

Social pressure - Its impact on impulse buying behaviour among the retail customers in Cochin City

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Abstract

A quick glance at the evolution of mankind it is evident that man is a social being and they dwelled in societies. Though the concept of society remained the same we could see a phenomenal change in its development. As we move forward in leaps and bounds our society is also evolving in terms of its changes in lifestyle, technology. This has in turn changed the outlook of people and their culture and attitude. Today the economic status is a major criterion for the division of society apart from the job status, material possession etc. Research in consumer behaviour has explicitly revealed that conspicuous buying contributes a chunk of purchases made. Various reasons can be attributed to this phenomenon like status, prestige which pinpoints to social pressure. Due to the large influx of product and brand options the consumers are also tempted to indulge in impulse buying. This study is conducted in cochin city and how far the social pressure has an impact on impulse buying behaviour.

Keywords: Impulse Buying Behaviour, Social Pressure, Social Influence, Demographic variables

1. Introduction

The Indian consumers are exposed to international brands and private labels due to the globalization of the economy as well as the onslaught of new players in the market. As a result of techno-consumerism new global values and habits are inculcated in the Indian consumers. The purchasing power of Indian consumers have also grown manifold and it is projected more than 1 trillion by 2021, driven by rising prosperity of emerging middle class people, according to PwC report. Consumers were earlier purchasing the products for their basic need fulfilments, now the scenario have changed and they are more interested in amassing wealth for exhibiting their status in the society. This acts as the social pressure which tempts the consumers to grab more products than required and to gain social acceptance. This forms the base of this study which looks into the impact of social pressure on consumer's impulse buying.

1.1 Literature review

Social pressure can be defined as a pressure that people face in their day to day life; it can be in the form of peer pressure, family pressure, societal pressure etc. In 1958, Harvard psychologist, Herbert Kelman (1958) identified three broad varieties of social influence: Compliance, Identification and Internalization. He found that these factors can trigger changes in individual's behaviour. Compliance is when people appear to agree with others, but actually keep their dissenting opinions private. Identification is when people are influenced by someone who is liked and respected, Kelman (1958). Internalization is when people accept a belief or behaviour and agree both publicly and privately, Kelman (1958). Another study on adolescents found the greater the susceptibility to interpersonal influence, the greater the tendency to buy on impulse (Lin et. al. (2012). Based on modern marketing theory and practice, it is believed that consumers' purchase decisions are influenced by effective advertising and are more likely to conform to reference groups' influence Bearden (1982). Peck and Childers (2006)

defined impulsive buying tendency as a consumer's tendency to buy spontaneously, unreflectively, immediately, and kinetically. If the peer group encourages impulsive buying, then the tendency to engage in such behaviour in the presence of peers should increase with the cohesiveness of the peer group (Luo, 2005). The enjoyment of shopping with friends and the positive mood may result in proneness spending more in general and spending more on impulsive purchases (Mangleburg et. al., 2004). Purchasing decisions are often strongly influenced by people who the consumer knows and trusts in both online and offline contexts (Young 2007). Peck and Childers (2006) defined impulsive buying tendency as a consumer's tendency to buy spontaneously, unreflectively, immediately, and kinetically.

1.2 Impulse Buying Behaviour

Impulse buying can be defined as an irresistible urge to buy things after seeing the product in the retail outlet without any planning for purchasing it. Impulse buying accounts for almost 80% of purchases in some product categories and shopping is a major leisure and lifestyle activity in many countries (Kacen & Lee 2002).

Rook and Hoch (1985) focused attention on the cognitive and emotional aspect of consumer's involvement in impulsive purchasing. Impulsive buying is an 'unplanned purchase' that is characterized by relatively rapid decision-making, a subjective bias in favour of immediate possession Bayley and Nancarrow (1998).

Consumer's impulse purchasing tendency varies according to different product categories and the consumer's involvement (Jones et al. (2003).

