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Advertising, Hedonic Consumption, and Cognitive Dissonance: Mediating influence of Impulse Buying Behavior towards Apparel Consumers

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the impact of advertising and consumers' hedonic consumption tendencies on pre-purchase cognitive dissonance, with impulse buying as a mediating factor. A descriptive and explanatory research design was employed, and 384 apparel shoppers from retail outlets were purposively selected as the participants. The analysis was conducted using PLS-SEM. The findings indicate that advertising significantly influences impulse buying, and hedonic consumption tendencies also have a notable effect on impulse buying. Additionally, impulse buying was found to have a significant impact on cognitive dissonance. However, impulse buying did not mediate the relationship between advertising and cognitive dissonance, whereas hedonic consumption tendencies exhibited partial mediation. These findings offer valuable insights for marketers and apparel brands, enabling them to make informed strategic decisions regarding advertising campaigns, celebrity endorsements, social media engagement, and product positioning by understanding how advertising and hedonic consumption shape consumer behavior.

1. Introduction

In recent years, the global apparel market has experienced substantial growth, primarily driven by rising living standards and increased consumer spending on clothing. As income levels stabilize in many regions, individuals are focusing more on enhancing their lifestyles, including their fashion choices. The global apparel market is expected to continue its upward trajectory, with a projected revenue increase of approximately 0.2 trillion U.S. dollars (a 10.87% rise) from 2025 to 2029, reaching a record high of 2.04 trillion U.S. dollars by 2029 [79]. This growth highlights the increasing importance of understanding consumer behavior, particularly in an industry as competitive as apparel.

Marketers must recognize and respond to the evolving demands of consumers in today's fast-paced market [6]. Advertising is a key factor driving purchasing decisions in the apparel sector, influencing consumers by evoking emotional triggers, psychosocial motivations, and impulsive

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tendencies [53]. Advertising is a powerful stimulus that persuades consumers to make purchases by targeting their psychological triggers [53].

Additionally, hedonic consumption, defined as the pursuit of pleasure and enjoyment through consumption [4,38], plays a crucial role in shaping consumer behaviors. Hedonic consumers seek experiences that provide emotional fulfillment and relaxation, and these motivations are often linked to impulse-buying behavior [36]. Impulse buying, characterized by spontaneous, unplanned purchases, is often driven by emotions and the desire to relieve tension or anxiety [64]. Research has shown that impulse purchases are associated with higher levels of cognitive dissonance than planned purchases [92].

Although previous studies have explored the individual effects of advertising, hedonic consumption, impulse buying, and cognitive dissonance on consumer behavior, the interaction between these factors in the context of apparel marketing remains underexplored, particularly in emerging markets such as Nepal. While extensive research has demonstrated the role of advertising in shaping consumer emotions [53] and the relationship between hedonic consumption and impulse buying [36], little attention has been paid to how these factors jointly influence pre-purchase cognitive dissonance. Moreover, the mediating role of impulse buying in this process has not been comprehensively examined, particularly in the context of the Nepalese apparel market.

Cognitive dissonance, a psychological discomfort that arises when individuals hold conflicting beliefs or attitudes [58], can intensify when consumers make impulse purchases. Festinger [25] emphasized that individuals strive for internal consistency and seek to resolve discomfort when contradictions arise in their thoughts or behaviors [5]. This tension often emerges when consumers experience conflicting emotions or beliefs, particularly when new information challenges their existing perceptions [62].

As the apparel industry becomes increasingly competitive, understanding the complex interplay between advertising, hedonic consumption, impulse buying, and cognitive dissonance is crucial for marketers to influence consumer behavior effectively. This study aims to fill this gap by investigating how advertising and hedonic consumption tendencies influence pre-purchase cognitive dissonance, with impulse buying as a mediating factor. Specifically, this study contributes to the existing knowledge by focusing on the apparel sector in Nepal, a rapidly developing market where consumer behavior may differ from more established markets. By understanding the complex interplay between these factors, this study provides valuable insights for marketers looking to design more effective advertising strategies in competitive industries such as apparel.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Theory Supporting

Cognitive dissonance theory: Dissonance is a theory, situational trigger, and state [25]. Dissonance theory involves conflicting thoughts and actions resulting from logical contradictions, different actions, or strong expectations. It affects attitude change and consumer beliefs, thereby impacting marketing success. Reducing dissonance helps marketers build brand recognition, attract new customers, and ensure successful marketing strategies.

Hedonic consumption perspective: Holbrook and Hirschman [39] suggest that hedonic consumption plays a central role in consumer behavior research. Their perspective emphasizes the significance of motivation, product symbolism, and individual differences in shaping consumer experience. Hedonic psychology encompasses product-related experiences and reactions, in which emotional and cognitive responses differ across cultures.

Hierarchy of Effects Theory: Advertising influences consumer purchases and non-purchases based on the hierarchy of effects theory. Businesses should create ads that encourage customers to buy [66], following the six steps of awareness, knowledge, liking, preference, conviction, and purchase, which are influenced by cognitive and affective processes [55].

Hawkins Stern Impulse Buying Theory: In this theory, Stern [92] suggests that impulsive judgments are influenced by external stimuli and not based on established decision-making patterns. It identifies four levels of impulse buying: unadulterated, reminder, suggestion, and planning.

2.2 Concepts

Advertisement: Advertising plays a crucial role in driving consumer purchases, leveraging its wide reach and lasting impact as a key marketing tool [45]. It enhances product awareness and shapes consumer perceptions by defining products and addressing customer needs. Additionally, advertising educates consumers about products, services, attitudes and purchasing behaviors [9]. In today's marketplace, advertising is indispensable, with consumers exposed to countless ads daily as the mediums continue to expand [54]. For businesses, advertising is essential for selling products and raising brand awareness, with media becoming a central means of connecting with customers.

