

A Review Study and Analysis on Factors that Influence Impulse Buying

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Abstract: Researchers and Practitioners have been interested in the field of impulse buying for the past sixty years (Clover, 1950; Stern, 1962; Rook, 1987; Peck and Childers, 2006; Chang et.al, 2011). The purpose of this paper is to provide a detailed account of the impulse buying behaviour by compiling the various research works literature in the field of Retailing and Consumer Behavior. It gives a broad overview of the impulse buying construct and the various behavior-related aspects. A wide range of journal databases and books were referred to review the works of various researchers. The content analysis of the various research works led to the classification of literature into different factors influencing impulse buying and further development of the research framework. The multiple aspects of the subject are categorized for future research works in the area of impulse buying with the suggestions. The paper will be useful for marketing practitioners and researchers towards a comprehensive understanding of the consumer's impulsiveness.

Keywords: impulse buying, impulsiveness, online impulse, consumer behaviour, hedonic motivation, retailing

1. Introduction

An impulsive buying is an unplanned decision to buy a product or service, made just before a purchase. It can be candy at a convenience store, a cute shirt that seems to be on sale or even sometimes things like gadgets which you don't have the budget for but you bought it on impulse because you like it so much. It is not because you had to buy that product or you fall in love with that product, you just bought it because you felt an urge to. One who tends to make such purchase is referred to impulse buyer; you may have some time wondered how store owner knows exactly what to put at checkout aisle that you just can't just help to buy, it's called impulse products, and the whole phenomenon is known as impulsive buying.

Research finding suggestions that emotions and feelings play a decisive role in buying, triggered by seeing the product or upon exposure to a well-crafted promotional message.

Marketers and retailers tend to exploits these impulses which are tied to the basic wants for instant gratification. Impulse buying can occur when a potential consumer spot something related to a product that stirs a particular passion to them. Products can be expensive, attractive or discounts during the sale.

2. Literature survey

Research scholars have taken a very keen interest in impulse buying for the past sixty years (Clover, 1950; Stern, 1962; Rook, 1987; Peck and Childers, 2006). Abratt and Goodey (1990) found that the examination of impulse buying in supermarkets could be of much interest to the manufacturers as well as retailers worldwide. Piron (1991) attempted to define the impulse buying by reviewing the past research works and found that the earlier studies revealed impulse buying to be very similar to unplanned purchasing (Clover 1950, West 1951), and forwarded his findings with managerial interests in mind. The managerial interest mainly refers to the focus on product sales. Therefore, in the earlier studies, only the purchases were investigated and not the consumer's traits. The researchers have suggested that impulse purchases can be further classified depending on the consumer's experiencing emotional and/or cognitive reactions.

A. Definitions and Types of Impulse Buying

The descriptions of impulse buying before the study of Rook (1987) were focused on the product while determining an impulse purchase. The earlier studies did not include the consumer and his personal traits as the factor influencing impulse purchases. The later year's researchers aimed at personal impulsiveness by investigating the various behavioural aspects of impulse buying. Rook (1987) argued that during impulse buying, the consumer experiences an instantaneous, overpowering and persistent desire. He characterised the impulse buying as an unintended, non-reflective reaction, which occurs soon after being exposed to stimuli inside the store. Rook and Gardner (1993) defined impulse buying as an unplanned behaviour involving quick decision-making and the tendency for immediate acquisition of the product.

Beatty and Ferrell (1998) described that Impulse buying refers to immediate purchases which are without any pre-shopping objective either to purchase the specific product category or to fulfil a specific need. They explained that the impulse buying behaviour occurs after experiencing a buying desire by the shopper and without much reflection. The buying of an item which is out-of-stock and reminded during encountering the product are excluded from the purview of

impulse buying.

Bayley and Nancarrow (1998) defined impulse buying as a “sudden, compelling, hedonically complex buying behaviour in which the rapidity of an impulse decision process precludes thoughtful and deliberate consideration of alternative information and choices.” Hedonic behaviour is marked with pleasure; in contrast to the utilitarian behaviour where the shoppers seek for functional benefits and economic value in the shopping process.