Beatty and Ferrell (1998) found that in-store browsing increases the likelihood of an impulse purchase.

Peck et al. (2006) found that a point-of-purchase sign increases consumers' impulse purchase behaviour. Rook and Gardner (1993) suggested that the combination of mood states such as pleasure, excitement, and power elicit impulse purchase behaviour.

A study on Impulse buying's relation on personality traits and cues found lack of control. It had some positive effects on impulse buying tendencies (Youn and Ronald (2000) ^[16]. Impulse buying has been linked to negative emotions (Silvera *et al.*, 2008) and may serve as a way to alleviate negative effect (Verplanken *et al.*, 2005) ^[15]. Piyush *et al.* (2010) found that all kind of products could be purchased impulsively and all consumers engage in impulse buying at various occasions. Tremblay (2005) in her research has addressed the self-esteem factor and found that there is a reverse relation between the level of self-esteem and the amount of impulse purchases. Coley and Burgess found gender as an effective factor on impulse buying behaviour (Coley and Burgess, 2003) ^[11].

1.3 Significance of the study

Retailing in India is witnessing a manifold growth as a result of the entry of new players. According to the Boston Consulting Group and Retailers Association of India report, titled, 'Retail 2020: Retrospect, Reinvent, Rewrite', highlights that India's retail market is expected to nearly double to US\$ 1 trillion by 2020 from US\$ 600 billion in 2015, driven by income growth, urbanization and lifestyle changes among customers. Apart from this an Assocham study also stated that with the increasing brand awareness and growing purchasing power of the upper class in tier II and III cities, Indian luxury market is expected to cross \$18.3 billion by 2016 from the current \$14.7 billion. In this background we can understand that a new consumerism is emerging in India based on materialism and subsequently leading to social pressure. As a result of this materialistic attitude impulse buying of consumers has also increased. While doing impulse buying the consumers is concerned about the social acceptance of the products which has not been addressed in the existing research studies available. In this scenario there is a need in studying the social pressure and its impact on impulse buying behaviour of consumers.

2. Objectives

1. To study the social pressure and its impact on impulse buying behaviour
2. To analyze the different factors affecting the impulse buying behaviour.

Hypothesis

Ho: There is no significant relationship between social pressure and impulse buying

H1: There is significant relationship between social pressure and impulse buying

3. Research Methodology

The research methodology for the present study is based upon the descriptive research design. Primary data was collected through questionnaire and secondary data was collected from books, published journals, articles etc. The population of the study was consumers of organised retailers in Cochin city. Using Simple random sampling method a sample of 215 responses were collected. For this purpose, a questionnaire was designed. A pilot study was also conducted. It helped in the increase of reliability of questionnaire.

3.1 Instrument

The survey instrument was developed by the researchers after an extensive review of literature and scales used in different educational backgrounds guided by the theoretical base of the study. A five point likert scale questionnaire is adopted for the study and three major variables namely shopping experience, Situations inside the store and Promotional factors are considered for the study and the social pressure. This instrument was sent to experts who were working in the field of management in different universities to determine its face and content validity. The instrument was improved in the light of the feedback from these experts. A pilot study was conducted to establish its internal consistency and reliability. The following table gives the reliability of the measures considered and the number of sub variables or items coming under each of the major variables.

Table 1: Reliability variables considered

Variables	Cronbach's Alpha	No of Items
Shopping experience	0.626	7
Situations inside the store	0.870	14
Promotional factors	0.832	7
Social pressure	0.632	4
Impulse buying character	0.729	3

3.2 Data Analysis

The data were analyzed via SPSS 20.0 for Windows. Descriptive statistics was used to describe and summarize the properties of the mass of data collected from the respondents. To study the relation between Social pressure and Impulse buying, the data under each questions were scored as 1 strongly disagree, 2 disagree, 3 for can't say, 4 for agree and 5 for strongly agree. The score of social pressure, Shopping experience, Situations inside the store and Promotional factors for each person is calculated as the sum of the scores of the questions coming under that variables.

