

The Pleasure and the Guilt - Impulse Purchase and Post Purchase Regret : A Study of Young Indian Consumers

* *Kokil Jain*

** *Shalini Gautam*

*** *Diksha Pasricha*

Abstract

The main purpose of this research was to study and understand the factors that influenced the impulsive purchase behaviour in young Indian consumers and also the relationship it had with post purchase dissonance. The goal of this research was to examine the effect of the external factors as well as that of internal or individual factors on impulse purchase behaviour. The external factors studied included promotional activities (sales and coupons) and visual product aesthetics. The individual factors considered in this study are gender, hedonic shopping gratification, price consciousness, and consumer spending self-control. A structured questionnaire having established scales was utilized to measure the identified antecedents. Data were collected from students of post graduate courses of a university ; 241 responses were analyzed using SPSS 21 to test the results. This research was carried out in between April and May 2017. The dimensions which emerged as defining factors affecting impulse purchase in young Indian consumers were hedonic shopping gratification, sale proneness, visual product aesthetics, price consciousness, and consumer spending self-control. The results were not able to establish any significant relationship between gender and impulse purchase and coupon proneness and impulse purchase.

Keywords : impulse purchase, post purchase dissonance, hedonic shopping gratification, price-consciousness and product aesthetics

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A purchase might not often be treated as a function originating out of a reasoned action but can be stimulated by a sudden, direct stimulus the consumer is exposed to; especially when it is an impulse purchase, which is a result of an immediate desire to buy a product without any previous planning or intention (Mishra, Koul, & Sinha, 2014). Impulsive consumption of products has been considered as an intense conflict in the ideas such as the pull to buy a certain good and the self - control to fight it (Hoch & Loewenstein, 1991). Consumers who are in a condition of a low ego state have shown patterns of being more likely to be susceptible to give into the desire and purchase impulsively (Baumeister, 2002). To a large extent, impulsive buying behaviour has been examined as involved with long-term predisposed factors like norms (Rook & Fisher, 1995), cultural orientations (Kacen & Lee, 2002), and fashion-involvement and lifestyle (Park & Lennon, 2006).

In the past, there have been numerous studies, which have thrown some light on the impact of impulsive buying

* *Associate Professor & Head of Marketing*, Department of Marketing, Amity International Business School, Noida, Uttar Pradesh. Email : kjain@amity.edu

** *Assistant Professor*, Department of Marketing, Amity International Business School, Noida, Uttar Pradesh. Email : sgautam@amity.edu

*** *Research Scholar*, Department of Marketing, Amity International Business School, Noida, Uttar Pradesh. Email : pasricha.diksha@gmail.com

behaviour patterns (Jeffrey & Hodge, 2007; Maymand & Ahmadinejad, 2011; Pattipeilohy, 2013), and on urge to buy impulsively as well (Beatty & Ferrell, 1998; Foroughi, Buang, Senik, & Hajmisadeghi, 2013).

This study examines the impulse buying tendencies of young Indian consumers and how both internal and external factors decide upon the purchase decision of these young Indian consumers. This study considered a sample size of 241 young Indian consumers who indulged in impulsive buying. There has been extensive research conducted on impulse buying, but there is very little literature where impulsive buying is studied in the Indian context.

Past research studies on impulsive buying have not considered the simultaneous ramifications of the selected variables on impulsive buying behaviour and its effect on post purchase dissonance. Also, external factors such as hedonic appeal of the products, promotional activities (sales and coupons), visual product aesthetics, and the consumer spending on self-control are the most relevant in times when the organized Indian retail sector is poised to grow exponentially. There are limited studies being conducted to understand the phenomenon of impulse buying with respect to the Indian context; more predominantly, on the young Indian shoppers. Hence, this study is an attempt to strengthen the extant literature of impulse buying by Indian consumers and to derive valuable insights for marketers to utilize in designing effective retail strategies.

Literature Review

Stern (1962) categorized buying behaviour of consumers into two groups, that is, planned buying behaviour and unplanned buying behaviour or impulsive buying behaviour. Piron (1991) and Stern (1962) profoundly described planned buying as a process whereby shoppers first identify the problem, search for the information, and then evaluate varied alternatives before they decide on their purchase. Impulse buying, on the other hand, is derived from an unplanned, spontaneous and unpredicted reaction, which is generally on the spot (Jeffrey & Hodge, 2007). Most of the impulsive purchases can be credited to impulsive behaviour which arises when there is a strong and irresistible yearning to purchase (Shoham & Brenčič, 2003 ; Zhang, Prybutok, & Strutton, 2007).

