

# Impulsive Buying at Supermarkets with Special Reference to Nalbari District

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## Abstract

Since the last decade along with the pace of rapid transition at global level in various forms, the retail market pattern has also been changing at rapid rate. The traditional retail sector market has now turned in to organized form due to growing number of shopping marts and supermarkets not only in big cities but also in small towns. The shopping behavior of consumer is also changing with the growing choices and trends as a result of vigorous changes taking place in their life style and also due to impact of global marketing conditions in retail industry. It has been changing the demand-supply chain in product market. Nowadays consumers of different categories prefer to purchase more from supermarkets rather than from unorganized retail shops. The growing number of supermarkets seems to change the concept 'consumers' preference determine production decisions' and 'consumers' spending depend on their income and budget'. Normally though price, income, etc., are the dominant factors for determining consumers' buying behavior, however, in case of supermarket some other unquantifiable factors like attitude, intention, space, ambience, convenience, buying facilities under one roof, recreational facilities, product varieties, price discount, etc., play dominant role. Under this background, this study focuses how the advent of supermarket has been able to change the buying behavior in terms of buying decisions and spending or to make impulsive buying.. It also focuses the factors other than price and income as determinants of buying behavior at supermarket. The study has been conducted at the small town- Nalbari located at Nalbari district of the state of Assam, India by considering a sample size of 100 from consumers of different categories of supermarket.

**Keywords:** Supermarket, impulsive buying, determinants of impulsive buying.

## Introduction

A consumer is a person who purchases goods or services to derive satisfaction. He is a person who can take decision what and where he will buy and he can be influenced by the marketing and advertisement. Consumer behavior is the function of price, income, budget, preference, attitude, expectation, evaluation and delivery of services. It is also concerned with the persons involved directly or indirectly in purchasing decisions including the advertisement activities. According to Engel, Blackwell and Mansard, "Consumer behavior is the actions and the decision processes of people who purchase goods and services for personal consumption." (Clootrack).

Since the last decade the retailing industry has been witnessing a huge growth along with the pace of rapid transition at global level in various forms. The traditional unorganized retail sector market has now turned in to organized form due to growing number of shopping marts or supermarkets not only in big cities but also in small towns. The growth of organized retail sector in the form of supermarket or mart has been triggering the consumers' spending which is also fuelled by rising disposable income. The shopping behavior of consumer is also changing with the growing choices and trends as a result of vigorous changes taking place in their life style and also due to impact of global marketing conditions in retail industry. "Modernity, service quality, purchase convenience, selection freedom, company name familiarity, information abundance, multiform and safety are some characteristics impact attitude of mall consumers on shopping pattern." (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2009). "The feelings, emotions and intension to buy will constitute the potential of mall consumer's positive attitude on shopping pattern" (Girija & Ravi, 2018). Nowadays consumers of different categories prefer to purchase more from shopping mart rather than from unorganized retail shops. The growing number of shopping mart seems to change the concept 'consumers' preference determine production decisions' and 'Consumers' spending depend on their income and budget'. Normally though price, income, etc., are the dominant factors for determining consumers' buying behavior, however, in case of shopping mart some other unquantifiable factors like attitude, intention, space, ambience, convenience, buying facilities under one roof, recreational facilities, etc., play dominant role. The three distinct dimensions of emotions, pleasantness and mall attractiveness, have been identified as major drivers for making buying decisions among shoppers at shopping mall (Rajagopal, 2006). Again the strategic efforts like the engagement of outsourced people as salesmen by the mall owner often change the consumers' shopping interest and

intensity of shopping (Rajagopal, 2009). Display of product varieties at differential prices and freedom of selection often push the consumers to compulsive buying. "Convergence of sales promotions, customers' perceptions, value for money and product features drive arousal among customers. The nature of customer-retailer relationship functions as the key in the selling and buying process with regard to in store promotions. Consumer appreciation of premium-based promotional offers is more positive when the premium is offered through an easy process and in combination with a relatively lower quantity of products to purchase" (Rajagopal, 2009). "It has also been found that when the value of the premium is mentioned and brand perception is positive, compulsive buying tendencies are higher among customers" (Astous & Jacob, 2002). It also seems that consumers' buying decisions are motivated by the offerings. Thus the variety of factors, sometimes lead consumers to buy more than their pre-planned expenditure and force to buy against preference orderings. There are various factors like promotional activities, payment facilities, etc., functioning at supermarket which lead majority of consumers to make impulsive buying. The practical experience shows that consumers' spend more money than they originally set out to spend (Pradhan, 2016).

