Factors Affecting In-Store Impulse Buying Behavior: An Analysis of Personal Care Products

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Abstract

Impulse Buying is considered the most common buying behaviour nowadays and has a significant influence on buying decisions of the consumers. This behaviour is influenced by many factors, these factors can be internal as well as external and many researchers have contributed in this area by determining these factors and describing their significance. Today, the competition has increased and marketers are constantly trying to trigger the Impulse Buying behaviour of consumers to increase their sales through these factors; both internal and external. This study revolves around analyzing the impact of 10 external/store environment factors – retail store offer, promotions, in-store advertisements, in-store displays, store traffic, product price, popularity of the product, packaging of the product, behavior of salesperson and store atmospherics- on the Impulse Buying behavior of both the genders as applied to three personal care product categories (Hair Care, Facial Care and Hand & Body Care) This study is limited to the cities of Sindh only. The population for this study is defined as the people who visit megastores to buy personal care products and the sample size for this study is 300, out of which 150 are males and 150 are females. For sampling, random sampling technique will be used. The choice for the method to be used for the data collection depends on various factors like budget, time and the number of respondents. For this study, data will be collected through primary sources; hence the data can be tailored and is best to test the hypotheses. The instrument that will be used for data collection is questionnaire (adapted). To test the hypothesis, SPSS shall be used. There are two techniques that have been used to test the hypotheses, the Chi- square Test and t-test while the findings of the research question are expressed through clustered bar chart.

Keywords: Impulse Buying, In-Store Advertisement, Promotions, Personal Care Products, Retail Store Offer

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INTRODUCTION

Impulse Buying is a spontaneous behaviour of the buyer to buy a particular product and this behaviour is usually caused by the stimulus. The stimulus may be the product itself, an effective promotional message or an attractive store lay out. The buyers who buy impulsively, their purchases are the reactions to a sudden urge therefore it is usually done without examining the other available alternatives and information. Since Impulse Buying is done without much thinking and it does not involve evaluation of different aspects such as need, affordability, price etc., these buyers are likely to be more thoughtless and feel an emotional attraction and may desire instant indulgence for the object. The consumers of Impulse Buying are likely to pay little or no attention to the possible negative consequences of the purchases. Internal factors include consumer's demographics, state of mind, mood, positive or negative emotions and other psychological factors. While external and environmental factors consist of atmospheric cues in retail ambience, promotional offers by retail stores, display settings, marketer-controlled factors such as advertisements, discounts offer, price and marketing mix.

Many researchers throughout the world have researched Impulse Buying but in developing countries like Pakistan, this topic has not been researched extensively, therefore, this research attempts to analyze the impact of 10 external/store environment factors – retail

store offer, promotions, in-store advertisements, in-store displays, store traffic, product price, popularity of the product, packaging of the product, behavior of salesperson and store atmospherics- on the Impulse Buying behavior of both the genders as applied to three personal care product categories (Hair Care, Facial Care and Hand & Body Care). This study aims to add up a significant part of knowledge to the existing literature and researches on Impulse Buying that will ultimately be beneficial for advanced studies in the related field. This study will also benefit retailers and manufacturers by providing them with the insights to understand Impulse Buying behaviour of each gender that will eventually result in satisfaction and fulfilment of the increasing demand of the consumers and boost up sales.

Objectives

1. To compare the impulse buying behavior of males and females as applied to personal care products.
2. To analyze which factor(s) play a leading role in the impulse buying of personal care products among both the genders.
3. To determine whether there is any difference in importance factors affecting impulse buying.
4. To determine whether there is an association between Gender and the factors affecting impulse buying.

5. To determine the category of personal care products that is bought on Impulse the most.

Research Question

RQ1: Which is the most important factor in Impulse Buying of personal care products among males and females?

