

IMPULSIVE BUYING BEHAVIOR OF CONSUMERS FOR ONLINE PURCHASES IN THE CITY OF ASTANA, KAZAKHSTAN

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ABSTRACT

This article explores the phenomenon of consumers' impulsive buying behavior for online purchases and its influencing factors in an online context by analyzing previous research in this field. Impulsive purchases have increased in frequency in digital contexts due to the development of e-commerce and the COVID-19 pandemic. The study offers a framework for understanding impulsive purchasing behavior that considers its definition and the categories and variables influencing it. For the study's survey on impulsive purchases made online, 132 respondents in Kazakhstan participated. The study concentrated on internet shoppers between the ages of 18 and 37 who made irrational purchases. The study examined impulsivity, psychological perceptions, and social influence as factors impacting impulsive purchase behavior. External stimuli, such as marketing campaigns and the retail environment, were also considered. The results revealed insight into the survey respondents' demographic information, such as their gender, age, frequency of internet shopping, the kinds of things they bought, and whether they made planned or spontaneous purchases. Both marketers and consumers may improve their awareness of impulsive buying inclinations and inadvertent acquisition by being aware of the elements driving impulsive purchases in online environments. This will lead to better decision-making during online shopping experiences.

Keywords: consumer behaviour; impulsive buying; online shopping

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INTRODUCTION

Consumer behavior is a subject of great interest and research for marketers and scholars, with impulsive buying behavior emerging as a significant phenomenon with global implications. Impulsive buying is the sudden and irresistible urge to make unplanned purchases, often driven by emotional or hedonistic motivations (Dholakia, 2000). Factors such as store displays, promotions, layouts, and brand novelties trigger impulsive buying in physical retail settings.

The rise of e-commerce and the COVID-19 pandemic, however, has brought about a notable shift in consumer behavior, as online shopping has become increasingly prevalent. Despite the perception that impulsive buying may not translate to the digital sphere, research suggests otherwise (Verhagen et al., 2015). Understanding online impulsive buying behavior is crucial for marketers and consumers alike. Both marketers and customers must understand impulsive purchasing behavior in the online environment.

Marketers require insights into the variables that motivate impulsive purchases to create successful online strategies, customize marketing initiatives, and increase conversion rates. However, customers might benefit from being aware of the reasons behind their impulsive purchases in order to make wise choices and practice restraint. This study aims to examine impulsive purchasing patterns in an online setting and look into the elements driving them. We aim to shed light on the occurrence and character of impulsive purchases in the digital sphere by examining current research on the topic and surveying 132 respondents in Kazakhstan. The results will help marketers better understand their clients' impulsive behaviours and the contextual elements that encourage impulsive purchases.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Impulsive Buying

Impulse buying behavior has been a widely discussed topic for decades. This phenomenon arose in the middle of the 1950s and encouraged numerous researchers to explore the nature of impulse buying and its reasons. The original definition of "impulse buying" was unplanned buying, derived from the DuPont Consumer Buying Habits Study conducted from 1948 to 1965. The definition of impulse buying was then updated, referring to consumers' strong urge to buy a product right then and there, which often causes cognitive dissonance in the consumer. This changed the focus of the definition from the product to the consumer. Hence, it has been suggested that impulse purchases result from their need to satisfy consumer needs in competition with their own rational and self-regulated ideologies. The rise of impulse buying also has been linked to the rise of materialism, often leading people to spend money or make uninformed purchases.

The earliest studies defined impulse buying as a spontaneous customer decision to purchase a good made right before the actual acquisition. The need to buy the product comes spontaneously, forcefully, and urgently (Rook, 1987). It was conceptualized as "a sudden purchase without having any pre-shopping intention to buy a specific product or accomplish the buying task" (Beatty & Ferrell, 1998). It was assumed that anything that was not included in the "shopping list" was impulsively bought and

therefore an unplanned purchase. Some researchers argued, however, that not all unplanned purchases could be impulsive since customers may forget to plan and list all the necessary products in advance (Koski, 2004). Therefore, purchasing something that is not listed but is needed occurs during shopping. This issue merited extensive studies to investigate thoroughly the nature of impulse buying. Rook's reconceptualization of impulse buying provides the most comprehensive overview: The author explains that impulse buying is a "distinctive type of consumer buying behavior that distinguishes it from other types of unplanned shopping, characterized by rapid decision-making accompanied by intense feeling states."

