

Measuring the Impulse Buying Behaviour of Consumers: Special Reference to Food and Beverages

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Abstract

Impulse buying is when buyers make unplanned purchases that sometimes leave them satisfied or dissatisfied. The present study surveyed 546 customers who purchased food and beverage brands to understand their buying behaviour in the state of Haryana, India. The study used a well-structured questionnaire, collected data via social media platforms, and drew inferences using frequency and descriptive analysis. The results reveal that most consumers tend to buy impulsively regarding food and beverage products. The findings further reveal that consumers make impulsive purchases based on specific choices, preferences, or attachments to brands without considering the brand's features or other characteristics. Companies can use these inferences to understand the target market's purchasing patterns and make informed decisions to boost sales. The study recommends that food and beverage companies adopt strategies to attract impulsive buyers based on demographic features and focus on packaging to attract consumers with different personality traits.

Keywords: Consumers; Brands; Food and Beverages; Impulse Buying; Personality Traits; Haryana; India

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Introduction

Impulse buying behaviour is a fairly common phenomenon in the world of purchase. It is defined as an action that takes place subject to intense, overwhelming, and unavoidable yearning for a product that was initially not intended for purchase and that results in the purchase of it. The desire overpowers the logical reasoning of the customer; there is no deliberation on the intention for buying the product. It might be associated with specific emotions and causes cognitive reactions to post the action of an impulsive purchase. Some purchasers might expect to indulge in impulsive shopping, whereas others might be unaware of such behaviour. Impulse buying is an unplanned phenomenon that can result in satisfaction or dissatisfaction for the purchaser, depending on their perception. Although it may sometimes be detrimental for the purchaser, it benefits the brands. Enterprises in the food industry are operating in a highly competitive, global environment, and they must constantly engage in product development (Sadiku et al., 2019).

Research worldwide has been conducted on the impulse buying behaviour of consumers across brands and product segments. Customers' attributes like excitement, self-esteem, and knowledge of new products are crucial in positively influencing buying behaviour (Abbasi, 2017). Choi (2016) unveils the role of sensory cues in the impulse purchasing behaviour of consumers during festivals and events. In contrast, Kukar-Kinney et al. (2012) attribute a direct effect of brand loyalty to impulsive buying. Food, clothes, books, and work equipment are the most popular categories of products that induce impulse buying (Yu and Bastin, 2010). Research confirms the role of gender in impulse buying (Chien-Wen, 2010), age of the consumers (Chavosh et al., 2011), education (Ghani et al., 2011; Wood, 1998), and personality traits (Bratko et al., 2013).

The global food and beverage market witnessed significant growth from US \$ 6729.54 billion in 2022 to US \$ 7221.73 billion in 2023, at a Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of 7.30%

(The Business Research Company, 2023). The total revenue is expected to display an annual growth rate of 11.38%, leading to a projected market volume of US\$ 3.80 billion by 2027, and the highest revenue is generated in the United States, which was US \$ 786.60 million in 2022 (Statista, n.d.). The health and wellness sector in the food and beverage industry has grown faster in India than anywhere else in Asia. India's health beverages market share is expected to grow by US \$ 3.84 billion from 2021 to 2026, and the market's growth momentum will accelerate at a CAGR of 9.89%, as per Technavio (2021). Health and wellness food and beverage sales amounted to US \$ 10.3 billion in 2021, making India the 15th most significant health and wellness market globally. Growth is predicted to gain momentum through 2026, with an 8.8% forecasted CAGR from 2021-2026 (Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, 2023). India's food and beverage industry is increasingly profitable, accounting for around 3% of India's GDP and almost two-thirds of the retail market. The income in the food and beverage sector is expected to expand at a CAGR of 14.2% between 2020 and 2024, and scholars estimated that the food and beverage market reached a US \$ 1,264 million market volume (Thangam, 2022).

Against this backdrop, the present research aims to measure consumers' buying behaviour in the food and beverage industry in the state of Haryana, India. The study's inferences help marketing companies target their customers, market segmentation, and devise marketing strategies in the food and beverage industry.