Advertising also influences societal norms at both the global and national levels. Depending on the approach, it can have either a positive or negative impact on consumers. For instance, Pal [63] examined how AI-driven personalization, targeted advertising, and one-click purchases amplify impulse buying by triggering emotional responses and offering immediate gratification. The study raised ethical concerns regarding privacy, manipulation, and financial exploitation, while suggesting strategies such as budgeting and digital financial literacy to help mitigate impulsive buying behavior.

Hedonic consumption tendency: Product consumption is often driven by a balance of practicality and passion, with consumers evaluating the functionality, usefulness, and performance of a product. In contrast, hedonic consumption focuses on pleasure, reflecting more abstract and sometimes irrational consumer behaviors. This type of consumption is influenced by sensory, emotional, and imaginative factors that shape the overall consumer experience [39]. Hedonic products are often valued for their ability to evoke beauty, joy, creativity, and entertainment, with mental perceptions playing a significant role in their attractiveness. According to Alba and Williams [4], hedonic consumption is the extent to which a product contributes to an individual's happiness. Wang *et al.*, [86] examined how power dynamics influence impulsive buying behavior, particularly in the context of hedonic products. Their study differentiated between the purchasing behaviors of powerful and powerless individuals. Furthermore, the consumption of hedonic products often involves social interactions, such as engaging with salespeople or participating in discussions during social activities such as travel. In the context of food, hedonic consumption is primarily driven by emotions, with pleasure and experience taking precedence over practicality.

Impulsive buying: Impulsive purchases are hedonistically complicated, urgent, and abrupt when speed hinders decision-making and prevents logical appraisal of alternatives and facts [48]. Impulsive buying involves both affective and cognitive processes [20]. Impulsive purchases are made because of the need for instant ownership [42]. Ghani and Jan [28] mentioned that impulsive purchases are sudden, unexpected shop purchases. Impulsive buying is mostly driven by in-store browsing and pleasant sentiments [17].

Cognitive dissonance occurs when an individual's knowledge conflicts with their values, beliefs, or aspirations [25]. It is a discomforting psychological state that has been widely examined in management and marketing research [82]. Post-purchase dissonance affects consumer behaviors, such as brand loyalty, attitude change, service quality perceptions, and responses to advertising.

Koller and Salzberger [52] noted that cognitive dissonance can arise both before and after a purchase, with consumers experiencing it when choosing between online and in-store shopping options.

In a recent study, Seran *et al.*, [76] explored the dual role of generative AI in intensifying cognitive dissonance among students in an academic context. This research highlighted the psychological conflict students face when balancing the efficiency of AI-assisted writing with academic values such as originality, intellectual ownership, and personal effort. Their findings introduced the concept of GenAI-induced cognitive dissonance, rooted in ethical dilemmas, concerns regarding academic integrity, and perceived threats to self-efficacy. Furthermore, Gill and Meenakshi [29] examined how cognitive dissonance influences relationship dynamics among teenagers and adults in India. Their study revealed that dissonance contributes to relational strain, affecting self-awareness and commitment, particularly in emotionally charged situations. However, the impact of cognitive dissonance on relationships is shaped by factors such as emotional maturity and social pressure, making it one of several factors influencing relationship dynamics.

2.3 Relationship between Advertisement, Hedonic Consumption, Impulse Buying, and Cognitive Dissonance

Advertising plays a pivotal role in shaping emotions, consumer psychology, motivation, attitudes, and behavior. This can lead consumers to favor a product or idea, potentially inducing cognitive dissonance. However, the effects of advertising on consumer behavior, intentions, and attitudes can vary. The main goal of advertising is to convince consumers that choosing a particular product over alternatives will lead to success. It can also enhance consumer satisfaction by inducing cognitive dissonance. A consumer's cognitive state and purchasing behavior are influenced by their prior exposure to an advertisement at the time it is presented [46], irrespective of the advertisement's source. Marketing interactions provoke diverse responses, each rooted in different psychological components. The cognitive aspect involves intellectual and rational processing, whereas the affective component concerns emotions and feelings. The behavioral component reflects how attitudes are translated into action [55]. Cognitive dissonance can arise before a purchase, particularly when consumers choose one product over competing alternatives [52].

In a recent study, Feng and Kim [24] explored how cognitive dissonance and persuasion knowledge contribute to negative reactions toward "woke" advertising. The study found that when consumers perceive socially conscious advertisements as insincere or manipulative, they experience psychological discomfort, resulting in adverse reactions. Cognitive dissonance occurs when personal beliefs conflict with a brand's message, and higher persuasion knowledge intensifies this effect by making consumers more skeptical of advertisers' intentions.

Abdullah and AL-Kanaani [2] studied the influence of enlightened marketing on cognitive dissonance among consumers in the tourism sector in Baghdad. Their findings revealed a significant inverse relationship, highlighting the role of customer-oriented marketing in reducing post-purchase psychological discomfort among consumers.

Advertising utilizes persuasive strategies to influence consumer decisions by introducing inconsistencies that contribute to cognitive dissonance (CD). Individuals often experience this discomfort unconsciously as they navigate conflicting thoughts and behaviors. From this perspective, the hypothesis suggests that consumers adjust their attitudes and behaviors to resolve inconsistencies.

H1: Advertisement influences cognitive dissonance

Advertisement and impulse buying: Advertising encompasses both social and emotional dimensions [32]. By appealing to consumers' emotions, advertisements trigger psychosocial motivations and impulsive tendencies, playing a key role in increasing product awareness and influencing purchasing decisions. Sharifi *et al.*, [77] demonstrated that the affective and cognitive aspects of advertising affect both hedonic and utilitarian browsing, intensifying the likelihood of impulsive and compulsive buying. Their findings also highlight that consumer anxiety is a significant factor contributing to compulsive buying behavior, which in turn influences impulsive purchasing tendencies.

