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## المجلة الدولية للإعلام والاتصال الجماهيري ( International Journal of Media and Mass Communication

# Exploring E-Impulse Buying through Promotional Strategies

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#### **Abstract:**

E-Impulse buying i.e. a sudden urge to buy online product without any prior planning is showing an imperative facet to understand the online shopping behavior. This paper examines the role of promotional activities used by online retailers in urging e-impulse buying.

CIT in the form of mailed questionnaire is used to collect the data at university level and then statement analysis has been done to get the idea about categories of promotional strategies influencing e-impulse buying further influence online shoppers' experiences and their repurchase decisions.

The study suggests a significant role of promotional activities in e-impulse buying. Categories for the identified promotional activities are also suggested along with the gender analysis of the responses of online shoppers. This study also indicates that male respondents show more positive responses for the e-impulse buying and repurchase decisions in comparison to the female respondents.

The paper identifies interesting role of promotional activities used by online retailers in eimpulse buying and also conclude the gender wise analysis of their buying experiences and re-purchase decisions.

Contributions of this study in examining the role of promotional activities used by online retailers in E-Impulse Buying. These papers proposes a gender wise analysis of online shoppers' responses in terms of their experiences and re-purchase decisions in the context of e-impulse buying and also indicates categories of promotional activities that urge to e-impulse buying.

Keywords: E-Impulse Buying, Online Shopping, Critical Incident Technique (CIT) and Promotional Strategies



#### Introduction

Proliferation of technology and E-shopping create a realm to understand the dynamic shopping behaviour of internet users. Online Shoppers response in different ways when experiences various stimuli of online shopping environment. Researchers advocated several cues that affect the online shoppers buying process and also facilitate them to buy something immediately without any prior planning (Bashar, 2020; Bashar, Singh, et al., 2024; Khalid et al., 2019). This phenomenon of spur of the moment online purchase gives a direction to the researchers to study the online shopper's behaviour in terms of online impulse buying i.e. "E-Impulse Buying". Many researchers over the years are able to identify such stimuli that are responsible for E-impulse Buying like website quality and design, demographic characteristics, socio-cultural attributes, personal traits, mood effects, economic and time effects, promotional strategies and peer effect and so on (Febrianti et al., 2021; Moh'd Ali et al., 2020; Nguyen et al., 2019).

In this paper promotional strategies and tools have been focussed to analyse the e-impulse buying. A qualitative study has been done to examine the role of using promotional tools on e-impulse buying. At the end of this paper some implications has been made for the researchers, academicians and online retailers.

## **Background Analysis**

*E-Impulse Buying:* E-impulse buying is not an old phenomenon as compare to traditional impulse buying. It is getting significance with more usage of internet and with up gradation of technology in terms of E-Commerce. E-impulse can be explained as – sudden urge to buy, an immediate purchase, or a hedonically complex buying behaviour without any prior planning or thinking to buy something online (Jain & Gandhi, 2021; Nguyen et al., 2019; Qi & Ploeger, 2021). Impulse buying in online context has been reviewed by several researchers and many factors have been explored by them which affect the impulse buying. Like (Cummins et al., 2014) advocated the impact of website quality on the impulsive buying behaviour of online shoppers. Website quality, design and its effectiveness has been also highlighted by many researchers in playing a major role in e-impulse buying (Chopdar et al., 2018; Lee et al., 2020; Xiao, 2016). Besides that (Wasiq et al., 2023) reported that internet addiction positively impact the buying impulsiveness.

Some researchers highlighted the demographic and socio-cultural aspects of online shoppers that influence the e-impulse buying. The findings of the study of (Wasiq et al., 2024) suggested that consumer's characteristics and demographics also influence the impulse purchases. The concept of gender as a factor that influences impulse buying of a product was studied by (Valaskova et al., 2021). Culture, subjective norms, education, purchasing power, age and income and so on are the factors that significantly affect the e-impulse buying (Hindley & Smith, 2017; Kacen & Lee, 2002). The study conducted by (Bashar, Wasiq, et al., 2024) indicated that the likelihood of an impulse purchase is positively correlated with the amount spent on the website prior to seeing an impulse item.

