

## Exploring Impulse Buying Patterns Among Millennials In The Fashion Retail Sector: An Analysis

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### Abstract

Over the past two decades, Millennials (Millennials) have gained significant attention from global marketers due to their considerable spending power and strong tendency toward impulse buying. However, limited research has examined the impulse buying behaviour of this cohort, and existing studies often fail to adopt an integrative approach that considers all potential influencing factors. The primary objective of this research is to identify and examine the simultaneous influence of various demographic, situational, and personal factors on impulse buying behaviour in the context of fashion apparel. A structured survey questionnaire was administered to a convenience sample of 250 Millennial consumers. The findings reveal that demographic factors—particularly gender—exert the strongest influence on impulse buying behaviour, followed by situational and personal factors. Notably, income (demographic), social influence (situational), and extraversion (personal) were found to have no significant effect on impulse buying. These insights can help global fashion retailers develop more targeted and effective market segmentation strategies tailored to the behavioural patterns of Millennial consumers.

### Keywords:

situational, personal, demographic, impulse buying behaviour, Millennials,

### 1.Introduction

India is renowned as a premier shopping destination, attracting both international tourists and local consumers. Kuala Lumpur, the nation's capital, was ranked the second-best shopping city in the Asia-Pacific region in 2022 (Globe Shopper Index, 2023). Shopping malls across the country are frequented not only on public holidays and weekends but also during weekdays, reflecting the central role of shopping in Indian lifestyle (Euromonitor International, 2023). Among the population, Millennials represent a significant demographic, comprising approximately 11 million individuals—about 39% of India's total population of 28.3 million (Department of Statistics India, 2011). Given their size and economic potential, understanding the impulse buying behaviour of this cohort is crucial for marketers. Many members of Millennials are educated and employed, positioning them as a powerful consumer segment. This generation is widely regarded as one of the most influential due to its high purchasing power (Krotz, 2015) and greater buying frequency compared to other age groups (Kim &

Ammeter, 2018; Ma & Niehm, 2016). Research has shown that impulse purchases account for 62% of supermarket revenues, underscoring the substantial impact of this behaviour on retail sales (Luo, 2015). While previous studies have explored the link between impulse buying and specific influencing factors (Vohs & Faber, 2017; Yu & Bastin, 2020), there remains a lack of comprehensive research that examines the simultaneous effects of multiple determinants and their dimensions. Therefore, the primary objective of this study is to investigate the integrated relationship between impulse buying behaviour and its key influencing factors.

## **2.Literature Review**

Early studies defined impulse buying behaviour as an unplanned purchase, where consumers make purchases without prior intention (Clover, 1950; Engel et al., 1968). However, subsequent research has argued that impulse buying goes beyond merely unplanned purchases. It also involves the influence of external stimuli that trigger spontaneous, on-the-spot decisions (Jones & Beatty, 1998). Scholars have increasingly recognized the role of behavioural motivations in impulse buying and have developed theoretical frameworks that emphasize the underlying psychological and emotional drivers (Rook & Hoch, 1985). Building on this perspective, research has identified various influencing factors—particularly situational, personal, and demographic variables—as potential determinants of impulse buying behaviour (Armos et al., 2024). Despite these advancements, there remains a notable gap in the literature: few studies have comprehensively examined the simultaneous impact of these multiple factors on impulse buying behaviour. This underscores the need for a more integrative and holistic approach to understanding the phenomenon.

### **2.1 Relationship Between Situational Factors and Impulse Buying Behaviour**

Situational factors refer to external stimuli that influence consumers' decisions at the point of purchase, often triggering impulse buying behaviour (Kacen et al., 2022). These factors typically lie beyond the consumer's direct control but can exert a significant and immediate impact on purchasing decisions. Five key dimensions are commonly associated with situational influences: store environment (Liao et al., 2019), social influence (Mattila & Wirtz, 2008), time availability (Foroughi et al., 2012), money availability (Foroughi et al., 2022), and credit card accessibility (Ruzita et al., 2014). Each of these dimensions has been shown to relate positively to impulse buying tendencies.

