

Research Article

A Study on Uncertainty and The Role of Promotional Strategies in Impulsive Buying with Special Reference to Thiruthangal Town.

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Abstract: Impulsive buying means making an unplanned purchase. It is based on an irrational thinking. Marketers try to tap this behavior of customers to boost sales. There is a great likelihood that customers end up making a purchase of products after entering the hypermarket without any actual intent of doing so. Impulsive buying behavior is a critical aspect of consumer decision-making, influenced by various psychological and external factors. Among these, uncertainty plays a pivotal role in shaping consumer responses to promotional strategies. This paper explores the relationship between uncertainty and impulsive buying, emphasizing how promotional tactics such as discounts, limited-time offers, and scarcity messaging can trigger unplanned purchases. By leveraging uncertainty, marketers can create a sense of urgency and perceived value, prompting consumers to act impulsively. The study also examines the moderating effects of consumer traits, such as risk tolerance and emotional state, in determining the effectiveness of promotional strategies. Understanding these dynamics provides valuable insights for businesses aiming to optimize their marketing strategies and enhance consumer engagement.

Keywords: Uncertainty, impulsive buying behaviour, promotional strategies.

INTRODUCTION

The word 'Impulse' refers to "a sudden strong and unreflective urge or desire to act" Impulse buying is an action of sudden whim of purchasing. Impulse buying occurs due to the changes in the mental or emotional feelings of the consumer. Human minds are not stable while purchasing, it is affected by certain forces like choice, desire, need, attraction and so on. As a result, impulse buying occurs.

Impulse buying is when a customer buys something without thinking about it first. It happens when a product or message is well-advertised or promoted. Impulse buyers buy things without planning to because they rely on feelings that make them need to buy. A consumer desires to make last-minute purchases of products and services. When a buyer makes impulsive purchases, sentiments and emotions often drive them. Impulse buying, which is defined as impulsive and unexpected purchases, has been thoroughly researched in order to identify the variables that affect this type of consumer behavior. Promotional tactics and uncertainty are two important elements that can significantly influence impulsive buying decisions. A promotional strategy adopted by the marketer has a greater influence on consumers' impulse buying behavior. Strategies like advertisements displayed in front of the shop, pamphlets circulated in and around the shopping zones, recommendation of products by the sales persons, services of the sales persons, direct marketing of the product by the manufacturer, publicity of the product in the

medias and sales promotion tools which creates a tempt in the consumers' minds to make a purchase impulsively

Impulsive purchasing and uncertainty

Increased impulsive purchasing has been associated with uncertainty, particularly during emergencies like the COVID-19 epidemic. Because such situations are unpredictable, people may use impulsive purchasing as a coping strategy to get instant satisfaction. Research has indicated that online impulse purchase behaviors might be directly impacted by perceived uncertainty. For example, studies show that consumers who were uncertain during the COVID-19 outbreak were more likely to spend impulsively online.

Statement of the Problem:

Understanding how uncertainty affects impulsive purchasing behavior and analyzing how promotional tactics can either promote or discourage such purchases are the challenges of this research. The study specifically aims to investigate whether a sense of uncertainty raises the probability of impulsive purchasing and how various promotional strategies (such as discounts and time-limited offers) affect consumers' decision-making in uncertain situations.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

Impulsive buying is a psychological phenomenon that involves unplanned purchases motivated by emotional drives rather than rational considerations (Nagadeepa et al.,

