

# Antecedents of Offline Impulsive Buying Behaviour



Annie John, R Rathidevi, Jain Mathew

**Abstract:** Paper Impulsive purchases are defined as those purchase decisions that are unplanned. Sellers are constantly attempting to understand the triggers to impulsive purchases as it provides them with a leverage to increase sales. The current study has identified literature in the area of Impulsive Buying Behaviour and consolidated the findings in order to arrive at a list of possible antecedents to Impulsive Buying Behaviour. The studies chosen were based in the offline context and sourced from ProQuest, ensuring reliability of the findings. The findings were consolidated using Meta-Analysis, carried out in the SPSS software package. The analysis revealed that Brand Preferences, Demographics, Buyer Emotions, Promotions, Store Atmospheric and Buyer Traits had statistically significant relations with Offline Impulsive Buying Behaviour. The findings of this study provide insights into the factors that drive impulsive purchases. The study adds value to the literature in the area of Marketing by consolidating research findings across time and geography.

**Keywords:** Impulsive Buying Behaviour, Offline Buying, Meta Analysis, Antecedents.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Impulsive buying is the resultant action of a conflict between planned and actual purchases [36]. According to [13], Impulsive Buying Behaviour is a completely voluntary action but at the same time is “unplanned, spontaneous and unanticipated”. The reasons behind impulsive buying are of particular interest for retailers and marketing professionals, who are constantly on the lookout for opportunities to increase their sales figures. According to a study conducted on 200 customers, by an American agency, the average spend on impulsive purchases was found to be \$5400 a year. While more than 70% of the sample claimed that majority of the purchases was in the food category, over 85% claimed that their impulsive purchases were triggered by promotional discounts and activities. Traditionally, research suggests that the trend was different. In their study in a departmental store, show that impulse purchase made up for 27% to 60% of the total sales and that apparels accounted for 50% of the impulse purchases [18].

Studies based in the traditional retail context have identified various psychological factors that trigger impulsive buying behaviour [29]. Visual triggers and promotional activities have been shown to result in Impulsive Purchases. In addition, characteristics of the buyer have also been known to increase Impulsive Purchases. This explains why, even though there may not be any apparent reasons or stimulations, people still feel motivated to make impulsive purchases [29]. The researchers aim to consolidate this information and identify key antecedents to impulsive buying behaviour. A systematic review of literature was conducted to understand and identify the possible factors that could influence impulsive purchases and the findings were consolidated to reveal the key antecedents and their respective correlation to Impulsive Buying Behaviour.

## II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A large number of studies have attempted to understand the construct of Impulse Buying Behaviour (IBB) so as to cater to and encourage these unplanned purchases [32]. A study by [9] suggests that these impulsive purchases are usually accompanied by emotions of pleasure and excitement during purchase and guilt, post purchase. [32] provides the theoretical basis of Impulsive Buying Behaviour. According to him, Buying Behaviour comprises of two types of action, one which is unplanned action and the other is a planned action. Impulse buying behaviour is the result of the unplanned or sudden decisions and is, to some extent, caused by affective responses of excitement and pleasure.

Literature and customers both regard Impulse Buying as a negative behaviour. However, it still accounts for a large percentage of sales, every year, across product categories [29]. The negativity attached to the construct could be attributed to the negative connotations of impulsivity in psychology literature. Regarded as a sign of immaturity and lack of control, impulsivity tends to be regarded as a normatively wrong behaviour and this evaluation is projected onto impulsive buying behaviour as well [21].

Researchers are constantly attempting to predict behaviour in terms of factors or triggers. Research into Impulsive Buying Behaviour is no different and a large number of studies have enabled the identification of antecedents to Impulsive Buying Behaviour. Literature describing these factors have been described below.

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### A. Social Status (SS)

One of the most widely researched antecedents to Impulsive Buying Behaviour is the influence of Society and the need to fit in [29]. Studies suggest that in the pursuit to fulfil such hedonic needs, individuals rarely consider the consequences of their decisions [15]. Literature in the area terms this need as the Consumer Susceptibility to Interpersonal Influence. [5] describe the term of Consumer Susceptibility to Interpersonal Influence or CSII as the influence of other people, namely friends, family and fellow shoppers, on an individual's purchase choices. [8] and [29] in their respective studies have explained how the social interactions linked to shopping experiences fulfil the emotional support requirements of individuals. CSII and the need to be socially accepted form the basis of the first hypothesis.

