

The Mediating Role of Emotional Arousal in the Impact of Social Media Advertisements on Impulsive Buying and Post-Purchase Regret

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
Keywords: Social Media Advertisements Impulsive Buying Post-Purchase Regret Emotional Arousal	Purpose – The aim of the research is to examine the impact of social media advertisements on impulsive buying and subsequent regret in terms of the mediating role of emotional arousal. The novelty of the research is to examine the impact of social media advertisements on impulsive buying and the resulting regret through emotional arousal. Design/methodology/approach – The research was conducted according to the relationship-seeking and causal comparison model in quantitative research approaches. The survey technique was used to collect the data, and the questionnaire form was applied to the participants online. The data were collected by the convenience sampling method. The sample size of the study consisted of 250 participants. Statistical package programs were used to analyze the data. Results – As a result of the data analysis, it was determined that social media advertisements have a positive impact on impulsive buying, and impulsive buying has a significant impact on post-purchase regret. Again, impulsive buying has a positive impact on outcome regret and a negative impact on process regret. Social media advertisements have a positive impact on emotional arousal and emotional arousal has a positive impact on impulsive buying. Moreover, it is concluded that emotional arousal plays a mediating role in the relationship between social media advertisements and impulsive buying. Discussion – The findings are similar to the results of previous studies in the literature. However, in this research, emotional arousal was found to play a mediating role in the effect of social media advertisements on impulsive buying and subsequent regret. It is recommended that similar studies should be conducted comparatively across provinces, products, and social media platforms in the future.
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1. Introduction

The increasing prevalence of social commerce and the acceleration of digitalization have made social media platforms one of the main channels that affect individuals' purchasing tendencies. Advertisements on these platforms have the potential to stimulate sudden and unplanned purchasing behaviors by attracting the attention of individuals (Czarnecka and Schivinski, 2019). This type of behavior, called "impulsive buying" in the literature, refers to a process that is not premeditated, occurs with a sudden desire, and mostly develops depending on the individual's emotional arousal level (Rook, 1987). Both visual and contextual components of social media advertisements can intensify individuals' emotional reactions and lead them to make instant decisions (Feng et al., 2023). In this framework, the emotional arousal level of individuals stands out as a determining factor in their purchasing processes (Lee et al., 2023). Emotional arousal encompasses the physiological and psychological reactions of the individual to environmental stimuli and can directly affect purchasing decisions, especially in environments with fast and intense information flow such as social media. However, it is stated that impulsive buying behaviors may create negative emotions such as regret and cognitive conflict after the purchase (Lindsey-Mullikin, 2003). Therefore, individuals may have to cope with these negative emotions if the product or service purchased impulsively by being influenced by social media advertisements does not meet expectations (Vazquez et al., 2020). For this reason, the research focuses on the concepts of social media advertisements, impulsive buying, post-purchase regret, and emotional arousal.

ETHICAL APPROVAL: The ethical approval for this study was obtained from the Ethics Committee of Erzincan Binali Yıldırım University with the decision dated May 28, 2025, and numbered E-88012460-050.04-453125.

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The research is expected to make both meaningful and significant contributions to the marketing literature by examining the effects of social media advertisements on consumer behavior. Therefore, the research first examines the effects of social media advertisements on impulsive buying. Then, the effects of impulsive buying on post-purchase regret, of social media advertisements on emotional arousal, and of emotional arousal on impulsive buying are discussed. Finally, the mediating role of emotional arousal in the relationship between social media advertisements and impulsive buying was examined. The research aims to fill the gap in literature by focusing on impulsive buying and post-purchase emotional consequences. In addition, it makes a unique contribution in terms of showing that social media advertisements can affect not only purchase decisions but also the regret experienced afterwards. The inclusion of emotional arousal in the research model enables consumer behavior to be addressed in a broader framework. It is thought that the findings can guide businesses and brands conducting digital marketing activities in content design. In particular, it is emphasized that emotionally powerful advertisements may not always yield positive results and may sometimes increase the feeling of regret. This situation should be carefully considered in terms of ethical advertising and sustainable consumer relations. As a result, the research presents an original model that explains the relationship between the variables through emotional arousal.

In today's digital world, businesses intensively advertise to people through social media platforms. These advertisements often increase instant and unplanned, in other words, impulsive purchases. People sometimes experience regret after impulsive buying. Moreover, the role of emotional arousal in this buying process has not yet been fully elucidated. The aim of the research is to examine the impact of social media advertisements on impulsive buying and subsequent regret in terms of the mediating role of emotional arousal. Accordingly, the research is shaped around the research questions listed below.

1. Do social media advertisements impact impulsive buying?
2. How does impulsive buying shape post-purchase regret?
3. Do social media advertisements imp consumers' emotional arousal levels?
4. Does emotional arousal influence impulsive buying?
5. Does emotional arousal play a mediating role in the relationship between social media advertisements and impulsive buying?

2. Theoretical Background and Hypothesis Development

2.1. Social Media Advertisements (SMA)

With the ever-changing and developing digital world, social media has become an important medium that not only changes the way individuals' access information but also radically affects the processes of producing and sharing information. Especially with the increasing use of web technologies, users have evolved from content consumers to active content producers (Ada et al., 2013; Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010). This has paved the way for some significant changes in the field of marketing communication. In other words, social media advertisements have ceased to be tools used solely for promotional purposes. It has evolved into a holistic communication strategy that includes mutual interaction, personalized content presentation, and user contribution.

Social media advertisements can be carried out in direct and explicit ways through sponsored posts or indirectly through brand pages, user comments, or interactions such as likes and shares (Taylor et al., 2011). This structural flexibility allows businesses to move from being passive actors that only deliver messages to being able to strategically adapt and flex according to simultaneous feedback from consumers (Hamouda, 2018). In other words, social media advertisements differ from traditional advertisements and offer much more than one-way communication; they have gained the identity of a contemporary marketing tool that enables two-way interaction, user participation, and data generation. In this context, it can be stated that social media advertisements are not only a communication method that aims to reach the consumer but also offer a dynamic and interactive structure that makes the consumer an active component of the process (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010).

One of the most obvious advantages of this contemporary structural model is that it offers direct access to the target audience based on user behavior. Advertising campaigns conducted through social media platforms

increase the visibility of brands or businesses, support the active participation of consumers, and encourage content creation (Barnes and Mattson, 2009). Users' reactions to advertising content, such as likes, comments, or shares, increase the reach of relevant advertisements, thereby significantly increasing the digital visibility of brands or businesses with a multiplier effect (Patino et al., 2012). In parallel with this approach, social media-oriented promotional activities cause businesses to move away from the traditional communication tool identity that focuses on message transmission and turn into a communication platform that is shaped by the active participation of users and includes different levels of interaction (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010).

On the other hand, the interactive nature of social media advertisements also brings some disadvantages. Consumers can quickly communicate a negative experience they have had with a product or service to different segments of society through social media. This can have serious consequences for brand identity and reputation (Kerpen, 2011). In addition, if the content of advertisements is perceived by users as disturbing, unrealistic, or intrusive, the effect of the advertisement gradually decreases, and consumer trust may be negatively affected (Li et al., 2013). In this context, Kazançoğlu et al. (2010) argue that social media advertisements should be analyzed in terms of informative, entertainment-oriented, and disturbing aspects; especially informative advertising content has a relatively higher persuasion capacity on consumers. This conclusion draws attention to the fact that the effectiveness of social media advertisements is not only dependent on the availability of technological opportunities but also on the strategic content design (Ashley and Tuten, 2015).

Considering the above-mentioned evaluations, social media advertisements are positioned at a strategic center in current marketing practices. The social media environment, which is based on interaction and user participation, offers businesses both short-term promotional opportunities and contributes to long-term brand value building (Mangold and Faulds, 2009; Mir, 2012). In particular, the positive contribution of posts made through personal references to the advertising effect makes social media advertisements a more effective tool than traditional advertisements (Battallar and Cömert, 2015). Accordingly, social media advertisements are considered a dynamic communication model that should be emphasized in both academic literature and applied marketing studies (Lyu et al., 2023).