Chen [15] explored impulse buying behavior in both physical stores and online environments, while Saraswat and Prakash [74] discovered that in-store print media advertising has a stronger influence on triggering impulse purchases compared to online advertising. Similarly, Aragoncillo and Orus [7] found that offline advertising has a slightly greater impact on encouraging impulse buying in the fashion industry. Several studies have emphasized how advertising affects consumer interest and information processing [56]. Zhang and Mao [90] suggested that a consumer's initial impression of a product influences their subsequent behavior. Additionally, Dodox and Wu [23] found that advertisements perceived as valuable and useful can foster impulsive purchases, with engaging ads having the potential to boost impulse-buying behavior.

Juanim *et al.*, [41] examined the mediating role of hedonic motives in the relationship between advertising stimuli and impulse buying behavior among online shoppers in West Java, Indonesia. Their study revealed that advertising stimulates impulse buying by activating emotional and hedonic motivation. Moreover, demographic factors, such as gender and age, were found to moderate this relationship, highlighting the importance of tailoring advertising strategies to different consumer groups. These findings offer practical insights for e-commerce platforms seeking to enhance impulse purchases through emotionally driven and demographically targeted advertisements.

H2: Advertisement influences impulse buying

Hedonic consumption tendency and cognitive dissonance: Research has extensively explored hedonic consumption tendencies, particularly in the context of stress-relieving activities such as shopping. Marketers must consider consumers' cognitive dissonance, both before and after a purchase, as it is shaped by their attitudes, values, perceptions, and tendencies. The action-based theory of dissonance suggests that individuals seek to resolve conflicting beliefs by reducing negative emotions and achieving internal consistency [33]. Hedonic consumers are likely to experience lower levels of cognitive dissonance than utilitarian consumers because their purchasing decisions are often driven by pleasure rather than practicality.

Mahdi *et al.*, [57] found that hedonic consumption has a negative impact on cognitive dissonance, suggesting that hedonic consumers experience less psychological discomfort post-purchase. Similarly, Wasaya *et al.*, [87] reported that hedonic consumption tendencies are significant predictors of cognitive dissonance. Supporting these findings, Karadeniz [44] demonstrated that hedonic consumption tendencies notably reduce cognitive dissonance.

Mercy and Stanly [59] investigated the relationship between hedonic and impulsive buying behaviors and their influence on cognitive dissonance in the context of mobile shopping among digital consumers in Tenkasi, India. Their study revealed that both hedonic and impulse buying, often driven by materialistic tendencies and facilitated by seamless digital payment systems, significantly predicted post-purchase cognitive dissonance.

H3: Hedonic consumption tendency influences cognitive dissonance

The consumption of goods and services often involves multisensory experiences that shape consumer behaviors. Product quality and aesthetics influence how individuals engage with products on emotional, imaginative and sensory levels [47]. Hirschman and Holbrook [37] define hedonic shopping as the emotional and imaginative experience evoked by a purchase. Arnold and Reynolds [8] note that hedonic shoppers are motivated by a variety of factors to fulfill their expectations.

Impulse buying plays a significant role in hedonic consumption by satisfying consumers' emotional needs [34,65]. Emotional and hedonic factors strongly influence impulsive purchasing behaviors, particularly in the fashion industry. New designs often trigger impulse buying, allowing consumers to express themselves and enhance their hedonic shopping experience [70]. Tarka *et al.*, [81] found that hedonism significantly contributes to compulsive buying through hedonistic shopping experiences, with stronger effects observed among younger consumers, especially women.

Thompson *et al.*, [83] suggested that shopping offers emotional relief through social interaction, while Cobb and Hoyer [18] highlighted its energizing effects on consumers. Yasa and Sari [75] explored how fashion involvement influences impulse buying, with hedonic consumption tendencies acting as a mediating variable among Zara consumers in Kuta, Bali. Their study found that fashion involvement positively and significantly impacted both hedonic consumption tendencies and impulse buying, with hedonic consumption mediating the relationship between fashion involvement and impulsive purchases.

Bambang and Roz [10] examined the relationship between hedonic shopping motivation, website quality, and their combined influence on impulse buying behavior and customer satisfaction in Indonesia's online marketplace. Their study revealed that both hedonic motivation and website quality significantly drive impulse buying tendencies, underscoring the importance of creating emotionally engaging and user-friendly website experiences to stimulate unplanned purchases and improve overall consumer satisfaction in digital retail.

These findings highlight the central role of emotionally driven consumption in unplanned purchasing behavior, particularly in the fashion retail context, and suggest that hedonic motivations are key drivers of impulse-buying behavior.

H4: Hedonic consumption tendency influences impulse buying

Impulse buying and cognitive dissonance: Koirala and Chalise [51] investigated the influence of various factors, including product category, promotions, mood, price, reference group, and store layout, on post-purchase cognitive dissonance among consumers in Kathmandu Valley. Their findings revealed that while several components of the impulse buying value scale significantly influenced post-purchase behavior, factors such as cash availability and promotions had no significant impact on post-purchase dissatisfaction.

Chetioui and El Bouzidi [16] examined the relationship between online impulse buying and cognitive dissonance among Moroccan Gen Z apparel shoppers. Their study identified hedonic shopping motivation, fear of missing out (FOMO), and materialism as significant predictors of impulse buying behavior, which in turn heightened post-purchase cognitive dissonance.

Ahmed *et al.*, [3] explored the factors influencing impulsive purchasing behavior among Egyptian e-consumers, emphasizing the role of internal factors such as social media addiction and FOMO, along with external influences like promotional activities and online visual merchandising. Their study also highlighted the impact of impulsive online shopping on post-purchase cognitive dissonance.