**H1:** There is a relationship between Social Status and Impulse Buying Behaviour

### B. Brand Preference (BP)

The brand helps differentiate the products of one seller from those of another [17]. While the initial purchase of the brand is mostly an impulsive purchase, good brand experience can result in increased repetitive purchases. Literature shows that the presence of the Brand name on packaging can trigger positive customer response in impulse [1]. According to [22], one major advantage of a good brand is that when faced with a choice, the consumer is more likely to decide in favour of a known brand than invest the time and effort to learn more about an unknown brand. Given that impulsive buying is an unplanned purchase, the consumer is more likely to take the decision when they trust the brand and when they have a good perception about the brand. This leads us to our second Hypothesis that the presence of a familiar brand or increased brand awareness can increase the possibility of an impulsive purchase.

**H2:** There is a relationship between Brand Preference and Impulse Buying Behaviour

### C. Demographics (D)

Researchers have tried to understand the impact of demographic characteristics on Impulsive Buying Behaviour. [20] in their study analysed the influence of culture on the tendency to buy impulsively. They found that in a collectivist culture, the tendency to buy impulsively increased when shopping with someone who was perceived to be important. Another study by [3] investigated the influence of age, gender and income on Impulsive Buying Behaviour in a developing economy. Their findings suggest that there is an inverse relationship between age and Impulsive Buying Behaviour and there was no significant relation between gender, income and IBB. A similar study was conducted in the Indian consumer market by [28]. Their study showed that the more educated the consumer, the less likely were they to make an impulsive purchase. They also found that income and IBB were directly proportional, while gender did not influence IBB.[11] in their study found similar relationships between demographic characteristics and Impulsive Buying Behaviour. However, contrary to the previous studies, their study found that gender was strongly associated to impulse buying. This suggests that demographic characteristics would have a significant relationship with Impulsive Buying Behaviour

**H3:** There is a relationship between Demographic Characteristics and Impulse Buying Behaviour

### D. Buyer Emotion (BE)

Literature suggests that Impulse buying results in emotional conflict due to the difference between the planned and actual purchase [36]. In his study investigated the influence of emotions on impulsive buying. He found that those in a positive mood were more likely to give in to their impulses than those who were in a negative mood. However, his study also shows that impulse buying could happen under both types of moods. [10] established the relationship between positive affect and impulse buying. Given that positive and negative affect are opposite or counter emotions, [6] suggest that negative affect would have an inverse relation with impulsive buying behaviour.

The relationship between emotions and Impulsive Buying Behaviour was explained by [30]. They suggest that consumers in positive emotional states are more likely to exhibit impulse buying because they did not feel constrained or were experiencing high energy levels. This emotional state also encouraged them to reward themselves and allowed them the freedom to purchase impulsively. Thus, the researchers assume that the emotional state would influence the level of Impulsive Buying Behaviour.

**H4:** There is a relationship between Buyer Emotion and Impulse Buying Behaviour

### E. Personality (BP)

The personality characteristics of target audiences has been established as a key tool for marketers [16]. [25] in their study, established the relationship between personality characteristics like self-esteem and compulsive buying behaviour. Prior research had investigated the similarity between impulsive buying and compulsive buying and established that the central feature was identical, i.e. both required giving in to once impulses. Thus, the results of the study by [25] were extended to the area of Impulsive Buying Behaviour. Similar studies have established the relation between materialism, neuroticism and impulse buying [33]. These studies linking Personality characteristics to Impulsive Buying led us to the formation of the fifth hypothesis of the study.

**H5:** There is a relationship between Buyer Personality and Impulse Buying Behaviour

### F. Promotion (P)

Consumer surveys conducted in the United States reveal that most consumers are likely to impulsively make purchase decisions when they believe they are receiving a good bargain. These perceived savings result in positive emotions and elevated moods and resulted in impulsive purchases [12]. Promotional low prices or other benefits were found to help consumers overcome the mental barriers to Impulsive Buying Behaviour. While discounted prices, 2-for-1 offerings or special store displays were all found to be equally effective in triggering purchase [26]. Discounted prices were found to be the most commonly tool to promote impulsive purchases.

