

# Whimsical Behavior Towards Buying

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## Abstract

*Impulsive buying behavior has been an extensively researched phenomenon for a few decades. Earlier literature has not satisfactorily addressed the issue by incorporating theoretical, behavioral and systematic approaches to study the phenomena. In view of this gap, the theoretical grounding of this study is based on Behavior Perspective Model (BPM). Specifically, this study aims to understand impulsive buying from the behavioral perspective which is inclusive of physical, temporal, social and regulatory behaviors. The questionnaire based on established constructs were administered to a sample of 425 (response rate was 92%) through the mall intercept method. After establishing the reliabilities and validities of constructs on the present set of data, the developed model was tested through SEM (Structural Equation Modeling). This study found that the significant predictors to impulsive buying were temporal followed by social, regulatory and physical factors.*

**Keywords:** Impulsive buying behavior.

## Introduction

Early studies on impulse buying focused on measuring the consumers' level of impulsiveness. By mid-eighties, the researchers began investigating attitudinal and behavioral aspects of impulsive buying (Bratko, Butkovic, & Bosnjak, 2013; Burgess, Yaoyuneyong, & Gibbs, 2014; Lloyd, 2014). Impulsive buying refers to spontaneous response to a stimuli which results in immediate buying that satisfies both hedonic and emotional desire (Bratko, Butkovic, & Bosnjak, 2013; Burgess, Yaoyuneyong, & Gibbs, 2014; Lloyd, 2014).

Studies while extending Rook and Fisher (1987) concept of impulsive buying found that physical proximity to stimuli induced good mood and feelings in consumers

and as a result they resorted to impulsive buying without considering the cost. This eventually leads to consumer self-fulfillment and accomplishment (Chen, 2013; Lloyd, 2014). Earlier literature has categorized antecedents to impulsive buying into three broad categories. For example heavy promotion, high price discount and prominent display were categorized into "product classification" (Bratko, Butkovic, & Bosnjak, 2013; Zhou & Gu, 2015). Individual factor category is inclusive of level of impulsiveness, roaming in a store, enjoying shopping, and self-concept (Choudhary, 2014; Mortimer & Bougoure, 2015; Sharma, Sivakumaran, & Marshall, 2015). Whereas, situational factors are inclusive of time and money availability (Badgaiyan & Verma,

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2015; Yaoshan Xu, Li, & Jiang, 2014). Many earlier studies have either measured the effectiveness of impulsive buying or the influence of product category on the level of impulsiveness. However, these studies have not adequately addressed the issue of impulsive buying by incorporating theoretical, behavioral and systematic approaches to the phenomena. In view of this gap, the theoretical grounding of this study is based on Behavior Perspective Model (BPM). Specifically, this study aims to understand impulsive buying from the behavioral perspective, which is inclusive of physical, temporal, social and regulatory behaviors.

## Literature Review

### Antecedents to Impulsive buying

Although there has been considerable research on impulsive buying, however the concept still remains poorly understood. In early fifties while studying impulsive buying for the first time, it was found that the level of impulsiveness varies from one product category to another (Clover, 1950). In early sixties buying behavior was classified as “planned”, unplanned” or “impulsive buying” and was observed that a few product related factors promote impulsive buying (Stern, 1962). Subsequently, impulsive buying behavior contributed by suggesting that impulsiveness is highly dependent on consumer demographics and characteristics (Kollat & Willett, 1967).

For another ten years no significant work was done on this issue. During the eighties most studies measured the level of impulsiveness by conceptualizing it differently (Rook & Hoch,

1985). Thus, academicians extended this concept by adding “consumer compulsion” which was synonymous to life “style traits” including “materialism”, “sensational” seeking and “variety” seeking (Rook, 1987).

