

Effect of promotional and situational factors on unplanned buying behavior of consumers in self-service stores

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ABSTRACT

The study has been undertaken with the objective of identifying determinants of unplanned buying behaviour and its impact on buying decision of consumer taking the reference of two leading self-service stores located in Kathmandu valley. The study analyzes the opinions of 320 consumers of eight Bhatbhateni and eleven Big Mart self-service stores located in the Kathmandu Valley. Data required for the study has been obtained from the questionnaire and observation method. Analysis has been done using mix of data analysis tools that encompasses descriptive, correlation, regression analysis. Based on the analysis, the study has drawn some facts having managerial implications in the field of marketing. It can be claimed that unplanned buying behavior is a complex phenomenon that requires strategic orientation. Although challenges are persistent in relation to management of all factors but management of time pressure, store promotion schemes and promotional factor are the most critical issues in Nepalese self-service retail stores. When consumers are exposed to different forms promotional ideas, they more likely make purchase decision on impulse.

Key words: *unplanned buying behavior, promotional factor, store promotion scheme, impulse buying.*

Introduction

Research Scholars have taken interests in impulsive buying for the past sixty years (Stern, 1962; Rook, 1987). The term impulse buying is generally considered to be synonymous with unplanned buying - that is, it describes any purchase which a shopper makes but not planned in advance (Stern, 1962). Piron (1991) attempts to define the impulse buying by reviewing the past research works and found that the earlier studies revealed impulse buying to be very similar to unplanned purchase and forward his findings with managerial interest in mind. Further, all impulse purchases are unplanned, but unplanned purchases are not always impulsively decided (Iyer, 1989).

The examination of impulse buying in supermarkets could be of much interest to the manufactures as well as retailer worldwide (Abratt and Goodey, 1990). Impulse buying is defined as a purchase decision made in store with no explicit recognition of a need for such a purchase prior to entry into store (Kollat and willet, 1967).

Impulse buying is often accompanied by strong affective reactions such as powerful urge to buy or feelings of pleasure and excitement (Rook, 1987). As impulse buying behavior consists of unplanned and sudden purchases, the cognitive and affective forces guiding the purchase are typically initiated at the time and place of purchase (Rook, 1998). An unplanned purchase results from a comparison of alternative purchase intentions with actual outcomes (Kollat and Willett, 1967). The buying decision of impulse buyers is characterized by being unplanned prior to purchase, probably accompanied by information search and alternative evaluate and short decision-making time (Kang, 2013). Kang (2013) also argued that consumer's behavior is intended to satisfy certain affective needs. Impulse buying is a consumer behavior of buying an unnecessary product with or without information search after entering a store. Impulse buying is influenced by a variety of economic, personality, time, location and even cultural factors (Stern, 1962).

This study attempts to identify and explain the situational and promotional factors that cause unplanned buying among customers. Moreover, the research on unplanned buying is deeply rooted in the western societies and developed societies. Few studies have been conducted so far on impulse buying in developing nations but no research in Nepal regarding this issue. This study will help to predict the impulse buying behaviors of consumers in Nepal and findings can be used to formulate appropriate marketing strategies and

marketing mix to give the effective responses to the competitors in competitive environment for gaining competitive advantages. In addition to this study will extend the scope of impulse buying literature to least developed countries like Nepal. The main aim of the study is to identify the factors that induce consumers to buy in unplanned way and examine the impact of promotional factors on consumers unplanned buying behavior.

Literature Review

The term impulse buying is generally considered to be synonymous with unplanned buying - that is, it describes any purchase which a shopper makes but not planned in advance (Stern, 1962). Piron (1991) attempted to define the impulse buying by reviewing the past research works and found that the earlier studies revealed impulse buying to be very similar to unplanned purchase and forward his findings with managerial interest in mind. Further, all impulse purchases are unplanned, but unplanned purchases are not always impulsively decided (Iyer, 1989).

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The categorization of impulsive buying according to Stern (1962) as following:

- I) Pure Impulse Buying.
- II) Reminder Impulse Buying.
- iii) Suggestion Impulse Buying.
- iv) Planned Impulse Buying

various factors are responsible to influence unplanned buying behavior of consumer among them some prominent factors that have been found from previous literature are as followings

Situational Factors: Any factor, such as an environmental factor, which contributes to the set of conditions to which a consumer acts or reacts. In this study store layout, employee assistance and time pressure are taken as situational factors.