A 2008 study by Mattila and Wirtz found that consumers are more likely to impulse purchase when they believe their environment is over-stimulating. In a recent study, Czernecka, Szywinski and Keles found that cultural values such as individualism and collectivism are determinants of impulse buying and monetary budgets. The researchers reported that different levels of globalization in terms of global consumer culture affect the propensity for impulse buying and poor budgeting. Vernon T. Clover found that impulse buying significantly affects store sales. With the income generated by impulse buying, retailers such as the bookstores in the Clover study could stay open. Because of this, Clover pleaded with retailers to make impulse merchandise more available to customers. The study, published in the June 2008 issue of *Consumer Research*, suggests that consumers are more likely to make impulse purchases for one brand over another if distracted while shopping. In the study, Central Michigan University psychology professor Brian Gibson surveyed college students by measuring their preference for various soft drinks, including Coca-Cola and Pepsi. Gibson's results showed that implicit attitudes, or those that people may not be aware of and cannot express verbally, predicted product choice only when participants were given a cognitive task, suggesting that implicit product attitudes play a significant role in product choice when a customer is distracted or makes an impulsive purchase. Researchers from the University of British Columbia and Cheung Kong Graduate School of Business found that impulsive spending is a behavior associated with a disorganized environment. The study concluded that being surrounded by chaos

reduces one's ability to perform other tasks requiring "mental" strength, threatening one's sense of personal control. The consumer's post-purchase experience enhances or limits future impulse purchases. Spiteri Cornish L. determined that consumers use three coping mechanisms to mitigate post-purchase regret: planned problem-solving, positive reinvention, or mental disconnection. Planned problem-solving limits future impulse purchases, and positive reinvention or mental disconnection leads to reinforcing behavior.

Factors Affecting Impulsive Buying Behavior

According to Muruganatham and Bhakat (2013), impulse buying can be affected by numerous factors divided into two extensive categories: external and internal stimuli. External factors generally refer to situational characteristics, including the marketing activities and shopping environment surrounding customers. From the marketing perspective, external stimuli include promotional activities (advertisements, sales promotion, direct selling, etc.) and the product (properties, packaging, placement, etc.). Several researchers have investigated that impulse buying arises after exposure to stimuli. For instance, the earliest study of Applebaum (1951) showed that the stimuli created by the sales promotional device entailed immediate purchase. Abratt and Goodey (1990) found that point-of-purchase (POP) posters in the store can also intensify the sudden buying desire. Thus, efficient in-store settings, special coupons, displays, product demonstrations and samplings can provoke interest at the purchase points. The shopping environment is directly connected to the store's atmosphere, design, and innovations. These include the room characteristics (lighting, sounds, smells, etc.), the interior design (POP, colors, textures, coverings, etc.), and technological appliances (new technologies, devices, etc.). The attitude and behavior of store personnel can be classified into this category too.

Internal stimuli refer to the complex factors that relate to an individual's traits and characteristics. These factors can include a shopper's impulsivity, psychological perceptions, hedonism, high curiosity, and probability of being influenced by social groups. As a personal trait, impulsivity may lead to unconscious, low-involvement decision-making

that can be noticeable during shopping. An individual's psychological perceptions, such as their state of mind and self-esteem, can also be the reason for impulse buying. Research has shown that people often make unplanned purchases to escape negative emotional states and improve their mood. Additionally, people perceive buying as a reward or special treat that makes them satisfied and happy.

High curiosity, particularly related to new products or interesting representations of them, can also increase the urge to purchase. The appearance of a product can also influence a shopper's decision-making process. Underhill (2009) stated that impulse buying results from the five senses: touch, hearing, seeing, smelling, and/or tasting. Thus, packaging can decrease the distance between the product and the customer by encouraging them to touch and learn more about it. Another vital factor in impulse buying is the influence of social groups. A consumer may change behavior to meet the expectations and receive approval or recognition from the surrounding people.

Shift toward Online Shopping and Impulse Buying

As consumer behavior shifts towards receiving benefits not only from the product or service but also from the purchasing process, e-commerce offers people a wide range of advantages. The growth of the e-commerce industry and the development of new technologies drive online shoppers to buy instantly. Providing consumers with a pleasant online buying experience significantly increases the number of unintentional purchases, according to recent studies. The more internet-based shopping platforms are enhanced, the more they can increase the shopper's pleasure level and intensify the impulse buying trend.

