TRIGGERS OF CONSUMER IMPULSE BUYING IN E-COMMERCE: AN EMPIRICAL INSIGHT FROM CHENNAI

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ABSTRACT

E-commerce involves buying and selling goods or services through online platforms, offering convenience and wide product accessibility. It has transformed traditional retail by enabling digital transactions anytime and anywhere. Consumer impulse buying refers to spontaneous and unplanned purchases driven by emotions, attractive offers, or visual appeal. It occurs when consumers make quick decisions without prior intention or thoughtful evaluation. Despite the rapid expansion of e-commerce, consumers in Chennai exhibit varied and unpredictable impulse buying behaviour influenced by multiple promotional, psychological and platform-driven factors. However, the specific triggers that most strongly stimulate these unplanned purchases remain unclear. Most of existing studies have not adequately examined impulse buying behaviour within Chennai's unique urban consumer context. Hence, this study aimed to analyze the triggers of consumer impulse buying in e-commerce in Chennai. A descriptive research design with a quantitative approach was adopted to systematically collect and analyse data for the study. The research targeted consumers in Chennai who actively engage in online shopping across various e-commerce platforms. The primary data were gathered from the sample of 425 randomly selected respondents using a structured questionnaire based on a 5-point Likert scale to measure impulse buying triggers. The collected responses were coded and organised using MS Excel and further analysed using SPSS (version 26.0). The statistical tools such as percentage analysis, mean score, standard deviation, ANOVA, correlation analysis and multiple regression analysis were employed. To assess the significance of relationships between the selected independent variables and consumer impulse buying behaviour, appropriate null hypotheses were framed and scientifically tested. This study confirmed that high level of impulse buying in e-commerce is perceived by consumers belong to male, upto 30 years, who purchase above 20 times a year, consider product reviews for purchase and spend above Rs.20000 in a year.

Keywords: Consumer Impulse Buying, E-Commerce, Online Shopping Behaviour, Promotional Triggers, Digital Marketing, Psychological Factors.

1. INTRODUCTION

E-commerce refers to the buying and selling of goods and services through digital platforms using the internet. It has transformed traditional retail by offering consumers greater convenience, wider product choices, secure payment options, and doorstep delivery. E-commerce platforms enable seamless transactions, personalized recommendations, and real-time price comparisons, making shopping faster and more efficient. Businesses benefit from broader market reach, reduced operational costs, and data-driven insights into customer preferences. With advancements in technology, mobile applications, digital payments, and social media integration, e-commerce continues to expand rapidly, reshaping consumer behaviour and becoming an integral part of the modern global marketplace. Consumer impulse buying refers to unplanned and spontaneous purchase decisions made by consumers without prior intention or careful evaluation. It is driven by emotional triggers, attractive promotions, product visibility, social influence, and psychological factors such as mood or excitement. In online shopping, features like flash sales, limited-time offers, personalised recommendations, and persuasive visual displays further stimulate impulse buying behaviour. Consumers often act instantly, motivated by convenience, curiosity, or the fear of missing out. Triggers of consumer impulse buying in e-commerce refer to the various

factors that stimulate unplanned and spontaneous online purchases. Emotional factors such as excitement, curiosity, and mood further enhance impulsive responses. Social media influence, celebrity endorsements, and peer suggestions add to the persuasive environment. Additionally, the convenience of one-click purchases, easy payment options, and seamless navigation make consumers more likely to buy instantly. Together, these triggers significantly shape impulse buying behaviour in online platforms. Thus, impulse buying has become a significant aspect of modern retailing, influencing sales patterns and shaping marketing strategies across e-commerce platforms.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Husna et al. (2025) revealed that psychological, technological, and promotional factors significantly trigger online impulse purchases across different e-commerce platforms in Sarawak. Also, social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok strongly influence impulsive buying through targeted advertisements and engaging content whereas demographic factors including age, gender, income, education, and occupation were found to affect the likelihood of impulse purchases. Further, respondents showed varying levels of susceptibility depending on their perceived value, convenience, and shopping satisfaction. In case of Thamara et al. (2025) identified from the systematic literature review that online impulse buying behaviour is influenced by multiple psychological, technological, and social factors. Attractive visual design, ease of navigation, and user-friendly technological features significantly increase impulsive purchase tendencies. Further, social influence, including peer recommendations and online reviews, also plays a crucial role. In addition, positive emotions such as excitement and enjoyment were consistently found to trigger spontaneous buying decisions. The researchers Jois et al. (2024) mentioned that online impulse buying behaviour is primarily influenced by psychological factors, website design, marketing strategies, and demographic characteristics. Thus, visually appealing layouts, clear product descriptions, and high-quality images significantly stimulate impulsive purchases while promotional strategies such as discounts and time-limited offers create urgency, strengthening purchase impulses. Social influence including ratings, reviews, and recommendations was also found to play a major role in encouraging spontaneous buying. In addition, younger consumers and those with higher income levels showed greater susceptibility to impulse buying, highlighting important demographic trends for e-commerce marketers. The study of Wang et al. (2022) revealed that personality traits such as extroversion and neuroticism significantly increase online impulsive buying behaviour, while self-control reduces it. Also, negative emotions and collectivistic cultural orientation also positively influence impulsive buying tendencies. The research confirmed that negative emotions and collectivism act as important mediators between consumer characteristics and impulsive purchasing whereas Cognitive and affective impulsive buying tendencies further strengthen spontaneous online purchase decisions.

