Effect of Impulse Buying on Socioeconomic Factors and Retail Categories

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Abstract

The study aimed to determine the impulse buying behaviour of shoppers at apparel multi-brand outlets using socio-economic factors and retail categories. The research is a descriptive one, and it was conducted among 400 Indian respondents. This research was carried out to identify the impulsive behaviour of respondents at multi-brand outlets because it occurs high in organized retail stores due to attractive displays and latest design and collections. The study revealed that impulse buying behaviour varies among the distinct age profile. The study found that men shop more impulsively than women. The impulse buying did not have a high impact on changes in monthly family income of the respondents. The impulse buying behaviour was displayed more within the same multi-brand outlets than the other retail categories.

Keywords: buying behaviour, EBOs - exclusive brand outlets, impulse buying, MBOs - multi-brand outlets, retail categories, socio-economic factors

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An impulse buying is an unplanned decision to buy a product or service before a purchase is made. The person who makes a sudden purchase is referred to as an impulse buyer. The impulse buying could be warranted that it happens due to various reasons such as unplanned purchasing, sudden action, or exposure to stimuli. The first person to suggest that impulse purchasing may stem from the consumer's exposure to a stimulus while in the store was Applebaum (1951). Consumer impulse buying behavior is a response of a stimulus that provokes a desire that ultimately motivates a consumer to arrive at an unexpected purchase decision upon entering the store. Some notions of impulsiveness refer to actions on the spur of the moment, to a lack of reflectiveness and planning, to the degree of rapidity of decisions and actions, or to the lack of consideration of the effects of one's actions (Sobczynski, 1982).

Impulse buying and variety seeking are classified as hedonic purchase behaviors associated with feelings and psychosocial motivations rather than thinking and functional benefits (Baumgartner, 2002). The impulse buying happens suddenly which may make us feel culpable after when we walk out of the store. The impulse buying may occur due to temptations when we see any good offers. The impulsive buyers, in fact, experience pleasure, but this comes along with guilt. Impulse buyers tend to experience guilt because they believe that they lost self-control when they were impulse buying. However, they would continue to shop because the pleasure is rewarding (Li, Deng, & Moutinho, 2014). Therefore, this study was conducted to study the effect of impulse buying on selected socioeconomic factors and different retail categories such as to stay with the same MBO, to move from one MBO to another MBO, and to shift to an MBO from an EBO.

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Literature Review

The buying behavior is classified as planned or unplanned. The planned buying behavior is time-consuming and needs a rational decision-making. The unplanned (impulse) buying refers to purchases made without any prior planning, which is distinguished by the relatively speedy decision-making encouraged by stimuli (Stern, 1962 ; Piron, 1991). The five crucial elements in impulse buying have been identified such as a sudden and spontaneous desire to act, a state of psychological disequilibrium, the onset of psychological conflict and struggle, a reduction in cognitive evaluation, and a lack of regard for the consequences of impulse buying (Rook & Hock, 1983).

Generally, the shoppers are faced with various factors and situations during their shopping. Therefore, the planned purchase situation model does not lend itself to explaining the process of impulse buying (Churchill & Peter, 1998). However, a study has also revealed that approximately two-thirds of all purchase decisions are made in stores (Solomon, 2001). So, the need for impulse buying is induced by certain external stimuli and is not consciously recognized before purchase (Crawford & Melewar, 2003). The impulse buyers exhibit hedonic rather than utilitarian considerations for their purchases, and the shopping experiences of impulse buyers tend to be driven by high-arousal emotions such as excitement and pleasure (Verplanken, Herabadi, Perry, & Silvera, 2005).

An empirical study of consumer impulse buying behavior in local markets was carried out on 2009. The study has clearly indicated that there exists a weak association between consumer lifestyle, fashion involvement and post decision stage of customer purchasing behaviour with the impulsive buying behaviour (Muhammad Ali Tirmizi et al., 2009). A study was carried out by analyzing the three characteristics (ambience, design and social) of a retail environment and consumer response that affect impulse buying. It is important to learn the factors which determine consumers' impulsive purchases. It was found that different buying situations lead to different impulse buying behaviours such as when consumers enjoy shopping, they go for more impulse buying or if they have a lot of time, they go for more impulse buying (Yang et al., 2011).