During online shopping, external stimuli directly depend on website characteristics and functionalities. "Website stimuli," as named by Zhao et al. (2021), include attributes such as website security, navigability, and visual appearance. These attributes can influence the shopper's decision-making process, leading to unintentional purchases. While e-commerce has revolutionized the way people shop, it does have its limitations when it comes to impulse buying behavior. One of the primary limitations is the inability to physically touch and feel the products

before purchasing them. This makes it difficult for consumers to assess the quality of the product and can lead to dissatisfaction with its purchase, ultimately reducing the likelihood of future impulse purchases. Additionally, the lack of human interaction in the online shopping experience can make it challenging for retailers to stimulate impulse buying behavior through upselling and cross-selling techniques.

Bencsik et al. (2019) explored the healthy lifestyle and behavior of the "Z Generation," which refers to individuals born between 1995 and 2010. The study found that this generation is more health-conscious and interested in wellness than previous generations, with a strong focus on physical activity and healthy eating. Additionally, the authors noted that social media plays a significant role in shaping this demographic's health behaviors and attitudes, as online health trends and information heavily influence them. This aligns with Zailskaite-Jakste and Minelgaite's (2021) study, which found that consumer engagement behaviour on social media has a mediating role and impact on brand equity.

Concerning our research on the impact of brand equity on consumer purchase decisions, Bencsik et al.'s (2019) findings suggest that understanding the health-related values and concerns of Generation Z could be a critical factor in building and promoting a strong brand image that resonates with this demographic. Moreover, their emphasis on the influence of social media highlights the importance of digital marketing strategies in reaching and engaging with this generation.

Nagy (2018) investigated factors influencing consumer purchase intentions of instant noodle products in the Hungarian market. The study found that consumer's perception of the product's quality and price and trust in the brand were significant factors in their purchase decisions. The study also highlighted the importance of packaging design and brand image in influencing consumers' perceptions of the product. These findings are consistent with previous research on the impact of brand equity on consumer behavior (Van Thuy et al., 2022; Zailskaite-Jakste & Minelgaite, 2021) and suggest that factors such as product quality, price, and branding are vital considerations for marketers when attempting to influence consumer purchase decisions.

In this paper, we also looked at the different types of impulse buying to identify if they are suitable for online purchasing. Stern (1962) divided impulse buying into four types: pure impulse buying, reminder impulse buying, suggestion impulse buying, and planned impulse buying.

METHODOLOGY

Data collection from secondary sources

Secondary data was collected from published sources. The secondary data aimed to understand the chronological study of in-store and online impulse buying behavior and use the data as research background to analyze and correlate our findings with existing studies. Previous research on impulse buying provides a comprehensive framework of behavior and the factors that affect it. However, more information on online impulse buying behavior, which has become prevalent today, still needs to be available.

Data collection from primary sources

The primary source for this research consisted of survey data. The survey population comprised individuals living in Astana between 18 to 37 years old, as this segment is the main age group that shops online. Respondents were invited to participate in the survey through messengers and region-based pages on social media.

Survey development

We developed the questionnaire based on seven questions listed in the appendix section. One question was measured on a 4-point Likert scale, which was implemented to facilitate future data analysis. All excess questions were avoided to make it easier for respondents and us to collect only helpful information. Additionally, the questionnaire was designed to be as short as possible to make it easier for respondents to answer. We ensured that none of the questions touched on sensitive topics or ethical issues and that none of the questions violated the respondents' rights.

Sample size

Respondents vary in age from 18 to 37, both genders and occupations.

Unlimited population: $n = \frac{z^2 \times \hat{p}(1-\hat{p})}{\epsilon^2}$

Finite population: $n' = \frac{n}{1 + \frac{z^2 \times \hat{p}(1-\hat{p})}{\epsilon^2 N}}$

Where;

z is the z score

ε is the margin of error

N is the population size

p̂ is the population proportion

According to government data, Astana's population is around 1 million, N= 1000000. For population proportion, we associated 50% of the population with an income and shops online

with ages 18 to 37, so p̂. We calculated the ε as 7.2 %, with a confidence level of 90%. Hence, we found that 132 respondents for our survey are representative, with a confidence level of 90 % and a margin of error of 7.2%.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Participants in the survey consisted of 72 women (55%) and 60 men (45%); this gender imbalance needs to be considered when analyzing the data. Additionally, there were 54 respondents in the age range of 18-22, 36 in the age range of 23-27, 30 in the age range of 28-32, and 12 in the age range of 33-37, indicating an uneven distribution of age groups in the answers.