2021). Impulse buying is an unanticipated purchase made without prior planning before (Musadik, 2021). Impulsive purchases can be triggered by internal factors such as emotions and person-ality traits, as well as external factors such as store layouts, sales promotions, and appealing visual elements (Mattia et al., 2021). Financial bonds are the third factor that contributes to the flow state, as they motivate the consumers to participate in live-streaming activities, such as sending gifts, comments and likes, and receiving rewards and discounts (Zhang et al., 2021). Only a few researchers have explored the dimensions that affect consumers to make spontaneous purchases (Ming et al., 2021; Zahari et al., 2021), and urging impulsive purchases within the context of online purchasing seems possible (Li et al., 2021). Sales promotion consists of a diverse set of incentive tools, mostly short-term, designed to encourage quicker or greater purchase of a particular product by consumers or merchants. Thus, sales promotion is a means of communication and an effort to influence consumers in purchasing activities (Khayru et al., 2021; Issalillah et al., 2021). Impulse buying is a buying activity carried out by potential customers who are already in the store, and when exposed to external stimuli, an urgent desire arises within them to immediately buy the product (Darmawan & Gatheru, 2021). Impulse buying is also interpreted as an unplanned decision or spontaneous buying behavior to buy a product (Anjanarko & Mardikaningsih, 2022). Buying decisions occur suddenly and instantly before making a purchase. Internet is a very convenient and economical channel for promotional campaigns by the marketers and provides a vibrant platform for the buyers to buy things online. Impulsive buying is a kind of purchase behavior that is not controlled by emotion (Zhang M, Shi G, 2022). Predicting consumer behavior completely is highly complex phenomenon; however, new research approaches, such as consumer neuroscience have shed light on how consumers make their decisions (Dawood, T. H et al, 2022). Marketers capitalize on consumers' emotional responses, thereby increasing the likelihood of impulsive purchases through emotional contagion (Herdiana & Supriyono, 2023). Impulse buying causes by two factors. External factor are the emergence of market, display, and availability of money and time. Internal factor comes from person's personality, failure of self control and personal pleasure (Harahap et al., 2023). Users are visually influenced by various product photographs published on e-commerce platforms, which strategically aim to stimulate purchases (Mohapatra et al., 2024). 12 studies examine the impact of limited-time discounts, such as flash sales and temporary offers, on consumer decision-making and impulsive buying behavior.

The research explores how urgency-driven purchasing is influenced by psychological triggers like scarcity and the fear of missing out (FOMO), leading to spontaneous and unplanned shopping. Relying on secondary data and a qualitative analytical approach, the study highlights that while time-sensitive discounts can significantly boost sales by creating an immediate need to purchase, their excessive use may have unintended consequences. Over-reliance on such strategies could diminish long-term brand loyalty, as consumers may come to expect frequent discounts and

delay purchases until the next promotional event. The study suggests that retailers should carefully balance promotional frequency and brand positioning to maintain both short-term sales growth and long-term customer retention. Naiara Oberoi's (2024) Impulsive purchases frequently occur when individuals experience a sudden and compelling sense of urgency, which is highly appealing to consumers (Ibrahim et al., 2025).

Scope of the Study:

This study would investigate the relationship between purchase uncertainty and promotional strategies on impulsive buying behavior. The scope would likely involve examining how different types of uncertainty (e.g., product quality, availability, price fluctuations) influence the effectiveness of various promotional tactics (e.g., discounts, limited-time offers, scarcity messages) in driving impulsive purchasing decisions. The Present study is confined to the geographical area of Thiruthangal. This study will focus on uncertainty and their role of promotional strategies in impulsive buying. It also explores the psychological triggers behind unplanned purchases, including emotions, mood, and social influences like peer pressure or cultural norms.

Objectives of the study:

1. To examine the relationship between uncertainty (e.g., economic, situational, or emotional) and impulsive buying behavior.
2. To explore the psychological factors that mediate the relationship between uncertainty and impulsive buying.
3. To analyse how different promotional strategies influence impulsive purchase decisions.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

Through the investigation of research methodologies, the research procedure is a practical evaluation aimed at providing answers for logical and social concerns. It is a methodical approach to assess the result by planning and decomposing the problem via the application of various techniques and systems. The test-taking techniques are well-organized, rational, and value-neutral. Statistics and descriptive analysis will be used in the survey. A questionnaire given to 240 respondents who had made an impulsive buying provided the primary data. The survey was sent as a Google form through the Whats App Group. Since non probability sampling was the sampling strategy employed in this investigation.