Shoppers may experience cognitive dissonance both during and after purchases. Discrepancies between expected and actual product performance often lead to post-purchase regret and dissatisfaction among consumers. Higher levels of impulsivity are closely linked to increased cognitive

dissonance [27]. Rational consumers may attempt to justify their impulsive decisions to reduce cognitive dissonance. Research has shown that impulse purchases generate more cognitive dissonance than planned purchases, a claim that is supported by the consumer involvement literature [89].

Purchase involvement is crucial for understanding consumer behavior [11]. Cognitive involvement often correlates with uncertainty, leading customers to engage in product research based on personal reflections, external references, and media sources such as catalogs, consumer reports, and expert consultations [13]. Highly involved buyers tend to be more confident in their initial perceptions, believing that thorough information gathering reinforces their purchasing decisions [61,78]. According to Venkatraman [84], engaged consumers are better equipped to manage risks and are more likely to adhere to their preexisting beliefs, even when others perceive the purchase as risky.

Impulse purchases, driven by pleasure and arousal, contribute to cognitive dissonance, with individuals exhibiting higher impulsivity being more prone to post-purchase dissonance [80]. This study explored the relationship between impulsive buying behavior and cognitive dissonance.

H5: Impulse buying influences cognitive dissonance

Mediation effect of impulse buying: Mercy and Stanly [59] examined the impact of impulse and hedonic buying tendencies on mobile shopping behavior, identifying cognitive dissonance as a post-purchase outcome influenced by emotionally driven and spontaneous purchasing decisions. Yaprak and Çoban [88] emphasized the role of advertisements and hedonic tendencies in shaping cognitive dissonance, with impulse buying serving as a mediating factor in this relationship. Similarly, Ramadania *et al.*, [67] found that impulse buying driven by advertising mediates pre-purchase cognitive dissonance, which is also influenced by consumers' hedonic consumption tendencies.

Chauhan *et al.*, [14] and Haq and Abbasi [32] explored the intricate relationships among various consumer behavior variables, especially impulse buying. Chauhan *et al.*, [14] investigated the links between online advertisements, cognitive dissonance, impulse buying, and both utilitarian and hedonic shopping values. Their study found that cognitive dissonance is shaped by hedonic and utilitarian values as well as online advertising, with impulse buying as a mediator. Haq and Abbasi [32] examined impulse buying alongside factors such as positive emotions, hedonic consumption, and fashion orientation. They found that hedonic consumption and positive emotions significantly explained the relationship between fashion orientation and impulse buying, underscoring the emotional and experiential components of impulsive purchasing behavior.

Coley and Burgess [20] studied impulse buying and identified gender-based differences in emotional and cognitive impulsivity, with women exhibiting higher levels than men. This highlights the importance of cognitive functions, emotional responses, and hedonic values in driving impulse buying, which is crucial for marketers targeting diverse consumer groups in a dynamic marketplace.

H6: Impulse buying mediates the relationship of advertisement and cognitive dissonance

H7: Impulse buying mediates the relationship of hedonic consumption tendency and cognitive dissonance

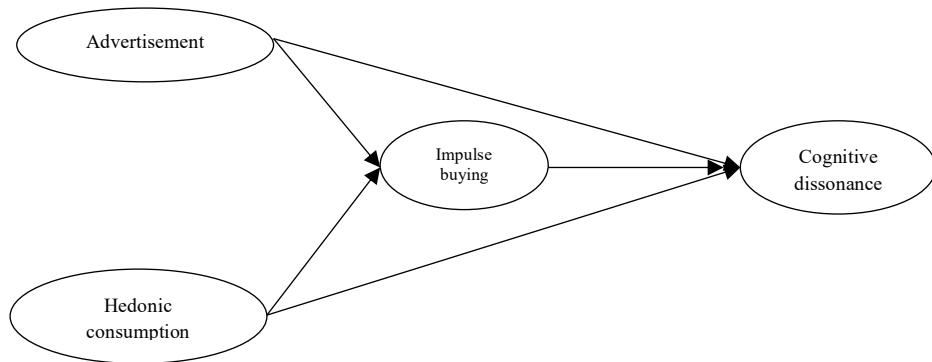


Fig. 1. Conceptual framework

3. Methodology

Design and sample: This study used a combination of descriptive and explanatory research designs. The descriptive design was applied to categorize, compare, measure, and summarize the data, while the explanatory design examined the relationship between advertising and hedonic consumption tendencies, and the mediating role of impulse buying in cognitive dissonance. This study focused on customers who buy fashion apparel from Nepalese brands, specifically in the Kathmandu Valley. A total of 425 customers were approached, and the first 384 who responded were included in this study. Table 1 presents the respondents' profiles. The sample size was determined based on the need to estimate a proportion with a 95% confidence level, resulting in a required sample of 384 as the total population was not known. Additionally, a minimum sample size of 74 was calculated using G*Power 3.1, with an effect size of 0.15, 95% confidence interval, 0.05 error margin, and three predictors. This study followed ethical guidelines, ensuring proper research conduct. Written informed consent was obtained from all participants before the data collection began.

