

A Comprehensive Literature Review of Impulse Buying Behavior

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ARTICLE INFO

ABSTRACT

Article history:

Received 18 January 2018

Received in revised form 6 February 2018

Accepted 28 March 2018

Available online 20 May 2018

Keywords:

Impulse buying, dimensions,
determinants, outcomes

Many of the researchers have studied and explored the synergetic impacts of different factors affecting the impulse buying and the factors affected by impulse buying which affect the rate of sales turnover. In this regard, this study is aimed at reviewing the literature of previous researchers (since 2000) pertaining to the impulse buying which reveals the study of the different facets and dimensions of impulse buying. It gives a broad overview of the impulse buying construct and the various aspects affecting the impulse buying behavior as well as impulse buying which affects many aspects.

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1. Introduction

Impulse buying is thought of as a sudden, compelling, hedonically complex buying behavior in which the rapidity of an impulse decision process prevents the thoughtful and deliberate consideration to search alternative information and choices [8, 6,]. Impulse buying is unplanned purchase behavior due to a sudden desire to buy the product for self-gratification [30].

1.1 Importance/Significance of the Study

In the emerging economies, there is a need to study the impulse buying due to recent development in retailing and huge cultural differences when compared to developed economies [20]. Dramatic increase in personal disposable income, life style and credit availability have made impulse buying a widespread phenomenon across the different retail formats. Creating an attractive physical shopping environment and in-store stimuli is important to enhance the sales through the unplanned buying [1]. The retailers can capitalize the universal nature of impulse buying in order to benefit their respective businesses.

Due to the dynamic trends of the markets in the developing economies, the impulse buying has become one of the growing areas of research [34]. Since income of people is increasing more and

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more due to which people are moving towards western culture which has resulted in growing up the purchasing power of the consumers [46]. Therefore, because of its importance review paper is aimed at identifying the different factors which affect impulse buying behavior which reveals the importance of impulse buying in the retailing sector.

1.2 Intent of the Study:

Because of the importance of impulse buying in the marketing, the authors have undergone through the comprehensive searching of the literature in order to capture the key literature pertaining to the impulse buying to learn about the gaps as well as the key trends in the area of impulse buying. Hence, the paper systematically reviews the studies conducted by the researchers including the literature published from 2000 to 2017 on impulse buying which was a complex piece of research, aiming at identifying, selecting and synthesizing all published articles on an impulse buying while generating the fact sheets. Generating the fact sheets enabled the authors to know where the knowledge of impulse buying lacks which can be used to guide the future research.

1.3 Research Questions:

The research questions of the study are as under:

- Is there a need for developing a standard instrument for the measurement of impulse buying?
- Is there a need to propose a standard framework for determinants of impulse buying?
- Is there need to extend the framework suggesting impulse buying as a predictor or moderator?

1.4 Purpose of the Study:

The purpose of reviewing the literature is to succinctly reveal the recent progress in the area of impulse buying behavior. The paper is aimed at summarizing the current state of knowledge of impulse buying while creating an understanding about the topic through the discussion of the findings, presented in the recent research studies. The study is aimed at producing the coherent arguments about the impulse buying. It is because the impulse buying is one of the major issues of research because of its complex nature [29, 34].

1.5 Research Objectives:

Following are the objectives of the effort:

- To review the operational definitions of impulse buying.
- To review the determinants of impulse buying.
- To review the outcomes of impulse buying.

2. Methodology

In order to meet research objectives, a systematic literature review (SLR) has been carried out emphasizing on the leading journals that publish impulse buying research. In contrast with other traditional as well as less systematic approaches to carry out literature reviews, systematic literature

review is thought of as more superior with respect to transparency because other researchers are able to verify the findings of the study more easily while replicating the research setup.