**H6:** There is a relationship between Promotions and Impulse Buying Behaviour

**G. Store Atmospherics (SA)**

Store atmospherics deals with features like Displays, In Store Employees, Layout, Light, Music, Navigation, Preparation time, Sense, Shop Enjoyment, Shopping Duration and Store Environment. Presentation of the products through attractive displays has been known to increase purchase and trigger impulsive purchases. The role of physical proximity in impulse experience has been analysed in experiments on delayed gratification [23]. Physical proximity is known to trigger positive memories with regards to previous instances of consumption. In addition, [34] found that the experience of shopping was influenced strongly by the interactions with the sales people and others in the store. These interactions added to the positive takeaway and people were found to be easily convinced about unplanned purchases when suggestions were given in the context of a positive interaction. [19]) has also stressed the importance of store atmospherics in buying decisions by classifying them into the four dimensions of visual, auditory, olfactory, and tactile. Consumers create a perception about the store based on the store atmospherics and this image influenced consumer behaviour in the store. Thus, it may be assumed that the store atmospherics would impact the chance of the consumer making an impulsive purchase.

**H7:** There is a relationship between Store Atmospherics and Impulse Buying Behaviour

**H. Traits (T)**

The traits of an individual are known to regulate their behaviour. One such trait that has a significant relationship with Impulsive Buying Behaviour is Impulse Buying Intention. [27] define Impulsive Buying Intention as the likelihood or probability of a consumer making an unplanned purchase. A similar construct is that of Impulse Buying Intention is Impulse buying Tendency. This is very similar to the concept of Impulse buying intention but focusses on the buyer’s ability to make a purchase without much deliberation [6]. [6] have also suggested that the Impulse Buying Behaviour is strongly linked to the pleasure derived from the shopping experience. This suggests that a consumer who enjoys shopping is more likely to make an impulsive purchase than one who views shopping as a chore. [35] were key contributors in establishing the relation between traits and Impulsive Buying Behaviours. Through their study, they found strong correlations between Impulsive Buying Tendency and the big five personality traits. Given the previous studies establishing the relationship between Impulsive Buying Tendency and Impulsive Buying Behaviour, this relation can be extended to establish the relation between traits and Impulsive buying behaviour.

**H8:** There is a relationship between Traits and Impulse Buying Behaviour

**III. METHODOLOGY**

A systematic review of literature was conducted to understand the possible factors that could influence Impulsive Buying Behaviour in the offline context. The identified factors were then analysed and combined to reveal the antecedents of IBB. The strengths of the relationships were calculated using Meta-Analysis. The analysis revealed the significance of the relationships between the identified antecedents and the construct of IBB. This led to the model representing the relations. All the studies that were included

in the analysis were sourced from ProQuest and belonged to reputed journals.

**IV. ANALYSIS**

The review of literature revealed factors that can impact the level of Impulsive Buying in an offline or retail environment. These factors were then listed along with their correlation values with respect to Offline Impulsive Buying. The list of antecedents is provided in the Table 1.

The similar antecedents were then grouped into categories. The grouping was done on the basis of previous research in the area of marketing. The groupings revealed 8 factors; Social Status, Brand Preference, Demographics, Buyer Emotion, Buyer Personality, Promotion, Store Atmospherics and Traits. The categories and their indicators are presented in Table 1.

**Table I: List of factors influencing Impulsive Buying Behaviour**

S No.	Antecedents	r	n	Category
1	Attractive Appearance	0.35	254	Social Status
2	Social Desirability	-0.28	285	
3	Social Presence	0.64	151	
4	Social Recognition	0.16	254	
5	Status Consumption (reflects status)	-0.07	464	
6	Affiliation	-0.73	254	
7	Attention-to-social-comparison-information	0.40	641	
8	Community Feeling	-0.20	254	
9	Esteem	-0.14	157	
10	Success	0.19	500	
11	Brand Attachment	0.60	151	
12	Brand Engagement in Self Concept (connection with brand)	-0.06	464	
13	Brand Experience	0.67	151	
14	Brand Loyalty	0.04	500	
15	Brand Personality (Activity)	0.31	522	
16	Brand Personality (aggressiveness)	0.70	522	
17	Brand Satisfaction	0.70	151	
18	Brand Trust	0.70	151	Demographics
19	Age	-0.10	464	
20	Financial Success	0.57	254	
21	Gender	0.46	82	
22	Gender	0.13	285	
23	Gender	0.36	464	
24	Income	0.00	464	
25	Life Satisfaction	0.20	165	
26	Social Environment	0.27	162	
27	Socio-economic status	-0.05	285	Buyer Emotion
28	Anxiety	0.30	275	
29	Consumer Excitement	0.28	157	
30	Emotion	0.16	165	
31	Happiness	0.20	500	

