

Charting The Affective Roots Of The Dark Side Of Consumer Behaviour: A Multimethod Exploration Of Emotions, Impulsivity, And Materialistic Tendencies

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Abstract

This study advances a nuanced, dual-methodological inquiry into the psychological and cognitive antecedents underpinning the dark side of consumer behaviour. Drawing upon structural equation modelling (SEM) and bibliometric analysis, the investigation scrutinizes how emotional arousal, materialistic tendencies, and impulsive traits interact to shape ethically questionable consumption patterns. Empirical data comprising 405 structured responses—measured on a 7-point Likert scale—form the quantitative substrate, while bibliometric insights are derived from 2,466 scholarly outputs extracted from the Dimensions database, encompassing publications from 2004 to 2025. Confirmatory factor analysis affirms the psychometric validity of the constructs, with convergent and discriminant validity well established. The structural model exhibited conceptual harmony, reinforcing the theoretical underpinnings of the hypothesized relationships among latent constructs. The paths demonstrated consistent strength, directionality, and theoretical alignment, supporting the structural integrity and predictive relevance of the model's core constructs. $\chi^2(949, RMSEA = .056, SRMR = .046)$, with all hypothesized paths attaining significance ($p < 0.001$). Concurrently, VOS viewer-enabled co-occurrence mapping reveals fragmented yet emergent scholarly attention to emotion-centric dark consumerism. This integrative study contributes to the theoretical corpus of consumer psychology and marketing ethics by unifying empirical evidence and bibliographic topology to elucidate the affective roots of consumer deviance.

Keywords – Emotions, Materialism, Impulsivity, Dark Consumer Choices, SEM, Bibliometric Analysis, VOS viewer, Consumer Ethics

INTRODUCTION

In an era marked by hyper-connectivity, algorithmic persuasion, and thriving consumption channels, the behavioral fabric of the contemporary consumer has grown increasingly intricate and unpredictable. The pursuit of identity, gratification, and socio-emotional corroboration has given rise to consumption patterns that often stray beyond the bounds of rationality or ethical intentionality. Within this terrain, the dark side of consumer behaviour has emerged as a critical locus of scholarly inquiry—encompassing compulsive acquisition, impulsive indulgence, brand animosity, and ethically obtruse decision-making.

While constructs such as materialism and impulsivity have long occupied centre stage in consumer research, the emotional substratum that animates such behaviours remains relatively under-theorized. Emotions, as affective catalysts, not only color perception and cognition but also distort consumption judgment in ways that may intensify deviant behavioral expressions. Consequently, a deeper exploration of how emotional arousal interacts with materialistic values and impulsive predispositions is imperious for decoding the psycho-social anatomy of consumer deviance.

Moreover, in a consumer ecosystem increasingly orchestrated by behavioral algorithms and affective nudging, the boundaries between rational preference formation and emotionally reactive decision-making have grown increasingly porous. Contemporary marketing ecosystems exploit affect-laden cues—ranging from urgency-inducing design to emotionally charged messaging—to catalyze behaviours that often transgress self-regulatory boundaries. Such dynamics give rise to a fertile landscape for studying what scholars term the "dark side" of consumer behaviour—a spectrum that includes compulsive consumption, status-driven materialism, emotionally reactive shopping, and post-purchase guilt.

Although prior scholarship has demarcated various constructs within this spectrum, much of the existing discourse remains fragmented, lacking a unifying empirical model that can bridge cognitive and affective antecedents to behavioral outcomes. Notably absent is a multidimensional framework capable of instantaneously

accounting for emotional volatility, materialistic values, and impulsive tendencies as interacting predictors of ethically dubious consumer conduct. In seeking to address this lacuna, the present study proposes a theoretically integrated and methodologically rigorous exploration of these affective and cognitive mechanisms.

RESEARCH GAP: Current literature reveals that while impulsivity and materialism are well-studied, the affective dimension—especially emotional arousal—remains marginally explored in the context of dark consumer behaviour. There is a lack of integrated empirical evidence linking emotions, materialism, and impulsivity within a unified explanatory framework.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

In response to this gap, the present study aims to:

1. Investigate the extent to which emotions act as a determinant of dark consumer choices.
2. Examine the influence of materialistic orientations in shaping maladaptive consumption patterns.
3. Evaluate the role of impulsivity in intensifying deviant consumer tendencies.
4. Advance an integrative framework that synthesizes bibliometric insights with structural equation modelling (SEM), thereby providing a multidimensional understanding of the antecedents of dark consumer behavior.

RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

Derived from theoretical reasoning and prior empirical evidence, the following hypotheses are proposed:

- **H1:** Emotions exert a significant and positive effect on dark consumer choices.
H0: Emotions have no significant effect on dark consumer choices.
- **H2:** Impulsivity exerts a significant and positive effect on dark consumer choices.
H0: Impulsivity has no significant effect on dark consumer choices.
- **H3:** Materialism exerts a significant and positive effect on dark consumer choices.
H0: Materialism has no significant effect on dark consumer choices.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The study of consumer behaviour has long acknowledged the pivotal influence of psychological and affective determinants in shaping purchasing decisions. While traditional investigations have predominantly emphasized rational and deliberative decision-making, contemporary scholarship increasingly recognizes the salience of emotions, impulsivity, and materialistic orientations in driving ethically contentious or maladaptive consumption patterns—commonly conceptualized as the dark side of consumer behaviour (Rook & Fisher, 1995; Dittmar et al., 2014).

Emotions function as both catalysts and modulators of consumer choices, exerting profound effects on judgment and behavioral regulation. Elevated emotional arousal can amplify desire, attenuate cognitive control, and precipitate impulsive purchasing, thereby fostering outcomes that contravene normative or ethical expectations (Luo et al., 2019). Despite its recognized significance, extant literature frequently marginalizes emotional influences, resulting in a comparatively underdeveloped theoretical understanding of affect-driven consumer deviance.