Table 1: Frequency of Online Shopping by Gender

Gender	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always	Total
Male	6	30	18	6	60
Female	18	30	24	0	72

Based on the respondents' gender, Table 1 shows how frequently they purchase online. It displays the proportion of respondents in each gender group and the frequency of internet purchasing, which ranges from never to always. Most responses falling into the "sometimes" group, indicating that both men and women purchase online.

The respondents' age distribution is shown in Table 2, which lists the proportions of responders in each age group and their respective numbers. The age range of 18 to 22 accounts for 40.9% of the sample's responses, followed by the age range of 23 to 27 years old, with 27.3%.

Table 2: Age Distribution

Age Group	Number of Respondents	Percentage
18-22	54	40.9 %
23-27	36	27.3 %
28-32	30	22.7 %
33-37	12	9.1 %

Table 3: Types of Goods Purchased Online by Gender

Gender	Food	Electronics	Beauty & Health	Clothes & Jewelry	Household Appliances
Male	24	6	12	12	6
Female	36	6	18	12	0

Table 3 lists the different products respondents bought online, broken down by gender. It shows the proportion of respondents in each gender group who had bought different products, such

as food, electronics, beauty and health items, apparel and jewelery, and home appliances. The chart demonstrates that people of both sexes purchase online in various product categories.

Table 4: Planned Purchase by age group

Age Group	Yes	No
18-22	24	30
23-27	18	18
28-32	18	12
33-37	6	6

The intended purchasing behavior for various age groups is examined in Table 4, which displays the proportion of respondents in each age group who made planned or impulsive purchases. According to the chart, a sizeable percentage of respondents in all age categories make impulsive, unexpected purchases.

Table 5: Last Occasion of Purchasing Online by Frequency of Online Shopping

Frequency of Online Shopping	This week	Within the month	Last month	Over a month ago
Rarely (once in 6 months)	0	6	12	6
Sometimes (once in 3 months)	6	18	18	18
Often (every month)	6	6	18	12
Always	6	0	6	0

This table shows the most recent online purchases based on how frequently people buy online. It displays the proportion of respondents in each frequency category—ranging from infrequently to always—and the breakdown of their most recent online transactions. According to the table, respondents who buy more regularly online are likely to have bought something more recently, with a more significant percentage of them purchasing within the last month or perhaps just the past week.

We tried to understand consumers' online shopping behavior with the survey, including demographic characteristics. Only 24 respondents rarely shop online, accounting for 18% of total online respondents. The survey results indicate that most respondents make online purchases at least once every six months. Only six respondents (4%) answered that they shop online without any alternatives. Based on this data, it is clear that most people prefer a blend of online and offline shopping. Furthermore, 36 out of 48 respondents who answered "Often" and "Always" were women. Considering that women respondents constitute 55% of all respondents, it can be concluded that women shop online more frequently than men.

The next question in the survey was about the respondents' latest online purchase and whether it was an impulse buy or not. The results show that 18 people purchased within a week when the survey was conducted, 30 respondents did it within a month, and 84 people made their last online purchase over a month ago. While we

assumed that the number of recent purchases would be higher, some respondents may have only recalled significant purchases. The data reveals that most recent purchases were in the food category (45%), followed by beauty and health (23%) and clothes and accessories (18%). Purchases of electronics (2) and household appliances (1) were rare. This may be because these categories involve relatively high costs and require more decision-making time. Underhill's statement about the importance of the five senses is appropriate here since online shopping platforms have different abilities to stimulate them and arouse interest in specific products. Liyanage and Wijesundara (2020) also mentioned that shipping and refund costs could discourage online impulse buying behavior.

The survey found that 59% of respondents reported making unplanned purchases, indicating that consumers can make irrational purchases even in the online space. The survey also identified external and internal factors that influence impulsive buying behavior. External factors included special offers, limited discounts, free delivery, top purchases, and recommendations, while internal factors included worries for the future, curiosity, and psychological perception.

Financial benefits such as offers, free delivery, and discounts also were found to be the most significant external triggers, accounting for 71% of external stimuli. Additionally, there were impulsive purchases influenced by internal stimuli, such as recalling a desire for a product,

wanting to try out a new product, and being too hungry and ordering more food than needed.