As per Coley and Burgess (2003), 90% of the consumers purchase impulsively. Impulse buying behaviour has been considered as one of the areas which has significant involvement in the thriving economies (Kacen & Lee, 2002) like India (Mohan, Sivakumaran, & Sharma, 2009). Transformation in cultural components has redefined the nomenclature of impulsive buying. A change has been observed in the consumer buying, further boosting impulsive buying, which is more present oriented as opposed to being planned and futuristic in nature (Wood, 1998). Clover (1950) spelled out that impulse buying is comparable to unplanned buying, which clouds retail sales and profits. Impulse buying has been exemplified divergently as in store decision making (Stern, 1962), intention-outcome matrix, and rapidity of decision making (Kollat & Willett, 1967).

Over the years, both hedonic and utilitarian drivers for shopping have been broadly studied by researchers (Piron, 1991). Such studies have helped marketers to devise pertinent targeting and positioning strategies, which have further enhanced the understanding of the retailers about impulsive consumer behaviour (Bloch, Ridgway, & Dawson, 1994 ; Jones, Reynolds, Weun, & Beatty, 2003 ; Reynolds, Ganesh, & Lockett, 2002). The growing number of youth having a strong affinity for shopping has made the marketers to focus on these young shoppers who constitute a large chunk of the consumer market. These young shoppers have plentiful amount of disposable income (Mishra et al., 2014), which further results in their purchase decision being impulsive in nature (Foroughi et al., 2013). A study also showed that impulsive purchase decisions contributed to a large amount of retail sales, thus booming the retail sector (Hausman, 2000).

Mohan, Sivakumaran, and Sharma (2013) established through their research that store environment encouraged individuals to purchase impulsively by initiating a positive effect and urge. Muratore (2016) studied the impulse buying behaviour of teens and concluded that teens with higher impulsive buying behaviour were comparatively

higher on traits like - prestige sensitivity, price-quality schema, price mavenism, and sale proneness than non-impulsive teen buyers, and lesser on price consciousness and value consciousness than non-impulsive buyers. The research also concluded the demarcating role of gender, establishing female adolescents as stronger impulsive buyers than their male counterparts.

Dey and Srivastava (2017) studied the impulse buying tendencies of young Indian consumers. Their findings supported a positive relationship of hedonic shopping value dimensions – novelty, fun, praise from others, escapism, and social interaction with impulse purchase intentions. Their study also successfully established the moderating role of situational characteristics.

Styvén, Foster, and Wallström (2017) through their research profiled impulse buyers as more likely to be younger, female, and frequent online buyers. However, their study also revealed that these shoppers also had a high tendency of leaving their online shopping carts midway without completing the entire purchase because of lack of need certainty.

Hausman (2000) established the relationship between impulsiveness and an inherent propensity to satiate needs like self-esteem and self-actualization. Individuals with a tendency to make impulsive choices were found to be high on some specific personality traits like sensation seeking (Baiocco, Laghi, & D'Alessio, 2009), optimum stimulation level (Punj, 2011), and materialism (Podoshen & Andrzejewski, 2012).

Chaturvedi (2013) studied the effect of in-store factors on individual's impulsive buying tendencies and these were found to significantly affect the phenomenon. Kumar and Narayanan (2016) studied the impulse buying tendencies specific to apparel multi-brand outlets. The study concluded that impulsive buying depicts variation within different age groups and that men buy more impulsively than women. Atulkar and Kesari (2016) established that customer shopping experiences are impulsive and are driven by enjoyment, emotional attachment, uniqueness, and comfort.

