

Unveiling The Triggers: An Exploration of Impulse Buying Behaviour in The Gadget Industry:  
A Qualitative Analysis

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<b>KEYWORDS</b> <i>Impulse Buying, Gadget Industry, Elaboration-Likelihood Model (ELM), Consumer Behaviour, Marketing Strategies.</i>	<b>ABSTRACT</b> Consumer behaviour in the gadget industry is profoundly impacted by impulse buying, a consequence of an uncontrollable urge to purchase something influenced by external factors. The perception of gadgets being luxuries has shifted to being considered an essential commodity in human life. This research aims to explore the nuances of impulsive buying within the Indian gadget market influenced by aggressive marketing strategies. By applying the Elaboration-Likelihood Model (ELM) to understand how peripheral processing impacts customer decision-making, this study seeks to reveal the determinant of impulsive buying of gadgets. A qualitative design is used that includes semi-structured interviews with recent impulsive gadget buyers in India. The findings show that driving factors for impulse purchases are emotional responses, social influences, promotional tactics, and product characteristics. Such ideas are paramount for marketers and retailers wanting higher sales through capitalising on spontaneous customer behaviour. Moreover, it suggests that marketers must know how to best employ psychological triggers, social proof, and various other promotional cues. Businesses that closely align their marketing strategies with consumer preferences are more likely to increase customer satisfaction levels and, consequently, boost sales. This research contributes to the literature by addressing the gap in understanding impulse buying in the Indian gadget market and provides actionable recommendations for leveraging impulsive buying behaviour to boost market performance.
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1. INTRODUCTION

Unlike traditional planned purchases, impulse buys are driven by immediate desires and often occur when consumers face unexpected opportunities (Iyer, Blut, Xiao, & Grewal, 2019). Impulse buying occurs in response to external stimuli with limited information processing that prompts a quick purchase (Changa, Eckmanb, & Yanb, 2011). It is garnering the attention of academicians due to its pivotal impact on consumer behaviour affecting the major part of the sales for retailers (Parmar, Mann, & Ghuman, 2020). Consequentially, studying the impacts of impulse buying on the gadget industry is crucial due to its unique combination of rapid technological advancements, strong emotional, and social appeal, and intense market competition (Aragoncillo & Orús, 2018; Mohan, Sivakumaran, & Sharma, 2013; L. Zhang, Shao, Li, & Feng, 2020). Combined with aggressive marketing strategies and promotional offers, the attraction of owning new technology makes gadgets a hotbed for impulse buys (Chan, Cheung, & Lee, 2017).

There exists a fast-evolving market for gadgets in India where technological advancements and consumer desire for the latest devices go hand-in-hand. Combined with impulsive buying, this market is growing at a rapid pace. While impulse buying is common across various demographics, research shows that around 57% of women have impulsively bought clothes or shoes and 49% of men have impulsively purchased electronics (Frontier, 2024).



Aragoncillo & Orús (2018) in their research shows that 40.0% of the customers spend more money than anticipated in physical stores compared to 25.0% in online purchases. Therefore, the current research is largely focused on retail shopping.

Understanding impulsive purchases requires comprehension of the factors behind them (Badgaiyan & Verma, 2014; Zafar et al., 2021). With a burgeoning Indian middle class, increasing disposable incomes, and easy access to internet and digital technologies, Indian consumers are increasingly investing in gadgets such as smartphones, tablets, laptops, and wearables (Agarwal & Bhagoliwal, 2016; E & Shetty, 2017). These technological advances have transformed how people communicate or relate with others and significantly affected purchasing habits. This study investigates impulse buying behaviour intricacies within this setting using the Elaboration-Likelihood Model (ELM) to examine how peripheral processing affects consumer decisions.

Proposed by Petty & Cacioppo (1986), the elaboration- Likelihood Model (ELM) is a dual process theory to explain how attitudes are formed and changed. According to ELM, there are two major paths to persuasion: a central route that involves thoughtful consideration of presented arguments, and the peripheral route which deals with more superficial processing based on cues such as attractiveness, credibility, or emotional appeal (Sher & Lee, 2009). In impulse buying, peripheral cues like flashy product design, scarcity tactics and social proof play a significant role since consumers often make quick decisions based on immediate impulses rather than cognition (Luo, Cheah, Hollebeek, & Lim, 2024). This model provides a useful framework to understand how these factors can lead to impulsive buying behaviour in the gadget market.

Emotional responses, social influences, promotional tactics and salient product characteristics play a significant role in gadget purchase behaviours motivated by impulsivity (L. Zhang et al., 2020). Understanding these factors is crucial for marketers and sellers to increase sales by capitalising on spontaneous customer purchases (J. J. Kacen, Hess, & Walker, 2012; J. Kacen & Lee, 2002). Psychological triggers that motivate impulse buying can be used by businesses to improve their marketing strategies while optimising retail operations to achieve higher sales volumes plus better customer experience (Rook, 1987).

While gadgets have transitioned from being considered luxuries to becoming essential items in modern life, there remains a huge gap regarding impulse buying behaviour in this industry (Merida & Fitriyana, 2018). This gap is particularly pronounced within the Indian gadget market where comprehensive studies about it have hardly been done. Existing studies predominantly examine impulse buying in Western cultures, leaving out the cultural, economic and social factors that influence this behaviour within India. It is crucial to examine the distinct attributes of the Indian consumer base, including diverse cultural practices, rapid urbanisation, and a tech-savvy young population to comprehend these dynamic forces (Kartik, Willis, & Jones, 2016; Kumar, Lee, & Kim, 2009).