2.2. The Relationship between Social Media Advertisements (SMA) and Impulsive Buying (IB)

Impulsive buying is defined as the shopping behavior that an individual exhibits under the influence of an internal impulse without making any plan (Yapraklı and Mutlu, 2020; Kang and Namkung, 2024). Within the S-O-R (Stimulus-Organism-Response) framework, impulsive buying holistically explains how external stimuli attract attention (Stimuli), how these stimuli affect the emotional and psychological responses of the individual (Organism), and how this interaction results in an immediate behavior such as buying (Response) (Mollen and Wilson, 2010; Kang and Namkung, 2024). In this behavioral tendency, the individual is guided by emotions instead of making rational decisions (Cavazos-Arroyo and Máynez-Guaderrama, 2022). In impulsive buying behavior, individuals not only purchase low-priced products but also prefer high-priced products (Chauhan et al., 2020). On the other hand, such shopping behaviors may result in negative situations such as regret, dissatisfaction, and economic difficulties, even if they satisfy the individual for a short time (Cavazos-Arroyo and Máynez-Guaderrama, 2022; Leksono and He, 2025).

Psychological characteristics of the individual play an important role in influencing impulsive buying behavior. Personal factors such as the individual's interactions with his/her social environment and emotional state are among the factors that play a fundamental role in the emergence of impulsive buying behavior (Iyer et al., 2020). Consumers not only aim to meet their physical or functional needs during the shopping process but also aim to provide emotional satisfaction, strengthen their self-perception, or improve their mood (Hausman, 2000; Ünsalan, 2016). This shows that unplanned and impulse purchases mostly serve the purpose of filling the emotional deficiencies of the individual rather than rational needs (Wood, 1998). On the other hand, e-commerce environments and digital social networks offer a ground that can activate impulsive buying behavior. In particular, the intensive use of social media platforms strengthens the effect of the content on consumer behavior and shapes the purchasing tendencies of individuals. This trend causes businesses to increasingly direct their advertising investments to digital channels (Denk, 2018).

When both domestic and foreign literature are examined, it is possible to come across studies examining the effect of social media advertisements on impulsive buying. Kodjamanis and Angelopoulos (2013) investigated

the effects of Facebook advertisements on consumers' purchase intentions and habits and stated that social pressure is an important factor in brand success. Accordingly, it is concluded that it is inevitable for businesses and brands to use social media as an advertising tool and invest in this area. Similarly, Rehman et al. (2014) showed that Facebook advertisements have significant effects on the purchasing behavior of young consumers. Ertemel and Ammoura (2016) stated that social media advertisements have indirect effects on purchase decisions and behaviors, while Çağlıyan et al. (2016) revealed that social media advertisements positively affect purchase behaviors. Sharma et al. (2018) emphasized the effect of social media advertisements on impulsive buying behavior; Yaprak and Çoban (2023) examined the effects of these advertisements on impulsive buying tendencies and stated that hedonic buying behavior plays a mediating role in this process. This study shows that effective social media advertisements positively affect impulsive buying tendencies by appealing to consumers' emotional and hedonic tendencies. Finally, Yadav et al. (2024) reveal that social media marketing has positive effects on consumer buying behavior and that specially developed advertising strategies encourage impulsive buying behavior. In line with the theoretical background of the research and the findings in the related literature, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H₁: Social media advertisements have an impact on impulsive buying.

2.3. The Relationship between Impulsive Buying (IB) and Post-Purchase Regret (PPR)

Post-purchase regret is a negative emotion arising from the individual's judgment that the decision he/she made after purchasing the product or service he/she needs was wrong or incomplete (Zeelenberg and Pieters, 2007). This feeling arises especially when the individual thinks that the options that he/she did not purchase may be more satisfying and often brings along a process that often results in cognitive inconsistency. In this direction, impulsive purchases made in online channels may cause unexpected results and cause regret and anxiety in consumers (Telci et al., 2011). Consumers often question their decisions with comparative thoughts such as "I wish I had done more research; maybe I could have chosen a better brand or business." or "I wish I had waited for the campaign period; maybe I could have bought at a more advantageous price." This questioning process leads to regret. This process of questioning paves the way for a growing sense of regret and meaningful questioning of purchase decisions (Tsiros and Mittal, 2000). As a matter of fact, post-purchase regret is not only limited to the functionality of the product or service; it is also directly related to the mismatch between the consumer's expectations and the actual experience (Heitmann et al., 2007). In other words, as the difference between expectations and product or service performance increases, the level of questioning the consumer's decision and the likelihood of regret increase (Sweeney et al., 2000). In this context, it is once again emphasized that post-purchase regret is not only caused by rational and cognitive evaluations but also fed by emotional reactions; therefore, consumer behavior should be handled in both cognitive and emotional dimensions (Zeelenberg and Pieters, 2007). Such emotional experiences can significantly affect the consumer's future purchasing tendencies and brand and business preferences. Therefore, it is observed that individuals who experience regret develop a tendency to move away from the brand or business and to evaluate different options (Tsiros and Mittal, 2000).

For marketing managers, accurately analyzing the underlying causes of post-purchase regret and developing strategies to minimize this negative emotion is critical not only to ensure the sustainability of customer satisfaction but also to create long-term customer loyalty and strengthen the bond between the brand and the customer (Kumar et al., 2021). In this context, reducing the feeling of post-purchase regret is considered an important strategic element that can contribute to both the success of businesses in customer relationship management processes and gaining competitive advantage (Sweeney et al., 2000). Post-purchase regret consists of two sub-dimensions: outcome regret and process regret. Outcome regret is a consumer's post-purchase regret about the use and user experience of the product. Process regret is not just dissatisfaction with the final purchase decision; rather, it refers to a general feeling of regret about all stages of the decision process—searching for information, evaluating alternatives, making choices, and making decisions. In other words, the consumer may experience dissatisfaction not only with the product or service but also with the entire process he/she followed to reach this product or service (Bil and Gökçe, 2022).

In recent years, impulsive buying, which has been the subject of research in different aspects, has started to attract great attention in literature in terms of its effect on post-purchase regret. Parsad et al. (2019) revealed that impulsive buying behavior is positively related to feelings of regret. Lazim et al. (2020) found that

impulsive buying has a positive and significant effect on post-purchase regret. Secapramana et al. (2021) found that an increase in impulsive buying tendency leads to more intense feelings of regret after the purchase. Li et al. (2021) reveal that low levels of anticipated regret increase impulsive buying tendency, but high levels of product involvement weaken this effect. Beyaz (2022) determined that there is a significant positive relationship between impulsive buying behavior and post-purchase regret and emphasized that this relationship has remarkable consequences for marketing strategies. Ayu and Aziz (2024) examined the relationship between women's online impulsive buying behavior and post-purchase regret and found that as the level of impulsive buying increases, the level of regret increases. Sarwar et al. (2024) stated that impulsive buying leads to post-purchase regret. Ongyono et al. (2024) found that impulsive buying increases consumers' regret levels. Putri and Astuti (2025) stated that impulsive buying has a significant effect on the feeling of regret. In line with the theoretical background of the research and the findings in the relevant literature, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H₂: Impulsive buying has an impact on post-purchase regret.

H_{2a}: Impulsive buying has an impact on outcome regret.

H_{2b}: Impulsive buying has an impact on process regret.