Store Layout: Design factor is the most direct sensory stimulus in a retail environment. This includes all visual elements inside a store, and is generally refer to the store design and physical facilities. Baker et al. (2002) have investigated design factor as an overall perception to customers. The result showed that design perception had a significant effect on the merchandise value perception and store patronage intentions. Sherman et al. (1997) have also studied the effect of 10 design variables' perceptions on consumer emotions. The result indicated that design factor had a positive influence on consumer pleasure. In store environment including store layout may affects emotional states of consumers and direct them to show high level of impulse buying behavior (Mattila and Wirtz, 2001; Ali and Itasnu, 2007). For example, a clear store layout and width of aisles could make customers feel better.

Employee Assistance: Crowding means a negative and subjective evaluation of high density (Eroglu and Harrel, 1986). It should be noted that research on the effect of this factor on impulse buying and it can be managed through better employee assistance in the store. Social factors influence impulse buying. Social factors include two types: store employees and other customers. Social factor (e.g. employee friendliness) was found to directly influence impulse buying. Store managers might be able to reduce the negative effect of crowding by training their employees to be extra friendly at busy times (Mattila and Wirtz, 2008).

Time pressure: Unplanned purchasing was a function of the shopper's knowledge of the store environment and time pressure; exposure to in-store cues mediated this relationship by triggering need recognition. Unplanned purchases were over and above routine purchases (Iyer and Easwar, 1989). This variable relates to feel of shoppers about amount of time, which has available in one day (time available) and it is opposite of

time pressure (Beatty & Elizabeth Ferrell, 1998). Time pressure has a negative effect to unplanned purchase and will reduce that. Situational predictors of impulse buying include the retail location, time of shopping, season and shopping habit (Shapiro, 1962, Muruganatham and Bhakt, 2013). They also suggested that situational factors influencing impulse buying may include actual perceived time available and spending power (Muruganatham and Bhakt, 2013). Time pressure had no significant effect on impulse purchase behavior of the consumers during their shopping experience at the store (Graa, Elkebir and Bensaid, 2014).

Promotional Factors: A specific combination of promotional methods used for one product or a family of products. In this study product display and store promotion scheme are taken as promotional factors.

Product display: In-store displays can be product displays, including point-of-purchase or shelf pace, signs, cards or wall decorations. They play an important role in any retailer's strategy, and therefore receive significant coverage in the literature (Berman & Evans 1995, Levy & Weitz 2009). Prominent store displays as determinant of impulse buying (Stern, 1962). Retailers today are actively engaged in increasing the magnitude of impulse purchase through product and store displays, product mixture and packing designs. Visual of product displays develop impression of the first sight pushing shopper to buy that product which means that attractive display creates an image in the mind of shopper, thus making them to buy that product emotionally (Ali and Itasnu, 2007).

Store promotion schemes: Various offers and additional benefits might be enclosed by retailers in the store to increase unplanned purchase. Cash discount, free product and coupons are components are using by retailers to increase unplanned purchase. In-store stimuli are promotional techniques employed to increase impulse buying of products. Some examples of these techniques include in-store settings, on-shelf positions, price-off promotions, sampling, POP displays, coupons, and in-store demonstration (Muruganatham and Bhakt, 2013). Controllable promotional techniques, point of sale, self-signs, end of aisle displays and special displays occupied significant place to influence unplanned purchase (Abratt and Goodey, 1990). In-store advertisements and promotions have been proving records to amplify the magnitude of unplanned purchasing among consumers (McClure and West, 1982; Immanently, 1990; Ali and Hasnu, 2007). Consumers buy impulsively when their attention is engrossed by pleasant goods, attractive in-store advertisement and promotions (Dholkia, 2000; Ali and Hasnu, 2007).

Demographic Factors

In addition to this Consumer's demographic characteristics had significant influence on impulse buying. The strength of predictor variables reevaluated that though education was insignificant, but it exerted the most influence on impulse buying on consumers. Impulse buying differed significantly between male and female, with the phenomenon more common among farmable shoppers due to their likeness and spontaneous attractions to fanciful products. The age of consumers and impulse, buying were significantly and inversely related (Ekeng, Lifu and Asinya, 2012). Age, Gender and the Time taken to Purchase were found to have a significant impact on impulse purchases of customers (Gandhi, Vajpayee and Gautam, 2010).

