

# Psychological Factors Driving Unplanned Online Purchase Behaviour Among Consumers in Coimbatore City

Dr Poornima B<sup>1</sup>, Ms Santhiya Priyadarshini M<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Assistant Professor, Department of B Com CA, Sri Ramakrishna College of Arts & Science, Coimbatore.

<sup>2</sup>III B Com CA, Sri Ramakrishna College of Arts & Science, Coimbatore.

## Abstract

The growth of e-commerce has had a considerable impact on the consumer purchasing behaviour particularly in Coimbatore City where internet purchases are being embraced. It analyses the psychological aspects that motivate unplanned online purchase behaviour, including the fear of missing out (FOMO), emotions, impulsiveness, scarcity, urgency and digital marketing tactics like flash sales and personalized recommendations. The structured questionnaire was used to gather primary data in the form of 100 online consumers, which was supported by secondary sources. Such statistical tools as percentage analysis, mean analysis, chi-square and ANOVA were used. The results demonstrate that there is a close relationship between triggers of psychological responses and impulsive online purchases, thus the necessity of ethical and responsible digital marketing.

**Keywords:** Unplanned Online purchase, Psychological Factors, (FOMO), Flash Sales, Consumer Behaviour, E-commerce, Coimbatore City.

## INTRODUCTION

The high rate of e-commerce has greatly changed the consumer buying behaviour particularly in such metropolitan cities as Coimbatore City where digital literacy and smartphone penetration are high. Online shopping sites are convenient, offer a variety of goods and provide easy access to them but it also promotes spontaneous and unplanned purchases by a series of psychological and marketing processes. Past research points out that fear of missing out (FOMO), emotional arousal, impulsivity, and immediate satisfaction as psychological variables play a significant role in consumer e-purchase decision-making. Flash sales, limited-time deals, scarcity, personalized recommending, and social proof are also examples of the marketing techniques that increase the desire to buy without prior planning. Emotional conditions including stress, excitement, boredom, or even happiness of the consumers also contribute greatly to the vulnerability of impulsive buying behaviour. Although such digital marketing activities improve the sales and customer interaction, they create ethical issues of manipulation, consumer control and privacy. In such a fastest developing commercial centre as Coimbatore City, it is necessary to know the psychological aspects of the unplanned online purchase behaviour. This paper seeks to examine

the interaction between psychological stimuli and digital marketing campaigns to determine how they can affect unintentional online buying by consumers as well as touching on the ethical aspect of the digital market.

## STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The high rate of online shopping has also caused a high rate of unplanned and impulsive buying behaviour among customers. Digital marketing tactics are taking advantage of psychological causes of fear of missing out (FOMO), urgency, scarcity, personalization, and emotional pressure to make buying choices. Though the strategies increase sales, they tend to cause irrationality and unplanned buying among the consumers. In addition, ethical issues pertaining to manipulation of consumers in online shopping setting, consumer privacy and absence of autonomy are not well addressed. Thus, it is necessary to examine the psychological determinants of unplanned online purchase behaviour and underline the significance of the responsible and ethical digital marketing in the work with consumers in Coimbatore city.

## SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The study is restricted to the conceptualizing of the psychological variables that contribute to the

affected of unplanned online purchase behaviour among the consumers in Coimbatore City. The paper dwells upon the main psychological stimuli, including fear of missing out (FOMO), emotions, impulsivity, scarcity, urgency, and the effect of digital marketing practices, including flash sales, personalized recommendations, and social proof. It investigates the influence of emotional conditions and stimuli of online marketing on the impulse buying decision on e-commerce websites. Ethical issues associated with the use of psychological triggers in online marketing are also included in the study. The results can only be applied to the online shoppers in the Coimbatore City and not to include other regions or offline shopping behaviour.

### OBJECTIVES

- To examine how psychological factors such as FOMO, urgency, and scarcity influence online impulsive purchasing behaviour.
- To explore how digital marketing tools like flash sales, personalization, and AI trigger online buying behaviour.
- To analyse the negative effects of FOMO on consumers online purchase decisions.

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### i. Source of Data

The research is based on primary data as well as secondary data.