Extending the argument of impulsive buying it has been suggested that impulsiveness is a spontaneous response to a stimuli in which no cognitive process is involved (Piron, 1991). It was also suggested that personality traits also effect impulsiveness which trigger immediate and spontaneous decision based on reflexes (Rook & Fisher, 1995). Additionally, academicians also observed that impulsive buying is a process which is highly complicated and swift due to which consumers make immediate purchase decisions without considering other options (Bayley & Nancarrow, 1998). It was also argued that due to impulsiveness, consumers suddenly and immediately buy a product although they might not have any intention to make that purchase (Beatty & Ferrell, 1998).

Subsequently in the early 2000, the effects of feeling and culture on impulsiveness were also explored. For example, it was suggested that both positive and negative feelings motivate consumers towards impulsive buying (Hsu, Kwok, Lin, & Acosta, 2015). It was also observed that cultural factors affect impulsive buying especially independent people are more vulnerable to impulsive behavior. Thus, it was recommended that while positioning and serving impulsive buyers, retailers should focus on convenient store layout and well trained sale personal (Crawford & Melewar, 2003). Other antecedents affecting impulsiveness during

this era were product category, demographic and attitudinal behavior. For example, it was found that impulsive purchases are affected by product category, frequency of purchase, age and brand. However, attitudinal shopping values do not affect planned impulsive purchase (Gutierrez, 2004). Refuting the product effect on impulsiveness it was observed that impulsiveness is not restricted to conventional stores, but it also exists on the internet. Products and others stimuli also affect impulsive buying (Madhavaram & Laverie, 2004). Impulsiveness has also been measured in terms of shopping with companion. For example, studies have found that shopping with family members tends to decrease impulsiveness (Luo, 2005). On the contrary, some studies find that chronic impulsive buying may heal a negative state of mind (Verplanken, Herabadi, Perry, & Silvera, 2005).

Hedonic consumption has an indirect effect on impulsive buying especially in the domain of fashion apparel products (Park et al., 2006). Moreover, the proximity between a consumer and stimuli promotes impulsiveness and this emphasizes the need for packaging and displaying the products appropriately (Peck & Childers 2006). A model on impulsive buying found that consumers stay in the store, promotional activities and location of TV screen affect impulsive behavior (Johansson & Qayyum, 2007). Shopping not only stimulates enjoyment but also promotes impulsiveness especially if social factors are conducive (Mattila & Wirtz, 2008). Some studies have argued that impulsiveness is not routed directly but has an emotional and

cognitive affect (Silvera, Lavack, & Kropp, 2008). Studies have observed that a positive and significant relationship exists between online impulsive behavior and the consumer's cognitive state of mind. While personality traits such as shyness and sociability does not affect impulsive buying behavior but it does have a relationship with cognitive behavior (Dawson & Kim, 2009; Dhaundiyal & Coughlan, 2009).

Variety seeking consumers gets easily bored with a monotonous life and are more vulnerable to impulsive buying (Sharma, Sivakumaran, & Marshall, 2010; Yu & Bastin, 2010). There is an emphasis on a pleasant store environment as it triggers positive emotional response and impulsive purchases (Chang, Eckman, & Yan, 2011). Supportive and friendly sales persons, attractive and pleasant store display, price discount and promotion in Pakistani stores also induce impulsive buying behavior (Ali & Hasnu, 2013). From a demographic context, studies have found that males are more vulnerable to impulsive buying as compared to their female counterpart (Burgess, Yaoyuneyong, & Gibbs, 2014; Shapiro, 2015).

Personal debt and national debt of countries across the world provides some indication that impulsive behavior has still not been fully understood (Shapiro, 2015). Impulsive behavior also positively affects hedonic and utilitarian behavior. Studies have found that hedonic behavior significantly affects urge to buy, while utilitarian behavior has an insignificant effect on urge to buy (Chung, Song, & Lee, 2017)

