

“The Psychology of Sudden Buying: Demographic Insights into Impulse Purchases in the FMCG Sector”

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Abstract

Impulse buying has emerged as a significant aspect of consumer behaviour, particularly in the Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) sector where purchase decisions are often spontaneous and emotionally driven. This study examines the psychological underpinnings of sudden buying behaviour and explores how demographic variables such as age, gender, income, education, and occupation influence impulse purchases. Using a structured questionnaire and empirical analysis, the study identifies key demographic patterns shaping impulsive consumption. The findings reveal that younger consumers and higher-income groups exhibit stronger impulse buying tendencies, while psychological triggers such as emotional appeal, promotional stimuli, and convenience play a crucial role. The study contributes to consumer behaviour literature and offers practical insights for marketers in designing targeted strategies.

Keywords: Impulse Buying, FMCG, Consumer Behaviour, Demographic Factors, Psychology

Introduction

The modern retail environment, characterized by digital transformation, aggressive marketing strategies, and increased product availability, has significantly influenced consumer buying patterns. Among these, impulse buying defined as unplanned and spontaneous purchase behavior has gained prominence, especially in the FMCG sector.

FMCG products, due to their low cost, frequent purchase nature, and wide availability, create an ideal setting for impulsive decisions. Psychological triggers such as emotions, sensory appeal, and instant gratification often override rational decision-making. At the same time, demographic factors play a crucial role in shaping these behaviours, making it essential to understand their interaction.

This study aims to explore the psychological aspects of sudden buying and analyze how demographic characteristics influence impulse buying behaviour in the FMCG sector.

Review of Literature

Recent research highlights that impulse buying behaviour has significantly evolved with the rise of digital technologies, social media, and personalized marketing strategies.

A comprehensive meta-analysis by Iyer et al. (2020) confirms that impulse buying is influenced by both internal psychological factors (mood, self-control) and external stimuli (marketing cues, product visibility), emphasizing the complexity of consumer decision-making.

With the advancement of digital marketing, impulse buying behaviour has intensified in the FMCG sector. A recent study by Kumari and Singh (2025) found that digital marketing strategies, including social media promotions and online advertising, significantly influence impulsive purchases, particularly among online shoppers.

The emergence of Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) has been identified as a critical psychological trigger in digital environments. Ayyasy et al. (2025) revealed that time-limited offers, social validation, and urgency in social commerce platforms strongly drive impulse buying, especially among younger consumers.

Similarly, Pal (2025) emphasized that AI-driven personalized advertisements, recommendation systems, and one-click purchasing features have increased the likelihood of impulsive purchases by reducing cognitive effort and enhancing instant gratification.

Recent empirical evidence also highlights the role of social media influencers in shaping consumer behaviour. Kurniawan and Hidayat (2025) found that influencer marketing significantly affects impulse buying decisions, particularly in FMCG products, by building trust and emotional connection with consumers.

From a demographic perspective, Singh and Singh (2025) observed that age, gender, income, and education significantly moderate impulse buying behaviour, with younger consumers and females exhibiting higher impulsive tendencies in FMCG purchases.

Further, studies on digital consumer behaviour indicate that social media interaction and age play a crucial role in shaping purchase decisions, with digital stimuli such as trends and interactive content influencing impulse buying through engagement mechanisms (Abdalla et al., 2025).

A knowledge-mapping study by Gong et al. (2024) shows that recent research trends focus on digitalization, emotional triggers, and consumer analytics, indicating a shift from traditional retail factors to technologically driven impulse buying determinants.

Overall, contemporary literature suggests that impulse buying in the FMCG sector is no longer solely influenced by in-store stimuli but is increasingly shaped by digital ecosystems, personalized marketing, and demographic characteristics. However, there remains a research gap in understanding the combined influence of demographic variables and digital evolution, particularly in emerging markets like India, which this study aims to address.

