

Impulse Apparel: Exploring Consumer Behavior and Influencing Factors in the Apparel Industry

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Abstract

The purpose of the study is to recognize impulse buying behavior of consumers in the field of Apparel Industry. Researchers have always been captivated in the field of impulsive buying but impulsive buying specific to apparel industry has been the new talk. Apparel, one of the basic necessities to cover the body has leaped to fashion academics due to its ever changing and strong growth of the fashion industry. The main focus of this study, is to explore and understand various secondary research papers in the field of consumer behavior in apparel industry. This paper will identify the environmental and atmospheric cues, factors stimulating offline and online purchase behavior in retail store which plays an important role triggering and influencing impulsive buying behavior. The study will emphasize the stimuli and related response model which gives prospective researcher's a better understanding of consumer buying behavior with respect to Stimulation- organism – response model.

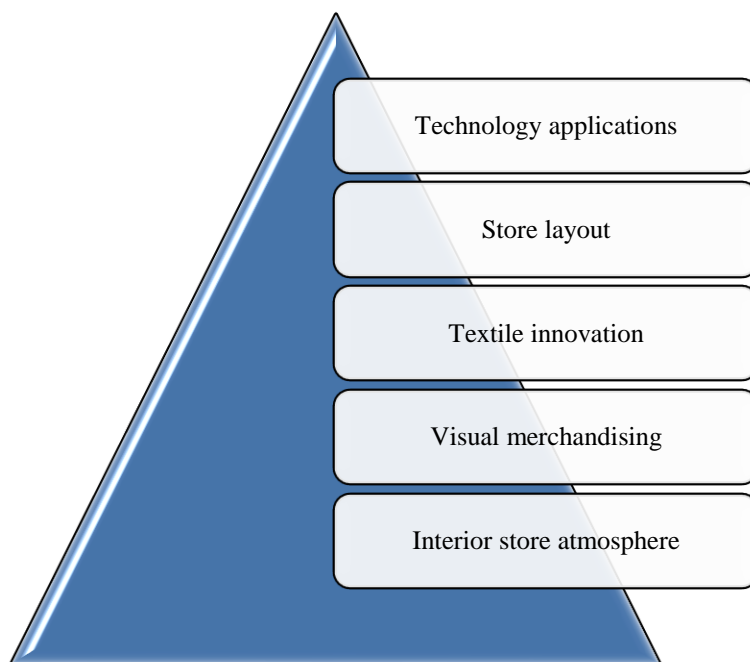
Keywords: Impulsive buying, stimuli, stimulation-organism-response, online buying, factors affecting consumer behavior, impulsive buying verses traditional buying.

Introduction

The fashion apparel industry has remarkably progressed especially over the last 20 years, when the frontline industry commences to enlarge in INDIA more organized apparel sector took its stage of evolution and growth which brought in noteworthy apprehension in the behavior of consumers. The current revenue in the apparel market estimated to the amount of US\$88,486 million in 2022. The market is estimated to grow annually by 4.85% (CAGR 2022-2026). The industry is anticipated for the growth in volume of 8.8% in 2023 globally (Gutierrez-Cruz, 2022).

The ever changing and well-built extension of the fashion apparel industry has a direct influence on the academics of fashion. While the industry alters, embrace and support the changes in every domain regardless to Technology applications, Store layouts, Textile innovation and augmented reality in retail stores offline or online, it is vital to these exchanges gradually the way consumers think and act about the apparel industry.