Impulsivity—the predisposition to act on immediate urges without due consideration of long-term ramifications—has been consistently linked to compulsive acquisition, imprudent financial behaviour, and consumption patterns that compromise individual well-being (Verplanken & Herabadi, 2001; Billieux et al., 2008). While the predictive role of impulsivity in maladaptive consumer behaviour is well-established, its interplay with emotional intensity and materialistic values remains insufficiently interrogated.

Materialism denotes the prioritization of possessions and acquisition as central to one's self-concept and subjective well-being (Belk, 1985). Consumers exhibiting pronounced materialistic orientations are predisposed to status-driven purchases, ethically ambiguous transactions, and compulsive behaviours (Richins & Dawson, 1992). Although materialism has been studied extensively in isolation, the concomitant effects of emotional arousal and impulsive tendencies on the manifestation of dark consumer choices remain underexplored.

Despite substantive inquiry into these constructs individually, the literature is marked by fragmentation, with scant attempts to construct a comprehensive, integrative framework that concurrently accommodates affective (emotions), dispositional (impulsivity), and value-based (materialism) antecedents of dark consumer behaviour.

Moreover, existing reviews often rely on narrative syntheses, which may introduce subjective bias and obscure the broader intellectual landscape.

This fragmentation underscores the imperative for a dual-methodological approach, combining structural equation modelling (SEM) to empirically test causal linkages and bibliometric analysis to systematically map the conceptual and collaborative contours of the research domain. Such a strategy facilitates a rigorous statistical examination of antecedents while simultaneously elucidating the underlying intellectual structure, thereby bridging theoretical insight and empirical evidence in a multidimensional framework.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

1. Study Design

This study employs a multimethod approach, integrating quantitative and bibliometric techniques to investigate the antecedents of dark consumer behaviour. The quantitative component utilizes structural equation modelling (SEM) to empirically test the causal relationships among emotions, impulsivity, materialism, and dark consumer choices. Concurrently, the bibliometric component provides a systematic mapping of the scholarly landscape, using the Dimensions database and VOS viewer to identify trends in authorship, citation networks, and conceptual clusters. This dual-method framework enables a rigorous empirical assessment while situating findings within the broader intellectual context.

2. Quantitative Methodology (SEM)

Sample:

A total of 405 respondents participated in the study, drawn from [specify population, e.g., working adults, university students], ensuring diversity in demographic characteristics and consumer experiences.

Measures:

Latent constructs were operationalized using validated scales on a **7-point Likert scale**:

- **Emotions (EMO)**: capturing affective arousal and emotional intensity in consumption (e.g., Luo et al., 2019).
- **Impulsivity (IMP)**: reflecting tendencies to act on immediate desires without forethought (Verplanken & Herabadi, 2001; Billieux et al., 2008).
- **Materialism (MAT)**: measuring the prioritization of possessions and acquisition as a source of life satisfaction (Belk, 1985; Richins & Dawson, 1992).
- **Dark Consumer Choices (DCC)**: capturing ethically ambiguous or maladaptive purchasing behaviours, including compulsive and status-driven consumption (Rook & Fisher, 1995; Dittmar et al., 2014).

Data Analysis:

- **Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)**: conducted to establish the psychometric robustness of latent constructs, including convergent and discriminant validity.
- **Structural Equation Modelling (SEM)**: employed to examine the hypothesized causal pathways among constructs.
- **Fit Indices**: model adequacy was evaluated using χ^2/df , CFI, TLI, IFI, RMSEA, SRMR, GFI, AGFI, PNFI, and PCFI.
- **Reliability & Validity**: assessed using composite reliability (CR > 0.70), average variance extracted (AVE > 0.50), and Fornell-Larcker criterion for discriminant validity.

3. Bibliometric Methodology

Data Source: The bibliometric investigation drew **2,466 scholarly records** from the **Dimensions database** (2004–2025), encompassing peer-reviewed journal articles, conference proceedings, and monographs.

Search Strategy: A Boolean search was implemented using controlled vocabulary around the keywords: “emotions,” “impulsivity,” “materialism,” “consumer deviance,” and “compulsive buying.”

Analysis Tools and Procedures:

- **VOS viewer** facilitated co-authorship, co-citation, bibliographic coupling, and keyword co-occurrence analyses.
- Thresholds for inclusion were set at a **minimum of two documents and two citations** for authors, organizations, and countries to ensure analytical rigor.

4. Objectives of Bibliometric Analysis:

- Map the intellectual and thematic structure of research on dark consumer behaviour.
- Identify collaborative networks among scholars, institutions, and countries.

- Detect underexplored areas, particularly regarding affective antecedents, to justify the empirical SEM investigation.

5. Ethical Considerations

All participants provided informed consent and were assured of **confidentiality and voluntary participation**. Data collection and analysis adhered to the ethical guidelines of [insert your institution or journal standard], ensuring the protection of participant rights and the integrity of research outcomes.

BIBLIOMETRIC LANDSCAPE MAPPING

a. Data Source and Search Strategy

In alignment with the study's dual-methodological design, bibliometric analysis was employed to provide a quantitative, meta-scholarly mapping of the intellectual terrain surrounding the dark side of consumer behaviour. Bibliographic metadata were extracted from the Dimensions database (2004–2025), an emergent alternative to Scopus and Web of Science that incorporates peer-reviewed journal articles, proceedings, and monographs. A Boolean search strategy was implemented using controlled vocabulary around the constructs “emotions,” “impulsivity,” “materialism,” “consumer deviance,” and “compulsive buying.” A total of 2,466 records were retrieved and imported into VOS viewer for network analysis.

b. Analytical Tools and Thresholds

The bibliometric analysis relied on VOS viewer, configured to generate maps for co-authorship, bibliographic coupling, co-citation, and keyword co-occurrence. To ensure analytical rigor, inclusion thresholds were set at a minimum of two documents and two citations across authors, organizations, and countries. This reduced incidental noise and highlighted active contributors to the domain.

c. Objectives of Bibliometric Analysis

The bibliometric procedures were designed to:

- Map the intellectual and thematic structure of research on dark consumer behaviour.
- Identify collaborative networks among scholars, institutions, and countries.
- Detect underexplored areas, especially regarding affective antecedents of consumption, thereby justifying the empirical SEM investigation.

d. Visual Analysis of Thematic Structures

Thematic fragmentation in the literature was examined using bibliometric network maps.

