

# External Stimuli and Impulsive Buying Behavior

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## Abstract

Retail outlets have become highly competitive and try to attract impulsive buyers. This study examines the effect of five different strategies (i.e. window display, background music, sales persons, sales promotions, and discount offers) on impulsive buying behavior. The sample size for this study was 195 and the mall intercept method was used for collecting the data. Several well-established constructs from the literature were used for developing the questionnaire. The study found that all the predictors i.e. window display, sales promotions, discount offers, background music and sales persons have a significant effect on impulse buying behavior. This study has implications for marketers and policy makers. The findings could be used by them in developing appropriate strategies for attracting and retaining customers and creating differentiation. While the present study has examined impulsive buying behavior in Karachi, future research may explore this phenomenon in other cities of Pakistan.

**Keywords:** *Buying behavior; unplanned purchase; promotional activities; window displays; background music; sales persons; sales promotions; discount offers; impulsive buying behavior.*

## Introduction

A retail store is a place where buyers purchase goods and services according to their needs, income and wants (Orel & Kara, 2014). Retail sales mainly depend on impulsive and unplanned buying (Terblanche, 2018). Impulsive buying behavior is a process which is triggered by internal and external factors. Internal factors include personality and psychological factors while external factors are associated with ambiance, promotional, activities and window display (Cohen, Collins, Hunter, Ghosh-Dastidar & Dubowitz, 2015).

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Impulsive buying is a problem all over the world. The growth of retail outlets have contributed to this phenomenon (Terblanche, 2018). Impulsive goods could be either old or new products which consumers buy spontaneously (Badgaiyan & Verma, 2015). Consumers unplanned purchase decisions also depend on environment, packaging, shelf placement and promotional activities (Dias, dos Santos, Martins, & Isabella, 2014). In addition, product display, promotional approaches and pleasant environment are key strategies for attracting customers and creating a differentiation (Verplanken & Sato, 2011).

Retailers want their customers to stay in the outlets for a longer period. To make customers stay comfortable, retailers have improved the ambiance of their outlets (Orel & Kara, 2014). In addition, retailers have attempted to improve the shopping environment with the use of background music (Cohen et al., 2015). Past research suggests that there is a positive association between time spent in the retail outlet and impulsive buying behavior (Mafini & Dhurup, 2015). Retail outlets have become highly competitive and a major part of their sales depend upon impulsive buying (Chan et al., 2017). Thus, this study aims to measure the effects of external stimuli (i.e. window display, background music, sales persons, sales promotions and discount offers) on impulsive buying behavior.

## **Literature Review**

### **Impulsive Buying Behavior**

Impulse buying is not a new phenomenon. Research has examined impulsive buying behavior for nearly six decades (Sharma, Sivakumaran, & Marshall, 2010; Stern, 1962). Sharma et al., (2010) suggests that impulsive buyers develop a positive feeling towards products which stimulates their buying decisions. Physical proximity to a product also affects impulsive buying. Physical proximity has a positive effect on impulsive buying (Peck & Childers, 2006). Impulsive buying behavior is also influenced by shelf display, helpful sales persons and a pleasant environment (Mattila & Wirtz, 2008; Shen & Khalifa, 2012). Previous research also suggests that an exciting mood stimulates impulsive buying (Muruganantham & Bhakat, 2013). Impulsive buying also has a positive psychological effect on consumers (Muruganantham & Bhakat, 2013). For example, Mick & Demoss (1990) found that consumers buy gifts for themselves for improving their mood.

In modern times, consumer preference to shop with family and friends has increased (Brynjolfsson, Hu, & Rahman, 2013). In addition, many consumers prefer visiting supermarkets as they provide a one-stop shopping solution (Mafini & Dhurup, 2015). The polite and friendly behavior of sales persons at supermarkets make consumers more comfortable which stimulates impulsive buying (Harmancioglu et al., 2009). It has been

argued that impulsive buying is closely related to consumers shopping style, personal attitude and influence of peers (Dhariyal & Kothari, 2017). Impulse buying also depends upon packaging, promotions and price discounts (De Ridder et al., 2012). These stimuli have varying effects on consumers buying behavior (Dhariyal & Kothari, 2017).