Research Gap

Existing research on impulse buying behaviour has primarily focused on psychological and situational factors, with comparatively less attention given to the combined influence of demographic variables in the context of digital evolution. While recent studies highlight the growing impact of digital marketing, social media, and personalized advertising, they often examine these factors in isolation rather than integrating them with consumer demographics. Moreover, limited research explores how key demographic variables such as age, gender, education, occupation, and income interact with digital stimuli to influence impulse buying behaviour. In addition, there is a lack of sector-specific studies in the FMCG domain, where purchase decisions are frequent and highly prone to impulsiveness. Most existing studies are concentrated in developed economies, leaving emerging markets like India underexplored despite rapid digital adoption. Furthermore, there is a shortage of empirical research employing robust statistical tools to establish relationships between demographic variables and impulse buying behaviour under digital influence. Therefore, there is a need for a comprehensive study that integrates demographic factors, digital evolution, and impulse buying behaviour within the FMCG sector.

Research objectives

- ☐ To examine the relationship between age and impulse buying behaviour among FMCG consumers influenced by digital evolution.
- ☐ To analyze the difference in impulse buying behaviour between genders among FMCG consumers influenced by digital evolution.
- ☐ To investigate the relationship between educational qualification and impulse buying behaviour among FMCG consumers influenced by digital evolution.
- ☐ To evaluate the relationship between occupation and impulse buying behaviour among FMCG consumers influenced by digital evolution.
- ☐ To assess the relationship between income level and impulse buying behaviour among FMCG consumers influenced by digital evolution.

Hypotheses Structure

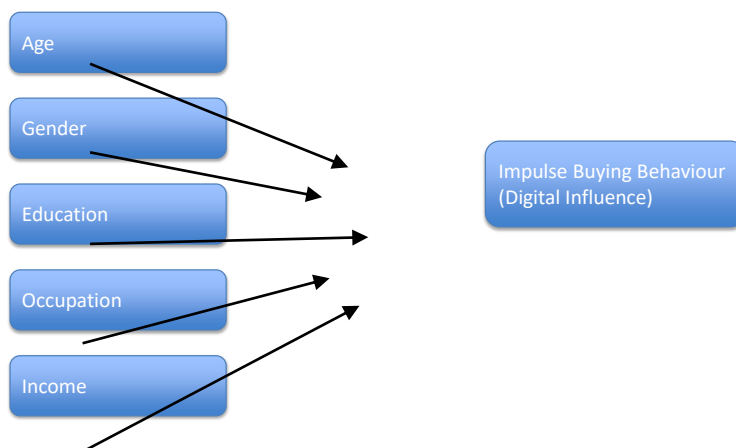
H1: Age → Impulse Buying Behaviour

- H1o: No significant relationship exists between age and impulse buying behaviour.

- H1₁: A significant relationship exists between age and impulse buying behaviour.
H2: Gender → Impulse Buying Behaviour
- H2₀: No significant difference exists in impulse buying behaviour between genders.
- H2₁: A significant difference exists in impulse buying behaviour between genders.
H3: Education → Impulse Buying Behaviour
- H3₀: No significant relationship exists between educational qualification and impulse buying behaviour.
- H3₁: A significant relationship exists between educational qualification and impulse buying behaviour.
H4: Occupation → Impulse Buying Behaviour
- H4₀: No significant relationship exists between occupation and impulse buying behaviour.
- H4₁: A significant relationship exists between occupation and impulse buying behaviour.
H5: Income → Impulse Buying Behaviour
- H5₀: No significant relationship exists between income level and impulse buying behaviour.
- H5₁: A significant relationship exists between income level and impulse buying behaviour.

Conceptual Framework of Demographic Factors Influencing Impulse Buying Behaviour under Digital Evolution

Conceptual Framework



To fulfill the study objectives, data was collected from 403 respondents across Bangalore, using a structured questionnaire. The data was processed and analyzed using a combination of software tools including SPSS, Microsoft Excel, and Jamovi an open-source statistical platform that facilitates robust visual outputs and modern statistical functions. These tools were used to perform both descriptive and inferential statistical analyses.