Offline Attributes

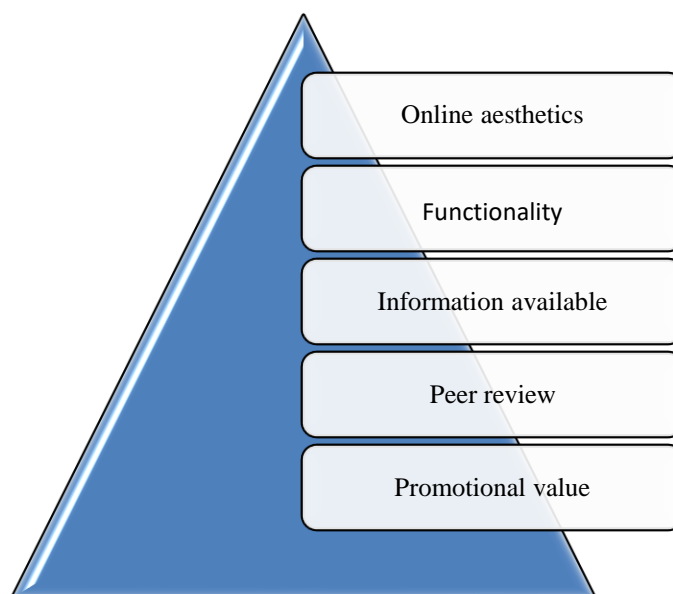


Source: *Self constructed*

Main focus of this study is to identify the environmental and atmospheric cues of stimulation in offline and online retail store which plays an important role triggering and influencing impulsive buying in consumers, customary, online as well as retail but the description of triggers differs from both the form of retail and also differ from store to store.

In offline retail the effect of exterior visual merchandising and interior store atmosphere impact the purchasing behavior of consumer towards apparels, where as in online retailing browsing, website aesthetics, functionality, information availability, peer review and promotional values that contribute to individuals' decision in buying behavior.

Online Attributes



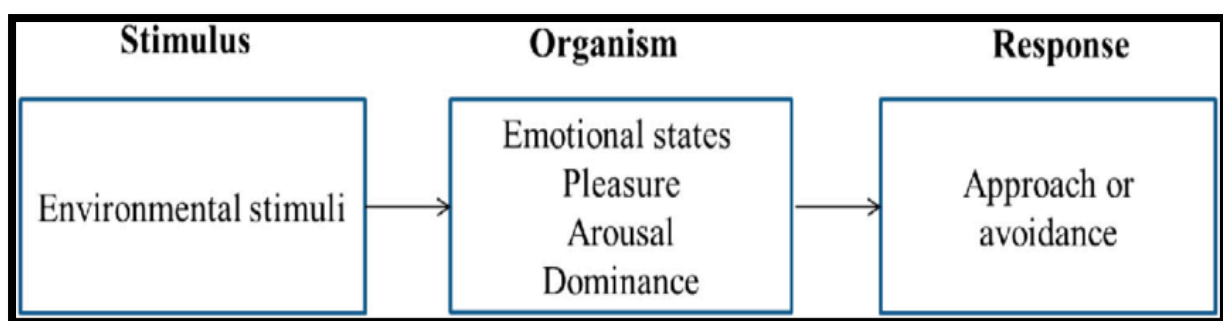
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Both the stores offline and online have its own way to attract and impulse the consumer in their decision making. This study focuses on the identifying on the Roles of stimuli towards the consumer behavior and to come out with the better understanding on the factors stimulating offline and online purchase behavior in retail store with the help of secondary research papers in the field of consumer behavior in apparel industry.

Stimulation-organism-response Model

To analyze the psychological impact in store and online Stimulation-organism-response model will be the starting point in understanding the consumer behavior even better.

The Stimulus- Organism-Response Theory is a psychological framework that aids in our comprehension of the motivations for human conduct. So, learning the causes of customers' or buyers' altered behaviour after entering a store is crucial. The majority of our actions are reflections of specific stimuli that have a significant impact on our inner feelings.



Source: *Mehrabian and Russell (1974)*

In 1974, Albert Mehrabian and James A. Russel additionally expanded the SOR design by examining consumer behavior. The SOR model stands for Environmental cues(stimuli) on an independent psychological condition (organism), dominate to behavioral effect(response).