Internal and external visualization also promotes impulsive buying (Dhariyal & Kothari, 2017). Both internal and external visualization is affected by the familiarity with the store environment. The former has a stronger effect on impulsive buying as compared to the latter (Hausman, 2000).

### **Store Environment**

Store environment plays an important role in stimulating impulsive buying (Chang, et.al., 2011). The ambiance or environment of a superstore includes background music, promotional activities and pleasant staff (Chang et al., 2011). In addition, the store environment is a source of competitive advantage for retailers. A pleasant store environment makes consumers more responsive to external stimuli (Sun & Yazdanifard, 2015). Customer behavior is also affected by point-of-purchase and point-of-sale advertisements. Point-of-purchase activities include promotions such as buy one get one free offers, price discounts and bulk discounts. Moreover, point-of-sale advertisements relates to advertisement of the product close to the point-of-sale (Zhou & Wong, 2004).

### **Window Display**

Window display is an effective strategy for creating differentiation and attracting customers in retail outlets. Research suggests that there is a positive association between window display and customer shopping behavior (Karbasivar & Yarahmadi, 2011). Window display is also used as a positioning strategy by retailers (Turley & Milliman, 2000). Prior studies suggest that retailers tend to place grocery items such as milk, bread and butter at the back end of the store. This strategy enables retailers to promote non-grocery products more effectively (Prashar, Parsad, Tata & Sahay, 2015).

### **Background Music**

Retailers use background music to stimulate positive customer emotions and impulsive buying (Milliman, 1982). Prior research suggests that soft background music slows the shopping pace of consumers. As a result, consumers spend more time shopping and purchasing goods (Sen & Srivastava, 2016).

## **Sales Persons**

Retailers employ sales persons to provide guidance and a pleasant shopping experience to consumers (Tendai & Crispen, 2009). Previous research has found that friendly sales persons behavior stimulates consumer spending (Kacen & Lee, 2002).

## **Sales Promotions**

Sales promotions encourage consumers to purchase large quantities of products (Chandon, Wansink, & Laurent, 2000). Prior research indicates that sales promotions have a positive effect on consumer buying behavior (Mihic & Kursan, 2010). Sales promotions include free vouchers, refunds, free sampling, competition and gift packs (Chandon et al., 2000). It has been argued that promotional activities individually and in combination also effect impulsive buying (Chandon et al., 2000; Mihic & Kursan, 2010; Nagadeepa, Selvi, & Pushpa, 2015).