Statistical Tools:

The data collected through Google Forms were analysed using

- Simple Percentage analysis
- Chi-square test
- Garrett Ranking Scale

Collection of data

The research incorporates both primary and secondary data. The primary data has been gathered from the respondents using Google forms. Secondary data has been obtained from diverse sources, including publications, unpublished

reports, journals, and articles, etc.

respondents and uncertain impulsive purchases.

Hypotheses

H1: There is no significant relationship between gender and aspects of shopping.

H2: There is no significant relationship between regarding age of the respondents and Frequency of doing online shopping.

H3: There is no significant relationship there is a significant relationship between education of the

Limitations of the study:

- The study is confined to Thiruthangal only
- The study covers a period of 2 months
- Due to shortage of time and other constraints the study has been limited to 240 respondents only.
- The data collected for the research is fully on primary data given by the respondents.

Data Analysis and Interpretation:

Demographic variables of the respondents by percentage:

Gender wise Classification of the Respondents

Table 1 lists out the gender wise classification of the respondents.

Table 1 Gender wise Classification of the Respondents

Gender	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Male	124	51.67
Female	116	48.33
Total	240	100.00

Source: Primary data

Out of 240 respondents, 124 (51.67%) are male and the remaining 116 (48.33%) are female.

Age wise Classification of the Respondents

Table 2 highlights the age wise classification of the respondents.

Table 2 Age wise Classification of the Respondents

Age (in years)	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Below 20	67	27.92
Between 21-25	71	29.58
Between 26-30	48	20.00
Between 31-35	33	13.75
Above 35	21	8.75
Total	240	100.00

Source: Primary data

Out of 240 respondents, 71 (29.58%) are in the age group of between 21-25 years, 67 (27.92%) come under the age group of below 20 years, 48 (20%) fall under the age group between 26-30 years, 33 (13.75%) belong to the age group between 31-35 years and 21 (8.75%) are in the age group of above 35 years.

Educational Qualification of the Respondents

Table 3 shows the educational qualification of the respondents.

Table 3 Educational Qualification of the Respondents

Educational Qualification	No. of Respondents	Percentage
School	45	18.75
UG degree	92	38.33
PG degree	75	31.25
Others	28	11.67
Total	240	100.00

Source: Primary data

Out of 240 respondents, 92 (38.33%) have completed their UG degree, 75 (31.25%) have finished their PG degree, 45 (18.75%) have completed their education up to school level and 28 (11.67%) belong to others (certificate/diploma) category.

Occupation of the Respondents

Table 4 indicates the occupation of the respondents.

Table 4 Occupation of the Respondents

Occupation	No. of Respondents	Percentage
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Private employee	75	31.25
Government employee	67	27.92
Self employed	58	24.17
Professional	40	16.67
Total	240	100.00

Source: *Primary data*

Out of 240 respondents, 75 (31.25%) are private employees, 67 (27.92%) are Government employees, 58 (24.17%) are self-employed and 40 (16.67%) are professionals.

Frequency of Doing Online Shopping

Table 5 shows the frequency of doing online shopping.

Table 5 Frequency of Doing Online Shopping

Frequency of Doing Online Shopping	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Rarely	103	42.92
Monthly	67	27.92
Daily	12	5.00
Weekly	58	24.17
Total	240	100.00

Source: *Primary data*

Out of 240 respondents, 103 (42.92%) have rarely doing shopping, 67 (27.92%) have engaged in online shopping monthly, 58 (24.17%) have engaged in online shopping weekly and 12 (5%) have engaged in online shopping daily.

Uncertain Impulsive Purchases

The details about uncertain impulsive purchases are given in Table 6.

Table 6 Uncertain Impulsive Purchases

Uncertain Impulsive Purchases	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Rarely	98	40.83
Sometimes	48	20.00
Often	45	18.75
Always	32	13.33
Never	17	7.08
Total	240	100.00

Source: *Primary data*

Out of 240 respondents, 98 (40.83%) have made uncertain impulsive purchases rarely, 48 (20%) have made uncertain impulsive purchases sometimes, 45 (18.75%) have made uncertain impulsive purchases often, 32 (13.33%) have always made uncertain impulsive purchases and 17 (7.08%) have never made uncertain impulsive purchases.

