structure. Systematic reviews confirm its widespread application in this domain [6]. Empirical evidence from live-streaming commerce further indicates that social presence and environmental cues significantly influence impulse buying through emotional mediators such as arousal and pleasure [8].

However, the existing body of research is heavily concentrated in Asian markets and predominantly relies on cross-sectional designs [7]. This limits the generalisability of findings and highlights the need for context-specific investigations across diverse socio-economic environments.

Emotional stimuli and consumer engagement. In social commerce, emotional stimuli can be conceptualised as a set of content-related and environmental characteristics that shape consumers' affective responses and facilitate rapid decision-making. These typically include time pressure, social influence (e.g. reviews and popularity cues), sensory richness (visual and audio elements), content vividness and personalisation, as well as influencer credibility.

Empirical studies consistently show that these stimuli enhance impulse buying through emotional activation and reduced self-control [8]. For instance, time pressure has been found to significantly increase

impulsive purchasing behaviour, although its effect may vary depending on product type and consumer characteristics [9].

Consumer engagement represents another critical construct in social commerce research. It is conceptualised both as a psychological state and as a behavioural manifestation, including interaction, participation and user-generated content. Engagement functions as a bridging mechanism between the consumer experience and behavioural outcomes such as purchase intention and impulse buying [4].

Importantly, engagement performs a dual role within the S-O-R framework. First, it amplifies the impact of stimuli by increasing exposure, immersion and time spent interacting with content. Second, it directly contributes to impulse buying by intensifying emotional involvement and reducing cognitive control. Empirical research indicates that engagement is driven by social interaction, system interactivity, and both hedonic and utilitarian motivations [10].

Despite these advances, the interaction between emotional stimuli, consumer engagement and emotional arousal remains insufficiently explored, particularly in non-Western and high-uncertainty contexts.

The Ukrainian context and research gap.

Recent reports indicate that Ukraine demonstrates a high level of digital penetration and active use of social media platforms, providing a strong foundation for the development of social commerce [3]. In addition, the financial infrastructure supports online transactions, with a high share of cashless payments and increasing volumes of online purchases [11].

At the same time, consumer behaviour in Ukraine is shaped by wartime conditions and economic uncertainty. Existing studies highlight increasing rationalisation of consumption, with many consumers planning purchases in advance and demonstrating heightened sensitivity to price, risk and privacy concerns [12]. This creates a tension between emotionally driven impulse buying mechanisms and more deliberate, risk-aware decision-making processes.

As a result, impulse buying in Ukrainian social commerce should not be interpreted as purely spontaneous behaviour but rather as a structured and context-dependent process influenced by emotional stimuli, consumer engagement, perceived risk and infrastructural constraints [13].

Therefore, this study addresses a critical gap in the literature by integrating emotional stimuli, consumer engagement and perceived risk within an S-O-R framework adapted to the Ukrainian context.

Theoretical framework and hypotheses. The Stimulus–Organism–Response (S-O-R) framework is employed in this study as a theoretical foundation for linking emotional content stimuli with internal psychological states and behavioural outcomes in social commerce. Within this framework, external environmental cues (stimuli) influence consumers’ internal states (organism), which in turn shape behavioural responses.

Prior research in social commerce and live-streaming environments consistently supports the sequence “social and content cues → emotional responses → impulse buying behaviour” [8]. This makes the S-O-R model particularly suitable for analysing impulse buying in digitally mediated and emotionally rich environments.

In this study, the S-O-R framework is operationalised as follows:

Stimulus (S): emotional stimuli in social commerce (ES), including perceived time pressure, social proof, sensory richness of content, influencer cues and content personalisation/vividness.

Organism (O): (1) emotional arousal (EA) and (2) consumer engagement (CE).

Response (R): (1) urge to buy impulsively (UBI) and (2) impulse buying behaviour (IBB).