Millennials consumers, in particular, are more likely to engage in impulse purchases when they have sufficient time (Ma & Niehm, 2016), discretionary income (Yang et al., 2019), and are present in a pleasant, well-designed store environment (Dias, 2003). Additionally, social appropriateness—the perception that the impulse purchase is acceptable in a given social context—also plays a significant role in shaping behaviour (Luo, 2005). However, the connection between impulse tendency and actual purchasing behaviour may weaken if the consumer views the act as socially or personally inappropriate. In such scenarios, even highly impulsive individuals may suppress their urge to buy (Wu & Huan, 2010).

### **2.2 Relationship Between Personal Factors and Impulse Buying Behaviour**

Personal factors refer to enduring individual characteristics that influence consumer behaviour from within (Sharma et al., 2019). Prior research has established associations between various personal factors—such as mood (Yoon, 2013), hedonic motives (Yu & Bastin, 2010), perceived lack of self-control (Shen & Khalifa, 2022), extraversion (Badgaiyan & Verma, 2014), and materialism (Bae, 2013)—and impulse buying behaviour (Vohs & Faber, 2023). These internal

traits shape the emotional and psychological predispositions that drive spontaneous purchase decisions. However, not all personal traits consistently influence impulse buying across different studies. Some researchers, including Lee (2008) and Eckman & Yan (2011), suggest that the influence of personal factors may vary in strength or significance depending on context. For example, extraverts, who tend to be more sociable and expressive, are more inclined toward impulse buying compared to introverts (John & Srivastava, 1999). The inconsistency in empirical results raises questions about which specific dimensions of personal factors are most predictive of impulse buying tendencies, highlighting the need for further integrative analysis.

### 2.3 Relationship Between Demographic Factors and Impulse Buying Behaviour

Demographic variables—such as age, income, gender, educational qualification, marital status, and occupation—have long been studied as determinants of impulse buying behaviour. Bashar et al. (2023) confirmed that such demographic characteristics influence consumers' impulsive purchase decisions. Among these, gender has received considerable attention, although research findings remain inconclusive. For instance, while some studies report significant gender differences in impulse buying behaviour (Lin & Lin, 2005), others present mixed or contradictory results. Similarly, income has shown varied influence. Bashar et al. (2023) argue that disposable income is a major driver of impulse purchases, whereas Amos et al. (2014) contend that income exerts minimal influence. These inconsistencies in findings suggest that demographic variables alone may not adequately explain impulse buying behaviour unless considered alongside other contextual and psychological factors.

### 2.4 Research Hypotheses

Based on the literature review and the proposed conceptual framework, the following hypotheses are formulated to examine the influence of situational, personal, and demographic factors on impulse buying behaviour among Millennials consumers:

- **H1:** Situational factors—including store environment, social influence, time availability, money availability, and credit card accessibility—have a significant influence on the impulse buying behaviour of Millennial consumers.
- **H2:** Personal factors—such as mood, hedonic motives, lack of self-control, extraversion, and materialism—significantly influence the impulse buying behaviour of Millennial consumers.
- **H3:** Demographic factors—specifically gender and income—have a significant impact on the impulse buying behaviour of Millennial consumers.