Hypotheses

- H1: There is an association between Gender and the factors affecting Impulse Buying behavior.
- H2: Females are more Impulsive than males when it comes to personal care products.
- H3: Hand & Body Care products are bought on Impulse more as compared to Hair Care and Facial Care products.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Impulse Buying

Impulse Buying is an extensively studied topic and many researchers from different fields like consumer behavior, psychology, economics and marketing have studied and explained Impulse Buying (e.g., Rook 1987, Dholakia 2000, Crawford & Melewar 2003, Giraud 2001, Wong & Zhou 2003, Parboteeah 2005 and many more). Impulse Buying is a rapid and persistent desire to buy something spontaneously (Rook 1987), initiated on the spot (Herabadi, 2001) with no intentions of buying a particular product category or satisfying a purchase task (Beatty and Ferrell 1998) and results from a lack of control over one's behavior (Levy, 1976). The early studies of impulse defined it as being an unintentional and spontaneous purchasing (Clover 1950, West 1951, DuPont studies 1945, 1949, 1954, 1959, 1965) while (Applebaum, 1951) proposed that Impulse Buying could initiate when the consumer is exposed to a stimulus in the store. Before the study of Rook (1987), the description of Impulse Buying was mainly focused over the product while Rook argued that Impulse Buying is a sudden reaction that is not intended and occurs as soon as the consumer is exposed to stimuli in the store.

CONSEQUENCES OF IMPULSE BUYING

Impulse Buying can have both negative and positive consequences. There are more chances of impulse purchases to occur when consumers are exposed to stimulus and then evaluate that purchase experience as positive (O'Guinn & Faber, 1989). Through an experiment, Weinberg & Gottwald (1982) identified that those who made impulse purchases were significantly more amused, enthusiastic and delighted than non-buyers. Verplanken & Sato (2011) argued that Impulse Buying is a form of self-regulatory behavior that can either serve as a promotion motive (to obtain positive outcomes like positive emotions) or prevention motive (to avoid negative outcomes like low self-esteem). An individual's tendency to satisfy hedonic needs through Impulse Buying not always results from positive experiences. One of the studies suggests that Impulse Buying is often related to negative emotions (Silvera, 2008) and people try to lift up their mood through Impulse Buying, which they consider as a rewarding experience. The negative evaluations of Impulse Buying come from the researches that describe Impulse Buying as an act of immaturity resulting in a lack of control over one's behavior (Solnick, 1980). Whether the consequences are negative or positive, the result of emotion-influenced cognitive processing will have an impact on the future behavior of consumer.

FACTORS AFFECTING IMPULSE BUYING

RETAIL STORE OFFER

Many retail stores present different types of discount and bundle offers to appeal their customers. An effective appeal can be done in

numerous ways but most common ways to communicate the offers are usually low prices, offs, sales, etc.

PROMOTIONS

It consists of many tools that are short term and long term; intend to trigger the urge of purchasing the product spontaneously among buyers. There are many different techniques and activities that are carried in retail stores most commonly such as buy two and save 10 percent, buy one and get one free (BOGO deals), coupons, cash rewards etc. and are all part of sales promotional tools.

IN-STORE ADVERTISEMENTS

Advertising is one of the most powerful means of communicating with the buyers, it is an advertisement through which the buyers are encouraged or manipulated to make a purchase of that specific product spontaneously. Advertisement is done in a store by placing the product on a visible location that catches the eye of the buyers such as near point of purchase, special attractive display of the product, a video display of any product, placing the ad on the shopping cart or by placing the product at the bottom of aisles. These in-store advertisements are the information sources at Point of Purchase.

STORE DISPLAYS

The store displays refer to the manner in which the products in the store are exhibited. Store displays can be placed both in the interior or the exterior. These displays are structured with suitable prop for an instant eye appeal. It is a display that shows what is in the store and it converts the shoppers into instant purchasers. Store displays are of many types such as window displays, live displays, marquee displays, free standing or island displays, counter displays, brand corners, end cap displays and cascade/waterfall displays.

STORE TRAFFIC

Store Traffic can be defined as the total number of people who go into the store, or the total number of footfalls in the store. It is one of the external factors that affect the buying behaviour in consumers. Greater the store traffic means reduced shopping time, that will reduce the interpersonal skills and eventually result in limited chances of Impulse Buying as consumers will rely more on shopping lists.

PRICE

Price of the product refers to what a company will receive in exchange of its product. It is one of the important tools in marketing that defines the value of the product and is used to attract the buyers. A lot of buyers tend to make an unplanned purchase because of product's price.

