

A Study on Impulse Buying Behaviour of Consumers

Elizabeth Reshma K S¹, Judeline D Rozario²

¹Assistant Professor, Department of Commerce, ST. Albert's College (Autonomous),
Ernakulam, Kerala, India, ORCID: 0009-0005-2994-7825.

²Assistant Professor, Department of Commerce, ST. Albert's College (Autonomous),
Ernakulam, Kerala, India

Abstract

Impulse buying has emerged as a significant phenomenon in modern consumer behaviour, especially in the context of organized retailing. This study aims to analyse the factors influencing impulse buying behaviour among consumers in Ernakulam district. The research adopts a descriptive and analytical design using primary data collected from 63 respondents through structured questionnaires. Statistical tools such as percentage analysis, mean, and chi-square tests were employed. The findings indicate that impulse buying is highly prevalent, with factors such as price, promotional offers, product display, mood, and availability of money significantly influencing behaviour. The study provides valuable insights for marketers to design strategies that stimulate consumer purchases while also contributing to academic literature.

Keywords: *Impulse Buying, Consumer Behaviour, Retail Marketing, Price, Promotion, Product Display*

1. Introduction

An impulse purchase or impulse buying is an unplanned decision to buy a product or service, made just before a purchase. It is an immediate purchase without pre-shopping intentions either to buy a specific product category or to fulfil a specific buying task (Beatty & Ferrell). One who leans to make such purchases is referred to as an impulse buyer. Impulse buying is defined as “unplanned purchase” that is characterized by relatively rapid decision –making and a subjective bias in favor of immediate possession” (Rook & Gardner, 1993) Impulse buying distorts the normal decision-making models in consumer’s brains. The logical sequences of the consumer’s actions are replaced with an irrational moment of self-endurance. Research findings suggests that emotions and feelings; both positive and negative, plays a decisive role in purchasing triggered by seeing the product or upon exposure to a well – crafted promotional message.

Marketers and retailers tend to exploit these impulses which are tied to the basic want for instant gratification. For instance, a person may not be specifically looking for chocolates or candies while in supermarket. However, such items are prominently displayed at the checkout triggers the consumers to buy what they might not have otherwise considered. Alternatively, impulse buying can occur when a potential consumer spots something related to a product that stirs a particular passion in them, such as certain celebrity’s picture on the cover of a certain magazine or bag of favorite color. Researchers have also found that Indian consumers have diametrically changed in terms of their shopping behaviour and impulse buying is

emerging as a highly noticeable behaviour due to the entry of foreign products in the market, growth in organized retail industry, increasing disposable income, favorable demographic segmentation and changing culture and style (Muruganatham and bhakat,2013). Researches of impulse buying in sub-continent countries have observed that some variables like availability of time, gender, mood, visual merchandising, age, culture, availability of money, product category, and price are common among such buyers in supermarket settings.

2. Statement of the Problem

The Indian retail industry is one of the fastest growing Industries in the world. It plays a vital role in the overall economic growth and development. The particular topic is selected to study and analyse various factors influencing Impulse Buying behaviour of consumers. The influence of demographic factors in buying behaviour and its frequency of occurrence is analyzed. Along with this, the influence of external factors like price, promotion and offers and product display on impulse buying is also analyzed.

In store marketing activities such as point-of- purchase displays and promotions, through background music, window displays. Proximity of products are important in winning customers and encouraging them to spend more. In store promotions are usually aimed at digging into the consumer's purses at the point of purchase through encouraging impulsive purchases. Majority of the retailers are able to earn the revenue through impulsive purchase due to their in-store activities that influence their potential consumers through creating enjoyable, attractive and modern looking environments.

3. Significance of the study

Impulse buying is an unplanned decision to buy a product or service. It disrupts the normal decision-making models in consumer's brain. Impulsive buying is a widely recognized phenomenon occurs in the mind set of consumers during purchase. It accounts for up to 80% of all purchases in certain product categories (Abrahams ,1997; Smith, 1996). It has been suggested that more purchases result from impulse than from planning.

So far various models and researches have tried to explain the impact of some cognitive and affective factors on impulsive buying. Majority of the research has been carried out in many states of India but in context of Kerala relatively less study is carried out. Hence this study intends to relate several of the scattered factors to give a seamless understanding of the factors leading to impulse buying habit of consumers in Kerala.

