



# International Journal of Marketing Management

ISSN 2454 - 5007



[www.ijmm.net](http://www.ijmm.net)

Email ID: [editor@ijmm.net](mailto:editor@ijmm.net) , [ijmm.editor9@gmail.com](mailto:ijmm.editor9@gmail.com)

## **From Desire to Decision: A Holistic View of Impulse Buying Dynamics in Retail**

**Ravi Sankar Pasupuleti**

Assistant Professor,  
Department of Management Studies,  
A.M. Reddy Memorial College of Engineering and Technology,  
Narasaraopet, Andhra Pradesh.

**Depthi Thiyyagura**

Assistant Professor,  
Department of Management Studies,  
A.M. Reddy Memorial College of Engineering and Technology,  
Narasaraopet, Andhra Pradesh.

**Jhansi K S Nandini Bommisatti**

Assistant Professor,  
Department of Management Studies,

---

### **ABSTRACT**

This study delves into the complex dynamics of impulse buying behavior by constructing a comprehensive theoretical framework. Rooted in behavioral theories and arousal theory, the research explores the interplay between external stimuli, individual cognitive and emotional processes, and impulsive purchasing tendencies. Leveraging the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), the study investigates the impact of attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control on consumers' intentions and actions in the context of impulse buying. The arousal theory is integrated to shed light on the influence of heightened emotional states on impulsive behavior. Through this synthesis, the research offers a nuanced understanding of the multifaceted factors that contribute to impulse buying, presenting insights into triggers, cognitive mechanisms, and emotional dynamics. This theoretical framework provides a foundation for developing informed strategies in retail contexts and designing targeted interventions in consumer psychology.

*Keywords:* Impulse buying behavior, Behavioral theories, Arousal theory, Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), Consumer psychology interventions

---

In the 1990s, researchers initiated investigations into the potential stimulation of unplanned consumer purchases across various product categories (Inman et al., 2009). Empirical studies consistently reveal a prevalent occurrence of impulse buying among consumers. Nelson's study found that

8 out of 10 supermarket shoppers make unplanned product purchases impulsively, with one in five shopping baskets containing such items (Cheng et al., 2013). Muhtar Kent's study indicated that over 70% of Coke's sales are attributed to impulse buying (Karmali, 2007).

Notably, a Canadian chain wholesaler could potentially see a 40% increase in profitability if each consumer made one additional impulsive product purchase (Dawson & Kim, 2009; Foroughi et al., 2013). Impulse buying behavior is rooted in the inclination or desire to make impulsive purchases without considering potential negative consequences. Research suggests that high impulse buying tendencies influence impulsive purchases through positive emotions and an irresistible urge to buy (Mohan et al., 2013). Individuals with elevated impulse buying tendencies engage in longer in-store searches, reinforcing the positive aspects of impulsive buying. This is pertinent as research indicates that those with high impulse buying tendencies are more responsive to environmental cues, contributing to increased engagement in impulse buying (Youn & Faber, 2000).

The urge to buy is another critical factor shaping impulse buying behavior. Retail customers' strong urge to buy is directly influenced by external stimuli such as in-store promotions, visual displays, and store images (Maharani et al., 2020). Impulse buying typically follows a strong urge to make an impulsive purchase (Foroughi et al., 2013). The intensity of urges correlates with a higher likelihood of engaging in impulse buying. Therefore, retail customers conducting in-store searches may encounter desired items spontaneously, leading to an irresistible urge to purchase due to the product's proximity. Despite its strength, the urge or desire is not always translated into behavior, as individuals employ various strategies to control their desires (Verplanken & Sato, 2011). Gender is another influential factor in impulse buying, shaped by social and cultural factors inherent in men and women (Mitchell & Walsh, 2004). Women exhibit a higher

inclination toward impulse buying, often making unplanned purchases without prior intention or when shopping for other purposes (Khan et al., 2015). Additionally, women tend to have a lower ability to control impulses compared to male consumers, leading to more frequent instances of impulse buying (Hadjali et al., 2012).