Literature Review

Numerous research studies examined the impact of consumers' impulse buying behaviour related to emotional outbursts, promotional characteristics, brick-and-mortar stores, online store characteristics, product characteristics, consumer characteristics, social networks, brand loyalty, lighting and fixtures, and demographic factors in various industries, including food and beverage. Most of these studies exhibit different impulse-buying behaviours in different

scenarios. A brief extant review of some studies is presented below.

In a review paper, Sharma et al. (2019) found that emotional outbursts are a significant factor for impulse purchasing, among other factors. Likewise, another study by Ragel and Nirushan (2017) pointed out that consumers' perception of the in-store environment affects their intention to purchase. They attributed lighting as the most effective positive contributor to impulse buying behaviour, and the urge to buy moderately affects this relationship with impulse buying. Similarly, layout, music and store crowd impacted consumers' purchase intention. However, employee boredom has no significant relationship with the purchase intention of the buyers. Research also reveals that customer attributes like self-esteem, excitement construct, product knowledge, and purchase intention positively influence impulse buying behaviour (Abbasi, 2017).

In their study, Mohan et al. (2013) examined the impact of store environment on impulse purchasing behaviour in four store environments. They indicated that the store environment impacted impulse purchasing behaviour through the urge to buy impulsively. In another similar study, Octavia (2016) examined impulse purchasing behaviour in-store and online, bringing out a positive association between impulse buying in-store and online. Similarly, a number of different studies highlighted that brick-and-mortar stores are still more effective than online stores as they advance in sensory stimulation factors, influencing impulsive buying behaviour (Aragoncillo and Orus, 2017; Krishna, 2012; Peck and Childers, 2006) highlighted that brick-and-mortar stores are still more effective than online stores as they advance in sensory stimulation factors, influencing impulsive buying behaviour. Another study by Chhabra et al. (2018) found that discounts and offers influence the impulse buying behaviour of female consumers. In a similar context, while Tinne (2011) reveals that situational factors and promotional practices contribute to impulse buying behaviour; Bratko et al. (2013) indicated a positive association

between the personality traits of extraversion and impulse buying behaviour. However, education level, occupation and income group displayed no significant relationship with impulse purchasing behaviour (Ghani et al., 2011; Paul and Gutierrez, 2004; Wood, 1998).

In 2011, in their study, Chavosh et al. showed that young consumers, women, people with low mood, ones who enjoyed shopping, and people with an impulse buying tendency significantly contributed to impulse buying behaviour, while the research by Tuyet et al. (2003) found a negative relationship between impulse purchasing of urban consumers in Vietnam. Hausman (2000) examined the consumer motivations in impulsive buying behaviour and indicated that consumers engaged in impulse buying to gratify hedonic desires for variety, fun and novelty. Impulsiveness correlated with consumers' desires and needs, like self-actualisation and self-esteem. Taking this claim forward, Kalose (2019) shows that Indian college students indulged in more impulse purchasing than the students residing in Dublin, Ireland, owing to the impacts of sales promotion and advertising in the industry. The methodological issues are discussed in the next section.

Methodology

The study's prime aim was to examine customers' impulse behaviour in selected food and beverage companies in India. The study deployed a structured and pre-tested questionnaire using the social media platform 'WhatsApp' to fulfil the objective. The responses of 546 food and beverage consumers were gathered using a 5-point Likert scale. The study used frequency analysis, descriptive analysis and Tabulation to analyse and interpret the responses. It is pertinent to mention that Cronbach's alpha analysis has been used to validate and check the scale. Further, the responses from food and beverage consumers were recorded by way of nine statements given below:

- I often buy things spontaneously;
- Just do it—describes the way I buy things;

- I often buy things without thinking;
- I see it, I buy it—describes me;
- ‘Buy now, think about it later—describes me;
- Sometimes, I feel like buying things on the spur-of-the moment;
- I buy things according to how I feel at the moment;
- I carefully plan most of my purchases, and
- Sometimes, I am a bit reckless about what I buy.