Table 1
Demographic profile of respondents

Demographic Variable	Categories	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	176	45.8
	Female	208	54.2
Age Group	18-26 years	287	74.7
	27-35 years	89	23.2
	36-44 years	7	1.8
	45 years and above	1	0.3
Marital Status	Married	100	26
	Unmarried	284	74
Occupation	Student	244	63.5
	Employed	107	27.9
	Self- Employed	25	6.5
	Others	8	2.1
Academic Background	Intermediate and below	29	7.6
	Bachelor's Degree	187	48.7
	Master's Degree	168	43.8
	And Above		
Monthly Income	Below NRs 20000	213	55.5
	NRs 20001-30000	75	19.5
	NRs 30001-40000	44	11.5
	NRs 40001-50000	19	4.9
	NRs Above 50000	33	8.6

Instrumentation: Data for this study were collected using self-administered questionnaires. All variables were measured using previously validated instruments. The advertisement scale, consisting of five items, was adapted from Kanat *et al.*, [43] study. The impulse buying scale, also with five items, was adapted from Rook and Fisher (1995). Cognitive dissonance was measured using a five-item scale from Koller and Salzberger [52], and hedonic consumption tendency was assessed using a five-item scale from Verplanken and Herabadi [85]. In total, 20 items were used, all of which were measured on a five-point Likert scale. The response options ranged from 'Strongly Disagree' to 'Strongly Agree,' with '1' representing Strongly Disagree, '2' for disagree, '3' for neutral, '4' for agree, and '5' for Strongly Agree. The questionnaire also included an informed consent section, ensuring that participants provided written consent before participating in the study.

Data normality, outliers, and common method bias: Mardia's univariate and multivariate tests were used to assess normality. The results indicated that the data did not follow a normal distribution, as it failed these tests. Mardia's multivariate skewness and kurtosis confirmed non-normality, with skewness of 65.856 ($p = 0.001$) and kurtosis of 585.625 ($p = 0.001$). When Mardia's coefficient exceeds a critical ratio of 1.96, the data may be considered to be non-normally distributed. As the study was cross-sectional, participants were instructed not to share the survey. Following Kock [50], a full collinearity test was conducted using a common dummy variable (gender), and the variance inflation factor (VIF) was found to be less than 3.3, aligning with the threshold suggested by Diamantopoulos and Siguaw [21].

Data analysis technique: The study used descriptive and inferential analyses. To test the reliability and validity of the data, PLS-SEM was used with convergent and discriminant validity. Second, path analysis, R², f², and mediation analysis were applied to test the hypotheses. For hypothesis testing, bootstrapping with 10000 sub-sample the percentile bootstrap technique at 95% CI were applied. SmartPLS 4.0. SPSS 29v was used for the data analysis.

3. Results

3.1 Measurement Model Assessment

Convergent validity: The measurement model was evaluated before the structural model assessment to ensure its quality. The measurement model was first assessed for reliability and validity. Advertising, Hedonic consumption inclinations, impulse purchases, and cognitive dissonance all had exterior loadings of 0.70 or higher [31]. Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability (rho) were above 0.70 and below 0.95. Convergent validity is established when the AVE exceeds 0.50. Both constructs had outer VIF values below 3 [12], indicating the absence of collinearity. Table 2 displays the internal reliability and convergent validity.

Table 2
Construct reliability and validity

Construct	Items	Loading	CA	CR	AVE	VIF
Advertisement (Adv)	A1	0.771	0.823	0.825	0.585	1.621
	A2	0.771				1.673
	A3	0.779				1.658
	A4	0.714				1.476
	A5	0.788				1.801
Hedonic consumption tendency (Hed)	H1	0.804	0.81	0.816	0.568	1.859
	H2	0.708				1.546
	H3	0.773				1.592

	H4	0.715				1.449
	H5	0.764				1.562
Impulse buying (IB)	I1	0.723	0.779	0.781	0.53	1.424
	I2	0.713				1.494
	I3	0.7				1.417
	I4	0.778				1.671
	I5	0.725				1.369
Cognitive Dissonance (Cog)	C1	0.773	0.834	0.835	0.601	1.662
	C2	0.738				1.516
	C3	0.777				1.749
	C4	0.789				1.719
	C5	0.798				1.83

Discriminant validity: The discriminant validity of the study was evaluated using the Fornell and Larcker criteria, the Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio, and cross-loadings, as presented in Tables 3 and 4. The Fornell and Larcker criteria were assessed following Fornell and Larcker (1981), while the HTMT ratio was evaluated using the HTMT0.85 threshold suggested by Henseler et al. (2015). The cross-loading details are presented in Appendix 2. The results confirmed that the discriminant validity requirements were met.

Table 3
Discriminant validity – F & L

Variables	Adv	Cog	Hed	IB
Adv	0.765			
Cog	0.634	0.775		
Hed	0.644	0.583	0.754	
IB	0.538	0.558	0.632	0.728

Table 4
Discriminant validity – HTMT

Variables	Adv	Cog	Hed	IB
Adv				
Cog	0.763			
Hed	0.778	0.705		
IB	0.657	0.681	0.785	

3.2 Advertisement, Hedonic Consumption Tendency, and Impulse Buying- The Status

Several key elements influence the customer behavior in the apparel sector. The advertisement ($M=3.99$, $SD=0.941$) demonstrates that respondents feel commercials affect their buying patterns but may not dominate their purchase decisions. A study found that positive brand mentions on fashion blogs greatly affect customers' purchase decisions. Celebrity endorsements boost clothing. Advertising influences in-store purchases by encouraging shoppers to try on garments. Although influential, advertisements may make it difficult to discover products. Following clothing manufacturers on preferred social media. These findings reveal that commercials, celebrity endorsements, and social media interactions greatly affect garment sector customer behavior, underlining the necessity for firms to carefully employ these channels to promote brand loyalty.

The Hedonic Consumption Tendency ($M=3.99$, $SD=0.913$) implies that consumers purchase for pleasure or to boost their mood. According to the study, shopping for clothing is fun and emotional.

To increase mood, people like to buy impromptu clothing. Pretty clothing cannot stay in stores and make them buy them. These findings imply that hedonic consumption is connected to emotional connection and impulsive clothes purchases.

The respondents' impulsive purchases were modest ($M= 3.94$, $SD=0.895$). This implies that customers buy garments on impulse. Shoppers buy clothes they like and often overbuy them. They often buy clothes on impulse. Salespeople had less impact on unexpected clothing purchases, indicating that personal instincts drive them. Respondents experienced cognitive dissonance ($M=3.20$, $SD=0.769$) while buying garments. While ambiguity or discomfort may still persist, it is less evident than other research factors. Cognitive dissonance makes buyers unsure and uncomfortable when buying certain things. They distrust their purchases and occasionally buy impulsively without considering alternatives. Criticizing and canceling purchases may reflect cognitive dissonance and internal struggles.