Table 2: Characteristics of participants participated in the survey

		Frequency	Percent
Age	Below 18 years	30	14
	18-25 years	35	16.3
	26-35 years	40	18.6
	36-45 years	90	41.9
	46-55 years	20	9.3
Educational qualification	Below SSLC	20	9.3
	Pre degree / Plus two	15	7
	Degree	85	39.5
	Master's degree	90	41.9
	Others	5	2.3
Gender	Male	80	37.2
	Female	135	62.8
Monthly income	Less than 5000	10	5.7
	5001-10000	30	17.1
	10001-15000	20	11.4
	15001-20000	15	8.6
	20001-25000	20	11.4
	25001+	80	45.7
Occupation	Student	40	18.6
	Government Employee	52	24.2
	Professional	60	27.9
	Private job	20	9.3
	Teaching	23	10.7
	Business	15	7
	Others	5	2.3

Pearson Correlation was seen as appropriate to analysis the relationship between the two variables which were interval-scaled and ratio-scaled. Furthermore, correlation coefficients reveal magnitude and direction of relationships which are

suitable for hypothesis testing. The researcher used Pearson Correlation is used to identify the relationship between social pressure and impulse buying.

Table 3: The correlation between Impulse buying behaviour and social pressure

Variables	Correlation	Lower bound	Upper bound	Z	p
Impulse buying -Social Pressure	0.532	0.512	0.552	14.828	<0.001

The calculated correlation coefficient is 0.532 ($p < 0.001$) which indicate that there exist a relationship between social pressure and impulse buying behaviour.

In the next section we find the trend of the relationship between social pressure and impulse buying. For this purpose we divide the respondents into four groups namely, low, average, medium and high social pressure group following Loyd, B. H., & R. R. Abidin. R. R. (1985) ^[8]. Initially the total score of social pressure of the 215 respondent were calculated and based on this respondents were classified into

one of the four groups as low or poor if the mean score is less than 35% of maximum possible score, average if the mean core is between 35 to 50 per cent of maximum possible score, medium or good if the mean score lies in the interval 50 to 75% of maximum possible score and high or excellent if the mean score is above 75% of maximum possible score. A one way analysis of variance is conducted to find out whether the mean score of impulse buying significantly varies with the social pressure group.

Table 4: Means and Standard Deviations and F –value Impulse buying characteristics

Variable	Social pressure	Mean	Standard deviation	F	p value
Impulse buying	Low	47.67	18.40	129.982	<0.001
	Average	59.33	13.15		
	Medium	67.05	7.99		
	High	85.25	4.97		

From the table number 4 the mean score of the Impulse buying for Low social pressure group has minimum value of 47.67. The mean score for average group is 59.33 and that of medium group is 67.05. Finally the high pressure group has the maximum score of 85.25. The table indicate that the mean score for Impulse buying character increases with increase in social pressure. A one way ANOVA is carried out to verify the difference observed above holds in the population or not,

and is found significant. The multiple comparison test indicates that all the four group have significant difference, among one another. So we can conclude that social pressure has a positive effect on impulse buying. This is because the persons with high social pressure only buy the items not based on their needs but based on the pressure. The following Box plot gives the variation impulse buying score among the 4 social pressure groups.