Control variable: perceived risk (PR), which is particularly relevant in environments characterised by privacy concerns and cybersecurity risks [12].

The proposed conceptual model captures both direct and indirect relationships between stimuli, internal states and behavioural outcomes. A visual representation of the model is provided in Figure 1.

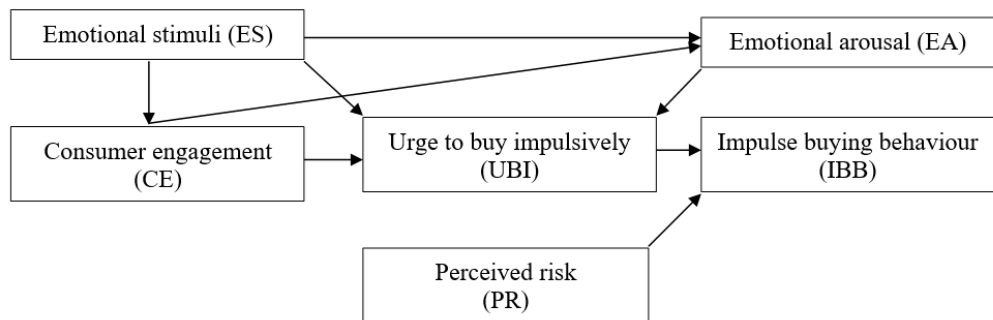


Figure 1. Conceptual model of emotional influence on impulse buying

Source: developed by the author

Hypotheses development. Based on prior empirical studies in live-streaming commerce, short-video platforms and social media environments—where emotional responses such as arousal and pleasure act as key mediators of impulse buying—the following hypotheses are proposed [2].

Emotional stimuli are expected to increase emotional arousal, as content characteristics such as urgency, vividness and social cues intensify affective responses.

H1. Emotional stimuli (ES) positively influence emotional arousal (EA) [9].

Emotional stimuli are also expected to enhance consumer engagement by increasing interactivity, immersion and the perceived relevance of content.

H2. Emotional stimuli (ES) positively influence consumer engagement (CE) [4].

Consumer engagement is further expected to stimulate emotional arousal, as deeper interaction with content increases emotional involvement.

H3. Consumer engagement (CE) positively influences emotional arousal (EA) [10].

Emotional arousal plays a central role in impulse buying by triggering spontaneous purchase intentions.

H4. Emotional arousal (EA) positively influences the urge to buy impulsively (UBI) [7].

Similarly, engaged consumers are more likely to develop a strong urge to buy due to increased immersion and reduced cognitive control.

H5. Consumer engagement (CE) positively influences the urge to buy impulsively (UBI) [14].

The urge to buy impulsively is expected to translate directly into actual impulse buying behaviour.

H6. The urge to buy impulsively (UBI) positively influences impulse buying behaviour (IBB) [14].

In addition, consumer engagement may exert a direct behavioural effect by facilitating faster decision-making and increasing purchase likelihood.

H7. Consumer engagement (CE) positively influences impulse buying behaviour (IBB) [8].

Emotional stimuli may also exert a direct effect on impulse buying, beyond mediated pathways.

H8. Emotional stimuli (ES) have a direct positive effect on impulse buying behaviour (IBB) [8].

Finally, perceived risk is expected to reduce impulse buying, as concerns related to privacy, financial security and uncertainty may inhibit spontaneous decisions.

H9. Perceived risk (PR) negatively influences impulse buying behaviour (IBB) [12].

Methodology. This study adopts a quantitative, cross-sectional research design to examine the relationships between emotional stimuli, consumer engagement, emotional arousal, and impulse buying behaviour in social commerce.

Data were collected using an online survey (CAWI) conducted between January 15 and February 15, 2026. The target population included Ukrainian consumers aged 18–60 who had made at least one purchase through social commerce platforms within the previous three months. A total of 620 valid responses were obtained using a combination of targeted social media advertising and panel-based recruitment.

