
Model of Impulse Buying Behavior

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Abstract

Impulse buying is one of the important changes we witness among consumer in recent times. With the advancement in technology impulsive buying has increased. It is vital to investigate factors affecting impulsive behavior. When studying impulse buying behavior, most marketing models have focused on purchasing only and ignored much of the information provided by factors influencing the purchase. The aim of the study is to build up model on impulsive buying behavior. This research found a connection between the filters of consumers buying behavior pattern, urge felt or tension handling ability/self control process of buying decision making, impulse buying process, impulsive buying behavior and factors influencing it. A model has been developed connecting them to the process of impulse buying behavior. The theoretical part is framed through the books, journals, previous research papers and articles.

Keywords: Consumer Impulsive Purchase Behavior, Impulse Buying Decision Process, Self Control, Urge Felt, Tension Handling Ability.

Model of Impulse Buying Behavior

Researcher has identified certain consumption and possession traits amongst consumers from all socio economic segments which influence consumer behavior. Impulsive buying decision is one of the important changes we can witness among consumer in recent times. It is due to the fact that 'materialism' is today's culture i.e. people have attachment towards materialistic possessions. It is gone to the extent that people identify themselves and others on the basis of the materials, goods possessed by them. Prominent characteristics about people/consumers may be observed like; tendency to acquire and make show off of their belongings, tendency to have/possess lot of things, being self centered approach, derive happiness or satisfaction from possessing them irrespective whether they need it or not.

This tendency boosts up by increase in disposable income, availability of increase of credit facility, dual income families, and nuclear families. Lifestyle and projection of self image and impulsive purchasing in today's retail is being considered as major leisure time activity. Impulsive purchase behavior is driven by hedonistic or pleasure seeking goals causes a consumer to experience desires for products. In fixated consumer behavior, consumers are not only interested in purchasing an object/good but also enjoying, displaying them and are known for their involvement.

All such characteristics tendencies create an atmosphere where it leads them to impulse buying. Marketers are starving hard to understand such behavior and in process of exploring different factors affecting the impulse buying behavior. Analyzing scientific literature on impulse buying in today's retail environment concludes that there

is no common attitude for impulsive buying habits. Researcher working on this field, who performed scientific researches, comes to a conclusion that there is no unified attitude of factors affecting impulse buying habits.

Research plan:

Researcher has identified certain consumption and possession trait of today's consumers, which are prominent and unexplored field of consumer buying behavior i.e. Impulsive Buying Behavior.

Research Question: IBB (Impulse Buying Behaviour) is very complex process in itself. Marketers are always keen to unfold the behavioural factors which are contributing and restraining customers from buying impulsively. The present study carried out to understand distinguished parts of the process, circumstances and phenomenon of impulse buying behavior.

Develop interlink-relationship between distinguished parts of the process, factors directly and indirectly influencing the process and finally develop a comprehensive model of impulsive buying behavior.

This study is a systematic and scientific attempt exploring impulsive buying behavior through underlying objectives:

- Study of comparison and analysis of available scientific literature.
- Study internal and external factors stimulating impulsive buying behavior.
- Study frameworks, models and processes explaining this type of buying behavior.
- Study distinguished parts of the process, circumstances and phenomenon of impulse buying behavior.
- Contribute to the knowledge body of impulsive buying behavior explaining all facets of this buying behavior.

Methodology

- Understanding and critical evaluation of past research data available on the topic.

- Understanding the factors impulsive buying behavior and its interlinks using different research tools.
- Develop a models explaining impulsive buying behavior in totality justifying all conclusive statements made therein.