Block and Morwitz (1999) enunciated the definition of an impulse purchase as a consumer buying an item with little or no deliberation after the result of a sudden, powerful urge. Kacen and Lee (2002) stated that impulsive behaviour is more arousing and irresistible but less deliberative when compared to planned purchasing behaviour.

According to Engel and Blackwell (1982) impulse buying is an action undertaken without previously having been consciously recognised or a buying intention formed prior to entering the store. Based upon the different description, we conclude that impulse buying involves hedonic purchase decisions which are made inside a store and excludes the reminder purchasing activities.

The classification of purchase as planned or impulse began with the Stern (1962) study where he provided the basic framework of impulse buying by categorizing a buying behaviour as planned, unplanned, or impulse. Planned purchases involve time-consuming information-searching with rational decision making, whereas unplanned buying refers to all shopping decisions made without any advance planning. Impulse buying is distinguished from the unplanned buying in terms of quick decision making. In addition to being unplanned, an impulse purchase also involves experiencing a sudden, strong, and irresistible urge to buy.

Iyer (1989) further distinguished that all impulse purchases are unplanned, but unplanned purchases are not always impulsively decided. Han et al. (1991) modified the Stern (1962) classification of impulse mix in the context of fashion products and developed as four types of impulse buying:

- Planned impulse buying
- Reminded impulse buying
- Suggestion or fashion-oriented impulse buying
- Pure impulse buying Planned impulse buying is partially

Planned but specific product or categories are not decided by the shopper. They are further determined on the basis of the different sales promotions inside the shop. Reminder impulse buying occurs when the buyer is reminded of the need of the product noticing it in the shop. Pure impulse buying is a novelty or escape purchase which a shopper breaks the trend of usual shopping. Stern (1962) introduced the concept of a suggestion impulse purchase as the purchase of a new product on the basis of self-suggestion but without any prior experience. Han et.al, (1991) described fashion oriented impulse as a type of suggestion impulse where the purchase is motivated by self-

suggestion to buy the new fashion product. In the case of fashion-oriented impulse buying, the shopper has no previous experience with the new and fashionable product. Mattila and Enz (2002) later argued that fashion-oriented impulse buying can be influenced by shopper’s own positive emotions when shopping.

B. Factors Influencing Impulse Buying

Impulse buying of the shopper is influenced by a number of factors which could be either related to the shopping environment, shopper’s personal traits, product itself and the diverse demographic and socio-cultural aspects.

1) External Stimuli and Store Environment

External factors of impulse buying refer to marketing cues or stimuli that are placed and controlled by the marketer in an attempt to lure consumers into purchase behaviour (Youn and Faber, 2000). External Stimuli are related to shopping and the marketing environment. The shopping environments include the store size, ambience, design and formats while the marketing environment is the various sales and advertising activities. Buying impulses can be induced when a consumer encounters a relevant visual stimulus in the retail environment, or some promotional stimuli (Piron, 1991). Impulse buying is considered as relevant in today’s shopping scenario with the innovative sales promotions, creative messages and appropriate use of technologies in the retail stores (Schiffman, 2010).

Applebaum (1951) was the first to suggest that impulse purchasing may stem from the consumer's exposure to a stimulus while in the store. The various stimuli inside the shop directly or indirectly influence the customer. Store atmosphere is influenced by the attributes such as lighting, layout, presentation of merchandise, fixtures, floor coverings, colours, sounds, odours, and dress and behaviour of sales and service personnel. Highly stimulating and pleasant store environments lead to enhanced impulse buying (Hoyer and Macininer, 1999). Product appearance and background music were important external influences on the customer (Verplanken and Herabadi, 2001).

2) Internal Stimuli

Internal Stimuli are related to the different personality related factors which characterise an individual rather than the shopping environment or stimuli. Internal factors of impulse buying denote the individual’s internal cues and characteristics that make him/her engage in impulse buying.

One of the path-breaking researches by Rook and Hoch (1985) highlighted that it is people and not the product, which experiences the consuming impulses during a shopping spree. Weinberg and Gottwald (1982) initially established that impulse buyers exhibited greater feelings of amusement, delight, enthusiasm, and joy. Chang et.al, (2011) argued that consumers who had more positive emotional responses to the retail environment were more likely to make impulsive purchases.