2.4. Emotional Arousal (EA)

Research in different fields shows that arousal plays an important role in individuals' decision-making processes and behaviors (Loureiro, 2014; Sohn et al., 2015). High levels of arousal direct individuals' motives towards short-term satisfaction instead of achieving long-term goals. It is stated that this situation leads to the behavior of choosing risky options (Sohn et al., 2015). Arousal is mostly related to impulsive decision-making behavior (Peters et al., 2006) and can create changes in individuals' judgments about objects. In this context, aroused individuals may find objects that do not normally attract their attention or arouse more interesting curiosity (Ariely and Loewenstein, 2006). On the other hand, research results also emphasize that arousal increases the intensity level of individuals' responses, increases their orientation towards various learning styles, and strengthens their long-term memory for events (Storbeck and Clore, 2008). Arousal allows individuals to carry their opinions to more extreme levels depending on their emotional intensity. As a result, highly aroused individuals may perceive advertisements with positive messages more positively and advertisements with negative messages more negatively than less aroused individuals (Gorn et al., 2001). This is explained by the fact that individuals associate their strong emotional reactions to advertisements with their own arousal levels, and as a result, their opinions are shaped at more extreme points (Schwarz and Clore 1988).

When the literature on the relationship between social media advertisements, emotional arousal, and impulsive buying is examined, it is seen that the issue has been addressed from many different perspectives and various findings have been reached. Storbeck and Clore (2008) argue that advertising strategies can facilitate consumers' associating products or services with specific emotional stimuli and thus contribute to increased excitement towards products and services. Son et al. (2022) concluded that emotional arousal is an important driving force in the effectiveness of social media advertising. Sağman and Becan (2024) found that YouTube advertisements with celebrity collaboration content affect consumers' emotional arousal levels. Herabadi et al. (2009) found that emotional arousal plays an important role in driving impulsive buying. Szymkowiak et al. (2020) stated that increased emotional arousal has a positive relationship with impulsive buying behaviors. Hanifah et al. (2024) concluded that emotional arousal significantly influences impulsive buying and that entertainment plays a critical role in exhibiting such behaviors. In the light of these studies, it is thought that emotional arousal may function as the main psychological mechanism that transforms the psychological effects of social media advertisements on consumers into purchasing behavior, and the following hypotheses are proposed:

H₃: Social media advertisements have an impact on emotional arousal.

H₄: Emotional arousal has an impact on impulsive buying.

H₅: Emotional arousal mediates the relationship between social media advertisements and impulsive buying.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Model

A quantitative research method was used in the research. Since the research seeks to explain the relationships between variables and the reasons for these relationships, it has both a relationship-seeking and causal comparison research design. The research model developed in line with the aim and scope of the research is presented in Figure 1.

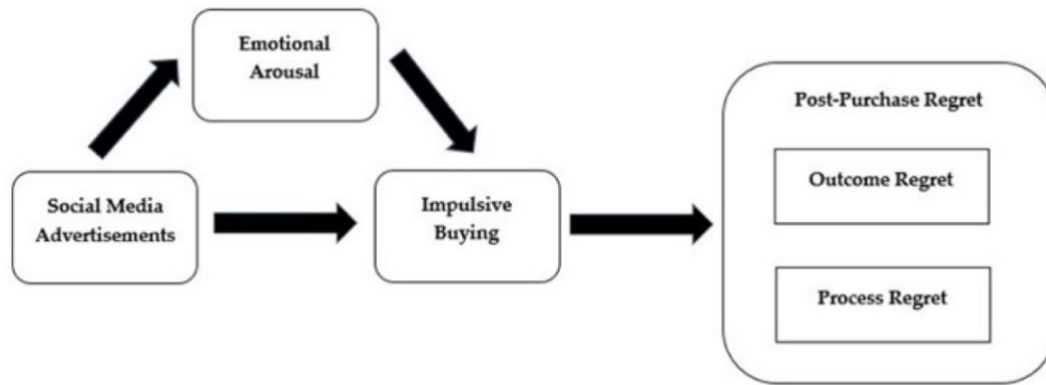


Figure 1. Research Model

3.2. Population and Sample

The research population consists of consumers aged 18 and over living in Erzincan who are influenced by the advertisement of a product they see on social media platforms and show purchasing behavior for the product in question. The convenience sampling method was used in the research. Because the research model does not have a complex structure and that a sample group of at least 200 people would be sufficient in multivariate research, the data obtained from a sample size of 250 people were considered sufficient for the research (De Winter et al., 2009; Gürbüz and Şahin, 2016). The findings obtained are valid only for this sample and cannot be generalized for other consumer groups.

3.3. Data Collection Methods and Tools

The data used in the research were obtained through the survey method, and a questionnaire form was used as a data collection tool. For the implementation of this research, ethics committee approval was obtained from Erzincan Binali Yıldırım University Human Research Social and Human Sciences Ethics Committee with the decision dated 28.05.2025 and numbered E-88012460-050.04-453125. The research was prepared in accordance with ethical rules. The questionnaire form was applied to the participants online, and the data collection process was carried out between June 1 and June 15, 2025. Within the scope of the research, the questionnaire form was sent to a total of 276 people, and through a preliminary question, the participants were asked whether they were influenced by the advertisement of a product they saw on social media and whether they purchased the product in question. The 257 participants who answered "Yes" to this question were allowed to continue the survey. However, 7 of the 257 questionnaires were excluded from the evaluation since the relevant field was answered despite the warning "Please leave this question blank". As a result, a total of 250 valid questionnaires were taken into consideration in the analysis.

The questionnaire consists of six main sections. In the first section, the participants were asked as a preliminary question, "Have you ever purchased a product that you have seen on social media by being influenced by the advertisement of that product?" Participants who answered "Yes" to a preliminary question were able to continue the research. In the second section, questions regarding the variable of social media advertisements were included. In the third section, there are questions about the impulsive buying variable. In the fourth section, questions related to the variable of post-purchase regret are included along with the sub-dimensions of outcome regret and process regret. In the fifth section, questions related to the emotional arousal variable are included. The scales containing the statements related to the research variables were obtained from different studies in the literature and organized within the scope of the study. The statements were measured using a Likert-type scale (1=Strongly Disagree, 5=Strongly Agree). In the last section, demographic questions

were included to reveal the differences between the participants. The sources of the scales used in the research and the number of items for each scale are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Scales Used in the Research

Scales and Dimensions	Total Item	Adapted From
Social Media Advertisements	7	Raji et al., 2019
Impulsive Buying	9	Rook and Fisher, 1995
Post-Purchase Regret		
<i>Outcome Regret (8 items)</i>	16	Lee and Cotte, 2009
<i>Process Regret (8 items)</i>		
Emotional Arousal	6	Liu et al., 2023

3.4. Data Analysis

In the research, the survey responses of 250 participants were analyzed with SPSS v23 and AMOS v24. Normal distribution was examined with the assumption of multiple normality. The construct validity of the scales was evaluated by confirmatory factor analysis, and Bootstrap ML (Maximum Likelihood) was used as a calculation method for non-normally distributed data. In the bootstrap method, 5000 resamplings were performed. The Bootstrap ML approach is widely recommended to increase the reliability of estimates when the assumption of multivariate normality is not met (Gürbüz, 2024). All measurement models and structural tests were conducted using this method. Internal consistency of the scale was examined with Cronbach's alpha coefficient. Since the assumption of multiple normality was not met in the structural equation model, the Bootstrap ML method was used. To use the maximum likelihood method, the data must conform to a normal distribution. A multivariate normality test below 10 is an excellent result, while values up to 20 are generally not problematic (Şimşek, 2007; Bayram, 2016; Kline, 2016). Frequency (percentage) was used to represent categorical variables. The significance level was set as $p < 0.05$.

