



Factors Affecting Impulsive Product and Service Buying Behavior: A Study of College Students in the Kathmandu Valley

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ABSTRACT

Impulsive buying is the tendency of a customer to buy goods and services without planning. The study's objective is to determine the factors affecting the impulsive buying behavior of the students in Kathmandu Valley. The study was based on the cross-sectional research design which followed the quantitative design. The study targeted college-level students studying at Bachelor's and Master's level in Kathmandu Valley. 200 students were selected from different colleges through a simple random sampling technique. A well-structured closed-ended survey questionnaire was developed and disseminated in a well-organized manner to respondents to collect the primary data from the field and analyzed systematically in 2023. The study analyzed the data using statistical tools like frequency distribution, mean, standard deviation, and correlation to derive the findings. The study finds that social influence is considered the first important cause influencing impulsive buying behavior. Similarly, it is followed by emotional triggers, lack of control, and financial resources influencing respectively. The study also shows that there was a strong relationship between social influence and impulse buying behavior. Business organizations should strategically leverage social factors in marketing campaigns to tap into this influential aspect of consumer behavior. Future researchers need to survey another variable with a large sample size by applying different methods.

1. INTRODUCTION

Impulsive buying behavior is defined as the tendency to buy spontaneously, without much forethought of the consequences (Beatty & Ferrell, 1998). Impulsive buying refers to a consumer's propensity to make impulsive purchases of

products and services without prior forethought. This propensity for impulsive, thoughtless purchases can be attributed to the buyer's instant satisfaction (Pradhan et al., 2018). Burton et al. (2018) claim that impulsive buying happens when there's a strong emotional need that strikes out of

nowhere and results in reactive conduct with no cognitive control. It highlights impulsive buying as a spontaneous, emotionally driven behavior that occurs with limited forethought and self-control. According to Sohn and Ko (2021), not all unplanned purchases may be deemed impulsive, even though all impulse purchases can be categorized as such. Impulsive purchasing upsets customers' natural mental models of decision-making. The relevance of impulse buying has increased due to rising income levels, a variety of payment methods, and the availability of online and mobile shopping. A number of elements, including as the retail atmosphere, life satisfaction, self-esteem, and the customer's emotional state at the time, might cause impulsive shopping in addition to its emotional content (Gogoi & Shillong, 2020). The majority of customers occasionally make impulsive purchases. According to Dawson and Kim (2009), impulse buying accounts for over half of mall customers' purchases and over one-third of department store purchases. This suggests that impulse buying is essential to retailers' bottom lines. Persuasive communication, emotional resources, cognitive currents derived from the theory of social judgment, rational processes, persuasive communication, and the impact of advertising on consumer behavior are some of the viewpoints that have been used to study impulse buying (Malter et al., 2020).

Kacen and Lee (2002) examined the two aspects of impulse buying immediate possession and snap decision-making. They claimed that when planned and impulsive buying behaviors were contrasted, impulse buying was less purposeful and more stimulating and seductive. Wu (2006) provided a comparison between compulsive, impulsive, and excessive buying, allowing us to conclude that impulsive buying is distinct from both compulsive and excessive buying behavior in terms of the psychological and motivational processes of the consumer. Xu (2007) outlined several traits of impulsive purchasing behavior, including being

unplanned, unreflective, and quick without doing a lot of assessment, as well as making decisions on the spur of the moment. Similarly, Mohan et al. (2013) explained impulse buying is any unplanned, on-the-spot purchase made without giving it any thought. According to Kang (2013), the purchasing decisions made by impulsive purchasers are typically characterized by a lack of planning ahead of time, information searching, weighing of options, and a quick decision-making process. Although an impulse buy is made, it is done so after careful consideration to optimize the purchase's advantages. More recent research revealed that crucial factors influencing the sales environment can generate the impulse to make an impulsive purchase (Graa et al., 2014).

Retailers would benefit from knowing what aspects of the retail environment cause customers to act impulsively, as impulse buying is a major component of consumer behavior and a key component of strategic marketing plans (Rook, 1987). A comprehensive summary of the impulsive purchase construct and its numerous behavior-related elements was provided by Muruganantham, G., and Bhakat, R.S. (2013). Aragoncilla, and Orus (2018) demonstrated that impulse buying is somewhat more encouraged by offline channels than by online ones; online impulse buying is explained by factors that promote impulse buying more so than by factors that discourage it; social networks can significantly influence impulse buying. Impulsive action is a result of an incapacity to weigh the repercussions of a purchase as well as an insatiable need to acquire. Even though you are aware of the drawbacks of purchasing, you have a strong desire to meet your most urgent demands right now (Meena, 2018). According to Dittmar et al. (1995), men and women have distinct ways of processing information, purchasing various things for different reasons, and are influenced by different factors when making purchases.