Under these aspects, this study focuses how the advent of supermarket has been able to change the buying behavior in terms of buying decisions and spending. It also focuses the factors other than price and income as determinants of buying behavior at shopping mart. The study has been conducted at the small town- Nalbari located at Nalbari district of the state of Assam, India. Nalbari is a small town where within a radius of 2 KM, at present there are 7 numbers of supermarkets at present. The study has been conducted by considering a sample size of 100 from consumers of different categories of supermarket under simple random sampling method.

### Literature Review

**Rajagopal (2009)** studied how the shopping malls contributed to business more significantly than traditional markets particularly in urban areas of Mexico. Shopping malls attract buyers and sellers, and attract customers, providing enough time to make choices as well as a recreational means of shopping. The study shows that the ambience of shopping malls, assortment of stores, sales promotions and comparative economic gains in the malls attract higher customer traffic to the malls. According to his study, the major factors that affect shopping arousal among urban shoppers are recreational facilities, location of the mall, ambience and store attractiveness with regard to products and services, brand value and price.

**B.V.Sangvikar, B.V & Katole, H. J (2012)** basically focused on behaviour of consumer mainly on purchasing pattern in various store formats and store preference in terms of availability, spending pattern, consumers preferred store, sales man services, and store layout. The majority of customers prefer to visit particular retail outlets because of Price discount followed by variety of products and convenience to customer. The study concludes that customer purchase behavior changes positively with price of the product and availability of products and negatively with poor quality of products.

**Gupta, S (2013)** studied the reasons for compulsive buying of consumers. With reference to different literatures, the study shows that there is a close association between and specific types of external stimuli such as sales promotional activities like display of promotional discounts, lower prices, attractiveness, brand perception, credit facility, etc. These factors positively affect compulsive buying behavior.

**Vishnu and Raheem (2013)** studied the behavior of Pakistani consumers at supermarket. He observed that free product, discount offers, window displays, etc greatly influenced the supermarket consumers for impulsive buying. Well decorated structure, pleasant and calm store environment along with colorful surroundings also had significant impact on impulsive buying. The study showed that female consumers were more impulsive than male consumers.

**Kaur, J & Kaur, C (2016)** made a review base study by taking in to account a number of research papers. The study highlights the various factors like mall attributes, individual and situational factors to explain the consumer behavior of shopping malls like time and money spent, etc. by quoting different relevant literatures. With reference to the research study made by Anic & Radas, the authors have mentioned that the presence of others significantly affect the time and money spent on shopping at malls. Customers who come with children, early shoppers, shoppers who visit on weekends, shoppers who shop without making shopping list buy impulsively and spend more money and time on shopping.

**Pradhan, V (2016)** examined some of the factors for impulsive buying behavior of consumers in supermarkets of Kathmandu Valley by considering 200 samples. His study shows that majority of supermarket buyers buy impulsively. They buy without having any pre-intention. Instead, they scroll through aisles/products and buy what they think they need. Impulsive buying is more in case of personal care items, grocery and accessories as compared to other products like electronics and kitchenware. The main factors for impulsive buying are availability of cash, mood of consumer, ATM facility, price, store's layout, availability of time, product promotion, store environment and reference group.

**Girija, K & Ravi, G (2018)** studied the shopping pattern of mall consumers and their attitudes. He took in to account various factors availability in shopping mall like internet cafes, food court, library, parking facilities, Automatic Teller Machine facility, etc to understand the consumers’ behavior at shopping mall. His study shows that there are two main variables- food court and spas affect the consumer behavior significantly at shopping mall.