Table 5 provides correlation coefficients and p-values that indicate the relationships between advertisement hedonic consumption tendency, impulse buying, and cognitive dissonance. First, there was a strong positive correlation between Advertisement and Cognitive Dissonance ($r = 0.634$, $p<0.01$) and between Hedonic Consumption Tendency and Cognitive Dissonance ($r = 0.583$, $p<0.01$). Second, there was a moderate positive correlation between Advertisement and Impulse Buying ($r = 0.538$, $p<0.01$) and between Hedonic Consumption Tendency and Impulse Buying ($r = 0.632$, $p<0.01$). Finally, there was a moderate positive correlation between Impulse Buying and Cognitive Dissonance ($r = 0.558$, $p<0.01$).

Table 5
 Descriptive and correlation analysis

Variables	M	r	SD	t value	P values	CI 95% 2.50%	CI 95% 97.50%
Advertisement	3.99 (0.941)	0.634	0.042	15.205	0.001	0.542	0.707
Hedonic consumption tendency	3.99 (0.913)	0.583	0.047	12.336	0.001	0.48	0.667
Advertisement <->	3.94 (0.895)	0.538	0.043	12.434	0.001	0.446	0.617
Hedonic consumption tendency <-> Impulse buying	-	0.632	0.039	16.021	0.001	0.543	0.701
Impulse buying <->	3.2 (0.769)	0.558	0.043	13.039	0.001	0.466	0.635

*Mean and SD value for the bold variables

3.3 Structural Model Assessment- the Path analysis

The significance test for hypothesis testing, R^2 , and f^2 were determined using a bootstrapping process with 10000 bootstraps [31]. Path analysis was used to explain the effects of advertising and hedonic consumption tendency on cognitive dissonance, as well as how these variables interact with impulse buying.

3.4 Models' Predictive Capability and Model Fit

The final structural model, including both exogenous and endogenous variables, was assessed, and the indices are listed in Table 6. Cognitive dissonance is an endogenous variable in the model. The coefficient of determination (R^2) was calculated to evaluate the predictive power of the model.

The R^2 for cognitive dissonance was 0.489 ($t = 10.888$, $p < 0.01$, $CI = 0.386-0.56$), indicating that 48.9% of the variance in cognitive dissonance could be explained by advertisements, hedonic consumption tendency, and impulse buying. An R^2 value above 0.20 is considered high [69]. Similarly, the R^2 for impulse buying explained by advertisement and hedonic consumption tendency was 0.429 ($t = 8.639$, $p < 0.01$, $CI = 0.325 - 0.52$), showing that 42.9% of the variance in impulse buying was explained by these two factors. The structural inner variance inflation factor (VIF) was also assessed, with values found to be well below the threshold of 3.3 [21]. For cognitive dissonance, the VIF values were $Adv = 1.795$, $Hed = 2.125$, $IB = 1.751$; for impulse buying, $Adv = 1.707$, $Hed = 1.707$, indicating no collinearity issues. Additionally, the badness-of-fit criterion was evaluated using the standardized root mean square residual (SRMR), which yielded a value of 0.066. This value is within the acceptable threshold of 0.08, confirming the model's explanatory power [35,40].

Table 6
 Models predictive capability (R^2) and model fit indices

Endogenous variable	R	SD	t value	P values	VIF	CI 95%		Model fit criteria		
						2.50%	97.50%	SRMR	Chi-square	NFI
Cognitive dissonance	0.484	0.044	10.888	0.001	Adv = 1.795 Hed = 2.125 IB = 1.751	0.386	0.56	0.066	569.694	0.826
Impulse buying	0.429	0.05	8.639	0.001	Adv = 1.707 Hed = 1.707	0.325	0.52			

3.5 Path Coefficient

The path analysis results indicated that advertisements had a significant impact on cognitive dissonance ($\beta = 0.390$, $t = 5.023$, $p < 0.01$). Similarly, hedonic consumption significantly influenced cognitive dissonance ($\beta = 0.186$, $t = 2.299$, $p < 0.05$). The findings also showed that advertisements had a significant effect on impulse buying ($\beta = 0.224$, $t = 4.214$, $p < 0.01$), while hedonic consumption tendencies significantly influenced impulse buying ($\beta = 0.488$, $t = 8.923$, $p < 0.01$). Additionally, impulse buying significantly affected cognitive dissonance ($\beta = 0.230$, $t = 3.996$, $p < 0.01$). Overall, path analysis confirmed that hypotheses H1, H2, H3, H4, and H5 were supported. The detailed results are listed in Table 7.

3.6 Effect Size (f^2)

The effect size (f^2) results, presented in Table 8, provide an understanding of the magnitude of the influence of each variable on the outcome. According to Cohen (1988), the effect size of advertisements on cognitive dissonance was the largest, with $f^2 = 0.164$ ($p < 0.05$), indicating a significant and strong effect. This was followed by impulse buying ($f^2 = 0.059$, $p > 0.05$) and hedonic consumption tendency ($f^2 = 0.032$, $p > 0.05$), both of which showed insignificant effect sizes. For impulse buying, hedonic consumption tendency demonstrated a significant and large effect size ($f^2 = 0.245$, $p < 0.01$), whereas advertisement had an insignificant effect ($f^2 = 0.051$, $p > 0.05$). These

findings highlight the relative importance of advertisements, hedonic consumption tendency, and impulse buying in shaping cognitive dissonance and impulse buying behavior.