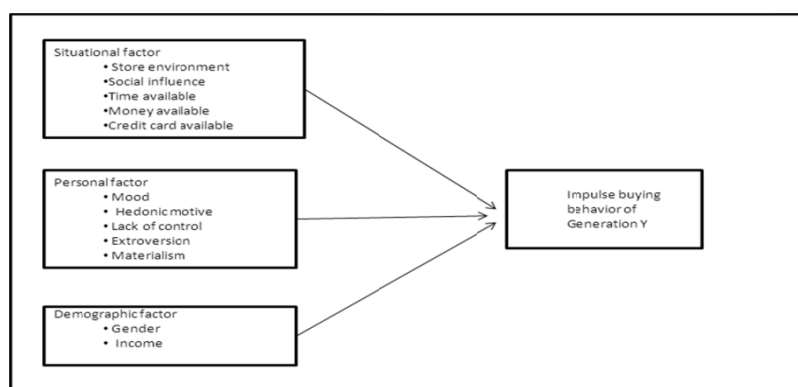


Figure 1. Impulse buying behaviour of Millennials

### 3. Research Methodology

This study employs a descriptive and causal research design using primary data collected through a structured questionnaire distributed via face-to-face interaction and email. The target population consists of Indian Millennials consumers (born between 1977 and 1995) who shop at fashion retail outlets in Kuala Lumpur. A total of 300 questionnaires were distributed, out of which 250 valid responses were retained after data screening. A non-probability sampling method was used due to the large and scattered nature of the population, and a cross-sectional approach was adopted for its cost and time efficiency. The study utilized 23 items to measure situational factors (store environment, social influence, time, money, and credit card availability), adapted from established sources such as Wakefield & Baker (1998), Beatty & Ferrell (1998), and Hanzaee & Taherikia (2020). Personal factors were measured using 27 items covering mood, hedonic motives, lack of control, extraversion, and materialism, with items sourced from Watson et al. (1988), Hausman (2000), and Richins & Dawson (1992), among others. Demographic factors were assessed using age and income, while impulse buying behaviour was measured using 7 items adapted from Nor et al. (2024). Data were analysed using factor analysis to validate constructs, correlation analysis to examine relationships among variables, and multiple regression analysis to test the hypotheses and determine the influence of each factor on impulse buying behaviour.

### 4. Result Analysis and Findings

Among the 250 valid respondents, 46% identified as Chinese, 42% reported earning above MYR 3,000, and 54% were female. Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was conducted to validate the underlying theoretical constructs and confirm factor groupings. The results show that the situational factors, comprising five dimensions, collectively explain 68.8% of the variance. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) values for each dimension are as follows: store environment (0.8), social influence (0.7), time availability (0.6), money availability (0.6), and credit card availability (0.7). Similarly, the personal factors, also consisting of five dimensions, account for 72.5% of the variance, with the following KMO values: mood (0.7), hedonic motive (0.8), lack of control (0.7), extraversion (0.8), and materialism (0.7). Impulse buying behaviour emerged as a single-factor construct with a KMO value of 0.8. Reliability analysis using Cronbach's alpha confirmed internal consistency, with all independent and dependent variables recording alpha scores of 0.7 or higher, indicating acceptable to high reliability.

The Pearson correlation analysis reveals that personal factors exhibit the strongest positive relationship with impulse buying behaviour ( $r = 0.40$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), followed by gender ( $r = 0.37$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) and situational factors ( $r = 0.34$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), indicating that these variables significantly influence impulse purchases among Millennials consumers. This suggests that individuals with certain psychological traits and emotional states, along with gender-related behavioural tendencies and external situational stimuli, are more likely to engage in impulsive buying. In contrast, income shows a very weak and statistically insignificant correlation with impulse buying ( $r = 0.03$ ,  $p = 0.552$ ), implying that financial status does not meaningfully impact the impulse buying tendencies of the respondents in this study.

**Table 1. Pearson correlation analysis**

Independent Variables	N	r	Significant
Situational Factors	250	0.34***	0.000
Personal Factors	250	0.40***	0.000

Gender	250	0.37***	0.000
Income	250	0.03	0.552

The multiple regression analysis results indicate that gender ( $\beta = 0.31$ ,  $t = 5.81$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) is the most significant predictor of impulse buying behaviour among Millennials consumers, followed closely by situational factors ( $\beta = 0.23$ ,  $t = 3.45$ ,  $p = 0.001$ ) and personal factors ( $\beta = 0.21$ ,  $t = 3.41$ ,  $p = 0.001$ ), all of which are statistically significant at the 0.01 level. These findings suggest that demographic and psychological traits, along with external situational influences, play a meaningful role in driving impulse purchases. In contrast, income ( $\beta = -0.02$ ,  $t = -0.40$ ,  $p = 0.691$ ) shows a negative but statistically insignificant effect, indicating that income level does not have a measurable impact on impulse buying behaviour in this sample.