4. Findings

4.1. Profile of the Participants

Table 2. Profile of the Participants (N=250)

	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	148	59.2
Female	102	40.8
Age		
18 and 25	28	11.2
26 and 33	42	16.8
34 and 41	50	20.0
42 and 49	53	21.2
50 and 57	50	20.0
58 and older	27	10.8
Marital Status		
Married	134	53.6
Single	116	46.4
Educational Status		
Primary School	24	9.6
High School	22	8.8
Associate's Degree	72	28.8
Bachelor's Degree	81	32.4
Postgraduate	51	20.4
Occupations		
Student	27	10.8
Self-Employed	50	20.0
Public Servant	74	29.6

Private Sector	34	13.6
Housewife	26	10.4
Retired	29	11.6
Other	10	4.0
Personal Income		
30.000 TL and below	70	28.0
30.001 and 45.000 TL	66	26.4
45.001 and 60.000 TL	27	10.8
60.001 and 75.000 TL	42	16.8
75.000 TL and above	45	18.0
Social Media Platforms Used*		
Instagram	240	96.0
YouTube	155	62.0
TikTok	94	37.6
Facebook	184	73.6
X (Twitter)	176	70.4
LinkedIn	62	24.8
WhatsApp	239	95.6
Other	90	36.0

* Multiple response

The profile of the participants is presented in Table 2. 59.2% of the participants were male, and 40.8% were female. The highest participation was in the 42 and 49 age range with 21.2%. In marital status, 53.6% were married, and 32.4% had a bachelor's degree. In terms of income level, 30.000 TL and below stood out with 28.0%, while the public sector was the most preferred field of employment with 29.6%. Instagram (96.0%) and WhatsApp (95.6%) ranked first in social media use, while LinkedIn (24.8%) was the least preferred platform.

4.2. Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

Table 3. CFA Results of the Social Media Advertisements Scale

Item	Factor	β_1 (%95 CI)	β_2 (%95 CI)	Standard Error	p	
SMA1	<---	F1	0.850 (0.725-0.990)	0.863 (0.804-0.910)	0.040	<0.001
SMA2	<---	F1	0.927 (0.790-1.078)	0.921 (0.884-0.954)	0.043	<0.001
SMA3	<---	F1	1.287 (1.161-1.478)	0.944 (0.920-0.964)	0.049	<0.001
SMA4	<---	F1	0.847 (0.728-0.973)	0.825 (0.757-0.880)	0.045	<0.001
SMA5	<---	F1	0.971 (0.837-1.120)	0.844 (0.779-0.892)	0.049	<0.001
SMA6	<---	F1	0.724 (0.631-0.821)	0.914 (0.869-0.950)	0.030	<0.001
SMA7	<---	F1	1 (1-1)	0.912 (0.862-0.944)	...	...

β_1 : Unstandardized Beta coefficient; β_2 : Standardized Beta coefficient; %95 CI: %95 Confidence interval

CFA results for the social media advertisements scale are presented in Table 3. In the multivariate normality test, it was determined that the critical value was not among the appropriate values. Since the assumption of multiple normality was not met, Bootstrap ML was used as the calculation method. The standardized path coefficients of the items in all factors were significant ($p < 0.05$). The highest standardized beta coefficient of 0.921 was obtained in Factor 1, item 2. The lowest standardized beta coefficient of 0.825 was obtained in Factor 1, item 4. The first-level confirmatory factor analysis was performed with a total of 7 items, and the fit values were CMIN/DF (34,669/10) = 3.467; GFI = 0.964; IFI = 0.989; CFI = 0.989; TLI = 0.976; RMSEA = 0.100; and SRMR = 0.020.

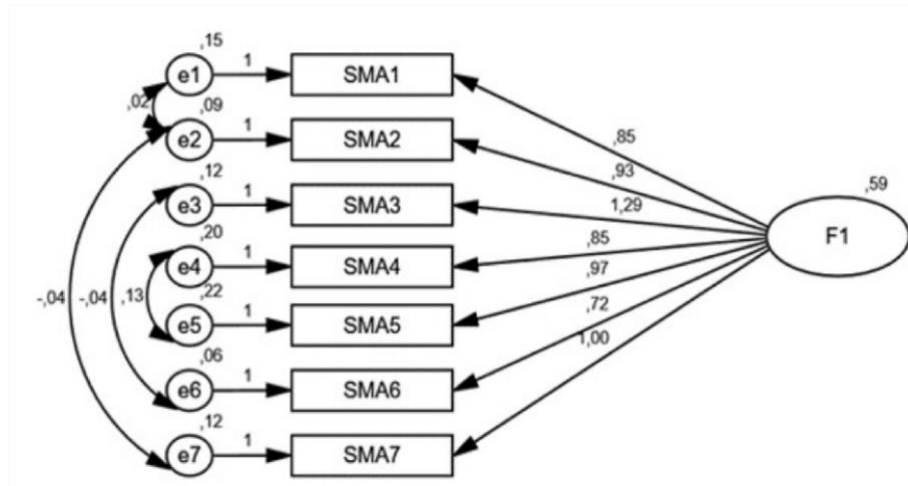


Figure 2. Unstandardized Path Coefficients of CFA Results of Social Media Advertisements Scale

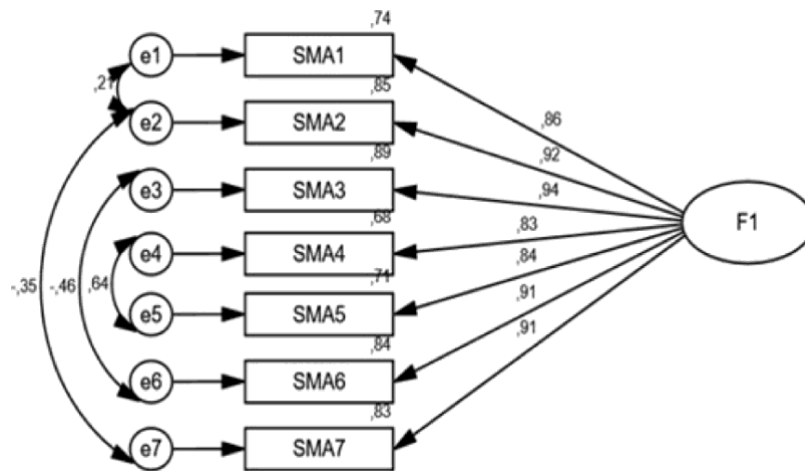


Figure 3. Standardized Path Coefficients of CFA Results of Social Media Advertisements Scale

Table 4. CFA Results of the Impulsive Buying Scale

Item		Factor	β1 (%95 CI)	β2 (%95 CI)	Standard Error	p
IB1	<---	F1	1.188 (1.012-1.394)	0.913 (0.853-0.948)	0.053	<0.001
IB2	<---	F1	1.385 (1.227-1.587)	0.975 (0.961-0.984)	0.052	<0.001
IB3	<---	F1	1.434 (1.285-1.632)	0.988 (0.971-0.997)	0.052	<0.001
IB4	<---	F1	1.457 (1.300-1.653)	0.980 (0.971-0.989)	0.054	<0.001
IB5	<---	F1	1.470 (1.303-1.678)	0.970 (0.953-0.981)	0.056	<0.001
IB6	<---	F1	1.104 (0.968-1.265)	0.892 (0.852-0.927)	0.052	<0.001
IB7	<---	F1	1.041 (0.897-1.204)	0.888 (0.846-0.927)	0.050	<0.001
IB8	<---	F1	1.198 (1.030-1.392)	0.870 (0.787-0.927)	0.060	<0.001
IB9	<---	F1	1 (1-1)	0.879 (0.842-0.918)	...	...

$\beta 1$: Unstandardized Beta coefficient; $\beta 2$: Standardized Beta coefficient; %95 CI: %95 Confidence interval

CFA results for the impulsive buying scale are presented in Table 4. In the multivariate normality test, it was determined that the critical value was not among the appropriate values. Since the assumption of multiple normality was not met, Bootstrap ML was used as the calculation method. The standardized path coefficients of the items in all factors were significant ($p < 0.05$). The highest standardized beta coefficient was 0.988 in Factor 1, item 3. The lowest standardized beta coefficient of 0.870 was obtained in Factor 1, item 8. First-level confirmatory factor analysis was performed with a total of 9 items, and the fit values were CMIN/DF (70,718/22) = 3.508; GFI = 0.941; IFI = 0.986; CFI = 0.986; TLI = 0.978; RMSEA = 0.100; and SRMR = 0.015.