Aspect of Shopping Lead to uncertainty

The information regarding the aspects of shopping lead to uncertainty is displayed in Table 7.

Table 7 Aspect of Shopping Lead to uncertainty

Aspect of Shopping Lead to uncertainty	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Product quality	73	30.42
Price fluctuations	35	14.58
Fear of missing out (FOMO)	59	24.58
Lack of product reviews	30	12.50
Limited time offers	43	17.92
Total	240	100.00

Source: *Primary data*

Out of 240 respondents, 73 (30.42%) have considered product quality, 59 (24.58%) have a fear of missing out (FOMO), 43 (17.92%) have focused limited time offers, 35 (14.58%) have concentrated on price fluctuations and 30 (12.5%) have focused lack of product reviews.

Handling of Ambiguity when online shopping

Table 8 depicts the actions of the respondents while feeling ambiguity when online shopping.

Table 8 Handling of Ambiguity when online shopping

Handling of Ambiguity when online shopping	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Postpone the purchase	92	38.33
Look for promotions or discounts	41	17.08
Buy immediately to avoid regret	21	8.75
Search for reviews before purchasing	86	35.83
Total	240	100.00

Source: Primary data

Out of 240 respondents, 92 (38.33%) have postponed the purchase, 86 (35.83%) have searched for reviews before purchasing, 41 (17.08%) have looked for promotions or discounts and 21 (8.75%) have bought immediately to avoid regret.

Influence of Promotional Strategies

Table 9 explains the types of promotional strategies influence the respondents.

Table 9 Influence of Promotional Strategies

Influence of Promotional Strategies	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Discounts and price cuts	63	26.25
Buy one get one free	75	31.25
Flash sales /Limited time offers	55	22.92
Free shipping	34	14.17
Loyalty rewards and cash back	13	5.42
Total	240	100.00

Source: Primary data

Out of 240 respondents, 75 (31.25%) are influenced by Buy one get one free, 63 (26.25%) are influenced by discounts and price cuts, 55 (22.92%) are influenced by Flash sales /Limited time offers, 34 (14.17%) are influenced by free shipping and 13 (5.42%) are influenced by loyalty rewards and cash back.

Hypothesis Testing: 1

Gender and Aspects of Shopping – Chi-Square Test

Table 1 indicates the information regarding gender of the respondents and aspects of shopping.

Table 1 Gender and Aspects of Shopping

Gender	Aspects					Total
	Product quality	Price fluctuations	Fear of missing out (FOMO)	Lack of product reviews	Limited time offers	
Male	40	18	30	16	20	124
Female	33	17	29	14	23	116
Total	73	35	59	30	43	240

Source: Primary data

Chi-Square test has been used to examine the relationship between gender and aspects of shopping. The null hypothesis framed is that there is no significant relationship between gender and aspects of shopping.

Table 2 Gender and Aspects of Shopping – Chi-Square Test

Calculated value	52.755
Table value	9.49
Degrees of freedom	$(2-1)(5-1) = 1 * 4 = 4$
Level of significance	95%
P value	0.000

Source: Calculated data

The calculated value of Chi-Square test and table value of Chi-square test are 52.755 and 9.49 respectively. As the calculated value of Chi-Square test is more than the table value of Chi-square test, the null hypothesis is rejected. Hence, it is proved that there is a significant relationship between gender and aspects of shopping.

Hypothesis Testing: 2

Age and Frequency of Doing Online Shopping

Table 3 shows the information regarding age of the respondents and Frequency of doing online shopping.

Table 3 Age and Frequency of Doing Online Shopping

Age	Aspects				Total
	Rarely	Monthly	Daily	Weekly	
Below 20	33	15	3	16	67
Between 21-25	27	24	4	16	71
Between 26-30	21	15	2	10	48
Between 31-35	17	7	2	7	33
Above 35	5	6	1	9	21
Total	103	67	12	58	240

Source: Primary data

Chi-Square test has been used to examine the relationship between regarding age of the respondents and Frequency of doing online shopping. The null hypothesis framed is that there is no significant relationship between regarding age of the respondents and Frequency of doing online shopping.

