

AN EMPIRICAL STUDY ON THE IMPULSIVE BUYING BEHAVIOR IN WOMEN AND FACTORS AFFECTING SUCH BEHAVIOR

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ABSTRACT

Consumer Studies is a very explorative field and the purpose of this study is to establish a link between growing number of facilities provided to the consumers and increase in their impulsive (unplanned) buying experiences. The research was started with the basic objective to study the buying behavior of women with special references to their unplanned buying experiences. The association of such provocational factors and their impact on working and non-working women were studied. A structured questionnaire was administered to the respondents and responses were generated from various locations in Raipur city (capital city of Chhattisgarh State).

Various statistical tools were used to find out the associations for such an instant behavior. The study reveals the impulse buying behavior in women and the driving forces behind such a behavior on occupational basis.

Keywords: *Consumer Buying Behavior, Impulsive Buying Behavior, Emotional concerns, Cognitive decision making.*

Introduction:

Consumer buying behavior is a study of individual consumer. It involves the study of psychological processes that consumers go through in recognizing needs, finding means to solve these needs, making a purchase decision, interpret information, make plans and implement the plans. There are several reasons which can be given for the rising trend of impulse buying. According to the study done by Williams and Dardis, 1972, rise in the level of discretionary income, growth of self service merchandising, in-store display, work and leisure time pressures, geographic mobility suggests that consumers take less time and effort in purchase planning pleasures. It's been 40 years since the area of consumer buying behavior is being explored. The studies undertaken by different scholars go beyond identifying the variables that results in impulsive buying, influencing the decision-making, general shopping behavior, shopping life style, personality and demographics.

Impulsive buying is a situation where a buyer gets trapped in a propagated situation which is created by the marketers by offering excessive discounts and other offers to the consumers. Ultimately, the consumer ends up buying a product which was not necessary to be purchased. The area of impulsive buying needs to be studied and further explored so as to find out the factors which provides acceleration to the ultimate cause of impulsive buying.

Buying situations can be classified on two basis:

- a. Planned purchases
- b. Unplanned purchases

We identify our needs, then we go for evaluating and searching the alternatives and finally purchase our products (buying decision is made), the buying process is not supposed to complete; the marketers evaluate the post purchase behavior also.

According to the studies done by Pollay (1968), Deshpande and Krishnan (1980), Bellenger, Robertson and Hirschman (1987), Prasad (1978), following points are evident:

- a. There appears to be high level of impulse purchasing in today's marketplace.
- b. This type of purchase behavior is not confined to any one type of product or outlet.
- c. Despite its importance, there is little empirical evidence available on subject of unplanned purchasing.
- d. There is even less evidence concerning other stages of pre-purchase planning.
- e. The evidence which does not exist is generally dated

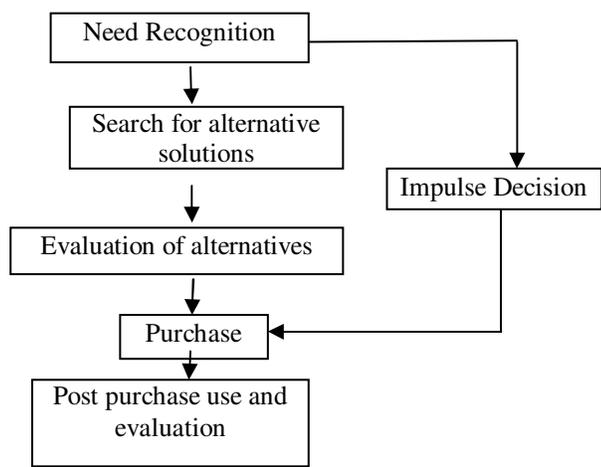
Stern (1962), has found out nine product related factors which would influence unplanned buying:

- a. Low Price
- b. Marginal need for items
- c. Mass distribution
- d. Self-service
- e. Mass advertisement
- f. Prominent store display
- g. Short product life
- h. Small size
- i. Ease of storage