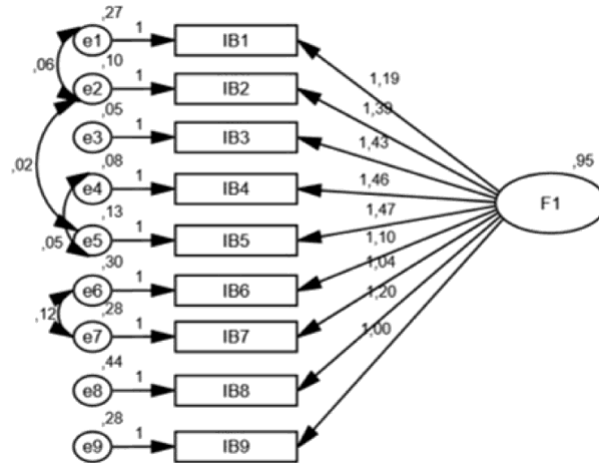


Figure 4. Unstandardized Path Coefficients of CFA Results of Impulsive Buying Scale

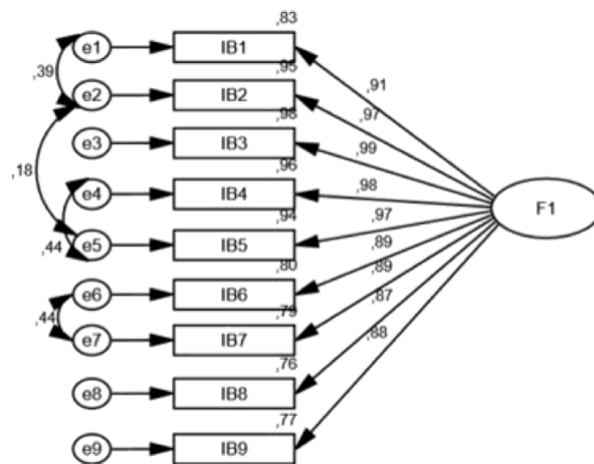


Figure 5. Standardized Path Coefficients of CFA Results of Impulsive Buying Scale

Table 5. CFA Results of the Post-Purchase Regret Scale

Item		Factor	β1 (%95 CI)	β2 (%95 CI)	Standard Error	p
PPR1	<---	F1	0.889 (0.841–0.932)	0.957 (0.936–0.973)	0.020	<0.001
PPR2	<---	F1	0.938 (0.893–0.976)	0.969 (0.952–0.982)	0.019	<0.001
PPR3	<---	F1	0.886 (0.826–0.936)	0.952 (0.928–0.969)	0.021	<0.001
PPR4	<---	F1	0.905 (0.854–0.950)	0.959 (0.937–0.974)	0.020	<0.001
PPR5	<---	F1	0.938 (0.894–0.973)	0.979 (0.964–0.988)	0.022	<0.001
PPR6	<---	F1	0.947 (0.889–0.983)	0.975 (0.946–0.989)	0.018	<0.001
PPR7	<---	F1	0.963 (0.934–0.985)	0.982 (0.971–0.991)	0.017	<0.001
PPR8	<---	F1	1 (1-1)	0.981 (0.969–0.991)	...	...
PPR14	<---	F2	1.154 (1.033–1.310)	0.959 (0.922–0.985)	0.044	<0.001
PPR15	<---	F2	1.224 (1.105–1.389)	0.987 (0.970–1.002)	0.043	<0.001
PPR16	<---	F2	1 (1-1)	0.889 (0.832–0.932)	...	...

β_1 : Unstandardized Beta coefficient; β_2 : Standardized Beta coefficient; %95 CI: %95 Confidence interval

F1: Outcome regret sub-dimension and includes 8 items (items between PPR1 and PPR8), F2: Process regret sub-dimension and include 8 items (items between PPR9 and PPR16).

CFA results for the post-purchase regret scale are presented in Table 5. In the multivariate normality test, it was determined that the critical value was not among the appropriate values. Since the assumption of multiple normality was not met, Bootstrap ML was used as the calculation method. The standardized path coefficients of the items in all factors were significant ($p < 0.05$). The highest standardized beta coefficient of 0.982 was obtained in Factor 1, item 7. The lowest standardized beta coefficient of 0.889 was obtained in Factor 2, item 8. First-level confirmatory factor analysis was performed with a total of 11 items, and the fit values were

CMIN/DF (187,326/39) = 4.803; GFI = 0.884; IFI = 0.976; CFI = 0.975; TLI = 0.965; RMSEA = 0.124; and SRMR = 0.019. PPR9-PPR10-PPR11-PPR12 items were removed from the scale because they had negative coefficients in CFA. The PPR13 item was removed from the scale because it did not belong to a sub dimensional. As a result of CFA, the scale consists of 2 sub-dimensions and 11 items.

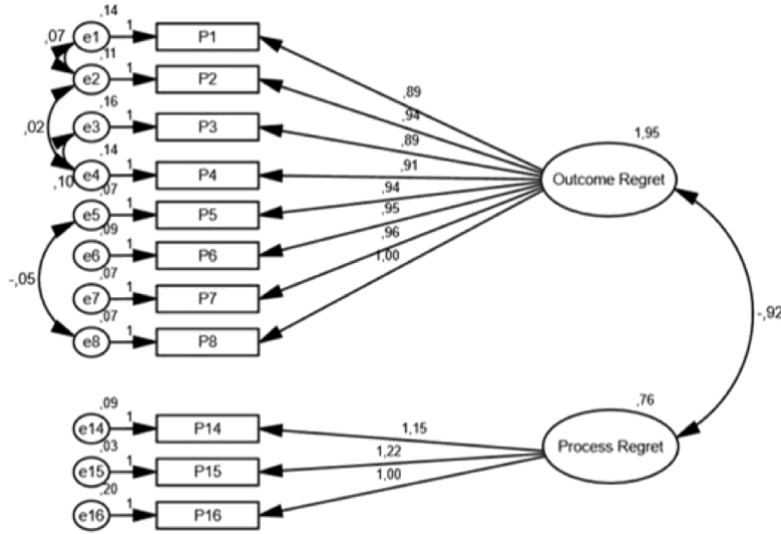


Figure 6. Unstandardized Path Coefficients of CFA Results of Post-Purchase Regret Scale

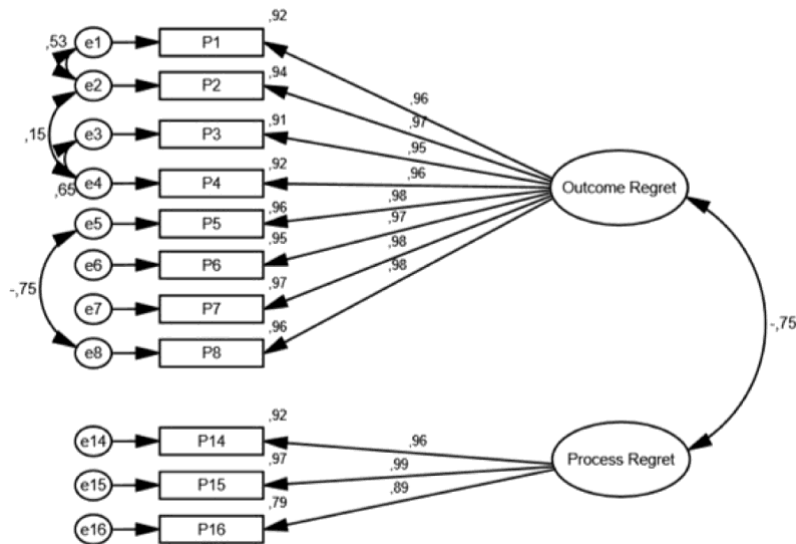


Figure 7. Standardized Path Coefficients of CFA Results of Post-Purchase Regret Scale

Table 6. CFA Results of the Emotional Arousal Scale

Item		Factor	β1 (%95 CI)	β2 (%95 CI)	Standard Error	p
EA1	<---	F1	0.816 (0.743-0.880)	0.945 (0.909-0.971)	0.027	<0.001
EA2	<---	F1	0.792 (0.712-0.864)	0.923 (0.879-0.954)	0.029	<0.001
EA3	<---	F1	0.664 (0.580-0.752)	0.900 (0.850-0.940)	0.026	<0.001
EA4	<---	F1	0.989 (0.912-1.050)	0.921 (0.880-0.952)	0.025	<0.001
EA5	<---	F1	0.677 (0.596-0.752)	0.913 (0.871-0.943)	0.025	<0.001
EA6	<---	F1	1 (1-1)	0.942 (0.910-0.968)	...	...