A notable research gap exists in the examination of how peripheral cues like product design, scarcity tactics, social proof, and emotional appeals lead to impulse buying decisions made in the gadget market, especially in India (Aragoncillo & Orús, 2018; Chung, Song, & Lee, 2017). Previous studies have primarily focused on general consumer behaviour without delving deeply into the specific dynamics of the gadget sector (Sheetal Mittal, Deepak Chawla, & Neena Sondhi, 2016). Moreover, there is a lack of understanding of the interplay between psychological factors and marketing strategies towards spontaneous purchases (Prashar, Parsad, & Sai Vijay, 2015).

Therefore, the first objective of the study is to identify key drivers behind the impulse purchases of gadgets in India. Secondly, fill the theoretical gap by utilising the ELM to understand how factors such as product design, scarcity tactics, social proof, and emotional appeals impact impulse buying in the gadget market. The third objective is to provide actionable recommendations to marketers and retailers to effectively leverage impulsive behaviour which will boost their customers' satisfaction levels and sales.

To achieve these objectives, the author employs a qualitative approach due to the exploratory nature of the research. This method allows for an in-depth and exhaustive analysis of the factors providing a robust foundation for understanding novel research problems within this context (Creswell & Miller, 2000). Thus, semi-structured interviews were conducted with individuals who have recently made impulsive purchases of gadgets. These interviews explore factors that influenced their purchase decisions impulsively. The data's thematic analysis revealed the key patterns and themes, providing a holistic understanding of impulse buying behaviour in the Indian gadget market. The significance of the study lies in its potential to offer useful insights for marketers and retailers. By understanding the factors that trigger impulsive purchases, businesses can modify their marketing plans to better align with consumer preferences, thereby enhancing customer satisfaction and increasing sales volumes.

### ***Theoretical Framework***

The theoretical framework of this study is based on the Elaboration-Likelihood Model (ELM) proposed by Petty & Cacioppo in 1986, as well as extensive literature on impulse buying. The ELM presents a dual-process model of persuasion, which explains how attitudes are formed and changed through two distinct routes: the central route and the peripheral route (El Hedhli & Zourrig, 2023). Within the gadget industry, this model can serve as a basis for understanding the effects that peripheral cues have on purchasing (J. Kacen & Lee, 2002). To elaborate, the central route involves careful consideration of the argument made. It requires high mental energy, resulting in long-lasting changes in attitude (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). Such a route is often followed when individuals are highly motivated to process information. Further, the peripheral route is



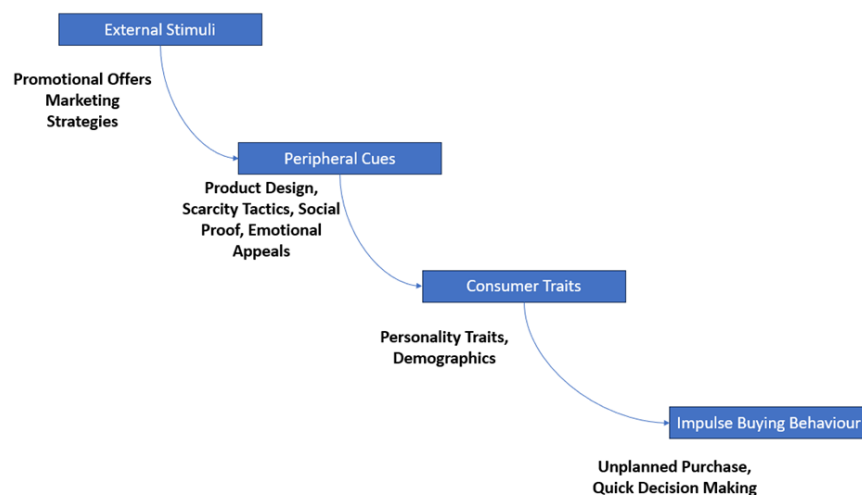
based on more superficial processing triggered by indicators such as attractiveness, credibility or emotional appeal. It demands less cognitive effort thus leading to temporary changes in attitude. This route is engaged when people lack the motivation and capacity to process information deeply (De Dreu & Beersma, 2010).

The importance of relating impulse buying behaviour to the Elaboration-Likelihood Model (ELM) is that it provides a holistic comprehension of consumer decision-making processes. The ELM differentiates between central and peripheral routes of persuasion, with the peripheral route being particularly relevant for impulse buying due to its reliance on superficial cues and minimal cognitive effort (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). Therefore, this study integrates ELM by showing how these external stimuli like promotional offers and marketing strategies affect buyer's decisions through cues such as product design, scarcity tactics, social proof and emotional appeals among others (Jones et al., 2003; Chan et al., 2017). This connection highlights the significance of peripheral processing in driving spontaneous purchases, emphasising immediate emotional stimulation in the consumer decision-making process (Iyer et al., 2019). Marketers understanding these dynamics may help develop targeted techniques which effectively leverage these cues to boost impulse purchasing behaviours resulting in increased sales turnover and customer participation (Rook & Fisher, 1995; Zhang et al., 2020).