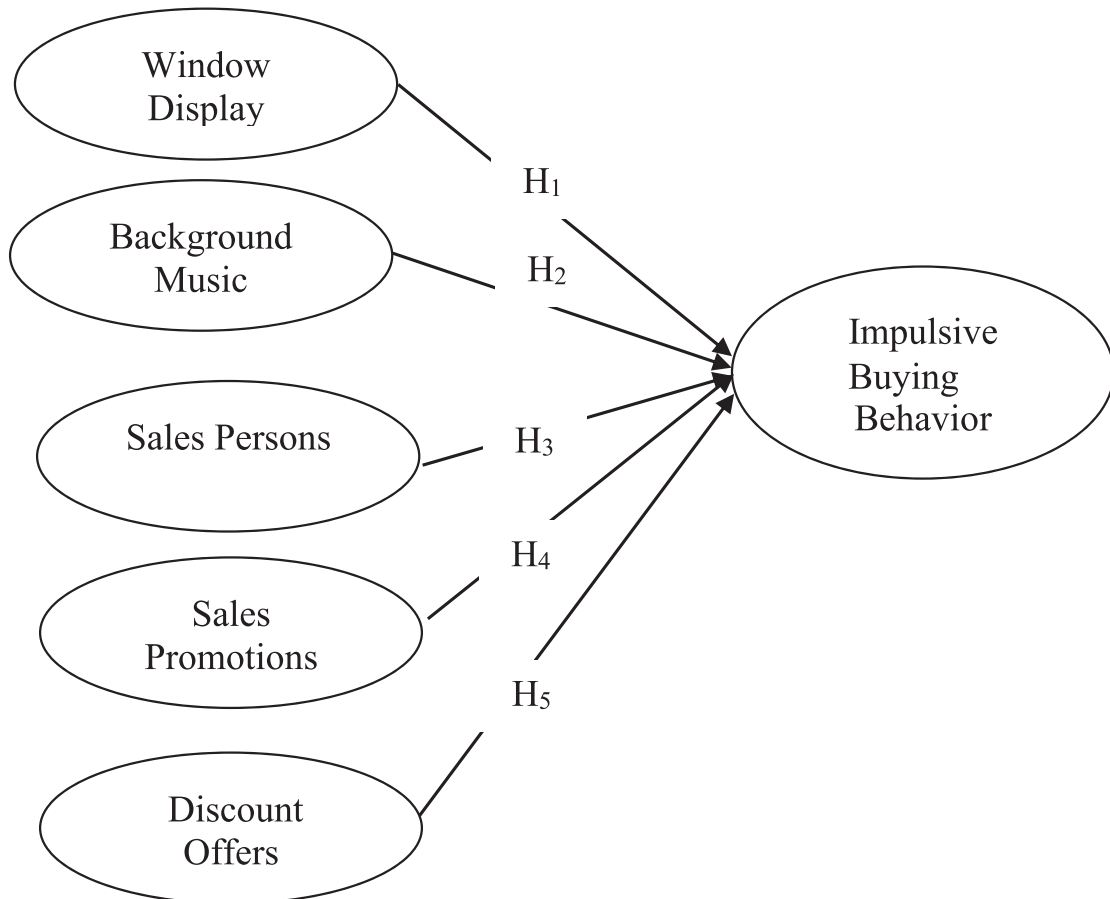
## **Discount Offers**

Discount offers (including price and bulk discounts) have a major effect on consumer attitude towards a brand. Price discounts increase sales and also stimulate impulsive buying (Nagadeepa et al., 2015). Retailers frequently use the price discount offer strategy for promoting sales (Chandon et al., 2000).

## **Conceptual Framework**

A conceptual framework for this study is diagrammatically represented in Figure 1. The subsequent sections provide a discussion of the relevant literature supporting the framework.

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework



### Window Display and Impulsive Buying Behavior

The window display of a retail outlet promotes impulsive buying (Tendai & Crispen, 2009). It is inclusive of store ambiance, shelf positioning, point of purchase displays and discounts (Merugu & Vaddadi, 2017). Previous studies suggest that window display has a positive influence on impulsive buying behavior especially when the products are in high demand (Merugu & Vaddadi, 2017; Tendai & Crispen, 2009).

It has been argued that the relationship between window display and impulsive buying is not consistent. This relationship varies from one product category to other category and from one retail location to another (Badgaiyan & Verma, 2015). Window display loses its effectiveness over a period of time (Prashar et al., 2015).

Thus, retailers are creating different innovative display-strategies for generating an exciting and pleasant shopping environment. This not only uplifts consumer mood but also promotes impulsive buying (Gandhi, Vajpayee, & Gautam, 2015). It has been argued that displaying product related advertisements near point-of-sale terminals positively effects buying behavior (Amos, Holmes, & Keneson, 2014). As a result, retailers have placed display-screens on their premises that are broadcasting short videos about the benefits of products (Gandhi et al., 2015; Sun & Yazdanifard, 2015).

Consumers are attracted by displays that are new, innovative and exciting (Muruganantham & Bhakat, 2013). Prior research has found that customers spend approximately five seconds viewing advertisements. They tend to lose interest if the advertisement does not catch their attention within this time period (Jha, 2015).