Despite the wealth of research on the connection between impulse buying tendencies, the urge to buy, and actual impulse buying, debates persist over the outcomes of these studies (Saad & Metawie, 2015; Xiang et al., 2016). This study aims to address these debates, providing empirical evidence to contribute to the ongoing discourse. Previous research has overlooked a comprehensive model that considers both direct and indirect relationships between impulse buying tendencies, the urge to buy, and gender with impulse buying. Single-focused research may oversimplify and provide a one-sided view of behavior (Turkyilmaz et al., 2015). Consequently, this study seeks to establish a comprehensive research model incorporating the urge to buy as a mediating variable and gender as a moderating variable in the relationship between impulse buying tendencies and actual impulse buying. The use of "urge to buy" as a mediating variable is justified by the acknowledgment that, despite strong and sometimes irresistible desires, they do not always translate into behavior, with individuals employing various techniques to control their urges (Foroughi et al., 2013). Additionally, "gender" is introduced as a moderating variable due to conflicting results in research on the influence of gender on impulse buying (Hadjali et al., 2012).

This research anticipates significant contributions for marketers in the retail industry, encouraging the promotion of impulse buying to enhance sales and

company profitability. The development of a gender-based marketing strategy is emphasized, recognizing the distinct patterns and directions of marketing activities for men and women (Chun et al., 2020). The theoretical contributions of this study extend to academics, providing a comprehensive impulse buying behavior research model that elucidates the direct and indirect impacts of impulse buying tendencies on actual impulse buying through the mediation of the urge to buy and the moderation of gender among retail customers.

## **2. Review of literature and Hypothesis Development**

### *2.1. Impulse Buying Tendency and Impulse Buying*

Customers with elevated impulse buying tendencies display a pronounced inclination for impulsive purchases, characterized by weaker self-control compared to those with lower impulse buying tendencies (Dawson & Kim, 2009; Foroughi et al., 2013; Youn & Faber, 2000). Impulse buying, as part of a broader psychological function intertwined with self-regulatory behavior, manifests when individuals with high impulse buying tendencies make decisions to purchase items that capture their attention without thorough consideration. These individuals exhibit a disregard for possessing similar items or having made comparable purchases in the past (Verplanken & Sato, 2011). Multiple factors influence retail customers' impulse buying, encompassing external stimuli, the shopping environment, and individual characteristics. The product itself, the purchasing context, and personal traits contribute to the variability in impulse buying (Yang et al., 2013). Personal attributes influencing impulse buying behavior include levels of impulsive tendencies, optimal stimulation, shopping pleasure, and self-control (Youn & Faber, 2000). In the context of impulse buying

behavior, the consensus is that consumers with heightened impulse buying tendencies tend to engage in more impulsive purchases due to their weaker control compared to those with relatively lower tendencies (Dawson & Kim, 2009; Foroughi et al., 2013; Herabadi et al., 2009; Youn & Faber, 2000). Given the preceding discussion, we formulate the hypothesis:

H1: Impulse buying tendency has a positive and significant effect on impulse buying.

### *2.2. Impulse Buying Tendency and Urge to Buy*

The desire to engage in impulse purchases arises unexpectedly, with approximately 32 percent of respondents explicitly expressing this phenomenon (Lin & Chen, 2012). Participants articulated instances where they felt "suddenly" compelled to make a purchase, such as one respondent who hurriedly bought ice cream upon sighting it. Each consumer exhibits a distinct impulse buying tendency, and those with a high inclination for impulsive purchases often harbor a strong urge to engage in such behavior. Individuals displaying a heightened tendency for impulse buying also tend to engage in more extended searches within the store, receiving positive reinforcement that encourages impulse buying. Mohan et al.'s (2013) research asserts that impulse buying tendencies impact impulsive purchases by triggering positive emotions and impulsive impulses. Those with elevated impulse buying tendencies tend to prolong their in-store searches, contributing to the generation of impulses and positive reinforcement for impulsive purchases (Hanzaee & Taherikia, 2010). Consequently, we propose the hypothesis:

H2: Impulse buying tendency has a positive and significant effect on the urge to buy.