Hypothesis Development

(1) Gender and Impulse Purchase : Gender surely does have an impact and brings about differences in the consumer decision-making process (Mitchell & Walsh, 2004) not influencing impulse purchasing (Bellenger, Robertson, & Hirschman, 1978; Kwon & Armstrong, 2002), but is generally associated with the impulse buying tendency (Chien - Huang & Hung-Ming, 2005). Out of the two, women showcased stronger impulse buying tendencies (Dittmar, Beattie, & Friese, 1995 ; Richins & Dawson, 1992 ; Rindfleisch, Burroughs, & Denton, 1997; Wood, 1998) as they shopped for consumables more frequently (Starrels, 1994) and were found to have a greater propensity to purchase impulsively as opposed to men (Cobb & Hoyer, 1986). Young women, specifically in emerging economies like India, are becoming financially independent by participating as workforce and ,therefore, have been rendered with stronger purchasing power than ever before. Thus, the following hypothesis is proposed :

➤ **H1:** Impulse purchase as a phenomenon is more prominently depicted by women than by men.

(2) Price Consciousness and Impulse Purchase : Price consciousness refers to the degree to which the consumer focuses exclusively on paying low prices (Lichtenstein, Ridgway, & Netemeyer, 1993). A sudden price drop indicates a positive result and increases the spending by increasing the likelihood of purchase of some goods and on the other hand, a price hike brings about a negative result and suppresses the likelihood of the purchase intention of other goods (Janakiramanen, Meyer, & Morales, 2006). Value is considered to be the most compelling force to understand the behaviour of consumers in the marketplace (Dodds, Monroe, & Grewal, 1991; Holbrook & Jackson, 1996 ; Zeithaml, 1988). Muratore (2016) established a negative relationship between impulse buying and

price consciousness in teen consumers. Since a price-conscious consumer will assess the purchase and will be very sensitive to price differentials, therefore, it can be assumed that purchase will be a thought after decision and not an impulsive one. Thus, the following hypothesis is proposed :

✍ **H2 :** There exists a negative relationship between price consciousness and impulse purchase.

(3) Hedonic Shopping Gratification and Impulse Purchase : Recent research studies have exhibited that shopping involvements serve consumers a combination of both hedonic and utilitarian shopping value (Babin, Darden, & Griffin, 1994 ; Carpenter, 2008 ; Hirschman & Holbrook, 1982; Lee, Kim, & Fairhurst, 2009 ; Seo & Lee, 2008).

On the one hand, utilitarian value has strong linkages with cognition and task orientation ; whereas, hedonic value is inclined more towards the emotional aspects of a consumer's shopping experience (Babin et al., 1994 ; Hirschman & Holbrook, 1982). Generally, shoppers associate necessity of buying a product with utilitarian value and the pleasure and enjoyment derived from the purchase as hedonic value (Carpenter, 2008).

Past research studies thoroughly examined the role of shopping values on post shopping response, that is, patronage intentions (Seo & Lee, 2008), satisfaction (Babin et al., 1994), customer share (Babin & Attaway, 2000), loyalty (Carpenter, 2008), word of mouth and share of purchases (Carpenter, 2008). It was very well concluded by Rook (1987) that shoppers primarily purchased not to fulfill their need of a product, but for a need for purchase. Since impulse purchase is characterized by seeking pleasure in purchase and is considered more as an emotional expression rather than a rational one, the following can be hypothesized :

✍ **H3:** There exists a positive relationship between hedonic shopping gratification and impulse purchase.

(4) Promotional Activities (Sales and Coupons) and Impulse Purchase : Belk (1974), in his iconic study, prospected five factors that have an effect on the buying behaviour of the consumer. These factors are time or duration spent in retail shops; physical surrounding of the retail stores; shopping task; social surrounding of the purchaser ; and previous emotional circumstances with which the consumer enters the retail store. Physical atmospherics such as music, aroma, color pattern, and lighting were established to have a strong effect on the buying behaviour of the shoppers (Beverland, 2006). Store atmospherics were also studied to have a positive role in enhancing the perceptions about the product and giving a lasting impression on the cognitive aspect of the consumers (Baker, Parasuraman, Grewal, & Voss, 2002). Presence of music and scent in the store induced a sense of purchasing the product, which is generally impulsive in nature (Mattila & Wirtz, 2001). Along with a store's physical atmospherics, merchandising mechanisms along with in-store sales promotions such as discounts, extra product promotions, and price reductions directly resulted in an impulsive purchase (Kaltcheva & Weitz 2006; Mattila & Wirtz, 2001; Zhang et al., 2007). Cash coupons or discounts were seen to give a sense of “spending less” and a perception of “savings” further reducing the “mental barrier” of the buyers (Hulten & Vanyushyn, 2011). Attractive display of percentage signs on the sales price and promos like “buy one and get one free” on a product prompted a purchase which was impulsive in nature (Zhang et al., 2007). Interactions with sales representatives at a store also enhanced the purchases of a product, which may be at times impulsive in nature (Weitz, 1981). Social elements such as relatives and friends in a store also influenced spontaneous purchases (Mattila & Wirtz, 2001). Hultén and Vanyushyn (2011) found out that impulse purchases were significantly related to frequency of exposure to in-store promotion.