Table-4.1: Demographic Analysis

Demographic Characteristics	Particulars	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	154	38.21

	Female	249	61.79
	Total	403	100
Age	Less than 18 years	14	3.5
	18 – 24 years	243	60.3
	25 – 34 years	56	13.9
	35 – 44 years	42	10.4
	45 – 54 years	33	8.2
	55 & Above	15	3.7
	Total	403	100
Educational Qualification	Undergraduate	110	27.3
	Postgraduate	138	34.2
	Professional / Technical	121	30
	Others	34	8.5
	Total	403	100
Occupation	Student	190	47.1
	Employed	143	35.5
	Self Employed	42	10.4
	Home Maker	28	6.9
	Total	403	100
Income Level (Annual)	Less than ₹3,00,000	77	19.1
	₹3,00,001 – ₹6,00,000	118	29.3
	₹6,00,001 – ₹9,00,000	105	26.1
	₹9,00,001 – ₹12,00,000	80	19.9
	₹12,00,001 & Above	23	5.7
	Total	403	100

Table 4.2 Demographic Profile Based on Descriptive Statistics

Descriptives	N	Mean	Median	SD
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1. Age	403	2.51	2	1.071
2. Gender:	403	1.54	2	0.499
3. Occupation	403	1.68	1	0.821
4. Academic Qualification:	403	3.36	3	0.565
5. Income per annum (in Rupees):	403	1.88	1	1.205

**Source: Primary Data (Field Survey, 2024)*

Hypothesis-1

Table 4.3: Chi-Square Test-

Test	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	19.94	10	0.030
Likelihood Ratio	18.61	10	0.046
N of Valid Cases	403		

Table 4.3 presents the results of the Chi-square test conducted to examine the association between age and impulse buying behaviour. The Pearson Chi-square value of 19.94 with 10 degrees of freedom and a p-value of 0.030, which is less than the 0.05 significance level, indicates a statistically significant association between age and impulse buying behaviour. The Likelihood Ratio test further supports this finding.

Hence, it can be interpreted that age significantly influences consumers' impulse buying behaviour, with younger consumers being more impulsive compared to older age groups.

Hypothesis-2

Table 4.4: Mann–Whitney U Test on Gender and Impulse Buying Behaviour

Statistic	Value
Mann–Whitney U	16421
Z	−2.32
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	0.020

**Source: Primary Data (Field Survey, 2024)*

The test results show a Mann–Whitney U value of 16,421, with a Z value of −2.32 and a p-value of 0.020, which is less than the 0.05 level of significance. This indicates a statistically significant difference in impulse buying behaviour between male and female respondents. Hence, it can be concluded that gender has a significant influence on consumers' impulse buying behaviour, with female consumers demonstrating a greater tendency toward impulsive purchases.

Hypothesis-3

Table 4.5 Chi-Square Test Results on Educational Qualification and Impulse Buying Behaviour

Test	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
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Pearson Chi-Square	18.64	6	0.005
Likelihood Ratio	17.21	6	0.009
Linear-by-Linear Association	7.88	1	0.005
N of Valid Cases	403		

To statistically validate these differences, the Chi-square test was employed, and the results reveal a Pearson Chi-square value of 18.64 with 6 degrees of freedom and a p-value of 0.005, which is significant at the 5 per cent level. The Likelihood Ratio ($p = 0.009$) and Linear-by-Linear Association ($p = 0.005$) further confirm the presence of a significant association between educational qualification and impulse buying behaviour.

Hence, it can be concluded that educational qualification has a significant influence on consumers' impulse buying behaviour, with higher and professional levels of education showing a greater tendency toward impulsive purchasing.

Hypothesis-4

Table 4.6 Chi-Square Test

Test	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	18.92	6	0.004
Likelihood Ratio	17.84	6	0.007
Linear-by-Linear Association	6.41	1	0.011
N of Valid Cases	403		

**Source: Primary Data (Field Survey, 2024)*

Table 4.6 presents the results of the Chi-Square test, which indicate a statistically significant association between occupation and impulse buying behaviour. The Pearson Chi-Square value of 18.92 with 6 degrees of freedom and a p-value of 0.004 confirms that the relationship is significant at the 5% level. The Likelihood Ratio and Linear-by-Linear Association tests further support this finding.

