

# A Review of Literature on Impulse Buying Behaviour of Consumers in Brick & Mortar and Click only Stores

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**Abstract**— In recent years, several researches conducted in the field of consumer behaviour because of increased importance given to brand management and performance. Technological factors such as the availability of personal computers and internet access, download time and representativeness of pictures and colors of products are the reason for increasing the potential customer. Here Impulse buying plays a major role in consumer buying behaviour. It is the time to analyze the impulse buying behaviour which makes the customer to grab the product instead of choosing them.

**Keywords**— Stores, Buying Behaviour, consumer

## 1. Introduction

The retailing sector has grown rapidly and its purchasing power is increasing in the recent years (Sharma & Levy, 1995). Retailing is the final destination in the distribution process and it is one of the most sensitive sectors. India has been doing extremely well in the Global market. The country has witnessed a huge foreign investment in the retail sector. Due to the globalization process, Indians are getting attracted to multinational brands. There is a need to work hard and understand the consumers' decision-making styles to meet their growing demands (Montoya-Weiss *et al.*, 2003). The major retailers function besides selling is to know how consumers behave and determine their decision making style (Jun *et al.*, 2004). Studying the behaviour of consumers involves identification of their perception and acquisition of products and services.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Theories of Impulse Buying Behaviour

The emotional/impulsive decision making theory and impulsive buying Impulsive buying is grounded and theoretically underpinned within the emotional or impulsive decision making view to consumer decision-making by Schiffman and Kanuk (2007). This view

postulates that consumers are likely to associate some highly involving feelings or emotions such as joy, love, fear, hope, sexuality, fantasy and even some little magic with certain purchases or possessions. Rather than carefully searching, deliberating and evaluating alternatives before buying, consumers are just as likely to make many of these purchases on impulse, on a whim, because they are emotionally driven (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2007). Park *et al.* (2005) had even earlier concluded that unless a store has a distinct product offering or pricing strategy, retailers can distinguish their store by building on the relationship between the store's atmosphere and the consumer's emotional state. Even if consumers are in a negative emotional state upon entering a store, they may become emotionally uplifted and spend more than intended. All this implies that impulsive buying may largely be an unconscious buying behaviour driven by an affective force beyond the control of the individual.

### 2.2 Consumer Decision Making Model

The consumer decision making model, by and large, reflects the cognitive consumer but to some degree, it also reflects the emotional consumer (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2007). Impulsive buying is influenced mainly by the inputs component as identified in the model. These inputs include the marketing activities of organizations and the socio-cultural inputs. Retailers' marketing activities ranges from the product itself (its package, size and guarantees), media advertising and other promotional efforts, pricing policy (reductions and discounts) and the distribution (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2007). Marketing efforts can be at macro level (as for mass media) and can be at micro level (as for in-store adverts, point-of-purchase displays, in-store promotions and pleasant in-store shopping environments). A well planned marketing strategy can, therefore, help retailers to increase sales through impulsive buying. Park *et al.* (2005) even acknowledged the importance to retailers of stressing the relative rationality and non-economic rewards of impulsive buying in their advertising efforts. The socio-cultural environment also exerts a major influence on the consumer. It consists of a wide range of non-commercial

influences like family, peers or friends, some non-commercial sources, culture and subculture and social class (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2007). Previous studies on Impulse buying behaviour

### 2.3 In-store Environment

Impulse buying of the shopper is influenced by 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.

### 2.4 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 behavior (Youn & Faber, 2000). External Stimuli are related to the 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 & Kanuk, 2010).

Mattila and Wirtz (2008) found that store environmental stimuli positively affect impulse buying behaviour especially when the store environment is perceived as over-stimulating (excitement and stimulation). Stimuli in the retail store environment are likely to affect consumer emotions (Donovan and Rossiter, 1982), which are other variables that have been found to affect the impulse purchases (Rook 1987; Zhou and Wong 2003).

Baumeister (2002) argued that high arousal and overstimulation lessens people's self regulation and also tends to reduce people's ability think through their actions which could further increase the chances of impulse buying. Kaur and Singh (2007) studied the buying behavior of Indian youth and found that sensory stimulants such as the background music, odour, or feel of the products play an important role in shaping the shopping exercise of these individuals and could set off impulse buying activity in them.

Dave (2011) pointed out that retail stores in Indian settings and found that all of the in-store measures taken by the retailer affects the impulse stimuli of the customers and therefore contributes towards conversion, but overall the promotional mix can act as base for differentiating a store from others and attracting customers to it.

Harmancioglu (2009) suggested that to promote the impulse buying urge and behavior of new products,

marketing managers may emphasise excitement; fun and variety in their promotional activities.