The survey also attempted to correlate the identified impulsive buying behavior with the existing types of impulse buying described by Stern (1962), which include Pure Impulse Buying, Reminder Impulse Buying, Suggestion Impulse Buying, and Planned Impulse Buying. The survey found examples of all four types of impulse buying behavior, with Pure Impulse Buying being the most common.

External factors were found to be marginally more significant in impulsive buying behavior, constituting 53.8% of the responses. This suggests that online marketers could leverage financial incentives such as offers, discounts, and free delivery to sway impulsive buying behavior in their favor.

Discussion

The results of this study provide insights into the impulsive buying behavior of online shoppers and the factors that influence it. The findings suggest that impulsive buying behavior is not limited to physical stores but is also prevalent in online shopping. This implies that businesses should focus on creating a pleasant shopping experience in physical stores and providing an engaging and user-friendly online platform to attract and retain customers.

The study also reveals that gender correlates with the frequency of online purchases, with women being more likely to shop online than men. This highlights the need for businesses to tailor their marketing strategies to their target audience and understand their preferences and buying behavior. Moreover, businesses should design their product placement, offers, and marketing campaigns to entice customers to make unplanned purchases, particularly in the food, beauty and health products, and clothes and jewelery categories.

Furthermore, the study identifies the most popular categories in e-commerce, with food being the most frequently purchased category, followed by beauty and health products, clothes and jewelery, electronics, and household appliances. This information is valuable for businesses to understand which product categories have the highest demand and where to focus their marketing efforts.

The study categorizes the factors influencing impulsive buying behavior into external and internal stimuli. External stimuli include financial benefits, such as offers, free delivery, and discounts, and the influence of the online environment and website navigation. On the other hand, internal stimuli include worries for the future, curiosity, and psychological perception. Businesses can use this information to design their marketing campaigns and offer to influence customers' buying behavior.

It is essential to acknowledge the limitations of this study, including the fact that it was conducted in Kazakhstan, mainly in Astana, where impulsive buying behavior may be different from other regions of the world. Moreover, customers may only sometimes be aware of their impulsive behavior, which may have distorted genuine motives in the survey results. Finally, respondents may have accounted for their hasty buying activities as planned and reasoned, which may have influenced the accuracy of the results.

In conclusion, the study provides valuable insights into the impulsive buying behavior of online shoppers and the factors that influence it. The results have practical implications for businesses to design their marketing strategies and offers to influence customers' buying behavior and increase sales. Further research in different regions is necessary to validate the study's findings and provide a more comprehensive understanding of impulsive buying behavior in online shopping.

CONCLUSION

This study aimed to examine online shoppers' impulsive buying patterns and determine the variables that affect them. The study includes interviewing 132 internet users in Astana, Kazakhstan, aged 18 to 37. The study examined factors influencing impulsive buying behavior, including impulsivity, psychological perceptions, social influence, and external cues such as marketing campaigns and the store environment. The results provide helpful information about the respondents' racial, ethnic, and age demographics, as well as their gender, online purchasing habits, and product preferences. The findings show that both sexes shop online, with most respondents falling into the "sometimes" category regarding how frequently they shop.

The study emphasizes the importance of comprehending the factors that lead to impulsive online shopping behavior. This knowledge can be used by marketers to better cater to consumers' impulsive tendencies and accidental purchases. This information can help shoppers make more informed choices online, improving marketing tactics and raising customer satisfaction. However, it is critical to understand this study's constraints. First, the survey was only conducted in Kazakhstan, which may restrict the findings' applicability to other populations. Second, the results may be biased due to the respondents' uneven gender distribution. Future research should include a more balanced sample to understand impulsive online purchasing behavior better.

There are several implications and policy suggestions to consider in light of the findings. Marketers can use the study's findings to tailor their marketing strategies and create targeted campaigns that appeal to consumers' impulsive purchasing habits. Retailers can also improve the characteristics and functionality of their websites to improve the shopping experience and encourage impulsive buying. In order to protect consumers from deceptive marketing techniques that prey on impulsive purchasing, policymakers can also consider enacting rules or regulations.

In conclusion, this study advances our understanding of impulsive online purchasing behavior. It gives important information about the variables influencing impulsive purchases and the demographics of online shoppers who engage in such behavior. The research has implications for marketers and consumers, highlighting the importance of awareness and reasoned decision-making when conducting online business. In order to improve our understanding of impulsive purchasing behavior in the digital age, future research should build on these findings and address the limitations.

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