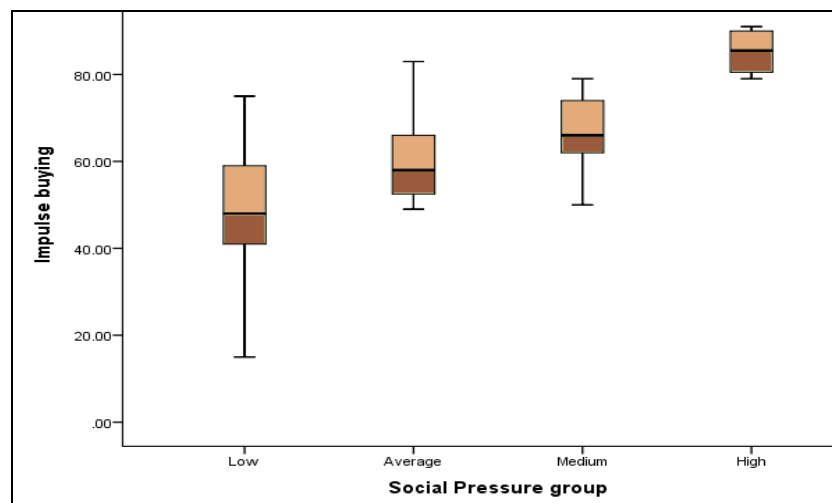


Fig 1

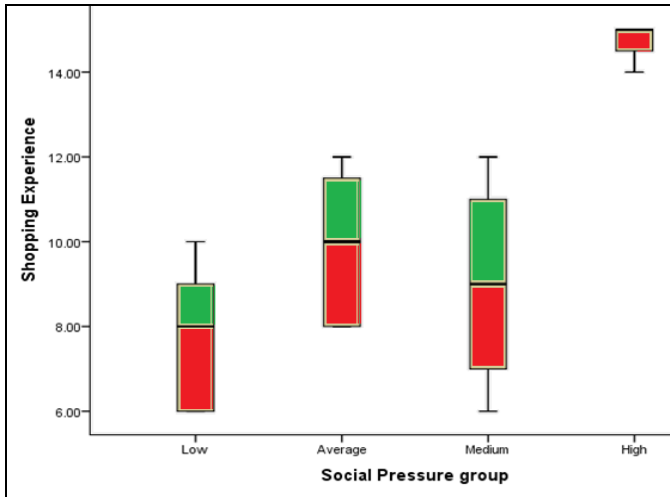
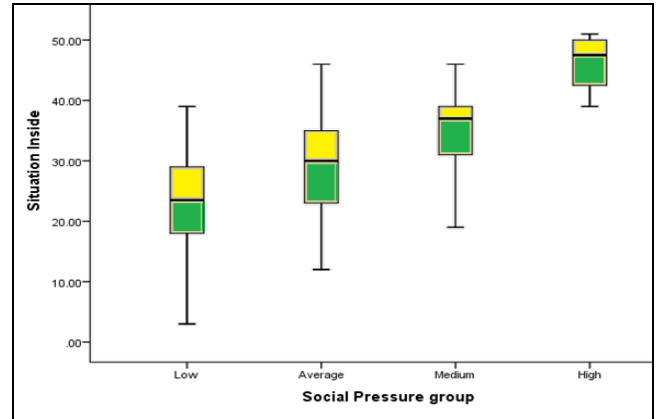
Since the Impulse buying is found to have a significant positive relationship with the social pressure, we examine whether a similar relationship holds in the case of its three components namely shopping experience, promotional factors

and situation inside the store. The following tables number 5 gives the mean, standard deviation and the F-value for these factors calculated on the basis of three level of social pressure of the respondents.

Table 5: Means and Standard Deviations and F –value Shopping Experience

Variable	Social pressure	Mean	Std. Deviation	F	P
Shopping experience	Low	7.83	1.47		
	Average	9.92	1.61		
	Medium	9.19	1.99	186.702	<0.001
	High	14.75	0.44		
Situations inside the store	Low	22.67	11.10		
	Average	29.83	9.03		
	Medium	35.81	5.84	120.444	<0.001
	High	46.25	4.59		
Promotional factors	Low	17.17	7.91		
	Average	19.58	5.20		
	Medium	22.05	3.16	35.684	<0.001
	High	24.25	1.94		

As in the case of impulse buying characteristic, a positive relationship holds for the components. Here also the F test and the multiple comparison test carried out indicate that that all the four group have significant difference among one another.

