

## Impulse buying – demographic aspect

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### Abstract

The purpose of this study is to investigate the effect of demographic factors viz Age, sex, Income & Education on Impulsive buying.

When a customer shows the tendency to buy goods or services without planning in advance or when a customer decides on the spur of the moment, it can be called as Impulsive buying. Normally the decision of Impulsive buying is taken by customer when he is highly emotional. Customers are more likely to buy impulsively when they see free goods offer & price discounts offered by stores. More often than not marketers make use of this irrational behavior of a customer to make sales happen. Researchers at the university of British Columbia and the Cheung Kong Graduate School of Business found that impulse spending is a behavior associated with disorganized environments.

Impulsive buying disrupts the normal decision making models in consumer brains. All the four demographic factors significantly influence impulsive buying behavior. However among the demographic factors that influence the impulsive buying, gender is the most reliable determinant of impulse buying as compared to other three.

**Keywords:** Impulsive buying behavior, Age, Sex, Income, Education.

### Introduction

There are number of factors that shape a consumer's behavior and they vary depending on a person. Consumer behaviors differ depending on the following demographic factors, sex, age, income and educational background among others. It is easy to single out the differences between the decision to purchase a commodity and the consumer behaviors of two different individuals from the divergent economic group. In other words, in most cases, a person with high income will likely to make a big purchase while on the other hand; the counterpart from small profit does the opposite. Economic factors like income are visible on the surface; however, it is important to note that some reasons influence buying decisions. Over the past five decades, marketers have analyzed impulse buying concerning different demographic background and concluded that it is one of the most important topics related to buying decisions. Developed nations like the United States and European states register the high levels of impulse purchase compared to the developing counterparts. Up to 90 percent of consumers in the state make an impulsive decision once in a while with a given category of some products bought impulsively at 80%. The definition of impulse buying has shifted over the years from product to consumer motivation. In the past, the definition loosely meant unplanned purchase. Scholars redefined the meaning to indicate a sudden consumer experience that is often persistent and powerful and motivates the consumer to make a purchase immediately. For this study, the focus is on the four main demographic factors and how they influence impulse buying in the developed countries.

### Materials and Methods

The method used in the study involved library and internet search for relevant material on the topic. The design included in putting in the main words that constituted the question. The result was a list of articles and books from which I chose the relevant ones for use. The main words used to identify the appropriate materials include "impulsive buying" and demographic factors. It was easy identifying the related articles from reading the abstract of each. On library books, it became easy as one would just read the summary of the book online to see how relevant they are to the topic.

### Results

Depending on the demographic factors, impulse buying behaviors vary and are of different types due to the broad scope. The following are the main types of an impulse purchase; the firsts complete impulse buying. The definition of this type of buying is where an individual buys a product after immediately coming to contact with it even if they did not plan to do so. Second is the recollection impulse buying described as acquiring a product because it was in the previous shopping list third on the list is recommendation buying; this is the purchase for a given commodity to satisfy a need which was not felt before acquiring the product. Lastly is impulse buying from planned shopping defined as picking up products one is attracted to instead of the ones on the list.

**Age:** The first primary demographic factor that affects, general consumer behavior is the age of a person; this is according to a research study carried out by (Nanda 176). Adding to the observation is Agarwal (61) who posit that with age, the need for some essential commodities changes. With the changes, the author

states, the buying decision is also affected, an example is a health need which significantly takes a different twist as people grow older compared to the younger generation. People's lifestyle changes according to the age which in the long run influences the need for personal value. The author indicates that at a younger generation, teenagers would spend a lot of their income on the requirements for their lifestyle like the fashion of watching movies as opposed to older people who shift their loyalty to some more critical spending. Most of the older adults do not go out compared to the young ones and switch their expenditures on lifestyle to pressing issues like maintaining good health. Age is an important marketing factor not only for the impulsive purchase analysis but also as a way of carrying out a market segmentation and study. Some literature highlight that companies segments their customers according to age. For example, some types of products are only marketed to a millennial while others are meant for the elderly generation. It is no wonder companies spend their time marketing for a particular segment. Teenagers would impulsively spend a lot of money on trendy things and engage in the latest activities to keep up with their counterparts.

Separately, a research was done by Bashar et al. (146) on impulse buying associated with age is the mood of the buyer. In the paper, the writer states clearly that having a negative attitude may lead to impulsive buying. The age is also associated with either being in a good mood or bad one. Young people tend to be happy most of their time compared to elderly individuals who may be undergoing some life stress. Other literature indicates that mood influences impulsive buying among people with severe or negative mood. According to them, impulse purchase in a particular age group is as a result of the pleasure which comes as a result of carefree spirit and being excited. Among such consumers a common that impulse buying would extend the three mentioned feelings. Someone with negative mood will most likely engage in shopping hoping that doing so will replace his or her bad feelings.

**Sex or Gender:** Between male and female gender, a lot of differences in social or biological needs exists. Some of these mentioned variances manifest in product preferences, and the urge to spend more on a given item or commodity by either gender. Within the sexes, the need for items varies depending on their lifestyle and the current fashion and trends. Therefore, the consumer behaviors, when it comes to the mentioned factors for example between male and female are widely different depending. The difference in need results in different spending habits and choices. Between the two genders, however, Ciunova-Shuleska (209) says, there are some cases when the pattern on spending and purchase is almost the same, for example when it comes to spending for leisure or food. The process of decision making also varies depending on one's gender. For example, individuals who are more concerned with the

welfare of their homes will less likely engage in impulse purchasing as opposed to the happy ones.