### **Description of the Model**

The model (Figure 1) for studying impulse buying behaviour in the gadget industry consists of four main parts: External Stimuli, Peripheral Cues, Consumer Traits and Impulse Buying Behaviour. External Stimuli include promotional offers as well as marketing strategies. They create a sense of urgency and attractiveness by offering discounts, limited-time sales, promotions, or special deals, prompting consumers to make quick decisions about their purchases. Marketing strategies involve advertising online banners used in in-store displays that enhance exposure to these offers thereby promoting impulsive purchasing.

**Figure 1. Theoretical Framework for the present study**



Peripheral Cues are immediate triggers for impulsiveness (Poy, del Carmen Eixarch, & Ávila, 2004). These cues encompass product design, scarcity tactics, social proof, and emotional appeals (Merida & Fitriyana, 2018). It is through attractive innovative product designs that consumers get pulled, leading them into impulsive purchases. Some examples of scarcity tactics include limited availability countdown timers, and low stock alerts, amongst others that incite fear because people are afraid, they might miss out on deals or a good product, therefore, forcing them to take quick actions (Gupta & Gentry, 2019). Social proof which is shown in the form of customer reviews, influencer endorsements, and peer recommendations is an effective measure in making a product more believable and appealing (Parmar, Mann, & Ghuman, 2020). Emotional appeals in marketing like nostalgia, excitement, and urgency arouse strong emotions that can lead to unplanned buying.

Consumer Traits affect how people respond to peripheral cues. Some consumers are more impulsive than others due to personality traits such as impulsiveness and susceptibility to influence novelty seeking make certain consumers prone to impulse buying (Xiaobo Fang, Fangxin Zhang, Kun Liao, & Minoo Ghoreighi, 2022). Demographics such as age, income, technological familiarity, and education levels also play a pivotal role in determining whether someone will be an impulsive buyer (Makgosa & Sangodoyin, 2018). For example, young consumers may be influenced by social media trends while higher income levels offer greater amounts of disposable income for unforeseen purchases. To summarise, external stimuli like promotional offers trigger impulse buying by exposing consumers to marketing strategies. Peripheral cues then act as quick triggers for impulsive behaviour, influenced by individual traits, leading to immediate, unplanned purchases.



## 2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Impulse buying behaviour is a multifaceted phenomenon that has attracted considerable attention in consumer psychology and marketing research (Iyer, Blut, Xiao, & Grewal, 2019). Various studies have explored different facets of impulse buying behaviour, shedding light on its triggers, outcomes, and influencing factors (eg Dawson & Kim, 2009; Mohan, Sivakumaran, & Sharma, 2013; Rook & Fisher, 1995; Sari & Laksmidewi, 2021). Therefore, this review will amalgamate findings from different studies to give a holistic understanding of the determinants and implications involved in impulse buying.

### *Internal Psychological Factors*

The literature highlights that nearly 40% to 80% of purchases are impulse buys which varies according to the product category and retail setup (Baumeister, 2002). Several types of investigation have shown that internal psychological factors play a key role in making people buy impulsively (Chen, Kassas, & Gao, 2021; Iyer et al., 2019; Xiaobo Fang, Fangxin Zhang, Kun Liao, & Minoo Ghoreighi, 2022). Rook (1987), a pioneer, demonstrates that impulse buying is largely influenced by subjective experiences, coping strategies, and negative consequences, which can be leveraged by marketers to formulate effective strategies to improve sales or customer experiences based on the findings. Further, Rook & Fisher (1995) underline the role of normative influences in moderating the relationship between impulse buying traits and actual buying behaviours, highlighting the significance of consumers' evaluation in shaping impulsive purchase decisions.

Iyer et al. (2019) advocate that impulse buying has the dominant role of psychological factors such as sensation seeking, impatience, and self-identity representation. In addition to this, Silvera, Lavack, & Kropp (2008) suggest that people with low self-esteem can serve as potent sources of negative states of mind hence they only buy for pleasure. Furthermore, Naeem (2021) has explored social patterns and impulsive buying strategies during the COVID-19 pandemic delving into situational factors such as external events and societal changes and their impact on consumers' psychological responses and impulsive buying behaviours. Mishra et al. (2022) show the intricate bond between mental wellness, emotions and obsessive shopping behaviours by shedding light on the underlying mechanisms of overconsumption.

### *External Market-Related Stimuli*

Market stimuli like store environment are an effective and popular measure of inducing impulse purchases. Bellini, Cardinali, & Grandi (2017) assert that a strong urge to shop without planning results in increased impulse purchases right after exposure to tempting cues, thus reducing pre-shopping preparation and facilitating impulsive purchasing decisions. K. Z. K. Zhang, Xu, Zhao, & Yu, (2018) categorise impulsive consumers into four categories: pure, reminder, suggestion, and planning thereby providing insight to marketers targeting specific groups that indulge in impulse buying. Mohan, Sivakumaran, & Sharma (2013) focused on the influencing role of store environment elements on consumer characteristics related to impulse buying behaviour including music, lighting, layout, shopping enjoyment, or fun experience upon entering a shop. Zhao, Li, Wang, Zhou, & Luo (2022) classify external stimuli impacting online impulsive buying behaviour into website-related factors, including website security, navigability, visual appeal, interactivity, and pricing,