#### ii. Data Collection Method

Primary Data: A structured questionnaire was used to measure psychological variables that affect impulse buying in online shopping as primary data.

Secondary Data: The secondary data were gathered through academic articles and other research journals available online.

#### iii. Area of the Study

The research is restricted to Coimbatore City, Tamil Nadu. It is concerned with online consumer behaviour of consumers in buying.

#### iv. Sampling Technique and Sample size

The sample use convenience sampling in choose the respondents in the Coimbatore city depending on availability and willingness.

Sample Size – sample of 100 respondents who are involved in online shopping have participated in the study.

#### v. Periods of the Study

November 2025 to January 2026

#### vi. Statistical tools of the Study

- Simple Percentage Analysis
- Average Score
- Chi-Square Analysis
- ANOVA

### LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

- The research is restricted to a small sample. Therefore, the findings cannot be applied to all internet purchasers.
- The convenience sampling method was employed, and the respondent bias and inadequate representation can occur.
- The study is based on self-reported information which can be affected by personal attitudes and moods.

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

**Fahad Ali (et al.)2025<sup>1</sup>** in their study were also able to examine the effect of psychological stimuli (scarcity, urgency, and personalization) on online consumer purchasing behaviour. Based on the quantitative data of 400 online shoppers, the results of the regression and ANOVA analysis demonstrated that the scarcity and urgency cues play a significant role in generating a purchase intention as compared to personalization. Another aspect of the study that was emphasized is the ethical dilemma and the necessity of balanced marketing.

**Tanja Vujovic (et al.)2025<sup>2</sup>** investigated how psychological factors have an impact on consumer decision-making and compulsive online shopping. The personality traits (extraversion, neuroticism and conscientiousness), and emotional factors (stress, anxiety) were analysed with the help of survey data of 377 participants. The results showed that psychological characteristics are a major impetus to unplanned purchases made online and urged the necessity of ethical and sustainable online marketing.

**Stefan Derian Hartono, Alberta Ingriana 2025<sup>3</sup>** conducted a systematic review of the literature that

examined how flash sales influence the impulsive online purchase behaviour. The study, based on the 33 articles published in 2020-24, determined urgency, scarcity, social influence, and fear of missing out as key psychological triggers. The review has also explained the implicates of promotions based on time on rational decision-making and has brought a question of ethics that should be used responsibly in digital marketing through flash sales strategies.

N. N. Aliyev 2024<sup>4</sup> explored of the psychological assumptions of impulse purchase with reference to online shopping environment. According to the study significant contributors to unplanned purchase are fear of missing out, instant gratification, emotional appeal, and social proof. It also mentioned the strength of online marketing networks like customized recommendation and retargeting. The research was concerned with accounting and transparency of ethics to provide a balance between the profitability of business and the welfare of consumers.

Yong Xu (et al.)2022<sup>5</sup> introduced a system of Web-based shopping, user persona, that merges the emotional and psychological factor to encourage individual suggestions. They asserted through the analysis of emotions and behaviour that customer satisfaction and marketing strategies are increased by personalisation of customers using emotions. The research provides insights on consumer behaviour and digital marketing literature, as it presents psychological and emotional insights as primary contributors to online buying decisions.

**FOMO REGARDING DATABASE**

The consumption of consumer databases and information-based marketing strategies tend to influence Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) in online shopping. The browsing behaviour, purchase history and user data are analysed on online platforms to provide personalized recommendations and offers with time limits. These database driven strategies build a sense of urgency and perceived scarcity, as such encouraging the consumer to make unplanned buying decisions.