In the context of Nepal, Pradhan (2016) found that most of the respondents do not plan to buy in supermarkets. The

majority of respondents make impulsive purchases of some goods, such as groceries, accessories, and personal care products. They take the time to consider whether they need other things, such as cookware and gadgets. The category of the product has a bearing on impulsive purchasing behavior. Numerous studies on the phenomenon of impulsive buying have been carried out in both established and developing nations, including the United States, Canada, England, Norway, Thailand, Korea, India, Pakistan, Indonesia, and Pakistan. In this research, researchers focus mainly on identifying the factors that empower impulsive buying behavior. In the context of our country Nepal, there is no sufficient research on the impulsive buying behavior of people. Some of the aspects have been discussed but unique research is yet to be done. There is hardly any in-depth research done on impulsive buying behavior in the markets among Nepalese consumers. The objective of the study is to determine the factors affecting the impulsive buying behavior of college students in Kathmandu Valley.

1.1 RESEARCH GAP

The identified research gap is the absence of comprehensive studies on the factors influencing impulsive buying behavior among Nepalese consumers, particularly college students in Kathmandu Valley. While some aspects of impulsive buying have been discussed in the context of Nepal, there is a lack of in-depth research on the subject. Previous studies in developed and developing countries have mainly focused on identifying factors that empower impulsive buying behavior, but such research is scarce in the Nepalese market.

This study aims to bridge the knowledge gap in the Nepalese setting, where there are few comprehensive studies on this topic, by focusing on the factors influencing impulsive buying behaviour among college students in the Kathmandu Valley.

The literature review suggests that despite the prevalence of impulsive buying behavior in Nepal, there is a need for more focused and detailed investigations into the factors that contribute to this behavior. The research objective outlined in the literature review aims to address this gap by determining the factors affecting the impulsive buying behavior of college students in Kathmandu Valley. This study could contribute valuable insights to both academic research and marketing strategies tailored to the Nepalese context.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study was based on a cross-sectional descriptive research design. It followed the quantitative design to identify the impulsive buying behavior of students. The study targeted college-level students studying at Bachelor's and Master's level in Kathmandu Valley. The study selected 200 college students by considering the 95% confidence level, 7% margin of error, and 50% prevalence. The respondents were selected by using the simple random sampling technique. The study team visited 10 public campuses and randomly selected 20 students from one college based on the total number of students in regular classes. A well-structured closed-ended survey questionnaire was developed. They were disseminated in a well-organized manner to respondents to collect the primary data from the field in 2023 and analyzed systematically. The study used some statistical tools like frequency distribution, mean, standard deviation, and correlation tests to analyze the quantitative data to address the research objective.

The questionnaire was pre-tested in one college among 20 students to ensure its reliability and validity. The instruments were translated into Nepali language to confirm their readability and understandability.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The responses collected are arranged, coded, tabulated, and analyzed to facilitate the study's descriptive analysis.

Table 1: Gender Distribution of respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	94	48
Female	106	52
Total	200	98

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Table 1 shows respondents' profiles based on strata of gender category. There were 200 respondents for the study. Out of 200 respondents, 94 were male, and the remaining 106 were female. The result

showed that there was a smaller number of females than males in the sample. Among the entire respondents, the majority 52% of respondents were female while the rest 48% of the respondents were male.

Table 2: Age Distribution of Respondents

Age	Frequency	Percent
20 years or younger	60	30
21-25 years	67	33.5
26-30 years	70	35
31-35 years	3	1.5
Total	200	100

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Table 2 shows the respondent's profile based on strata of age category. Out of the total respondents, the majority of respondents were of age group 26-30 covering 35% of the total respondents, followed by the participants having age group 21-25 covering 33.5% of the total

respondents, followed by the participants having age 20 years or younger carrying 30% and the least percent of the respondent were from age group 31-35 representing only 1.5% of the total respondents.

Table 3: Education of the Respondents

Education	Frequency	Percent
Bachelor level	124	62.0
Graduated/ Master	76	38.0
Total	200	100

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Table 3 shows the respondent's profile based on the strata of the education category. Out of 200 respondents, the highest percent of participants in terms of

education level were represented by Bachelor level consisting 62.0 percent, and 38.0 percent of respondents were from Master level.

Table 4: Impulsive Buying Behavior

The average weekly	Frequency	Percent
Once	127	63.5
Twice	46	23
Thrice	14	7
More	13	6.5
Total	200	100

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Table 4 explains the responses of respondents about the impulsive buying

behavior of product purchases per week. Out of 200 respondents, data shows that

the majority of the respondents purchased products once a week i.e., indicated by 63.5 percent whereas 23 percent of respondents purchased the product twice a week, 7 percent of respondents purchased products thrice a week and 6.5 percent of

respondents purchase the product more than three times in a week. The result indicates that the majority of students used to purchase once a week whereas only a few used to purchase more times a week.