The Stimulus- Organism- Response structure is benched in environmental psychology, had existed and implemented to numerous conceptual designs used for learning the theory of Impulsive behavior in retail stores as well as in the electronic shopping circumstances in pervious educational writings. The prime intention of this study is to find out the stimuli behavior of customers offline and online by comparing their behaviors in both form of retail stores and bring out better understanding in the concept.

Objectives of the Study

1. To understand and explore the various components influencing consumer behavior in apparel industry.
2. To study the impact of these factors separately in offline and online retail modes.
3. To review SOR model and suggest constructive model to improve the overall impact on consumers related to apparel industry.

Review of Literature

Impulsive buying behavior

Impulsive behavior is instantaneous and unexpected purchases without any requirement in advance to shopping, regard to a certain product classification to encounter specific needs.

These actions take place following consumer experience that leads to unanticipated phenomenon of a very powerful impulse to buy and forced to make unbidden purchases beyond any adequate thought. The steer to create impulsive behavior is a composite hedonic element that frequently vitalizing emotional dispute, which would be expected from internal (psychological aspects) or external (inducement from promoters) (Jondry Adrin Hetharie, 2019).

Impulse buying earlier was classified as organized, unorganized or impulse gesture which leads to purchases. Planned purchases are always a time consuming which involves information search with logical decision-making process, however unorganized purchases refer to decision making without any prior planning and references. Impulse buying is prominent from unplanned purchases in phrase with prompt buying decision making. Adding on to unplanned buying, impulsive buying behaviour also demand an instant, powerful and desirable need to buy (Muruganatham. & Bhakat, 2013) without any shopping desire prior to setting foot into the retail store (Beatty & Ferrell, 1998).

Impulse buying was further defined as unexpected, entrancing, hedonically compound buying behaviour which involves swiftness on decision making that prevent reflective and intentional deliberation of information and options made by consumers (Bayley & Nancarrow, 1998). Hedonic behaviour on the other hand is patented as pleasure, in disparity to pragmatic behaviour which experiences economics and seek functional value among shoppers.

Preliminary research on Impulsive buying behaviour were apprehensive with topics on rational, determining impulse behaviour from non- impulsive behaviour and strive to rank the different kinds of impulsive behaviour into different categorization (Kollat & Willett, 1969). This method required the conception of impulsive behaviour as an attribute appearing from consumer behaviour. Attributes represents tendency that refers to consumers distinctive psychological trait (Park & Lennon, 2009).

In spite of negative aspects with regards to impulsive buying behaviour in formerly investigation, this approach carry out report to reliable sales over all the product classifications (Han , Morgan , Kotsiopoulos, & Kang-Park, 1991).

The extensiveness of impulsive behaviour, for relatively extravagant product like apparels lead to research and investigate impulse buying as an intrinsic attribute, preferably than feedback to economical product offering (Cobb & Hoyer , 1986). Hence, impulsive behaviour like a consumer attribute may be categorically associated to purchasing behaviour (Park & Lennon, 2009).

Consumer Behaviour in Apparel Industry

Consumer behaviour is the study which involves individuals or groups selection, acquire, use or unload of goods and services that satisfies the needs, wants and desires of consumers (Solomon, 2006). The term also refers to the study of both personal and organisational behavioural study. Examining consumers encompasses the learning of what to buy, how to buy, where to buy and why consumers are buying (Dadfar, 2009). The current learning has moulded and strive to understand consumer behaviour related to apparel industry which contains the decision- making process that directs to the move of purchases. Thus, consumer behaviour not only involves learning or analysis of what individuals consume, besides how frequently do they and under what circumstances they consume.

Consumers have their own preferences relating to apparel buying which is divided into two categories that is the store traits which includes price of the apparels, size, variety, fashion, durability etc., and store traits that includes size of the store, location, ambience, different services the store offers etc. Apparel one of the basic necessity of humans across globe has its stable preferences and consumption among the consumers.