Rook (1987) suggested that consumer impulsivity is a lifestyle trait which can be linked to materialism, sensation

seeking, and recreational aspects of shopping. Rook and Fisher (1995) introduced the concept of buying impulsiveness trait which shows a person’s tendency to involve in impulsive shopping. Hawkins et. al. (2007) stated that buyers seek variety and differences which may be a major reason for brand switching as well as impulse purchasing. Variety seeking behaviour was found to be associated with impulse buying in a study of (Sharma et al, 2010).

The involvement with the products may also vary during impulse buying when compared to general buying. Impulse buying or purchasing with little or no advance planning is also a form of low-involvement decision making (Michael et al, 2010). Impulse purchases are more likely to happen when shoppers evaluate the purchase as appropriate (O’Guinn and Faber, 1989). Youn and Faber (2000) pointed out that impulse buying may originate from consumer traits such as impulsiveness and optimum stimulation level, shopping enjoyment, or lack of self-control. Shen and Khalifa (2012) observed that cog

3) *Situational and Product Related Factors*

Shapiro (1992) stated that situational predictors of impulse buying include the retail location, time of shopping, seasons and shopping habits. Situational factors influencing impulse buying may include actual or perceived time available and spending power (Beatty and Ferrell, 1998). Hoch and Loewenstein (1991) suggested that buying may result in more buying and it can form momentum in which impulsive desires are likely to be acted upon.

The more the time spent in the store prior to seeing an impulse item, the more is the chance to buy impulsively (Jeffrey & Hodge, 2007). The relationship between the store environment and the consumer’s impulsive moods is moderated by situational factors such as time pressure (Xu, 2007). In-store browsing appears to be positively affected by one’s available time and one’s impulse buying tendency, and in turn, has a positive impact on one’s positive feelings and impulse buying urge (Beatty and Ferrell, 1998).

Stern (1962) initially observed that the different aspects of the product which is encountered in the store may affect impulse buying. Functional benefits can also trigger the impulse buying phenomenon (Schiffman et.al, 2010). Yu and Bastin (2010) found that impulse buying varies across a broad range of product categories which include clothes, books and equipment for exercises. Crawford and Melewer (2003) found that confectionery is the most sold impulse product which has seen unprecedented annual growth in the travel retail sector, outperforming categories. Impulse products are purchased on impulse, without any planning or search effort. Kumar (2007) suggested that impulse buying concept is applicable to durables apart from FMCG. In the case of new products, Harmancioglu et al. (2009) found that knowledge about the new product drive impulses buying intentions and behaviour which is determined by the word-of-mouth and compliance with social norms.

3. Research Framework

re and content analysis we have derived some predictions for the future research endeavors in the field of impulse buying. In this paper, we therefore propose a framework to increase the understanding of impulse buying. After analysing the various factors studied in the past studies we conceptualised four different groups which could accommodate the various factors. Therefore, we have categorized the various factors under the broad categories of “External stimuli”, “Internal stimuli”, “Situational and product related factors”, and “Demographics and Socio-cultural factors”.

We have also observed the various factors influencing the impulse buying and some moderating traits such as cognition and traits. Our review shows that the impulse buying is actually a result of the interaction of various internal and external stimuli. There are aspects such as personality traits and socio-cultural traits that could be studied further in detail to better understand the impulsiveness of the consumers.

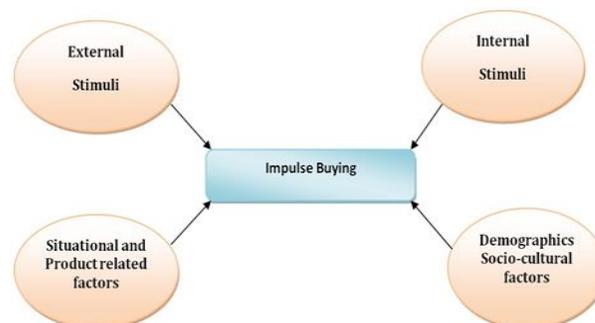


Fig. 1. Framework for impulse buying behavior
 Source: Compiled by authors - Muruganatham and Bhakat