$\beta 1$: Unstandardized Beta coefficient; $\beta 2$: Standardized Beta coefficient; %95 CI: %95 Confidence interval

CFA results for the emotional arousal scale are presented in Table 6. In the multivariate normality test, it was determined that the critical value was not among the appropriate values. Since the assumption of multiple normality was not met, Bootstrap ML was used as the calculation method. The standardized path coefficients of the items in all factors were significant ($p < 0.05$). The highest standardized beta coefficient of 0.945 was obtained in Factor 1, item 1. The lowest standardized beta coefficient of 0.900 was obtained in Factor 1, item 3.

The first-level confirmatory factor analysis was performed with a total of 6 items, and when the fit values were examined, CMIN/DF (9,953/7) = 1.422; GFI = 0.987; IFI = 0.999; CFI = 0.999; TLI = 0.997; RMSEA = 0.041; and SRMR = 0.005 were obtained.

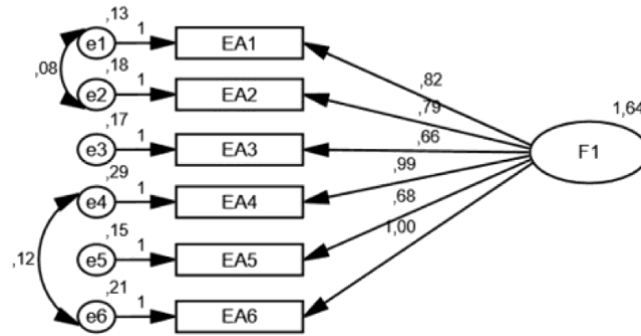


Figure 8. Unstandardized Path Coefficients of CFA Results of Emotional Arousal Scale

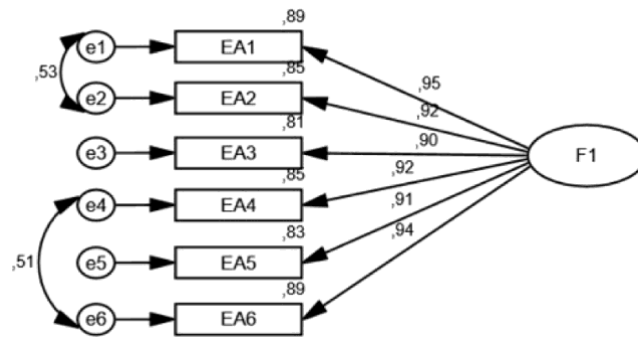


Figure 9. Standardized Path Coefficients of CFA Results of Emotional Arousal Scale

RMSEA values above 0.10 for some scales indicate that the model does not fit perfectly. However, it is known that RMSEA is particularly affected by sample size, model complexity, and item numbers. The fact that other fit indices in the study are at acceptable levels (CFI, TLI > 0.90; SRMR < 0.08) supports the adequacy of the model's overall fit (Hu and Bentler, 1999; Hooper et al., 2008). Therefore, the RMSEA values in question were not considered a problem that would undermine the model's validity.

4.3. Descriptive Statistics and Reliability Analysis

Table 7. Descriptive Statistics and Cronbach's Alpha Values of the Scales

	Mean \pm Standard Deviation	Median (Min.-Max.)	Cronbach's Alpha
Social Media Advertisements	4.48 \pm 0.74	5 (1.29-5)	0.961
Impulsive Buying	4.14 \pm 1.24	5 (1-5)	0.983
Outcome Regret	4.07 \pm 1.31	5 (1-5)	0.992
Process Regret	1.76 \pm 1	1 (1-5)	0.961
Emotional Arousal	4.24 \pm 1.08	5 (1-5)	0.970

As presented in Table 7, Cronbach's Alpha was used as the measurement of reliability. The mean score of the social media advertisements scale is 4.48, the median score is 5, and the Cronbach's Alpha value is 0.961, and the scale is found to be highly reliable. The mean score of the impulsive buying scale is 4.14, the median score is 5, and the Cronbach's Alpha value is 0.983. The mean score of the outcome regret sub-dimension was 4.07, the median score was 5, and the Cronbach's Alpha value was 0.992. In the process regret sub-dimension, the mean score was 1.76, the median score was 1, and the Cronbach's Alpha value was 0.961. The mean score of the emotional arousal scale is 4.24, the median score is 5, and the Cronbach's Alpha value is 0.970. Cronbach's Alpha values of all variables are above 0.90, indicating that the scales are highly reliable (Nakip, 2006).

4.4. Research Model Testing

Table 8. Research Model Results

Depent Variable		Independent Variable	β_1 (%95 CI)	β_2 (%95 CI)	Standard Error	Test Statistic	p	R ²
Emotional arousal	<---	Social media advertsiments	1.242 (1.051–1.415)	0.855 (0.801–0.896)	0.048	26.023	<0.001	0.731
Impulsive buying	<---	Social media advertsiments	0.662 (0.424–0.970)	0.395 (0.266–0.548)	0.077	8.580	<0.001	0.840
Impulsive buying	<---	Emotional arousal	0.639 (0.452–0.805)	0.555 (0.385–0.690)	0.053	12.003	<0.001	
Outcome regret	<---	Impulsive buying	1.022 (0.954–1.093)	0.965 (0.929–0.995)	0.029	34.785	<0.001	0.505
Process regret	<---	Impulsive buying	-0.640 (-0.750- -0.538)	-0.791 (-0.857- -0.716)	0.039	-16.259	<0.001	0.839

β_1 : Unstandardized Beta coefficient; β_2 : Standardized Beta coefficient; %95 CI: %95 Confidence interval

Table 9. Indirect Effect

Indirect Effect			
	β_1 (%95 CI)	β_2	p
Social media advertisements --> Emotional arousal --> Impulsive buying	0.794 (0.584-1)	0.474	<0.001
Social media advertisements --> Emotional arousal --> Impulsive buying --> Outcome regret	0.811 (0.598–1.026)	0.474	<0.001
Social media advertisements --> Emotional arousal --> Impulsive buying --> Process regret	-0.508 (-0.632- -0.390)	0.474	<0.001

β_1 : Unstandardized Beta coefficient; β_2 : Standardized Beta coefficient; %95 CI: %95 Confidence interval