Analysis and comparison of available scientific literature:

Based on overall observation researcherlike to quote impulsive buying as a inspiring and expressively charged experience (Rook, 1987; Jones, Reynolds, Weun and Beatty, 2003) drawing from Jones Et Al's (2003, p.506) definition, impulsive buying is the "degree to which an individual is likely to make unintended, immediate or spontaneous, and unreflective purchases" Impulse buying behavior of the customers is defined as the purchasing of the commodity without planning. Many factors of human characteristics are responsible for impulsive buying behavior of consumers. These factors are for example internal and external stimuli, demographic factors and exposure to technology. It is also a fact that if you increase exposure to certain types of stimulating environments there is likelihood of impulsive buying, as researcher observes it as stimulus driven. Internal and external factors of impulse buying also affect the consumer (Alerza, Yarahmodi 2011). One of the studies also concludes that, majority of the consumers either never or only sometimes plans their purchases, thereby rendering themselves more susceptible to stimuli that encourage impulse buying behavior. Banerjee (2012)

Models/framework of impulse buying process:

There could be variations in the pattern an individual makes purchase decision, depending on individual characteristic and influence of external factors. Representation of a process or relationship given in structured form is referred as model. Various models allow us to make sense of the concept that we study. It also helps to predict the likely course of events. Marketers and researchers are interested in understanding how and why impulse buying are made, which is very predominant

in today's context. An attempt to give comprehensive view of the subject the paper studied few models or frameworks to develop understanding of the subject.

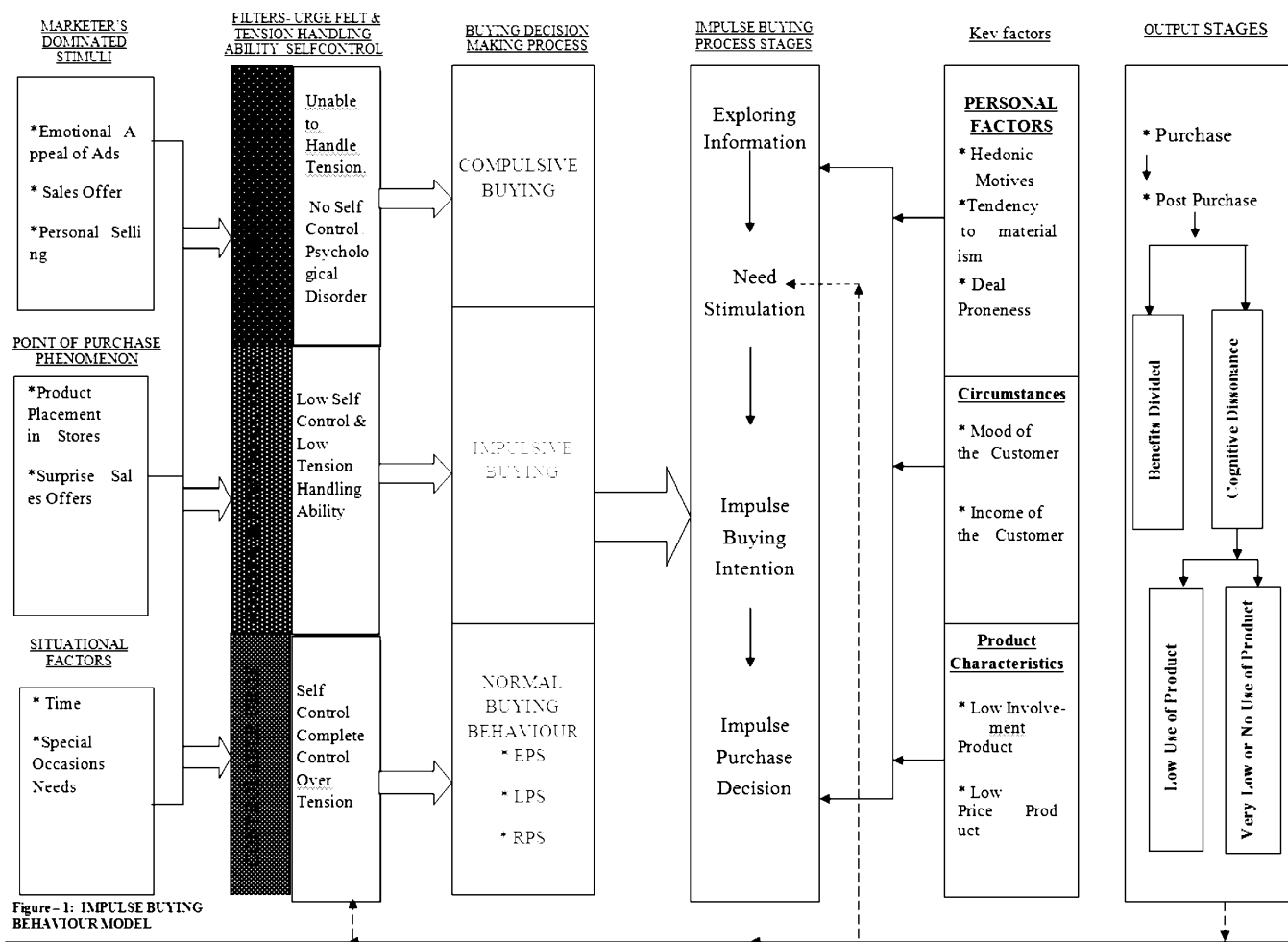
Few researcher rebate consumer's perception from point of impulsivity, The Reference Point Model "emphasizes the importance to understand consumer's perception of the product and impulse purchase behavior"; a model of environment - shopper relationships, where consumers perception and point of impulsivity and its effects are analyzed factors such as hedonic motive ,customer's socio demographic characteristics, cognitive characteristics, avoidance of dissonance ,tendency to materialism, differences between gender impulsiveness, self discrepancy compensation are distinguished by these research work. The theoretical model of impulse buying similarly emphasized self discrepancy and propensity to materialism for impulsive buying behavior. The said model uses different concepts and the main assumption is that consumers depending on their social status to buy different product on impulse. Model proposes that the consumers do buy impulsively because of self discrepancy, but also spot that this motivation is the only reason to buy on impulse. It is proposed that the relationship between self discrepancy and tendency to materialism explains consumer impulsive purchase behavior. The two factors cost-benefit accessibility framework introduces some new factor to existing framework of impulsive buying. The model proposes "cost of purchase benefit and hedonic values that stimulates impulsiveness".

