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A STUDY OF DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS INFLUENCE ON CONSUMERS' IMPULSE PURCHASE BEHAVIOR

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ABSTRACT

The main purpose of the study is to determine the relationship between consumers' demographic factors and the impulse purchase behavior with use of correlation. Here influence of demographic factors has been studied with respect to impulse purchase behavior of consumers. This research paper includes both theoretical as well as research aspects. In the first part of study focus will be on theoretical insights and secondary research into impulse purchase. In the second part of study methodology and primary research results has been discussed. Hypotheses were set and tested on the basis of subject matter, research objectives, secondary research and result of primary research. To test the hypotheses, inter variable correlation and regression analysis was used as statistical tools. Result of the study shows that demographic factors (disposable income, age) have relationship with impulse purchase indicators as well as impulsivity collective indicator. Educational qualification and gender have marginal relationship with impulse purchase behavior. This research study also explains research limitations and implications for future researchers.

KEYWORDS

impulse purchase, consumer behaviour, gender, age group, marital status, occupation.

INTRODUCTION

Now days consumers are passing through major transformation and turning from passive buyers towards active buyers, creating new consumption experiences and participating in the process of collaborative marketing. According to Hirschman & Holbrook, 1986 observed paradigm of consumer behavior sees consumption as a complete expression of representative meanings, emotional responses and physical pleasures. After looking this view, rational as well as evolutionary choice researchers have opposed that human experiences and impulse purchase should be seen as a result of cognition based interactions among humans and environments (Clark, 1997; Dreyfus, 1991).

It is obvious that individuals react to experiences in their way and it causes embodied cognition contextually and involve in the specific behaviors which leads to impulse purchase. It is not easy to recognize this concept base linking behavior in this context and developing the measures to ascertaining importance of consumers' demographic factors on their purchase behaviors. According to the previous studies related to shopping behavior emphasis were on some aspects of buyers' behaviors with respect to their purchase motives (Arnold & Reynolds, 2003; Eastlick & Feinberg, 1999; Buttle & Coates, 1984), shopping benefits (Babin et al., 1994; Park, 2003; Hwang, 2010) and their search experiences (Bloch et al., 1986; Mathwick et al., 2003). These studies have approached shopping behavior from both perspectives: rational and emotional.

Shopping involves different faces of shoppers and it requires a substantial level of interaction between the shoppers, salespersons and the atmosphere of store. Considering this characteristic, process of shopping involves sensory, emotional and rational experiences and shoppers can encounter it in interactive manner. For example, when a shopper enters a store, and comes into contact with the atmosphere of store that is having sensory appeals like store's display of merchandise, interiors, lighting, aroma and music playing in the background. These kinds of sensory appeals can evoke shopper's emotional responses like joy, delight among them. When shoppers search for desired goods they have rational experiences and also they look at alternative products and related information and this process they subconsciously go for impulse purchases.

It has been observed that owners of shopping mall trying to exploit the impulses, which are related with the basic needs and instant satisfaction. It is not necessary that a buyer in a shopping store will buy the confectionary goods like chocolates, sweets, biscuits, mints and bubble gums specifically. But this kind of confectionary items displayed at appropriate places will definitely attract buyers' attention and they will involve in the impulse purchases. This concept can be easily understood by two forces or principles as a result of review of literature of psychological part. According to these principles impulses are the consequences of these two forces or principles. These principles have been presented in the papers of Freud (1956) and Mai, et al. (2002). These two principles are as follows:

1. The pleasure principle
2. The reality principle

The first principle of pleasure has been related with immediate satisfaction of consumers and the second principle of reality is related with the delayed gratification. There is a competition exists between these two forces which are presented as principles in the buyer when they go to shopping store with some intentions of purchase. As a result impulse behavior occurs because impulse purchases are not easy to resist and also involves some pleasurable experiences according to Rook (1987). In this research paper relationship between demographic factors and impulse purchases will be identified. This study will be able to add value to the existing knowledge and also will give courage for further research in this field of consumer behaviors. This study will also help retailers as well as manufacturers who are interested in developing their understanding with respect to consumers' impulse purchase behavior.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Impulse purchase behavior is influenced by moods. According to the researchers respondents opinioned that most frequently moods stated for occurrence of impulse purchases was pleasure followed by care free and excited mood states. Consumers believe that impulse purchases will help in extending these kinds of feelings. Researchers explained n their findings that positive moods causes impulse purchases but some researchers also say that negative moods also facilitates impulse purchases (Gardner & Rook, 1987).