### *2.3. Urge to Buy and Impulse Buying*

Consumers grappling with a persistent urge to make purchases find it challenging to

resist various stimuli encouraging buying during the shopping process, even with their maximal attempts at control (Baumeister et al., 2002; Dholakia, 2000). The urge to buy is characterized as a spontaneous impulse that emerges when confronted with a particular brand, item, or product in a store environment (Dholakia, 2000; Mohan et al., 2013). This desire or urge to buy precedes impulsive consumption, implying a positive relationship between the urge to buy and impulse buying. The urge to buy represents a sudden and spontaneous state experienced by consumers when encountering an item or product in a store setting. The intensity of this urge correlates with an increased likelihood of making impulsive purchases. Retail customers' impulses are primarily triggered by their physical proximity to enticing objects, and they face the greatest challenge resisting the urge to make impulsive purchases when confronted with attractive items. Prior research has consistently indicated a positive relationship between the urge to buy and impulse buying (Foroughi et al., 2013; Hanzaee & Taherikia, 2010; Mohan et al., 2013). Multiple studies (Foroughi et al., 2013; Hanzaee & Taherikia, 2010; Mohan et al., 2013) underscore the positive association between the urge to buy and impulsive buying behavior. Therefore, we propose the following hypothesis:

H3: Urge to buy has a positive and significant influence on impulse buying.

#### *2.4. Impulse Buying Tendency, Urge to Buy, and Impulse Buying*

Each consumer exhibits a unique inclination towards impulsive buying, implying that retail customers with elevated tendencies for impulsive purchases are more likely to experience a desire for impulsive buying. Individuals characterized by a heightened level of impulse buying tend to sense a more pronounced urge to engage in impulsive purchasing. The urge to buy manifests as an

impulsive desire emerging when a customer encounters a particular item, product, or brand in a store environment. It is asserted that the urge or desire to engage in impulsive buying precedes the actual act of impulsive purchases, establishing a positive correlation between the urge to buy and impulsive purchasing behavior (Foroughi et al., 2013; Hanzaee & Taherikia, 2010). The findings suggest that, during in-store shopping experiences, the more strongly consumers feel the urge to buy, the greater the likelihood of them engaging in impulsive buying. Numerous preceding studies consistently highlight the positive impact of the urge to buy on impulsive purchasing behavior (Foroughi et al., 2013; Hanzaee & Taherikia, 2010; Mohan et al., 2013). Consequently, we propose the hypothesis:  
H4: Impulse buying tendency has a positive and significant influence on impulse buying through an urge to buy.

#### *3. Theoretical Framework*

The theoretical framework for understanding impulse buying behavior draws upon the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) model, a psychological framework widely applied in consumer behavior research. According to this model, external stimuli (S) act upon an individual's internal processes or organism (O), which, in turn, elicits a behavioral response (R). In the context of impulse buying, external stimuli encompass a range of factors such as in-store promotions, visual merchandising, and situational cues that capture consumers' attention. The organismic processes involve the individual's cognitive and emotional responses to these stimuli, shaping the likelihood of impulsive buying behavior.

Behavioral theories, particularly the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), contribute to the understanding of how psychological constructs influence impulse buying tendencies. TPB posits that an individual's attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived

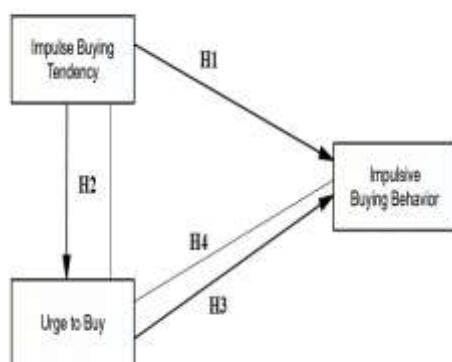


behavioral control collectively determine their intention to engage in a particular behavior. Applied to impulse buying, attitudes toward unplanned purchases, societal norms around impulsive behavior, and one's perceived control over resisting impulses become critical factors influencing the decision-making process.

Further enriching the theoretical framework, the arousal theory proposes that emotional arousal plays a pivotal role in impulsive actions. When consumers experience heightened emotional states, such as excitement or pleasure, there is an increased likelihood of impulsive buying. This aligns with the findings of Mohan et al. (2013) and Beatty & Ferrell (1998), who emphasize the role of emotions in driving impulsive buying tendencies.