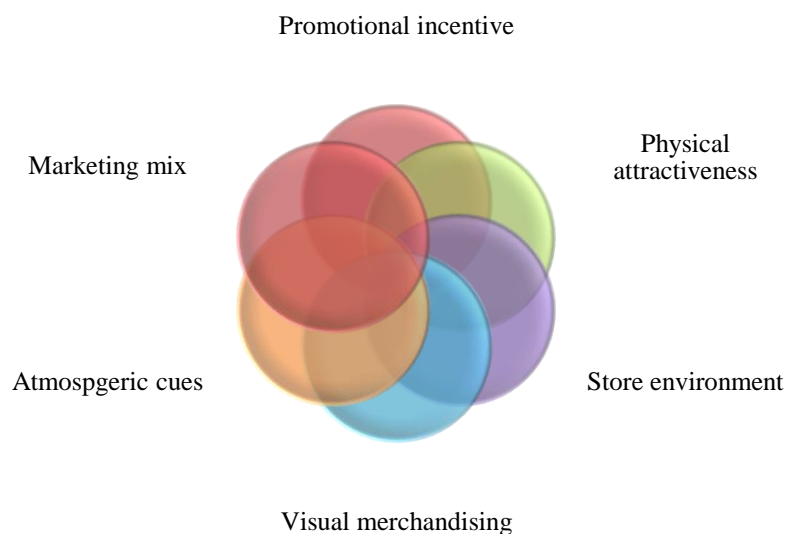
Factors of stimulation in offline and online retail stores

Offline Retail stores

The attributes of impulse buying refers to the different stimulations or marketing cues that have been used and administered by the marketer in a aim to tempt or persuade consumer in their buying behaviour (Youn & Faber, 2000).Buyers can encounter a desire to buy commodities through impulsive action when they visually experience intimations such as promotional incentive (Dholakia, 2000). Determined environment and retail surroundings impact in store and future store options which impacts the expectations and preferences of the consumers (Hausman, 2000).

Studies have shown that consumer belief over physical attractiveness of a retail store had an inflated choice of a store then the quality of merchandise, pricing and selection of commodities. This study supports the conviction on consumer option of store is purely determined on store surroundings and visual merchandise (Darden, Erdem, & Darden, 1983). While examine the people’s approach, they avoid and create circumstances in line with their desires (Bowers, 1973) consumers circumvent or depart strife full and obstructive retail store (Morgan , Jeffrey , & Anglin, 1999). Researchers have come across various different details of retailing environments which will influence consumer behaviour. Recent studies have revealed the importance of atmospheric cues in retail store i.e., sounds, smell, sight etc., are the triggering hints that can impact the consumers desires impulsively (Karbasivar & Yarahmadi, 2011). Marketing mix on the other hand also plays an important role in influencing consumer decision process at various phases of buying.

Elements of offline impulsive buying



Source: Self Constructed

Online Retail stores

Attributes on stimuli that are accomplished by consumers in their surroundings or individual personality elements of consumer which provoke them to compel impulse purchases have been researched (Beatty & Ferrell, 1998). Furthermore, these attributes can be distinguished by numerous conditional variables that may be experienced by consumers earlier to their behavioural reactions, considering the unexpected changes in responses or low cognitive influence guiding to impulsive purchases (Belk, 1975).

Personality traits

Individuals engaging in impulsive purchase tend to be a part of similar characteristics and personality attributes (Youn & Faber, 2000). Age being one such characteristic which has a major impact, where in it has been noticed that adolescent individuals tend to be stronger impulsive than elderly individuals (Bellenger, Robertson, & Hirschman, 1978).

Shopping enjoyment

Studies have shown the importance to shopping enjoyment could capture consumers more in browsing activity which could guide to an escalated desire to buy. Taking into report the theory of atmospheric motive owning a constructive effect on impulsive buying, have indicated a positive correlation with shopping enjoyment on cyberspace (Adelaar, Chang, Lancendorfer, Lee, & Morimoto, 2003).