Table 8 and Table 9 show the structural results of the proposed model with path coefficients for significant relationships. The impact of social media advertisements on emotional arousal was found to be statistically significant. A one-unit increase in social media advertisements increases emotional arousal by 1.242 units ($p < 0.001$). Therefore, **H₃**: “Social media advertisements have an impact on emotional arousal,” is supported. The visual effects, colors, music, and personalized content used in advertisements in the social media environment activate emotions such as excitement, curiosity, and desire in individuals and put the decision-making process on an emotional basis by overriding cognitive processes. The impact of social media advertisements on impulsive buying was found to be statistically significant. A one-unit increase in social media advertisements increases impulsive buying by 0.662 units ($p < 0.001$). Therefore, **H₁**: “Social media advertisements have an impact on impulsive buying,” is supported. Advertisements with visually striking, personalized, and emotional content cause instant reactions by disabling planned thinking. Unlike traditional advertisements, social media encourages individuals to make decisions in a direct, interactive environment. The impact of emotional arousal on impulsive buying was found to be statistically significant. A one-unit increase in emotional arousal increases impulsive buying by 0.639 units ($p < 0.001$). Therefore, hypothesis **H₄**: “Emotional arousal has an impact on impulsive buying” is supported. Emotional arousal triggers purchase decisions that are devoid of planning, made in a short time, and independent of need. The fact that social media advertisements manipulate an individual's emotional state and direct purchase behavior clearly reveals how effective the psychological dimension of marketing is. Thus, emotional arousal becomes a critical psychological mediator of the effect of social media advertisements on impulsive buying. The impact of impulsive buying on outcome regret is statistically significant. A one-unit increase in impulsive buying increases outcome regret by 1.022 units ($p < 0.001$). Therefore, hypothesis **H_{2a}**: “Impulsive buying has an impact on outcome regret,” is supported. This situation reveals that the level of dissatisfaction experienced by the individual after obtaining the product is largely due to impulsive decision-making tendencies. Purchases made without adequate evaluation of the

product's functionality, quality, or conformity to expectations cause the individual to think, "I wish I had not bought it," afterwards. Since regret is a dimension directly related to experience, it is understood that impulsive decisions trigger this outcome more intensely. The impact of impulsive buying on process regret is statistically significant. A one-unit increase in impulsive buying decreases process regret by 0.640 units ($p < 0.001$). Therefore, **H_{2b}**: "Impulsive buying has an impact on process regret," is supported. This result suggests that individuals do not find the shopping process problematic, but rather the outcome of the shopping process. In the purchase process, individuals do not question how the decision was made much because they act under the influence of the advertisement and therefore regret about the process is experienced less. Factors such as how fast the decision is made or whether the advertisement is persuasive or not are secondary for the individual. What is important is whether the product meets the expectations, and therefore the outcome rather than the process is subjected to more intense emotional evaluation. The mediating effect of emotional arousal on the impact of social media advertisements on impulsive buying was found to be statistically significant, and its indirect effect was 0.474 ($p < 0.001$). Therefore, **H₃**: "Emotional arousal mediates the relationship between social media advertisements and impulsive buying" is supported. Advertisements direct purchase behavior by appealing to individuals' emotions rather than their rational decision-making process. Emotional arousal acts as a key psychological mechanism in this process. Individuals' exposure to high levels of emotional stimulation in the social media environment interrupts their logical evaluation processes and causes them to make unplanned, instantaneous decisions.

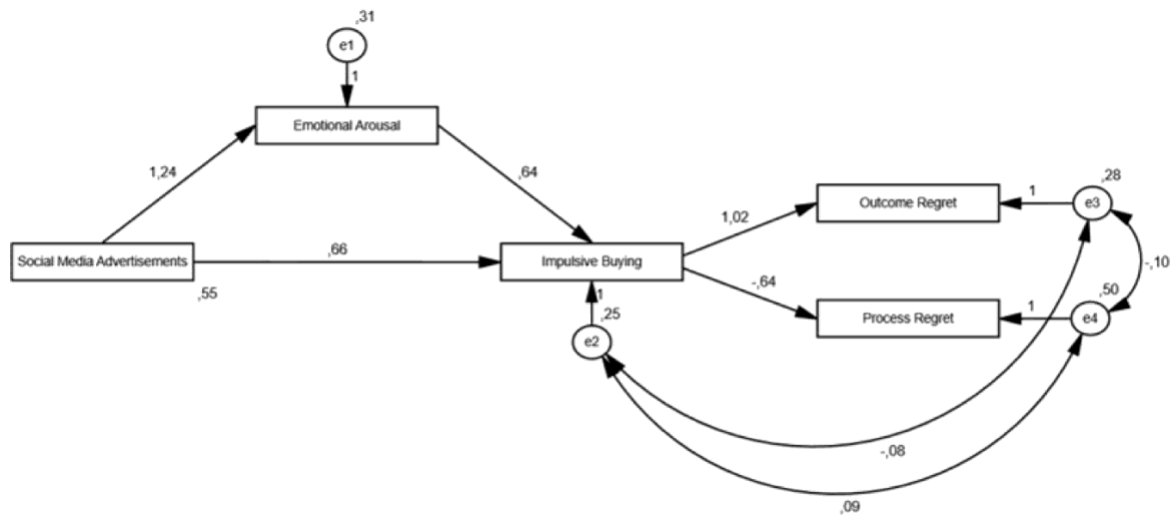


Figure 10. Unstandardized Path Coefficients of the Model

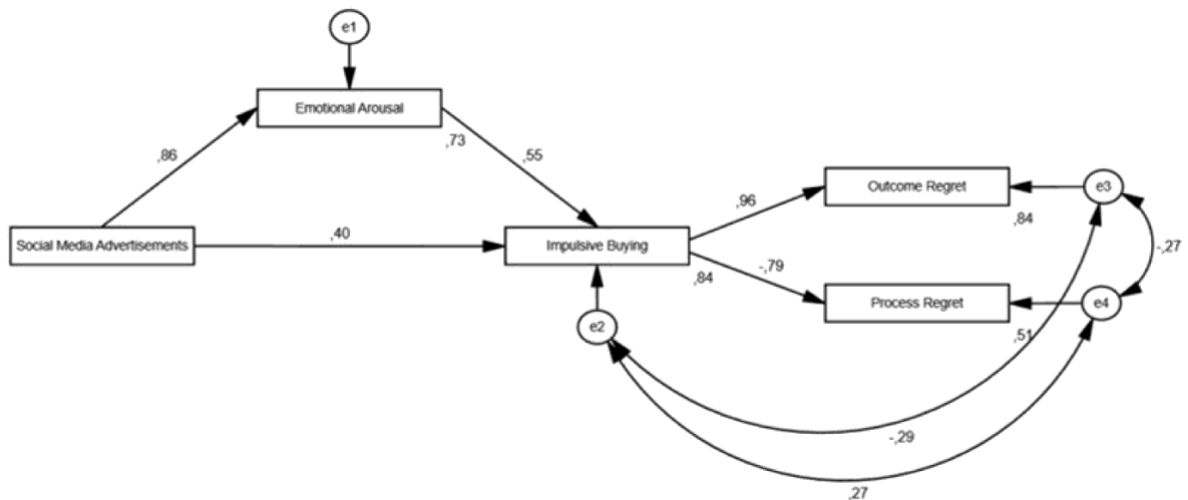


Figure 11. Standardized Path Coefficients of the Model

5. Conclusion and Discussion

In today's digital communication environments, individuals' consumption practices are shaped not only by individual needs and rational preferences. Marketing activities conducted through social media have an important place among the external factors that guide individuals' consumption behaviors. Businesses intensively advertise to people through social media platforms. Both visual and emotional stimulation caused by the impact of social media advertisements pull consumer decisions to an instinctive level and increase impulsive buying. Consumers may sometimes experience a sense of regret after an impulsive purchase decision. Moreover, the role of emotional arousal in this buying process has not yet been fully clarified. Therefore, the aim of the research is to examine the impact of social media advertisements on impulsive buying and subsequent regret in terms of the mediating role of emotional arousal. In this context, firstly, the impact of social media advertisements on impulsive buying was examined. Then, the impact of impulsive buying on post-purchase regret, together with the sub-dimensions of outcome regret and process regret, was examined. Then, the impact of social media advertisements on emotional arousal and the impact of emotional arousal on impulsive buying were investigated. Finally, the mediating role of emotional arousal in the relationship between social media advertisements and impulsive buying is examined. The research makes a unique contribution to the literature in terms of providing a holistic framework in which the concepts of social media advertisements, emotional arousal, impulsive buying, and post-purchase regret (with the sub-dimensions of outcome and process regret) are discussed together. In particular, it fills a gap in previous research by revealing the mediating role of emotional arousal in detail. Thus, a new perspective is brought to the social media-oriented marketing communication literature.