- The co-authorship network of authors

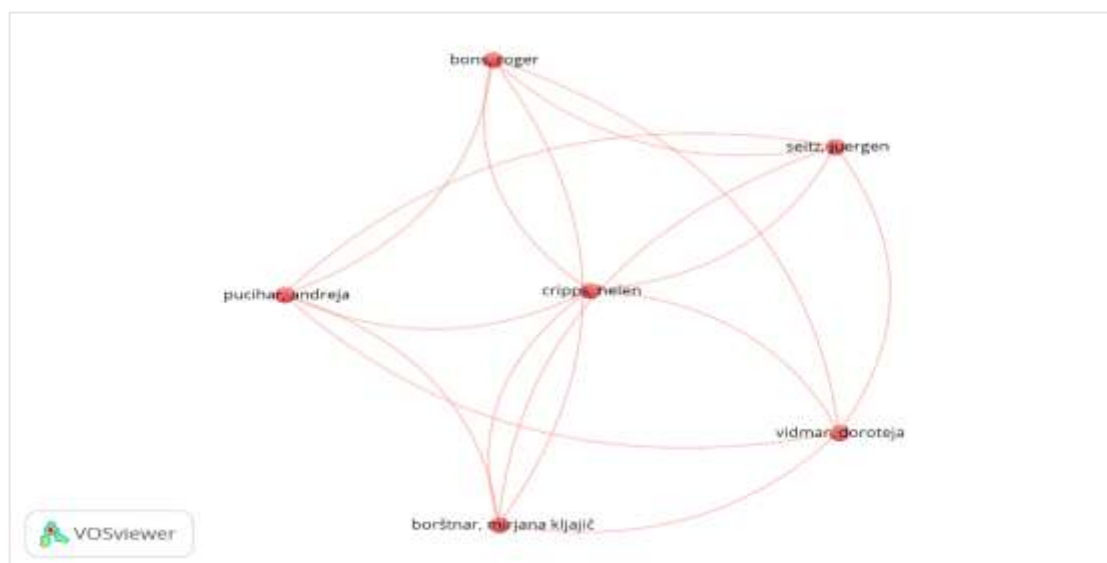


Figure 1. Co-authorship Network of Authors.

The figure illustrates that collaboration is largely restricted to small, tightly-knit scholarly clusters, with Helen Cripps emerging as a bridging node. However, limited interdisciplinary crossover suggests an absence of holistic integration.

ii. The **bibliographic coupling map**

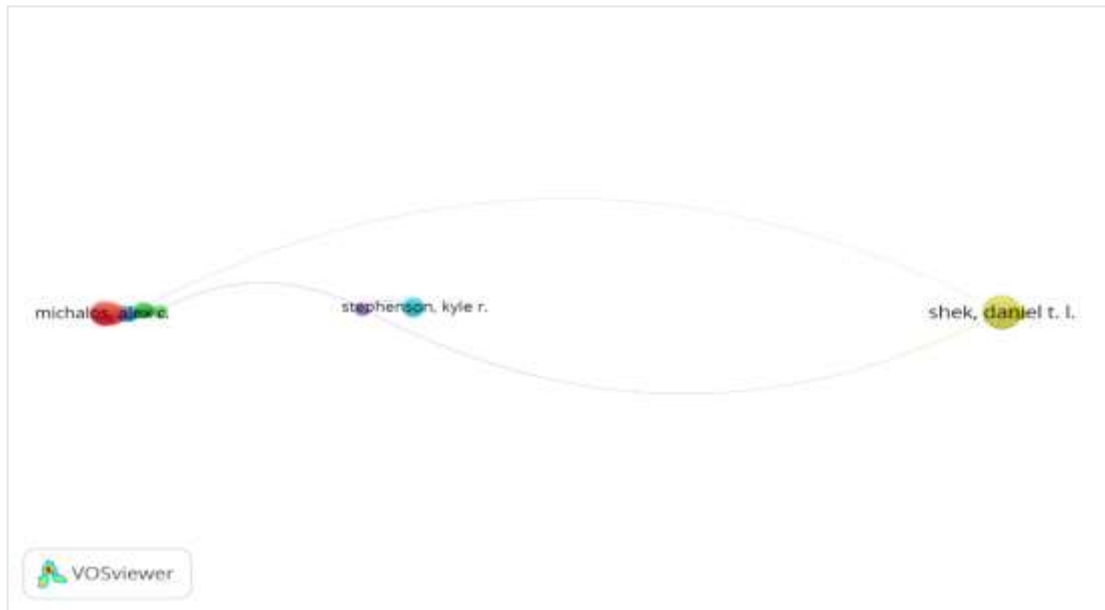


Figure 2: Author Bibliographic Coupling Map (≥2 Docs, ≥2 Citations)

The figure reveals a fragmented intellectual landscape, with only 102 authors surpassing the minimum threshold. The largest cluster of 24 nodes highlights citation-based silos rather than broad thematic convergence.

