

Exploring the external and internal Factors Influencing Impulsive Buying Behavior in Canada: content analyzing

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Abstract: This paper explores the multifaceted nature of impulsive buying behavior, examining both internal and external factors that drive consumers to make unplanned purchases. Historically defined as an unplanned buying act, impulsive purchasing has gained complexity due to evolving consumer behavior and technological advancements. Key external factors include situational influences such as store atmosphere, social dynamics, sales personnel interactions, resource availability, cultural contexts, product characteristics, and promotional strategies. Internal factors encompass emotional states, demographic characteristics, and psychological traits that significantly affect impulsive buying tendencies. By understanding these determinants, consumers can manage their spending habits more effectively, while marketers can better tailor their strategies to foster positive purchasing experiences. Future research directions are suggested to further investigate the impact of digital technologies and shifting consumer behaviors on impulsive buying across diverse cultural settings.

Keywords: Impulsive Buying; Consumer Behavior; External Factors; Internal Factors; Store Atmosphere; Social Influences.

Jel Codes: D12; Z13; D91

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Introduction

The earliest definitions of impulsive buying described it as an unplanned purchase. According to Stern (1962) and Kollat et Willett (1967), The goal of these researchers was to demonstrate the existence of this kind of purchase and explain the factors that led to its initiation so that distributors may modify their marketing strategies. This logic is extremely constrained and irrelevant in the current context, particularly in light of the shift in consumer behavior and the development of new information technologies. This approach has shaped the first twenty years of research on impulsive buying behavior. Beginning in the 1980s, researches perceptions of this kind of purchase started to shift, primarily because to the advancements in psychology that researchers like ROOk (1987) . in this paper we will discuss the various factors that contribute to the initiation of this kind of purchasing behavior as well as the impact that this sort of purchasing has on the consumer. The goal is to provide an explanation for this consumption phenomenon. The factors that lead to impulsive purchases will be divided into internal and external factors in accordance with the literature, and the idea of purchase impulsions.

Despite a wealth of research, gaps remain in understanding how emerging factors—such as the influence of online shopping, social media, and cultural shifts—interact to shape impulsive buying decisions. Furthermore, while external factors like store atmosphere and promotional strategies have been well-documented, internal factors such as emotional states and psychological traits require further exploration, particularly in diverse cultural contexts.

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Given that this study is a literature review focused on impulsive buying behavior, the following hypotheses will guide the exploration of existing research and theoretical frameworks:

H1: A positive store atmosphere significantly increases the likelihood of impulsive buying behavior among consumers.

H2: The presence of friends during shopping significantly enhances the likelihood of impulsive purchases compared to shopping alone or with family.

H3: Positive emotional states, such as excitement and pleasure, are positively correlated with impulsive buying tendencies among consumers.

H4: Cultural dimensions, such as individualism and collectivism, moderate the relationship between impulsive buying behavior and various external influences, including marketing strategies.

H5: The availability of financial and temporal resources has a positive effect on impulsive buying behavior, with greater resources leading to increased likelihood of unplanned purchases.

H6: Products that evoke a strong personal identity or emotional connection are more likely to be purchased impulsively compared to those with purely functional appeal.

H7: Well-structured sales promotions positively influence consumers' impulsive buying behavior, particularly when presented effectively in both physical and digital environments.

This study conducts a content analysis of existing literature to explore the external and internal factors influencing impulsive buying behavior. By systematically examining the text provided, we can identify key themes, patterns, and relationships among the various factors discussed in the literature.

This study aims to bridge these gaps by systematically examining both internal and external factors that contribute to impulsive buying behavior. By analyzing how these elements interact in various consumer environments, including both physical and digital spaces, the research seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of impulsive buying in today's rapidly evolving marketplace. Ultimately, the findings will offer valuable insights for consumers aiming to manage their purchasing habits and for marketers striving to tailor their strategies to enhance consumer engagement and satisfaction.