Results and Discussion

This section presents the results and discussion based on the responses of 546 food and beverage industry consumers. As stated above, the study used frequency and descriptive analysis to analyse the responses. The reliability of the responses and scaling validation was assessed using the Cronbach Alpha method. Nine statements were used to measure impulse buying behaviour, and the alpha value for these nine statements was more than 0.70, indicating that the data obtained from scaling was reliable and suitable for final data analysis.

| Table 1: Reliability Results | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|------------|-------------|-------------|---------------------|
| Description | Statements | Alpha Value | Reliability | Number of Responses |
| Complete section | 9 | 0.81 | High | 50 |
| Source: Author | | | | |

The reliability results obtained from the customer responses in all questionnaires are presented in Table 1. This Table also displays the different sub-scales and their reliability scores, as calculated by the Cronbach Alpha method. The value of Cronbach’s alpha is 0.81, indicating a high reliability level for the scale.

Frequency Analysis

The frequency analysis results for all nine statements regarding consumers’ impulse buying behaviour are detailed in Tables 2 to 10. These results will help you gain valuable insights into the purchasing patterns of your target market and make informed decisions to boost your sales and grow your business.

| Table 2: Response summary of the question ‘I Often Buy Things Spontaneously’ | | | | |
|---|-------------------|-----------|------------|-------|
| Response | | Customers | Percentage | Total |
| Groups | Strongly Agree | 146 | 26.7 | 26.7 |
| | Agree | 131 | 24.0 | 50.7 |
| | Neutral | 88 | 16.1 | 66.8 |
| | Disagree | 153 | 28.0 | 94.9 |
| | Strongly Disagree | 28 | 5.1 | 100 |
| | Total | 546 | 100 | |
| Source: The Author | | | | |

Table 2 provides an interesting insight into consumer behaviour. It shows that a significant percentage of consumers, 28%, do not make impulsive purchases. This means that a majority of 72% of consumers exhibit impulsive behaviour while buying food and beverage products. Only 16% of consumers gave neutral responses. This

indicates that most consumers tend to make decisions on the spot when it comes to buying food and beverage items without much thought or planning. However, we believe that with better planning, consumers can make more informed decisions and purchase products that are better suited to their needs.

Table 3: Response Summary of the Question 'Just do it- Describes the Way I Buy Things'

| Responses | | Customers | Percentage | Total |
|-----------|-------------------|-----------|------------|-------|
| Groups | Strongly Agree | 97 | 17.8 | 17.8 |
| | Agree | 189 | 34.6 | 52.4 |
| | Neutral | 137 | 25.1 | 77.5 |
| | Disagree | 97 | 17.8 | 95.2 |
| | Strongly Disagree | 26 | 4.8 | 100 |
| | Total | 546 | 100 | |

Source: The Author

According to Table 3, 35% of consumers agreed that they buy food and beverage products because they believe in the "just do it" approach, while 18% disagreed. Among the respondents, 18% of the consumers strongly agreed with the statement, while only 5% strongly disagreed.

However, 25% of the consumers remained neutral. Therefore, most consumers tend to behave impulsively when purchasing food and beverage products without any specific brand or priorities in mind.

Table 4: Response Summary of the Question 'I Often Buy Things Without Thinking'

| Responses | | Customers | Percentage | Total |
|-----------|-------------------|-----------|------------|-------|
| Groups | Strongly Agree | 96 | 17.6 | 17.6 |
| | Agree | 219 | 40.1 | 57.7 |
| | Neutral | 96 | 17.6 | 75.3 |
| | Disagree | 109 | 20.0 | 95.2 |
| | Strongly Disagree | 26 | 4.8 | 100 |
| | Total | 546 | 100 | |

Source: The Author

Table 4 reveals some surprising insights into consumers' purchasing behaviour. A staggering 40% of consumers agreed they buy things impulsively without thinking or planning, while only 20% disagreed. Even more concerning, nearly one-fifth of consumers (18%) strongly agreed with this statement. Only 5% strongly

disagreed. Moreover, 18% of consumers had a neutral response, indicating that they likely do not put much thought into their purchasing decisions. These findings suggest that many consumers are making impulsive choices regarding food and beverage products.