Visual merchandising is one of the main factors that influence whether consumers will buy on impulse. According to studies by Manuere & Martha (2023) and Jaini, Zulkiffli, Ismail, Mohd, & Hussin, (2021), visual elements such as colour schemes, lighting effects and arrangement of items significantly affect consumer responses, stimulating their impulsive purchase ability. consumer impulsivity

### *Online Impulse Buying*

In modern times, digital platforms and the online presence of an organisation have become critical. Aragoncillo and Orús (2018) mention that on social commerce platforms like Facebook and Instagram, customers can be influenced to make impulsive purchases through the enhancement of online reviews' credibility and the facilitation of experience sharing. Researchers also have identified that website design, ease of use, competitive pricing, promotional strategies and positive emotion act as key drivers of online impulse buying (Himawari, Prayoga, Fajrianti, & Abraham, 2018; Liu, Li, & Hu, 2013; Zhang, Xu, Zhao, & Yu, 2018). Also, digital stimuli vary with economic development levels indicating their effect differs among consumers in various countries.

Furthermore, the quality of a website as well as user experience also plays a pivotal role in promoting online impulsiveness. According to Wells et al. (2011), high-quality websites serve environmental cues that necessitate impulsive purchase desires through seamless navigation and appealing content thus creating flow experiences. In addition, sales promotions and the use of credit cards encourage impulsive buying by creating urgency and simplifying transactions (Akram et al. 2018). Moreover, several studies emphasise serendipity, trustworthiness and the flow experience, which show how external stimuli drive online impulsivity relating to unplanned purchasing (Chung et al., 2017; Huang, 2016).

### *Cultural and Normative Influences*

Culture plays a critical role in moderating impulsive buying. J. Kacen & Lee (2002) identify cultural challenges such as self-identity, normative influences, emotion suppression, and postponed gratification as effective influencers in impulsive buying. J. J. Kacen et al. (2012) describe how product characteristics in particular their hedonic nature account for most spontaneous purchases compared with retailing factors (J.J. Kacen et al., 2012). Among all retailing strategies in store environments,





high-low pricing was found to have the highest impact. Normative evaluations, or judgments about the appropriateness of impulse buying, also moderate this behavior since the relationship between the trait and actual purchasing is only significant when consumers view it as acceptable (Rook & Fisher, 1995). Moreover, there are personality traits which play an important role as substantiated by Anindito & Handarkho (2022) and Liu, Li, & Hu (2013) who underscore individual characteristics as vital predictors and analysers in respect of impulsive purchase.

Further studies show that culture and personality are key determinants of impulse buying. Thus, Miao, Jalees, Qabool, & Zaman (2020) examine how personalities combined with cultural effects along with store stimuli makes up a part of impulse buying highlighting some sense of cultural context to orientated consumer behaviour. Czarnecka, Schivinski, & Keles (2020), by examining the effects of cultural values on impulsive buying tendencies provide insights into how individual-level cultural values influence consumer behaviour related to impulse buying and financial decision-making.

### ***Impulse buying behaviour in the gadget industry***

There is extremely scarce research on impulse buying behaviour in the gadget industry, only considering a few internal and external factors, especially in the Indian context (Zheng, Men, Yang, & Gong, 2019). The gadget industry is characterised by rapid technological changes and continuous innovation making it an ideal landscape for investigating impulse buying (G Muruganantham & Ravi Shankar Bhakat, 2013). The Technology Acceptance Model is used by scholars to explain that the ease of use and perceived usefulness of new technology significantly influence impulsive buying behaviour (Azizah, Nur, & Putra, 2022). Consumers are more likely to make impulsive purchases when they find the technology easy to use and beneficial

Apart from that, online advertising and marketing stimuli are necessary to evoke impulsive buying of such gadgets. Dawson & Kim (2009) talk about stimuli like external cues and classified ads with discounts that elicit impulse buying in consumers' minds. This insight aids marketers in developing strategies that target the need for cutting-edge and novel gadgets. Scholars also examine psychological factors like cognitive dissonance, hedonism, materialism, and anxiety which are particularly relevant to the gadget industry (Marikyan, Papagiannidis, & Alamanos, 2023; Sari & Laksmidewi, 2021). The desire for new technology all the time makes people purchase impulsively as they want to relieve themselves of old devices' discomforts but the impulse diminishes overtime (Farah & Ramadan, 2020).

J. J. Kacen et al. (2012) highlight how immersive store environments, attractive product displays, and interactive demos can stimulate impulsive purchases. Nawaz et al. (2023) and Khalil & Raza (2021) further discuss how marketing cues such as limited-time offers and social proof can enhance the appeal of gadgets, encouraging spontaneous buying. These elements create an engaging shopping experience that can lead to higher impulsive buying rates.

In summary, impulse buying behaviour in the gadget industry is shaped by a complex interplay of social media influences, marketing stimuli, psychological factors, and in-store elements. The literature underscores the importance of these factors in understanding and leveraging impulse buying behaviour. By integrating these insights, marketers and retailers can develop targeted strategies to capitalise on impulsive purchasing and boost sales in this competitive market. This approach is particularly pertinent in the Indian gadget market, where understanding local consumer behaviours and preferences can provide a significant competitive advantage.

## **3. METHODOLOGY**

This research employs a qualitative approach due to its unparalleled usefulness in exploring complex phenomena (Creswell, 1998). It is most valuable to investigate consumer behaviour especially where little previous knowledge is available (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Kainthola, Chowdhary, Kaurav, & Tiwari, 2021). This study aims to identify the underlying reasons for impulse buying through semi-structured interviews and thematic analysis to uncover the underlying factors driving impulse buying and to identify its consequences for marketing strategies and retail operations.