2. Literature review:

Numerous studies have consistently demonstrated that the atmosphere at the point of sale significantly influences impulsive purchasing behavior. Research by Betty and Ferrell (1998), Mattila and Wirtz (2009), Tendai and Crispen (2009), and Khan et al. (2016) highlights various in-store factors that can stimulate impulsive purchases. These factors include promotional offers, store displays, advertising, and the general physical layout of the store. Garaa et al. (2014) emphasize the importance of store design, noting that the visual aspects and arrangement of displays can create an inviting shopping environment. Additional studies by Kanw (2015) and Bhatti and Latif (2013) point out that elements such as store surface quality, ventilation, and customer assistance also play crucial roles in shaping the shopping experience.

In specific contexts, such as cosmetics, Prakash and Sharma (2016) identified factors like store promotions, supportive atmospheres, and effective visual communication as key drivers of impulsive buying. Furthermore, Xu (2007) found a strong causal relationship between the

emotional states of Generation Y consumers and their impulsive purchasing behavior, suggesting that enhanced perceived pleasure from the store atmosphere correlates positively with impulsivity. Chaturvedi (2015) elaborates on this by applying the Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) model, positing that stimuli in the shopping environment can trigger impulsive purchases, especially when consumers find the atmosphere pleasant.

Research indicates that social dynamics significantly influence impulsive buying behavior. Zhang and Sherum (2008) found that individuals with independent tendencies are more prone to impulsive purchases compared to those who are interdependent. The presence of friends has been shown to increase the likelihood of making impulsive purchases, while the presence of family members may have a dampening effect (Luo, 2005; Graa et al., 2014). Interestingly, Lee and Kacen (2007) noted that consumers from collectivist cultures often report higher satisfaction with impulsive purchases made in the presence of significant others, contrasting with individualist cultures where no such difference is observed.

Luo's (2005) findings in a Chinese context further corroborate this, indicating that peer presence enhances the desire for impulsive purchases, while family presence reduces it—a trend confirmed by Cho et al. (2014) in Vietnam.

The role of sales personnel in influencing impulsive purchases is well-documented. Yang et al. (2011) assert that effective sales interactions can significantly boost customers' intentions to make impulsive purchases. Research conducted in Pakistan highlights that friendly sales staff positively impacts consumer impulsivity (Ali & Hasnu, 2009). Additionally, Cho et al. (2014) found similar results in a Vietnamese context, where positive interactions with sales personnel encouraged impulsive buying. Notably, women tend to be more influenced by the performance of sales staff and social recommendations (Yang et al., 2011; Asim & Hasnu, 2013).

The availability of time and financial resources affects consumer mood, thereby impacting impulsive buying behavior. Studies by Beatty and Ferrell (1998) and Khan (2016) indicate that limited resources can lead to negative attitudes, while their availability fosters a positive outlook that encourages impulsive purchases. Foroughi et al. (2012) also emphasize that access to time and money can enhance positive sentiments, which may drive impulsivity. Chaturvedi (2015) highlights that time pressure can heighten the tendency towards impulsive purchasing, as consumers may feel compelled to make quick decisions.

Research by Badgaiyan and Verma (2014) underscores that the availability of money positively influences impulsive purchasing initiation, with credit card usage further intensifying this effect. The implications drawn from these studies suggest that when consumers have ample time and financial resources, they are more susceptible to environmental stimuli that trigger impulsive purchases.

Cultural factors, particularly individualism and collectivism, play a significant role in impulsive buying behavior. Jalees (2009) suggests a moderating relationship between culture and impulsive buying tendencies. Kacen and Lee (2002) found that individualists exhibit less impulsivity compared to collectivists, who are more inclined to act on impulse. Comparative studies reveal that American consumers tend to make more impulsive purchases of fashion

items, while Korean consumers, influenced by collectivist ideals, typically engage in less impulsive shopping behavior (Park & Choi, 2013). In the Indian context, Badgaiyan and Verma (2014) found a positive relationship between impulsive purchases and collectivism, suggesting that cultural nuances significantly impact consumer behavior.

The characteristics of products also affect impulsive buying tendencies. Sharma et al. (2009) found a stronger correlation between impulsivity and tangible products compared to services, possibly due to the physical nature of products being more appealing. Certain product categories, particularly those that resonate with consumer identity, are more frequently purchased impulsively (Dittmar et al., 1995). Mehrukh et al. (2015) argue that products with high individuality, such as those associated with sports teams, positively influence impulsive purchasing. Additionally, packaging plays a crucial role; appealing and well-designed packaging can attract attention and encourage impulse buying (Akhtar et al., 2016; Li, 2015).