Incorporating elements of the S-O-R model, TPB, and arousal theory provides a comprehensive lens through which to analyze impulse buying behavior. The external stimuli act as triggers, influencing internal cognitive and emotional responses, ultimately culminating in the behavioral response of impulse buying. This theoretical synthesis offers a nuanced understanding of the multifaceted processes that underlie impulsive consumer decisions in various retail settings.

The proposed research model has shown in the fig.1



#### 4. Discussion and Conclusion:

The findings of this study shed light on the intricate dynamics of impulse buying behavior, delving into the nuanced interplay of factors influencing consumers during their shopping experiences. The differentiation in impulsive buying tendencies among individuals underscores the heterogeneous nature of consumer behavior, emphasizing the need for personalized marketing strategies to cater to varying inclinations.

The study's revelation that retail customers with heightened impulsive buying tendencies are more likely to experience a strong urge to make impulsive purchases aligns with existing literature, reinforcing the notion that individual traits contribute significantly to impulsive behavior. This underscores the importance of understanding and leveraging consumer tendencies in designing targeted interventions and marketing campaigns. The positive correlation established between impulse buying tendencies and the urge to buy further underscores the cascading impact of internal predispositions on the consumer's decision-making process.

The concept of the urge to buy as a precursor to impulsive purchasing emerges as a critical aspect of consumer behavior within a retail setting. The spontaneous nature of this urge, triggered by specific items or brands, signifies the intricate interplay of environmental stimuli and individual characteristics. By acknowledging the urge to buy as a catalyst for impulsive purchases, retailers can strategically position enticing products and brands to capitalize on this impulsive tendency, thereby boosting sales and enhancing the overall shopping experience. The study's emphasis on the role of the urge to buy in influencing impulsive buying behavior contributes to the theoretical underpinnings of consumer psychology.

Understanding the psychological triggers that prompt impulsive buying provides valuable insights for marketers seeking to optimize their strategies. The positive and significant influence of the urge to buy on impulsive buying, as posited by the hypotheses, reinforces the need for retailers to create environments that evoke and capitalize on these impulsive urges.

In conclusion, this study advances our understanding of impulse buying by unraveling the intricate connections between impulsive buying tendencies and the urge to buy. The nuanced insights gleaned from this research have practical implications for marketers aiming to tailor their approaches, offering a foundation for the development of targeted strategies that resonate with individual consumer inclinations and foster impulsive buying behavior in retail settings.

##### *5. Future Research Directions:*

As we delve into the complexities of impulse buying behavior, several avenues for future research emerge, promising to deepen our understanding and refine practical implications for marketers and retailers. Firstly, exploring the moderating role of demographic variables beyond gender could provide a more comprehensive picture of the factors influencing impulse buying tendencies. Investigating how age, income levels, and cultural backgrounds shape impulsive behaviors would contribute to tailoring marketing strategies to diverse consumer segments.

Additionally, delving into the impact of situational variables on the urge to buy and impulse buying tendencies presents a promising direction. Examining how specific contextual factors, such as promotional activities, store layouts, and social influences, interact with individual characteristics could uncover nuanced insights. Understanding how these situational elements contribute to the intensification or mitigation of impulsive

urges would offer practical guidelines for retailers aiming to optimize their in-store environments.

Moreover, future research could focus on the temporal aspects of impulse buying, exploring how time constraints or leisurely shopping experiences influence impulsive tendencies and the urge to buy. Investigating whether consumers exhibit varying impulsive behaviors during peak shopping periods, such as sales events or holidays, compared to routine shopping occasions could uncover temporal nuances in impulse buying.

Furthermore, considering the rapid evolution of e-commerce and the increasing prevalence of mobile commerce, a comparative analysis between traditional in-store impulse buying and online impulsive behaviors becomes crucial. Research exploring how digital platforms, personalized recommendations, and virtual environments influence the urge to buy and impulse buying tendencies would offer valuable insights for businesses navigating the dynamic landscape of modern retail.

Incorporating neuroscientific methodologies, such as brain imaging techniques, could provide a deeper understanding of the neural processes underlying impulsive buying tendencies and the urge to buy. Unraveling the neural correlates of these behaviors could offer a more nuanced comprehension of the cognitive mechanisms at play, contributing to both theoretical frameworks and practical applications in marketing.