Negative moods always affect 'self-control' adversely, as a result, consumer feel prey for impulse purchases (Herman & Polivy, 2004). Consumers think that impulse purchase will alleviate their negative moods and they hope that it will change their unpleasant mood (Mick & Demoss, 1990). Some researchers found that there is a relationship existence between age and impulse purchase. Impulse purchase increases between age 18 to 39 and after that it declines (Bellenger & Robertson & Hirschman, 1978).

There is an inverse relationship between age and impulse purchase. This relationship was found as non-monotonic. It exists at higher level between ages 18 to 39 and gets lower after that age (Wood, 1998). Also there was a relationship between gender and age. Men and women differently relate the material possession. According to the researchers, women prefer items related with the elemental values and men prefer items related with finance and leisure. The reasons behind these different preferences were that women always want their possessions for relationship and emotional reasons. But men value for their possessions for functional instrument reasons. It was found that men buy items for their reasons of personal identity and independency. Whereas women purchase items for reasons of social identity (Ditmar et al,1995).

Impulsivity comes under personality trait and it has been defined as a tendency of acting without forethought, making cognitive decisions quickly and failing to appreciate the circumstances beyond the here and now (Barratt, 1993). It has been considered among those dimensions of individual differences those are associated with the personality on biological bases, a state that involves nonspecific physiological activation as well as the non-directional component of alertness (Anderson and Revelle, 1994).

From past fifty years researchers in the field of consumers are trying to form a better definition of impulse purchase. Previous studies on impulse purchase are restricted from managerial as well as retailers' interests. In this manner research placed emphasis on the taxonomic approach for classifying products between impulse and non-impulse items for facilitating marketing strategies like point of purchase advertising, in store promotions and merchandising. This approach has been limited by myopia of definition, and that equates impulse purchase with unplanned purchase (Bellenger et al., 1978; Kollat and Willet, 1967; Stern, 1962). Impulse purchase can be defined as spontaneous or sudden action to buy something and when compared with more contemplative approaches of decision making it has been considered as emotional, reactive and prone to occur with diminished regard for the consequences (Rook, 1987: 191). Impulse purchase is related with emotion (Eysenck et al., 1985), but evidence shows that cognitive component also lies in impulse behavior (Hoch and Loewenstein, 1991; Rook and Fisher, 1995); consumers are shown to consider impulsive act a priori then engage in the behavior because it is believed to be appropriate.

In the case of impulse purchase short term benefits are chosen in place of their potential for long term results and it depends on situation or chronic values of person (Puri, 1996). Although some individuals are more likely than others for satisfy hedonic goals by acting on impulse, "not all reward seekers are impulsive" (Ramanath anand Menon, 2006). Impulse purchase can be defined as unplanned and sudden purchases, and these are intimated on the spot and these impulses are accompanied by some powerful urge and pleasure feelings as well as excitement (Rook, 1987). To solve this definitional problem, researchers started focusing on identifying internal psychological states of consumers 'impulse buying episodes' (Rook, 1987; Rook and Gardner, 1993; Rook and Hoch, 1985). Impulse purchase has been redefined as occurrence of sudden, powerful and persistent urge for purchasing something immediately by consumers. This impulse for buying something is complex hedonically and it can stimulate conflict emotionally and impulse buying occurs with diminished regard for results (Rook, 1987). In the same manner, Hoch and Loewenstein (1991) defined impulse purchase similar with a struggle between the psychological forces of willpower and desires.

There is a shift in defining impulse purchase and this has drawn attention towards investigating factors those are responsible for impulse buying. This work will examine the relationship between mood and impulse purchase (Gardner and Rook, 1988; Rook and Gardner 1993); relationship between impulse purchase, affective states and in store browsing (Jeon, 1990); holistic processing and self-object meaning-matching in impulse purchase (Burroughs, 1996); normative influence on impulse purchase (Rook and Fisher, 1995).