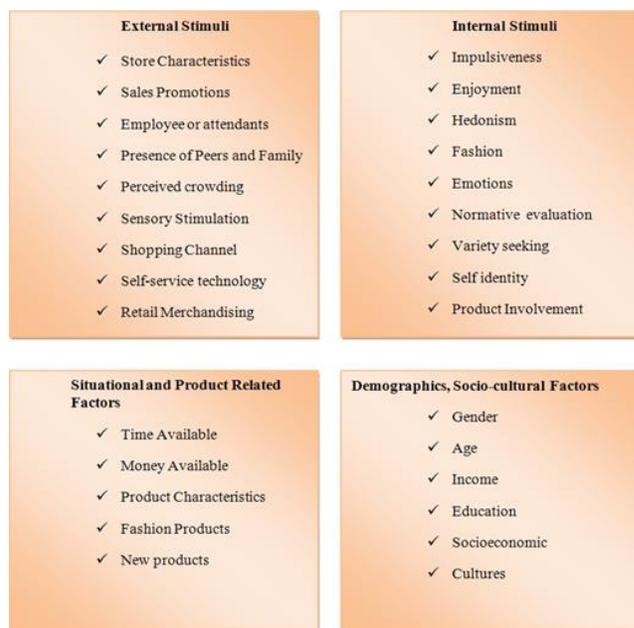


Fig. 2. Different factors influencing impulse buying behavior
 Source: Compiled by authors - Muruganatham and Bhakat

Based on the literature review, we now produce a set of research propositions that could help in developing the knowledge on this area of consumer behavior. Our proposed model captures the different aspects of impulse buying of the consumers. In this part of our literature review, we have explored four propositions that arise from the derived model. The future researches could be done under the following lines:

- P1- Effect of various external stimuli on the impulse buying behavior
- P2- Effect of various internal stimuli on the impulse buying behavior
- P3- Effect of the situational and product related factors on impulse buying behavior
- P4- Effect of Demographics and socio-cultural aspects on impulse buying behavior

These four dimensional frameworks could be further hypothesized in the future research attempts and studied through empirical testing and exploratory studies. Among these four lines of research, the most challenging implication of our research is the effect of the external stimuli (market and store related factors) on the consumer's impulse buying. With the technological development of the retailing formats, this aspect is fully under the control of the marketers. External stimuli could be leveraged by the retailers by framing suitable retail strategies to tap the potential consumers inside the store. Future research studies could be extended in this field by analysing the interactive effects of the various stimuli and the shopper's personal traits.

4. Research Framework

This research conducted on the following points.

A. Research design

This research was conducted on the personal observation basis of people. People perception and their suggestions and their liking are taken under the account. Basically, it's qualitative research where people views and their choices are considered. The research was grounded based on nature.

B. Data collection

Primary data was collected on personal observations and interactions with the people. Secondary data was collected on the post research reports, internet sites were also searched.

C. Area of Survey

This survey is held at Bhadohi.

D. Findings

The study concluded that being surrounded by chaos impairs a person's ability to perform other task requiring the brain's power, which results in a threat to a person's sense of personal control.

Let's discuss the factors below which influence the impulse buying.

1) Consumer Characteristics

The nature of the consumer plays a vital role in impulsive buying. Some consumer has a tendency to purchase in bulk, some are fond of new innovative products etc. In most cases, it is that they had not planned for or they don't need. Also, a person may feel obliged to impulse buying depending on the degree to which he/she identifies with the product. In comparison to men, women have more tendencies to impulse purchase. Kids/teens have more tendencies for impulse purchasing in comparison to old age people.

2) Emotion

Most consumers expect their emotional support to be fulfilled by their social interaction, intrinsic to their shopping experience. When they are in an emotional state that compels them to make a un-necessary purchase, buyers are often more concerned about their greater feeling of amusement, delight and joy without thinking their financial consequences or purchasing power/income.

3) Visual Merchandising

It meant to communicate the product value to and quality to consumers. This is a phenomenon that retailers used to improve the image of their stores and present what they sell to a customer in such a way that grabs the attention and compel them to buy the product. This is a great factor in impulsive buying.