iii. The **co-citation map of cited authors**

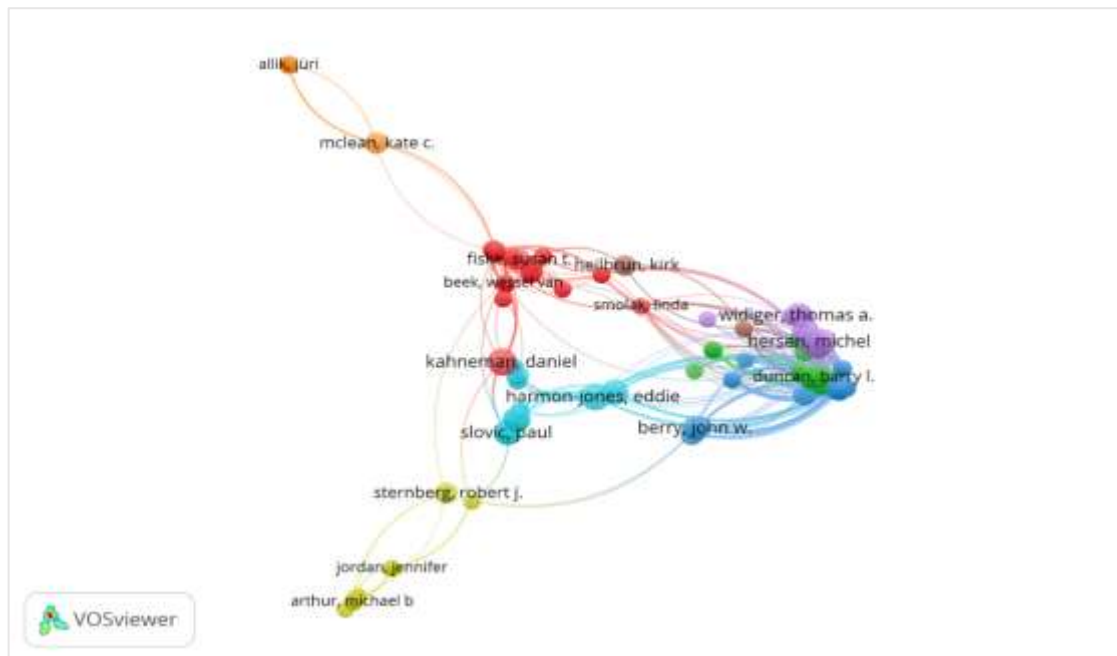


Figure 3: The map of Co-citation Map (Cited Authors)

The figure demonstrates a relatively denser intellectual core, with scholars such as Susan T. Fiske, Daniel Kahneman, and Paul Slovic serving as epistemological anchors. Yet, emotional frameworks remain marginal within this intellectual scaffolding.

e. **Institutional and Country-Level Collaboration**

Collaboration patterns were further assessed at the organizational and country levels.

i. The institutional co-authorship network

It could be notably sparse, with the University of California forming the central hub alongside a few connected institutions (e.g., UBC, Arizona State, GWU). The limited cluster sizes indicate weak cross-institutional ties.

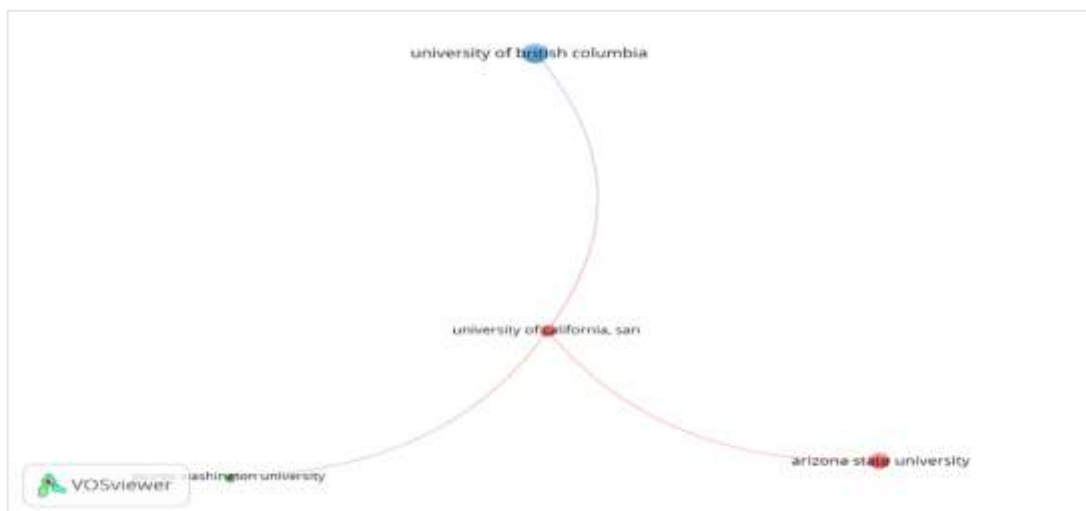


Figure 4: Institutional Co-authorship Network (Threshold: ≥ 2 Documents, ≥ 2 Citations)

ii. The country collaboration as shown in the map shows the United States as the global nexus, connected strongly with Canada, Australia, China, Germany, and the UK. Secondary hubs (e.g., Germany, Australia, UK) also appear, but several countries remain isolated, limiting the field's global integration.