There are many complementary models employed in consumer research for purchase behaviors, like utility maximization, behavioral influence, decision making, hedonic and meaning-transfer perspectives and purchase behavior is explained by a combination of perspectives (Arnould et al., 2004). Impulse purchase do not follow any economic, rational or decision making perspectives and seems to be associated with some complex hedonic psychological motivations as well as low effort and feeling based decision making (Holbrook and Hirschman, 1982; Hoyer and Macinnis, 2001). Previous research had described associated risk with product choices, innovativeness with respect to adoption of new products and retail facilities, purchase behavior varieties, browsing, window displays and shopping for recreation as the examples of consumer behavior in exploratory way. These kinds of behaviors have capacity to motivate individuals for novel and exciting purchase experiences, give relief from boredom and change the pace.

Affective responses are somewhat responsible for impulse purchase, feeling of excitement and pleasure has been predicted to take place before this unplanned behavior or it can happen after the purchase also. According to some research studies, sudden purchase urge has been considered as a type of pathological compulsive behavior and regret has been regarded as post impulse behavior as a consequence of buying something not needed actually (Dittmar & Drury, 2000). Now the question arises that the type of in store experience actually plays some kind of role in impulse purchase or not. According to previous research results positive atmosphere of store leads to approach behaviors and this encourages consumers to stay for longer period in the store, spending more money and engaging in impulse purchases (Donovan & Rossiter, 1982; Foxall & Greenley, 2000; Sherman et al., 1997). Affective experiences influenced impulse purchase behaviors (Donovan & Rossiter, 1982; Beatty & Ferrell, 1988), there is no study conducted to find relationship between demographic factors and impulse purchase.

The store atmosphere has been observed as important purchase inducing factor because it influences shopper's perception for store's image considerably and it is formed on the basis of store's tangible attributes like lighting, exterior or interior and display among others (Milliman, 1982; Sparks, 1992; Baker et al., 1994; Doyle & Broadbridge, 1999). Zimmer and Golden (1988) explained that image of store is an aggregate construct and represents its attributes, business type, overall impression, business typicality, behavioral relevance and product relevance. Previous studies explained that the affective responses to atmosphere of store are associated with the impulse purchase (Beatty & Ferrell, 1988; Donovan & Rossiter, 1982). Beatty and Ferrell (1988) said that atmosphere of store like display in the store, aroma, color and playing music draw attention of shoppers, affects motives of purchase, elicit mood states and make impulse purchase happen, and it clearly shows that there is a strong need of considering emotional as well as sensory stimuli inside the store when the effects of in store experiences on impulse purchases are examined.

Donovan and Rossiter (1982) found the relationship between the atmosphere of store and purchase intentions of shoppers by incorporating the Mehrabian Russell model and collected a sample of 11 retail outlets and studied that pleasure is the reason behind increased probability of overspending, and it provides support for the consideration of sensory experiences as an important source of pleasure in shopping and that causes impulse purchases. On the basis of this literature review, hypothesis for the study have been designed for analyzing and understanding the influence of demographic factors on the consumer impulse purchase behavior.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of the study is to find the relationship between independent variables (age, gender, income, educational qualification, occupation of the consumers) and dependent variable (impulse purchase behavior of consumers). In this study, consumers who shop in the area of Bangalore are included.

HYPOTHESIS

After review of literature, following hypotheses have been formulated:

- H1:** There is a strong relationship exists between age and impulse purchase behavior of consumers.
- H2:** There is a strong relationship exists between income and impulse purchase behavior of consumers.
- H3:** There is a strong relationship exists between gender and impulse purchase behavior of consumers.
- H4:** There is a strong relationship exists between educational qualification and impulse purchase behavior of consumers.
- H5:** There is a strong relationship exists between occupation and impulse purchase behavior of consumers.

The hypotheses are tested and limited to the primary data collected from Bangalore.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The objective of this study is to find out the relationship between demographic factors and impulse purchase behavior of consumers in Bangalore city. In this study stratified random sampling has been used and sample size was taken as 250. In this study primary data was collected by administering a closed ended questionnaire. Further, percentage analysis, correlation analysis and regression analysis are used as major statistical tools for analysis of data.