Table 4 Age and Frequency of Doing Online Shopping– Chi-Square Test

Calculated value	9.418
Table value	21.026
Degrees of freedom	(5-1) (4-1) = 4 *3 = 12
Level of significance	95%
P value	0.000

Source: Calculated data

The calculated value of Chi-Square test and table value of Chi-square test are 9.418 and 21.026 respectively. As the calculated value of Chi-Square test is less than the table value of Chi-square test, the null hypothesis is accepted. Hence, it is proved that there is no significant relationship between regarding age of the respondents and Frequency of doing online shopping.

Hypothesis Testing: 3

Education and Uncertain Impulsive Purchases– Chi-Square Test

Table 5 indicates the information regarding education of the respondents and uncertain impulsive purchases.

Table 5 Education and Uncertain Impulsive Purchases

Education	Uncertain Impulsive Purchases					Total
	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always	Never	
School	14	6	10	7	8	45
UG degree	40	24	12	12	4	92
PG degree	32	13	14	12	4	75
Others	12	5	9	1	1	28
Total	98	48	45	32	17	240

Source: Primary data

Chi-Square test has been used to examine the relationship between education of the respondents and uncertain impulsive purchases. The null hypothesis framed is that there is no significant relationship between education of the respondents and uncertain impulsive purchases.

Table 6 Education and Uncertain Impulsive Purchases– Chi-Square Test

Calculated value	20.513
Table value	12.026
Degrees of freedom	(4-1) (5-1) = 3 *4 = 12
Level of significance	95%
P value	0.000

Source: Calculated data

The calculated value of Chi-Square test and table value of Chi-square test are 20.513 and 12.026 respectively. As the calculated value of Chi-Square test is more than the table value of Chi-square test, the null hypothesis is rejected. Hence, it is proved that there is a significant relationship between education of the respondents and uncertain impulsive purchases.

Garrett Ranking Technique:

Percentage position= $100(R_{ij}-0.5)/N_{ij}$

Where R_{ij} =Rank

N_{ij} =Number of Ranks

The Garrett ranks are calculated by using appropriate Garrett ranking formula. Based on the Garrett ranks, the Garrett's table value is ascertained. The Garrett table values and scores of each rank are given in the following table. Finally, by adding each row Garrett score is obtained. Finally, by adding each row Garrett score is obtained

The scores thus obtained for each factor is arranged in descending order. The factor with the highest mean value is considered the most important one and is given first rank, followed by second, third and so on.

Table1 Rank wise factors based on impulsive buying behaviour during uncertain times

S.No.	Particulars	Rank					Total
		I	II	III	IV	V	
1.	Fear of missing out (e.g., limited stock)	110	23	47	19	41	240
2	Emotional stress or anxiety	43	100	35	32	30	240
3	Economic instability (e.g., inflation)	48	32	113	26	21	240
4	Sudden changes in personal circumstances	16	46	22	143	13	240
5	Uncertainty about future product availability	23	39	23	20	135	240
		240	240	240	240	240	

Source: Primary Data

Table 1.1 Calculation of Garrett Score

S.No.	Particulars	Rank					Total
		I	II	III	IV	V	
1.	Fear of missing out (e.g., limited stock)	8360	1403	2350	760	1025	13898
2	Emotional stress or anxiety	3268	6100	1750	1280	750	13148
3	Economic instability (e.g., inflation)	3648	1952	5650	1040	525	12815
4	Sudden changes in personal circumstances	1216	2806	1100	5720	325	11167
5	Uncertainty about future product availability	1748	2379	1150	800	3375	9452

Source: Calculated Value.