All constructs were measured using multi-item scales adapted from prior validated studies. Responses were recorded on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree). Emotional stimuli included perceived time pressure, social influence, sensory richness, and influencer credibility. Consumer engagement was operationalized as a multidimensional construct comprising cognitive, emotional, and behavioural dimensions. Emotional arousal and impulse buying constructs were adapted from established S-O-R-based studies.

To ensure measurement validity and reliability, the study employed Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). The analysis included:

internal consistency reliability (Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability),

convergent validity (average variance extracted, AVE),

discriminant validity (Fornell–Larcker criterion),

structural model evaluation using bootstrapping techniques.

Potential common method bias was addressed through procedural remedies (anonymity, scale separation) and statistical checks. Ethical standards followed ICC/ESOMAR guidelines, ensuring informed consent and data confidentiality [16].

The logic of the research design and data analysis is presented in Figure 2.

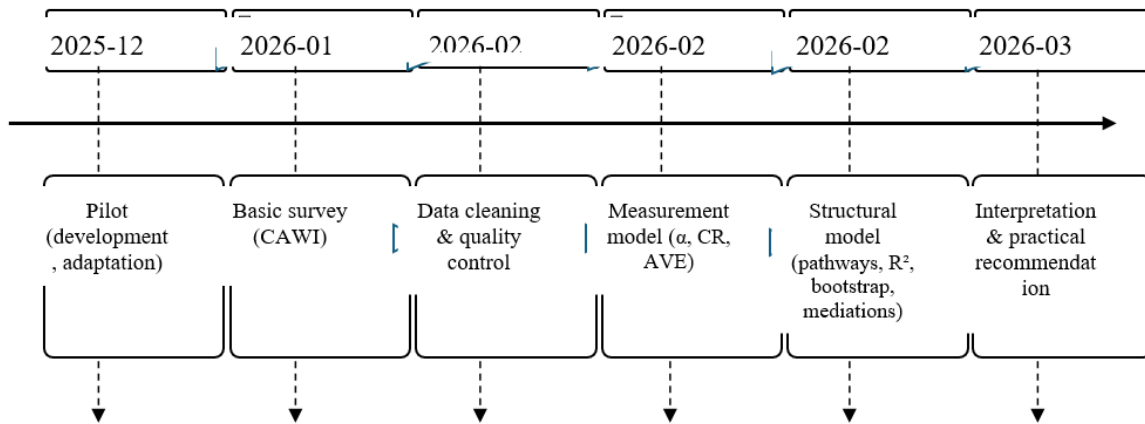


Figure 2. The logic of the research design and analysis
Source: developed by the author

Results and analysis. This section presents the empirical results based on a dataset (N = 620), structured in accordance with reporting standards for empirical research articles. The methodological thresholds for reliability and validity assessment, as well as bootstrapping procedures for indirect effects, follow established guidelines in PLS-SEM and measurement validation [15].

The characteristics of the sample are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Respondent profile (N = 620)

Indicators	Category	n	%
Gender	Female	347	56.0
	Male	273	44.0
Age	18–24	127	20.5
	25–34	212	34.2
	35–44	161	26.0
	45–60	120	19.3
Region of residence	Kyiv	125	20.2
	West	173	27.9
	Centre	157	25.3
	South	94	15.2
Main social commerce platform	East	71	11.5
	Instagram	274	44.2
	Telegram	150	24.2
	Facebook	98	15.8
	TikTok	63	10.2
	Other	35	5.6

Source: developed by the author

The inclusion of social commerce platforms in the sample reflects their widespread use in Ukraine as key channels for interaction and commerce, supported by recent “state of digital” reports and the recovery of e-commerce activity in recent years [3; 18].

Descriptive statistics of the constructs are presented in Table 2.