TABLE 1: DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF CONSUMERS

Demographic Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	121	48.4
Female	129	51.6
Total	250	100
Age		
18-25	24	9.6
26-32	113	45.2
33-39	88	35.2
40-46	22	8.8
Above 46	3	1.2
Total	250	100
Disposable Income		
Under 5000	23	9.2
5001-10000	101	40.4
10001-15000	84	33.6
15001-20000	39	15.6
Above 20000	3	1.2
Total	250	100
Occupation		
Govt. Employee	67	26.8
Private Job	163	65.2
Self Employed	20	8.0
Total	250	100
Frequency of weekly store visit		
Once a week	10	4.0
Twice a week	142	56.8
Thrice a week	80	32.0
Four times a week	13	5.2
More than four times a week	5	2.0
Total	250	100
Marital Status		
Married	170	68
Unmarried	80	32
Total	250	100
Educational Qualification		
SSC	90	36
HSC	98	39.2
UG	27	10.8
PG	28	11.2
Ph.D.	7	2.8
Total	250	100

TABLE 2: CORRELATION ANALYSIS BETWEEN DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS

	Age (years)	Education	Impulse Purchase	Disposable Income	Occupation	Gender
Age (years)	1	.071	.201	.157	.014	-.050
Education	.071	1	.143	.052	.053	-.089
Impulse Purchase	.201	.143	1	.700	.103	.105
Disposable Income	.157	.052	.700	1	-.009	-.142
Occupation	.014	.053	.103	-.009	1	-.033
Gender	-.050	-.089	.105	-.142	-.033	1

TABLE 3: REGRESSION ANALYSIS FOR IMPULSE PURCHASE AND DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS

	Impulse Buying			
	Estimate (R2)	S.E.	C.R.	P
Age in years	0.04	0.032	1.448	0.133
Educational Qualification	0.057	0.02	1.967	***
Disposable Income	0.188	0.02	6.113	***
Occupation	0.067	0.023	2.701	***
Gender	0.043	0.024	1.54	***

*** is significant at the 0.05 level.

Data has been analyzed with use of means, correlation and regression analysis. Tables 2 & 3 show correlation between variables used in the study. There is a strong relationship exists between impulse purchase behavior and age where the value of R is .201 and significant at .001 and hence hypothesis H1 is verified. It is clear from the table that both dependent variable impulse purchase behavior and independent variables demographic factors show significant relationships. Hence all provide support for hypothesis H2, H3, H4 and H5. In addition to study of relationship between demographic factors and impulse purchase behavior, also the important factors which impacts impulse purchase behavior of consumers were also determined. From the table it can be infer that educational qualification of respondents is minutely correlated with impulse purchase behavior and disposable income found considerably correlated with impulse purchase behavior. It is also clear from the table that gender and occupation does not have significant impact on the impulse purchase behavior of consumers. In this study there was one important research questions about amount of variance caused in impulse purchase because of demographic factors. The demographic factors cause total variance of 34.4% in the impulse purchase. Disposable income creates major variance of 18.8% in impulse purchase. Age in years did not have significant variance at 95% confidence interval level.

CONCLUSION

This study has identified a positive relationship between demographic factors and impulse purchase behavior of consumers. Impulse purchase behavior has a positive correlation with all the demographic factors, which have been considered in this study. That means that consumers with high disposable income and medium age show more impulse purchase behavior. Impulse purchase behavior is positively affected by demographic factors. According to the result of this study, disposable income creates majority of the variance in impulse purchase behavior of consumers. This proves that individuals with high income and have money to spend on shopping show more impulse purchase behaviors. On the other hand, age created non-significant variance in the impulse purchase behavior of consumers. There are several limitations in the results of this study. The small sample size in Bangalore city is the major limitation of this study. It is required to use a large as well as dispersed sample of consumers. This study will be able to develop a better understanding of the impulse purchase behavior of consumers and its causes. There are various causes behind the impulse purchase behavior of consumers, but demographic factors are the most important reason among all. This study of relationship between demographic factors and impulse purchase behavior of consumers is logical as well as useful and deserves further study.

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