Social factors were seen to generally bring down the ability of the shoppers to think, leading to a temporary loss on self-control, and finally to purchasing impulsively (Mattila & Wirtz, 2001). Thus, based upon the discussion, the following hypotheses are proposed :

↪ **H4** : There exists a positive relationship between promotional activities and impulse purchase.

↪ **H4_a** : There exists a positive relationship between sales proneness and impulse purchase.

↪ **H4_b** : There exists a positive relationship between coupon proneness and impulse purchase.

(5) Consumer Spending Self-Control and Impulse Purchase : Self-control can be exemplified as monitoring one's behaviour, having fair standards, and possessing the scope of any change when required. Self-control in an individual is seen to be a representative of a stable characteristic of one's personality (Baumeister, 2002).

A self-control trait measure was developed by Tangney, Baumeister, and Boone (2004), which emphasized on breaking habits, resisting temptation, and keeping good self-discipline. This measure studied various domains of behaviour but described only the consumption - related phenomenon. Consumer self-control is a struggle between willpower and desires, which generally arise from preferences which are inconsistent in nature (Hoch & Loewenstein, 1991). Impulse buying on the other hand is a strong and defined sensation to purchase and giving in to your temptations (Shoham & Brenčič, 2003 ; Zhang et al., 2007). From the above discussion, it can be concluded that an individual with high self-control would have purchases which are planned and not driven by impulse. Thus, the following hypothesis is proposed :

↪ **H5**: There exists a negative relationship between consumer spending self-control and impulse purchase.

(6) Visual Aesthetics and Impulse Purchase : Visual aesthetics is an important dimension as it forms an important evaluative for consumers who value not just the simple act of purchasing the product, but also the unique experience that defines that shopping experience. Visual product aesthetics provides a sensory dimension to the product (Workman & Caldell, 2007). An exceptionally well-designed product creates a unique differentiation in the minds of the consumers and provides a competitive edge (Bloch & Richins, 1983). Visual appearance of a product plays an important role in influencing the final evaluation of the product and response of consumers towards the final purchase (Crilly, Moultrie, & Clarkson, 2004). Workman and Caldwell (2007) established that visual consumers tend to give more importance to aesthetic factors in comparison to others. Law, Wong, and Yip (2012) and Balaji, Raghavan, and Jha (2011) also established the role of visual aesthetics in consumer's purchase intention. Based on the above discussion, the following hypothesis is proposed :

↪ **H6**: There exists a positive relationship between the visual aesthetics of the product and impulse purchase.

(7) Impulse Purchase and Post Purchase Behavior : Post purchase regret has been a disputable topic, questioned frequently among the researchers and more intensely after Festinger's (1957) research presented that the dissonance could affect customer's decision making process, affecting consumers' attitudes towards their purchase decisions and satisfaction regarding it. Festinger (1957) explained being in a dissonant state as someone whose cognitions are not in synchronization, suggesting that, for some people, dissonance is an extremely painful and intolerable thing. Several research studies reflected that active provision of post-purchase reinforcement could have higher levels of customer satisfaction and retention. Customer satisfaction, complaint behaviour, and loyalty supplemented dissonance acted as constructs of key interest in consumer behaviour. Oliver (1997) suggested that the reduction in the interest was not explicable and unfortunate. For example, many measurement approaches refer to consequences of dissonance rather than to the level of dissonance itself. Since, impulse purchase in itself is a phenomenon where consumer rationality is not prominently reflected in the purchase, chances of post purchase dissonance or regret are seemingly higher. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed :

↪ **H7**: Impulse purchase tendency has a significant effect on post purchase dissonance.