Table 7
Path analysis

Hypotheses	Path	β	SD	t value	P values	CI 95%		Result
						2.50%	97.50%	
H1	Advertisement \rightarrow Cognitive dissonance	0.39	0.078	5.023	0.001	0.234	0.537	Supported
H2	Advertisement \rightarrow Impulse buying	0.224	0.053	4.214	0.001	0.12	0.33	Supported
H3	Hedonic consumption tendency \rightarrow Cognitive dissonance	0.186	0.081	2.299	0.022	0.032	0.347	Supported
H4	Hedonic consumption tendency \rightarrow Impulse buying	0.488	0.055	8.923	0.001	0.372	0.588	Supported
H5	Impulse buying \rightarrow Cognitive dissonance	0.23	0.058	3.996	0.001	0.118	0.342	Supported

Table 8
Effect size-f2

Path	f2	SD	t value	P values	CI 95%	
					2.50%	97.50%
Advertisement \rightarrow Cognitive dissonance	0.164	0.076	2.148	0.032	0.119	0.119
Hedonic consumption tendency \rightarrow Cognitive dissonance	0.032	0.031	1.03	0.303	-0.111	0.031
Impulse buying \rightarrow Cognitive dissonance	0.059	0.031	1.875	0.061	0.033	0.033
Advertisement \rightarrow Impulse buying	0.051	0.027	1.91	0.056	0.041	0.041
Hedonic consumption tendency \rightarrow Impulse buying	0.245	0.076	3.238	0.001	0.232	0.232

3.7 Mediation Analysis

Further, the mediation analysis shows the path from advertisement to cognitive dissonance through impulse buying was statistically significant ($\beta = 0.051$; $t = 2.818$, $p < 0.01$). The Variance Accounted For (VAF) method revealed that impulse buying did not mediate this relationship. The VAF value of 0.11 suggests no mediation, as the threshold for mediation is typically above 0.2 [31]. This indicates that impulse buying plays a partial role in the relationship between advertisements and cognitive dissonance.

Moreover, the VAF analysis also suggests that impulse buying accounts for $VAF = 0.376$ in the model, indicating partial complementary mediation [91]. This means that while impulse buying contributes to the relationship between advertising and cognitive dissonance, other factors influence the outcome.

Thus, based on these findings, Hypothesis 6 (H6), which proposed that impulse buying mediates the relationship between advertisement and cognitive dissonance, was not supported. However, Hypothesis 7 (H7), which posited that impulse buying partially mediates the relationship between hedonic consumption tendencies and cognitive dissonance, was supported.

Table 9

Mediation analysis – VAF method result

Hypotheses	Path	β	SD	t value	P values	CI 95%		VAF	Result
						2.50%	97.50%		
H6	Advertisement buying -> Cognitive dissonance	0.051	0.018	2.818	0.005	0.024	0.097	0.11	Not Supported
H7	Hedonic consumption tendency -> Impulse buying -> Cognitive dissonance	0.112	0.031	3.568	0.001	0.057	0.181	0.37	Supported

4. Discussion

This study investigates how advertising and hedonic consumption tendencies influence pre-purchase cognitive dissonance through impulsive buying behavior, focusing on 384 customers of Nepalese clothing brands. This study shows the relationships between advertising, hedonic consumption, impulsive buying, and cognitive dissonance. The findings emphasize the key role that advertising plays in shaping consumer behavior and driving impulsive purchases.

The study found that brand mentions on fashion blogs and celebrity endorsements significantly impact consumer shopping decisions. Advertisements enhance the appeal of apparel and encourage consumers to try on clothes they see in ads, potentially boosting their in-store purchases. However, the study also suggests that advertisements may complicate the process of finding the exact items that consumers desire, contributing to cognitive dissonance. The increasing trend of consumers following clothing brands on social media highlights the importance of digital engagement in strengthening brand loyalty and driving impulse purchases.

A central finding was that advertisements are the most significant contributors to cognitive dissonance. This supports previous research, such as that of Wasaya *et al.*, [87], who emphasized the persuasive power of advertisements in inducing internal conflict among consumers. Advertisements can trigger cognitive dissonance by convincing consumers that the product is the best choice, causing them to make purchases to resolve this conflict. This relationship aligns with earlier research on the role of advertising in decision-making and psychological discomfort [24].

Moreover, hedonic consumption tendencies significantly affect cognitive dissonance, confirming the findings of Gultekin and Ozer [30], Haq and Abbasi [32], and Mishra [60]. Hedonic consumption, driven by emotional satisfaction and pleasure, can create internal conflicts when purchases contradict consumers' practical needs or values. This study reveals that consumers motivated by hedonic shopping are more likely to experience cognitive dissonance, particularly when advertisements evoke strong emotional responses.

The study also found a significant relationship between advertising and impulse buying, with hedonic consumption tendencies strongly influencing impulse buying. These findings resonate with Ramankutty *et al.*, [68], Aragoncillo and Orus [7], and Dodoo and Wu [23], who suggested that advertisements can trigger impulse purchases, especially when consumers find the ads emotionally engaging. This supports the idea that emotionally resonant advertisements encourage spontaneous purchasing behavior, particularly in the fashion sector.

Interestingly, while hedonic consumption influences both impulse buying and cognitive dissonance, advertising was not directly linked to impulse buying in this study's results. This suggests that although advertising plays a significant role in shaping consumer perceptions and inducing cognitive dissonance, the emotional and hedonic aspects of consumption have a more direct impact on impulse buying behavior. This finding differs from those of previous studies [67,87], which found

stronger direct effects of advertising on impulse buying. This suggests that the relationship between advertising and impulse buying may be more complex than previously believed.