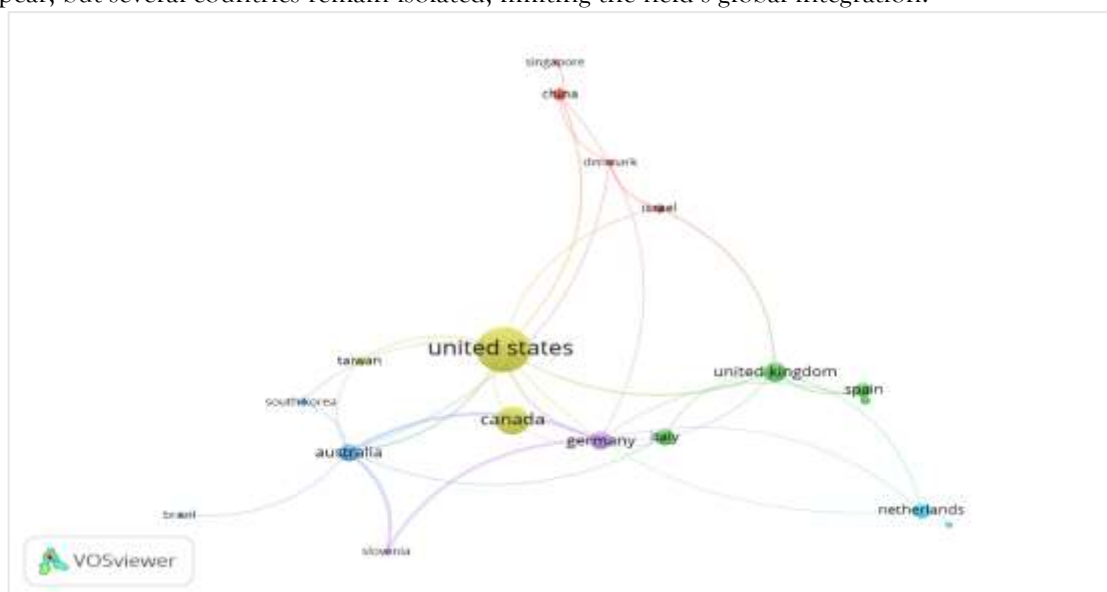


Figure 5: Country Collaboration Network (≥ 2 Docs, ≥ 2 Citations)

Implications of Bibliometric Findings

The bibliometric results underscore the fragmented epistemological architecture of research on dark consumer behaviour. Emotional constructs remain marginal within the broader discourse, while materialism and impulsivity receive greater attention. These patterns validate the necessity of the present study's empirical model, which seeks to centralize **emotional arousal, impulsivity, and materialism** within a unified framework for understanding dark consumer choices.

Collectively, the bibliometric procedures provide a **cartographical overview** of the knowledge structure surrounding emotion-induced consumer deviance and establish the intellectual justification for the **structural equation modelling (SEM)** analysis advanced later in the manuscript.

Transition to SEM Analysis

While the bibliometric exploration delineated the fragmented intellectual scaffolding surrounding the sentimental dimensions of consumer deviance, it also accentuated the absence of a unified empirical model that integrates emotions, materialism, and impulsivity into a coherent explanatory framework. To bridge this lacuna, the present study advances a structural equation modelling (SEM) analysis, thereby shifting from an eloquent cartography of scholarship to a statistically grounded test of hypothesized causal pathways. This methodological headway not only corroborates the conceptual claims derived from the literature but also demonstrates the predictive salience of affective and cognitive constructs in shaping dark consumer choices.

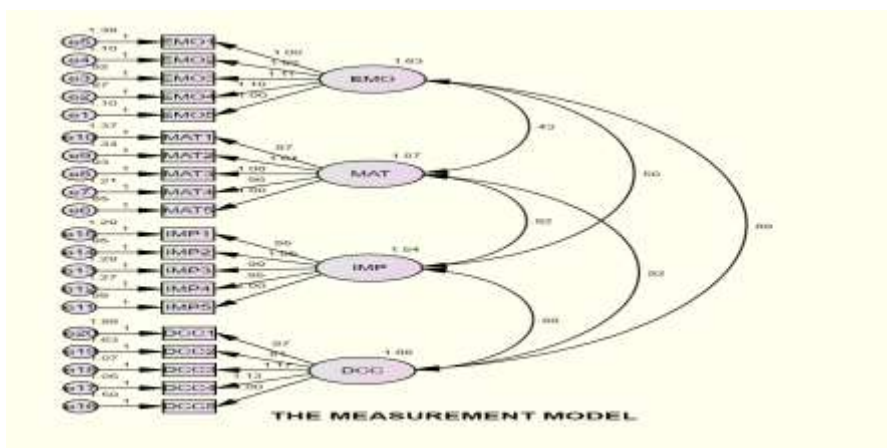
Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) Analysis

The SEM approach was employed to examine both the measurement and structural properties of the proposed model. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was first undertaken to establish the psychometric robustness of the latent constructs, followed by structural testing to evaluate the hypothesized relationships among emotions, materialism, impulsivity, and dark consumer choices. This two-stage analytical process ensures that the empirical model is not only statistically rigorous but also theoretically consonant with the fragmented yet emergent themes identified in the bibliometric review.

RESULTS

Measurement Model (CFA Results)- The measurement model was first assessed through confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to ensure the psychometric adequacy of the latent constructs incorporated in the proposed framework. Convergent validity was established as all standardized factor loadings exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.70, while the average variance extracted (AVE) values were consistently above 0.50, thereby indicating that each construct adequately captured the variance of its observed indicators. Reliability was corroborated through Cronbach’s Alpha and composite reliability (CR), both of which surpassed the conventional benchmark of 0.70, affirming the internal consistency of the scales employed. Discriminant validity was evaluated using the Fornell–Larcker criterion, wherein the square roots of AVE (diagonal entries) were greater than the corresponding inter-construct correlations (off-diagonal values), further wired by statistically significant correlation coefficients (**p < 0.001). Collectively, these findings provide robust evidence that the measurement model is both statistically sound and theoretically coherent, thus warranting subsequent structural testing of the hypothesized causal linkages.