Personality is an antecedent of purchase

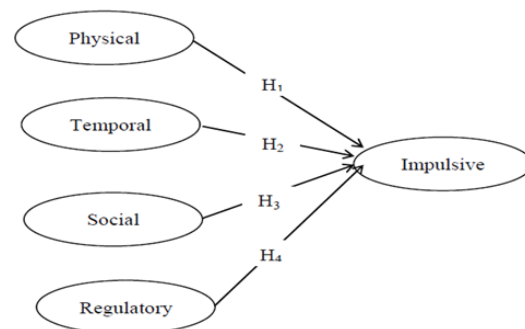
decision making but its effect on impulsive buying and variety seeking behavior is not conclusive. Impulsive buying and variety seeking traits are highly correlated but their effects on 'neuroticism' and 'openness to experience' being important personality traits are significantly different. Neuroticism positively affects impulsive buying tendency and variety seeking negatively affects impulsiveness (Olsen, Tudoran, Honkanen, & Verplanken, 2016). Additionally the three-personality traits agreeableness, neuroticism, and openness to experience are related to compulsive buying whereas impulsive buying plays a moderating role in this relationship (Shehzadi, Ahmad-ur-Rehman, Cheema, & Ahkam, 2016). Factors such as the availability of money and shopping habits effects impulsive buying but traits including risky behavior and academic stress do not affect impulsiveness (Kim & Kim, 2016)

Impulsiveness and compulsiveness have positive relationship but impulsiveness negatively effects compulsiveness. On the other hand, impulsive buying has a significant relationship with the two personality traits conscientiousness and extrovert (Badgaiyan, Verma, & Dixit, 2016). A relationship also exists between impulsive buying, body image and negative effects. Negative affects mediate the relationship of the three body image (appearance orientation, weighted discrepancy and upward comparison) and impulsive buying (affective). However, negative attitude does not mediate the relationship of body image (appearance orientation, weighted discrepancy and upward comparison) and impulsive buying (cognitive) (Lucas & Koff, 2017).

### Conceptual Framework

The following sections contain the discussions on the development of the conceptual developed presented in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework



### Physical Factors and Impulse Buying

The ambience of a store, especially the pleasing physical environment of a retail outlet triggers impulsive buying. The longer they stay in store the more consumers are exposed to stimuli, such as the aroma of bakery products and goods on display. Hence, the greater the vulnerability to impulsive buying (Chen, 2013). Studies have found that physical proximity acts as a catalyst towards unplanned buying behavior (Muruganantham & Bhakat, 2013). Studies also claim that the surrounding areas in a shopping environment has a positive relationship with pleasure emotion which triggers impulsive buying behavior (Meena, 2015; Xu, 2007). Researchers have also found that an over stimulation of physical environment effects impulsive buying by arousing consumers pleasure levels (Floh & Madlberger, 2013; Jalees, 2009; Mattila & Wirtz, 2008).

Impulsive buyers tend to react positively to

the store display and design (visual elements) (Kim & Martinez, 2013; Park & Lennon, 2006). Thus, the atmosphere in a retail outlet not only induces positive emotions but also triggers impulsive behavior (Foroughi, Buang, Senik, Hajmirsadeghi, & Bagheri, 2014; Zhou & Wong, 2004). Store display includes the point of sale advertisements which influences impulsiveness (Badgaiyan & Verma, 2014; Tendai & Crispin, 2009). External stimuli such as product attributes positively influences impulsive buying behavior (Chang et al., 2011; Park et al., 2014). Therefore, it can be concluded that factors such as accessibility, ease of purchase, mass distribution, mass advertising, small and light packages fall in the category of physical factors and they collectively and individually effect impulsive buying behavior (Chen, 2013; Stern, 1962).

H<sub>1</sub>: Physical factors positively affect impulsive buying.

### Social factors and Impulse Buying

Social factors are those factors which could influence consumer buying behavior. Consumers tendency to purchase increases if the retail outlet members have a pleasant and cooperative attitude (Zhu & Chang, 2014). Consumers also buy gifts under social pressure or by imitating what others are buying due to social pressure (Chen, 2013). Studies have found that social factors such as retail outlet staff friendliness, perceived crowding effects impulsive buying behavior (Mattila & Hanks, 2012; Orth & Wirtz, 2014). Impulsive buying increases in the presence of peers (Badgaiyan & Verma, 2014; Burgess, Yaoyuneyong, & Gibbs, 2014). There is a negative effect on impulsive buying in the

presence of family members (Luo, 2005). The reason for this opposite effect is that peers and friends encourage and support impulsive buying whereas family members tend to discourage the same (Sharma, Sivakumaran, & Marshall, 2014; Zhang & Shrum, 2009). Thus, consumers are involved in impulsive buying mainly because of praise and encouragement, or to gain self-identity (Dittmar & Drury, 2000; Lawrence, Ciorciari, & Kyrios, 2014; Zhang & Shrum, 2009).