## **4. DATA COLLECTION**

Purposive sampling was employed to select participants to allow maximum output from the respondents. The respondents are customers who had recently engaged in impulse buying of gadgets in the Indian market (see Table 1). This sampling method allowed for the selection of individuals with relevant experience and insights (Kainthola, Chowdhary, Kaurav, & Tiwari, 2021; Sari & Laksmidewi, 2021). The evaluation was done based on their experience with a recent purchase (last six months) which ensured that their experiences were fresh and relevant. As the review of the literature highlighted the role of culture, gender, and other aspects, the data purposely included varied demographics to ensure diversity in age, gender, income level, and geographical location to provide a broad spectrum of perspectives.



**Table 1. Respondent's Details**

Respondent	Age	Gender	Location	Primary Gadget Purchased
1	22	Male	Bangalore	Gaming Laptop
2	48	Female	Bikaner	Mid-Range Smartphone
3	35	Male	Siliguri	Fitness Tracker
4	25	Female	Bhubhneswar	Bluetooth Earphones
5	62	Male	Delhi	Smart TV
6	27	Female	Coimbatore	Basic Feature Phone
7	55	Male	Kolkata	Tablet
8	32	Female	Meeruth	Smartwatch
9	20	Male	Delhi	High-End Smartphone
10	40	Female	Chennai	E-Reader
11	19	Male	Mumbai	Gaming Console
12	25	Female	Bangalore	Smart Watch
13	30	Male	Imphal	E-Reader
14	60	Female	Delhi	Portable Charger
15	50	Male	Bangalore	Bluetooth Earphone
16	21	Female	Jaipur	Bluetooth Speaker
17	45	Male	Amritsar	Tablet
18	38	Female	Pune	Smart Phone
19	18	Male	Indore	Professional Camera
20	58	Female	Guwahati	Fitness Band

The interviews were stopped at 20 respondents as no new information was gathered after the 18th respondent. Further, the small size of the qualitative analysis is justified as it provides in-depth knowledge for nuanced investigations and helps maintain the efficiency of the results (Guest, Bunce, & Johnson, 2006; Kainthola, Tiwari, & Chowdhary, 2021).

#### ***Interview Guide Development***

A semi-structured interview guide was developed by researchers to aid the collection of data using open-ended questions that facilitated detailed responses from participants involved in interviews. This guide covered various aspects of impulse purchase behaviour such as triggers or motives behind impulsive purchase decisions for gadgets, decision-making processes, and contextual factors affecting consumption patterns among others. The guide also sought information about respondents' views regarding marketing strategies and promotional tools deployed within the electronic goods market and their response to unplanned purchase situations. To validate its accuracy and appropriateness, the interview schedule was pilot-tested on three respondents before being implemented in the main study. This pilot testing helped to refine the questions so that they could elicit the needed data for carrying out the research (Mikuska, 2017; Sampson, 2004).

#### ***Procedure for Conducting Interviews***

Depending on respondents' preferences and logistical constraints, interviews were done either face-to-face or via video calls with each session lasting between 30-60 minutes and being audio-recorded with participants' consent. The aim was to extract even the smallest details of the purchase experience of the respondents.

#### ***Data Analysis***

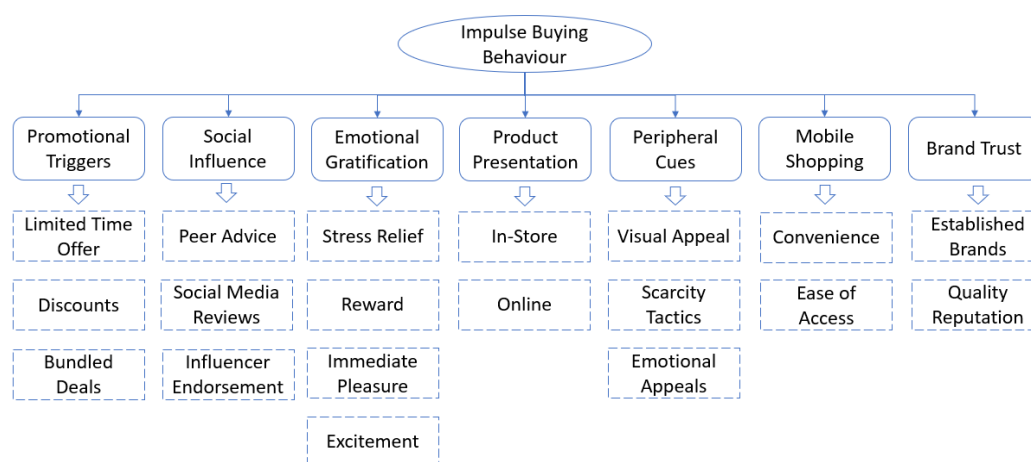


Thematic analysis was particularly significant because it provides a structured and systematic way to capture the nuanced nature of impulse buying behaviour (Creswell, 1998; Nowell, Norris, White, & Moules, 2017). It helped the authors to delve deep into the subjective experiences of the participants in an effective manner which offered rich insights. The method involved several steps: becoming familiar with the information through transcription and initial jottings, generating codes at first to help locate significant parts of the text, searching for themes through related codes grouping, reviewing themes to ensure they are accurate and consistent, defining them by naming those that summed up their message most accurately, and creating a report that combined all findings with illustrative citations (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This approach was crucial as it allowed for a profound understanding of impulse buying behaviour in the Indian market for gadgets through an organised identification and analysis of key trends in the data.

