

Chapter 16

A Qualitative Insight Into the Personal Factors Impacting Online Impulse Behavior

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the chapter is to have a deeper understanding of impulse buying and find out the different personal factors that affect the impulse behavior of the consumer in the online context. Phenomenology methodology was used by conducting 12 in-depth interviews with Gen Y as the main respondents. The interview transcripts were analyzed through the method of thematic analysis. This study found that factors such as sudden urge to buy, haptics, risk factors, persuasion, convenience, monotony and boredom, and trust were the dominant personal factors. These factors act as the triggers for consumers to make impulse purchase decisions. This study differentiates the personal and market-oriented factors and broaden the understanding of impulse buying behavior. The findings will enable the marketers to make effective strategies and help the business organizations to increase their revenues.

INTRODUCTION

Impulse buying refers to a buying behavior, which is totally unplanned in nature. The decision is made just before the purchase and doesn't necessarily focus on the actual needs. (Clover, 1950; Stern, 1962; Rook, 1985). Previous studies have shown that share of the impulse buy to total sales has grown signifi-

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-5225-9697-4.ch016

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cantly from 40% to 75% from the time the construct was developed till now including brick and mortar stores and online shopping. (Hausman, 2000).

In a study of National Endowment for Financial Education, 2010 report 87% of the adults in America admit that they make an impulse buy. A person on an average spends \$110000 for the impulse buy in his/her lifetime. From the past sixty years, researchers have studied different aspects and factors due to which consumers tend to go for impulse buying. However, in the era of internet, rapidly increasing virtual traffic and online market places to buy has led us to focus on different dimension related to impulsive behavior online. Online selling through various online market platforms like amazon.com, flipkart.com etc. with their effective marketing strategies, vast array of products and good discounts to consumers has stimulated impulsive buying.

Social media has also played a very crucial role in changing the mindset of consumers, particularly in impulse buying. Facebook has 2.23 billion users across the world, WhatsApp has 1.5 billion users; YouTube has 1.9 billion users as per Statista (2018). Hence, in this chapter, we look at some personal factors, which are stimulating the consumers to shop impulsively in the online context and also how these factors either market related or personal have an impact on behavioral patterns due to the existence of online markets in comparison to an offline setting.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The phenomena of impulse purchase emerged in 1950 by Clover (1950) when the studies found out that a significant share of the total sales was unplanned and sudden. He described it as an unplanned purchase. Beatty and Ferrell (1998) definition of impulse buy is considered to be the one the most extensive definition “a sudden and immediate purchase with no pre-shopping intentions either to buy the specific product category or to fulfill a specific buying task. The behavior occurs after experiencing an urge to buy and it tends to be spontaneous and without a lot of reflection (i.e., it is ‘impulsive’)”.

Stern (1962) further contributed significantly to the literature he classified impulse behavior in four categories: 1. Pure impulse, 2. Planned impulse, 3. Reminder impulse and 4. Suggestion impulse. This study provided a new land base for further studies. Rook (1985) studied various behavioral component of individual and linked impulse behavior with the hedonic component, materialism, and sensation. Rook further in (1987, 1993, 1995) contributed to the literature, where he referred that impulse behavior is dependent on consumer’s mood. Rook and Fisher (1995) defined it as a spontaneous and immediate response. One similarity that exists between online and offline consumer behavior is the perceived usefulness of the consumer that will tell about their repetitive visit to the store with the use of Technology acceptance model, TAM (Koufaris, 2002).

MARKET-ORIENTED FACTORS

In a comparative view of significant contribution to the total sales, the offline channel is more dominating over online system. Social media is a very crucial player in the online context, which affects consumer behavior. Facebook is the most influential social platform affecting consumer (Laura and Carlos, 2018).

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