The impulse buying is a psychological function. When impulse behavior was studied many in-store stimuli were considered (Verplanken & Sato, 2011). A study says that five major traits of personality (extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, openness, and neuroticism) had a positive impact on impulse buying. As the consumer will be more extroverts he/she will be more of an impulsive buyer (Shahjehan et al., 2011). Buying is more emotional rather than rational (Sarki et al., 2012). Impulse buying is also influenced by the size of the store like larger the store higher is the impulsive purchases and smaller the store lesser would be the impulse buying. The factors which inclined impulse purchases in the store are customer service, store ambience, and product price. The personal factors such as age, occupation, frequency of visits to the stores did not influence the amount spent on impulse buying (Palaniswamy et al., 2012).

A study was conducted on, 'The impact of cultural values and lifestyle on impulsive buying behaviour of Pakistani customers'. The study highlights on the cultural values and lifestyles (life satisfaction, financial satisfaction, lifestyle, in-group contact, gender role, and security) which had significant impact on the impulsive buying behaviour of Pakistani customers (Shahid Bashir et al., 2013). Impulse buying is also influenced by in-store factors but the extent of influence is not the same for all the factors. The factors like store design and store convenience and image have significant correlation with impulse purchase proportion but the 'Trialability' has a significant negative correlation (Ramesh Kumar Chaturvedi, 2013).

The shopping is an important experience for tourists. The experience activities themselves may become part of the tourist's experience influencing impulse buying behaviors. The results indicate that customer participation can lead to a greater pleasure experience that produces the strongest impact on impulse buying. Meanwhile, to a lesser extent, customer learning and customer entertainment can also lead to a greater domination response, which can exert a greater influence on impulse buying (Zhi-fei Lia et al., 2014). This study aimed to investigate direct and indirect effects of apparel store environmental characteristics and consumers' positive emotional responses to the environment on impulse buying behavior. The study found direct effects of ambient/design characteristics on

consumers' positive emotional responses and direct effects of consumers' positive emotional responses to the retail environment on impulse buying behavior. Money availability and task definition moderated the relationship between consumers' positive emotional responses and impulse buying behavior (Hyo Jung Chang et al., 2014).

The authors have draw on self-regulation theory to examine three unanswered questions: (1) the extent to which trait affect influences impulse buying whilst controlling for state affect; (2) establish which dimensions of the five-factor personality model predict impulse buying; and (3) test whether or not any influence of trait affect on impulse buying is additive to the effects of the five-factor personality model (Edmund Thompson & Gerard Prendergast, 2015). The author investigated the influence of impulse buying tendency and pre-purchase mood on impulse buying. The results revealed that consumer impulse buying tendency and pre-purchase mood encourage impulse buying positively. In addition, it is found that impulse buying has no influence on post-purchase mood. Moreover, satisfaction has a partial mediator role between pre-purchase mood and post-purchase mood (Leyla Ozer & Beyza Gultekin, 2015).

A Different Study on Impulse Buying

The various studies have been conducted in previous past but every time the results differ due to changes in the effect of demographic variables. The socio-economic factors like age, gender and income have been studied by various researchers. Age is one of the imperative factors that influence impulsive shopping. A study found that age has negative relationship with the impulse buying tendency of consumers (Ghani et al., 2011). In this study it has been observed that the youngsters falling under the age group of 26 and 30 years are involved in more impulse buying than the elders. Gender is another important cause for impulse buying behavior (Shahid Bashir *et al*., 2013). Some studies declare women as more impulsive as compared to men in buying (Priyanka & Rooble, 2012). While the other study find men to be more impulsive than women as females carefully plan their purchases (Mai *et al*., 2003). This study finding also proves that men are impulsive purchaser than women. 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 (Ghani et al., 2011). This study also proved that the impulse buying behaviour on shopping does not differ significantly among the diverse monthly family income of the respondents. Several studies have been conducted to identify the effect of impulse buying in the same store but in this study attempts have been taken to recognize the effect on *different retail categories such as* to stay with the same Multi-Brand Outlet, to move from one Multi-Brand Outlet to another Multi-Brand Outlet and to shift to an Multi-Brand Outlet from an Exclusive Brand Outlet.