Table 1.2 Per cent Position and Garret Value Ranking Results

S.No.	Purpose	Total Scores	Average	Rank
1	Fear of missing out (e.g., limited stock)	13898/240	57.91	1
2	Emotional stress or anxiety	13148/240	54.78	2
3	Economic instability (e.g., inflation)	12815/240	53.40	3
4	Sudden changes in personal circumstances	11167/240	46.53	4
5	Uncertainty about future product availability	9452/240	39.38	5

Source: Computed Data

Most of the respondents gave I rank to 'Fear of missing out (e.g. limited stock)' with the mean score of 57.91 followed by "Emotional stress or anxiety" 54.78. The least rank goes to the factor 'Uncertainty about future product availability'

Table-2 Rank wise emotions based on influence impulsive buying behaviour

S.No.	Particulars	Rank					Total
		I	II	III	IV	V	
1.	Excitement	82	28	16	40	74	240
2	Stress or anxiety	34	48	28	82	48	240
3	Fear of missing out (FOMO)	28	14	136	36	26	240
4	Happiness	44	72	40	60	24	240
5	Social pressure (influencer or peer recommendations)	52	78	20	22	68	240

		240	240	240	240	240	
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Source: Primary Data

Table-2.1 Calculation of Garrett Score

S.No.	Particulars	Rank					Total
		I	II	III	IV	V	
1.	Excitement	6232	1708	800	1600	1850	12190
2	Stress or anxiety	2584	2928	1400	3280	1200	11392
3	Fear of missing out (FOMO)	2128	854	6800	1440	650	11872
4	Happiness	3344	4392	2000	2400	600	12736
5	Social pressure (influencer or peer recommendations)	3952	4758	1000	880	1700	12290

Source: Calculated Value

Table 2.2 Per cent Position and Garret Value

S.No.	Purpose	Total Scores	Average	Rank
1	Excitement	12190/240	50.79	3
2	Stress or anxiety	11392/240	47.47	5
3	Fear of missing out (FOMO)	11872/240	49.47	4
4	Happiness	12736/240	53.07	1
5	Social pressure (influencer or peer re commendations)	12290/240	51.21	2

Source: Computed Data

Most of the respondents gave I rank to “Happiness” with the mean score of 53.07 followed by ‘Social pressure (influencer or peer re commendations)’ (51.21) the least rank goes to the factor ‘. Stress or anxiety” This implies that when people are feeling good or trying to improve their mood, they are more prone to make impulsive purchases. One of the main factors influencing such behavior seems to be the emotional boost that comes with making an impulsive purchase.

Findings of the study:

- 51.67 percent of the respondents are male.
- 29.58 percent of the respondents are in the age group of between 21-25years.
- 38.33 percent of the respondents have studied up to the graduation level of education.
- 31.25 percent of the respondents are employed by private enterprises.
- 42.92 percent of those surveyed said they hardly ever go shopping
- 40.83 percent of the respondents have infrequently made rash, unsure purchases.
- 30.42 percent of the respondents those surveyed had thought about the quality of the goods.
- 38.33 percent of the respondents those surveyed have postponed the purchase.
- 31.25 percent of respondents were influenced by the "buy one, get one free" offer.
- There is a significant relationship between gender and aspects of shopping.
- There is no significant relationship between regarding age of the respondents and Frequency of doing online shopping.
- There is a significant relationship between education of the respondents and uncertain impulsive purchases.
- With a mean score of 57.91, the majority of respondents ranked "Fear of missing out (e.g. limited stock)" as the most important factor.
- "Happiness" received a mean score of 53.07 from the majority of responders.

Implication for the Research:

Since sales, discounts, and temporary promotions can in still a sense of urgency and raise the possibility of impulsive purchases, promotional tactics can have a big impact on impulsive buying. Both individuals trying to control their spending and firms attempting to boost sales must comprehend how these tactics affect impulsive buying.

features, benefits, and unique selling points. This information aids consumers in making informed buying decisions.

The research found those consumers who are feeling uncertain in their purchasing decision tend to be more impulsive. Uncertainty usually appears when consumers are confused whether they should purchase or not. Various choices of product is one of the reasons of this uncertainty.

CONCLUSION:

The advertising stimulus likely creates an environment where the consumers' self-control is lowered, thus increasing impulsive buying behavior. Advertising stimuli and website characteristics play a crucial role in shaping hedonic motives and impulsive buying behavior. Advertisements convey information about a product's

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