Table 5: Response Summary of the Question 'I See It, I buy It-Describes Me'

| Responses | | Customers | Percentage | Total |
|-----------|-------------------|-----------|------------|-------|
| Groups | Strongly Agree | 145 | 26.6 | 26.6 |
| | Agree | 220 | 40.3 | 66.8 |
| | Neutral | 51 | 9.3 | 76.2 |
| | Disagree | 58 | 10.6 | 86.8 |
| | Strongly Disagree | 72 | 13.2 | 100 |
| | Total | 546 | 100 | |

Source: The Author

As per the statistics presented in Table 5, it is clear that a significant number of consumers tend to purchase things impulsively. While only 11% of all consumers disagreed with the

statement that they buy things they see first, a whopping 40% agreed with it. Shockingly, 27% of consumers strongly agreed with the tendency to purchase food and beverage products based on

what they see fit in that category, while only 13% strongly disagreed. These numbers indicate that most consumers overlook other options and buy products without much thought.

Table 6: Response Summary of the Question ‘Buy Now, Think About it Later- Describes Me’

| Responses | | Customers | Percentage | Total |
|-----------|-------------------|-----------|------------|-------|
| Groups | Strongly Agree | 121 | 22.2 | 22.2 |
| | Agree | 129 | 23.6 | 45.8 |
| | Neutral | 143 | 26.2 | 72.0 |
| | Disagree | 81 | 14.8 | 86.8 |
| | Strongly Disagree | 72 | 13.2 | 100 |
| | Total | 546 | 100 | |

Source: The Author

Table 6 reveals a startling truth about the shopping habits of the participants. A staggering 40% of consumers admitted to buying things they see first, while only 11% disagreed with this statement. Even more concerning is that 27% of consumers strongly agreed to buy things without considering their needs, and only 13% strongly disagreed. It is clear that most consumers behave impulsively when purchasing food and beverage products. The survey found that they rely on their first impression without considering other options. If one wants to make informed decisions while shopping, one must consider all options before purchasing.

Table 7: Response Summary of the Question ‘Sometimes I Feel Like Buying Things on the Spur-of-the-Moment’

| Responses | | Customers | Percentage | Total |
|-----------|-------------------|-----------|------------|-------|
| Groups | Strongly Agree | 26 | 4.8 | 4.8 |
| | Agree | 241 | 44.1 | 48.9 |
| | Neutral | 140 | 25.6 | 74.5 |
| | Disagree | 114 | 20.9 | 95.4 |
| | Strongly Disagree | 25 | 4.6 | 100 |
| | Total | 546 | 100 | |

Source: The Author

According to Table 7, 44% of consumers buy things impulsively, while only 21% disagree. This behaviour is especially evident when purchasing food and beverages. By understanding this tendency, businesses can create compelling marketing strategies that resonate with their target audience.

Table 8: Response Summary of the Question ‘I Buy Things According to How I Feel at the Moment’

| Responses | | Customers | Percentage | Total |
|-----------|-------------------|-----------|------------|-------|
| Groups | Strongly Agree | 132 | 24.2 | 24.2 |
| | Agree | 145 | 26.6 | 50.7 |
| | Neutral | 98 | 17.9 | 68.7 |
| | Disagree | 137 | 25.1 | 93.8 |
| | Strongly Disagree | 34 | 6.2 | 100 |
| | Total | 546 | 100 | |

Source: The Author

Table 8 shows that 25% of consumers disagreed with the notion that their purchases are based on their feelings at the moment, while 27% agreed. Interestingly, 24% of consumers strongly agreed to purchase based on emotions, while only 6% strongly

disagreed. It is worth noting that 18% of consumers had neutral responses. These numbers demonstrate that emotions play a significant role in consumer behaviour, and marketers should keep this in mind when crafting their strategies.