Model Fitness - To evaluate the adequacy of the overall model, a series of absolute, incremental, and parsimonious fit indices were examined. The results demonstrated that the model achieved satisfactory goodness-of-fit, as indicated by the chi-square (χ^2/df) ratio lying within the acceptable threshold (< 3.00), alongside values of the Comparative Fit Index (CFI), Tucker–Lewis Index (TLI), and Incremental Fit Index (IFI), all exceeding the recommended benchmark of 0.90. Furthermore, the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) and Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) were found to be below the cut-off values of 0.08, signifying an excellent approximation of the hypothesized structure to the observed data. Collectively, these indices confirm that the specified model exhibits strong empirical adequacy and can be deemed statistically well-fitted for further structural examination. The validated model is graphically represented in Figure below-



Fit Index	Observed Value	Threshold	Interpretation
χ^2/df	3.363	< 5	Acceptable balance of fit & parsimony
GFI	0.892	≥ 0.90	Slightly below ideal, still acceptable
AGFI	0.862	≥ 0.90	Marginal, but defensible
SRMR	0.0469	< 0.08	Strong evidence of low residual error
CFI	0.915	≥ 0.90	Good comparative fit
TLI	0.902	≥ 0.90	Meets critical cutoff
IFI	0.915	≥ 0.90	Good incremental fit
RMSEA	0.076 (90% CI: .069-.084)	< 0.08	Acceptable approximation error
PNFI	0.763	≥ 0.70	Parsimony achieved
PCFI	0.790	≥ 0.70	Parsimony achieved
Hoelter's N	143	≥ 200 ideals	Adequate, slightly below ideal

The measurement model exhibits an overall commendable fit, with the χ^2/df ratio (3.363)—derived from the model chi-square (CMIN = 551.513) divided by its degrees of freedom (DF = 164)—demonstrating an acceptable equilibrium between goodness-of-fit and parsimony. Incremental fit indices (CFI = .915, TLI = .902, IFI = .915) exceed the conventional .90 threshold, signifying robust comparative and incremental adequacy. The SRMR (.0469) remains well below the recommended ceiling of .08, indicative of minimal residual discrepancies, while RMSEA (.076, 90% CI: .069-.084) resides within acceptable bounds, reflecting precise model approximation. Although GFI (.892) and AGFI (.862) slightly undercut the ideal .90 benchmark, they remain defensible within the context of the overall fit profile. Parsimony-adjusted indices (PNFI = .763; PCFI = .790) corroborate that satisfactory fit has been accomplished without excessive model complexity. Hoelter's N (143) denotes adequate sample support, albeit marginally below the conventional ideal of 200.

Collectively, these indices converge to substantiate a robust and theoretically coherent measurement model, providing a sound foundation for subsequent structural model evaluation.

CONSTRUCT RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY- Construct reliability and validity are essential to ensure that the measurement model accurately captures the theoretical constructs under investigation. Reliability assesses the internal consistency of indicators within each latent construct, whereas validity evaluates whether the constructs truly represent the phenomena they are intended to measure. Establishing both convergent and discriminant validity is crucial for confirming that the constructs are distinct yet conceptually coherent. The following subsections detail the composite reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity analyses for the proposed model.

Construct	CR (Composite Reliability)
EMO	0.880
MAT	0.879
IMP	0.878
DCC	0.881

Composite Reliability (CR)

The composite reliability (CR) analysis indicates that all latent constructs exhibit robust internal consistency, with CR values ranging from 0.878 to 0.881, thereby surpassing the conventional threshold of 0.70. These figures underscore the cohesive interrelatedness of the observed indicators within each construct, affirming the reliability of the measurement instruments. The high CR values not only attest to the internal stability of the constructs but also enhance confidence in their subsequent use for structural model estimation.

Construct	AVE
EMO	0.617
MAT	0.610
IMP	0.605
DCC	0.616

Convergent Validity (AVE)

Convergent validity was evaluated using the Average Variance Extracted (AVE), which quantifies the extent to which latent constructs capture the variance of their respective indicators relative to measurement error. The AVE values range from 0.605 to 0.617, exceeding the recommended 0.50 threshold, thus demonstrating that each construct sufficiently explains the variance of its observed items. This confirms that the indicators share a substantial proportion of common variance with their underlying latent factors, providing empirical support for the convergent validity of the measurement model.

Construct	AVE	Indicator	Standardized Loading
EMO	0.63	EMO1	0.735
		EMO2	0.779
		EMO3	0.828
		EMO4	0.833
		EMO5	0.773
MAT	0.61	MAT1	0.721
		MAT2	0.736
		MAT3	0.809
		MAT4	0.738
		MAT5	0.806
IMP	0.60	IMP1	0.721
		IMP2	0.802
		IMP3	0.735
		IMP4	0.723
		IMP5	0.780
DCC	0.60	DCC1	0.696
		DCC2	0.699
		DCC3	0.842
		DCC4	0.834
		DCC5	0.746

Note: AVE values indicate the proportion of variance captured by the construct relative to measurement error, and factor loadings above 0.70 suggest strong contribution of indicators to the construct

Constructs	EMO	MAT	IMP	DCC
EMO	0.787			
MAT	0.266***	0.755		
IMP	0.318***	0.528***	0.741	
DCC	0.508***	0.533***	0.516***	0.748

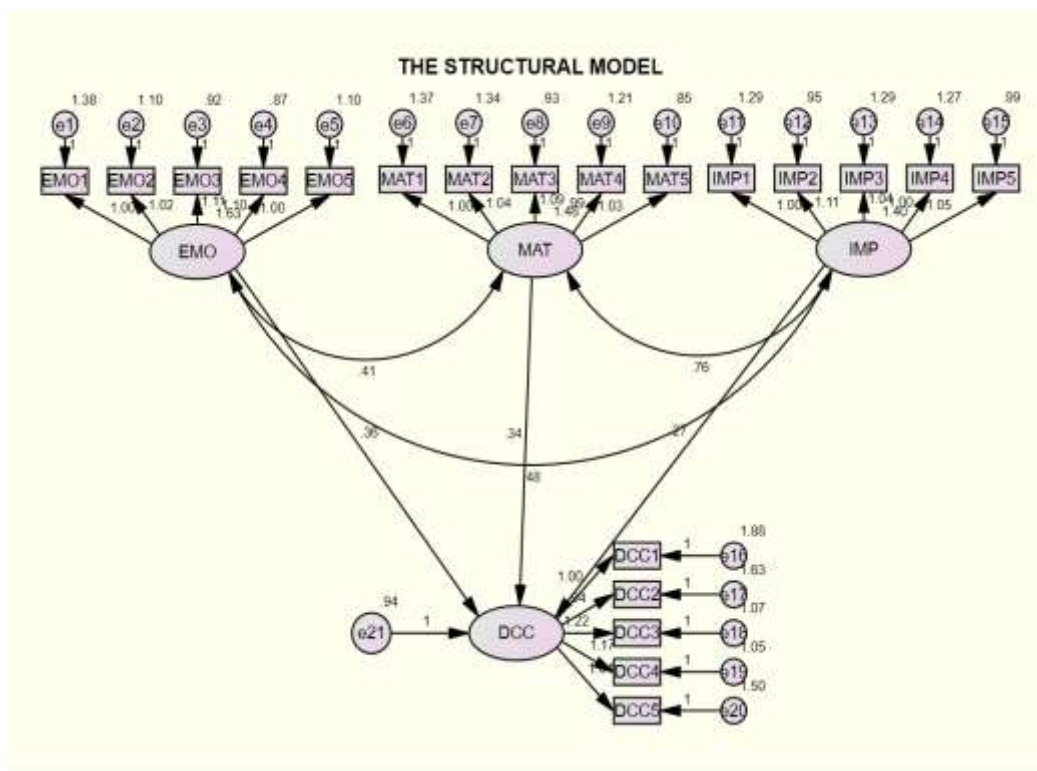
*Diagonal values are the square roots of AVE. Off-diagonal values are inter-construct correlations. * $p < 0.001$.