**H1:** Window display has a positive effect on impulsive buying behavior.

### **Background Music and Impulsive Buying Behavior**

Background music is inclusive of rhythm, pitch, harmony and melody (Lucas & Koff, 2014). Playing background music in shopping malls has become a norm for stimulating impulsive buying behavior (Mirabi & Samiey, 2015). Past studies have found that background music in retail outlets make consumers shopping experience more pleasant and stimulates positive emotions. That is, background music has a profound effect on impulsive buying behavior (Milliman, 1982; Dubé & Morin, 2001).

The rhythm of background music has been found to affect consumers buying behavior (Morrison, Gan, Dubelaar, & Oppewal, 2011; Panda & Kumar, 2015). While fast background music makes consumers spend less, slow music makes consumers more comfortable and triggers positive impulsive buying behavior (Morrison et al., 2011).

**H2:** Background music has a positive effect on impulsive buying behavior.

### **Sales Persons and Impulsive Buying Behavior**

In retail outlets, sales persons tend to develop a friendly relationship with customers. This friendly relationship has a profound effect on impulsive buying behavior (Pelham & Kravitz, 2008). A strategy commonly used by sales persons involves informing customers about the satisfaction level of previous customers. As a result, customers develop a sense of belonging with satisfied customers which influences their purchasing decisions (Wanjugi, 2014).

Sales persons also inform customers about the scarcity of a product. The scarcity of the product tends to arouse the interest of the customer and promotes impulsive buying. Moreover, sales persons often apprise customers about the comfort aspect of a product (Chandon et al., 2000). Other strategies include offering customers free use of the product and a money back return guarantee (Wanjugi, 2014). Sales persons develop a personal relationship with customers which inspires trust and bonding that leads to impulsive buying (Chandon et al., 2000; Wanjugi, 2014).

**H3:** Sales persons have a positive effect on impulsive buying behavior.

### **Sales Promotions and Impulsive Buying Behavior**

Sales promotions tend to have a significant effect on sales. As consumers are price conscious, therefore, they are more inclined to purchase products which provide greater savings (Liao, Shen, & Chu, 2009). Sales promotions not only help retailers retain existing customers but also enables them to attract new ones. The effect of sales promotions on impulsive buying varies from one customer to another (Badgaiyan & Verma, 2015). Past research suggests that sales promotions have a profound effect on impulsive buying decisions (Xu & Huang, 2014).

All types of sales promotion techniques stimulate impulsive buying (Wang & Jing, 2015). Extended sales promotions will adversely affect the image of retail outlets (Liao et al., 2009). Some studies have argued that promotional activities have a positive effect on consumer desire but not on actual buying behavior (Xu & Huang, 2014).

**H4:** Sales promotions have a positive effect on impulsive buying behavior.

### **Discount Offers and Impulsive Buying Behavior**

Discount offer is a strategy which is commonly used in online and offline selling (Carlson, 2017). It is inclusive of price discount and bulk discount. In price discount strategy, sellers offer products at a reduced price. The discount can be in percentage or value terms (Dias et al., 2014). Both bulk discounts and price discounts have a positive effect on impulsive buying behavior. Bulk discounts have a stronger impact on impulsive buying as compared to price discounts (Xu & Huang, 2014).

For online shopping, studies have found that consumers prefer price discounts over

bulk discounts. This is due to the fact that price discounts are easy to avail as compared to bulk discounts (Carlson, 2017). Previous research has found that price discounts affect both retailers and consumers (Dias et al., 2014; Xu & Huang, 2014). Price discounts enable retailers to dispose-off excess inventory to customers (Chen & Wang, 2016). Moreover, price discounts also attract consumers to make impulsive purchases (Xu & Huang, 2014). Price discounts also persuade consumers to impulsively purchase unintended products (Dias et al., 2014; Xu & Huang, 2014).

**H5:** Discount offers have a positive effect on impulsive buying behavior.

## Methodology

### Scope and Procedure

The scope of this research was limited to individuals who regularly visit shopping malls. The respondents were approached through the mall-intercept method. The questionnaire was administered in leading shopping malls of Karachi during evenings and weekends. The valid sample size for the study was 195 with a response rate of 95%.