In view of Chaudhary et al. (2025) justified that impulse buying in e-commerce is driven by a combination of emotional, cognitive, and environmental triggers embedded in digital platforms. Also, internal factors such as mood, emotional arousal, boredom, and cognitive biases significantly increase spontaneous purchase tendencies. External cues such as urgency-based marketing, personalized recommendations, influencer endorsements, and seamless UX design further amplify impulsive buying behaviour. Accordingly, AI-driven customization and social media content enhance perceived product value, trust, and immediacy, accelerating impulse decisions. The research from Sandhu et al. (2025) measured impulse buying is driven by a combination of internal psychological triggers such as emotions, mood, and immediate gratification and external cues including pricing, promotions, product displays, and packaging design. In addition, packaging attributes like color, imagery, and material significantly influence spontaneous purchases, especially in emerging markets while digital technologies, such as social media marketing, live-streaming, and online discounts, were identified as major accelerators of impulsive buying behaviour. The research also noted that demographic variables like age, gender, and income had minimal influence on impulse purchases. The authors Huo et al. (2023) assumed that social presence and sales promotion significantly enhance consumers' flow experience during live-streaming shopping. This heightened flow experience strongly increases the likelihood of impulse buying behaviour in live-commerce environments. Also, situational factors like specifically time availability and money availability positively moderate the relationship between flow experience and impulse buying. Additionally, the SOR model effectively explains how external stimuli trigger internal psychological states that lead to impulsive responses. The study of Zhang et al. (2022) noticed that key external stimuli such as influencer characteristics, online comments, logistics service quality, and promotional incentive information significantly influence impulse buying behaviour in live commerce through perceived trust and perceived value. Moreover, promotional time limits, however, showed no significant effect, likely due to the increased frequency of live commerce activities. The analysis confirmed that perceived trust and perceived value strongly drive consumers' impulse buying tendencies in hunger marketing environments whereas influencers play a central role in building trust, while promotional benefits enhance consumers' perceived value.

3. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The rapid rise of e-commerce has fundamentally reshaped consumer purchasing behaviour by offering convenience, instant accessibility and diverse product choices. In this highly dynamic online environment, impulse buying has emerged as a common and influential consumer behaviour pattern. However, despite the widespread adoption of online shopping, consumers in metropolitan regions like Chennai continue to encounter factors that stimulate or hinder impulse purchases. Elements such as attractive promotional offers, persuasive product displays, flash sales, social media influence and user

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reviews play a significant role in triggering unplanned buying decisions. At the same time, concerns related to trust, payment security, delivery reliability, and product authenticity may moderate these impulses. While extensive research has explored online consumer behaviour in general, limited studies have focused specifically on understanding the triggers that influence impulse buying behaviour among e-commerce users in Chennai.

4. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY
- To present the socio-economic profile of the selected consumers who engage in online shopping in Chennai.
- To examine the triggers of consumer impulse buying in e-commerce in the study area.

5. HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY
- There is no significant difference in mean impulse buying in e-commerce with respect to frequency of purchase yearly of the consumers.
- There is no significant difference in mean impulse buying in e-commerce with respect to factors impulse for purchase of the consumers.
- There is no significant difference in mean impulse buying in e-commerce with respect to spending amount in a year of the consumers.
- There is no positive significant association at consumer impulse buying in e-commerce.
- There is significant relationship with consumer impulse buying in e-commerce among selected variables.

6. RESEARCH DESIGN
This study adopted a descriptive research design with a quantitative approach. The primary data were collected through a well-structured questionnaire developed to examine the triggers influencing consumer impulse buying behaviour in e-commerce platforms in Chennai. The secondary data were sourced from journals, books, published research articles, government reports, statistical handbooks, newspapers, magazines, online databases and authentic websites related to consumer psychology, online shopping behaviour and digital retail trends. A sample of 425 consumers who actively engage in online shopping was selected using random sampling techniques. The collected data were coded and tabulated systematically using MS-Excel and the sample data were analysed using statistical tools such as percentage analysis, mean score, standard deviation, ANOVA, correlation analysis and multiple regression analysis with SPSS software (version 26.0).

7. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION
7.1 Socio-economic Profile of the Consumers
The details about the socio-economic profile and impulse buying in e-commerce of the selected consumers are furnished in the below table.

Table 1: Socio-Economic Profile of the Consumers and Impulse Buying in E-Commerce

No.	Variables Name	Number of Consumers	%	Mean	SD
1	**Gender**				
	• Male	248	58.4	3.62	0.72
	• Female	177	41.6	3.58	0.66
	Total	**425**	**100.0**		
2	**Age**				
	• Upto 30 Years	91	21.4	3.73	0.57
	• 31-40 Years	154	36.2	3.51	0.74
	• 41-50 Years	116	27.3	3.58	0.72
	• Above 50 Years	64	15.1	3.71	0.66
	Total	**425**	**100.0**		
3	**Frequency of Purchase yearly**				
	• Upto 10 times	146	34.3	3.31	0.69
	• 11-20 times	175	41.2	3.60	0.63
	• Above 20 times	104	24.5	3.86	0.64
	Total	**425**	**100.0**		
4	**Factors impulse for purchase**				
	• Best Deals	138	32.5	3.58	0.76
	• Product Review	96	22.6	3.80	0.51
	• Today offer	119	28.0	3.44	0.67

No.	Variables Name	Number of Consumers	%	Mean	SD
	• Minutes Offer	72	16.9	3.71	0.72
	Total	**425**	**100.0**		
5	**Spending Amount in a year**				
	• Upto Rs.5000	69	16.3	3.54	0.75
	• Rs.5001-10000	91	21.4	3.35	0.76
	• Rs.10001-20000	145	34.1	3.65	0.65
	• Above Rs.20000	120	28.2	3.76	0.62
	Total	**425**	**100.0**		

• It is displayed from the analysis that 58.4% of the consumers are male and 41.6% of the consumers are female.

• It is mentioned from the analysis that 21.4% of the consumers are under the age group of up to 30 years, 36.2% of the consumers belong to the 31–40 years of age category, 27.3% of the consumers fall into the 41–50 years group and 15.1% of the consumers are belong to above 50 years of age segment.

• From the analysis, it is observed that 34.3% of the consumers purchase online upto 10 times a year, 41.2% of the consumers purchase 11–20 times and 24.5% of the consumers purchase above 20 times in a year.

• It is illustrated from the analysis that 32.5% of the consumers are influenced for online shopping by best deals, 22.6% of the consumers are influenced by product reviews, 28.0% of the consumers are influenced by today's offer and 16.9% of the consumers are influenced by minute offers.

• From the analysis, it is depicted that 16.3% of the consumers spend upto Rs.5,000 for online shopping yearly, 21.4% of the consumers spend Rs.5,001–10,000, 34.1% of the consumers spend Rs.10,001–20,000 and 28.2% of the consumers spend above Rs.20,000 annually.

7.2 Section 2: Consumer Impulse Buying in E-Commerce

This section has examined that the consumer impulse buying in e-commerce in Chennai. For the purpose, eight statements have been framed with 5-point Likert's scaling method for examining the impulse buying in e-commerce.

The Cronbach Alpha value for the statements of consumer impulse buying in e-commerce is 0.927 whereas consumers' replies were recorded using a 5-point Likert scale. This study indicated that reliability of the strategies for enhancing employability skills is good and fit for analysis. From the above table, it is justified that the statement 'I feel tempted to purchase items online when I see attractive offers or deals' hold the highest mean score of 4.03 with a standard deviation of 1.20 and followed closely by 'I am influenced to make sudden purchases when I see limited-time online discounts' with a mean score of 4.01 with a standard deviation of 1.22.

Relationship between Socio-economic variables and Consumer Impulse Buying in E-Commerce (Anova)

For examining the relationship between selected socio-economic variables and consumer impulse buying in e-commerce, a hypothesis has been framed and tested by Anova test. The test results are discussed in the following tables.

Frequency of Purchase Yearly and Impulse Buying in E-Commerce

H_0: There is no significant difference in mean impulse buying in e-commerce with respect to frequency of purchase yearly of the consumers.