Personal traits have also been reviewed to study their impact on e-impulse buying. Personality, emotions, mood states, self-control, cognitive and affective factors etc influence the e-impulsiveness (Bashar, 2012; Chauhan et al., 2021; Rayburn et al., 2022). The impulse buying was categorised as hedonic behaviour that is associated with feelings and psychosocial motivations instead of thinking and functional benefits and argued that



variety seeking consumers are more prone to impulse buying (Çakirkaya et al., 2021; Chopdar et al., 2018; Ramos-Henríquez et al., 2021). Hedonic and Utilitarian shopping motivations also have been identified as the stimuli of impulse (Du et al., 2019; Ghali-Zinoubi, 2021; Mariani et al., 2019; Matute-Vallejo et al., 2011).

Product related factors also considered as the important factor of impulse buying in online context. It is found online shoppers more emphasize on product-specific shopping content like color, size, design, and fabric to substitute for a more sensory experience (Ali et al., 2024; Bashar et al., 2022; Goldsmith et al., 2010; Zeng & Hao, 2016).

Promotional Strategies: Promotional strategies and tools are used by different online retailers to propel the impulse buying of online consumers. Researchers precisely focused on these factors to examine its relationship with online impulse buying and shopper's experiences. Online marketers frequently implement promotional strategies promoting upand cross-selling through product recommendations, suggested coordinated (and uncoordinated) items, featured items, sale items, and other promotional offers. Since the added on and upgraded items are often purchased on impulse, impulse buying online is an important phenomenon to both online marketers and consumers. The study of (Dawson & Kim, 2009) investigated a positive relationship between the retailers' Web sales and the external impulse buying cues (sales, promotions, ideas and suggestions). A study conducted by Shop.org/Biz rate in 2005 found a 30 percent increase in online sales after implementing aggressive marketing programs such as direct e-mail promotions, free shipping, gift idea centres, suggested items, and featured sales item pages. Researchers also advocated that the exposure to external stimuli like virtual customization of the product, the extra discount, and price not only attracts new customers to a retail website but also promotes impulse buying (Aggarwal et al., 2013; Dawson & Kim, 2009).

With the support of literature reviewed it is clear that there is a relationship between promotional strategies and e-impulse buying. Researchers have identified this relationship and tried to explore it further. As not many studies have been done in this context in India, so here the research objectives emerged for this research are —

- (i) To explore the phenomenon of e-impulse buying with the perspective of promotional strategies used by online retailers
- (ii) To analyze the responses of online impulsive buyers experiencing promotional strategies followed by analysis of their re-purchase decisions

## Methodology

To understand the phenomenon of e-impulse buying through the view of promotional strategies in Indian context primarily we construct a questionnaire for Critical Incident Technique (CIT) to capture the real picture of e-impulse buying through the aspects of promotional strategies.

Critical Incident Technique: In this study, CIT was used in order to understand the e-impulse buying by evaluating the incidents of e-impulse buying from the point of view of promotional strategies used by online retailers (Flanagan, 1954). The CIT has been used successfully to study behavior in a number of disciplines including, but not limited to, management, hospitality, marketing, Internet, retailing and services to provide research insights to both managers and consumer researchers (Bitner et al., 1994; Keaveney, 1995). This particular method considers the "stories that people have told and asks questions of



the stories in order to classify each one within the scheme" (Bitner et al., 1990). For this research we used mailed questionnaire to approach more respondents so that we can capture sufficient incidents to get proper insights. In situations where the observers are motivated to read the instructions carefully and answer conscientiously, this technique seems to give results which are not essentially different from those obtained by the interview method. Except for the addition of introductory remarks, the forms used in collecting critical incidents by means of mailed questionnaires are about the same as those used in group interviews.

In this paper we emphasized to identify different promotional activities used by online retailers that influenced the consumer's impulse buying on online shopping sites. Therefore, to capture the relevant data seven open ended questions and four closed ended questions were involved in the questionnaire.