In order to ensure the sufficiently thorough coverage of research, literature has been searched in the following journals: *Managerial and Decision Economics, Journal of Information Technology, Journal of Retailing and Consumer Service, Eurasian Journal of Business and Management, Journal of Customer Behaviour, Accounting, organizations and society, The International Review of Retail, Distribution and Consumer Research, Electronic Commerce Research and Applications, International Journal of Academic Research, Journal of Economics and Behavioral Studies, Journal of Product & Brand Management, Journal of consumer marketing, Journal of Marketing Research, Electronic Commerce Research, Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management, International Journal of Retail & Distribution Management, Journal of consumer psychology, Asian Journal of Business Management Studies, International Journal of Business and Management, International Journal of Trade, Economics and Finance, British Food Journal, International Journal of Electronic Commerce, Tourism Management, Decision Support Systems, International Journal of Information Management, Management Science Letters, Journal of Business and Management, International Journal of Marketing Studies, Journal of Services Marketing, Asian Journal of Management Sciences & Education, Psychology & Marketing, African Journal of Business Management, Journal of Business Research, Clothing and Textiles Research Journal, Journal of Business Research, Marketing Letters, Journal of Product & Brand Management, ASA University Review, European Journal of Scientific Research, Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences, Journal of International Marketing, Journal of consumer research, Addiction, Journal of Shopping Center Research, Social Behavior and Personality: an international journal, American Journal of Industrial and Business Management, ACR North American Advances, International Journal of Management.* Combined, these journals publish the majority of academic research focusing on impulse buying behavior of the consumers.

Hence, the study has been conducted by reviewing the literature of the studies conducted by the various researchers since 2000 to 2017 and the related articles found were 55. Related literature has been searched through Google scholar that is one of the widely-used search engines for academic purposes. The terms searched were: impulse buying, unplanned buying, sudden purchases etc. The papers have been selected by title. After selection of the papers, the authors have gone through the abstracts of the paper. Therefore, the studies for reviewing the literature have been selected with respect to title and abstract. After selecting the paper different fact sheets are prepared pertaining to the studied impulse buying's dimensions, determinants and outcomes.

3. Results

Impulse buying is thought of as a sudden, rapid, compelling, hedonic, complex and thoughtless phenomenon which does not need any deliberate consideration to search for alternative information and choices [17, 38]. Impulse buying is sudden, powerful, unintended and emotional as well as persistent urge which occurs immediately and spontaneously [21, 44]. Impulse buying is referred to as buying those things which are not in listed in our shopping list [16].

Impulse buying is thought of as an urge which immediately occurs to buy around the clock and is highly difficult to resist. It is composed of spontaneous and unreflective desires of buying things thoughtlessly and illogically [41, 50]. The results are composed of determinants, dimensions and outcomes of impulse buying. These are as under:

2.1 Standardized Instrument for the Measurement of Impulse Buying:

From the fact sheet (Table 1) it has been evident that many of the determinants are synonymously used in the definitions of the impulse buying by different authors.

2.1.1 Unplanned

Impulse buying is unplanned [16, 25, 46] or unintended purchase phenomena [29, 38, 44, 45]. Vohs and Faber [50], Joo Park *et al.*, [17] and Park *et al.*, [38] defined impulse buying as thoughtless phenomena. Impulse buying is spontaneous [38, 44, 46, 50]. It is thought of as unreflective as well [21, 29, 38, 45, 50]. Therefore, unintended, thoughtless, spontaneous and unreflective are the determinants which have been considered as “unplanned purchases” because of the similar meanings of the words.

2.1.2 Sudden

Similarly, Joo Park *et al.*, [17], Sultan *et al.*, [44], Punj [41], Park *et al.*, [38] and Tifferet *et al.*, [45] (2012) used the word sudden whereas Sultan *et al.*, [44], Vohs and Faber [50], Punj [41], Lo, *et al.*, [28], Karbasivar *et al.*, [21], Park *et al.*, [38] suggested the word immediate. Therefore, due to the similar meaning of the words, immediate has also been considered as “sudden” in the study.

2.1.3 Compelling

The literature reveals that impulse buying is compelling [17, 38], powerful [41, 44] or a strong [45] phenomena. Compelling, strong and powerful are the dimensions which convey the similar meaning. Therefore, these words have been categorized as “compelling”.

2.1.4 Persistent Urge

Persistent urge [41, 44, 50] and around the clock purchase Vohs and Faber [50] have been categorised under a single umbrella named as “persistent urge”.

2.1.5 Emotional

Impulse buying behavior is also Emotional in nature [21, 44] is usually associated with emotional conflict [41]. Therefore, it has been categorised as “emotional”.