**Archana M, Anupama P, Rajani K G (2019)** studied the changing consumer buying behavior due to the advent of shopping malls. The study has considered various factors like price, quality, location, brand name, sales promotional activities, ambience, parking facility, entertainment, etc. for the purpose of understanding the changing buying behaviors. Finally, the study concludes that that the opening of shopping malls or supermarkets have brought many positive benefits as compared to traditional shops as a result of which consumers’ preference towards supermarket has been increasing.

**Divate, A, Sinha, B & Bhatt, V (2020)** analysed the factors for impulsive buying behavior of the consumers in supermarkets. The study shows that some external factors along with consumers’ psychology along influence the purchase decision of the consumers in supermarkets. Promotional schemes, attractive packaging and seen first time and pick are most influencing factors for impulse buying in supermarkets. Besides age, gender and occupation also have significant impact on impulse purchase of supermarket consumers.

**Objective**

1. To understand whether the consumers of supermarket buy impulsively.
2. To know the factors determining the buying behavior of supermarket consumers’.

**Research Methodology**

In order to fulfill the objectives of the study, both primary and secondary data have been collected. Secondary sources of data are various online databases and search engines including Scopus, Google Scholar, JSTOR, Science Direct, Springer Link, etc. To get a meaningful result a number of journal articles available at online websites have been reviewed. Primary data have been collected by using well structured questionnaires. Considering the consumers of different supermarkets as population, 100 numbers of samples have been collected from the supermarket consumers of Nalbari Town. Samples have been collected by considering 5 numbers of demographic variables. They are gender, age group, occupation, marital status and monthly income. To understand the impulsive buying behavior five questions have been set. They are whether the consumers prepare list of items, whether buying is done as planned, spending amount, buying as per requirement and on the basis of attractiveness. For convenience, it is assumed that the buyers who buy without list or planning or requirement who spend more than intended and who buy by giving priority on attractiveness show more impulsive buying behavior.

For the purpose of the study impulsive buying behavior has been assumed as dependent variable while product type, free product (e.g., buy 1 and get 1), lower price, price discount and freedom of selection have been considered as independent variables. Product type refers to different types of products like cloth, electronics, apparels, kitchenware, grocery, personal care products, toiletries, footwear, accessories, etc. Free product refers the sales promotional policy of giving gift with buying of certain things. Lower price refers the differences of prices between the traditional shops and supermarket. Price discount implies the sales promotional policy of offering price discount. Freedom of selection refers the capacity choosing by scrolling. Percentage analysis method has been used for analyzing the data. For convenience of understanding tabular method has been used for data presentation.

**Findings and Analysis**

The purpose of this study is to know whether the consumers of supermarket buy impulsively or not and also to find out different influencing factors of impulsive buying behavior at supermarket with the help of the data collected from 100 samples. The demographic categorization of the samples is depicted by the table 1.

**Table 1: General profile of respondents**

Sl No.	Demographic Variables	No. of respondents	Percentage
1	<b>Gender</b>		
	Male	40	40.0
	Female	60	60.0
2	<b>Age Group</b>		
	15-25	25	25.0
	25-35	25	25.0
	35-50	25	25.0

	51 and above	25	25.0
3	<b>Occupation</b>		
	Student	27	27.0
	Self Employed/Business	28	28.0
	Professional/Job Holder	45	45.0
4	<b>Marital status</b>		
	Single	60	60.0
	Married	40	40.0
5	<b>Monthly income</b>		
	Less than Rs20000	23	23.0
	20000 to 40000	32	32.0
	40000 to 60000	23	23.0
	60000 and above	22	22.0

Table 1 shows the demographic information of the 100 respondents. Out of the total respondents 40.0 % are male and 60% are female. Equal number of respondents has been considered in case of different age groups. Accordingly, each age group contains 25% respondents. Occupation wise 27% from student community, 28% from self employed persons or businessmen and 45 % from professionals have been considered. Out of the total respondents 60 % are single and 40 % are married. As per monthly income 23% earns less than Rs.20000, 32% earns between Rs. 20000 to 40000, 23% earns between Rs. 40000 to 60000 and 22% earns more than Rs.60000.