The impulsive purchase model contributes for determining social aspects leads to impulsive purchases. Only researcher of psychology had done research on it but there were little prior research done in consumer behavior research. Similarly this model complements the same factors as discussed in earlier model influencing impulsive buying behavior.

Few models explain the restraining behavior of consumer towards impulse buying. Post purchase outcome like dissonance and adverse consequences of impulsive buying are discussed in the model. An integrated model of consumption impulse formation and enactment propose serious consequences of impulse purchasing and

restrain consumer from such buying behavior. "The negative emotions such as regret, may force a consumer to resist urge to buy impulsively, if these restraining factors are present, the consumer will experience conflict. Inversely, if there are no identified restraining constraints, the consumer will respond to the urge and buy the product on the spot". Few models speak on impulse buying in case of new products; consumer's psychology and sometimes wishes to change themselves to enrich oneself with an improved self image. Self concept linked to product or services patronized by them and try to match their personal images. A new products impulse purchase model propose that the consumers think if they buy the new latest innovative product will add to their status. This will help to get more respect from others and increase their self-respect and it will make them feel modern. Consumer's level of knowledge of new products has a positive effect on their impulse buying intentions and purchases. This fact opens up new way of segmenting consumers, on the basis of self image and positioning their product accordingly. The propose theory spot that reasoned action and adoption theory of innovations new products knowledge is greatly influenced what others (whom they admire) thinks about it (i.e. word of mouth information) and consumer's response to it act in accordance with especially with opinion leaders or others. The results on overall basis suggest that similar factors encourage most of the consumers to form purchase intention and to buy impulsively.