Content and variety

Furthermore researchers, have given importance of content and variety in the electronic shopping, content is an aspect in web-based shopping which constitute all the informative details that is accessible on a webpage such as cost, offers, products traits, contact information, return policies and spares (Montoya-Weiss, Voss, & Grewal, 2003). Former learnings have shown that the like hood of consumer reassessing the website increases remarkably with the availability of appropriate content (Rice, et al., 2014).

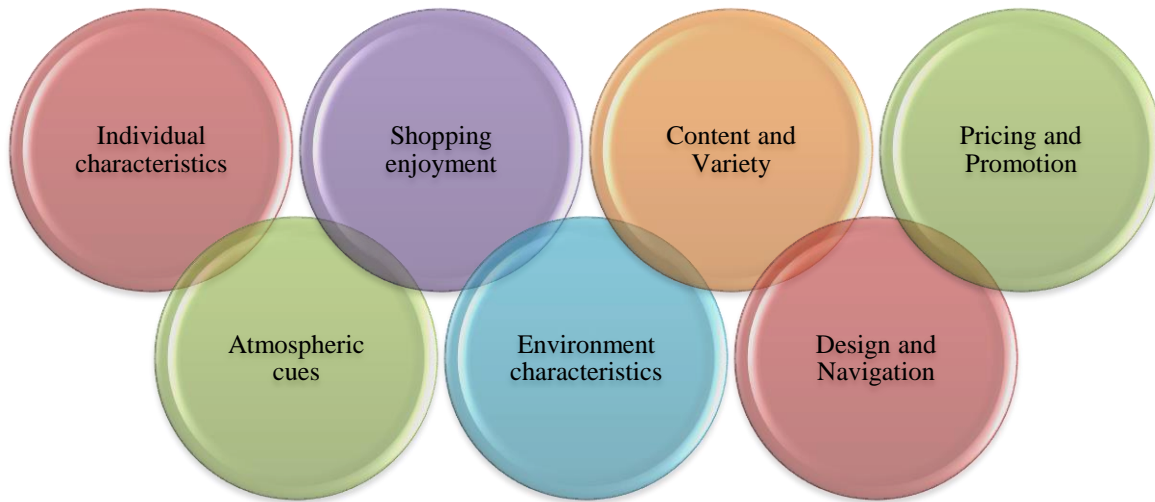
Design and navigation

Design is a component experienced in the online shopping circumstance which encloses the aesthetics of the webpage. It can be interpreted as 'the standard to which a human accepts that the online shopping is aesthetically satisfying to the customers. The magnetism of the outline cited mostly to its vision attributes specially the colours engaged and its gross line-up (Van der Heijden, Verhagen, & Creemers, 2003). Navigation another important aspect of electronic store that plays an essential part in forming the perspective and behaviour that targets the user to use the technology (Davis, 1989).

Pricing and promotional values

The online retail surroundings are distinctive and has certain features that generate divergent atmosphere in the buyer decision making affair. Due to the absence of tangible touch with the product articles pragmatic online customers lean to grant additional significance to the prices of the product. Hence, pricing and unique offers play an essential part in stimulating online customer to engage in grazing for products on the website which expands the probability of purchases (Lee, Kim, & Fairhurst, 2009). Studies have also proven that browsing is a dominant feature of the impulsive purchases and it has revealed across numerous research's that, the prolonged an individual engross in browsing, the higher the possibility of them encountering an desire to buy as they will be exhibited to numerous stimuli in the environment which would impact the behaviour (Beatty & Ferrell, 1998).