POPULARITY OF THE PRODUCT

Popularity of the product means how well known the product is. With the change in trend now a day the consumers are becoming more sophisticated and savvy. The popularity of the product can be because of word of mouth, advertisements and other promotional activities that make the product well known to the consumers and arises the need of buying that product instantly

PACKAGING

Packaging can be defined as the process through which the product is wrapped up and protected for use, sale and distribution. It is one of the important attributes of the product. Quality, colours, graphic forms and packaging typography are the other factors of packaging that stimulates Impulse Buying behaviour in consumers.

BEHAVIOR OF THE SALESPERSON

Salesperson is an individual responsible for selling the goods and has many defined responsibilities such as providing the information of the product, acting as the adviser of the customer, explains the uses and benefits of the merchandise etc.

STORE ATMOSPHERICS

Things that are used to design store ambiance including store interior and exterior are all part of store atmospherics. Store exterior is store's architecture, colors, textures and other aspects such as building and structural design. Whereas store interior includes store image and other factors like colour, music (auditory), floor, scent (olfactory), types of promotional activities, service and store cleanliness etc. Along with the colour and decor, lighting also contributes in a pleasant shopping experience.

GENDER ROLES

How Impulse Buying differs between genders is a significant part of this study. Generally, a common opinion is that women show greater attraction for shopping of personal care products but the trend has now changed. Initially the marketers of personal care products used to target women with different innovative ways but now with the change in trend and awareness, men are also being targeted for personal care products as they are becoming more conscious about their appearance. Some studies suggest that women are more impulsive buyers than men because they like browsing slowly through the stores, which increases the probability of Impulse Buying, inspecting every shelf and display, comparing and matching the prices, products values, asking the salesperson about the products, and finally purchasing the product (Gasiorowska, 2003). Men generally do not tend to invest much time in shopping which reduces the chances of making impulsive buying decisions in them (Mburu, 2010). However, the reasons of being impulsive while buying personal care products may vary between men and women.

Personal Care Products

The products of personal care are used for grooming the body, face and hair, for cleansing, beautifying, moisturizing, exfoliating, hydrating, conditioning, soothing, deodorizing, perfuming, styling, promoting attractiveness, etc. These products mainly comprise of skin care, oral care, hair care, cosmetics and toiletries. Three categories of personal care products are targeted for this study:

- Hair Care category that includes shampoo, conditioner, hair gel, hair oil, hair dye and hair wax.
- Facial Care category that includes facewash, moisturizing lotion, sunblock, cleanser, fairness cream and acne cream.
- Hand & Body Care category that includes shower gel, deodorant, body lotion, sanitizer, hand wash and hand lotions.

A huge amount of time and money is spent on the shopping of personal care products like shampoos, perfumes, lotions, creams and other types of toiletries. Personal care products are bought on Impulse Buying due to their appealing nature, which is why buyers end up spending massive amount of money on them. In-store promotions tend to make the consumers spend more by influencing their Impulse Buying behavior at the point of purchase. By influencing their Impulse Buying behavior, the retailers try to push their profits and revenues up. For this reason, most marketers try to power the decision of their customers via in-store factors like background music, attractive displays and persuasive salespersons (Tendai & Crispen, 2009).

The Impulse Buying of consumers serves as a dependent variable in this study. The internal stimuli, gender, and the ten external/store environment factors – retail store offer, promotions, in-store advertisements, in-store displays, store traffic, product price, popularity of the product, packaging of the product, behavior of

salesperson and store atmospherics– are the independent variables of the study.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research attempts to analyze the impact of ten external/store environment factors i.e. retail store offers, promotions, in-store advertisements, in-store displays, store traffic, product price, popularity of the product, packaging of the product, behavior of salesperson and store atmospherics, on both the genders as applied to three personal care categories (Hair Care, Facial Care and Hand & Body Care) in Hyderabad, Pakistan. To conduct this study, data has been collected through primary source through "Questionnaire". Pilot test was conducted with initially 60 survey forms to the business students only, to check whether it is easy for the respondent to attempt or not. Later, it was found through their personal and verbal feedback that the questionnaire was a bit difficult to understand as well as the number of properly filled questionnaires was less than the average. So, it was again revised and this time only the minor changes were made. The reliability of the questionnaire that has been used to collect the data of this study is 0.7. The sample size is 300 (150 males and 150 females) which has been collected at different departmental stores of Hyderabad.

FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

RQ1: Which is the most important factor in Impulse Buying of personal care products among males and females?

The research question for the study is to know which is the most important factor in Impulse Buying of personal care products among males and females. The research question has been answered through frequency distribution, expressed through a clustered bar chart. The Clustered bar chart is not a statistical test but the chart through which the summaries of groups or cases are expressed in a graphical form Figure 1. Figure 1 shows that the majority of the females i.e. 22.7% and 30% male responded that popularity of the product was the most important factor for them while making an impulse purchase of personal care products. The findings are consistent with the research conducted by (Dittmar & Beattie, 1998).

H1: There is an association between gender and factors affecting Impulse Buying behavior.

Table 2. Association between Gender and Factors affecting Impulse Buying

Variables	Gender		Chi Square value	Sig.
	Male	Female		
In-store Advertisements	Agree (46.7%)	Agree (46.7%)	7.755	.101
Packaging*	Agree (28.0 %)	Disagree (40.7%)	25.302	.000
Low price	Agree (34.0%)	Agree (45.3%)	6.275	.180
Attractive displays	Agree (40.7%)	Agree (54.7%)	8.818	.060
Store traffic	Disagree (31.3%)	Agree (34.0 %)	8.657	.070
Retail store offer	Agree (38.7%)	Agree (50.0%)	6.941	.135
Popularity of product	Agree (40.0%)	Agree (40.7%)	7.257	.123
Promotions	Agree (36.0%)	Agree (42.0%)	5.441	.245
Salesperson*	Agree (40.0%)	Agree (50.0%)	9.818	.044
Store atmospherics*	Agree (28.7%)	Agree (48.0%)	14.425	.006

Table 2 shows that Impulse Buying behavior differs with respect to three external/store environment factors - packaging, behavior of salesperson and store atmospherics – the respective significance values of these factors is less than 0.05 that shows a statistically

significant association between gender and factors affecting Impulse Buying behavior. Female consumers indicated a preference for behavior of salesperson and store atmospherics as those factors that have an impact on their Impulse Buying behavior of personal care products. Whereas, male consumers showed an interest in attractive packaging of the products as being an important factor influencing their Impulse Buying behavior of personal care products. Hence, the null hypothesis is accepted i.e. there is no association between gender and the factors affecting Impulse Buying behavior.

H2: Females are more impulsive than males when it comes to personal care products.

Table 3 is generated for the group statistics showing the male and female comparison having their respective mean values. The mean value for males is 6.4333 while for females it is 7.21 and is greater than the value of males, which shows that females are more engaged in Impulse Buying when it comes personal care products.

Table 3. Group Statistics

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
T Personal care products	Male	150	6.4333	2.03135	.16586
	Female	150	7.2133	1.95790	.15986

Table 4 shows the independent sample test having significance values which is two tailed. The findings show that the females are more impulsive as their mean value is greater than the value of males and the significance value of this hypothesis is 0.001 which is less than 0.05 so the alternate hypothesis is accepted and the null is rejected.

H3: Hand & Body Care products are bought on impulse the most as compared to Hair Care and Facial Care products.

Table 5 shows that the aggregate value for the category of Hand & Body care was the highest that was 36.66 %, in comparison to the aggregate values of Hair Care and Facial care products that were 22.9% and 20.9% respectively. Hence, the alternate hypothesis i.e. Hand & Body care products are bought on impulse more as compared to Hair Care and Facial Care products, was accepted. The results follow the findings of (Dittmar, 1996), according to him, women who used to buy on impulse tend to purchase products that express their emotional and appearance concerns. The results of this hypothesis also show that the females are more impulsive than males when it comes to personal care products. It also follows the findings of (Kollat & Willet, 1968). They stated in their study that females have a higher tendency of Impulse Buying than males.