4) Displays

A well-decorated store with a beautiful and calm environment with charming surroundings and well highlighted placed good tends to initiate good spirits in consumer motivating to visit the store and compel to buy the product without any planning. Most customers are quickly attracted by beautiful stores, attractive packing and colourful packages. These things change the mind set-up of customers and force them to buy that product.

5) Income level

The availability of money tends to develop positive feeling in individuals which consequently leads to impulsive buying. It plays a major role in buying mostly hi high -level income people often purchase goods without any planning just for their joy. When a customer has sufficient funds or money then he/she will extend the shopping size and include those things also that they don't have planned to purchase it.

6) Time Availability

No doubt it plays a major role in purchasing, humans like to buy the product in their appropriate time. We often see people purchase more during weekends because they have enough time to purchase. In another word, the more time available to an individual in a buying situation, the greater will be the likelihood of the person to make an impulse purchase.

7) Discounts and Offers

In the modern era, this is the special factor that plays an important role in influenced impulsive buying. Income is fixed and limited people want more products with a limited amount, so they buy at that time when they got more numbers of product in a fixed scale of amount, such conditions occur during festive sessions like Diwali, Navratri, Dussehra etc. seasons. Cash-

backs are an attractive way for them, compel to buy. It makes them feel that they got the better end of the deal and tends to unwanted purchase.

8) *The growth of the Internet and E-commerce*

According to report India is an emerging second-largest Internet market (with over 460 million users) country in Asia after China and expected to reach 500 million with the add-on of Jio internet services in India. Lots of online shopping portals advertise their product digitally. These E-commerce channels have a huge number of customers and have bottleneck competition between them. Within a decade the revenue of these online shopping companies are increasing by heaps and bounds, people like to buy products at their home. The door to door deliveries (without any shipping charge) with attractive discounts and cash-back through card payments compel people to buy product impulsively.

9) *Influence of Friend and Relative*

Often impulse buying is influenced by their friends, relatives, and their surrounding during shopping. People can sway you towards making a purchase just because they think something will go well with you. People often suggest or force their relatives or friend to buy the product of their choices these nature compel to impulse buying.

10) *Availability of nearby local market and fast service*

It can also be a cause of impulse buying. If a store opens at your nearby it will increase your purchasing frequency, same as organization or company giving you fast services you will use to it, for example, pizza and online home deliveries of food. When people are used to with services or availability of nearby supermarket it will increase their burden on the wallet and increase the number of impulse buying.

11) *Some Special Common Factors*

There are also some cases which are responsible impulse buying some are described below in points.

- Availability of credit at the shop.
- Nature of salesperson.
- Hospitality at shop/ store/mall
- Unwanted guest at home and unplanned trip/journey.

5. Conclusion

Impulse buying has been a challenge for market researchers due to its complex nature. Hausman (2000) mentioned that impulse buying is a complicated and multifaceted phenomenon which accounts for a huge volume of the products sold each and every year. Consumer researchers have mainly focused on identifying the different factors that induce impulse buying in various developed countries (Bayley & Nancarrow, 1998). In the emerging economies, there is a need to study impulse buying due to recent development in retailing and huge cultural differences when compared to developed economies (Kacen

and Lee, 2002). Dramatic increases in personal disposable income, lifestyle and credit availability have made impulse buying a widespread phenomenon across the different retail formats. Creating an attractive physical shopping environment and in-store stimuli is important to enhance the sales through unplanned buying (Abratt and Goodey, 1990). Current Indian retailing environment will provide a lot of scopes for the consumer to become impulsive in offline as well as the online retail situation for different product categories. Keeping in mind the universal nature of impulse buying, it can be capitalised by retailers to benefit their respective businesses. The proper combination and synergistic effect of the various factors influencing impulse buying could lead to more sales turnover hence benefiting the marketers and retailers. After the content analysis of the literature, it was possible to clarify the Impulse buying the concept, its various dimensions, and its relationship with the consumer, and also to present some research propositions for the development of the knowledge in the field of consumer research. Based upon the changing trends of the market in the developing economies it is possible to infer that impulse buying may turn into a growing area of research and could be seen across the various forms of retailing.

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