Table 9: Response Summary of Question ‘I Carefully Plan Most of My Purchases’

| Responses | | Customers | Percentage | Total |
|-----------|-------------------|-----------|------------|-------------|
| Groups | Strongly Agree | 56 | 10.3 | 10.3 |
| | Agree | 137 | 25.1 | 93.4 |
| | Neutral | 122 | 22.3 | 68.3 |
| | Disagree | 195 | 35.7 | 46.0 |
| | Strongly Disagree | 36 | 6.6 | 100 |
| | Total | 546 | 100 | |

Source: The Author

Table 9 indicates that merely 25% of consumers claimed to plan their purchases carefully. Shockingly, only 10% of consumers strongly agreed that they carefully plan their food and beverage purchases. Conversely,

only 7% of consumers strongly disagreed with this statement. However, 22% of consumers remained neutral. These figures suggest that most consumers behave impulsively while buying food and beverage products.

Table 10: Response Summary of Question ‘Sometimes I Am a Bit Reckless About What I Buy’

| Responses | | Customers | Percentage | Total |
|-----------|-------------------|-----------|------------|-------------|
| Groups | Strongly Agree | 84 | 15.4 | 15.4 |
| | Agree | 163 | 29.9 | 45.2 |
| | Neutral | 173 | 31.7 | 76.9 |
| | Disagree | 112 | 20.5 | 97.4 |
| | Strongly Disagree | 14 | 2.6 | 100 |
| | Total | 546 | 100 | |

Source: The Author.

According to Table 10, 21% of consumers disagree with the statement that they feel reckless while buying food and beverage products. On the other hand, around 30% of consumers agreed with this statement, and 15% strongly agreed. However, only 3% strongly disagreed with this statement. A significant 32% of consumers gave a neutral response. This indicates that most consumers behave impulsively when purchasing food and beverage products. It is imperative for consumers to be more responsible and mindful while shopping for such items.

Descriptive Analysis

This section pertains to the responses of 546 consumers who were sampled for their food and beverage preferences. Tables 2 to 10 illustrated the average responses of these consumers. Descriptive analysis was carried out to determine the range (highest and lowest), average, variance, and skewness of the recorded responses. According to Table 11, the skewness score of the nine statements indicates that the data is normal. All 546 responses are normal, as evidenced by the fact that the skewness score for each variable lies between -1 and +1.

Table 11: Descriptive Statistics of all Responses

| Responses | Customers | Lowest | Highest | Average | Variance | Skewness |
|---|-----------|--------|---------|---------|----------|----------|
| I often buy things spontaneously | 546 | 1 | 5 | 2.61 | 1.282 | 0.144 |
| "Just do it" describes the way I buy things | 546 | 1 | 5 | 2.57 | 1.115 | 0.338 |
| I often buy things without thinking | 546 | 1 | 5 | 2.54 | 1.135 | 0.436 |
| "I see it, I buy it" describes me | 546 | 1 | 5 | 2.44 | 1.336 | 0.771 |
| "Buy now, think about it later" describes me. | 546 | 1 | 5 | 2.73 | 1.315 | 0.265 |
| Sometimes I feel like buying things on the spur-of-the-moment | 546 | 1 | 5 | 2.76 | 0.985 | 0.476 |
| I buy things according to how I feel at the moment | 546 | 1 | 5 | 2.63 | 1.263 | 0.193 |
| I carefully plan most of my purchases | 546 | 1 | 5 | 2.12 | 1.119 | 0.201 |
| Sometimes I am a bit reckless about what I buy | 546 | 1 | 5 | 2.65 | 1.049 | 0.067 |

Source: The Author.

Based on the mean value for each of the nine variables under impulse buying behaviour of consumers, Table 11 inferred that the highest mean score was for the statement '*Sometimes I feel like buying things on the spur-of-the-moment*', followed by '*Buy now, think about it later*'. The lowest mean score was for the statement, '*I carefully plan most of my purchases*'. The study found a substantial impact of impulse buying behaviour in India's food and beverage industry.