## 5. RESULTS

The investigation of semi-structured interviews with respondents from different demographics, which included different genders, ages, occupations, and areas, produced several key themes and insights on India's impulse buying behaviour for gadgets visible in Figure 2. The research findings are arranged around the central factors that influence impulsive purchases as well as the theoretical framework that explains these activities.

Figure 2: Theme assessment



### Promotional Triggers

The analysis showed a 100 per cent effect of promotional strategies on the respondents. However, the impact of these triggers varied. Among young adults (age 18-30), both male and female participants frequently mentioned limited-time offers, discounts, and bundled deals as primary drivers of their impulse purchases. For instance, a 25-year-old woman software engineer residing in Bangalore City mentioned how a flash sale made her buy a smart watch suddenly (Flash sale). The sense of urgency created by such sales compelled her to make quick decisions to take advantage of the perceived value.

In contrast, Promotional triggers among middle-aged adults in urban areas are most notably seasonal sales and exclusive store offers. A 45-year-old man, who is a businessperson in rural Punjab said he bought a tablet on the spot after he had been given an unexpected discount on it. This demographic tends to respond more to physical promotions within retail stores rather than online-only deals clearly showing how important offline retail environments are for driving spontaneous purchases among older consumers.

### Social Influence

The social influence is visible amongst the respondents. However, the impact varied significantly, especially within urban and rural respondents and across different age groups. Young females living in urban areas seemed to be swayed mostly by societal proof such as peer recommendations, social media reviews, and endorsements (Social media influencers). For example, one of the young female respondents from Delhi stated "I always look at online reviews before I make my mind up about buying any gadget". In urban settings, social media is integrated into almost every aspect of life, including shopping choices. The pervasive use of social media in urban settings amplified the impact of these online recommendations, making them a key factor in spontaneous buying decisions.

On the other hand, rural respondents based their decisions more on face-to-face communication rather than social media (Middle-aged men in rural areas). They respected the opinion of a person they knew better than that of strangers. They value direct, personal recommendations over online reviews or endorsements. Conversely, other populations may view these wider endorsements as impersonal since they have no personal relationship with those who give them. This approach indicates how social influences differ between urban and rural areas due to heavy reliance on interpersonal interactions. This reliance on personal, face-to-face interactions highlights the differing sources of social influence in rural versus urban environments.



### ***Emotional Gratification***

The research revealed that emotional gratification is the primary reason for impulse buying regardless of any demographic groups involved. For example, 30 per cent of the respondents agree that impulsive purchases act as stress relievers or a reward. This sentiment was strong in the younger generation participants. For example, the 25-year-old software engineer mentioned buying headphones after completing a significant project at work as a reward. The thrill of acquiring a new gadget and the anticipated pleasure associated with using it propelled countless unplanned purchases. In contrast, those who are middle-aged described being happy or excited but also feeling anxious about possible regret.

*"I was alone and there were so many sales person who told me how good the Bluetooth speakers are and I gave in. I hope it's good otherwise my wife will not be happy."*

*Respondent 15, Professor*

### ***Role of the Sales Staff***

It was also evident that 55 per cent respondents mentioned the role of the sales staff. They said they played a crucial role in convincing them to make the purchase. The more persuasive they were the more the customers were inclined to buy the product. 15 per cent said that they felt trapped in the scenario with such lucrative offers and on top of it the salesperson was polite enough to guide them through the process. 40 per cent respondents said the sales staff made them understand the gadget better which pushed them towards making the final call of impulse purchase. Only 10 per cent of the respondents pointed out that, while the offers were good, they felt that the constant "nagging" by the salesperson irritated them so much that they preferred to make the purchase elsewhere. For them, they wanted to explore options for their perusal. This can be an interesting outlook for future research.

### ***Product Presentation***

Visual medium leaves a lasting impact. Similar sentiment was inferred from the data analysis that product presentation plays a significant role in influencing impulse buying. However, the differences in experiences between in-store and online purchases are considerable and conspicuous. The possibility of impulsive buying while visiting stores is heightened by compelling and well-organised retail displays that can almost make an individual touch the items physically. The ability to physically interact with gadgets in stores was a strong motivator for impulse buying. 40 per cent of participants said they like in-store shopping because it has fewer distractions. Additionally, 55 per cent prefer in-store shopping because they can experience the product. Meanwhile, 25 per cent stated that while they generally prefer online shopping for other products, they choose to shop in-store for gadgets due to concerns about malfunctions or empty boxes, especially with phones, whereas cheaper products like earphones can be bought online.

Appealing items pictures, detailed descriptions and easy-to-use interfaces are among the reasons why individuals shop on impulse over the Internet. Such factors were mentioned by young people who mainly preferred online shopping as being imperative in their decision-making process. High-quality images, detailed product descriptions, and user-friendly interfaces on online platforms contributed to the appeal of buying gadgets impulsively. Younger participants, particularly those who preferred online shopping, cited these factors as critical in their decision-making process.