Table 2

Descriptive statistics (7-point Likert scale)

Construct	Marking	M	SD
Emotional stimuli	ES	4.00	1.08
Involvement	CE	4.00	1.02
Emotional arousal	EA	4.00	1.07

Continued from Table 2

Urge to buy impulsively	UBI	4.01	1.12
Impulse buying behaviour	IBB	4.00	1.13
Perceived risk	PR	4.01	1.07

Source: developed by the author

The reliability and convergent validity of the measurement model are shown in Table 3.

Table 3

Reliability and convergent validity

Construct	Cronbach's α	CR	AVE
ES	0.872	0.912	0.722
CE	0.808	0.875	0.636
EA	0.800	0.882	0.714
UBI	0.848	0.908	0.767
IBB	0.911	0.938	0.790
PR	0.789	0.877	0.703

Source: developed by the author

All constructs demonstrate satisfactory internal consistency and convergent validity, as indicated by Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability (CR) and average variance extracted (AVE), in line with recommended thresholds for PLS-SEM analysis [15].

Discriminant validity was assessed using the Fornell–Larcker criterion (Table 4), where the square roots of AVE (diagonal elements) exceed the inter-construct correlations.

Table 4

Fornell–Larcker matrix

	ES	CE	EA	UBI	IBB	PR
ES	0.850	0.495	0.598	0.538	0.493	-0.058
CE	0.495	0.797	0.513	0.584	0.477	-0.211
EA	0.598	0.513	0.845	0.564	0.460	-0.074
UBI	0.538	0.584	0.564	0.876	0.644	-0.226
IBB	0.493	0.477	0.460	0.644	0.889	-0.221
PR	-0.058	-0.211	-0.074	-0.226	-0.221	0.839

Source: developed by the author

The results confirm adequate discriminant validity of the measurement model [15].

Hypothesis testing and structural model. The results of hypothesis testing and the explanatory power of the model are presented in Tables 5 and 6.

Table 5

Hypothesis testing results (standardised coefficients)

Hypothesis	Pathway	β	p	Conclusion
H1	ES → EA	0.455	<0.001	Supported (moderate effect)
H2	ES → CE	0.484	<0.001	Supported (moderate effect)
H3	CE → EA	0.291	<0.001	Supported
H4	EA → UBI	0.263	<0.001	Supported
H5	CE → UBI	0.315	<0.001	Supported (moderate effect)
H6	UBI → IBB	0.470	<0.001	Supported (strongest effect)
H7	CE → IBB	0.091	0.018	Supported (weak effect)
H8	ES → IBB (direct)	0.191	<0.001	Supported (small effect)
H9	PR → IBB	-0.085	0.006	Supported (weak negative effect)

Source: developed by the author

The results indicate that all proposed hypotheses (H1–H9) are statistically supported; however,

the strength of the relationships differs considerably. The strongest effect on impulse buying behaviour is observed for the pathway UBI \rightarrow IBB ($\beta = 0.470$), confirming the central role of the urge to buy impulsively as the immediate predictor of behaviour. In contrast, CE \rightarrow IBB ($\beta = 0.091$) and PR \rightarrow IBB ($\beta = -0.085$) demonstrate relatively weak effects, suggesting that engagement and perceived risk influence impulse buying mainly through broader emotional and psychological mechanisms rather than direct behavioural impact.

Table 6

Endogenous variable	R^2
CE	0.278
EA	0.421
UBI	0.478
IBB	0.459

Source: developed by the author

The model demonstrates moderate explanatory power, with R^2 values indicating that the proposed constructs meaningfully explain variance in consumer engagement, emotional arousal, impulse buying intention and behaviour.

To further assess the practical significance of the model, effect sizes (f^2) were examined. The results indicate that the relationship between UBI and IBB exhibits a large effect size, while the effects of emotional stimuli on engagement and arousal are moderate. Other structural relationships demonstrate small to moderate effect sizes, suggesting that multiple factors jointly contribute to impulse buying behaviour.