Men and women relate to a given item in different ways. According to, Herabadi et al. (26), women value items with fundamental preferences while on the other hand men prefer items associated with finance and leisure. It is widely believed among scholars in the field that women mostly value some issues due to relationship and possession values. Men, it is thought to value their items due to what Foroughi et al. (188) term as functional instrumental values. In addition to the claim, men are also involved in impulse buying due to personal identity while women do so due to social identity. In a study carried out by Agarwal (60) the author concluded that women are more likely to purchase items instinctively while on the other hand men tend to think in detail before deciding to pick a commodity. Some female participants interviewed in the study said that they are reckless when it comes to choosing products in shops. Some of the interviewees said that the joy of shopping is picking up items even the ones they did not plan to buy. Gender, therefore, is an essential factor when it comes to impulse buying as different studies suggest that it influences one's habit of purchasing commodities.

**Income:** The next demographic factor influencing ones buying habit is income. A consumers' income is a decisive factor when it comes to the behaviors of a consumer in different buyers across the board. Within various income levels, it is easy to tell the differences in choices made with regards to buying patterns. For example, among the middle class, the decision purely rests on utility while on the other hand; people with high income will base their decision on the feature and design of the product whenever they make a purchase. Even the marketing strategies differ depending on the nature of the items, i.e., expensive and high-end products are advertised in luxury magazines while products for the middle class are advertised on different channels that will reach a majority of the targeted consumers. A person's income is directly related to the kind of products they will purchase (Bashar et al. 150). For example, a purchaser with a lot of disposable income will most likely spend a lot impulsively on luxury and vocational trips and luxurious items even on ones they did not plan for. Separately, Jan and Mohammed (300) say that when a consumer has carried with him or her a lot of money be it cash or card, they will go on a high spending spree and buy commodities they do not need in the first place. In other words, the availability of money comes with a positive feeling in buyers and this leads to unplanned purchasing (Nanda 176). Among teenagers, the availability of disposable money makes it easy for them to spend a lot on luxury and trendy commodities. Some parents award their children with their credit cards or others use students' loans to buy items spontaneously in colleges even if that was not in their plans. Consumers with limited

income will find ways of spending what they have on essential items that they cannot do without. In such a case, all the purchases are planned for which means that the consumer will most likely not buy any commodity that is beyond their reach financially. Income, therefore, plays a vital role on whether a buyer does so impulsively or purchase within their economic level.

**Education:** The final demographic factor influencing unplanned purchase is education background. This last concept impacts the perception of things around consumers that is to say that the level of discretion is affected when one makes purchases. Education in the modern world is a determinant of a person's societal class and one way of climbing the social ladder. An educated person will, in most cases, apply carefulness when it comes to buying given items. A buyer's preference will be influenced mainly by the level of his or her education. Regardless of the income or gender, education makes purchasers weigh their option and forgo some items which they may deem inappropriate for their immediate needs. Level of knowledge and spending habits closely relate. Having economic literacy will limit one from unnecessary spending which would lead to planned buying. A majority of educated people know the importance of saving and selectively acquire products that would make sense to their needs. A more educated person will take his or her time deciding on what to purchase, evaluating the importance of buying the commodity against the existing requirements (Nanda 176). Education directly affects some social issues includes the trends in fashion, choice of stationary, the kind of house and the shows one attends among many others. Advertisement influences the decision to make purchases and a lot of people buy commodities based on the information during advertising. Educated people, however, look at the available details and not merely rely on advertisement information before finally deciding to purchase a particular item (Ciunova-Shuleska 204).

### Discussion

For market research, some literature has been published to investigate the demographic factors influencing impulse buying. Most of the studies conclude that it is challenging to conclusively highlight the issues impacting unplanned purchases due to the dynamic nature of understanding human beings. From the discussion, the behavior of consumers as far as impulse buying is mainly concerned depends on some factors. This study specifically focused demographic concept which, from the reviewed literature, profoundly determines whether a buyer will spend impulsively or make the decision rationally. The four highlighted demographic factors, sex, income, age and education background considerably play a role in consumer behaviors related to impulse buying. Among teenagers,

for example, the study concluded, they will most likely spend what they have on trendy items and hot commodities as opposed to older people who make purchases to but have prioritized their spending habits. Age, therefore, is an important concept when one tries to understand the why a given generation spends more impulsively compared to the other. The other important point highlighted in the discussion which came out is the demographic issue of education related to an impulse purchase. A well-educated person will take his time to inquire about a product before finally picking it as opposed to people who only rely on information on the advertisements.

### Conclusion

In a few words, therefore, the analysis concludes that the discussed four demographic factors (age, gender, education, and income) significantly influence impulse buying. Also, the four elements affect the consumer behaviors as well. Also important to point out is that from the discussion, gender is the most reliable determinant of impulse buying compared to the other three. Among women, Impulse buying is more common regardless of the product compared to male counterparts. Such a case may not be so however when it comes to luxury items when it comes to men. The same applies to all the other three demographic concepts. The paper, therefore, recommends that marketers should consider the four demographic thoughts when launching or promoting a product.

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