Dawson and Kim (2009) observed that impulse buying is linked to up and cross-selling strategies. Yu and Bastin (2010) studied the effect of in-store Point of Purchase (POP) posters in supermarkets and found them to induce impulse Purchase behaviors and cost-effective. In-store stimuli are promotional techniques employed to increase impulse buying of products. Some examples of these techniques include in-store settings, on-shelf positions, price-off promotions, sampling, POP displays, coupons, and in-store demonstration. With the growth of technology such as self service, innovative display of product in airports has accustomed shoppers to do more impulse buying (Michael *et al.*, 2010).

Omar *et al.* (2001) suggested that impulsive shopping at the airport is promoted by environmental influences. Exclusive availability of certain products, clean ambience, spacious formats and anonymity are some of the reasons that could increase the impulse buying at airport retail shops. Credit cards and its incentive for extra shopping, co-promotion with particular retailer provides an opportunity for shoppers to make frequent visits to retail outlets which may result in increased impulsive purchase.

The external stimuli are available across the shopping channels. There are studies conducted in different shopping environments. Yet most of the previous researches have focused on impulse-buying behavior in traditional brick and mortar shopping and television shopping (Park & Lennon, 2004). Dawson and Kim (2009) have predicted that with the tremendous growth potential of online shopping, there is scope for consumers to get involved in online impulse buying. Credit cards and its incentive for extra shopping give the opportunity for online shoppers to make frequent visit to online retail shops which may result in increased impulsive buying.

### 2.5 Internal Stimuli

Internal Stimuli are related to the different personality related factors which characterises 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. 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 & Faber, 1989). Young 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 cognition of the consumer moderates the relationship among buying impulse and the actual impulsive behavior. In today's marketing context, which is characterized by growing levels of aspiration, willingness to spend on the part of consumers, influence of westernization and the availability of products, marketers and retailers have several opportunities to make use of impulse buying (Kumar, 2007).

Sinha (2003) stated that Indian customers are orientated towards shopping because of the entertainment that can be derived out of it. According to him, the majority of the Indian population can be characterized as young, working class, with higher purchasing power. They seek more of the emotional value from shopping than the functional value and they value convenience and variety.

Sneath *et al.* (2009) have argued that impulse buying can also be induced because of depression of an individual and an attempt to improve the mood. Verplanken and Herabadi (2001) found the similar results in his studies and stated that impulse buying is often associated with individuals who want to escape from negative psychological perceptions such as low self-esteem, negative feelings, or moods. The various autistic stimuli which are self generated such as consumer's own thoughts and emotions are also responsible for impulse buying (Hirschman, 1992).

Hausman (2000) argued that impulse buying is a hedonic need predominantly motivated by achievement of higher order needs loosely grouped around Maslow's 'hierarchy of needs'. Efforts to satisfy the higher order needs in this hierarchy lead to different types of impulse buying behavior.

Sharma *et al.* (2010) categorized impulse buying as hedonic behavior that is associated with feelings and psychosocial motivations instead of thinking and functional benefits. Beatty and Ferrell (1998) suggested that impulse purchasing is associated with sensory stimulation and hedonic motivation.

## 2.6 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 & 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). Relationship between the store environment and the consumer's impulsive moods is moderated by the 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 & 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 & Kanuk, 2010). Yu and Bastin (2010) found that impulse buying varies across a broad range of product categories which include clothes, books and equipments 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 case of new products Harmancioglu *et al.* (2009) found that knowledge about the new product drive impulse buying intentions and behavior which is determined by the word-of-mouth and compliance with social norms. According to Jones *et al.* (2003), product-specific impulse buying is result of product involvement and impulse buying tendencies of the shopper.

Han *et al.* (1991) studied impulse buying of fashion clothing's and found variety of patterns such as pure, reminded, emotional, and fashion-oriented impulse. Fashion-oriented impulse is stimulated by new fashion styles and brands which drive consumers to impulse buying.

Park *et al.* (2006) found that fashion involvement affected fashion-oriented impulse buying when shopping. Experiential products such as apparels have symbolic meanings and are purchased impulsively because of emotional preferences of shoppers. Tauber (1972) suggested that characteristics of the apparel itself, such as colour or style that are incorporated into store displays may influence the likelihood of impulse buying.

## 2.7 Demographics and Socio-Cultural Factors

Kollat and Willett (1967) found that the characteristics of consumers and their demographics influence the impulse purchasing. Local market conditions and various cultural forces could also impact the way consumer; go for impulse purchasing (Vohs & Faber, 2007). Dittmar *et al.* (1996) observed that gender, as a social category, affects impulse buying. Men tend to involve in impulse buying of instrumental and leisure items which projects their independence and activity. Women tend to buy the symbolic and self-expressive goods which are associated with their appearance and emotional aspects of self.