H<sub>2</sub>: Social factors positively affect impulsive buying

### Temporal Factors and Impulse Buying

Temporal factors are inclusive of short term promotions, store opening time, and the time availability of consumers (Evans, Jamal, & Foxall, 2006; Talke & Heidenreich, 2014). Temporal motives like impulsive buying is also referred as immediate reaction to buying when exposed to stimuli. Academics suggest that most of the situational or environmental factors stimulating impulsiveness are temporal (Chen, 2013). While supporting the effect of temporal factors on impulsive buying, researchers have developed a model in which they have included "time and money availability" as an antecedent to impulsive buying (Beatty & Ferrell, 1998; Vinayagamorthy & Kannan, 2015).

It has been argued that temporal factors, including occasions like Christmas and festivities, sales and free gifts, vacations, and traveling individually affects impulsive buying behavior (Mohan, Sivakumaran, & Sharma, 2013).

H<sub>3</sub>: Temporal factors positively affect



impulsive buying

### Regulatory factors and Impulse Buying

Regulatory factors are the rules and regulations of retail outlets for consumers (Chen, 2013). In fifties, a study found retail policy to have an effect on impulsive buying (Clover, 1950). If more time is spent in an outlet the consumer displays impulsive buying behavior. Moreover, a friendly return policy of a store also induces impulsive buying (Alloway, Gerzina, & Moulder, 2015; Park & Lennon, 2006; Yang et al., 2014)

Regulatory factors such as joining the queues discourages impulsive buying. On the other hand, self-service counters in which consumers quickly complete their transactions encourages impulsive buying (Shir mohammadi, Ebrahimi, & Ghane, 2014; Stern, 1962). Regulatory factors especially time affects impulsive buying. Therefore, retailers have introduced new marketing channels including "on-line shopping", "24 hour super mart" and friendly refund policies (Alloway et al., 2015; Liao et al., 2015; Yang et al., 2014).

H<sub>4</sub>: Regulatory factors positively affect impulsive buying.

### Methodology

The conceptual framework of this study is based on the Behavior Perspective Model (BPM) and relevant literature. The target audience for this paper are people from middle and upper class, therefore, the data was collected from the leading malls of Karachi. The scope and aim of the study is to understand impulsive buying from the

behavioral perspective which is inclusive of physical, temporal, social and regulatory behaviors. The valid sample size for the study is 425 with a response rate of 92%. This sample is appropriate if analyses are based on Structural Equation Modeling (Jackson, 2003). Respondents comprise of males 255 (60%) and females 170 (40%). Ages of the respondents were as high as 58 and as low as 19 years (M = 29.35, SD = 1.55). The scales were adopted from the study Chen (2013). Each construct has five items. Respondents had the option of selecting seven (a very high agreement) to one (a very high disagreement). The reliability for the scale in earlier studies was as high as .90 and as low as .78 (Floh & Madlberger, 2013; Foroughi et al., 2014). After ascertaining the reliability and validity, the overall model was tested on SEM.

### Results

#### Descriptive analysis

The normality and the reliability of the constructs were re-ascertained and the results are depicted in Table 2.