Data Collection: Many researchers observed that the students at university level are the diversified and appropriate respondents to capture the consumer behaviour and experiences. Therefore here data is collected by using convenience sampling in Dehradun city from the students at university level from different departments. Data is collected by using CIT in the form of mailed questionnaire. Questionnaires sent to the randomly selected emails from the student's database maintained by administration at university level. From the 250 students approached for this research only 55 students respond effectively. The average age of the respondents is 21 years. Among the 55 respondents, 33 are male and 22 are female respondents (shown in Table 1).

Data Analysis: On the basis of data collected the following Table 2 has been concluded to take a glance over the e-impulse buying and shoppers' experiences. This exploratory study revealed various promotional activities that influence e-impulse buying and further shoppers' experiences are also reviewed.

This study indicated that male respondents show more positive experiences than female respondents after an e-impulse buying influenced by promotional activities. And also they are more definite towards the next e-impulse buying or repurchase if ever urged by any promotional activity.

Table 1: Gender Analysis of the Online Shoppers' Responses

Gender	Total Effective Respondents	Indulged in e- impulse buying	Promotional activities influence e- impulse buying	Positive Experiences	Negative Experiences	Neutral Experiences	Positive repurchase decision	Negatives repurchase decision	Confused repurchase decision
F	22	16	12	7	3	2	5	1	6
M	33	18	16	13	1	2	8	1	7



The CIT technique is applied to the online shoppers specifically to the university level students that revealed a broad spectrum of promotional activities that influence impulse buying on the internet. Statement analysis has been done to get the inferences from the shoppers' responses and to identify the various promotional activities that urged the spur of the moment online buying. Further these promotional activities categorized and clubbed in five categories – sales, discounts, offers, advertisements and others. A brief replica of these promotional activities is portrayed in Table 2. And statement analysis also helped in to find out the different kind experiences of the respondents followed by their repurchase decisions that have been indicated in Table 3.

Table 2: Categorization of various Promotional Activities propelled e-impulse buying

Categories	Promotional Activities	Statements
Sales	Flash Sales Festive Sales Seasonal Sales	I purchased a few mobile accessories from Amazon freedom sale; season sale on Myntra; high sale on various shopping sites; sale on festivals; In Flipkart daily they are giving deal of the day for 24 hrs; Diwali shopping; Festival time big billion day by Flipkart; Snapdeal DIL KI DEAL; I look for more and more offers especially during festive season.
Discounts	Discounts on Brands Cash Back Flat Rates Relaxation in price by using VISA/debit/credit/master card	I just saw that there is discount and I buy it A laptop backpack of American Tourister on a heavy discount; I found Lenovo K3 note on Flipkart of Rs. 9999 with all the featuresand I place the order ad got the phone; Recently I bought a pen drive of 16gb in which a website is offering a 45% off on the price; I found a cash back offer that if I purchase above 600 then I'll get 10% cash back to my account so memory card was of Rs 420 so I added a pen drive in it of Rs 440 the total was Rs 860 and I saved 10% of it that was Rs. 86; Purchased a dress while going through the collection and the heavy discount made me purchase the product
Offers	Free Complementary Product Dual Product Scheme Coupons Discount Vouchers Free Mobile Recharge Online Contest for Winning a Product Special Schemes provided by	The offer was to apply the coupon code as "MAD149" for a particular catalogue; I received 15% discount voucher on my billing amount which was about to expire in a month. Therefore I didn't want to lose this and got a apparel (top) with additional of 15% to the tag price; It was a positive deal for me. As I got recharge worth Rs 3600 free