2.1.6 Inactiveness

While doing impulse purchases, customers are usually inactive and do not search the products and information pertaining to the products deliberately. Therefore, no deliberate search [17, 38] and inactiveness Masouleh *et al.*, [29] have been categorised as “Inactiveness”. The dimensions of the impulse buying are as under

Table 1
 Dimensions of Impulse Buying Behavior

Authors (publication year)	Unplanned	Sudden	Compelling	Hedonic	Complex	Inactiveness	Persistent Urge	Emotional
Koufaris <i>et al.</i> , [25]	✓							
Joo Park <i>et al.</i> [17]	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Sultan <i>et al.</i> , [44]	✓	✓	✓				✓	✓
Jeffrey <i>et al.</i> , [16]	✓							
Vohs <i>et al.</i> , [50]	✓	✓					✓	
Punj [41]		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
Park <i>et al.</i> , [38]	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Karbasivar <i>et al.</i> , [21]		✓		✓	✓			✓
Tinne [46]	✓							
Masouleh <i>et al.</i> , [29]	✓					✓		
Tifferet <i>et al.</i> , [45]	✓	✓	✓	✓				
Lo <i>et al.</i> , [28]		✓		✓				

2.2 Standardized Framework for Determinants of Impulse Buying

2.2.1 Sales Promotions

From fact sheet (Table 2), it has been evident that sales promotion has influence on impulse buying behavior [3]. Impulse buying behavior of the consumers is influenced by many of the promotional activities [46]. Coupons [15, 35,], price promotion [56], discount [21, 29, 35, 46, 53, 56], free products [21], various schemes [46], bonus packs [53], loyalty programs, contests, price packs [35] superstore offer [46] and promotional signage [32] are the determinants of impulse buying which have been studied by the authors and therefore, have been categorised as “sales promotion” because all of these determinants are the types of sales promotion.

2.2.2 Advertising

Advertisement is also a determinant which has been studied by different authors while using different terms i.e., Word of mouth [13], video stimulus, Image & Text Stimuli [2] and television shopping programs [39]. Therefore, these determinants have been categorized under “advertising”.

2.2.3 Personal Factors

Literature reveals that there are many different aspects of personal factors which greatly affect the impulse buying behavior of the consumers. These personal factors are related to personality and the personal traits of the customers. Personal factors (mood, hedonic motive, lack of control, extroversion, materialism) [22, 29] and personality traits [30, 36, 42, 48], has been studied holistically as well as partially while considering different facets which have been studied by the authors are hedonism/pleasure [11, 12, 14, 17, 52], excitement [13] emotions [2, 17], satisfaction Bressolles *et*

al., [5], urge to buy impulsively [27,] or arousal [52], post purchase mood [37], anticipated regret [56], self-esteem [13], esteem [14], stress reaction [55], variety seeking tendency [36], impulse buying tendency [37], self-control [44], lack of control [55], consumers' experience and attitudes [25]. Interactivity and personalization (it is the ability of consumer to define and design a product or service for themselves which is most adapted to their needs, having a relation privileged with the brand as well as modifying the contents and the shape of the environment in real time)[5], self-monitoring, Optimum stimulation, consumer impulsiveness [43], absorption (it is ability of the people to respond to environmental and sensory cues composed of the factors affecting the purchase and consumption of products [55], shopping experience [14], shopping life style (the behavior of the customers according to the series of personal responses and opinions about purchase of the products) [47], shopping enjoyment and perceived control [25], fashion involvement (because it is related to the emotions, moods and appeals of the customers) [12], shopping enjoyment [25], fashion-involvement (positive emotions and moods: the extent of personal interest respectively) [17, 47], pre-decision stage & post decision stage (because decision making is a cognitive process of the customers and is related to the attitudinal and behavioral facets of impulse buying behavior) [47], economic wellbeing (overall financial health or financial position of the costumer) [3], normative evaluation (the state of desire that is experienced upon encountering an object in the environment) [27].

2.2.4 Store environment

Store environment has also been observed as a common determinant studied by the authors. The facets of store environment studied by the authors are display [21, 32, 46, 51], window display [4] :in-store form/mannequin display [32], forum display [4], retailing factors [20], floor merchandising [4, 32], shop brand name [4], behavior of sales persons [3, 31, 46], store music [3], store environmental stimulations [31] and idolatrous behavior [54].

2.2.5 Online factors

Literature also reveals the "online factors" as determinants of impulse shopping behavior. These factors are website factors [25], ease of using websites [5], website quality [48], information available on websites, reliability/ honoring commitments and security and privacy of the information pertaining to the customers [5].

2.2.6 Demographic factors

Demographic factors play a great role in impulse buying behavior [10, 22]. The other facets studied by the authors are the region [49], gender [3, 18, 45, 49], income [46] and age [3] partially.

2.2.7 Situational factors

Situational factors have influence on impulse buying behavior [22, 29, 53]. The other facets studied by the authors are the credit card [3, 25] time availability, money availability [3] and festivals [46].

2.2.8 Social factors

Social factors have also influence on impulse buying. The facets of the social factors studied by the authors are social needs [14], para-social interaction [39], individualist orientation and collectivist orientation [49] and family influence [3].