Table 2 highlights the different buying behaviors at supermarkets of respondents as per their demographic categorization.

**Table 2: Buying behaviours of respondents.**

		Do you make a list of items before going to supermarket?		Do you buy only the already planned items?		Do you spend more than the planned amount?		Do you buy according to your requirements?		Do you buy any item that appeals you?	
		Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Gender	Male	22	18	16	24	23	17	28	12	25	15
	Female	23	37	19	41	48	12	30	30	40	20
Age	16-25	18	07	15	10	09	16	14	11	12	13
	25-35	11	14	09	16	19	06	10	15	17	08
	35-50	13	12	11	14	12	13	11	14	16	09
	50 and above	19	06	18	07	07	18	17	08	18	07
Occupation	Student	17	10	18	09	11	16	13	14	18	09
	Self Employed	18	10	16	12	11	17	16	12	14	14
	Professional	20	25	21	24	24	21	23	22	26	19
Marital Status	Single	21	39	19	41	45	15	27	33	37	23
	Married	18	22	16	24	25	15	16	24	28	12
Monthly income	Less than Rs20000	13	10	11	12	09	14	15	08	13	10
	20000 - 40000	15	17	15	17	19	13	16	16	17	15
	40000 -60000	10	13	10	13	09	14	11	12	17	06
	60000 and above	08	14	04	18	18	04	08	14	17	05

From table 2 percentage figures of showing different buying behaviours for different demographic category has been calculated.

**Table 3: Percentage of Respondents displaying different buying behaviours**

		Do you make a list of items before going to supermarket?		Do you buy only the already planned items?		Do you spend more than the planned amount?		Do you buy according to your requirements?		Do you buy any item that appeals you?	
		Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Gender	Male	55.0	45.0	40.0	60.0	57.5	42.5	70.0	30.0	65.2	37.5
	Female	38.3	61.7	31.7	68.3	80.0	20.0	50.0	50.0	66.7	33.3
Age	15-25	72.0	28.0	60.0	40.0	36.0	64.0	56.0	44.0	48.0	52.0
	25-35	44.0	56.0	36.0	64.0	76.0	24.0	40.0	60.0	68.0	32.0
	35-50	52.0	48.0	44.0	56.0	48.0	52.0	44.0	56.0	64.0	36.0
	50 and above	76.0	24.0	72.0	28.0	28.0	72.0	68.0	32.0	72.0	28.0
Occupation	Student	62.9	37.1	66.7	33.3	40.7	59.3	48.1	51.9	66.7	33.3
	Self Employed	64.3	35.7	57.1	42.9	39.3	60.7	57.1	42.9	50.0	50.0
	Professional	44.4	55.5	46.7	53.3	53.3	46.7	51.1	48.9	57.8	42.2
Marital Status	Single	35.0	65.0	31.7	68.3	75.0	25.0	45.0	55.0	61.7	38.3
	Married	45.0	55.0	40.0	60.0	62.5	37.5	40.0	60.0	70.0	30.0
Monthly income	Less than Rs20000	56.5	43.5	47.8	52.2	39.1	60.8	65.2	34.7	56.5	43.5
	20000 - 40000	46.8	53.2	46.8	53.2	59.3	40.7	50.0	50.0	53.1	46.9
	40000 -60000	43.5	56.5	43.5	56.5	39.1	60.9	47.8	52.2	73.9	26.0
	60000 and above	36.4	63.6	18.1	81.9	81.9	18.1	36.4	63.6	77.2	22.8

**Interpretation:**

**(I) Gender wise buying behavior:**

Table 3 highlights that there is difference of buying behavior between male and female. For example, the percentage figures in case of preparing list of items, buying as per planned and buying as per requirement are 55.0, 40.0 and 70.0 against female’s percentage of 38.3, 31.7 and 50.0. On the other hand, in case of spending, 80 percent female spend more than the planned amount at supermarket against 57.5 percent of male. Similarly, 66.7 percent female buy those items which are appealing against the male’s percentage of 65.2. Thus impulsive buying behavior is more in case of female than male. However impulsive buying is significant in case of male also.