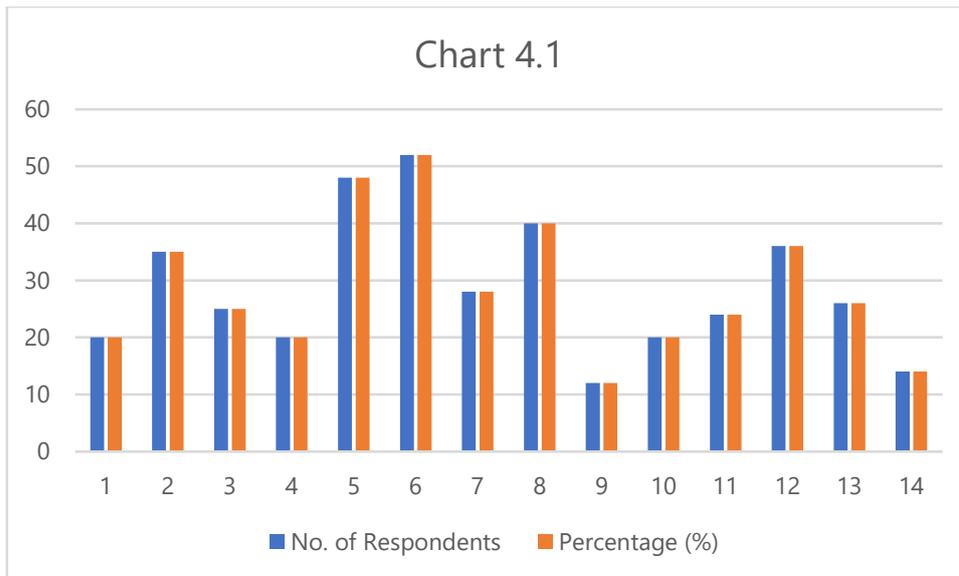
**Data Analysis & Interpretation**

**Table 4.1: Simple Percentage Analysis**

**Percentage Analysis of Demographic Profile of Respondents**

(Number of Respondents ÷ Total Number of Respondents) × 100

Demographic Variables	Category	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Age	18-20 years	20	20
	21-25 years	35	35
	26-30 years	25	25
	Above 30 years	20	20
Gender	Male	48	48
	Female	52	52
Occupation	Student	28	28
	Private employee	40	40
	Government Employee	12	12
	Business Employee	20	20
Monthly Income	Below ₹20,000	24	24
	₹20,001-₹40,000	36	36
	₹40,001-₹60,000	26	26
	Above ₹60,000	14	14



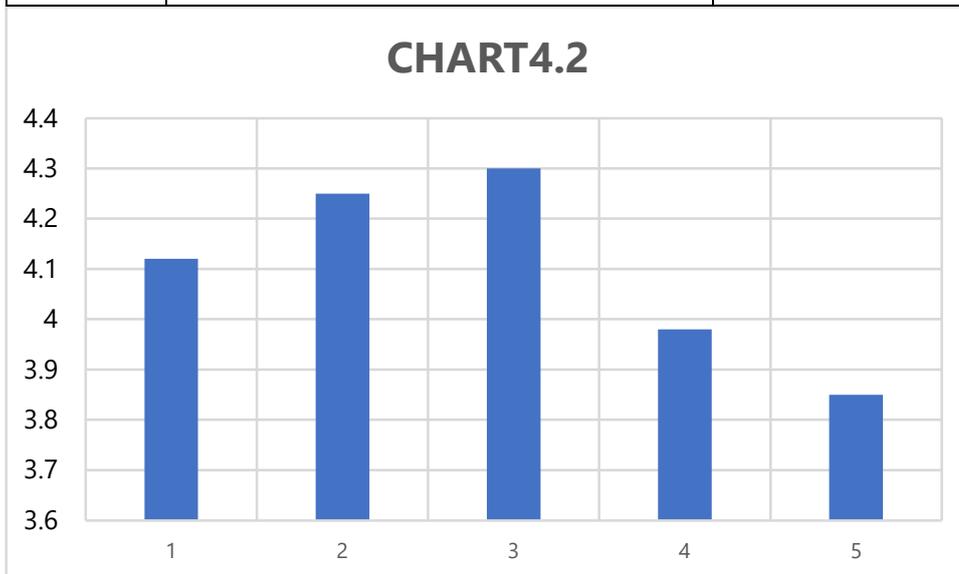
**Interpretation:**

As it was analysed, the majority of the respondents are aged between 21-25 (35%). The number of female respondents is a little more than male. Most of the respondents are persons who are privately employed (40%), and a significant percentage of the respondents make 20,001-40,000 per month (36%).