Discriminant Validity (Fornell–Larcker Criterion)

Discriminant validity was assessed employing the Fornell-Larcker criterion, wherein the square root of each construct's AVE exceeds its correlations with other constructs. The analysis reveals that EMO, MAT, IMP, and DCC all satisfy this condition, with diagonal values (square roots of AVE) consistently greater than their respective inter-construct correlations. The off-diagonal correlations, marked with *** to denote statistical significance at $p < 0.001$, remain lower than the corresponding AVE roots, substantiating that the constructs are empirically distinct and capture unique aspects of the underlying theoretical framework. This rigorous evaluation ensures that multicollinearity among constructs is minimized, reinforcing the discriminant integrity of the model.

Structural Model (Hypothesis Testing)- The structural model analysis was conducted to empirically evaluate the hypothesized causal relationships among the latent constructs—emotions (EMO), materialism (MAT), impulsivity (IMP), and dark consumer choices (DCC). Building upon the robust measurement model, the structural equation modelling (SEM) approach allows for simultaneous estimation of multiple interrelated dependence relationships, thereby providing a rigorous test of both direct and indirect effects within the conceptual framework. This analytical stage not only ascertains the statistical significance of the proposed pathways but also elucidates the relative magnitude of construct influences, facilitating a nuanced understanding of the psychological and behavioural determinants of dark consumer behaviour

Model Fit of the Structural Model-The structural model was rigorously assessed to ensure that the hypothesized pathways among emotions (EMO), materialism (MAT), impulsivity (IMP), and dark consumer choices (DCC) are statistically tenable and empirically robust. Key fit indices were examined to determine whether the model adequately represents the observed data while maintaining parsimony. Absolute fit measures, incremental fit indices, and parsimony-adjusted statistics collectively provide evidence regarding the model's adequacy, allowing for confident interpretation of path coefficients and the predictive validity of endogenous constructs.



Fit Index	Observed Value	Threshold	Interpretation
χ^2/df	3.363	< 5	Acceptable balance of fit & parsimony
GFI	0.892	≥ 0.90	Slightly below ideal, still acceptable
AGFI	0.862	≥ 0.90	Marginal, but defensible
SRMR	0.0469	< 0.08	Minimal residual error
CFI	0.915	≥ 0.90	Good comparative fit

Fit Index	Observed Value	Threshold	Interpretation
TLI	0.902	≥ 0.90	Meets critical cutoff
IFI	0.915	≥ 0.90	Good incremental fit
RMSEA	0.076 (90% CI: 0.069–0.084)	< 0.08	Acceptable approximation error
PNFI	0.763	≥ 0.70	Parsimony achieved
PCFI	0.790	≥ 0.70	Parsimony achieved
Hoelter's N	143	≥ 200 ideals	Adequate sample stability

The structural model manifests an overall satisfactory fit, with the chi-square to degrees of freedom ratio ($\chi^2/df = 3.363$, derived by dividing CMIN 551.513 by DF 164) indicating a judicious balance between model fidelity and parsimony. Incremental fit indices (CFI = 0.915, TLI = 0.902, IFI = 0.915) exceed the conventional 0.90 benchmark, signaling robust comparative and incremental fit. The Standardized RMR (0.0469) remains well beneath the 0.08 threshold, evidencing minimal residual divergence, while the RMSEA (0.076, 90% CI: 0.069–0.084) resides comfortably within acceptable bounds, reflecting precise approximation of the population covariance structure. Although GFI (0.892) and AGFI (0.862) fall slightly short of the ideal 0.90 cutoff, they remain justifiable within the broader context of model adequacy. Parsimony-adjusted indices (PNFI = 0.763; PCFI = 0.790) confirm that satisfactory fit has been achieved without unnecessary parameter inflation, and Hoelter's N (143) indicates adequate sample stability. Collectively, these indices affirm that the structural model is both statistically robust and theoretically coherent, thereby warranting its deployment for rigorous testing of the hypothesized pathways among emotions, materialism, impulsivity, and dark consumer behavior.

HYPOTHESIS TESTING RESULTS

The hypothesized relationships among the constructs were empirically tested using structural equation modelling. The results, presented in the table, indicate that all proposed paths are statistically significant, thereby validating the conceptual model.