Objectives of the Study

(i) To identify the impulse buying behaviour of the shoppers at apparel MBOs with respect to socioeconomic factors.

(ii) To recognize the impulsive behaviour of shoppers across different retail categories.

Hypotheses

✥ **H1:** Significant difference between impulse buying behaviour and age.

✥ **H2:** Comparison between impulse buying behaviour and gender.

✥ **H3:** Significant difference between impulse buying behaviour and monthly family income.

✥ **H4 :** Significant difference between impulse buying behaviour and retail categories.

Research Methodology

The study was conducted between November 2014 and March 2015 for 400 respondents in Coimbatore city, India. The research is a descriptive one and the researcher has used the schedule to collect the information from the respondents. The shoppers of apparel MBOs at Coimbatore city form the sampling unit for the survey. The study was conducted using non-probability sampling technique and the convenience sampling method was adopted because the population size was unknown. The convenience sampling method was utilized with the shoppers who visited the Multi-Brand Outlets for shopping.

In this study, the impulse buying behaviour has been analyzed to find out the sudden decisions made by the shoppers to purchase from the MBOs based on the 5 different factors such as changing mood, excitement, happiness after impulse purchase, urge to buy more on seeing a good offer, and a good deal intended to buy more from the Multi-Brand Outlets. The five point scale was constructed and the ratings are, *Strongly Agree*–5, *Agree*–4, *Neutral*–3, *Disagree*–2, and *Strongly Disagree*–1. The impulse buying behaviour score was found out for each respondent by adding the ratings of all the 5 items. Higher the score greater is the impulse buying behaviour on shopping and lower the score lesser is the impulse buying behaviour on shopping. The data was analyzed using Anova and T-Test. Anova was used to identify the significant differences between the important demographic variables like age, monthly family income and the three retail categories such as to stay with the same MBO, to move from one MBO to another MBO and to shift to an MBO from an EBO. T -Test was utilized to compare the two variables male and female and to identify how they differ in their impulsive purchases.

Results and Discussion

For the purpose of this study, the shoppers of Multi-Brand Outlets are chosen as samples, to find out whether they are involved in impulsive buying at the Multi-Brand Outlets. The Anova and T-Test were used for data analysis. The following are the summarized results from analysis of data.

From the Table 1 following are the inferences:

(i) The demographic data indicates that the 21 to 25 years age group people are up to 47.3% when compared to

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

S. No.	Variables	Characteristics	Respondents	% of Respondents
1	Age	Up to 20 years	121	30.3
		21 to 25 years	189	47.3
		26 to 30 years	48	12
		Above 30 years	42	10.5
2	Gender	Male	277	69.3
		Female	123	30.8
3	Family Income	Below ₹ 5000	46	11.5
	(Per month)	₹ 5000 to 10000	102	25.5
		₹10001 to 25000	110	27.5
		₹ 25001 to 50000	75	18.8
		Above ₹ 50000	67	16.8

other age group people. So, it states that 21 to 25 years age group people mostly make purchases from the Multi Brand Outlets, when compared to the rest of the age groups.

(ii) The gender classification depicts that 69.3% of the respondents are male and only 30.8% of the respondents are female.

(iii) The monthly family income profile of the sample indicates that 11.5% of the respondents income below ₹ 10000, 25.5% of the respondents income range from ₹ 10001 to ₹ 20000, respectively ; 27.5% of respondents fall under the income category ₹ 20001 to ₹ 30000, 18.8% of the respondents fall between 30,001 and 50, 000 and 16.8% of the respondents fall above ₹ 50000.