### ***Peripheral Cues***

The in-depth investigation revealed that impulse buying behaviour is influenced by peripheral cues such as visual appeal and scarcity tactics. The designs and appearances of these gadgets significantly impacted the impulsive purchase tendencies of the younger participants. The compositions and aesthetics of the product played a major role in attracting customers for impulse purchases. The sleek looks, attractiveness, innovative characteristics, and premium-quality make are identified as pivotal influencers of impulse buying. Time-limited offers, flash sales, and availability of limited stock all contributed towards creating an urgency that encouraged impulse buying in all populations. The respondents described feeling pressured into making quick decisions so as not to miss out on a good deal. Notable, 30 per cent of the participants highlighted the influence of these factors, particularly the young ones.

### ***Emotional Appeals***

The examination of the interviews showcased a strong implication of marketing messages. Marketing appeals exploiting emotions of excitement, social status, and desire to belong had a considerable influence on impulse buying behaviour. The participants reported that they are more compelled to make a purchase when a gadget evokes positivity or exclusivity. Specifically, 60% of participants acknowledged that advertisements evoking excitement and novelty made them attracted to gadgets. Furthermore, 50% mentioned that feeling a sense of belonging or elevated social status due to owning a particular gadget significantly motivated their purchases.

### ***Brand Trust***

Trust plays a pivotal role in any relationship. Similarly, 35 per cent of respondents mentioned in their interview that they are more inclined towards a brand they trust or has a market reputation of a quality brand. Therefore, regarding impulse buying across different demographics brand name had come out as one crucial factor. Participants expressed a strong preference





towards established brands that have built up a reputation for quality when making impulsive buys. Established brands and efficient product quality mitigate anxiety linked with hasty purchase decisions thereby increasing dependability on well-known brands for impulsive decision-making. The sentiment was stronger among female respondents than male highlighting a slight gender difference in brand loyalty and its impact on impulsive purchases.

## 6. DISCUSSION

The examination provides a holistic inquiry into the occurrence of impulse buying behaviour in the Indian market for gadgets, thereby giving out a crucial understanding of psychological, social and marketing elements that make people buy on impulse. The findings conform with the literature on consumer behaviour as well as provide fresh perspectives relevant to the gadget industry in a fast-changing market.

One of the key findings is the role of psychological triggers in impulse buying behaviour. This primary driver often leads to emotional gratification, particularly among younger participants, who often view impulse buys as a stress relief or reward. In this regard, Xiaobo Fang et al., (2022) found that positive emotions contribute significantly to impulse buying. Additionally, middle-aged participants exhibited happiness and excitement along with concerns about potential regret consistent with dual-process theory which postulates that consumer decisions are influenced by both impulsive and reflective systems (Deutsch, Gawronski, & Hofmann, 2016).

It is also important to note that in the digital age, emotional marketing has become increasingly influential. Technology-focused companies such as Apple use emotions in their advertisements to show how their products can assist consumers in making great moments out of ordinary activities other than listing down technical features. As a result, this approach greatly influences impulsive purchases through establishing strong emotional connections with customers.

This study points to social influence as highly important, especially in urban places. Younger consumers were strongly influenced by social proof such as peer recommendations, reviews on social media platforms, and influencer endorsements. This finding is consistent with the social influence theory which suggests that individuals' behaviour and attitudes are shaped by those within their social network circles (Cialdini & Goldstein, 2004; Zhao et al., 2022). The widespread application of social media has amplified this effect because there is an increased use of online reviews and endorsements by consumers when purchasing goods or services.

However, the findings highlight that there is a notable divergence in the impact of social influences between urban and rural consumers. For rural people personal recommendations meant more than endorsement from social media. This suggests that digital marketing is effective but traditional word of mouth still reigns supreme in some demographics. This finding is particularly significant considering that rural areas are a huge market segment in India.

Promotional strategies, including promotional triggers, are proven as crucial drivers of impulse buying across all demographics. Limited-time offers, flash sales and bundled deals evoke urgency and lead consumers to make decisions fast. The generations are more and more garnering lifestyles like YOLO (You Only Live Once) and FOMO (Fear of Missing Out). Further, increased use of e-commerce has prompted retailers to provide visually appealing websites which are user-friendly during the online shopping experience. To improve consumer experience and boost sales, Amazon, and Flipkart among other businesses spend heavily on their platforms' optimisation.

The study underscores the impact of technological advancements on impulse buying behaviour. Mobile shopping has facilitated quick and convenient purchases, making it easier for consumers to engage in impulsive buying. Furthermore, the inclusion of artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning into personalised marketing has further aggravated this effect. Such personalised recommendations based on browsing history and preferences may prompt individuals to make impulsive purchases by presenting them with products closely linked to their interests.

The online purchasing field is seeing the emergence of augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR) as new forms of e-commerce that may have a significant impact on impulse buying in future. These technologies provide immersive shopping experiences, which make products more attractive to consumers and encourage unplanned purchases. For example, IKEA and Sephora are among those companies that have integrated AR features into their systems to enable customers to see how things appear in real-life situations. This has proved extremely successful at generating business.

While such strategies can garner immense sales and customer attraction, marketers must consider ethical implications and play fair. The authors advocate employing transparency in marketing and measures for the protection of consumers from deceptive tactics. Promoting ethical marketing practices ensures consumers are not manipulated into regrettable purchases.