Table 2: Descriptive Analysis

	Reliability	Mean	Std. Dev.	Kr. <sup>1</sup>	Sk. <sup>2</sup>
Impulsive	.86	3.86	1.44	-.88	.13
Temporal	.91	3.78	1.58	-.98	.05
Social	.86	4.23	1.53	-.93	-.14
Personal	.87	4.22	1.56	-.94	-.07
Regulatory	.81	4.07	1.42	-.80	.03

1. Kurtosis, 2. Skewness

Table 2 above shows that the temporal factor

( $\alpha = 0.91$ ,  $M = 3.78$ ,  $SD = 1.58$ ) has the highest reliability followed by personal factor ( $\alpha = .87$ ,  $M = 4.22$ ,  $SD = 1.56$ ). Whereas impulsive ( $\alpha = .86$ ,  $M = 3.86$ ,  $SD = 1.44$ ) and social factor ( $\alpha = .86$ ,  $M = 4.23$ ,  $SD = 1.53$ ) have the same level of internal consistency and Regulatory Factor has the lowest level of ( $\alpha = .81$ ,  $M = 4.07$ ,  $SD = 1.40$ ) reliability. All these values reflect reasonable level of internal consistency and reliability (Bryman & Bell, 2015; Gravetter & Forzano, 2015). Skewness and Kurtosis values ranged between  $\pm 2.5$ , indicating that the constructs have no issue with Univariate normality (Byrne, 2013; Hair Jr, Wolfinbarger, Money, Samouel, & Page, 2015).

### Convergent Validity

Convergent validity was ascertained through the loading of indicator variables and criteria of fit indices. All factor loadings were greater than 0.40 and the fit indices were within the prescribed range (Hsu et al., 2015).

### Discriminant Validity

The constructs are distinct and unique since under root of factor loading (variance explained) is higher than square of each pair of correlation (Hair et al., 2015). The results are depicted in Table 3.

Table 3: Discriminant Validity					
	TF	SF	RF	PF	IF
Temporal(TF)	0.856				
Social(SF)	0.584	0.804			
Regulatory(RF)	0.546	0.555	0.752		
Personal(PF)	0.593	0.609	0.508	0.811	
Impulsive(IF)	0.731	0.727	0.657	0.695	0.787

## Confirmatory Factor Analysis

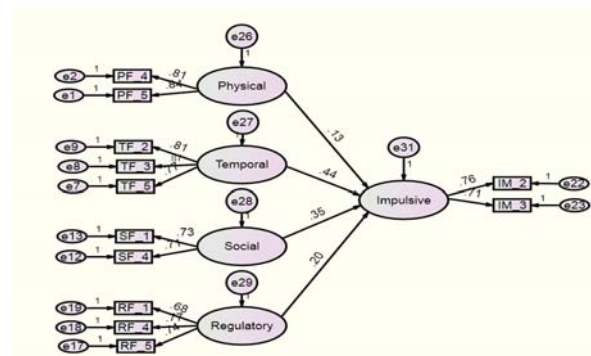
Confirmatory factor analysis for each factor was carried out separately. Summarized results depicted in Table 4 show that except PNFI and PCFI all others indices meet the prescribed criteria.

Table 4: Confirmatory Factor Analysis						
	$\chi^2/df$	CFI	PNFI	IFI	PNFI	PCFI
Temporal	9.694	0.991	0.990	0.991	0.330	0.330
Social	1.979	0.997	0.994	0.997	0.497	0.499
Regulatory	0.158	1.000	0.997	1.002	0.333	0.333
Personal	3.610	0.993	0.991	0.993	0.495	0.497
Impulsive	3.399	.995	.994	.996	.331	.332
Criteria	<5.0	>9.0	>0.9	>0.95	>0.50	>0.50

## Emerging Model

The overall SEM model is inclusive of personal, temporal, social and regulatory factors with one endogenous model impulsive buying behavior as depicted in Figure 2. The seven reporting indices are meeting the prescribed criteria limits, as depicted in Table 5:

Figure 2: Final SEM Model



**Table 5: Fit Indices**

	$\chi^2/df$	CFI	PNFI	IFI	PNFI	PCFI
Model	1,578	.993	.983	.994	.655	.662
Criteria	< 5.0	> 0.9	> 0.9	> 0.95	> 0.50	> 0.50

In absolute category  $\chi^2 = 69.414$ ,  $DF = 44$ ,  $p = 0.009 < .05$  and  $CMIN/df = 1.514 < 5$  are significant (Schweizer, 2015). In relative category  $CFI = 0.993 > 0.900$  and  $NFI = 0.983 > 0.900$  and  $IFA = .994 > .95$  meets prescribed requirements. In Parsimonious category  $PNFI = 0.655 > .0.50$  and  $PCFI = 0.662 > 0.50$  are within the prescribed criteria. Thus, fit indices results show that the hypothesized model fits very well (Koubaa, Srarfi Tabbane, & Chaabouni Jallouli, 2014).