(1) Impulse Buying Behaviour and Age Profile : The impulse buying behaviour was compared with the age of the respondents. For this purpose, the mean scores were found out for each age group of respondents. The descriptive statistics is presented in the Table 2. The Table 2 shows that the high mean score (17.71) is for the respondents with age group from 26 to 30 years and the least mean score (16.40) for the respondents falling under the age group between 21 and 25 years. The mean scores indicate that the respondents falling under the age group of 26 and 30 years are involved in more impulse buying than the respondents falling under the other age groups.

In order to find whether the impulse buying behaviour score differed significantly based on the age profile, the following hypotheses were framed and tested.

H01: The impulse buying behaviour score does not vary significantly among the age of the respondents.
Ha1: The impulse buying behaviour score varies significantly among the age of the respondents.

In Table 3, one way ANOVA (Analysis of Variance) has been applied to find whether the mean scores on impulse buying behaviour differ among the four age groups. From the above table the result shows that the calculated F-ratio value (3.285) is greater than the table value (2.627) at 5% level of significance. It is inferred that the impulse buying behaviour on shopping differs significantly among the different age groups. Therefore, the

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics for Impulse Buying Behaviour vs. Age

		Impulse Buying Behaviour Score		
		Mean	S.D	No. of Respondents
Age	16-20 yrs	17.08	2.84	121
	21-25 yrs	16.40	2.96	189
	26-30 yrs	17.71	3.08	48
	Above 30 yrs	16.45	2.88	42
Total		16.77	2.96	400

Table 3. ANOVA - Impulse Buying Behaviour vs. Age

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	84.644	3	28.215	3.285	*
Within Groups	3400.733	396	8.588		
Total	3485.378	399			

* - Significant at 5% level

impulse buying behaviour scores on shopping vary among the differences in age of the respondents. Hence, the null hypothesis (H01) is rejected and alternative hypothesis (Ha1) is accepted.

(2) Comparison of Impulse Buying Behaviour Among Gender : The impulse buying behaviour was compared with the gender of the respondents. For this purpose, the mean scores were found out for male and female respondents. The descriptive statistics is presented in the Table 4.

The Table 4 shows that the high mean score (16.81) is for male respondents and low mean score (16.67) is for female respondents. The mean scores indicate that the male respondents are involved in more impulse buying than the female respondents. In order to find whether the impulse buying behaviour differ significantly based on the gender of the respondents, the following hypotheses were framed and tested.

H02 : The impulse buying behaviour score does not differ significantly between male and female respondents.
Ha2 : The impulse buying behaviour score differs significantly between male and female respondents.

In Table 5, the T-Test was applied to find whether the mean scores of impulse buying behaviour differ significantly between the male and female respondents. The calculated T-Test value (0.418) is lower than the table value (1.966) at 5% level of significance. The mean and standard deviation of impulse buying behaviour for the male and female respondents are not the same. It is inferred that the mean scores of impulse buying behaviour do not differ significantly between male and female respondents. Therefore, the male respondents do not differ significantly from the female respondents with regard to impulse buying behaviour. Hence, the null hypothesis (H02) is accepted.

(3) Impulse Buying Behaviour and Monthly Family Income : The impulse buying behaviour was compared with different monthly family income group of respondents. For this purpose, the mean scores were found out for each monthly family income groups. The descriptive statistics is presented in the Table 6.

The Table 6 shows that the high mean score is (17.25) for respondents whose monthly family income is above ₹ 50,000 and the lower mean score is (16.39) for respondents whose monthly family income is ranging from ₹ 10,001 to ₹ 20,000. The mean scores indicate that the respondents falling under the monthly family income group above ₹ 50,000 are involved in more impulse buying than the other monthly family income groups. In order to find whether the impulse buying behaviour differed significantly based on the monthly family income of the respondents; the following hypotheses were framed and tested.

H03 : The impulse buying score behaviour does not differ significantly with monthly family income.
Ha3 : The impulse buying score differs significantly with monthly family income.