**(II) Age wise buying behavior:**

Buying behavior is also different for peoples of different ages. Table 3 shows that the buyers of the age group of 25 to 35 do highest impulsive buying in comparison to the age groups of 15-25, 35-50 and 50 and above. Impulsive buying of the buyers of the age group 35 to 50 is more than the age groups of 15 to 25 and lesser than the 50 and above. Because 56 percent of buyers of age group 25 to 35 buy at supermarket without pre-prepared list of items, 64 percent buyers buy non-planned items, 76 percent spend more than the estimated amount, 60 percent buy without giving priority to requirement and 68 percent buy the items which are appealing in nature. On the other hand 72 percent of the age group 16-25 and 76 percent of the age group of 50 and above go to supermarket with already prepared list of items. Again, 64 percent of the age group 16-25 and 72 percent of the age group of 50 and above do not spend more than the estimated amount. Similarly, 56 percent of the age group 16-25 and 68 percent of the age group of 50 and above buy the required items only. In a nutshell we can say that the consumers of the middle age groups, i.e., 25 to 35 and 35 to 50 buy more impulsively than the younger groups and older groups.

**(III) Occupation wise buying behavior**

Table 3 highlights that impulsive buying is the highest for the professionals or job holders and lowest for the self employed persons. For example, 55.5 percent of the buyers from the professionals buy at supermarket without having a prepared list of items. But this percentage figures for the student and self employed persons are 37.1 and 35.7 respectively. Similarly 53.3 percent of the buyers from the professionals spend more than the planned amount. However, this percentage figures for the student and self employed persons are 40.7 and 39.3. Of course, impulsive buying is the highest for the student community if it is considered from the viewpoint of buying on the basis of appealing. Table 3 shows that 66.7 percent of the students buy the items at supermarket which are more appealing without giving priority to requirement and plan. But this percentage figures for the self employed and professionals are 50.0 and 57.8 respectively.

**(IV) Income wise buying behavior**

Table 3 shows that impulsive buying is positively related with income. Buyers of higher income group buy items at supermarket without pre-prepared list, spend more than the estimated amount and buy the items which are more appealing. For example, 63.6 percent of buyers having incomes ranges 60,000 and above buy without definite list of items. But this percentage figures for buyers of incomes ranges between 40,000 to 60,000, 20,000 to 40,000 and lesser than 20,000 are 56.5, 53.2 and 43.5 respectively. Similarly 81.9 percent of buyers of income category 60000 and above spend more than the planned amount. But this percentage figures for buyers of incomes ranges between 40,000 to 60,000, 20,000 to 40,000 and lesser than 20,000 are 39.1, 59.3 and 39.1 respectively. However, buyers irrespective of any income group make impulsive buying if it is considered from the viewpoint of buying on the basis of appealing. But it is higher for the higher income earner. For example, 77.2 percent of the buyers having incomes 60,000 and above buy the items which are more appealing as compared to 73.9 percent for income category 40000 -60000, 53.1percent for income category 20000 – 40000 and 56.5 percent for income category lesser than 20,000.

Thus we can summarize that impulsive buying is higher for females, consumers of the age group of 25-35, professionals and higher income groups. However the consumers irrespective of any demographic category make impulsive buying at supermarket though at lesser extent as is evident from table 3.

**Factors for Impulsive Buying Behaviour**

During study, it is found that there are many factors for which the consumers make impulsive buying at supermarket. However, the basic factors which are more influential for impulsive buying at supermarkets of Nalbari are product variant, free product (e.g., buy 1 and get 1), lower price, price discount and freedom of selection. The following table highlights the factors for impulsive buying for consumers of different demographic categories.