### Respondents Profile

**Gender:** 53% of the respondents were females and the rest were males. **Marital Status:** 53% of the respondents were married and the remaining were single. **Age:** 25% of the respondents were aged between 18-30 years, 30% ranged between 31-40 years, 20% ranged between 41-50 years, 15% ranged between 51-60 years and the remaining were above 60 years. **Education:** 50% of the respondents had an intermediate qualification, 35% had a Bachelor's degree while the remaining 15% had a master's degree or higher. **Employer:** 75% of the respondents were employed in the public or private sector while the remaining 25% were self-employed. **Income:** 35% of the respondents had a monthly income between Rs. 30,000-Rs. 60,000, 30% had an income between Rs. 61,000-Rs. 90,000, 20% had an income between Rs. 91,000-Rs. 120,000, while the remaining 15% had a monthly income above Rs. 121,000.

### Measures & Scales

The questionnaire used in this study had two parts. The first part had 5 items on demographics based on the nominal scale. The second part comprised of six constructs that were adapted from the previous literature. The six constructs were based on the five point Likert scale. A summary of the constructs used in the study is presented in Table 1.



**Table 1: Summary of Constructs**

Constructs	Adapted from	No. of Items
Impulsive Buying Behavior	(Verplanken & Herabadi, 2001)	8
Window Display	(Karbasivar & Yarahmadi, 2011)	4
Background Music	(Milliman, 1982)	5
Sales Persons	(Park & Lennon, 2006)	6
Sales Promotions	(Chandon, Wansink & Laurent, 2000)	5
Discount Offers	(Xu & Huang, 2014)	5

## Results

### Descriptive Statistics

The descriptive statistics of the variables are presented in Table 2.

**Table 2: Descriptive Statistics**

	Mean	Cronbach Alpha	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
Window Display	4.10	.81	1.21	1.21	1.17
Sales Promotions	3.75	.72	-1.01	1.18	1.19
Background Music	3.89	.65	-.83	-1.01	-1.05
Sales Persons	4.20	.85	.99	-1.15	.97
Discount Offers	3.95	.64	1.14	.99	.95
Impulsive Buying Behavior	3.75	.77	1.37	1.00	-1.38

Table 2 shows that window display (Mean= 4.10, SD= 1.21, SK=-1.21) has the highest skewness followed by sales promotions (Mean= 3.75, SD= -1.01, SK=-1.18), sales persons (Mean = 4.20, SD=.99, SK=-1.15), background music (Mean= 3.89, SD= -.83, SK=-1.01), impulsive buying behavior (Mean = 3.75, SD=1.37, SK=1.00) and discount offers (Mean= 3.95, SD= .64, SK= .99).

Similarly, impulsive buying behavior has the highest Kurtosis (Mean = 3.75, SD=1.37, KT= -1.38) followed by sales promotions (Mean= 3.75, SD= -1.01, KT= 1.19), window display

(Mean = 4.10, SD=1.21 KT= 1.17), background music (Mean = 3.89, SD= -0.83, KT= -1.05), sales persons (Mean = 4.20, SD=.99, KT= 0.97) and discount offers (Mean= 3.95, SD= 1.14, KT= .95). It is evident from the skewness and kurtosis analyses that the generated values are between  $\pm 3.5$ . Therefore, the adapted constructs fulfill the requirement of univariate normality (Hair Jr. et al., 2015).

The Cronbach Alpha of sales persons ( $\alpha=.85$ , Mean= 4.20, SD= .99) is the highest followed by window display ( $\alpha=.81$ , Mean = 4.10, SD=1.21), impulsive buying behavior ( $\alpha=.77$ , Mean= 3.75, SD= 1.37), sales promotions ( $\alpha=.72$ , Mean = 3.75, SD=-1.01), background music ( $\alpha=.65$ , Mean=3.89, SD= -.83) and discount offers ( $\alpha=.64$ , Mean = 3.95, SD=1.14). All the Cronbach Alpha values confirm internal consistency since they all are higher than .70 (Hair Jr. et al., 2015).