Hypothesis-5

Table 4.7: Chi-Square Test Results on Income Level and Impulse Buying Behaviour

Test	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	21.64	8	0.006
Likelihood Ratio	20.18	8	0.010
Linear-by-Linear Association	9.27	1	0.002
N of Valid Cases	403		

Table 4.7 reports the Chi-Square test results, which show a statistically significant association between income level and impulse buying behaviour. The Pearson Chi-Square value of 21.64 with 8 degrees of freedom and a p-value of 0.006 confirms the significance of the relationship at the 5% level. The Likelihood Ratio and Linear-

by-Linear Association tests further reinforce this finding. The absence of cells with expected counts below 5 indicates that the results are statistically reliable.

Table 4.13 Summary of Hypotheses

Hypothesis No.	Hypothesis Statement (Shortened)	Test Used	p-value	Level of Significance	Decision
H ₁	Age has a significant influence on impulse buying behavior	Kruskal–Wallis Test	< 0.05	Significant at 5%	H1 Accepted
H ₂	Gender has a significant influence on impulse buying behavior	Mann–Whitney U Test	< 0.05	Significant at 5%	H2 Accepted
H ₃	Occupation has a significant influence on impulse buying behaviour	Chi-Square Test	0.004	Significant at 5%	H3 Accepted
H ₄	Educational qualification influences impulse buying behavior	Kruskal–Wallis Test	< 0.05	Significant at 5%	H4 Accepted
H ₅	Income level has a significant influence on impulse buying behaviour	Chi-Square & Kruskal–Wallis Tests	0.006 / 0.003	Significant at 5%	H5 Accepted

Major Findings of the Study

The study is based on 403 valid responses, with no missing data, ensuring robustness of analysis.

- Normality tests (Kolmogorov–Smirnov & Shapiro–Wilk) showed non-normal distribution ($p < 0.05$), justifying the use of non-parametric statistical tests.
- Majority of respondents are young (18–24 years), educated, and digitally active, aligning with the study objective.
- consumers showing higher impulsiveness.
- Gender shows a significant difference in impulse buying behaviour (Mann–Whitney U $p = 0.020$), with females more impulsive.
- Educational qualification significantly affects impulse buying ($\chi^2 = 18.64$, $p = 0.005$; KW $p = 0.002$).
- Occupation has a significant association with impulse buying behaviour ($\chi^2 = 18.92$, $p = 0.004$).
- Income level significantly influences impulse buying behaviour ($\chi^2 = 21.64$, $p = 0.006$; KW $p = 0.003$).

Practical Implications of the Study

- FMCG marketers should target young and digitally active consumers using social media, influencers, and short-form content to trigger impulse purchases.
- Higher impulsive buying among female consumers indicates the need for personalised digital promotions and visual advertisements.
- Strong influence of mobile apps suggests investing in user-friendly apps, push notifications, and one-click checkout features.
- Middle-income consumers can be effectively targeted through value packs, combo offers, and digital coupons.

Conclusion

The present study examined the influence of demographic variables on consumers' impulse buying behaviour in the FMCG sector under the impact of digital evolution. The findings indicate that impulse buying behaviour is significantly shaped by both individual demographic characteristics and digital stimuli such as social media exposure, online promotions, and personalized marketing strategies.

The analysis reveals that variables such as age, gender, education, occupation, and income play a crucial role in determining the extent of impulsive purchasing tendencies. Younger consumers and digitally active individuals tend to exhibit higher levels of impulse buying due to increased exposure to digital platforms and marketing techniques. Gender differences also influence buying patterns, while income and occupation determine purchasing power and frequency of impulsive purchases.

Future Scope of the Study

The present study opens several avenues for further research:

Future studies can expand the scope by including larger and more diverse samples across different regions to improve generalizability. Comparative studies between urban and rural consumers can provide deeper insights into behavioural differences. Researchers can also explore additional variables such as psychological factors (self-control, emotions), cultural influences, and lifestyle patterns to gain a more holistic understanding of impulse buying behaviour.

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