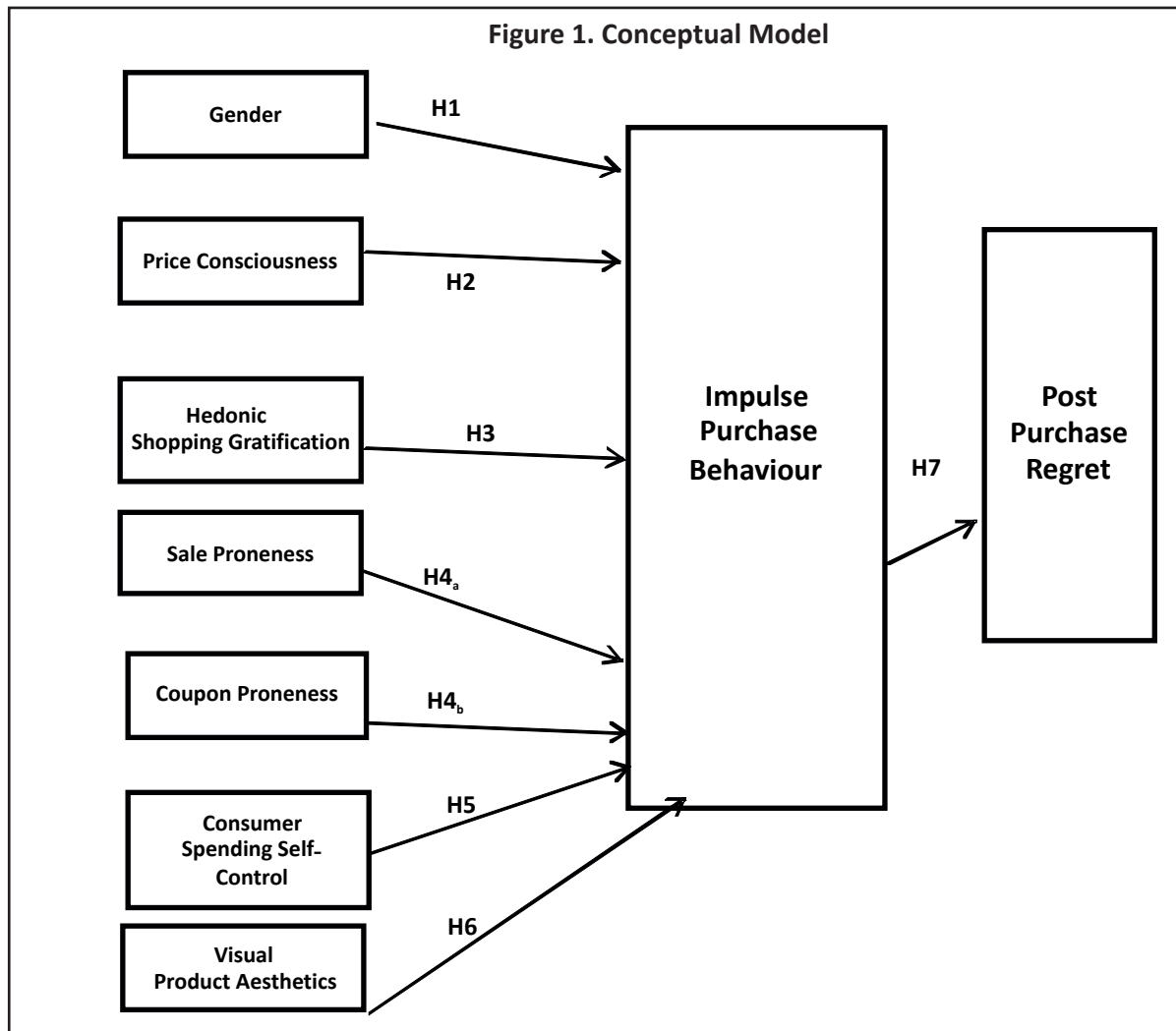


Table 1. Source and Reliability Measures of Scale Items

Name of the Scale	Author	Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Price Consciousness	Lichtenstein, Ridgway, & Netemeyer (1993)	5	0.724
Hedonic Gratification	Arnold & Reynolds (2003)	3	0.863
Coupon Proneness	Lichtenstein, Ridgway, & Netemeyer (1993)	5	0.840
Sale Proneness	Lichtenstein, Ridgway, & Netemeyer (1993)	5	0.814
Consumer Spending Self- Control	Haws & Bearden (2010)	9	0.914
Centrality of Visual Product Aesthetics	Bloch, Fredric, & Arnold (2003)	11	0.908
Buying Impulsiveness Scale	Rook & Fisher (1995)	9	0.862
Regret Experience Measure: REM	Creyer & Ross (1999)	8	0.712

A conceptual model of the study is depicted in the Figure 1.