### Hypothesis Testing and Results

The SEM output in the context of derived hypotheses including regression weights and critical values depicted in Table 6 shows all the four hypotheses were accepted.

**Table 6: Summary of Hypothesized Relationships**

Relationship	SRW	SE	CR	P
Impulsive <--- Physical	.13	.042	3.096	.002
Impulsive <--- Temporal	.44	.051	8.637	.000
Impulsive <--- Social	.35	.077	4.463	.000
Impulsive <--- Regulatory	.20	.056	3.508	.000

It was found that temporal factors are the strongest predictor of impulsive buying followed by social factors, regulatory factors and physical factors.

### Discussion and Conclusion

Impulsive buying if not addressed at early stage may lead to compulsive behavior,

which is a form of an addiction (Refer to Table 6). The relevance of the hypothesized results with earlier studies is discussed in the following section.

Hypothesis 1 on the effect of physical factor and impulsive buying behavior was significant (Refer to Table 6). This result supports earlier studies which found that pleasant physical proximity directly triggers pleasure emotions and lead to impulsive buying (Meena, 2015; Muruganantham & Bhakat, 2013). Additionally, others while validating this relationship emphasized that over stimulation of physical environment effects impulsive buying by arousing consumers pleasure levels (Floh & Madlberger, 2013; Jalees, 2009; Mattila & Wirtz, 2008). Researchers also suggest that impulsiveness depends on physical environment (visual elements) (Kim & Martinez, 2013; Park & Lennon, 2006). Thus, the atmosphere in a retail outlet not only induces positive emotions but also triggers impulsive behavior (Foroughi et al., 2014; Zhou & Wong, 2004). Point of sale advertisements also influence impulsiveness (Badgaiyan & Verma, 2014; Tendai & Crispen, 2009).

Hypothesis 2 on the effect of social factors and impulsive buying behavior failed to be rejected (refer to Table 6). Several studies have found that social factors including retail outlet staff friendliness, perceived crowding effects impulsive buying behavior (Mattila & Hanks, 2012; Orth & Wirtz, 2014). While supporting that peer presence positively affects impulsive buying, studies have explained this happens mainly due to



impulsiveness and self-construed behavior. On the contrary, while validating the effect of social factors on impulsive buying it is observed that family presence in retail outlets negatively affect impulsive buying but peer presence positively affects impulsive buying behavior (Luo, 2005).

Hypothesis 3 tested the effect of temporal factors and impulsive buying behavior failed to be rejected (refer to Table 6). While supporting the effect of temporal factors on impulsive buying academicians have developed a model in which they have included “time and money availability” as an antecedent to impulsive buying (Beatty & Ferrell, 1998; Vinayagamoorthy & Kannan, 2015).

Hypothesis 4 on the effect of regulatory factors on impulsive buying behavior was significant (refer to Table 6). Studies while

validating the effect of regulatory factor on impulsive buying also found that regulatory factors individually and in combination with temporal factors affect impulsive buying behavior (Chen, 2013). Another important regulatory factor such as friendly return policy also induce impulsive buying behavior (Alloway et al., 2016; Park & Lennon, 2006; Yang et al., 2014).

## Conclusion

This study has successfully extended the Behavior Perspective Model (BPM). It was found that temporal factors are the strongest predict or of impulsive buying followed by social, regularity and physical factors. This study has validated the above relationships in Pakistani culture. The findings of the study will assist marketers to develop appropriate positioning strategies for creating differentiation.

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