Table 5: The Most Common Items Bought Impulsively

Common items	Frequency	Percent
Food and grocery	63	31.5
Apparels	24	12
Electronic Gadgets	20	10
Home and kitchen appliances	25	12.5
Cosmetics	28	14
Personal use products	40	20
Total	200	100

Source: *Field Survey, 2023*

Table 5 explains respondents' profiles based on the most common item that they did impulsive buying. The results show that out of 200 respondents, out of the most common items their impulsive buying was 31.5% of respondents purchased food and grocery, 20% of respondents purchased personal use products, 14% of respondents purchased cosmetics-related products, 12.5% of

respondents purchased home and kitchen appliances, 12% respondents purchased apparels and the rest of the respondents i.e., 10% purchased electronic gadgets. As a result, food and groceries were the basic and common items for all which were essential goods also so the purchasing frequency of these goods was higher than other items.

Table 6: A Main Platform for Online Impulsive Buying Behavior

Platform	Frequency	Percent
Facebook	30	15
Instagram	54	27
TikTok	39	19.5
Daraz	77	38.5
Total	200	100

Source: *Field Survey, 2023*

Table 6 explains the respondents' profile based on the strata of the main platform for online impulsive buying, out of 200 respondents who used online media for impulsive buying 38.5% of respondents used Daraz as the main platform, 27% of respondents used Instagram as the main platform, 19.5% of respondents used TikTok

as main platform whereas rest of the percent i.e., 15% of respondents used Facebook as the main platform for online impulsive buying. Daraz was a professional business site so customers preferred to check this website to search and choose the items they intended to purchase.

Table 7: Most Influencing Factors for Impulsive Buying Behavior

Factors	Frequency	Rank
Emotional Triggers	47	2
Social Influence	72	1
Lack of Control	44	3
Financial resources	37	4
Total	200	

Source: *Field Survey, 2023*

Table 7 presented that social influence played the most impactful factor in impulsive buying behavior, with a frequency of 72, securing the top rank. Emotional triggers closely follow social influence, playing a significant role in impulsive buying behavior, with a frequency

of 47 and securing the second rank. The sense of lack of control over one's impulses ranked third, with a frequency of 44 in influencing impulsive buying behavior. Financial resources contributed to impulsive buying behavior, with a frequency of 37, securing the fourth rank.

Table 8: Correlation Analysis

Variables	ET	SI	LC	FR	IBB
ET	1				
SI	.158	1			
LC	.124	.113*	1		
FR	.117	.148*	.131*	1	
IBB	.443**	.524**	.312**	.297**	1

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Here, Emotional Triggers= ET, Social Influence = SI, Lack of Control = LC, Financial Resources= FR and Impulsive buying behavior = IBB

Table 8, presents that there was a moderate to strong positive relationship between emotional triggers and impulsive buying behavior (0.443**). The result shows a strong positive relationship between social influence and impulsive buying behavior (0.524**). Similarly, there was also a significant positive relationship between lack of control and impulsive buying behavior (0.312**) and a significant positive relationship between financial resources and impulsive buying behavior (0.297**). According to the findings, there was a strong correlation between social influence and impulse buying behavior. It indicates that social activities or social use and dissemination of any goods affected the buying behavior of people. One customer believed in the social values of the socially accepted and recognized goods and behavior.

4. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

The study reveals that impulsive buying behavior is prevalent among respondents, particularly in the context of online platforms. Social influence plays a pivotal role, indicating the impact of social media and peer influence on impulsive decisions. Additionally, emotional triggers, lack of control, and financial resources contribute significantly to impulsive buying tendencies. Moreover, strong correlations suggest a profound impact of social

influence, emotional triggers, lack of control, and financial resources on the impulsive buying tendencies of consumers. Business organizations should strategically leverage social factors in marketing campaigns to tap into this influential aspect of consumer behavior. Advertisers should focus on creating emotionally resonant content to influence on impulsive buying behavior of consumers positively. Future researchers can do similar types of surveys with a large sample size in different groups.

CONTRIBUTION OF AUTHORS

The study was done with the joint effort of four researchers. Here, Dr. Manandhar and Dr. Karki jointly prepared the concept proposal, designed the data collection tools, analyzed the data, and prepared the report. Mrs. Bhusal and Mrs. Adhikari reviewed related literature, completed the fieldwork, and supported to preparation of the report.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

There is no conflict of interest.

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