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32	Individual Mood	0.14	300	<b>Buyer Personality</b>
33	Negative affect	0.00	733	
34	Positive Affect	0.01	733	
35	Stress	0.46	82	
36	Subjective Well- being	-0.15	277	
37	Family Disruption	-0.15	285	
38	Consumer competency	0.25	275	
38	Consumer competency	0.25	275	
39	Materialism	0.04	228	
40	Materialism	0.33	155	
41	Neuroticism	0.35	228	
42	Neuroticism	0.45	120	
43	Psychoticism	0.44	120	
44	Purchase-decision-involvement	0.47	641	
45	Retention Time	-0.35	275	
46	New Product Knowledge	0.18	157	
47	Obsession Compulsion	-0.32	120	
48	Parasocial Interaction	0.16	144	
49	Peer Communication	0.09	285	
50	Self Acceptance	-0.56	254	
51	2for1	0.39	570	
52	Concept oriented communication	-0.13	285	<b>Promotion</b>
53	Conspicuous Consumption	0.11	500	
54	Discount	0.59	570	
55	Images	0.86	156	
56	Sales Promotions	0.08	94	
57	Sensationalism	0.92	300	
58	Bargain Conscious	0.19	275	
59	Socio Oriented Communication	0.29	285	
60	Display	0.46	570	
61	Employee	0.00	733	<b>Store Atmospherics</b>
62	Experience based motive	0.24	302	
63	Feel	0.12	302	
64	In- store slack	-0.45	162	
65	Intangible Resources	0.03	285	
66	Interaction with Sales People	0.23	144	
67	Layout	-0.02	733	
68	Light	0.04	733	
69	Music	0.03	733	
70	Navigation	0.81	302	
71	Preparation time	-0.20	162	
72	Sense	0.03	302	
73	Shop Enjoyment	0.02	733	
74	Shopping Duration	0.25	288	
75	Store Environment Perception	0.02	733	
76	Think	-0.09	302	<b>Traits</b>
77	Visual	0.49	300	
78	Visual Appearance	0.57	302	
79	Anxiety trait	0.31	120	
80	Buying Impulse	0.63	220	
81	Extraversion	0.03	120	
82	Frugality	-0.07	464	
83	Hedonic Consumption Tendency	0.12	300	

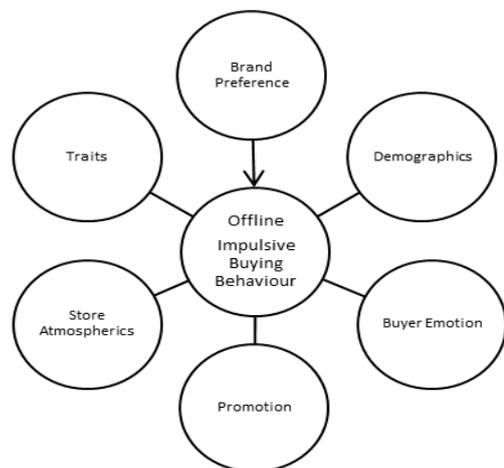
84	Hedonism	0.40	212
85	Impulse buying tendency	0.15	165
86	Impulse Buying Trait	0.07	733
87	Impulsive trait	0.75	101
88	Urge to buy Impulsively	0.12	733

The researchers then attempted to calculate the strength of the relationship between each variable and Offline Impulsive Buying Behaviour. The calculation of the strengths was done using Meta-Analysis. For each variable the correlation was calculated by combining the correlations of the indicators associated. The Meta-Analysis outputs were analysed for Significance. Social Status and Buyer Personality were found to be not significant.

