

Impulsive Buying Behavior

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Abstract: Impulsive buying generally defined as an unplanned buying refers to a consumer buying an item not originally on their predetermined shopping list. Psychological researches reveal that emotions play a crucial role in motivating the consumers in making the buying decisions. In this chapter, different definitions are being explained along with its process, types and factors influencing impulsive buying as well as marketing strategies. The process includes the steps i.e. Exploring Information, Need Stimulation, Impulse Buying Intention and Impulse Purchase Decision. Types of impulse buying behaviour are Pure Impulse Buying, Suggestion Impulse Buying, and Reminder Impulse Buying & Planned Impulse Buying. There are nine factors explained in this chapter that influence consumers’ impulsive buying behaviour which are mass distribution, self service, store display, low prices, mass advertisements, low marginal need of item, smaller sizes, ease of storage and short product life.

Keywords: Impulse Buying Behaviour, Process & Types of Impulse Buying.

Topic 1: - Definition of Impulse Buying in Chronological order:

Name of Author	Definitions	Meaning
V. T. Clover (1950) ¹	Impulse purchasing is to be strictly similar to unplanned purchasing.	Impulse Purchase = Unplanned Purchase
William Applebaum (1951) ²	Impulse purchasing may stem from the consumer’s exposure to stimuli while in a store	Impulse Purchase = Unplanned Purchase + Exposure to Stimuli
Nesbitt (1959) ³	Impulse buying is an intelligent shopping, smart shopper do not planned their purchase, but search for and take advantage of in-store promotions, thus maximizing their buying power	
Stern (1962) ⁴	Impulse purchase is based on the premise that the making of an impulse purchase, be it planned, pure, reminder or suggestions, is linked to the consumer’s exposure to stimuli	
P. Kotler (1972) ⁵	Marketer controlled stimuli such as the product itself, the product’s position on the shelf, atmospheric salesmanship, tie-ins have being identified by consumer researcher as prompt for unplanned or impulse purchases	
Hirschman (1985) ⁶	Self-generated stimuli are also accountable for unplanned and impulse purchase	
Rook and Hoch (1985) ⁷	has given attention on cognitive and emotional responses which	

1 Clover, Vernon T. (1950), "Relative Importance of Impulse Buying in Retail Stores;" Journal of Marketing, 25 (July), 66-70.

2 Applebaum, William (1951), "Studying Consumer Behavior in Retail Stores," Journal of Marketing, 16 (October), 172-178.

3 Nesbitt, Saul (1959), "Today's Housewives Plan Menus as They Shop," Nesbitt Associates Release, 2-3.

4 Stern, Hawkins (1962), "The Significance of Impulse Buying Today," Journal of Marketing, 26 (April), 59-62.

5 Kotler, Philip (1974), "Atmospherics as a Marketing Tool", Journal of Retailing, Vol-49, 4, 48-64.

6 Hirschman, Elizabeth C. (1985), "Cognitive Processes in Experiential Consumer Behavior," in Research in Consumer Behavior, ed. Vol. 1, Jai Press, Inc.

	consumer experience during impulse purchase	
Rook (1987) ⁸	constructed a definition of impulse buying on five crucial elements which distinguished impulsive & non-impulsive buying behaviour, i.e. Feelings a “sudden and spontaneous desired to act” Being in a “state of psychological at disequilibrium” Experiencing a “psychological conflict & struggle” Reducing “cognitive evaluation” Consuming “without regard for the consequences	
Navarick (1987) ⁹	defined impulsivity as reduced evaluation of consequences” i.e. impulsive behaviour results from choosing immediate available options over future options	Impulse purchase = reduced evaluation of consequences
Beatty & Ferrel (1998) ¹⁰	a sudden and immediate purchase with no pre-shopping intention, impulsive behaviour occurs after experiencing urge to buy and it tends to be spontaneous & without lots of reflection.	Impulse purchase = urge to buy + spontaneous

Topic 2: - Process of Impulsive Buying Behaviour

Impulse buying process involves four stages i.e. [1] Exploring Information. [2] Need Stimulation. [3] Impulse Buying Intention. [4] Impulse Purchase Decision.¹¹

Stage 1: - Exploring Information

Need identification is the first step of buying decision followed by information search for identification of solution to satisfy the needs. Time spend on exploration of information depends on situation complexity, involvement level, involvement of risks and capital.

For example: Consumer buying chocolates, ice-creams, biscuits etc... needs little information and involved little than buying an Electronic Products.

Stage 2: - Need Stimulation

Problem identification and need stimulation is the first step of consumer buying decision process, unless consumer recognize need, he doesn't think of buying decision goods or services which will satisfy his/her needs. The consumer recognizes the gap between ideal state and present state because not all the needs leads to buying process, consumer make the list of needs and try to satisfy those needs which stood first in the list.

Stage 3: - Impulse Buying Intention

Consumer makes an impulse buying intention after the needs stimulation, in which he/she feel the urge to buy and tries to get rid of his/her urge. In this process of trying to get rid of this urge, consumer search every possible way to make a purchase decision that is impulse buying decision.

Stage 4: - Impulse Purchase Decision

The impulse buying decision can be categories as fast track process where consumer buys impulsively when need are identified.