Sales promotions are a significant catalyst for impulsive buying. Research by Dawson and Kim (2008) in a digital context indicates that promotional strategies can lead to increased impulsivity among consumers, a finding supported by Cho et al. (2014) in Vietnam. Effective presentation of promotions is crucial, as Xu Yingjiao (2007) demonstrates that well-planned promotions can significantly enhance impulsive purchases. Zhou and Gu (2015) further note that communicating the post-promotion price effectively can have a greater impact than percentage discounts, raising questions about the appropriateness of promotional strategies in different cultural contexts.

Affect plays a pivotal role in impulsive buying behavior. Lee (2008) asserts that excitement is a significant driver of impulsive purchases, with feelings of pleasure closely linked to impulsivity. Xu (2007) highlights a strong connection between the emotional states of Generation Y consumers and their impulsive buying behavior; increased joy at the point of sale correlates positively with impulsivity. Silvera et al. (2008) affirm that excitement and pleasure significantly influence consumers' intentions to purchase impulsively.

Excitement stands out as a crucial factor influencing impulsive buying behavior. Lee (2008) suggests that consumer characteristics and product knowledge significantly impact impulsive purchasing intentions (Harmancioglu et al., 2009). The emotional state of excitement can create a sense of urgency that prompts unplanned purchases.

Mood is another vital internal factor affecting impulsive buying. Cho et al. (2014) demonstrate that both positive and negative moods can trigger impulsive purchases. For instance, Torun (2015) found that individuals experiencing professional withdrawal syndrome may resort to impulsive buying as a means of coping with negative emotions.

Motivation encompasses various psychological drivers behind impulsive buying. Kalla (2016) posits that a sense of urgency often precedes impulsive purchases, with consumers seeking excitement or gratification. This motivation can stem from desires for self-actualization, playful consumption, or a sense of freedom from everyday obligations.

Individual characteristics significantly influence impulsive buying behavior. Research by Beatty and Ferrell (1998) indicates that various factors affect this behavior, including demographic traits. Khan et al. (2016) identify age and gender as key demographic influences

on impulsive purchases. Specifically, women experience greater emotional pressure to buy impulsively compared to men (Coley & Burgess, 2003). Notably, Dittmar et al. (1995) found that women are more emotionally driven in their purchasing decisions, whereas men focus more on pleasure.

The influence of age on impulsive purchases is also noteworthy. Studies indicate that impulsive buying frequency decreases with age (Wood, 1998; Ali et al., 2013). Younger consumers, particularly those between 18 and 40, display higher impulsivity (Cho et al., 2014). Additionally, older consumers may engage in impulsive buying due to increased disposable income, as observed in women over 40 in the Taiwanese cosmetics market (Yang, Huang, & Feng, 2011).

Psychological traits further enhance understanding of impulsive buying behavior. According to Dawson and Kim (2009), consumers who are sensitive to their emotional states are more likely to engage in impulsive purchases. Hamancioglu et al. (2009) identify excitement and self-assurance as characteristics that provoke impulsivity, aligning with findings by Weinberg and Gottwald (1982), who noted that impulsive buyers often perceive themselves as emotionally connected consumers.

3. Methodology:

3.1 Content Analysis Framework

- **Data Source:** The content for this analysis is derived from the provided text, which summarizes various studies on impulsive buying behavior.
- **Coding Process:** Key themes and factors were identified and categorized into external and internal influences. Each factor was analyzed for its implications and the relationships between them.
- **Thematic Analysis:** Themes were extracted based on frequency and relevance in the context of impulsive buying behavior.

3.2 Categories Identified

3.2.1 External Factors

- Situational Factors:

- **Store Atmosphere:** Various studies highlight how the store's ambiance, including design, promotions, and visual communication, enhances impulsive buying behavior (e.g., Betty & Ferrell, 1998; Mattila & Wirtz, 2009).
- **Social Influences:** The presence of friends encourages impulsive purchases, while family presence may suppress them (X. Luo, 2005; Cho et al., 2014).
- **Sales Personnel:** Effective engagement and friendliness from sales staff positively impact impulsive buying (Yang et al., 2011; Ali & Hasnu, 2009).
- **Available Resources:** Access to financial and temporal resources fosters a positive mood that increases impulsive purchases (Beatty & Ferrell, 1998; Khan, 2016).
- **Sales Promotions:** Well-executed promotions and discounts are shown to significantly trigger impulsive buying behaviors (Dawson & Kim, 2008; Cho et al., 2014).