Researcher studied various models which are relevant to impulsive buying behavior and review their usefulness and contribution to the existing knowledge body. Models reviewed focus on impulse decision process, argument with logical inputs and other influencing factors, was also discussed. Different and newer approaches were used to understand impulsive buying. However these models are falls short on comprehensive explanation on complete decision process. There is always a subsistence of a significant relationship between consumers buying patterns and the marketing techniques. Summing up all the studied researches and analyzing models researcher had developed a model of impulsive buying behavior and its process. Please see Figure-1



Internal and external factors stimulating impulsive buying behavior:

While going through various researches and models, researcher found that there are certain factors that instigate urge in the consumer to go through a certain buying process, some of the external factor are given below, like Marketers Dominated Stimuli which includes

Emotional Appeal of Advertising: These days' marketers reach and influence to their targeted consumers/audiences advertising message transmitted through all communication modes. Television is one of the most influential mode amongst it because of its mass reach and its impact; it can influence not only the individual's attitude, buying behavior, life style, exposure and in the long run, even the culture of the country (Latif and Abideen, 2011).

Sales Offers: Promotional discount of the product can manipulate the consumer to buy the product. In such

purchase situation the consumers involves a very minimum thinking process in their mind. This trend has boost the sales of the product by offering the consumer price discount, coupon, free sample, bonus pack and "buy-one-get-one-free" that are given by the retailer to the buyers and it proves that consumer will buy more than they expect.

Personal Selling Impact: Personal selling can influence the buyer's behavior. Salespersons are both emotionally and intellectually appealing as well as considerate of their customers' needs. They have the ability to influence consumers buying decision to great extent.

Apart from marketers dominated stimuli there are even Point of Purchase Phenomenon which influence buyer's behavior and create urge to buy like,

Placement of Products in the Stores: Impulse buying is commonly detected phenomenon in consumption situations. An innovative practice adopted by retailers

certainly leads to increase in number of impulsive purchases by consumers. Attractive product displays; overall store design; packaging designs and contemporary marketing innovations at put on use by retailers to increase impulse buying further.

Surprises and Sales Offers: Surprises and sales offers influence consumers buying intention in a positive way. It is like some profit earned unexpectedly giving pleasure to the consumer. Getting such an offer which gives benefits may instigate impulse buying behavior in the consumer.

There may also be Situational Factors influencing buying process like, Time Pressure: More the consumer spent time in the store, more he disposed to buy impulsively (Iyer, 1989); contrary to Au, et al. (1993). The impulsive buying over and over again achieves in the five first minutes of shopping time and the chances of this behavior realization decreases as the time passed.

Special Occasion Needs: To lure consumers during festival seasons come with host of offers and discounts are offered by marketers. Discounts and schemes are offered either by retailers or by marketers to appeal to customers to buy, and buy more. To grab this opportunity of discount offers, and attractive schemes during festival season's customers buy impulsively. Customers in this case may buy the products which may be new in the market; or buy the product they may use less, or buy the product they use but buy it in excessive quantity. Also discount offers regarding product, focusing on effective price and discount strategies which are brought by the retail players in order to attract their potential customers.

Along with these external factors there are internal factors that also influence impulse buying behavior of the consumer. Figure-1 can also be referred to understand these factors and its influence on IBB. These may also be said to be key influencing factors of impulse buying behavior. These factors are,

Personal Factors:

Hedonic Motives: Hedonic dimensions, namely pleasure arousal, and escapism (Monsuéré et al., 2004) have been identified as facets of shopping enjoyment. People go for shopping even for their pleasure requirements which also leads to impulsive buying.

Tendency to Materialism: consumers find satisfaction in being materialistic now days. People want to compete with each other, and want to copy their idols which again lead to impulsive buying because in such cases purchasing is done for show off purpose and not for any planned purchase.

Deal proneness: persuasive deals make consumer deal prone. If consumer gets attracted towards deals although they need the product or not they feel the urge to buy and will tend to buy it impulsively.