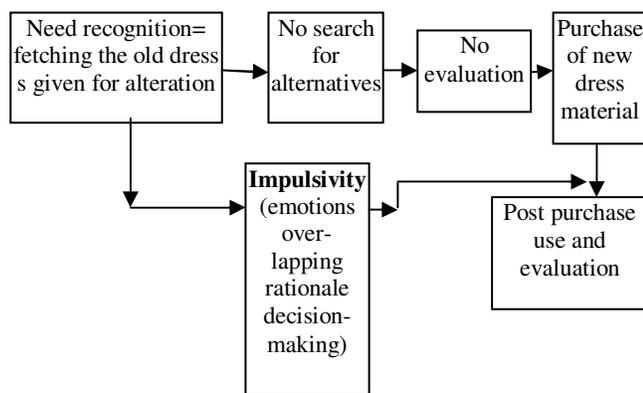
Consider the following Situation:

Mrs. Singh went to a boutique to fetch some old dresses, which she had given for alteration. The boutique owner told her that some new and fresh stock has come in reasonable prices and good quality too. She could not hold herself back to buy six of the dress material shown to her. The above stated example is an attempt to specify how important is it to understand such an instant behavior that is connected somewhere with the psychological and emotional concerns in an individual.

The following model by Engel and Blackwell explains the buying process of a normal purchaser:



Applying the example on the model given by Engel and Blackwell (1982). We get the following equation:



Objectives of the study:

1. The study seeks to find out the women buying behavior.
2. The study sought to find out the factors that stimulate impulsivity among women.
3. It seeks to further investigate the association between Impulse buying behavior and factors that generate Impulse in women.
4. What is the proportional association between working and non-working population of women and the impulse driving forces?

Rationale of the Study:

It has been noticed that the raising trend of shopping malls and availability of varied items under one roof has definitely exploited the hidden impulsivity in most of us. A buyer in a big shopping store might enter with a well planned and well listed list of confectionaries but ultimately end up buying many related items which have been displayed with shopping list of the buyer.

According to the studies already done by Freud (1956) and Mai, et al (2002), there are two principles on which buying behavior can be defined: The principles of pleasure Depicts the immediate satisfaction which a buyer derives from purchasing a product. And the principle of Reality states regarding the satisfaction what a consumer derives after delayed gratification.

Impulse Buying Behavior and related studies will try to establish the relativity between Impulsivity and influences. It will definitely enhance the understanding of this topic and will also help the retailers and marketers on the issue. The paper will certainly try to add on the existing knowledge about the topic.

Literature Review:

Consumer Behavior has a long history of Research. Since past 40 years, Marketing and consumer behavior researchers have strived to capture a persuasive phenomenon which is given the name of **“Impulsive buying”**. With over 13 million of retail stores, India has more retailers than any other country in the world. In Urban centers, these traditional retail stores are being supplemented by large malls. In a survey done by Sinha and Uniyal, 2008, the observations were:

- Indian consumers are noted for high degree of value orientation.
- Indians have high degree of family orientation.
- Products which communicate feelings and emotions get better with Indian consumers.
- Working women today have also stepped out of long standing image of being only a home maker.
- Indian consumers are price sensitive and prefer to buy value for money as products.
- The expenditure in the year of 2008 for consumer durables was 4000 Crs.
- In Urban centers, especially women have emerged as a very large and attractive segment.

According to Prof. Pine (The author of sheconomics, of the Univ. of Hertfordshire), “in the ten days before their periods begin, women are more likely to make extravagant impulsive buys”

A survey conducted by a magazine Marie Clarie on 1500 British ladies reveals that the spending habits of women could not be curbed while recession. This again became the topic of curiosity in a study done by Wharton Jay H. Baker, a consulting firm found that the shopping style of men and women differ in many ways i.e. Women shop and men buy. They seek personal attention of salesman and

enjoy exploring more and more alternatives. Whereas, men treat shopping to be instrumental, they are rather very particular what they need and about the things they have to buy. They go for convenience such as parking places etc. Men rarely want help of salespeople. Therefore in totality, it was observed by the study done by Wharton, Marketing professor, Stephon J. Hoch, shopping behavior mirrors gender differences throughout many aspects of life.