Methodology

A structured questionnaire using established scales was used to test the proposed research model. Students of post

graduate marketing course participated in the survey as a part of their consumer behaviour course. The responses were collected over a period of two months in April and May 2017. A total of 250 filled questionnaires were collected, out of which 241 were considered fit for further analysis. Multiple linear regression was carried out to test the results. The Table 1 summarizes the scales used along with their reliabilities.

Analysis and Discussion

The results were analyzed using multiple regression analysis between the identified antecedents and impulse purchase using SPSS 21. Further, chi-square test was used to test the strength of relationship between impulse purchase and post purchase dissonance. The results of stepwise regression concluded the effect of price consciousness, visual aesthetics, consumer spending self - control, hedonism, and sale proneness on consumer impulse purchase behaviour. The results present a statistically significant model, $F(7, 234) = 21.810, p < .0005$ (Table 2). The R^2 value of the model is 0.395 (Table 3).

(1) Gender and Impulse Buying Behaviour of the Consumers : There is no significant outcome established by the results which indicate a relationship between gender and impulse purchase (Table 4), although previous studies have proven the impulse purchase phenomenon being more prominently displayed by female consumers (Dittmar et al., 1995 ; Muratore, 2016 ; Richins & Dawson, 1992 ; Rindfleisch et al., 1997 ; Styvén et al., 2017 ; Wood, 1998). The results of this study are more in agreement with the results of Bellenger et al. (1978) and Kwon and Armstrong (2002). The argument for different results can be attributed to the gender gap that is minimizing and behaviours which were once gender specific, are now being displayed equally by both the genders. Also, since the study has considered young Indian consumers, the results are more prominently defining similar gender behaviour. Thus, we reject hypothesis H1.

Table 2. ANOVA Results

		ANOVA				
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	119.556	7	17.079	21.810	.000 ^b
	Residual	183.241	234	.783		
	Total	302.797	241			

a. Dependent Variable: Impulsiveness

b. Predictors: (Constant), Gender, Sale Proneness , Price Consciousness , Consumer Spending Self- Control, Visual Product Aesthetics Response, Hedonic Gratification, Coupon Proneness

Table 3. Model Summary

MODEL SUMMARY										
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics					
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change	Durbin-Watson
1	.628 ^a	.395	.377	.88492	.395	21.810	7	234	.000	1.951

a. Predictors: (Constant), Gender, Sale Proneness , Price Consciousness , Consumer Spending Self- Control, Visual Product Aesthetics Response, Hedonic Gratification, Coupon Proneness

b. Dependent Variable: Impulsiveness

Table 4. Multiple Linear Regression Results on Factors Affecting Impulse Purchase Behaviour

Factors	B-Values	Standard Error	Beta	t - value	Sig.	Hypothesis	Hypothesis Accepted/Rejected
Gender	-.145	.125	-.065	-1.164	.246	H1	Rejected
Price Consciousness	-.419	.053	-.413	-7.877	.000	H2	Accepted
Hedonic Gratification	.124	.042	.187	2.945	.004	H3	Accepted
Sale Proneness	.140	.069	.136	2.029	.044	H4 _a	Accepted
Coupon Proneness	.048	.062	.051	.783	.435	H4 _b	Rejected
Consumer Spending Self Control	-.238	.054	-.246	-4.421	.000	H5	Accepted
Visual Product Aesthetics Response	.114	.058	.120	1.974	.050	H6	Accepted

(2) Price Consciousness and Impulsive Buying Behaviour : The results tested to establish the relationship between price consciousness and impulsive buying behaviour show a negative significant relationship ($\beta = -0.416$, $p < 0.05$) (Table 4). This means that price consciousness and impulse purchase behaviour are linearly negatively related. It can be explained by the argument that as a person becomes more price conscious, the assessment of purchase is more involved and the intention is to purchase the best product within the given price point. Such purchases lack the spontaneity of the impulse purchases, which seek pleasure and adventure in the purchase experience. Thus, we accept the hypothesis H2. The results are in line with research conducted by Muratore (2016), which concluded that price consciousness and impulsive buying tendencies are negatively correlated in case of teen consumers.