Circumstances:

Mood of Customer: In this regards to analyze circumstances further from perspective of mood of the consumer can add important inputs to consumer behavior studies. The studies in this context found an important factor of impulse buying and that is customer's affective state or mood. It is found that if customer is in a good quality mood, he or she tends to recompense him or herself more generously so buy impulsively

Income of Customer: Marketing is all about customer's intention to buy ability to pay for the product he desire to buy. So naturally if customers have ability to pay for the product and he is desirous to buy, will facilitate the process of impulse buying. Since paying ability increases the purchasing power of the customers. Inversely consumers who do not have ability to pay or do not have enough money, will altogether avoid the shopping environment. Impulse buying will be more prevalent if income is good, otherwise consumer will think before buying which contradicts the definition of impulse buying (Jain 2010).

Product Characteristics:

Low involvement product: usually in the case of low involvement products consumer don't think much and tend to buy the product as in case of product being of less use and the loss associated will not be too much.

Low price product: same is the case with low price products consumer tend to take risk in case of low price products. And hence buy impulsively many a times.

While the external factors influence the consumers, they are exposed to filters of, urge felt and tension handling

ability/self control. If the consumer experience uncontrollable urge, unable to handle tension or no self control, it leads to compulsive buying behavior in psychological terms. Compulsive buying behavior is a type of psychosomatic disorder where customer experiences an uncontrollable urge to buy the product. Those customers failed to act on this urge feel tension. This increase in tension can only dissolve with buying the product. In compulsive buying, consumer has no tension handling ability and thus buys a product of low use and may not use the product at all.

So compulsive buying behavior is the process of getting relieved from negative feelings and increase in tension to buy the specific products. As such this urge is triggered by any negative feelings or by negative events. Post mortem of this behavior explores that in most case consequences of this behavior is negative. Customers end up in buying the products: they may use less or may not use at all.

Contrary to compulsive buying behavior, in normal buying behavior, person with good self control ability, purchase those products which he felt required to satisfy his needs. When the consumer is going through controllable urge with self control and has complete control over tension the consumer experiences normal buying behavior. Normal buying behavior is the sum total of a consumer's attitudes, preferences, intentions and decisions regarding the consumer's behavior in the marketplace. It is a buying process which is carried out at the time of requirement and is usually made after giving a second thought. Consumer has total self control ability and plans before buying.

Normal buying pattern is a three staged buying process; as depicted in figure-1

1. Extensive problem solving (EPS): It is an initial stage of buying decision making process. Buyers when has limited knowledge/information or has no previous experience about the product adopt this process. Also when buyer accepting a new product/product category, and has not developed a choice criteria takes longer time to make decision. It is especially when the product is expensive in nature and risk involved is substantially high, in terms on capital and product failure.

2. Limited problem solving (LPS): This process is somewhat enhanced stage of consumer decision making process. A buyer in this case is somewhat better informed, having some knowledge and had some previous experience about the product adopt this process. Buyer in this case not certain on, evoked set of brands, and also apparent about the brand he or she should choose to which will satisfy his or her needs completely. Level of involvement in the decision process is moderate and time to seek information on different stages of decision process is also moderate.
3. Routinized response behavior (RRB): The buyers who have complete information, knowledge and had enough experience about the product adopt routinized response behavior. Level of involvement in the decision process is low and time to seek information on different stages of decision process is very less. It is mostly in case of our day to day purchases, with product of low level involvement. The buyer knows/determined to choose the specific brand, which will meet all his needs.

On the other hand the consumer's experience of sudden and powerful urge to buy with low self control and low tension handling ability pushes to make an impulse purchase. Impulse buying behavior is defined as a sudden and powerful urge in the consumer to buy immediately. It occurs when desire for a product or brand outweighs one's willpower to resist. It is important for marketers to know/explore the characteristics of customers that make them to buy impulsively. Also on other side it important to know and explore the characteristics of customers which make them buys rationally. There is long list of internal factors like personality characteristics, mood of the buyer, self control, ability to handle tension, and external factors like situational factors, market's stimuli facilitate impulsive buying.

Further, studying the impulse buying behavior, it involves four stage process i.e.