A quantitative research method was used in the research. Since the research seeks to explain the relationships between variables and the reasons for these relationships, it has both a relationship-seeking and causal comparison research design. The data used in the research were obtained through a survey method, and a questionnaire form was used as a data collection tool. The questionnaire form was applied to the participants online, and 250 valid questionnaires were taken into consideration in the analysis. The survey responses of the participants were analyzed through SPSS v23 and AMOS v24 statistical package programs. Descriptive statistics, CFA, reliability analysis, and structural equation modeling were used in the data analysis.

Most of the participants are male. When the ages of the participants are analyzed, it is seen that the age range of 42 and 49 is the majority. Participants are generally bachelor's degree and public servant. It is seen that most of the participants are married and have an income of 30.000 TL and below. In addition, most of the participants use Instagram and WhatsApp as social media platforms. Cronbach's Alpha values of the variables analyzed within the scope of the research are above 0.90, which indicates that the scales are highly reliable.

The transformative impact of social media platforms on consumer behavior is clearly observed in the findings of this research. The impact of social media advertisements on impulsive buying was examined, and it was found that this impact is significant and positive. The hypothesis **H₁: "Social media advertisements have an impact on impulsive buying"** is accepted. Similar results were found in the studies in the literature (Sharma et al., 2018; Yaprak and Çoban, 2023; Yadav et al., 2024). This result shows that social media advertisements direct consumers to unplanned and impulsive buying behavior through their remarkable content, dynamic structures that adopt fast consumption culture, and personalized messages.

The impact of impulsive buying on post-purchase regret (with the sub-dimensions of outcome regret and process regret) was examined, and this was found to be significant. **H₂: "Impulsive buying has an impact on post-purchase regret,"** **H_{2a}: "Impulsive buying has an impact on outcome regret,"** and **H_{2b}: "Impulsive buying has an impact on process regret"** hypotheses are accepted. This finding aligns with the existing literature (Beyaz, 2022; Ayu and Aziz, 2024; Sarwar et al., 2024; Putri and Astuti, 2025). The feeling of regret that emerges after impulsive buying is one of the remarkable outcomes of the research. According to the direct effect model created within the scope of structural equation modeling, it is observed that if impulsive buying is high, outcome regret increases significantly. This finding shows that sudden and unplanned decisions are insufficient to create satisfaction, impulsive purchases often create unrealistically high expectations and do not meet the actual need, and short-term pleasure-seeking turns into long-term discomfort.

According to the direct effect model created within the scope of structural equation modeling, it has been observed that process regret decreases significantly when impulsive buying is high. This finding shows that

consumers do not need to evaluate the process in detail because quick, intuitive, and emotional responses become dominant at the moment of impulsive buying. Intense emotional arousal at the moment of decision, the pursuit of hedonistic pleasure, and the motivation for instant gratification weaken the cognitive mechanisms that question the process, leading consumers to internally accept their own decisions. This naturally suppresses process regret. Furthermore, it is emphasized that the positive emotions felt at the moment of decision send the consumer a signal that they have made the “right decision,” and therefore evaluations of the product's performance become more dominant than the process. In short, outcome regret is experienced much more intensely than process regret and significantly affects consumers' levels of dissatisfaction. This situation shows that when expectations are not met, consumers feel dissatisfied not with the decision process but with the outcome they achieved, and that counterfactual thinking is generally outcome-focused, such as “If I had chosen another product, the outcome would have been different.” Therefore, even though consumers go through the purchasing process quickly, they tend to question the outcome rather than the process.

The impact of social media advertisements on emotional arousal was analyzed, and it was found that this impact was significant and positive. Hypothesis **H₃**: “*Social media advertisements have an impact on emotional arousal*” is accepted. This finding aligns with the existing literature (Storbeck and Clore, 2008; Son et al., 2022; Sağman & Becan, 2024). It is seen that the content, visual design, and interaction-oriented strategies of social media advertisements create a high level of emotional arousal in consumers. This arousal suppresses consumers' rational decision-making mechanisms and leads to sudden and impulsive purchases. In addition, elements such as intense emotional messages, attention-grabbing colors, influencer recommendations, and user comments used in advertisements also provide psychological stimulation for consumers.

The impact of emotional arousal on impulsive buying was investigated, and it was found that this impact was significant and positive. The hypothesis **H₄**: “*Emotional arousal has an impact on impulsive buying*” is accepted. This finding aligns with the existing literature (Herabadi et al., 2009; Szymkowiak et al., 2020; Hanifah et al, 2024). It has been observed that as the level of emotional arousal increases, consumers' control mechanisms weaken, and they tend to engage in faster and more impulsive purchasing behaviors; that is, they make impulsive purchases. This explains the tendency of aroused individuals to seek short-term rewards and to engage in risky or unplanned expenditures.

Structural equation modeling results confirm that emotional arousal plays a mediating role in the relationship between social media advertisements and impulsive buying. The analyses revealed that the indirect effect of social media advertisements on impulsive buying is realized through emotional arousal, and this impact is statistically significant. Hypothesis **H₅**: “*Emotional arousal mediates the relationship between social media advertisements and impulsive buying*” is accepted. This finding suggests that emotional processes play a critical role in shaping consumer behavior and that social media advertisements not only convey information but also mobilize consumers through emotional interaction. Emotional stimuli influence consumers' decisions not only through conscious attention but also through unconscious processes. This shows that the relationship that individuals establish with the content presented on social media is active and interactive. This emotional guidance is also directly related to the technical structure of social media platforms. Repeated visual messages, content optimized by algorithms according to the individual's interests, music, color usage, message tone, and interactive advertising structures directly affect consumers' decision processes and increase their purchasing tendencies. Therefore, social media platforms function not only as a marketing medium but also as an emotional architecture that systematically directs the attention of the individual. The mediating role of emotional arousal in the research statistically confirms the unconscious effects of this structure. Personal recommendations, user comments, and visual designs used as advertising elements play an important role in the emotional mobilization of individuals. The effect of these elements on consumer psychology is not only related to the product but also to the emotional associations offered by the advertisement. Consumers react to what the advertisement makes them feel before the functionality of the product. This bond created through emotions increases the speed of decision-making but weakens the evaluation process. For this reason, traditional information-processing models are insufficient to explain consumption processes; new frameworks based on emotional and social interaction are required instead.

6. Limitations and Future Work

While this study provided valuable insights for research and practice, its limitations offer opportunities for future exploration. While this research primarily focused on social media advertisements, impulsive buying, and post-purchase regret, the inclusion of the emotional arousal variable in the research model could further enhance the effectiveness of social media advertisements. This not only increases the effectiveness of digital marketing practices but also plays a significant role in reducing consumer regret, leading to greater consumer satisfaction and ultimately, the development of digital marketing practices. Since the research was conducted only in Erzincan province, it is extremely difficult to generalize the findings obtained in the research to the whole of Turkey. As a matter of fact, different results may emerge in other cities and other demographic characteristics. Therefore, it may be recommended to conduct similar studies in different cities to make a generalization on the subject. To understand consumers' emotional arousal processes and regret experiences more comprehensively, it may be recommended to use a qualitative data collection method. To determine which platform advertising strategies are more effective, it may be recommended to analyze different social media platforms separately and make platform-based comparisons. In addition, how emotional arousal changes in the context of different types of advertisements (e.g., humorous, scare-themed, social responsibility-oriented) and the effects of such advertisements on impulsive buying and subsequent regret can also be evaluated under separate headings.

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