In conclusion, the future research trajectory in the realm of impulse buying should aim at refining our understanding by considering a broader spectrum of demographic variables, investigating situational influences, exploring temporal dynamics, comparing in-store and online contexts, and incorporating neuroscientific approaches. These avenues promise to enrich the current knowledge

base and equip marketers with actionable insights for tailoring strategies to the ever-evolving landscape of consumer behavior.

## References

- Baumeister, R. F., Twenge, J. M., & Nuss, C. K. (2002). Effects of social exclusion on cognitive processes: anticipated aloneness reduces intelligent thought. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 83(4), 817.
- Baumeister, R. F., Vohs, K. D., & Tice, D. M. (2002). The strength model of self-control. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 16(6), 351–355.
- Dawson, S., & Kim, M. (2009). External stimuli and impulse buyer behaviour. In *European Advances in Consumer Research Volume 8* (pp. 181-186).
- Dawson, S., & Kim, M. (2009a). External and internal trigger cues of impulse buying online. *Direct Marketing*, 3(1), 20–34.  
<https://doi.org/10.1108/17505930910945714>
- Dholakia, U. (2000). Temptation and resistance: An integrated model of consumption impulse formation and enactment. *Psychology & Marketing*, 17(11), 961-986.
- Dholakia, U. M. (2000). Temptation and resistance: An integrated model of consumption impulse formation and enactment. *Psychology and Marketing*, 17(11), 955–982.  
<https://doi.org/10.1002/1520-679>
- Foroughi, A., Buang, N. A., Senik, Z. C., & Hajmiasadeghi, R. S. (2013). Impulse buying behavior and moderating role of gender among Iranian shoppers. *Journal of Basic and Applied Scientific Research*, 3(4), 760–769.
- Hanzaee, K. H., & Taherikia, F. (2010). Impulse buying: an Iranian model. *China-USA Business Review*, 9(12), 31.
- Hanzaee, K. H., & Taherikia, A. (2010). The effect of brand trust and perceived quality on successful brand extension. *European Journal of Social Sciences*, 13(2), 227-240.
- Herabadi, A. G., Verplanken, B., & Van Knippenberg, A. (2009). Consumption experience of impulse buying in Indonesia: Emotional arousal and hedonistic considerations. *Asian Journal of Social Psychology*, 12(1), 20–31.
- Khan, M. S., Uddin, S., Ahmed, N., Ahmed, R. R., & Ahmed, S. S. (2015). Gender and impulsive buying behavior: An empirical study of Pakistani urban consumers. *Journal of Marketing Research & Case Studies*, 2015.
- Kim, H. S., Kim, J., & Lennon, S. J. (2007). Effects of web site atmospherics on consumer responses: Music and product presentation. *Direct Marketing: An International Journal*, 1(1), 7-19.
- Lin, Y.-H., & Chen, C.-Y. (2012). Adolescents' Impulse Buying: Susceptibility to Interpersonal Influence and Fear of Negative Evaluation. *Social Behavior & Personality: An International Journal*, 40(3).
- Mehrabian, A., & Russell, J. A. (1974). *An approach to environmental psychology*. MIT Press.
- Mitchell, V. W., & Walsh, G. (2004). Gender differences in German consumer decision-making styles. *Journal of Consumer Behaviour*, 3(4), 331-346.
- Mohan, G., Sivakumaran, B., & Sharma, P. (2013). Impact of store environment on impulse buying behavior. *European Journal of Marketing*, 47(10), 1711-1732.



Turkyilmaz, C., Ertekin, E., & Yilmaz, Y. (2015). What is impulse buying? An exploration into compulsive buying tendency in Turkish society. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 207, 336-345.

Verplanken, B., & Sato, A. (2011). The psychology of impulse buying: An integrative self-regulation approach. *Journal of Consumer Policy*, 34(2), 197-210.

Verplanken, B., & Sato, A. (2011). The psychology of impulse buying: An integrative self-regulation approach. *Journal of Consumer Policy*, 34(2), 197-210.

Youn, S., & Faber, R. J. (2000). Impulse buying: Its relation to personality traits and cues. *Advances in Consumer Research*, 27, 179-185.