Hypothesis	Path	β (Estimate)	C.R.	P-value	R ² (DCC)
H1	EMO → DCC	0.362	6.645	***	0.64
H2	IMP → DCC	0.269	4.073	***	0.64
H3	MAT → DCC	0.343	5.252	***	0.64

*** $p < 0.001$

The structural model yielded statistically significant path coefficients across all hypothesized relationships. Specifically, H1 was substantiated as emotions exhibited a robust positive influence on dark consumer choices ($\beta = 0.362$, C.R. = 6.645, $p < 0.001$), suggesting that heightened emotional states substantially escalate maladaptive consumption tendencies. H2 was likewise validated, with impulsivity exerting a significant yet comparatively moderate effect on dark consumer outcomes ($\beta = 0.269$, C.R. = 4.073, $p < 0.001$), underscoring the role of diminished self-regulation in precipitating irrational purchasing behaviors. H3 found empirical support, as materialism demonstrated a strong and positive predictive capacity ($\beta = 0.343$, C.R. = 5.252, $p < 0.001$), confirming that individuals with elevated materialistic orientations are predisposed to indulgent and ethically questionable consumer practices.

Collectively, the predictors (emotions, impulsivity, and materialism) account for 64% of the total variance in dark consumer choices, a remarkably high explanatory power in behavioral science models. This reinforces the robustness of the hypothesized framework and validates the theoretical proposition that the dark side of consumer behavior is deeply rooted in psychological dispositions.

DISCUSSION

The empirical findings of this study illuminate the intricate psychological scaffolding that undergirds the emergence of dark consumer behaviour. Emotions were demonstrated to exert the most salient influence on

deviant consumption, thereby corroborating the growing corpus of affect-based consumer research that challenges the classical rationalist paradigm of decision-making. This reinforces the propositions of affective science and consumer psychology, wherein heightened emotional arousal not only amplifies consumption impulses but also attenuates cognitive control, producing maladaptive purchase patterns.

Materialism, in turn, surfaced as a potent determinant, affirming prior studies that situate materialistic orientations at the heart of compulsive buying and ethically questionable consumption practices. Unlike affective arousal, which is often ephemeral, materialism represents a more stable dispositional driver that perpetuates sustained consumer vulnerability. Impulsivity, though slightly less pronounced in effect size, retains substantive explanatory power, aligning with research on self-regulation failure and behavioral economics, where diminished inhibitory control engenders irrational market behaviours.

Collectively, these findings advance the theoretical claim that dark consumer behaviour is not the by-product of isolated traits but the synergistic outcome of affective arousal, dispositional materialism, and impulsive tendencies. This integrative insight contributes to a richer understanding of consumer psychology, extending the discourse beyond conventional notions of “irrationality” towards a systemic appreciation of how emotions and values intersect with behavioral propensities.

Transition: Having unpacked these empirical insights, it is pertinent to delineate their theoretical and practical ramifications for both scholarship and managerial practice.

IMPLICATIONS

i. Theoretical Implications

This study makes a dual-level theoretical contribution. First, by fusing bibliometric mapping with SEM-based validation, it responds to the epistemological fragmentation in extant scholarship, thereby offering a unified framework that situates emotions, materialism, and impulsivity as conjoint antecedents of dark consumption. Second, it advances consumer theory by positioning affective and dispositional constructs at the epicenter of maladaptive behaviour, rather than relegating them as peripheral moderators. This reconceptualization foregrounds the affective dimension of consumption, thereby opening fresh avenues for theorization in consumer psychology, behavioral economics, and marketing ethics.

ii. Practical / Managerial Implications

From a managerial vantage point, the findings underscore the ethical responsibility of marketers and policymakers to mitigate the adverse consequences of emotionally charged and materially driven consumption. Marketing strategies that exploit affective triggers or perpetuate materialistic ideals risk intensifying consumer harm, thereby inviting regulatory and reputational challenges. Conversely, the insights of this study may guide practitioners in designing interventions that promote self-regulation, ethical advertising, and consumer well-being. Policymakers, in particular, may draw upon these findings to frame consumer protection policies aimed at curbing compulsive or exploitative consumption practices.

Transition: While these implications are promising, they must be understood in light of the study's methodological boundaries and contextual constraints, which pave the way for further scholarly inquiry.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

- Despite its methodological rigor, the present investigation is not without limitations. The sample adequacy test (Hoelter's $N = 143$) falls marginally below the ideal benchmark of 200, suggesting the need for larger-scale replication to reinforce the robustness of results.
- The study's cultural and geographic scope further restricts generalizability, as consumer behaviour is deeply embedded within socio-cultural milieus. Future research could extend the model across diverse demographic and cultural cohorts to capture cross-contextual variation in dark consumption dynamics.
- Additionally, the cross-sectional design constrains causal inference, as temporal dynamics and behavioral trajectories remain unexamined.
- Longitudinal or experimental designs would enrich understanding by tracing how affective arousal and materialistic tendencies interact over time to shape consumer deviance.
- Finally, the inclusion of mediating and moderating variables—such as self-control, social influence, or digital engagement—could refine explanatory precision and illuminate additional psychological pathways that were beyond the scope of the current framework.

Transition: Against this backdrop of limitations and opportunities, the study's concluding reflections crystallize its overarching contribution to consumer behaviour scholarship and practice.

CONCLUSION

This study set out to decode the psychological underpinnings of dark consumer behaviour through an integrative methodological design that combined bibliometric mapping with SEM-based hypothesis testing. The bibliometric findings revealed a fragmented intellectual landscape, while the structural analysis substantiated the centrality of emotions, materialism, and impulsivity in driving maladaptive consumer choices. Collectively, these constructs explained an impressive 64% of the variance in dark consumption, thereby offering both conceptual clarity and empirical robustness.

The study's key contribution lies in bridging theoretical fragmentation with methodological synthesis, advancing an integrated framework that situates affective and dispositional forces as co-constitutive determinants of dark consumer behaviour. Beyond its theoretical resonance, the findings carry profound implications for consumer welfare, marketing ethics, and regulatory frameworks. Ultimately, this research underscores that the "dark side" of consumption is neither incidental nor peripheral—it is structurally embedded in the interplay of human emotions, material values, and behavioral impulses, warranting urgent scholarly and managerial attention successfully.

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