As the model of Engel and Blackwell (1982) denotes that planned buying behavior consists of five stages, but the factor of impulsivity was ignored while framing the model of purchase and consumption of the product. Since, it is an individual who experiences the impulse to buy, not the product.

Going back to the purchasing pattern differences in men and women, In India too women are becoming style conscious. We have a breed of females that have mastered the art of buying armed with increased disposable income due to recognition and position in the corporate world.

In the countries like US, impulsive buying behavior accounts for 80% of all purchases. The studies done by Burroughs in 1996; Piron in 1991; Rook in 1987; Rook and Hoch in 1985 states that the research should not be limited to the product category and the respective retail pattern, rather one should go beyond to explore the factor of impulsivity. According to Welles, (1986) nine out of ten shoppers occasionally buy on impulse. For a thorough understanding of consumer behavior, researchers must recognize the consumers are influenced both by long-term rational concerns and by more short-term emotional concerns, which ultimately effects their decision to purchase (as stated by Hirschman 1985; Hoch and Loewenstein 1991).

It has been noticed from the spending patterns that the unplanned purchases are mostly for small and inexpensive items. The past researchers has termed the concerns of the buyers which ultimately lead to unplanned buying, as such expenditure pattern is for the satisfaction of the short term urges, Menstrual upsets, relaxation and handling stress, for escapism from the real situation.

These are the studies done by various researchers which have inspired me to take up such an interesting topic as it deals with all of us being buyers and consumers of one or the other product.

Research Methodology:

The consumer who shops in organized outlets like super bazaars, shopping malls, departmental stores etc, in different areas of Raipur city (the capital city of Chhattisgarh state) were taken as population in the study. A convenient sample of 150 women buyers were requested to complete the questionnaire on voluntary basis, out of which only 127 respondents responses could be obtained. The comments made by the respondents also formed very significant part of the study. The impulse driving forces such as low prices of the product; Easy availability, location related factor, Self-service counters; ease of storage; store display, appearance of the product;

Mood swings and increase in purchasing ability; high fashion involvement; mass advertisements and short product life cycles were taken as the impulse driving factors under the study.

For this research study, the secondary data was collected from Retail journals, business magazines, marketing surveys reports, Internet and books. The secondary data has contributed a lot in the Literature Review. The study focuses on buying behavior of women depending upon their Occupational status i.e. working and non-working women population. The Statistical tools such as chi-square test, Density analysis and Z test for finding the differences between means and proportions are used to find out the dependency and association between buying behavior and impulse driving forces in women.

Hypothesis:

1. The impulse driving forces and Occupational status of women does not have any association.
2. The proportion of women buyers who prefer to buy the product on low prices is the same in both the populations i.e. working and non-working population.
3. The affect of easy availability of the product, self-service counters and location related factors is equally proportionate in working and non-working population.
4. Store display, ease of storage and appearance of the product equally attracts working and non-working population.
5. Mood swings and increase in purchase ability is equally proportionate in both the populations i.e. working and non-working population.
6. The proportions of buyers who have high fashion involvement are equally proportional i.e. working and non-working population.
7. Short product life cycle and mass advertisement have proportionately equal affect on both the populations i.e. working and non-working population.

Findings:

The data collected from various locations was tested for its dependency and association with the impulse buying behavior in Women and the factors that stimulate such impulse behavior in them. The principle objective of this research was to find out the impulsive buying behavior in women and the factors that generate such an instant (impulsive) buying behavior. Chi-square test at 5 % confidence level shows that there exists a relationship between impulse (unplanned) buying behavior and these impulse generating factors. It states that these factors stimulate the impulse in women. These impulse factors were derived from the "study of impulse buying" done by Stern (1962) and by the interview with several respondents.