**Table II: Variables and their Correlation Coefficients with Offline Impulsive Buying Behaviour**

	Factors	R	p
1	Social Status	0.028	0.8420
2	Brand Preference	0.501	0.0002
3	Demographics	0.212	0.0130
4	Buyer Emotion	0.117	0.0266
5	Buyer Personality	0.121	0.2484
6	Promotion	0.467	0.044
7	Store Atmospherics	0.159	0.0193
8	Traits	0.276	0.0010

The final list of factors and their relation to Offline Impulsive Buying Behaviour are represented in the model given below.



**Fig. 1: Correlation between Antecedents and Impulsive Buying Behaviour**

A Summary of the Hypotheses testing is provided in Table III

**Table III: Summary of Hypotheses Testing**

Hypothesis	Relation	Decision
H1	SS=>IBB	Rejected
H2	BP=> IBB	Accepted
H3	D=>IBB	Accepted
H4	BE=>IBB	Accepted
H5	BP=>IBB	Rejected
H6	P=>IBB	Accepted
H7	SA=>IBB	Accepted
H8	T=>IBB	Accepted

**V. DISCUSSION**

The findings of the study suggest that six of the proposed antecedents have significant relations with Impulsive Buying Behaviour. Brand Preference appears to have the strongest correlation to Impulsive Buying Behaviour. This suggests that when faced with an impulsive decision, the consumer is more likely to give in to their impulses when the brand is known and preferred [1]. This is primarily because the presence of a known brand allows the consumer to take the impulsive decision or make the purchase without much deliberation.

Promotions or promotional activities were found to have the next strongest correlation. This is in line with the different survey results that have been discussed in the literature. The perception of value created by discounted prices and other promotions, allows the consumer to overcome their mental barriers to impulse purchases. [14]

The other four variables of Buyer Emotions, Traits, Demographics and Store Atmospherics were found to have weak correlations with Impulsive Buying Behaviour. Store Atmospherics was found to have a correlation of only 0.16. This is contrary to the findings of [4]. These studies suggested that the store atmospherics would have a strong impact on the consumer’s likelihood of making an impulse purchase. In the current study, findings suggest that while the atmospherics have a significant relation with impulse purchases, the strength of the relation is weak.

The three buyer related variables of Buyer Emotion, Demographics and Traits also fall into the weak correlation category. This would suggest that while impulsive buying is dependent on the individual consumer, the push from the seller is more likely to motivate the consumer to make the decision. This could be attributed to the negative connotation given to the word ‘Impulsive’ in psychology [31]. The term impulsive is generally equated to a negative characteristic and implies lack of control. This results in Impulsive Buying Behaviour being regarded as a wrong behaviour by consumers [30].

The significance values of the relations lead us to accept six of the eight hypotheses of the study. The significance values of the two variables of Social Status and Buyer Personality, suggest that the relation between them and Impulsive Buying Behaviour is not significant, basis the studies that were included in the analysis. Among the 6 significant relations, Brand Preference was found to impact Impulsive Buying Behaviour the strongest, followed by Promotions or promotional activities. This would suggest that sellers must continue the focus on promotional activities as the value perceptions created by these activities are of importance in encouraging impulsive purchases. The strength of Brands and their images have already been established in the context of shopping. The current study findings suggest that the

awareness of brands is also a strong trigger in Impulsive purchases.

**VI. IMPLICATIONS**

The study findings provide direction for retailers to focus efforts in order to encourage impulsive purchases. Literature suggests that impulsive purchases can account for as much as sixty percent of an individual consumer’s purchases, creating a need to understand and cater for impulsive purchase. The current study consolidates the work done by researchers to understand the key antecedents of Impulsive Buying Behaviour. In other words. The current study provides a summary of over six decades of literature in the area of Impulsive Buying Behaviour.

**VII. CONCLUSION**

Impulsive Buying has been viewed as a paradox in the field of marketing. On the one hand, impulsiveness has been expressed as a negative behaviour and on the other hand impulsive purchases form a large proportion of the sales of goods across categories. This has made impulsive buying behaviour a key research topic for marketers who are looking to encourage impulsive purchases and increase sales. While researchers have tried to study all permutations and combinations of factors that could influence impulsive purchases, the current study attempts to consolidate all the findings and identify key antecedents of Impulsive Buying Behaviour in the offline context. This provides a snapshot of over sixty years of literature in the area and would provide a basis for future research in the field of Consumer Buying Behaviour.

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