Table 4. Descriptive Statistics for Impulse Buying Behaviour vs. Gender

		Impulse Buying Behaviour Score		
		Mean	S.D	No. of resp.
Gender	Male	16.81	2.90	277
	Female	16.67	3.09	123
Total		16.77	2.96	400

Table 5. T-Test for Comparing the Impulse Buying Behaviour of Male & Female Respondents

T	df	Sig.
0.418	398	Ns

* Ns - Not Significant

Table 6. Descriptive Statistics for Impulse Buying Behaviour vs. Income

		Impulse buying behaviour score		
		Mean	**S.D**	**No. of resp.**
Monthly	Below ₹ 10000	16.74	2.59	46
family	₹ 10,001 - 20,000	16.39	2.70	102
income	₹ 20,001 - 30,000	17.06	3.19	110
	₹ 30,001 - 50,000	16.43	2.97	75
	Above ₹50000	17.25	3.12	67
	Total	16.77	2.96	400

Table 7. ANOVA - Impulse Buying Behaviour vs. Monthly Family Income

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	48.606	4	12.152	1.397	Ns
Within Groups	3436.771	395	8.701		
Total	3485.378	399			

* Ns - Not Significant

In Table 7 one way ANOVA (Analysis of Variance) has been applied to find whether the mean scores on impulse buying behaviour differ among the five diverse monthly family income categories of the respondents. The ANOVA result shows that the calculated F-ratio value (1.397) is lower than the table value (2.395) at 5% level of significance. Therefore, it is inferred that the impulse buying behaviour on shopping does not differ significantly among the diverse monthly family income of the respondents. Hence, the null hypothesis (H03) is accepted.

(4) Impulse Buying Behaviour and the Retail Categories : The impulse buying behaviour was compared with the distinct retail categories of the respondents. For this purpose, the mean scores were found out for each retail category. The descriptive statistics is presented in the Table 8.

Table 8. Descriptive Statistics for Impulse Buying Behaviour vs. Retail Categories

		Impulse buying behaviour score		
		Mean	**S.D**	**No. of Resp.**
Retail	Staying with the same MBO	17.04	3.05	141
Categories	Moving from one MBO to another MBO	16.65	2.87	221
	Comes to an MBO from an EBO	16.45	3.11	38
	Total	16.77	2.96	400

Table 9. ANOVA - Impulse Buying Behaviour vs. Retail Categories

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	16.988	2	8.494	0.972	Ns
Within Groups	3468.389	397	8.736		
Total	3485.378	399			

Ns - Not Significant

The Table 8 shows that the mean score (17.04) is higher for the respondents who stay with the same MBO and the least mean score (16.45) for the respondents who come to an MBO from an EBO. The mean scores indicate that the respondents staying with the same MBO are involved in more impulse buying than compared to the respondents falling under the other retail categories. In order to find whether the impulse buying behaviour differs significantly on the retail categories, the following hypotheses were framed and tested.

H04: The impulse buying score does not differ significantly with the retail categories.
Ha4: The impulse buying score differs significantly with the retail categories.

In Table 9 one way ANOVA (Analysis of Variance) has been applied to find whether the mean scores on impulse buying behaviour differ with the three retail categories like staying with the same MBO, moving from one MBO to another MBO and coming to an MBO from an EBO. The ANOVA result shows that the calculated F-ratio value (0.972) is less than the table value (2.627) at 5% level of significance. It is inferred that the impulse buying behaviour on shopping does not differ significantly with the retail categories. Therefore, the impulse buying behaviour on shopping does not vary with the three retail categories under which the respondents fall under. Hence, the null hypothesis (H04) is accepted.

(5) Summary of Results : In this section the results of various hypotheses which were tested using Anova and T-Test are depicted in the Table 10 with the inferences.