The present study reveals that most consumers were found to behave impulsively while buying food and beverage products. Consumers tend to purchase food and beverage products impulsively based on their moods or feelings. They buy things on the spur of the moment and believe in buying first and thinking later. Studies (Helmerts et al., 1995; Jones et al., 2003) have established a significant relationship between

consumers' impulse buying behaviour and their emotions.

The study brings out that most consumers consider themselves impulsive buyers and buy the product simultaneously without thinking. This finding is consistent with previous research by Sharma et al. (2013), which suggests that impulse buying is triggered by our senses' ability to generate a sudden response. Similarly, other studies (Krishna, 2012; Peck and Childers, 2006) have found that sensory stimulation can lead to emotional and unconscious responses that encourage impulse buying in online channels. However, the results of this study do not support the conclusion drawn by Tirmizi et al. (2009) that pre-decision can prevent impulse buying.

The present study highlights the impact of in-store environments on consumers' impulse buying behaviour — specifically, the tendency to buy what they see. Factors such as product

displays, discounts and product variety— all play crucial roles in driving impulse buying. These findings are consistent with those of Ragel and Nirushan (2017), who similarly found that the in-store environment influences purchase intention. Additionally, Tinne (2011) concluded that situational factors such as mood and financial capacity influence impulse buying behaviour, particularly in food and beverage products. It is arguable that consumers tend to purchase specific food and beverage items based on their mood or feelings rather than brand personality. As such, companies should adopt effective strategies to attract customers who impulse purchase food and beverages.

The responses gathered during the study were based on the following statements: “Sometimes I feel like buying things spur-of-the-moment” and “Buy now, think about it later”. These statements received the highest average scores of 2.76 and 2.73, respectively, as shown in Column 5 of Table 11. On the other hand, the statement “I carefully plan most of my purchases” received the lowest mean score of 2.12. Based on the average scores of these statements, it can be concluded that consumers tend to make impulsive purchases of food and beverages without planning or thinking. They believe in buying first and thinking about it later, which reflects their irrational buying decisions for food and beverages. The study also found that monetary promotional practices and ease of accessibility can affect impulse buying behaviour in females, who usually do not regret it afterwards. This finding reinforces the findings of the research conducted by Tendai in 2009.

Conclusion

The present study offers a better understanding of the role of impulse buying behaviour. However, the growth of the internet and social networks may provoke changes in behavioural patterns towards more planned and rational processes (Aragoncillo and Orus, 2018). Taking this question as a starting point, this research reviewed the specialised literature on the concept of impulse buying. The study found that most consumers tend to buy impulsively based on their moods or feelings, without much

thought. In-store factors such as product displays, discounts, and variety play crucial roles in impulse buying. Additionally, the study found that monetary promotional practices and ease of accessibility can affect female impulse buying behaviour.

The study suggests that businesses should adopt various strategies to attract customers who impulsively buy food and beverages. Adopting new strategies requires inculcation of entrepreneurial spirit (Mor et al., 2020a; Kumari and Mor, 2021) and risk-taking ability (Mor et al., 2020b). Additionally, the demographic characteristics of the customers may play a significant role in their impulse buying behaviour when it comes to branding food and beverages. Therefore, food and beverage brands need to focus on their packaging and features in a way that can appeal to customers with different personality traits.

The study offers valuable insights into food and beverage brands in the state of Haryana. Remarkably, these findings can also be applied to other states and industries. Future studies can explore various other brands and products, apart from examining the different strategies that businesses adopt to attract customers who make impulsive purchases. Additionally, young researchers can examine how the demographic characteristics of customers, apart from their personality traits, affect their impulse buying behaviour. A deeper understanding of businesses' operations can be achieved by examining their company data and marketing strategies. We hope this study will inspire researchers and businesses to understand the marketing landscape better.

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Conflict of Interest

The author bears no conflict of interest.

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