The results obtained through Z test clearly indicates that working and non-working women, both get equally

attracted to purchase a product when it is offered at low prices by the marketers. Such an instant phenomenon is reported to generate positive response from both the population sets i.e. working and non-working population.

The increasing trends of shopping malls and the facilities of self service counters, easy availability of the products under one roof and other location related factors equally attract the attention of working as well as non-working women. Now a day our rational home makers prefer to see variety of products and then make a purchase decision. The decisions they take have various rational concerns like availability, variety needs etc.

The unplanned buying due to store displays, ease of storage and appearance of the product is equally enjoyed by working and non working women population. They go for buying those products which well relates with them and is different. The women today, have become more value driven. They have become more fetish about finding suitable purchasing alternatives for themselves and their family as a whole. The upcoming trend of supermarkets, big retail Stores have made our women population more concerned with the needs of the family and the extra conscious about the value they derive from buying such products.

59 per cent of the total working population agreed that the sudden increase in their income due to arrears, bonuses etc actually increases unplanned buying behavior in them whereas only 7 per cent of non working women acknowledged that increase in their disposable income actually stimulates unplanned buying behavior in them.

Working as well a non working population, both were found to be equally inclined towards the latest trends and fashions in their own distinctive ways. Both the women population has their own fashion statements, their own likes and dislikes. Here the old theory still works that “no matter who the lady is, but she always wants to look good”.

Mass advertisements in the form of aggressive marketing campaigns and short product life cycle, though attracts both the populations equally, but found to be less significant than the other factors. The buyers have their own perception these days and it can be said that mass advertisement has generated response but on a minimal basis.

Table 1: The findings of the Hypothesis

Hypothesis	Result	Findings
Ho= There is no association between women buying behavior and the stated factors	Ho is Rejected	The impulsivity in women has an association with the stated factors.
Ho= The proportion of women buyers who prefer to buy the product on low prices	Ho is Accepted	Bothe the population sets gets equally attracted to purchase the

is the same in both the populations		product when it is offered at lower price.
Ho= The affect of easy availability of the product, self-service counters and location related factors is equally proportionate in working and non-working population.	Ho is Accepted	Such services are preferred and welcomed by our women irrespective of their occupational status.
Ho= Store display, ease of storage and appearance of the product equally attracts working and non-working population	Ho is Accepted	Both the women population are equally attracted by display of the stores etc.
Ho= Mood swings and increase in purchase ability is equally proportionate in both the populations	Ho is Rejected	The working and non-working women populations do not proportionately agree that sudden increase in the purchasing power aggravates their unplanned buying.
Ho=The proportions of buyers who have high fashion involvement are equally proportional i.e. working and non-working population.	Ho is Accepted	both were found to be equally inclined towards the latest trends and fashions
Ho=Short product life cycle and mass advertisement have proportionately equal affect on both the populations i.e. working and non-working population.	Ho is Accepted	attracts both the populations equally

Conclusion:

Especially in the urban centers, women have emerged to be an attractive and a very large segment. This segment is attracting a continuous attention of marketers because of few reasons like, increase in the working population of women, her major role of being a home maker, increase in her credit standing capacity etc. Now the role played by her has changed its dimensions and even her wants and consumption habits have shifted. These changes have been

noticed by the marketers. The aggressive promotional campaigns, heavy discounts, displays etc are all various methods to attract the emerging segment. The growing number of shopping malls, promotional discounts, self service counters etc has given rise to impulsive buying in women. There can be many associations which can be studied under it. Working woman has her own concern with the shopping motives like easy availability, fashion involvement, appearance of the product etc. Both the working and non-working women are equally aware of their needs and are highly involved in decision making. Thus, impulsive behavior in women must be understood by the marketers and should be made use for providing products which provide more value to the consumers. With this, they can themselves generate enormous but deserved profit.

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