**Fig 2****Fig 3**

Finally we carried out a two way ANOVA to find out whether the demographic variables play any role in Impulse buying behaviour and to find out whether there exists any interaction between the social pressure and demographic variables. The result of the test is exhibited in the following table.

Table 6: F and p value two way ANOVA Impulse Buying

Demographics	Source of Variation	DF	SS	MS	F	P
Educational qualification	Educational qualification	4	5193.07	1298.27	4.05	<0.001
	Social Pressure	3	34674.99	11558.33	36.10	<0.001
	Residual	207	66277.07	320.18		
	Total	214	121685.44	568.62		
Age	Age	4	17730.60	4432.65	17.07	<0.001
	Social Pressure	3	36299.99	12100.00	46.61	<0.001
	Residual	207	53739.53	259.61		
	Total	214	121685.44	568.62		
Gender	Gender	1	5710.12	1035.27	57.12	<0.001
	Social Pressure	3	26474.04	378.50	20.88	<0.001
	Gender x Social Pressure	3	10679.81	312.04	17.22	<0.001
	Residual	207	52110.71	18.13		
	Total	214	121685.44	25.50		
Occupation	Occupation	6	16481.86	2746.98	10.24	<0.001
	Social Pressure	3	23233.91	7744.64	28.87	<0.001
	Residual	205	54988.27	268.24		
	Total	214	121685.44	568.62		
Monthly income	Monthly income	5	5844.01	1168.80	6.20	<0.001
	Social Pressure	3	10079.65	3359.88	17.83	<0.001
	Residual	166	31287.88	188.48		
	Total	174	55801.90	320.70		

Table number 6 indicates that the Impulse buying characteristic significantly varies with each of the factors of the demographic variables. The two way ANOVA carried out

are presented for the sub variables situation inside, shopping experience and promotional factors in the table number 7 to 9.

Table 7: F and p value Two way ANOVA Shopping experience

Demographics	Source of Variation	DF	SS	MS	F	P
Educational qualification	Educational qualification	4	360.53	90.13	14.35	<0.001
	Social Pressure	3	1200.31	400.10	63.71	<0.001
	Residual	207	1300.06	6.28		
	Total	214	3336.47	15.59		
Age	Age	4	283.41	70.85	10.65	<0.001
	Social Pressure	3	1685.94	561.98	84.47	<0.001
	Residual	207	1377.19	6.65		
	Total	214	3336.47	15.59		
Gender	Gender	1	15.84	1035.27	57.12	0.016
	Social Pressure	3	1239.07	378.50	20.88	<0.001
	Gender x Social Pressure	3	151.04	312.04	17.22	<0.001
	Residual	207	1504.51	18.13		
	Total	214	3336.47	25.50		
Monthly income	Monthly income	6	233.02	38.84	6.94	<0.001
	Social Pressure	3	652.70	217.57	38.89	<0.001
	Residual	205	1146.99	5.60		
	Total	214	2475.20	11.57		
Occupation	Occupation	5	512.19	102.44	14.81	<0.001
	Social Pressure	3	775.67	258.56	37.37	<0.001
	Residual	166	1148.41	6.92		
	Total	174	3336.47	19.18		

Table 8: F and p value Two way ANOVA Situation Inside

Demographics	Source of Variation	DF	SS	MS	F	P
Educational qualification	Educational qualification	4	1391.01	347.75	2.32	<0.001
	Social Pressure	3	14130.78	4710.26	31.38	<0.001
	Residual	207	31069.84	150.10		
	Total	214	53594.47	250.44		
Age	Age	4	7403.46	1850.87	15.29	<0.001
	Social Pressure	3	14826.59	4942.20	40.83	<0.001
	Residual	207	25057.38	121.05		
	Total	214	53594.47	250.44		
Gender	Gender	1	1553.11	1035.27	57.12	<0.001
	Social Pressure	3	10461.50	378.50	20.88	<0.001
	Gender x Social Pressure	3	4783.82	312.04	17.22	<0.001
	Residual	207	24169.02	18.13		
	Total	214	53594.47	25.50		
Monthly income	Monthly income	6	2324.88	387.48	2.91	<0.001
	Social Pressure	3	5445.97	1815.32	13.63	<0.001
	Residual	205	27309.97	133.22		
	Total	214	43377.66	202.70		
Occupation	Occupation	5	9292.26	1858.45	13.32	<0.001
	Social Pressure	3	11196.17	3732.06	26.74	<0.001
	Residual	166	23168.59	139.57		
	Total	174	53594.47	308.01		