Elements of online impulsive buying



Source: Self constructed

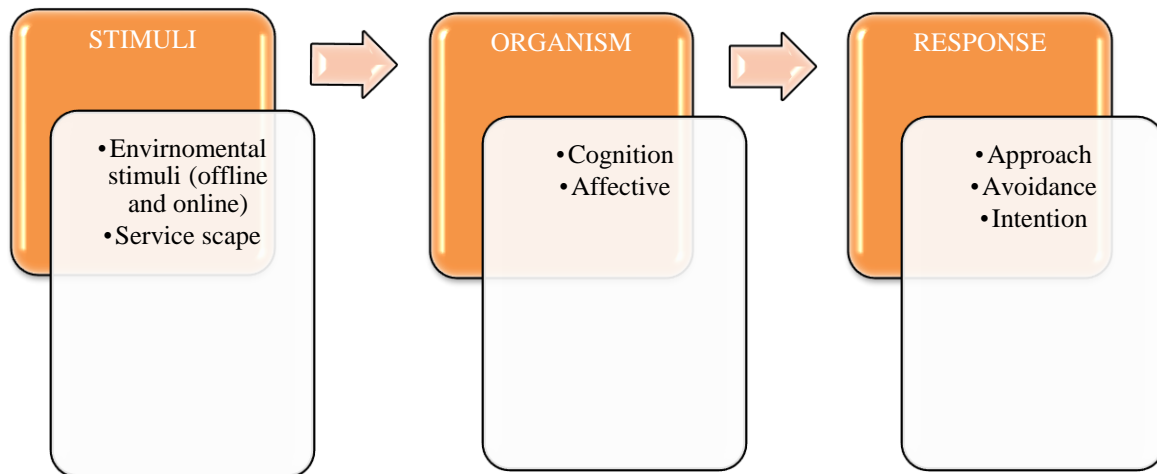
Stimulation- Organism- Response Model

The S-O-R model is a psychological theory which helps in comprehensive reasons behind Human behavior, further this study was developed by Albert Mehrabian and James A. Russel in 1974 to understand the consumer behavior in terms of Environmental stimuli, Behavioral response and Internal evaluations of consumers with respect to decision making. This model also suggest that consumers emotions play a very important role in acknowledging to environmental cues and stimuli (John C, 2002). Consciousness and unconsciousness of consumers perception and environmental analysis is what we observe (Donovan, 1982).

Mehrabian and Russel (1974) specified that psychological reactions on the environment can be described by below points:

- a. Pleasure- that is purely based on verbal discernments in the form of words used in happiness, delighted or fulfillment prevailing to environmental situations.
- b. Arousal- measured of a person's cheerfulness or liveliness in situations.
- c. Dominance- that is indicator on respondents' notion of readiness to be presiding and prominent in environmental cues.

The above-mentioned aspects assume that each environmental situations have certain conditions on the consumer decision making process which influence the behavior of the consumers. Mehrabian and Russel also mentioned Arousal as a high charge concept on level of feelings in the environment that natures to environmental psychology content.



Source: *Self constructed*

Stimuli

Store environment stimuli plays a very important role to influence consumer towards buying decision process. Earlier in Marketing research, Philip Kotler (1973) mentioned that environment and atmospheric cues as a new marketing tool to be indulged in retail outlets. Further the study of this concept of retail environment was evolved through Bitner and cast the term as 'Servicescape' which was defined as 'physical elements used by the firm to intensify and constrain action of consumers' (Bitner, 1992). Adding on the result of Donovan and Rossiter (1982) proposed that gratifying atmospheric and environmental cues influence the decision-making process of consumers to an unplanned purchase of commodities. The result of the study conducted by Park and Lennon also proved that tangible environment induces impulsive buyer behavior in consumers which results in unplanned purchase. Suggesting to the study human beings are high flown by the atmospheric and environmental cues during the service interaction of the store.

Online Environmental stimuli

When it comes to online stimuli it also comprises of environmental cues and ambience elements and design strands (Mummalaneni, 2005). Studies on Social elements on online environment are growing in the from of social networking sites and virtual community study (Flavian & Guinalic, 2005). Further the study in online environmental stimuli consists of product demonstration which comprises of visual and verbal elements (M.kim & lennon 2008). Which is further extended to layout, functionality, links and menus of the website (Koo & Ju, 2009).