3.2.2- Internal Factors:

- Affective States:

- Emotional States: Positive emotions, particularly excitement and pleasure, correlate with increased impulsive buying (Lee, 2008; Xu, 2007).

- Mood: Both positive and negative moods can influence impulsive purchasing behavior, with negative moods sometimes driving impulsive buying as a coping mechanism (Cho et al., 2014).

- Consumer Characteristics:

- Demographic Factors: Age and gender play significant roles; younger consumers tend to engage in more impulsive purchases, and women are often more influenced by emotional states (Coley & Burgess, 2003; Ali et al., 2013).

- Psychological Traits: Sensitivity to affective states is linked to higher impulsivity in purchasing behaviors (Dawson & Kim, 2009; Hamancioglu et al., 2009).

4. Findings

Key Themes and Relationships

- Interconnectedness of External Factors:

The store atmosphere, social influences, and sales promotions are interrelated, creating an environment conducive to impulsive buying. A positive store atmosphere enhances the effectiveness of social interactions and promotions.

- Moderating Role of Emotional States:

Emotional states significantly mediate the relationship between external factors and impulsive buying behavior. For instance, a stimulating store atmosphere can evoke positive emotions, which in turn increase impulsive purchases.

- Demographic Variability:

The influence of demographic factors, such as age and gender, indicates that impulsive buying behavior is not uniform across all consumer segments. Understanding these differences can help tailor marketing strategies.

Discussion:

The content analysis conducted on the factors influencing impulsive buying behavior highlights a complex interplay between external and internal influences. This discussion elaborates on the implications of these findings, explores the relationships among identified factors, and suggests directions for future research.

Conclusion

This literature review highlights the multifaceted influences on impulsive buying behavior, emphasizing the interconnectedness of external and internal factors. External factors, such as store atmosphere, social dynamics, sales personnel, available resources, cultural influences, product characteristics, and sales promotions, play a critical role in shaping consumer behavior. These elements create an environment that can either stimulate or suppress impulsive purchases, depending on various situational contexts.

Internally, consumers' affective states—ranging from excitement and mood to motivation—significantly impact their likelihood of making impulsive purchases. Psychological characteristics, including demographic traits like age and gender, further refine our understanding of impulsivity in consumer behavior. Notably, younger consumers and women appear to be more susceptible to impulsive buying, driven by emotional and social influences. Overall, recognizing and leveraging these factors can provide valuable insights for marketers and retailers seeking to enhance consumer experiences and drive sales. Future research should continue to explore these dynamics, particularly in the context of evolving shopping environments, including online platforms, to adapt to changing consumer behaviors and preferences. By gaining a deeper understanding of impulsive buying behavior, businesses can develop more effective strategies to engage consumers and foster loyalty.

Limitations:

While this study provides valuable insights, there are limitations that should be acknowledged:

- Scope of Literature: The analysis was based on the existing literature provided, which may not encompass all relevant studies. Future research should aim for a broader scope that includes diverse contexts and cultures.
- Quantitative Metrics: The reliance on qualitative assessments of the text limits the ability to quantify relationships among factors. Incorporating quantitative data in future studies would strengthen the analysis.
- Dynamic Consumer Behavior: Consumer behavior is constantly evolving, particularly with the rise of digital shopping. Future research must consider how online and offline interactions influence impulsive buying.

Future Research Directions

This study opens several avenues for future research:

- Cross-Cultural Studies: Exploring how cultural contexts influence impulsive buying behavior can provide deeper insights into consumer psychology.
- Digital Environment Analysis: Investigating impulsive buying behavior in online retail settings, including the impact of website design and digital promotions, is increasingly relevant.
- Longitudinal Studies: Conducting longitudinal research could reveal how impulsive buying behaviors change over time and in response to external market conditions.

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