**Table 4: Factor wise percentage of buyers showing impulsive buying**

	Why do you buy more than the listed items?		Why do you spend more than the estimated amount?		Why do you buy more than requirement?	
	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree
Varieties of products are available.	55.0	45.0	53.4	46.6	63.0	37.0
Free product is available	65.3	34.7	64.0	36.0	57.1	42.9
Prices are comparatively lower than traditional shops	47.1	52.9	39.8	60.2	43.0	57.0
Price discount is available.	68.0	32.0	55.0	45.0	64.3	35.7
Due to freedom of selection	54.0	46.0	52.5	47.5	50.2	49.8

**Interpretation:**

Table 4 shows that out of the five factors taken in to consideration to know the reasons for impulsive buying at supermarkets of Nalbari, the most prominent factor for which the consumers indulge in impulsive buying is the discount prices which is nothing but the sales promotional schemes. Due to the availability of price discount, 68% consumers buy more than the already listed items, 55% consumers spend more than the intended amount while 64.3% consumers buy more than requirements. The second important factor for impulsive buying is the availability of free products like buy 1 and gets 1 free, combo pack, special gift with certain amount buying, etc., for impulsive buying. Due to the offerings of free product, 65.3% consumers buy more than the already listed items, 64.0% consumers spend more than the desired amount and 57.1% consumers buy more than requirements. The third important factor is the availability of different varieties of products ranging from lower price to higher price for impulsive buying. For the availability of different varieties of products 55.0% consumers buy more than the already listed items, 53.4% consumers spend more than the desired amount and 63.0% consumers buy more than requirements. The fourth factor for impulsive buying is the freedom of selection at supermarket. The study shows

that due to the freedom of selection, 54.0% consumers buy more than the already listed items, 52.5% consumers spend more than the desired amount and 50.2% consumers buy more than requirements. The least important factor is the lower price rates than traditional retail shops. Major percentage of the consumers disagrees with the view of availability of same products at lower prices at supermarket than retail shops. For example, 52.9% consumers buy more than the listed items not due to lower prices, 60.2% spend more than the desired amount not due to lower prices. Similarly only 43.0% buy more than requirements due to lower prices.

#### **Limitations and future scope of the Study:**

1. The study has considered only five factors as reasons for impulsive buying. However, it is observed that in case of each factor, certain percentages of the consumers disagree as the reason for their impulsive buying. It expresses that there may be some other factors also like store environment, recreational facilities, buying under one roof, etc for impulsive buying. This necessitates further study to understand reasons for impulsive buying.
2. The study has considered a limited number of samples for convenience. Increase of the size of samples may help the researchers for better understanding the nature of impulsive buying behavior at supermarket.
3. The study has been carried out in a small town Nalbari where there is six numbers of supermarkets. There are lot of differences between Nalbari and other cities in case of socio-economic and geographical environments. Therefore, further analysis for understanding the impulsive buying behavior is necessary from macroeconomic point of view.
4. The objective of the study is to know whether the consumers at supermarket make impulsive buying or not. However the nature and magnitude of impulsive buying may be different for different varieties of products. Therefore there is need to study the impulsive buying behavior for different products.

#### **Conclusion**

The objective of the study is to know whether the consumers make impulsive buying at supermarkets. The study has shown that more or less each consumer makes impulsive buying. However the degree of impulsive buying is different for different consumers depending upon different demographic characters. Though there is various push and pull factors which force the consumers to make impulsive buying at supermarkets but pull factors like product varieties ranging from low price to high price, availability of free product or gift with buying, price discount, etc. are more important. Freedom of selection or buying at own choice works as push factor not only for visiting supermarkets but also for impulsive buying. Comparison of price level and other advantages or disadvantages with retail shops force the consumers to go to supermarket as well as to buy impulsively. Of course there may some other important factors more particularly in big cities for showing impulsive buying behavior at supermarket. It necessitates more advanced study in this field. Thus we can conclude that the advent of supermarket has been able to change consumers' buying behavior more particularly in urban area due to rapid change of life style. Finally we can conclude that the advent of supermarket has changed the implication of the economic principle that 'Consumers' spending depend on their income and budget' by pushing them to make impulsive buying.

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