### *Implications*

The findings from the results have consequential implications. As far as a theoretical understanding of impulse buying behaviour is concerned, this research offers great insights, particularly within the Indian gadget market. The use of the Elaboration-Likelihood Model (ELM) as a conceptual framework emphasises the role of peripheral cues in influencing consumer decisions. The study validates the use of ELM in the context of impulse buying and thus confirms that customers prefer peripheral processing instead of central processing when they make spontaneous purchase decisions. Peripheral



elements like scarcity tactics, product design, social proof and emotional appeals have a great impact on impulse buying behaviour. This implies that emotions and social proof have a significant effect on impulsive buying decisions and therefore confirms previous theories that stress the importance of affective factors and social influence on consumers' behaviour, underscoring the need for further exploration of these variables in future studies.

The study also provides insights regarding how cultural differences may influence impulse-based spending habits. A good example here is India which has seen an increase in mobile-first shopping culture while also valuing brand trust. Such findings mean that developments relating to consumer behaviour should consider cultural variations across regions. By including psychological aspects (emotions and social validation) as well as situational factors (promotion strategies and availability), this paper presents a more comprehensive understanding of what triggers impulsive purchases.

### ***Practical Implications***

These findings have important implications for marketing managers and retailers. They should ensure that their gadgets are visually appealing and innovative as they put more emphasis on having high-quality images & videos which bring out or emphasise design, features & build quality respectively. The triggering of impulse purchases lies with the attractive displays at stores and effective product presentation online and offline.

Flash sales and limited-time offers such as rotation stock alert systems enhance urgency while recommendations from industry experts, positive reviews or influencers can easily influence customers' decisions. Emotional appeal approaches like creating excitement about a product through advertising and belonging to a group using human models who are seen as role models due to their opulence can foster consumer closeness with organisations. This captivates customer attention more than any other communication tactic since reflects one's lifestyle where products become part of it before a purchase decision is made within a comfort zone provided by interactive in-store demonstrations that include both trust and loyalty-building elements. Enhanced client experience may further be attained by training employees to perform personal demonstrations.

Optimising the online experience entails several aspects including; user-friendly interface platforms; detailed product information; high-resolution images; virtual fitting rooms; 360-degree view options for products; and augmented reality (AR) added features among others. For smartphone usage on the internet there has to be a good mobile presence coupled with directed promotions along with individualised suggestions which address mobile-first shopping preference. Consumer feedback regularly is useful in identifying emerging fashions and designs that are appealing to clients.

Policies aimed at protecting consumers against deceptive practices would encourage responsible promotional activities. Marketers can come up with new ways aimed at changing public attitudes towards impulse consumption patterns thereby encouraging informed purchasing decisions. Conversely, resources and tools needed to promote informed choices help in controlling impulsive buys. As such people involved in this business can enhance customer engagement and loyalty as well as make ethical and sustainable decisions.

### ***Future Directions***

The findings of the research suggest different channels for future explorations about impulse buying behaviour in the gadget market. One of these areas worth pursuing is the fusion of cutting-edge technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning for enhancing personalised marketing strategies. AI can scrutinise extensive customer data to forecast impulsive purchasing behaviours and modify promotional messages accordingly so that it may raise the chances of unplanned buying. Furthermore, forthcoming research might investigate how augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR) affect impulse buying. In addition, AR and VR provide consumers with immersive shopping experiences, simulating store environments capable of creating engaging product demonstrations that could lead to impulsive purchase decisions.

Additionally, the evolving landscape of social media platforms warrants extensive research. Thus, there is a need to investigate the role of emerging platforms and micro-influencers in shaping consumer behaviour. Moreover, cross-cultural research would provide a deeper understanding of cultural differences at different levels of impulse buying behaviour, allowing companies to come up with more specific marketing strategies considering culture. Finally, ethical aspects pertaining to aggressive marketing strategies should be studied including their implications on long-term consumer welfare as well. Therefore, achieving a balance between effective marketing practices and consumer protection will be essential in establishing sustainable business models within the gadget market. By focusing on these areas future studies will help shed light on impulse buying behaviour thereby enabling marketers to adjust towards the fast-changing digital environment more comprehensively.

## **7. CONCLUSION**

Therefore, this study delves into an extensive examination of impulse buying behaviour in India's gadget market, which sheds light on psychological, social and marketing factors that compel impulsive purchases. The semi-structured interviews revealed consumer response tendencies through peripheral cues like visually appealing product design, scarcity tactics as well as social proof such as testimonials or even celebrity endorsements which have been found to be major influences. This underscores the strategic marketing role alongside product presentation for influencing buyer reactions plus triggering instant sales. The implications of the theory underscore the necessity to realise the psychological experiences that trigger an



impulsive purchase.

If marketers and retailers employ visually attractive designs, generate urgency through scarce tactics, use social proof from influencers, and create emotionally compelling marketing messages, they will be able to constructively improve their sales. Such schemes may be very effective in a fast-paced market environment that is driven by digital technologies where consumers are constantly bombarded with information and stimuli. The future research could explore how AI and machine learning can be integrated into personalised marketing; the effect of AR and VR on shopping experiences; and the emerging role of social media platforms as well as micro-influencers. Moreover, cross-cultural studies along with ethical considerations will provide a better understanding of the use of sustainable approaches in gadget markets. Thus, knowledge about impulse buying behaviour motivators can increase customer involvement for sales improvement among marketers and retailers.

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