**Table 2 Multiples repression analysis**

Independent Variables	Beta	t	Significant
Situational Factors (SF)	0.23	3.45	0.001
Personal Factors (PF)	0.21	3.41	0.001
Gender	0.31	5.81	0.000
Income	-0.02	-0.40	0.691
Dependent variable: Impulse buying behaviour			

Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

## 5. Discussion

The primary objective of this study was to examine the simultaneous relationship between impulse buying behaviour and its determinant factors—situational, personal, and demographic—among Millennials consumers. Among these, demographic factors, particularly gender, emerged as the most influential, followed by situational and personal factors. This highlights the importance for retailers to develop targeted marketing strategies based on gender segmentation. Within situational factors, dimensions such as store environment, money availability, credit card accessibility, and time availability were found to significantly influence impulse buying behaviour. Interestingly, social influence showed no significant effect, suggesting that the presence of friends or family does not impact Millennials' impulse purchasing—a finding aligned with previous studies (Graa & Dani-Elkabir, 2021). Therefore, marketers should focus on enhancing the store atmosphere—including music, lighting, temperature, layout, and design—while also promoting time-limited offers and ensuring easy payment options to stimulate impulse buying.

Regarding personal factors, hedonic motives, lack of control, mood, and materialism were positively associated with impulse buying, with materialism showing the strongest influence. This contradicts earlier findings (e.g., Chavosh et al., 2011) and may be explained by Millennials's tendency to improve their self-image and social identity through fashion consumption. Additionally, Millennials's fashion consciousness and attraction to trendy apparel (Pentecost & Lynda, 2020) reinforce this behaviour. Conversely, extraversion did not significantly influence impulse buying, which differs from findings by Mathai and Haridas (2014), indicating the complexity and evolving nature of personality's role in consumer behaviour. As such, marketers must stay updated on Millennials's dynamic preferences and

behaviours (Hughes, 2018). Further analysis of demographic variables showed that females are more prone to impulse buying than males, suggesting that gender-based targeting can enhance marketing effectiveness. Meanwhile, income was found to have no significant impact. This result could be attributed to the Millennials cohort's tendency to spend more spontaneously, driven by individualism and self-confidence (Laermer & Simmons, 2017), rather than income levels.

## 6. Conclusion

This study provides a comprehensive and integrative analysis of the factors influencing impulse buying behaviour among Millennials consumers in India's fashion retail sector. By examining situational, personal, and demographic factors together with their dimensions, the research offers valuable insights into the key drivers of spontaneous purchasing decisions in this influential consumer segment. The findings contribute to both academic literature and practical marketing strategies by highlighting which factors significantly impact impulse buying and which do not. The study underscores the importance of gender, store environment, materialism, and mood in shaping consumer behaviour, offering marketers a strategic roadmap to engage Millennials more effectively. Future research could further explore these relationships in other cultural contexts or across different product categories to enhance generalizability.

## 6. Limitations and Future Research

This study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. The primary limitation lies in the sample size and sampling method. With only 250 participants, the sample is relatively small in comparison to the approximately 11 million individuals who comprise the Millennials population in India. Furthermore, the use of convenience sampling, driven by time and budget constraints, may limit the generalizability of the findings. Data were collected exclusively from Kuala Lumpur through email and face-to-face methods, which may not accurately capture the diversity of consumer behaviour across different regions and socio-economic backgrounds within the country. For future research, it is recommended to employ a larger and more representative sample, encompassing various states and regions of India to enhance external validity. Probability-based sampling methods could provide more robust and generalizable results. Additionally, future studies may consider including other influencing variables—such as cultural orientation, online shopping behaviours, or psychological traits—to further enrich the understanding of impulse buying behaviour among Millennials.

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