In addition, predictive relevance (Q^2) was assessed using the blindfolding procedure. The Q^2 values for all endogenous constructs (CE, EA, UBI and IBB) were above zero, indicating that the model has adequate predictive relevance.

The interpretation of structural paths, R^2 , f^2 and Q^2 values is consistent with prior research in social commerce, where emotional states and the “urge to buy” play a central role, while engagement functions both as an outcome of stimuli and as a predictor of behavioural responses [8].

Mediation analysis.

The assessment of indirect effects using bootstrapping (Table 7) indicates that a substantial portion of the influence of emotional stimuli on impulse buying behaviour operates through sequential mediation paths, particularly:

ES \rightarrow EA \rightarrow UBI \rightarrow IBB

ES \rightarrow CE \rightarrow UBI \rightarrow IBB

These findings are consistent with prior empirical evidence highlighting the mediating role of emotional arousal, pleasure and the urge to buy in video-based and live-streaming commerce environments [5].

Table 7

Effect	2.5%	50%	97.5%
Direct ES \rightarrow IBB	0.111	0.190	0.260
ES \rightarrow EA \rightarrow UBI \rightarrow IBB	0.038	0.056	0.079
ES \rightarrow CE \rightarrow UBI \rightarrow IBB	0.053	0.071	0.094
ES \rightarrow CE \rightarrow EA \rightarrow UBI \rightarrow IBB	0.011	0.017	0.026
ES \rightarrow UBI \rightarrow IBB	0.065	0.102	0.142
ES \rightarrow CE \rightarrow IBB	0.011	0.044	0.080
Total effect ES \rightarrow IBB	0.419	0.481	0.540

Source: developed by the author

The total effect of emotional stimuli on impulse buying behaviour is substantial, confirming the importance of both direct and indirect pathways.

The visualisation of standardised path coefficients is presented in Figure 3.