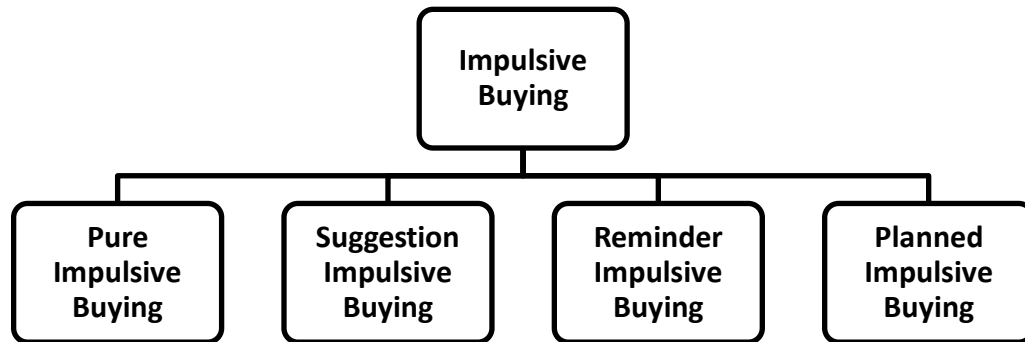
7 Rook, Dennis W. and Stephen J. Hoch (1985), "Consuming Impulses," in Advances in Consumer Research, Vol. 12, eds. Morris B. Holbrook and Elizabeth C. Hirschman, Provo, UT: Association for Consumer Research, 23-27.

8 Rook, Dennis W. (1987), "The Buying Impulse," Journal of Consumer Research, 14 (September), 189-199.

9 Navarick, Douglas J. (1987), "Reinforcement Probability and Delay as Determinants of Human Impulsiveness," The Psychological Record, 37, 219-226.

Topic 3: - Types of Impulse Buying Behaviour

The understanding of impulse buying concepts was greatly improved and easily explained through Stern's (1962)¹² identification of four distinct types of impulse buying i.e. Pure Impulse Buying, Suggestion Impulse Buying, and Reminder Impulse Buying & Planned Impulse Buying.



1. **Planned Impulsive Buying:** It is equivalent to Nesbitt (1959) as describe above. When entering a shop the consumer has in mind to buy something or some sort of good but the choice of what kind of product, brand, size or price etc. has not been determined. Instead special offers and other stimuli such as salespersons, influence the decisions inside the shop. The actual decision is made at the point of sale. This makes it different from planned purchase when a more specific kind of product is in mind e.g. a blouse instead of clothes.

2. **Pure Impulsive Buying:** (defined as classic or truly impulsive buying), is a purchase that breaks the normal planned shopping pattern. This category is strongly connected to emotions and the impulsiveness is very high. It occurs because of a want to escape or because the product is a novelty. The consumer is not looking for the product at all but having strong emotional feelings. For example: Low price is a common trigger to this category.

3. **Reminder Impulsive Buying:** it is occurring when the consumer is reminded of the need to buy an item upon seeing it. There already exists an unconscious need for the product which implies that the consumer has previous knowledge about the product. The reminder impulse can also remind them about a particular advertisement or information previously noticed by the consumer, which now makes the consumer take the opportunity of purchasing. The difference between reminder impulse buying and suggestion impulse buying is that the product is known to the consumer in the first but not in the latter situation.

4. **Suggestion Impulsive Buying:** it is occurring when shopper sees a product for the first time and visualizes a need for it. This purchase can turn out to be a rational or functional purchase decision but the purchase is not planned because the consumer has no previous knowledge about the product. That is why visualization in the store is the key factor for the purchase.

Topic 4: - Factors affecting Impulsive Buying Behaviour

There are nine factors that influence consumers' impulsive buying behaviour (Stern, 1962):, mass distribution, self service, store display, low prices, mass advertisements, low marginal need of item, smaller sizes, ease of storage and short product life.

1. A low price refers to reduction in product prices, cost savings or sales promotions. For e.g. – any discount offers given by seller.
2. Mass distribution refers that a particular product is available at different location, so it is easy available for every consumer. For e.g. – Consumer have convenience to purchase the product.
3. In self-service, consumer can shop more quickly & have freedom in shopping, consumer do not rely on clerk for every step in purchase process. For e.g. – Online shopping and Teleshopping.
4. Mass advertising creates consumer knowledge about product/brand, easily recognized the changes in the product that leads to impulse purchase. For e.g. – Social Media Advertising.
5. Store displays are always prominent and eye-catching for the consumer to notice product.
6. High marginal needs for the item are most likely to be planned while items with low marginal needs are purchase when consumer is near to the display or it is convenient to buy.

7. Smaller sizes in product packing are tends to leads to impulse buying as compared to large or heavy sizes. For e.g. – Biscuits and Chocolates are available in small packages.
8. Ease of storage influence an impulse purchase in a similar way how the large or heavy items discourage impulse buying.
9. Items which are consumed quickly and are perishable in nature have the short product life encourages to buy impulse.

Topic 5: - Marketing Strategies for Impulsive buying with reference to retail malls.

1. Attractive store layout and design will attract more consumers for impulse purchase.
2. Right mix of product selection and product placement encourages impulse purchase.
3. Keep low priced products nearby checkout areas.
4. Offer discounted samples of new arrivals of the products right next to cash counters.
5. Try to display impulse products around the high demand items.
6. Impulse purchases only happen when you can create a sense of it in consumer's minds i.e. use the right language to communicate urgency.
7. To increase customer attention, use signage on and around impulse displays.
8. Try spotlighting or coloured lighting that sets the display apart from the rest of stores. Bright and bold colours can drawn attention and help to create the feelings of impulse buying.
9. Give product demonstration and presentation in malls as well as offers product samples.
10. Showcase seasonal items.
11. Provide training to floor staff to encourage consumers' impulsive buying behaviour.
12. A major factor of creating an impulse for buying is the limited time offers, special offer and limited stock schemes. They work well as they motivate the customer to buy on an impulse rather than a logical one. It makes the customer to think that if they do not buy right now, it is never. This creates enough urgency to make the buying decision.

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