1. Exploring information
2. Need stimulation
3. Impulse buying intention
4. Impulse purchase decision

- **Exploring Information:** Need identification is first stage of decision process followed by information search for identifying solution to satisfy need identified. Time spend on exploration of information depends on level of involvement, complexity of situation, risk involved, and capital involved. (For example a customer making buying decision about noodles needs little information and involved little than buying a car.)
- **Need Stimulation:** Need simulation or problem identification is the first step in the consumer buying decision process. Unless consumer recognizes need, he doesn't think of buying good/services which will satisfy his needs. Not all needs leads to buying process, consumer's priorities his long list of needs and try to satisfy those needs first which stand first in the list. The consumers in this recognizes gap between its ideal state and present state.

But the "way" (product price, ease of acquisition, etc.) to obtain this ideal situation has to be perceived as "acceptable" by the consumer based on the level of importance he attributes to the need. In addition to a need resulting from a new element, the gap between the actual situation and the ideal situation may be due to three cases. The current situation has not changed, but the ideal situation has or, the ideal situation is still the same but it's the actual situation has changed or finally, the two situations have changed.

- **Impulse buying intention:** after the need stimulation consumer makes an impulse buying intention, in which now he feel the urge to buy and tries to get rid of this urge. In the process of trying to get rid of this urge consumer find every possible way to make a purchase decision that is impulse purchase decision.
- **Impulse Purchase Decision:** The impulse buying decision can be categories as fast track process where consumer buys impulsively when need identified. He even does not search for alternatives, which can satisfy his need/s. Researcher tried to explore the list of factors which have very strong influence on consumer impulsive buying habits. Consumer characteristics, like personality characters, attitude, mood of the consumer

influencing impulsivity. Similarly marketer's dominated stimuli like product display, packaging, store characteristics, promotional activities, product characteristics also situational factors also influencing impulsivity, the various research studies explores.

In Impulse purchase decision the output of the complete process is purchase, after this is the post purchase experience of the consumer i.e. whether benefits are derived or if not then whether it leads to cognitive dissonance that matters. However it is important for consumer he should not feel dissonance after buying the product impulsively. Consumers do sometimes love to purchase impulsively, some times. So marketers have to consider both sides of impulse purchasing, and plan strategies accordingly.

- **Purchase:** After going through the various stages, impulse buying decision process chooses the product or brand that seems most suitable to meet his needs. After that he proceeds to the actual purchase of the product. Consumer's decision will depend on the information and the selection made in the previous step based on the perceived value, product's features and capabilities that are important to him.
- **Post purchase evaluation:** Post purchase behavior is always an important phenomenon for marketing professionals. Consumers' decision making process is function of results of post purchase phenomenon to great extent. Consumer evaluated his experience with product, and other related characteristics of marketing mechanism with expectation he has about product. He carefully evaluated whether he made a right choice or not. If he derives gains from the purchase, he will either feels sense of Satisfaction from the product (and the choice he made), otherwise he feel disappointed or Dissatisfaction from the product (and the choice he made). Consumer may feel cognitive dissonance in such case. If the feeling of cognitive dissonance develops then it leads to low use or very low use or either no use of the product in future.

This review results in cognitive dissonance, which is a psychological phenomenon that occurs when there is a discrepancy between what a person believes and information that calls this into question. In shopping behavior, this negative state arises when there is substantial difference between the expected performance of some product being purchased and its actual performance. This is true with planned purchase also; level of cognitive dissonance in the result of impulsive buying is significantly greater. It is an opinion that will influence his future decisions and buying behavior. In case of benefits derived the purchase process of future will directly start from the need stimulation and in case of cognitive dissonance all the future purchases will again start from filters: urge felt /tension handling ability or self control. Depending on the experience of the consumer he will either minimizes or maximizes stages of buying process. If he experience satisfaction from the product or choice he made it will reinforce in his attitudinal information, and become brand loyal.

Or on the contrary, if the Experience with the product is unsatisfactory, the consumer is most likely to repeat the stages of the Consumer Buying Decision Process during his next purchase. Also more likely he will exclude the brand from his “evoked set”. In addition to optimizing the customer experience, a guarantee, an efficient customer service and a specific call center are some of the assets that can be developed to improve post-purchase behavior if there is any trouble with the product.