**Table 4.2: Average (Mean) Analysis**

**Score of Psychological Factors Influencing Unplanned Online Purchase Behaviour**

S. No	Psychological Factors	Mean Score
1	Fear of Missing Out (FOMO)	4.12
2	Scarcity and Urgency	4.25
3	Flash Sales and Discounts	4.30
4	Emotional Influence	3.98
5	Personalized Recommendations	3.85



**Interpretation:**

In the table, Flash Sales and Discounts are the ones that have a highest mean score followed by Scarcity and Urgency. This implies that unplanned online purchase behaviour is highly affected by other psychological factors that are related to marketing.

**Table 4.3: Chi-Square Test Analysis  
 Relationship Between Psychological Factors and Unplanned Online Purchase Behaviour**

**(O) Observed Frequency**

**(E) Expected Frequency**

$$(\chi^2 = \sum (O - E)^2 / E)$$

Response Category	O	E	(O-E)	(O-E) <sup>2</sup>	(O-E) <sup>2</sup> /E
Agree	44	30	14	196	6.53
Neutral	18	30	-12	144	4.80
Disagree	12	30	-18	324	10.80
Strongly Disagree	8	30	-22	484	16.13
TOTAL	120	120	-	-	40.39

**Interpretation:**

The calculated Chi-Square (40.39) is more than the table figure at 5% level of significance, the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, the factors and unplanned online purchase behaviour have a strong relationship.

**Table 4.4: ANOVA Analysis**

**Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) Showing Difference In Unplanned Online Purchase Behaviour Based on Income Level of Respondents**

Source of Variation	Sum of Square (ss)	Degrees of Freedom (df)	Mean Square (ms)	F Value
Between Groups	142.80	3	470.60	4.58
Within Groups	1084.20	116	9.35	-
TOTAL	1227.00	119	-	-

**Interpretation:**

The F value of 4.58 has a significant value at the 5 percent level. Therefore, the null hypothesis is lost implying that there is no significant difference in the unplanned online purchase behaviour in the various income groups.

**FINDINGS**

- Unplanned online purchases of young consumers (21-25 years old) in the Coimbatore city constitute the majority (women slightly more than men), and they are primarily those who are privately employed with a monthly income of 20,001-40,000.
- Unplanned online purchase behaviour is mostly affected by flash sales and discounts, scarcity, and urgency, and, as a result, marketing-related psychological variables have a significant impact.
- The Chi-square value calculated (40.39) exceeds the table value at the 5% level of significance and this shows that there is a significant correlation between

psychological aspects and unintended online purchase behaviour in Coimbatore city.

- ANOVA outcome reveals that the F value (4.58) is significant at 5% level, which means that the respondents of the city of Coimbatore differ significantly in unplanned online purchase behaviour depending on the income level.

**SUGGESTIONS**

According to the research results, it is proposed that platforms of e-commerce functioning in the Coimbatore city must pursue responsible and ethical promotion strategies. As flash sales, discounts, and urgency messages are the most effective factors in unplanned online purchase behaviour, the platforms must facilitate transparent prices, clear product description, and authentic

offers. It is significant to educate consumers (young and middle-income groups, in particular) on eco-friendly online spending. The consumers are advised to compare, read reviews and evaluate their actual needs and then make purchases. This can minimize unnecessary impulsive purchase, enhance customer satisfaction and enable long term trust between consumers and online retailers in Coimbatore city.

## CONCLUSIONS

The paper has concluded that consumer behaviour in Coimbatore city in relation to unplanned online purchase behaviour are highly influenced by psychological and promotion elements. Flash sales, discounts, and marketers focused on urgency are likely to make young consumers and middle-income groups purchase without thinking. The percentage analysis, the average scores, Chi-Square and ANOVA results prove that there are significant relationships and differences between consumer behaviour. On the whole, the research points at the need to focus on responsible marketing and the knowledgeable choice taken by the consumer. Online shopping sites can boost consumer confidence and satisfaction in Coimbatore city by facilitating transparency and awareness that will lower impulse buying behaviours and improve consumer confidence.

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