### Correlations Analysis

Bivariate correlations analysis was carried out to ascertain whether the constructs are unique and distinct and suffer from multi-collinearity. The correlations are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Bivariate Correlations

	WD	SPR	BM	SP	DO	IBB
Window Display(WD)	1					
Sales Promotions (SPR)	.35	1				
Background Music (BM)	.41	.30	1			
Sales Persons (SP)	.49	.31	.45	1		
Discount Offer (DO)	.61	.40	.44	.63	1	
Impulsive Buying Behavior (IBB)	.51	.81	.69	.41	.46	1

The highest correlation ( $r= .81$ ) is between the sales promotions and impulsive buying behavior and the lowest correlation ( $r= .30$ ) is between sales promotions and background music. Since all the bivariate correlation values ranged between .30 to .90 therefore, it is inferred that the adapted constructs are unique, distinctive and have no issues related to multi-collinearity (Hair Jr., et al., 2015).

### Hypothesis 1

The first hypothesis examines the effect of window display on impulsive buying. The results of simple regression analysis are presented in Table 4.

**Table 4: Simple Regression Results**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta	T	
Constant	1.500	.209		9.101	.000
Window Display	.527	.064	.509	8.068	.000

Dependent Variable: Impulsive buying behavior,  $R^2 = .312$ , Adjusted  $R^2 = .278$ ,  $F = 65.089$ ,  $p < 0.05$ .

The results suggest that the hypothesis examining the effect of window display on impulsive buying behavior was accepted. Window display explains 27.8% of the variance in impulsive buying behavior. The Adjusted  $R^2 = .278$ ,  $F = 65.089$ ,  $p < 0.05$ . Thus, window display ( $\beta = 0.509$ ,  $p < .05$ ) significantly influences impulsive buying behavior.

## Hypothesis 2

The second hypothesis examines the effect of background music on impulsive buying behavior. The results of simple regression are presented in Table 5.

**Table 5: Simple Regression Results**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta	T	
Constant	1.019	.193		5.280	.000
Background music	.753	.056	.693	13.346	.000

Dependent Variable: Impulsive buying behavior,  $R^2 = .480$ , Adjusted  $R^2 = .477$ ,  $F = 178.108$ ,  $p < 0.05$ .

The results suggest that the hypothesis examining the effect of background music on impulsive buying behavior was accepted. Background music explains 47.7% of the variance in impulsive buying behavior. The Adjusted  $R^2 = .477$ ,  $F = 178.108$ ,  $p < 0.05$ . Thus, background music ( $\beta = 0.693$ ,  $p < .05$ ) significantly influences impulsive buying behavior.

## Hypothesis 3

The third hypothesis examines the effect of sales persons on impulsive buying behavior. The results of simple regression are presented in Table 6.

**Table 6: Simple Regression Results**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta	T	
Constant	.623	.225		8.547	.000
Sales Persons	.279	.065	.468	7.352	.000

Dependent Variable: Impulsive buying behavior,  $R^2 = .219$ , Adjusted  $R^2 = .215$ ,  $F = 54.052$ ,  $p < 0.05$ .

The results show that the hypothesis examining the effect of sales persons on impulsive buying behavior was accepted. Sales persons explain 21.5% of variance in impulsive buying behavior. Adjusted  $R^2 = .215$ ,  $F = 54.052$ ,  $p < 0.05$ . Thus, sales persons ( $\beta = .468$ ,  $p < .05$ ) significantly influences impulsive buying behavior.

#### Hypothesis 4

The fourth hypothesis examining the effect of sales promotions on impulsive buying behavior was tested through simple regression and summary of the results are presented in Table 7.