Additionally, this study confirms that impulse buying significantly influences cognitive dissonance, aligning with Saleem, Ali, and Ahmad [73] and Karadeniz [44]. However, this contradicts some studies that found no direct link between cognitive dissonance and impulse buying [27,57], suggesting that consumers who frequently engage in impulse buying are more likely to experience cognitive dissonance regarding their purchases. The emotional and psychological discomfort resulting from impulse purchases may explain the heightened cognitive dissonance observed in these consumers.

This study further explored whether impulse buying mediates the relationship between advertising and cognitive dissonance. Contrary to the results of previous studies by Wasaya et al., [87], Chauhan *et al.*, [14], and Ramadania *et al.*, [67], the results of this study showed no mediating effect of impulse buying in this relationship. However, the findings suggest that impulse buying partially mediates the relationship between hedonic consumption and cognitive dissonance. This suggests that while advertising directly influences cognitive dissonance, the emotional aspects of consumption and impulsive buying contribute to the internal conflicts that consumers experience.

Mercy and Stanly [59] examined the impact of impulse and hedonic buying tendencies on mobile shopping behavior, identifying cognitive dissonance as a post-purchase outcome influenced by emotionally driven and spontaneous purchasing decisions. Yaprak and Çoban [88] emphasized the role of advertisements and hedonic tendencies in shaping cognitive dissonance, with impulse buying serving as a mediating factor in this relationship. Similarly, Ramadania *et al.*, [67] found that impulse buying, driven by advertising, mediates pre-purchase cognitive dissonance, which is also influenced by consumers' hedonic consumption tendencies.

Chauhan *et al.*, [14] explored the intricate connections among consumer behavior variables, especially impulse buying. Their study found that cognitive dissonance is influenced by hedonic and utilitarian values as well as online advertising, with impulse buying as a mediator. Haq and Abbasi [32] examined impulse buying alongside factors like positive emotions, hedonic consumption, and fashion orientation. They found that hedonic consumption and positive emotions significantly explained the relationship between fashion orientation and impulse buying, emphasizing the emotional and experiential elements of impulsive purchasing behavior.

Coley and Burgess [20] studied impulse buying and identified gender-based differences in emotional and cognitive impulsivity, with women exhibiting higher levels of both. This highlights the importance of cognitive functions, emotional responses, and hedonic values in shaping impulse buying, offering critical insights for marketers targeting diverse consumer groups in an ever-evolving marketplace.

In conclusion, this study highlights the significant influence of advertising on cognitive dissonance and shows that hedonic consumption plays a more prominent role in driving impulse-buying behaviors. These findings offer valuable insights for marketers in the fashion industry, demonstrating the importance of creating emotionally engaging advertisements that resonate with consumers' hedonic motivations. Understanding psychological factors, such as cognitive dissonance and emotional satisfaction, can help brands design more effective advertising strategies that influence purchasing decisions and address the internal conflicts that drive consumer behavior.

5. Conclusion

The results indicate that advertising, hedonic consumption tendencies, and impulse buying behavior moderately influence consumer actions in the apparel industry, with cognitive dissonance playing a lesser role in purchase decision-making. Advertising can induce cognitive dissonance, which

may lead to spontaneous purchases or prompt consumers to reconsider items they had not initially considered. Consumers who make impulse purchases are likely to experience cognitive dissonance. According to cognitive dissonance theory, individuals seek to alleviate this discomfort, which, in turn, influences both consumer behavior and marketing strategies. Hedonic consumption focuses on consumers' emotional and cognitive responses when interacting with products. The hierarchy of effects theory suggests that advertising helps move consumers from awareness to purchase, while Hawkins and Stern's impulse buying theory underscores the importance of external stimuli, such as persuasive advertisements, in driving impulse buying. A deeper understanding of the interconnections between advertising, hedonic consumption tendencies, and impulse buying allows businesses to better engage customers and improve their shopping experiences.

5.1 Practical Implications

This study provides valuable insights for marketers, businesses, and academics in the apparel industry. This underscores the importance of understanding how advertising, hedonic consumption, and impulse buying contribute to cognitive dissonance, particularly in the context of clothing purchases. These findings emphasize the growing influence of digital marketing and social media platforms on consumer behavior. As platforms such as Instagram and TikTok increasingly shape purchase intentions, marketers should tailor their strategies to engage consumers effectively through targeted advertisements and influencer collaborations. Social media is a powerful tool for driving impulse purchases and shaping decision-making, providing businesses with a competitive advantage when trends are closely monitored and marketing efforts are adapted. Understanding the psychological factors that contribute to cognitive dissonance is crucial for marketers. By recognizing the sources of discomfort or uncertainty in purchasing decisions, businesses can develop strategies to reduce these concerns, leading to higher customer satisfaction and more positive purchase results. Marketing messages that reassure consumers and provide clear product benefits can help ease the cognitive conflict that often accompanies impulsive purchases. Marketers should consider the emotional and cognitive responses triggered by hedonic consumption and impulsive buying. By designing marketing campaigns that appeal to these emotional triggers, businesses can encourage immediate purchases and build long-term customer loyalty. This approach is particularly important in the apparel sector, where emotional fulfillment and self-expression are key motivators. Additionally, this study provides a foundation for future research on the intersection of advertising, consumer behavior, and cognitive dissonance. It offers a deeper understanding of how impulse buying and hedonic consumption tendencies influence purchasing decisions, which can guide both academic exploration and practical marketing strategies in the apparel industry.

5.2 Future Research Implication

This study is limited to the brand of apparel and geographical area, with delimitation of three antecedent variables predicting cognitive dissonance. Future research can be conducted by selecting clients from various clothing brand stores as a sample, which represents a major portion of the target market and provides valuable insights. Exploring the validation of the model on several additional sample categories is an attractive path for future research. Analyzing the impact of a particular model on a different product category can reveal new aspects. Additional research should focus on gaining a deeper understanding of the cognitive dimension of customer behavior in the apparel sector, particularly through cross-country comparisons.

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