The present research study is useful and will highlight some of its findings which will be useful to marketers and business organizations to understand various factors influencing for impulsive buying behaviours. The study also focused on the impulsive buying tendency of customers according to demographic variables like gender, age, income. This will also help the retailers or marketers to understand the type of customers who make impulsive purchases. This study will be also useful for the customers to have an understanding of how their planned purchases are giving way to unplanned impulse purchases and also recommend ways to curb their excessive impulse buying.

The findings presented in the study will be helpful for the marketers to understand the factors responsible for impulsive buying and based on that they can develop marketing strategies which will help them to increase the sales and footfalls. Scope of this study is limited to Kochi only. Hence, in order to generalize result further research can undertake other area also.

4. Objectives of the Study

- To understand various factors influencing the impulse buying behaviour of consumers.
- To identify the product type which is impulsively purchased by the consumers

5. Hypotheses

H1: There is a significant relationship between age of consumers and how often they engage in impulse buying

H2: There is a significant relationship between gender and impulse buying behaviour.

6. Literature Review

Stern (1962) subdividing impulse purchase into four categories like, Pure impulsive buying, Suggestion impulsive buying, Reminder impulsive buying and planned impulsive buying. Pure impulse buying is considered as true impulsive buying. It is a novelty or escape purchase where an emotional appeal sparks a desire to consume, which breaks a normal buying pattern. **Dennis W. Rook (1987)** defined it as an unplanned purchase which occurs when a customer experiences positive effect when exposed to stimulus. He reviews extant research impulsive behaviour in his article 'The Buying Impulse' and then introduces a new interpretation of impulse buying. Following are the results of an exploratory study that investigates the phenomenology of consumer's impulse buying episodes. The research identifies; (1) the subjective experiences that distinguish the onset of the buying impulse, (2) how consumers cope with their impulsive urges to buy, and (3) the types of negative consequences they incur as a result of their impulsive buying.

Piron (1991) conducted a review of these definitions and concluded that none of them fully described this interesting and complex phenomenon. He identified thirteen dimensions which were common across these various definitions of impulse buying proposed by different researchers. He integrated these dimensions and proposed a comprehensive definition of impulse buying, which is as follows: "Impulse buying is a purchase that is unplanned, the result of an exposure to stimulus, and decided on-the-spot. After the purchase, the customer experiences emotional or cognitive reactions"

Puri (1996) built on the hedonic framework proposed by Rook and Hoch and proposed a two-factor cognitive framework to develop a cognitive explanation of consumer impulsiveness.

Beatty and Ferrell (1998) proposed a model of important precursors of impulse buying comprising situational factors and consumer differences which influenced endogenous variables, such as browsing activity, positive affect towards the purchase, negative affect, and

the urge felt by the consumer to buy impulsively, thereby determining whether the impulse purchase takes place.

7. Research Methodology

The study uses a descriptive research design. Data were collected from 63 respondents in Ernakulam district using convenience sampling. Primary data were collected through structured questionnaires, while secondary data were sourced from journals and books. Statistical tools such as mean, percentage, and chi-square tests were used.

8. Data Analysis and Interpretation

The analysis shows that 58.73% of respondents engage in impulse buying. Majority of respondents fall within the age group 20–29. Snacks and clothing are the most commonly purchased items on impulse. Majority of the respondents have high preference to buy snacks, clothes, fruits and vegetables, footwear etc. whereas books and magazines, electronic items, bags etc. have least preference by the respondents on their impulse purchases. On the basis of ranking, we can find out that snacks are the highly preferred product. Products like groceries, cosmetics and stationaries also have good preference level. While products included in the category of beverages, accessories, shoes etc. have medium preference on impulse purchase. Price is identified as the most influential factor, followed by promotional offers and availability of cash. Product display and mood also significantly influence buying decisions.

It is evident from the statistics that the respondents enjoy the feeling of getting a good deal as its mean value is 3.8414. Most of the respondents have a difficulty in controlling themselves from buying a product when they are provided with a good offer and sales clearance signs acts as a reason for their unplanned purchases. Because, in both the cases the mean value is above 3. Discounts on product also act as an inducer of their buying since it exhibits a mean value 3.5238. Whereas, the advertisements create less influence on the impulse buying behaviour of consumers

Test 1

H0: There is no significant relationship between Age of the consumers and how often they engage in Impulse buying.

H2: There is significant relationship between Age of the consumers and how often they engage in Impulse buying.