ORGANISM- Cognitive process

The organism consists of Cognitive that is the thinking process of consumers and affective which involves moods, feelings and attitudes of consumers which involve the relationship between the stimuli and individuals (Chang & Chen, 2008).

Cognition

Studies have shown that relationship between cognition and emotion has greater influence towards behavioral aspect of consumers (Lopez & Ruiz, 2010). Researchers have illustrated the influence of outcome of moods on cognition (Russell & Snodgrass, 1987).

Further studies have perceived cognition as a dominant element of moderate emotions. While these elements play an important role during the online shopping environment contrasted to offline or traditional shopping environment as we can observe that higher thinking process is involved during computed mediated activity which is less compared to offline buying process.

Affective

Research studies have shown affective as emotion, moods, feeling and attitudes in marketing and environmental psychology. Sensations are considered as a mental condition of mind which arises on consumers due to the events and thoughts of a situation (Bagozzi, Gopinath & Nyer, 1999).

Response

The model SOR exposes the reactions of consumers towards stimuli and developments of organism through which a response behavior develops. There are many reactions that the consumer portrays one such important response is the Approach and avoidance reaction towards the atmospherics and environmental cues (Aubert, 1997).

Approach behavior consists of the positive response of willingness to stay in a retail outlet, explore and finally purchase the commodity. But the Avoidance behavior leads to opposite of approach intends to avoid the situation.

Another very important response behavior is the intention to buy commodities can be called as behavioral intention. It simply means that intents to buy or purchase (Ballantine & Fortin, 2009). The literature also addresses the repurchase, positive word of mouth and loyal consumers that are also the response of intention behavioral.

Future Scope of Study

Following a thorough examination of the literature, the study has made several important predictions for aspiring researchers in the area of impulsive purchasing behaviour.

- Various approaches and factors have been studied through the secondary data analysis for offline and online retail store but detailed study in the factors affecting the impulsive behavior on consumers offline and online taking into intrinsic factors that affect impulse buying behavior have to be researched.
- The scope of intrinsic factors like culture, materialism, tendency of impulsive behavior to be considered in more elaborated, with assess to offline and online shopping amidst the consumers.
- The factors studied in the paper can be individually taken up for primary research.
- The shopaholic attribute can be given a special importance in the future research as it has taken over the consumers without any hinderance or age limitations.

Research Gap

All of the studies analysed in the review succeeds in identifying an understanding of impulsive behaviour in offline and online retail stores, but more research needs to be done on internal and external aspects relating to offline and online apparel retail stores.

Conclusion

This research studied the important attributes of impulsive buying behaviour that contribute to instantaneous and immediate purchases without any aim earlier to shopping in relation to a particular product classification to meet definite needs. But these sudden purchases are impacted by certain factors and attributes which have influenced by promotional approaches, in-store display, atmospheric cues and so on when it comes to offline apparel retail stores. In the other hand online apparel retailing has significant relationship with atmospheric cues with regard to browsing affair specifically content, variety, navigation and promotions. Previous studies have given the understanding on impulsive behaviour but in-depth study on impulsive consumer behaviour respect apparel have to be studied. Furthermore S-O-R model has been deliberated in order to understand the human behaviour with respect to stimuli caused by store environment, organism that consists of cognitive thinking process of consumer and response that deals with reactions of consumers towards the various stimulations.

Due to the numerous developments taking place in our nation and the significant changes in the purchasing power of each individual, which are reflected in impulsive behaviour across all product categories, there is now a great deal of opportunity in understanding both offline and online impulsive behaviour in Indian retailing. The proper fusion and well-coordinated outcome of the various factors influencing consumer behaviour may lead to an increase in sales income, benefiting both offline and online marketers and retailers.

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