CONCLUSION

One of the findings of this study indicate that amongst the ten external/store environment factors, popularity of product was the most important factor for both the genders when it came to Impulse Buying of personal care products. Another finding of the study revealed that majority of the factors i.e. seven factors showed no association with Gender. While three factors had a significant association with Gender that are packaging of the product, behavior of salesperson and store atmospherics. Moreover, another finding of the study suggested that females act more impulsively than males when it comes to personal care products. This finding is supported by previous findings, whose results stated that females have a higher tendency of Impulse Buying than males (Kollat & Willet, 1968; Giraud, 2001; Wu & Huan, 2010). Another interesting finding in this study was that amongst the three personal care product categories examined in this study, hand and bodycare category was bought on Impulse the most.

Recommendations

- Marketers should focus on showing their products in the best light, with celebrity endorsements or being in the media very often as they are directly linked with the popularity of the product. Positive word-of-mouth about a product can do wonders to make

it popular, especially in this era of social media hype, where websites and blogs start by recommending products from one friend to another, moving through the social networking services.

- The second most important factor that triggers the Impulse Buying of personal care products among males and females is low product price. Hence, the marketers and retailers should focus on low pricing strategies for personal care products in order to attract customers toward Impulse Buying behavior.
- The retailers should create an environment that supports Impulse Buying and apply steps that promote efficiency in shopping and lessen the difficulties of their target customers, because customers avoid or leave retail settings that are stressful or obstructive.
- Since Hand and Body Care products are high-impulse products, the marketers and retailers should focus on promoting this category to increase the chances of Impulse Buying.
- Finally, the marketers and retailers are advised to pay more consideration to four store environment factors - in-store advertisements, packaging of the product, low price and attractive displays - to increase the chances of Impulse Buying within consumers as well as to boost up their sales and profits in the long run.

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Fig 1. The most important factor in Impulse Buying

Table 1. Research hypotheses, variables, objectives and techniques

S#	Hypothesis	Variables	Based on Objectives	Test/Technique
1	H1	Gender, In-store Factors and, Impulse Buying	1,2 and 5	Chi-Square Test
2	H2	Gender and Impulse Buying	4	Independent t-Test
3	H3	Impulse Buying and	3	Chi-Square Test

Table 4. Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		T-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	T	df	Sig. (2- tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
T-Personal care products	Equal variances assumed	.315	.575	-3.386	298	.001	-.78000	.23036	-1.23334	-.32666
	Equal variances not assumed			-3.386	297.597	.001	-.78000	.23036	-1.23334	-.32666

Table 5. Category bought on Impulse the most

HAIR CARE													
	Shampoo		Conditioner		Hair gel		Hair oil		Hair dye		Hair wax		
		Sig		Sig		Sig		Sig		Sig		Sig	
M	53.3%	.004	29.3%	.000	16.7%	.001	34.0%	.000	6.0%	.001	7.3%	.118	22.9%
F	42.0%		40.0%		6.0%		19.3%		9.3%		12%		
T	47.7%		34.7%		11.3%		26.7%		7.7%		9.7%		
FACIAL CARE													
	Face wash		Moisturizing Lotion		Sunblock		Cleanser		Fairness cream		Acne cream		
		Sig		Sig		Sig		Sig		Sig		Sig	
M	40.0%	.000	18.7%	.000	6.7%	.000	8.0%	.000	17.3%	.001	8.7%	.003	20.91%
F	44.7%		26.0%		24.0%		26.0%		23.3%		8.0%		
T	42.3%		22.3%		15.3%		17.02%		20.0%		8.3%		
HAND AND BODY CARE													
	Shower gel		Deodorant		Body lotion		Sanitizer		Hand wash		Hand lotion		
		Sig		Sig		Sig		Sig		Sig		Sig	
M	29.3%	.018	56.0%	.087	18.7%	.000	20.7%	.004	43.3%	.003	26.0%	.000	36.66%
F	34.0%		42.7%		39.3%		34.0%		54.0%		42.0%		
T	31.7%		49.3%		29.0%		27.3%		48.7%		34.0%