Table 10. Summary of Results of Hypotheses Tested

S. No.	Description	Hypotheses (H0)	Test	F / T value	Inference
1	Impulse Buying vs. Age	Impulse Buying does not have impact on Age	Anova	3.285	H01 - Rejected
2	Impulse Buying vs. Gender	Impulse Buying does not have impact on gender	T-Test	0.418	H02 - Accepted
3	Impulse Buying vs. Income	Impulse Buying does not have impact on income	Anova	1.397	H03 - Accepted
4	Impulse Buying vs. Retail Categories	Impulse Buying does not have impact on retail categories	Anova	0.972	H04 - Accepted

* F value (Anova) and T value (T-Test)

Findings

The impulse buying behaviour on shopping varies much among the age of the respondents. The respondents falling under the age group of 26 and 30 years are involved in more impulse buying than the respondents falling under the other age groups. The males do not differ significantly from the females with regard to the impulse buying behaviour. The male respondents are involved in more impulse buying than the female respondents. The impulse buying behaviour on shopping does not vary much among the monthly family income of the respondents. The respondents whose monthly family income is above ₹ 50,000 are involved in more impulse buying than the other

monthly family income groups. The impulse buying behaviour on shopping does not vary much among the differences in retail categories under which the respondents fall. The respondents staying with the same MBO are involved in more impulse buying than compared to the respondents falling under the other retail categories.

Managerial Implications

The impulse buying is high among the youngsters; therefore the retailers should take initiative in attracting large number of shoppers by stacking products and brands conducive to the youngsters. The males are more impulsive buyers than females. So, the retailers should concentrate more towards the female segment to induce them to end up in unintentional purchases. High income groups end up with more unplanned purchases than the other income groups. Therefore, the retailers can plan their strategies for the elevated income range customers by pooling the database using analytics. This would help the retailers to identify the superior income range customers and concentrate on them to extract intense volume.

The respondents staying with the same Multi-Brand Outlet are involved in more sudden purchases than the respondents moving from one Multi-Brand Outlet to another Multi-Brand Outlet and coming to a Multi-Brand Outlet from an Exclusive Brand Outlet. This may happen because of trust and loyalty revealed by the shoppers towards their beloved MBOs and as these repeated impulse purchases is made by the shoppers of the same Multi-Brand Outlets, they should be greeted and personalized benefits or customized service to be provided to those shoppers. The managers can provide gifts to the shoppers who end up in unintentional purchases. Then, the managers can plan to set up their stores with new themes for every season to provoke more impulse buying because the apparel stores need it predominately.

Conclusion

The turnover of Indian retail market is increasing because the shoppers are exposed to newer retail formats and the youngsters are spending heavily because of increased disposable income and high unplanned purchases prevailing from the youth falling between the age group 26 and 30 years. Therefore, the youngsters do more impulsive buying than the others. The males are more impulsive buyers than females may be because they do not have time or not interested to plan before they buy. The Multi-Brand Retailers have great opportunities to attract both the genders to arrive at impulsive purchases and concentrate more on post middle aged and elevated aged groups to catch more impulsive purchasing from these groups. The retailers should focus more on the shoppers who stay with the same MBO because those shoppers involve in more impulse buying than the shoppers falling under the other retail categories.

Limitations of the Study

(1) The present study is restricted to Coimbatore city in India and the findings may not be applicable to other cities of the country because of socio-economic differences.

(2) The non-probability sampling method and under non-probability sampling method convenience sampling technique has been adopted to collect the data from the respondents. This may compromise the validity of the study to a certain extent. Therefore, it is advisable to adopt a probability sampling technique and the study could be repeated.

(3) In this study, the author has considered only three socio-economic variables like, age, gender and monthly family income but the study could be explored with other socio-economic variables as well.

Scope for Future Research

(1) The impulse buying may differ from one MBO to another MBO with regard to many other factors and buyers situation, which could be considered for future research.

(2) The impulse buying could be recognized by conducting an extensive study in distinct retail formats like, hyper markets, discount stores, family shops, factory outlets, shopping malls, etc. which has not been covered in this study.

(3) This study could be extended to whole country by considering many more Multi-Brand Outlets (MBOs) and Exclusive Brand Outlets (EBOs) that differ in their image characteristics to ensure generalization of the results.

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