Table 2: Frequency of Purchase Yearly and Impulse Buying in E-Commerce

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	'p'
Between Groups	7.295	3	2.432	5.151	0.002*
Within Groups	198.754	421	0.472		
Total	206.049	424			

Note: * – Significant at 1% level

From the above table, it is illustrated that the 'p' value is lesser than 0.05 (p = 0.002), hence the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, there is a significant difference in mean impulse buying in e-commerce with respect to frequency of purchase yearly of the consumers.

Factors Impulse for purchase and Impulse Buying in E-Commerce

H_0: There is no significant difference in mean impulse buying in e-commerce with respect to factors impulse for purchase of the consumers.

Table 3: Factors Impulse for purchase and Impulse Buying in E-Commerce

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	'p'
Between Groups	23.854	2	11.927	27.626	0.000*
Within Groups	182.194	422	0.432		
Total	206.049	424			

Note: * – Significant at 1% level

From the analysis, it is noticed that the 'p' value is lesser than 0.05 (p = 0.000), hence the null hypothesis is rejected. Hence, there is a significant difference in mean impulse buying in e-commerce with respect to the factors impulse for purchase of the consumers.

Spending Amount in a year and Impulse Buying in E-Commerce
H_0: There is no significant difference in mean impulse buying in e-commerce with respect to spending amount in a year of the consumers.

Table 4: Spending Amount in a year and Impulse Buying in E-Commerce

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	'p'
Between Groups	9.911	3	3.304	7.091	0.000*
Within Groups	196.138	421	0.466		
Total	206.049	424			

Note: * – Significant at 1% level

It is assumed from the analysis that the 'p' value is lesser than 0.05 (p = 0.000) consequently the null hypothesis is rejected. Thus, there is a significant difference in mean impulse buying in e-commerce with respect to the spending amount in a year of the consumers.

Degree of Relationship between selected independent variables and Impulse Buying in E-Commerce
The following analysis has investigated that the relationship between the selected independent variables and the dependent variable impulse buying in e-commerce by using correlation analysis. For this study, the independent variables have been selected such as age, frequency of purchase yearly and spending amount in a year.

H_0: There is no positive significant association at consumer impulse buying in e-commerce.

Table 5: Degree of Relationship between selected Independent Variables and consumer impulse buying in E-Commerce

Variables	Age	Frequency of Purchase yearly	Spending Amount in a year	Impulse Buying in E-Commerce
Age	1.000			
Frequency of Purchase yearly	0.142 (0.003*)	1.000		
Spending Amount in a year	-.006 (0.896[NS])	0.213 (0.000*)	1.000	
Impulse Buying in e-commerce	0.013 (0.787[NS])	0.188 (0.000*)	0.123 (0.011**)	1.000

Note: * - Significant at 1% level; ** - Significant at 5% level; NS - Not Significant

From the above analysis, the values represent correlation coefficients measuring the association between the selected independent variables and impulse buying in e-commerce. The correlation analysis observed that frequency of purchase yearly (0.188, significant at 1% level) and spending amount in a year (0.123, significant at 5% level) show a positive and significant relationship with consumer impulse buying in e-commerce. Hence, the analysis found that as the frequency of online purchases and the annual spending amount increase, the level of impulse buying in e-commerce among consumers also tends to rise. On the other hand, age (0.013) does not show any significant relationship with impulse buying in e-commerce. Thus, the analysis confirms that the age of consumers has no influence on their impulse buying in e-commerce in Chennai.

Relationship of Impulse Buying in E-Commerce
The relationship of impulse buying in e-commerce with selected variables among consumers is investigated in the below table.
H_0: There is significant relationship with consumer impulse buying in e-commerce among selected variables.

Table 6: Relationship of Impulse Buying in E-Commerce (Multiple Regression Analysis)

No.	Variables	Coefficient	SE	't' value	'p' value
	(Constant)	3.076			
1	Age	-0.009	0.034	-0.271	0.787[NS]
2	Frequency of Purchase yearly	0.173	0.044	3.933	0.000*
3	Spending Amount in a year	0.081	0.032	2.546	0.011**
	R Value	**0.924**			
	R² Value	**0.854**			
	F Value	**87.435***			

Note: * - Significant at 1% level; ** - Significant at 5% level; NS - Not Significant

From the above table, the results of the multiple regression analysis examining the relationship between the selected variables and impulse buying in e-commerce show that frequency of purchase yearly (0.173) is statistically significant at the 1% level, and spending amount in a year (0.081) is significant at the 5% level. This indicates that these variables exert a strong and positive influence on consumers' impulse buying in e-commerce in Chennai. On the other hand, age (-0.009) does not show any significant effect on impulse buying in e-commerce, as indicated by its non-significant p-value. Hence, the analysis confirms that age does not contribute to predicting the level of impulse buying in e-commerce among consumers. The R^2 value of 0.854 indicates that 85.4% of the variation in impulse buying in e-commerce is explained by the independent variables included in the model. The F value of 87.435 confirms the overall significance of the regression equation at the 1% level, demonstrating that the model is statistically sound and highly effective in explaining impulse buying in e-commerce in Chennai.