Table 9: F and p value Two way ANOVA Promotional factors

Demographics	Source of Variation	DF	SS	MS	F	P
Educational qualification	Educational qualification	4	1306.29	326.57	6.37	<0.001
	Social Pressure	3	2100.97	700.32	13.65	<0.001
	Residual	207	10620.59	51.31		
	Total	214	14227.44	66.48		
Age	Age	4	1718.34	429.59	8.71	<0.001
	Social Pressure	3	1352.56	450.85	9.14	<0.001
	Residual	207	10208.54	49.32		
	Total	214	14227.44	66.48		
Gender	Gender	1	1035.27	1035.27	57.12	<0.001
	Social Pressure	3	1135.51	378.50	20.88	<0.001

	Gender x Social Pressure	3	936.11	312.04	17.22	<0.001
	Residual	207	9986.61	18.13		
	Total	214	14227.44	25.50		
Monthly income	Monthly income	6	734.23	122.37	2.60	<0.001
	Social Pressure	3	617.67	205.89	4.37	<0.001
	Residual	205	9662.08	47.13		
	Total	214	11802.51	55.15		
Occupation	Occupation	5	1619.45	323.89	5.22	<0.001
	Social Pressure	3	1279.68	426.56	6.87	<0.001
	Residual	166	10307.44	62.09		
	Total	174	14227.44	81.77		

Table number 7 to 9 indicate that the sub variables situation inside, shopping experience and promotional factors significantly vary with each of the factors of the demographic variables. It is observed that a significant interaction holds in the case of Gender for the impulse buying character and the three sub variables. The Tukey's multiple comparison test carried out indicates that a significant difference exists between the mean score of male and female for the Impulse buying and its sub variables situation inside, shopping experience and promotional factors.

4. Findings

The study was conducted to examine the relationship between impulse buying and social pressure. The analysis shows that social pressure has a positive effect on impulse buying behaviour. The study also tries to determine the impact of three variables namely shopping experience, promotional factors and situation inside the store and found out that in the case of impulse buying behaviour a positive relationship exists among these variables. The F test carried out for impulse buying behaviour indicates that all the four group have significant difference among one another. The study also reveals that there exists a difference in the impulse buying behaviour of male and female respondents.

5. Conclusion

This paper concludes that, impulse buying is an unplanned purchase followed by a sudden desire to buy the product. Social pressure plays a significant role in the consumer buying behaviour. For the purpose of the study we had divided the consumers into four social pressure groups namely low, medium and high and average these groups have influenced the impulse purchase behaviour. Another significant result is that social pressure can lead to impulse purchase, as the study shows that people with high social pressures do more impulse buying. A two way ANOVA was done to find out whether demographic variables play any role in Impulse buying behaviour and to find out whether there exists any interaction between the social pressure and demographic variables. The study also reveals that there is difference in the impulse buying behaviour of male and female for all the four social pressure groups. A similar significant difference is observable in the case of situations inside the store and shopping experiences between male and female.

5.1 Limitations and Further Research

The study is carried out only in the retail sector of Cochin. Another limitation of the study is that only a small sample had been taken for this study. This study can help the retailers

by giving an insight about the impulse buying behaviour of consumers. This will also help them to increase their business by arranging the merchandise to attract the consumers. Marketers are also benefited by the study as they get an overview regarding the purchasing behaviour of the consumers. Future researchers 'can study the topic with a wide geographical coverage for obtaining better results.

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