(3) Hedonic Shopping Gratification and Impulse Buying Behaviour : The results of step - wise regression establish a positive relationship between hedonic shopping motivations and impulse purchase ($\beta = 0.151$, $p < 0.05$) (Table 4). The results depicted in Table 4 show that hedonism is an important indicator driving impulse purchase in young Indian consumers. Past research studies too have established that people show impulsivity when exposed to an emotion such as adventure, fun, and happiness (Babin et al., 1994 ; Carpenter, 2008 ; Hirschman & Holbrook, 1982; Jones et al., 2003; Lee et al., 2009 ; Seo & Lee, 2008). Shopping too can be considered as an activity which shares similar inclination and , therefore, impulsiveness is a natural outcome. Thus, we accept hypothesis H3. The results further establish the growing importance the consumers are giving to the experience of shopping. Shopping as an act is slowly moving away from being a pure rational and utility based activity to something which has orientations of joy and pleasure and is governed by emotions. This has major learning for marketers who need to redefine their offering and experience to target both mind and heart of the consumer to create sustainable competitive differentiation.

(4) Promotional Activities (Sales & Coupons) and Impulse Buying Behaviour : Sale proneness is found to be an important antecedent driving impulse purchase ($\beta = 0.133$, $p < 0.05$) (Table 4). This result supports past research (Hultén & Vanyushyn, 2011; Kaltcheva & Weitz, 2006 ; Mattila & Wirtz, 2001; Smith & Sinha, 2000 ; Zhang et al., 2007). Discounted offers increase the purchase affordability for an individual and make the purchase more attractive for the individual by rationalizing the price - value relationship. Research studies have proven Indian consumers to be value conscious and ,therefore, price discounts strengthen the value proposition, thereby increasing the probability of purchase. Thus, H4_a is accepted.

The result fails to establish any significant relationship between coupon proneness and impulse purchase. Impulsive purchase is an unplanned and spontaneous purchase which is primarily controlled by the underlying need to fulfil one's desire without thinking about the possible outcomes. Coupons make the purchase more planned and take away the significant thrill attached with the purchase. Therefore, the results do not support the hypothesis

of relationship between coupon proneness and impulse purchase. Therefore, H4_b is rejected.

(5) Consumer Spending Self - Control and Impulse Buying Behaviour : The results of step wise regression analysis establish a statistically significant negative linear relationship between consumer spending self- control and impulse buying ($\beta = - 0.258, p < 0.05$) (Table 4). Consumer spending self-control (CSSC) measures an individual's capacity to control spending related thoughts, emotions, and decisions in conformance to one's own self-imposed standards (Baumeister, 2002 ; Carver & Scheier, 1998 ; Vohs & Faber, 2007). A greater spending self-control will lead to a more conservative purchase strategy by an individual, thus diminishing the probability, if any, of impulse or spontaneous purchase. Hence, the hypothesis H5 stands accepted.

(6) Centrality of Visual Aesthetics of the Products and Impulse Buying Behaviour : The results establish a statistically significant relationship between centrality of visual aesthetics and impulsive buying behaviour ($\beta = 0.181, p < 0.05$) (Table 4). The centrality of visual aesthetics measures four different dimensions of product appearance, that is, value assigned, acumen to recognize and evaluate product designs, response, and impact on product preferences and satisfaction (Bloch, Fredric, & Arnold, 2003).

Past studies too have confirmed the importance of packaging, PoP displays, store atmosphere and product design, and appearance on impulse buying. The results support the impact of product design and appearance in making an impulse purchase in case of young Indian consumers. Attractive product designs and displays break through the clutter and are able to win consumer attention leading to a better probability to be purchased. With changing lifestyle patterns and limited time availability, consumers today are favouring to shop from places which provide more variety in terms of available brand choices. Therefore, with multiple brands competing under the same roof for consumer attention, attractive brand visual aesthetics will surely act as a winning strategy to seek consumer favourability. This study reflects that there is a statistically significant effect of product aesthetics on spontaneous purchases. Thus, we accept the hypothesis H6. This result supports already established research in the area by Law et al. (2012) and Balaji et al. (2011).