Gender is one of the most common forms of segmentation used by marketers. However not enough data on gender differences has been collected in the field of consumer behavior. Based on tenants from evolutionary foundation, women had higher levels of brand commitment, hedonic consumption and impulse buying in comparison to male (Tifferet and Herrnstein, 2012). Female gender, younger age, higher family income and lower parental education were all associated with impulse buying (Tifferet and Iterstein, 2012). Age and parental education influenced negatively and family income influence positively on impulse buying.

Gender difference exist with respect to purchase intention, consumer impulsivity and frequency of purchase, more clearly moves will be influenced more heavily than female regarding on line purchasing (Zhang, Prybutok and Strutton, 2007). Basar and Ahmad (2013) found that impulse buying behavior and education is minutely positively correlated, disposable income is considerably positively correlated and no substantial impact of job character and gender.

Methodology

The study has used descriptive and analytical research design. It attempts to cover the perceptual and attitudinal aspect of consumers towards unplanned buying decision. The data and information are collected for

the presentation purpose. Seven days in a week have been chosen to collect the data to incorporate all nature of consumer. The minimum cost has been maintained.

The population of the study constitutes the consumers of eight Bhatbhateni and seven BigMart self-service stores operated in Kathmandu valley. The available literatures in the field of study area have suggested that the tendency of unplanned purchase in female is greater than male. The total sample of the respondents covers 320 consumers buying in two self-service stores. Judgmental sampling method has been used to undertake the study. This study has covered the respondents as per the judgments of researcher that means those respondents who are in the access of researcher are taken as a sample of the study along with considering limited time and cost. Similarly, this study has the target to explore the specific factors of unplanned buying behavior in Nepalese context. Prior to determine the sample size, frequency of gender involved in buying was obtained through self-observations. The sampling technique has focused on those customers who walk out of the store were surveyed with the help of structured questionnaire. It has been estimated that the possible non-response rate will be around 25 percent. But the actual non-response rate has been found 31.18 percent. Incorporating the possible non-response rate, the total size of sample respondents for the study has been reached to 465 consumers buying in stores.

The information about factors influencing unplanned buying behavior has been collected from the primary sources. Based on the variables included, questionnaire has been developed using 6-point Likert Scales on each dimension incorporating the knowledge gained from the review of available literature. The opinion of the experts of the concerned field has been obtained and incorporated in the questionnaire to make the study more validate. Upon getting the feedback from the field, the questionnaire has been finalized and administered among the respondents through personal visits on entire days of the week to incorporate more categories of customers.

Required information were collected, edited and entered in the spread sheet. Analysis was done by using SPSS version 18. The following tools have been used to analyze the data. The Cronbach's alpha has been calculated for testing the reliability of questionnaires and variables identified for undertaking the study.

Average, percentage and standard deviation have been used to present the detail overview of respondents' profile in terms of age and gender and education level.

Correlation analysis has been carried out to examine the relationship between unplanned buying behaviors and identified influencing factors. Multiple regression analysis has been used to examine the impact of independent variables on dependent variables.

Proposed regression model

$$Y = a + b_1x_1 + b_2x_2 + e$$

where,

a= constant

b1= beta coefficient of promotional factor

x1= promotional factor

b2= beta coefficient of situational factor

x2= situational factor

e= error term

Analysis and Discussion

The whole analysis has been carried out using 22 questions including both dependent and independent variables. According Guelford (1965) suggestion, when Cronbach alpha is greater than 0.7, it shows the questionnaire has a relatively high internal reliability. The results of the study show that Cronbach's α is higher than 0.7 (i.e 0.730). It indicates that the reliability of the questionnaire is acceptable.

Female customers have the higher average value of mean than male customers (4.0716 > 3.7557) for unplanned purchase factor in self-service store resulting female customers are more involved on unplanned purchase. Since, the Likert items are designed with increasing response with increasing agreement with the statement i.e. 6 is assigned for the 'strongly agree' and 1 is assigned for strongly disagree. In such situation, greater mean values indicate the positive response towards unplanned buying behavior.

customers with the SLC level have higher averaged value for mean followed by masters and above level then bachelor level and less in intermediate level resulting that customers with SLC level are involved more in unplanned buying activity but no consistency has been found in behaviour due to different values of standard deviation and standard error of mean in various identified level of education level. Similarly, the customers with the age of below 20 have higher averaged values for mean indicating more involved in unplanned buying the analysis shows that higher aged group customers show the lower tendency on unplanned buying activity.