The researcher proposes modelfigure-1 after complete and comprehensive details of impulse buying process of impulse buying behavior, depicting links, interlinks between various components of impulse buying, as discussed above.

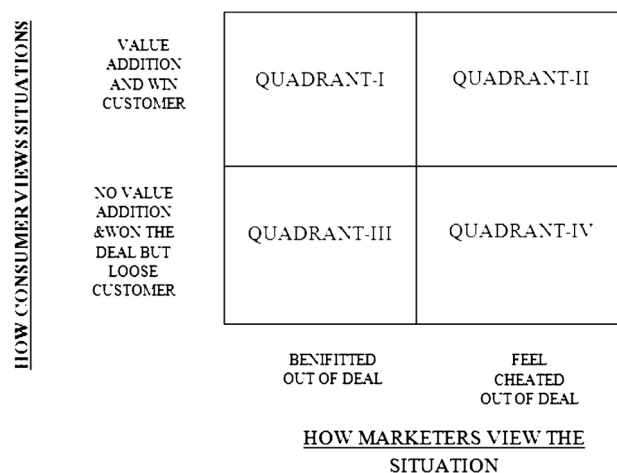
Conclusion:

Although recently impulse buying is considered to be an unethical appeal to the consumers, in perspective of marketers, it brings revenues rather than blame. In perspective of consumers, it should not be that much negative aspect, because who have purchasing power, can spend their money according to their wish. Hence after going through various researches and models and also after giving explanation to the proposed model it can be concluded, that impulse buying behavior is a sensitive

behavior which gets influenced by various external and internal factors. These factors after going through the filters of controllable and uncontrollable urge leads to the different buying patterns of the consumers. Please refer figure – 2. It can also be concluded that impulse buying not necessarily always involves cognitive dissonance with it, it all depends on the experience of the consumer and the situations associated with the buying conditions.

Different impulse buying situations stems from a combination of two viewpoints as shown in the figure-2, first how customer views the situation? Second, how do marketers view the situation? Either positive viewpoint or negative viewpoint results in four possible situations;

Figure – 2: Relativity of Consumer’s & Marketer’s Perspective in Different Impulse Buying Situation



(Model Developed By Author)

Situation-1: Quadrant-I

Marketers offering value proposition and it are equally valued by customer through the deal.

Situation-2: Quadrant-II

In the deal Marketers offering value proposition but it is not appreciated or valued by the customer and feel cheated. This may be due to improper understanding of customer needs and lack of knowledge of consumer behavior on the marketer’s part.

Situation-3: Quadrant-III

In this deal marketer is not offering value proposition, however the proposition is valued by customer, sensing gains may be in terms of economy in purchases, enclashing opportunity to seal the deal, and not missed opportunity of gaining something out of deal. But case may be that marketer loose customers because costumer's real need is not addressed properly. Also customer may form wrong perception about product/brand/company which may not be in the interest of the interest of the marketer in long run.

Situation-4: Quadrant-IV

In this type of situation marketer and the customer are regrettedequally. Customers may feel that marketer pushed excessive or sub standard product, and no value added proposition. Consumer had added an unnecessary product in his possession. Marketers are happy to seal the deal but have fear of losing customer in long run. As given in the figure-2 again it may be due to the reasons as quoted in situation-3, that real need is not addressed and customer taken for ride by the marketer. Also customer may form wrong perception about the product/brand/company which may not be in the interest of the marketer.

Only in quadrant –I deal leads to win-win situation, in all other situation either customer or marketer or both are losing side. Researcher with this research study wish to propagate or support impulse buying phenomenon, provided deal falls under quadrant –I. Marketers should be cautious about dealing with customers especially deal falls under quadrant – II, III & IV of figure-2. The proposed model will be useful for all the future researches and also for the marketers to understand consumer buying pattern so as to effectively increase their consumers, and also further researches can be done specifically to find out which products usually enjoy impulse buying and many more.

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