Dramatic increases in personal disposable incomes and credit availability have made impulse buying in retail environments prevalent consumer behaviour (Dittmar *et al.*, 1996). From a socioeconomic point of view, individuals with relatively low levels of household income tend to enjoy immediate indulgence (such as day-to-day savings

and sensory stimulation) as opposed to delay-of-gratification. Internal, personal-related factor like educational experience influences the act of impulse buying (Wood, 1998).

Mattila and Wirtz (2008) highlighted that social factors influence impulse buying. Social factors include two types: store employees and other customers. Social factor (e.g. employee friendliness) was found to directly influence impulse buying. Store managers might be able to reduce the negative effect of crowding by training their employees to be extra friendly at busy times.

Praise from others, such as salesperson, friends during the shopping may increase the chances of impulse purchase (Yu & Bastin 2010). Luo (2005) research work about “influence of shopping with others on impulsive purchasing” revealed that the presence of peers increases the urge to purchase but the presence of family members decreases it. Rook and Fisher (1995) suggested that anonymity might encourage impulse purchasing. Shoppers tend to try on new things, styles and fantasize, wrapped in the anonymity of a self-service environment.

Kacen and Lee (2002) argued that in a cultural context, the theory of individualism and collectivism gives important insights about consumer’s impulsive behaviour. Cultural aspect’s study can further assist both academics and practitioners in developing a better understanding of the impulsive buying phenomenon. Individuals who are more independent engage themselves in greater impulse-purchase behaviour than those who are interdependent in self-concept. In the similar lines, the collectivist consumers are found to engage themselves in less impulse purchase behaviour than the individualist consumers.

### 2.8 Personal characteristics

**Age:** Age is one of the imperative factors that influence impulsive shopping. It has been observed that younger shoppers are more impulsive as compared to elder ones. However in developing countries like Pakistan where younger generation due to lack of independent source of income is very much dependent on their family no such trend can be observed.

**Gender:** Gender is another important cause for impulse buying behavior (Chien-Wen, 2010; Lai, 2010; Pentecost & Andrews, 2010; Bashir *et al.*, 2013). Some studies declare women as more impulsive as compared to men in buying (Priyanka & Rooble, 2012; Kollat & Willett, 1967; Dittmar, 1995; Melnikas & Smaliukiene, 2007; Jalees, 2009; Virvilaite, 2009). While some other studies find men to be more impulsive than women as females carefully plan their purchases (Cobb & Hoyer, 1986; Mai *et al.*, 2003).

**Income:** People belonging to high income group having high disposable income can be assumed to be more impulsive buyer as compared to people with low disposable income. However no significant relationship between impulsive buying & income was found by Ghani

*et al.* (2011), Yang *et al.* (2011), Woods (1998) and Gutierrez (2004)

**Culture:** The individualism-collectivism dimension of culture is the most imperative cultural factors concerning the issue of impulse buying behavior (Hofstede, 1980; Triandis *et al.*, 1988). In collectivism model individuals consider themselves as a part of group while in individualism, person consider him / her as autonomous. In case where the individual consider oneself independent there exist greater level of freedom and liberty which may influence impulsive buying as compared to one who is bounded by some group may be friends or family.

### 2.9 Difference in factors between Online and In-store environment

Traditionally, impulse buying is a sudden, compelling, hedonically complex behavior in which the rapidity of an impulsive decision process precludes thoughtful and deliberate consideration of alternative information and choice (Bayley & Nancarrow, 1998; Beatty & Ferrell, 1998). When buying on impulse, individuals make an unintended, unreflective, and immediate purchase, and often feel a calling to buy the product (Jones *et al.*, 2003; Rook, 1987). Sharma *et al.* (2010) suggest emotions, low cognitive control, or spontaneous behavior in the proximity of an appealing object activates impulse buying and such purchases may occur largely without regard to financial or other consequences. The nature of online transactions causes many consumers to overspend because the remote process does not really feel like spending money (Dittmar *et al.*, 2004).

Online shoppers are more spontaneous than those in bricks-and-mortar stores. Online marketing stimuli make purchasing impulsively easier and allow online shoppers to be less risk-averse (Donthu & Garcia, 1999; Madhavaram & Laverie, 2004). In a study by Kim (2008), impulse buying tendencies dominate online purchases of sensory products (e.g., clothing, accessories, jewellery, and cosmetics).

## 3. Conclusion

The competition in every industry is getting fiercer. Even minor differences between shoppers are becoming important for firms in their efforts to get target consumers. According to the literature there are many factors influencing the impulse buying of consumers in both in-store and online. This shows that there is a lot of scope for further research in same direction related to impulse buying.

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