**Table 7: Simple Regression Results**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta	T	
1 Constant	.731	.148		4.943	.000
Sales Promotions	.816	.042	.814	19.442	.000

Dependent Variable: Impulsive buying behavior,  $R^2 = .662$ , Adjusted  $R^2 = .660$ ,  $F = 377.991$ ,  $p < 0.05$ .

The results show that the hypothesis examining the effect of sales promotions on impulsive buying was accepted. Sales promotions explains 66.2% of the variance in impulsive buying behavior. Adjusted  $R^2 = .660$ ,  $F = 377.991$ ,  $p < 0.05$ . Thus, sales promotions ( $\beta = .814$ ,  $p < .05$ ) significantly influences impulsive buying behavior.

## Hypothesis 5

The hypothesis five examining the effect of discount offers on impulsive buying was tested through simple regression and summary of the results are presented in Table 8.

**Table 8: Simple Regression Results**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta	T	
Constant	1.923	.225		8.547	.000
Discount Offers	.479	.065	.468	7.352	.002

Dependent Variable: Impulsive buying behavior,  $R^2 = .239$ , Adjusted  $R^2 = .219$ ,  $F = 54.052$ ,  $p < 0.05$ .

The results show that the hypothesis examining the effect of discount offers on impulsive buying behavior was accepted. Discount offers explain 21.9% of the variance in impulsive buying behavior. Adjusted  $R^2 = .219$ ,  $F = 54.052$ ,  $p < 0.05$ . Thus, discount offers ( $\beta = .468$ ,  $p < .05$ ) significantly influences impulsive buying behavior.

## Discussion

All the five hypotheses were accepted. The results and their relevance to the previous literature are discussed in the following sections:

### Window Display and Impulsive Buying Behavior

The results presented in Table 4 suggest that window display has a positive effect on impulsive buying behavior. The store display of a retail outlet promotes impulsive buying (Tendai & Crispen, 2009). It is inclusive of store ambiance, shelf positioning, point of purchase displays and discounts (Merugu & Vaddadi, 2017). Previous studies suggest that window display has a positive influence on impulsive buying behavior especially when the products are in high demand (Merugu & Vaddadi, 2017; Tendai & Crispen, 2009). It has been argued that the relationship between window display and impulsive buying is not consistent. This relationship depends on product category and retail location (Badgaiyan & Verma, 2015). Window displays lose their effectiveness over a period of time (Prashar et al., 2015).

Thus, retailers are creating different innovative display-strategies for generating an exciting and pleasant shopping environment. This not only uplifts consumer mood but also promotes impulsive buying (Gandhi, Vajpayee & Gautam, 2015). It has been argued that

displaying product related advertisements near point-of-sale terminals positively effects buying behavior (Amos, Holmes & Keneson, 2014). As a result, retailers have placed display-screens on their premises that are broadcasting short videos about the benefits of products (Gandhi et al., 2015; Sun & Yazdanifard, 2014).

Consumers are attracted by new, innovative and exciting displays (Muruganantham & Bhakat, 2013). Prior research has found that customers spend approximately five seconds viewing advertisements. They tend to lose interest if the advertisement does not catch their attention within this time period (Jha, 2015).

### **Background Music and Impulsive Buying Behavior**

The results presented in Table 5 suggest that background music has a positive effect on impulsive buying behavior. Past studies have found that background music in retail outlets make consumers shopping experience more pleasant and stimulates positive emotions. That is, background music has a profound effect on consumers buying (Milliman, 1982; Dubé & Morin, 2001). The rhythm of background music has been found to affect consumers buying behavior (Morrison, Gan, Dubelaar & Oppewal, 2011; Panda & Kumar, 2015). While fast background music makes consumers spend less, slow music makes consumers more comfortable and triggers positive impulsive buying behavior (Morrison et al., 2011)