The relationship between situational factor (the value of situational factor is based on the summated values of store layout, employee assistance and time pressure) and unplanned buying behavior of consumers has been examined by calculating the correlation between unplanned buying behavior and situational factor. Correlation coefficient of situational factor and unplanned buying behavior has been found 0.224, which is significant at 1 percent level of significance ($p < 0.01$). It shows that there is positive correlation between situational factor and unplanned buying behavior of consumers of selected self-service stores. This finding is within the line of research conducted by (Vohs and Faber, 2007) and (Mattila and Wirtz, 2008).

Similarly, the relationship between unplanned buying behavior and promotional factor (the value of promotional factor is based on the summated value of product display and store promotion scheme) has been examined by calculating the correlation coefficient between unplanned buying behavior and promotional factor. The correlation coefficient has been found 0.308, which is significant at 1 percent level of significance ($p < 0.01$). It shows that there is positive correlation between promotional factor and unplanned buying behavior of consumers of selected self-service stores. This finding is within the line of research conducted by (Zhang and et al. 2007), (Tinne, 2011) and (Tifferet and Herstein, 2012).

The result has provided sufficient evidence for that there is significant relationship promotional factor and situational factor with unplanned buying behavior. Correlation coefficient between dependent and independent variables has reflected satisfactory relation; both relations are significant even low value and positive correlation.

The concrete result of regression shows that the regression model on unplanned buying behavior and promotional factor is highly significant at 1 percent level of significant ($p < 0.01$) with the value of $F = 18.648$, Hence, there is sufficient evidence, at the 1 percent level of significance, that there is a linear relationship between promotional factor and unplanned buying behavior of consumers. But situational factor is insignificant at 5 percent level of significance. The value of DW shows that there is no problem of autocorrelation and multicollinearity has not been found with value of VIF being less than ten.

Value of R^2 of 0.105 conveyed that the independent variable used under this study: promotional factor explained only 10.5 percent variation in the unplanned buying behavior of consumers. Focusing on variation explained, this regression model cannot be generalized just by considering single independent variable.

Beta coefficients of promotional factor shows the significant at 1 percent level of significance ($p\text{-value} < 0.01$). The positive value of beta coefficient reveals that promotional factor has positive impact on unplanned buying behavior of consumer as a positive correlation between these two variables and it substantiates the decision of researcher regarding the use of regression analysis. This result is similar with the findings of (Hasnu and Ali, 2007), (Carter, Mills and Donvan, 2009) and (Mehta and Chugan, 2013).

Regression Model

$$Y = 1.709 + 0.348 x_1$$

Where,

Y = Dependent variable (unplanned purchase)

a = 1.709 (constant value)

b1 = 0.348 (beta coefficient of promotional factor)

X_1 = Independent variable (promotional factor)

Conclusion

Review of literature in the study area shows that many research works have been conducted in the field of determinants of unplanned buying behavior. Consumer researchers have mainly focused on identifying the different factors that induce unplanned purchase in various developed countries. In the emerging economies;

there is a need to study the unplanned buying due to recent developments in retailing and huge cultural differences when compared to developed economies (Kacen and Lee, 2002).

Keeping this in mind, the universal nature of impulse buying, it can be capitalised by retailers to benefit their respective businesses. The proper combination and synergistic effect of the various factors influencing impulse buying could lead to more sales turnover therefore benefiting the marketers and retailers. Researchers and retailers alike can better understand the conditions under which abnormal buying (compulsive and impulsive buying) is more likely to take place. This too may aid policy makers as the social concern for abnormal increase in purchasing habit.

Although challenges are persistent in relation to management of all factors; management of time pressure, store promotion scheme and promotional factor is the most critical issues in Nepalese self-service retail stores. When consumers are exposed to different forms of store promotion scheme and time management facilities and promotional ideas, they more likely make purchase decision on impulse.

Nepalese consumers have dramatically changed in terms of their shopping behavior. Unplanned buying is emerging as highly noticeable behavior. In this context, the scope of unplanned buying plays a significant role for modern retailers and researchers. Adjusting successfully to relationship changes have enormous implications in terms of sustained competitive advantage based on the ability to access and retain committed consumers. The share of unplanned purchases in total purchases is more and more increasing. The growing interest in understanding the mechanisms underlying unplanned purchase decisions reveals the importance therefore researchers and practitioners need to further work on its different dimensions.

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