8. FINDINGS

• It is asserted from the analysis that most (58.4%) of the consumers are male. Also, the analysis measured that high level of impulse buying in e-commerce is perceived by male consumers.

• It is mentioned that most (36.2%) of the consumers belong to the 31–40 years age category. From the analysis, it is identified that consumers upto 30 years show the high level of impulse buying in e-commerce.

• It is observed that most (41.2%) of the consumers fall under 11–20 times purchase category. It is confirmed from the analysis that consumers who purchase above 20 times a year perceive the high level of impulse buying in e-commerce.

• It is illustrated from the analysis that most (32.5%) of the consumers are influenced by best deals. It is obtained from the analysis that consumers who consider product reviews show the high level of impulse buying in e-commerce.

• It is noticed that most (34.1%) of the consumers spend Rs.10,001–20,000 for online shopping yearly. It is confirmed from the analysis that consumers spend above Rs.20000 group show the highest level of impulse buying in e-commerce.

• From the mean score analysis, it is confirmed that the statement 'I feel tempted to purchase items online when I see attractive offers or deals' hold the highest mean score of 4.03 and followed closely by 'I am influenced to make sudden purchases when I see limited-time online discounts' with a mean score of 4.01.

• The Anova test showed that there is a significant difference in mean impulse buying in e-commerce with respect to frequency of purchase yearly of the consumers.

• From the 'F' test, it is mentioned that there is a significant difference in mean impulse buying in e-commerce with respect to the factors impulse for purchase of the consumers.

• It is assumed from the Anova test that there is a significant difference in mean impulse buying in e-commerce with respect to the spending amount in a year of the consumers.

• The correlation analysis displayed that frequency of purchase yearly (significant at 1% level) and spending amount in a year (significant at 5% level) show a positive and significant relationship with impulse buying in e-commerce. Thus, the analysis found that as the frequency of online purchases and the annual spending amount increase, the level of impulse buying in e-commerce among consumers also tends to rise.

• The multiple regression analysis noticed that the relationship between the selected variables and impulse buying in e-commerce show that frequency of purchase yearly (0.173) is statistically significant at the 1% level, and spending amount in a year (0.081) is significant at the 5% level. The analysis proved that these variables exert a strong and positive influence on consumers' impulse buying in e-commerce in Chennai.

9. SUGGESTIONS

• The findings mentioned that high level of impulse buying in e-commerce is perceived by male consumers. Hence, online retailers should extend similar appealing promotional strategies, personalised recommendations, and attractive product displays to female consumers to enhance their impulse buying tendencies.

• The study noticed that consumers upto 30 years show the high level of impulse buying in e-commerce. Therefore, online platforms should introduce vibrant, youth-oriented features and interactive shopping elements that can also attract older consumers and stimulate impulse purchases across all age categories.

• It is revealed from the research that consumers who purchase above 20 times a year perceive the high level of impulse buying in e-commerce. Thus, online retailers should implement loyalty rewards, surprise deals, and frequent-buyer benefits for all consumers to motivate more spontaneous and repetitive buying actions.

• It is obtained from the findings that consumers who consider product reviews show the highest level of impulse buying in e-commerce. So, e-commerce sellers should highlight authentic reviews, user images, and detailed ratings for all products to trigger quick trust and encourage impulsive decision-making among every consumer group.

• It is confirmed that consumers spend above Rs.20000 group show the highest level of impulse buying in e-commerce. Consequently, retailers should provide personalised premium offers, attractive bundles and exclusive high-value promotions to consumers, encouraging even moderate and low spenders to make unplanned purchases.

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10. CONCLUSION

This study aimed to examine the triggers of consumer impulse buying in e-commerce in Chennai. The study revealed that socio-economic variables such as frequency of purchase yearly, factors impulse for purchase and spending amount in a year have significant difference with impulse buying in e-commerce, while age does not show a notable influence. Hence, enhancing impulse buying in e-commerce requires online retailers to focus on strategic elements such as personalised recommendations, trust-building review systems, engaging promotional schemes and user-friendly shopping interfaces. Moreover, e-commerce platforms should customise their marketing strategies to effectively engage consumers across different spending levels and purchasing frequencies, ensuring a higher and more inclusive growth in impulse buying in e-commerce.

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