(7) Impulse Purchase and Post Purchase Dissonance : To measure the relationship between impulse purchase and post purchase dissonance, Pearson correlation was run. The result shows there is no significant relationship between impulse purchase and post purchase dissonance ($r = .106, p > 0.05$). This result contradicts the previous research studies which established a positive relationship between impulse purchase behaviour and post purchase dissonance. Our research results are in line with George and Yaoyuneyong (2010) who too established that impulsive buyers experienced lower post purchase dissonance than people who planned and purchased. The authors argued that the reason can be impulsive buying acting as a coping mechanism to avoid discomfort, which is a natural outcome in circumstances when expectations are not met.

As India becomes economically stronger with rising disposable incomes, we see an increase in the consuming class driven by impulse and having very little place for regret. The thrill or the hedonic appeal to consume is much larger than it ever was. The pull to enjoy life and to consume whatever there is on offer has diminished the role of regret in consumption. For the materialistic young generation, the power to purchase itself is the strongest satisfier than any other post purchase evaluation. Thus, we reject hypothesis H7.

Managerial Implications

The study gives an insight into the most promising customer segment of young Indian consumers with respect to impulse buying behaviour. India is a country of disparity not just in terms of people of different religions and cultures who coexist, but also with different generations with different shopping orientations. The study is able to

identify important dimensions like visual aesthetics and hedonic gratification, which drive impulse purchase. Taking cue from these, marketers should pay importance to the design elements of the product and should design products which are not only intelligent and feature loaded, but also have visually appealing designs. Designing shopping experiences which create pleasurable outcomes and treat for the senses should be the defining objective of the marketers. Shopping has a new meaning and is no more an activity to purchase products to solve a problem. The pleasure that comes along during this product acquisition is what the young consumer is seeking today. This reorientation of not just focusing on the final product but also how it is being acquired and how that process can be the most unique, desirable, and gratifying will define the future competition.

The research also presents a new understanding to the marketers of the diminishing gender boundaries which existed in the past. Further research studies can be conducted to clearly identify how changing gender roles are redefining the Indian society, and more specifically, the youth shopper who is a post liberalization generation. The role of price and its consciousness still exists for the young consumers, probably being passed on by the older generation. However, surprisingly, the regret factor takes a back seat. Probably, time to repurchase and re-consume is diminishing because of the novelty of the new offerings and choices available, giving no space and time for regret.

Limitations of the Study and Scope for Further Research

The research has its limitations in being confined to a particular area, that is, NCR in India and therefore, cannot be generalized for the entire youth population of the country. Also, we feel that the results would have been more pronounced if a larger sample of the population was studied. It is proposed that to get an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon, experimental designs can be utilized where specific conditions related to the store environment can be manipulated to get a clearer picture of an individual's response in real time. Also, since consumers are moving towards online purchases, the same phenomenon should be studied specifically to understand the drivers affecting impulse buying both in online and offline retail formats. A comparison will help researchers get a richer understanding of the phenomenon.

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About the Authors

Dr. Kokil Jain is an Associate Professor in the area of Marketing in Amity International Business School, Amity University, Noida. She is a Doctorate in Management with over 15 years of experience in the areas of teaching and research. She has keen interest and expertise in the area of Brand Management and Consumer Behaviour. Her current research interests include : Luxury Branding, Consumer Brand Relationship, and Brand Anthropomorphism.

Dr. Shalini Gautam has been working as an Assistant Professor in Amity International Business School, Amity University, Noida since the last 6.5 years. She worked in various banks like HSBC, Standard Chartered for 12 years and then shifted to academics. She has got many papers published earlier in Indian Journal of Finance, Prabhandan : Indian Journal of Management, and other leading management journals.

Diksha Pasricha is a PhD. Research Scholar with Amity International Business School, Amity University, Noida. She is pursuing her doctoral thesis in the area of Luxury Brand Marketing. She is a bronze - medalist in MBA in International Business and Marketing.