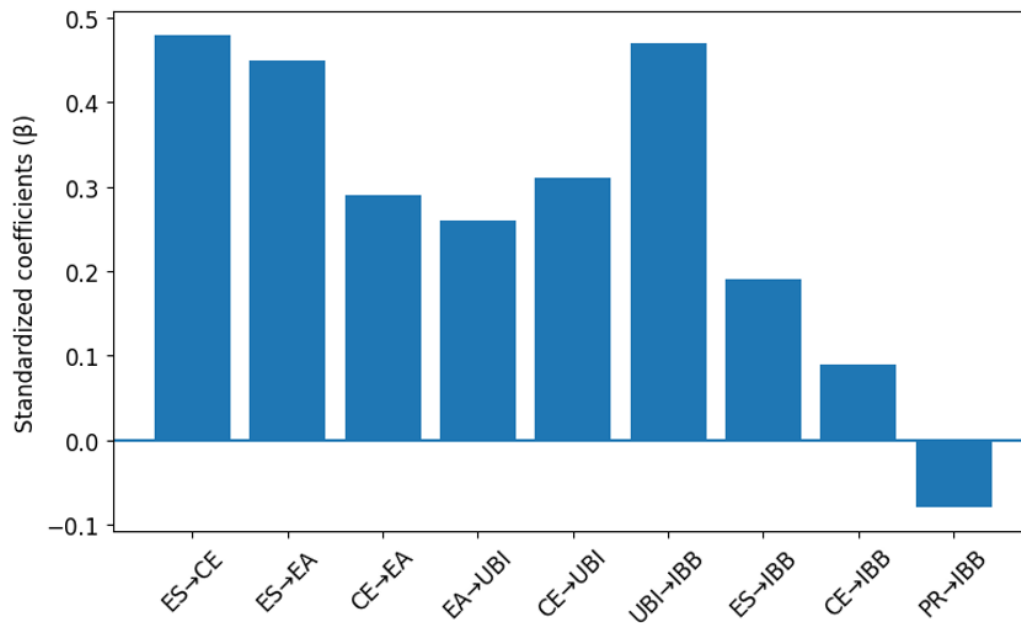


Figure 3. Standardised effects in the model
Source: developed by the author

Discussion, limitations and conclusion. The findings generally support the logic of the Stimulus–Organism–Response (S-O-R) framework in social commerce by demonstrating that emotional stimuli enhance consumer engagement and emotional arousal, which subsequently generate the urge to buy and contribute to impulse buying behaviour. This mechanism is consistent with previous findings from live-streaming and short-video commerce environments, where time pressure, social influence and sensory-rich content influence consumer behaviour through affective responses such as arousal and pleasure [5].

However, although all proposed hypotheses were statistically supported, the results should not be interpreted as indicating an equally strong influence of all constructs. The magnitude of the effects varied considerably, suggesting differences between statistical significance and practical relevance. The strongest behavioural mechanism was observed through the pathway from the urge to buy impulsively to actual impulse buying behaviour, confirming that emotional activation alone is insufficient unless it is transformed into a strong purchase impulse. In contrast, some relationships demonstrated relatively weak effects, particularly the direct influence of consumer engagement on impulse buying behaviour ($\beta = 0.091$) and the negative effect of perceived risk ($\beta = -0.085$), although both remained statistically significant.

The confirmation of all hypotheses can be explained by the theoretical consistency of the proposed model and the fact that the relationships were derived from well-established mechanisms within the S-O-R framework and prior empirical research on social commerce. Nevertheless, the results should be considered context-dependent rather than universal. The use of self-reported survey data, the cross-sectional research design and the specific characteristics of Ukrainian consumers during wartime conditions may have contributed to the high consistency of relationships observed in the model.

A key theoretical contribution of the study lies in clarifying the dual role of consumer engagement. Engagement not only strengthens emotional arousal through increased interaction, immersion and exposure to digital content but also contributes directly to impulse-related behavioural outcomes. However, the relatively weaker direct effect of engagement on impulse buying behaviour suggests that engagement alone does not automatically result in purchasing actions. Instead, its influence is mainly realised through emotional mechanisms and the development of the urge to buy impulsively. This finding extends previous research by positioning engagement as both a supporting psychological mechanism and an intermediate process within the S-O-R framework [10].

The role of perceived risk requires particular attention. In this study, perceived risk was included as a control variable rather than a core mediator or moderator because the primary objective was to examine the emotional pathway of impulse buying formation. Risk perception was introduced to account for external constraints related to privacy concerns, financial uncertainty and trust issues that may suppress spontaneous purchasing decisions. The negative but relatively weak effect of perceived risk indicates that emotional stimuli can still encourage impulse buying, although their effectiveness may decrease when consumers experience

uncertainty or security concerns [12].

The Ukrainian context provides an important explanation for these findings. On the one hand, high digital adoption, intensive use of social media platforms and the development of cashless payment infrastructure create favourable conditions for social commerce growth [3; 11]. On the other hand, wartime uncertainty has increased consumer rationalisation, price sensitivity and attention to potential risks [12]. Therefore, impulse buying behaviour in Ukraine should not be viewed as purely spontaneous but rather as a combination of emotional stimulation and rational evaluation.

From a managerial perspective, the results suggest that emotional marketing strategies in Ukrainian social commerce should be applied carefully. Marketers should combine emotional triggers, including urgency, social proof and sensory-rich content, with mechanisms that strengthen consumer confidence, such as transparent communication, secure payment options and clear value propositions. Excessive reliance on emotional pressure without trust-building elements may reduce effectiveness, especially under conditions of uncertainty.

The most relevant social commerce platforms in Ukraine, including Instagram, Telegram, Facebook and TikTok, offer different opportunities for activating emotional stimuli and engagement. Platform selection should therefore depend on the type of product, consumer expectations and the balance between emotional influence and perceived risk reduction [17].