In order to test the hypothesis, Chi square is applied and the result is given below

CHI- SQUARE TEST 1- Table 8.

	<i>Value</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)</i>
Pearson Chi-Square	44.059 ^a	16	.000
Likelihood Ratio	39.356	16	.001
N of Valid Cases	63		
a. 22 cells (88.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .38.			

Interpretation

The above table shows the relationship between age of the consumers and how often they engage in Impulse buying. Here, the chi-square value is 44.059 and ‘p’ value in Asymptotic significance is .000 which is less than the level of significance, i.e. 0.05. Therefore, we reject the null hypothesis (H0), that “There is no significant relationship between the age of the consumers and how often they engage in impulse buying”. While the alternate hypothesis (H1) “There is significant relationship between age of the consumers and how often they engage in impulse buying” is accepted. So, we can conclude that the frequency of impulse buying varies with age groups.

Test 2

H0: There is no significant relationship between Gender of the consumers and how often they engage in Impulse buying.

H2: There is significant relationship between Gender of the consumers and how often they engage in Impulse buying.

In order to test the hypothesis, Chi square is applied and the result is given below

CHI – SQUARE TEST 2- Table 4.2

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	17.000 ^a	16	.386
Likelihood Ratio	22.897	16	.117
N of Valid Cases	63		

a. 20 cells (80.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1.05.

Interpretation

The above table shows the relationship between gender of the consumers and how often they engage in Impulse buying. Here, the chi-square value is 17.000 and ‘p’ value in Asymptotic significance is .000 which is less than the level of significance, i.e. 0.05. Therefore, we reject the null hypothesis (H0), that “There is no significant relationship between the gender of the consumers and how often they engage in impulse buying”. While the alternate hypothesis (H2) “There is significant relationship between gender of the consumers and how often they engage in impulse buying” is accepted.

7. Major Findings

1. 52.4% of the respondents are female and the rest belongs to male category.
2. Majority of the respondents are included in the age group 20-29 and the least from the age group less than 20.
3. All respondents are educated and majority of them have completed Degree.
4. Majority of the respondents are salaried people and it constitutes 33.3% of the total population and the least respondents are from professional front.
5. Major parts of the respondents are included in the lower income group and it is 25.4%.
6. Among the total respondents, 58.73% are persons who made impulse purchases.

7. Majority of the respondents engage in impulse buying with a medium frequency. And it constitutes 60.3% of the total respondents.
8. Respondents give more preference to snacks items like chocolates, cookies etc. during their unplanned purchases. Products like clothes, fruits and vegetables, footwear, groceries etc. are also given due consideration. Whereas books and magazines are the least preferred product category.
9. Unplanned purchases of the respondents are triggered mostly by the product price, availability of cash and promotion and offers. Other factors like product displays, mood of the consumers also have considerable impact in unplanned purchases of respondents.

8. Conclusion

The goal of this research is to get an insight into the impulsive buying behaviour of consumers. From the research that is conducted among few consumers it is found that, impulsive buying is a very common phenomenon among consumers. After successively collected and analyzed the data, we are finally able to draw a conclusion about the relationship between Impulse buying behaviour and demographic factors like gender, age and income levels.

In this study, the researcher extensively reviewed various study related to impulse buying behaviour among the consumers and based on the studies, objectives and hypotheses were formulated. The present study was carried out in Cochin city, Ernakulam district, Kerala. The result of the study shows that there is significant relationship between Demographic factors like Gender, Age and Income and Impulse buying. Along with this some external factors like price, promotion and offers, Product displays has a significant impact on the impulse buying behaviour of the consumers. It is found that there are certain products that consumers often buy impulsively; snacks, clothes, fruits and vegetables, footwear, grocery. Only a minor portion of total respondents' shoes impulsive buying of books and magazines, Electronics etc.

Keeping in mind the findings of study, marketers and retail outlet owners can actually capitalize on this phenomenon of impulsive buying behaviour and make consumers spend more than they intend to. Attractive prices, promotion and offers, attractive and eye-catching window displays motivate consumers to buy impulsively. Understanding a group of consumers about their reference groups also helps the marketers to cash their impulses.

9. Suggestions

- Retailers should give considerable focus on providing their consumers with quality services.
- As various offers and discounts induce the consumers to buy more, it is advisable to provide the consumers with various discounts, cash coupons etc.
- Retailers should focus on price sensitive customers by providing them with attractive discounts, cash back offers etc.

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