Categories	<b>Promotional Activities</b>	Statements		
	Online Retailers			
	Newspaper	Purchased merchandise after seeing a newspaper ad of		
	Emails	an ecommerce website; Promotions on Facebook are		
Advertisements	Social Websites	attractive and amazing offers; I got a message of 40%		
Advertisements	Messages	discount on the site; Saw a video on a social-site (INSTA)		
	Videos for Demo	which made to purchase that particular product		
	Commercial ads			
		They sell things at very cheap price and at no delivery		
	Free Delivery of Products	charge; I am very conscious about the quality of the		
	Lower Price than in Local	product. So as per me I will purchase the product		
	Markets	Influenced by the promotional activities but through		
	Uniqueness and Variety of	selected online portals; I purchased a mobile just		
Others	Products available	because they were promoting it saying I'll get 3600 of		
	Brands	free recharge and one year subscription of office365;		
	High Quality Products	They are providing mobile phone with best features with		
	Additional Features	discount as per the market price; I purchased a bag but it		
	Appearance of Products	was sudden because it looked good and I thought of		
		purchasing it		

Respondents explained their e-impulse buying experiences and also briefed about their impulsive repurchase decision influenced by promotional activities. These experiences further explained in the form of positive, negative and neutral responses as shown in the following table 3.

Table 3: Online Shoppers' Experiences categorized as Positive, Negative and Neutral

Responses	E-Impulse Buying Experiences	Statements
POSITIVE	Easy to Use Safe and Secure Access Learning Experience Easy Comparison and Evaluation Enjoyable Satisfactory Time Saving Save Extra Efforts Delivered at time	Its good I would like to do more online shopping; It is quite easy and helpful for students who doesn't have enough time to visit market; It helps to save my time and extra efforts; Experience was goodand before I was thinking only to buy I pen drive but end up in buying three pen drives; Enjoyable; It's a great experience to buy the product online. The product quality was good and delivered at time; It was totally satisfying; Somehow it was a learning for me but still the experience was good
NEGATIVE	Discrepancies in the delivered Product	Unfortunately I was unable to make online transaction; online shopping is good but some time it is not give us



Responses	E-Impulse Buying Experiences	Statements
	Out of Stock	the benefit which we were assuming; When it was
	Problems in Transactions	delivered to me I found it to be very smaller than the
	Mislead by giving discounts and	standard size; they provide product at cheap price
	offers	comparing to market But sometimes they make fools of
		customer by showing heavy discount; It was not that
		effective as quality of that dress was not similar as it
		seems and promoted
NEUTRAL	A., E	It was just fine not so good stuff of the material; It is
	Average Experiences Not Good Not Bad	good but not up to the mark; It was not so good or not so
		bad

#### **Result and Discussion**

The results show a noticeable influence of promotional activities used by online retailers on e-impulse buying. This exploratory study uncovered the various promotional activities like – sales on festive seasons; discounts and offers on brands, dual product scheme, cash back, coupons, gift vouchers; advertisements through social websites, newspapers, commercial ads, emails and messages; and other activities like uniqueness and variety of products available, free delivery charges, brands and appearance of the product. Further e-impulse shopping experiences and their repurchase decision have been also captured and then categorized gender wise. And it is found that male shoppers show more positive experiences than female shoppers when experienced to e-impulse buying urged by promotional activities. Moreover, male shoppers are more definite and positive towards their purchase if ever felt e-impulse influenced by promotional strategies. In contrast, female shoppers are often confused about their next e-impulse buying decisions urged by promotional activities.

## **Limitations and Future Scope**

No research can be possible without having any limitations or constraints. This study is thoroughly qualitative based so it may further extend to descriptive research by using quantitative methods. Critical Incident Technique (CIT) and Statement Analysis are used in this study that may create some constraints due to the inappropriate interpretation of the incidents. Thus some other techniques may also be used in future to get more stringent insights. Sample may be more versatile in terms demographic as well as geographic characteristics.

## **Research Implications**

From this study, researchers and academicians may be able to fill the academic gap by emphasizing over the relationship between promotional strategies used by online retailers and the e-impulse buying. Online retailers may also get benefited by focusing over the inferences of this study and by optimizing the phenomenon of e-impulse by providing better customer satisfaction and services. And finally they can create more wealth in terms of profit and brand image by focusing on the above discussed inferences of this study.



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