Based on these insights, Table 8 summarises recommended strategies for marketers by linking emotional stimuli, engagement mechanisms and expected consumer responses across social commerce platforms.

Table 8

Recommended actions for marketers

Platform	Emotional stimuli (examples)	Engagement tactics	Expected effect
Instagram	Sensory content (videos/reels), social proof (reviews/UGC), soft urgency	Polls, Q&A, UGC challenges, comment-based interactions	↑ CE → ↑ EA → ↑ UBI; higher likelihood of impulse decisions within a browsing session
Telegram	Time-limited offers (“time window”), channel exclusivity, social proof (screenshots of reviews)	Bots for quick selection, short polls, bundled offers	Reduced time to transaction; ↑ UBI due to fast decision flow
Facebook	Social proof, direct responses/support, trust through transparent conditions	Live streams, community groups, moderated reviews	↑ trust and engagement; increased impulse buying in medium-risk categories
TikTok	Dynamic video content, emotional music/visual effects, trends, FOMO-like urgency	Live/demo formats, comment-based CTAs, creator integrations	↑ arousal as a mediator; accelerated UBI, especially for low-cost products
Cross-platform	Balance between promotional urgency and transparency, reduction of perceived risk	Privacy-by-design, clear return policies, secure payment options	Lower PR → higher conversion of emotional stimuli into purchases

Source: developed by the author

These recommendations are consistent with previous research demonstrating the importance of time pressure, social influence and sensory stimuli in stimulating impulse buying through emotional mechanisms. At the same time, they highlight the need to consider privacy sensitivity, economic constraints and consumer caution in uncertain environments such as Ukraine [9; 18]

Limitations and future research. This study has several limitations. First, the cross-sectional design restricts the ability to draw causal inferences. Future research should employ longitudinal or experimental designs, such as A/B testing of emotional stimuli, combined with real-time measurement of emotional responses. Prior literature on live-streaming commerce also highlights the need to move beyond cross-sectional approaches [7].

Second, the wartime context introduces additional variability related to infrastructure stability, logistics and financial behaviour. Future studies should incorporate temporal comparisons across different phases of instability and include macro-level indicators as contextual moderators [19].

Conclusion. This study contributes to the growing body of research on social commerce by demonstrating how emotional stimuli, consumer engagement and emotional arousal interact to drive impulse buying behaviour within the Stimulus–Organism–Response (S-O-R) framework. The findings provide empirical support for a sequential mechanism in which emotional stimuli enhance both engagement and arousal, leading to the formation of an urge to buy and, ultimately, impulse buying behaviour.

The results reinforce the central role of emotional processes in digital consumer behaviour, showing that

impulse buying is not merely a reaction to promotional tactics but rather a function of complex interactions between content characteristics, psychological states and engagement dynamics. Importantly, this study extends existing literature by contextualising these relationships within the Ukrainian market, where economic uncertainty and elevated perceived risk significantly shape consumer responses.

From a theoretical perspective, the study advances the S-O-R framework by explicitly modelling consumer engagement as both a mediator and a parallel driver of behavioural outcomes. This highlights its dual function in amplifying emotional activation and directly influencing impulse buying behaviour, thereby providing a more nuanced understanding of the mechanisms underlying digital consumption.

From a managerial perspective, the findings suggest that marketers should adopt a balanced approach that combines emotional triggers (e.g. urgency, social proof and sensory content) with trust-building mechanisms, including transparency, privacy protection and clear value propositions. In high-uncertainty environments such as Ukraine, impulse buying is more likely to occur when emotional activation is supported by rational justification and perceived security.

This study is subject to several limitations. The cross-sectional design restricts causal inference, while the use of self-reported data may introduce bias. Future research should employ longitudinal and experimental designs, as well as cross-country comparisons, to better capture the dynamics of impulse buying across different socio-economic contexts. Additionally, further research could explore the moderating role of contextual factors such as crisis intensity, infrastructure stability and platform-specific features.

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