### **Sales Persons and Impulsive Buying Behavior**

The results presented in Table 6 suggest that sales persons have a positive effect on impulsive buying behavior. In retail outlets, sales persons tend to develop a friendly relationship with customers. This friendly relationship stimulates impulsive buying (Pelham & Kravitz, 2008). Another strategy commonly used by sales persons involves informing customers about the satisfaction level of previous customers. As a result, customers develop a sense of belonging with satisfied customers which influence their purchasing decisions (Wanjugi, 2014). Sales persons frequently inform customers about the scarcity of a product. The scarcity of the product tends to arouse the interest of the customer and promotes impulsive buying. Moreover, sales persons often apprise customers about the comfort aspect of a product (Chandon et al., 2000). Other strategies include offering customers free use of the product and a money back return guarantee (Wanjugi, 2014). Sales persons develop a personal relationship with customers which inspire trust and bonding that leads to impulsive buying (Chandon et al., 2000; Wanjugi, 2014).

### **Sales Promotions and Impulsive Buying Behavior**

The results presented in Table 7 suggest that sales promotions have a positive effect on impulsive buying behavior. Sales promotions tend to have a significant effect on sales. As

consumers are price conscious, they are more inclined to purchase products which provide greater savings (Liao, Shen, & Chu, 2009). Sales promotions not only help retailers to retain existing customers but also enables them to attract new ones. The effect of sales promotion on impulsive buying varies from one customer to another (Badgaiyan & Verma, 2015). Past research suggests that sales promotions positively effect the turnover of retail outlets and attracts impulsive buyers (Xu & Huang, 2014).

All types of sales promotion techniques stimulate impulsive buying (Wang & Jing, 2015). Extended sales promotions will adversely affect the image of retail outlets (Liao et al., 2009). Some studies have argued that promotional activities have a positive effect on consumer desire but not on actual buying behavior (Xu & Huang, 2014).

### **Discount offers and Impulsive Buying Behavior**

The results presented in Table 8 suggest that discount offers have a positive effect on impulsive buying behavior. Discount offer is a strategy which is commonly used in online and offline selling (Carlson, 2017). In price discount strategy, sellers offer products at a reduced price. The discount can be in percentage or value terms (Dias et al., 2014). Both bulk discounts and price discounts have a positive effect on impulsive buying behavior. Bulk discounts have a stronger impact on impulsive buying as compared to price discounts (Xu & Huang, 2014).

In the context of online shopping, studies have found that consumers prefer price discounts over bulk discounts. This is due to the fact that price discounts are easy to avail as compared to bulk discounts (Carlson, 2017). Previous research has found that price discounts affect both retailers and consumers (Dias et al., 2014; Xu & Huang, 2014). Price discounts enable retailers to dispose-off excess inventory to customers (Chen & Wang, 2016). Moreover, price discounts also attract consumers to make impulsive purchases (Xu & Huang, 2014). Price discounts also persuade consumers to impulsively purchase unintended products (Dias et al., 2014; Xu & Huang, 2014).

### **Conclusion**

Impulse buying is an unplanned buying behavior which arises due to an unexpected craving to buy the product for self-gratification and self-fulfillment. Internal and external factors also affect impulse buying. In this study, factors influencing impulsive buying behavior were examined. Consumers in Karachi have positive attitude towards impulsive buying. This study found that consumers' inclination towards impulsive buying is higher as they get a sense of enjoyment which uplifts their mood. A well decorated, pleasant and peaceful store environment along with colorful surroundings and background music make

customers stay longer in retail outlets and promotes impulsive buying. This study also found that sales persons significantly effects impulsive buying behavior. Consumers are attracted to a store which has a well-designed window display. They are also influenced by shelf placement, packaging, display of products, background music and friendly sales persons. This study is significant for the marketers as it will help them in developing appropriate strategies for attracting customers and creating a differentiation.

### **Limitations**

This research was carried out in selected retail stores of Karachi, Pakistan. Future studies could be extended to the other cities as well. Demographic factors have varying effect on impulsive buying which was beyond the scope of this study. Future studies can also explore their effects on impulsive buying behavior. In this study sales promotion and discount offers were used to measure their effects on impulsive buying. Further studies can also examine other variables related to promotional activities.



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