The below table illustrates the literature which is compiled in such a way that impulse buying is taken as dependent variable and other facets as independent variables in order to find out the impact or relationship between them.

2.3 Impulse Buying as Predictor and Moderator

2.3.1 IB as predictor variable

Besides, it has been evident from the literature that impulse buying also affects many of the factors because impulse buying have impact on the television shopping program exposure [39], impulse buying satisfaction and post purchase mood [37] and purchase intentions [9]. Literature indicates that very little attention has been given by the searchers towards the factors which are affected by the impulse buying behavior.

2.3.2 IB as Moderating Variable

Impulse buying also acts as moderator between many of the variables which has been found from the literature. It acts as a moderator between online service quality and buying impulse [5], shopping motives and commercial activities [26]. Impulse buying tendency acts as a moderator between cognitive product involvement and purchase intentions while responding towards mobile text advertising. Besides impulse buying tendency also acts as moderator between the affective product involvement and purchase intentions while responding towards mobile text advertising [9]. Hence, it has been evident that impulse buying is an important phenomenon for the organizations and the retailers because it is source of gaining the profitability by increasing sales volumes and market's shares.

4. Conclusion

From the literature, it has been evident that different aspects pertaining to impulse buying have been studied. From the results, it is found that the most common outcome variables are the personal factors, social factors, sales promotion, product factors, advertising, situational factors, online factors, store factor and demographics. Few of the studies have investigated other aspects affecting impulse buying behavior which also need to be investigated in different contexts because impulse buying is one of the interesting phenomena which are of great importance not only academically but also for the practitioners for last few decades. It has been one of the emerging areas of the research which is greatly emphasized by the researchers. It is helpful for the marketing managers in order to reengineer their marketing activities for the purpose to increase sales volumes and market shares to achieve the ultimate goals of profit maximization. There needs to proper attention to find the factors affected by impulse buying.

Table 2
 Determinants of Impulse Buying Behavior

Author (Publication Year)	Personal Factors	Social Factors	Sales promotion	Product factors	Advertising	Situations	Store factors	Online Factors	Browsing	Demographics
Khan <i>et al.</i> , [22]	✓					✓				✓
Badgaiyan <i>et al.</i> , [3]	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓			✓
Zhou <i>et al.</i> , [56]	✓		✓							
Nagadeepa <i>et al.</i> , [35]			✓							
Ozer <i>et al.</i> , [37]	✓									
Bhatti <i>et al.</i> , [4]							✓			
Yin Xu and Huang [53]			✓			✓				
Haq <i>et al.</i> , [12]	✓									
Liu <i>et al.</i> , [27]	✓									
Mehta <i>et al.</i> , [32]			✓				✓			
Masouleh <i>et al.</i> , [29]	✓		✓	✓		✓				
Gültekin <i>et al.</i> , [11]	✓								✓	
Kacen <i>et al.</i> , [20]				✓			✓			
Sultan <i>et al.</i> [44]	✓									
Karbasivar <i>et al.</i> , [21]			✓			✓	✓			
Tinne [46]			✓	✓		✓	✓			✓
Mattila <i>et al.</i> , [31]							✓			
Youn <i>et al.</i> , [55]	✓									
Olsen <i>et al.</i> , [36]	✓									
Mathai <i>et al.</i> , [30]	✓									
Shahjehan <i>et al.</i> , [42]	✓									
Harmancioglu <i>et al.</i> , [13]	✓			✓	✓					
Turkylmaz <i>et al.</i> , [48]	✓							✓		
Sharma <i>et al.</i> , [43]	✓									
Tirmizi <i>et al.</i> , [47]	✓									
Wakefield <i>et al.</i> , [51]							✓			
Yingjiao Xu [52]	✓									
Bressolles <i>et al.</i> , [5]	✓						✓	✓		
Joo Park <i>et al.</i> , [17]	✓									
Park <i>et al.</i> , [39]					✓					
Adelaar <i>et al.</i> , [2]	✓				✓					
Heilman <i>et al.</i> , [15]			✓							
Koufaris <i>et al.</i> , [25]	✓							✓		
Hausman [14]	✓	✓								
Tuyet Mai <i>et al.</i> , [49]		✓								✓
Liu <i>et al.</i> , [27]	✓									
Jung Chang <i>et al.</i> , [18]										✓
Tifferet <i>et al.</i> , [45]										✓
Ghani <i>et al.</i> , [10]										✓

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