

Study on Unplanned Purchases in Indian Retail: Emotional Triggers in DMart Customers

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ABSTRACT

Emotionally driven unplanned buying has come as an important part of consumer behaviour, especially in modern retail setup. This study evaluates the emotionally triggered unplanned purchase behaviour of consumers, with special reference to the D-Mart store. The primary objective of the study is to identify and analyse the factors influencing consumers' emotional responses and unplanned purchase decisions during shopping visits. Primary data were collected from 100 customers visiting the D-Mart store in Nandurbar city through a structured questionnaire. The study analyses the influence of factors such as in-store promotional offers, product display strategies, family and peer influence, and consumers' emotional situation on unplanned purchase behaviour. The findings indicate that promotional strategies, systematic store layouts, and attractive visual merchandising positively influence consumers' tendency towards emotionally driven unplanned purchases. Demographic variables such as age, gender, and income also shows a moderate influence on purchasing behaviour. Lastly, situational factors, including discounts and promotional offers, along with psychological factors such as the fear of missing out (FOMO) and excitement, play an important role in shaping unplanned purchase decisions. The study gives practical implications for retailers by highlighting the advantages of effective store layouts, promotional strategies in enhancing customer experience and improving sales.

Keywords: Indian Retail, Emotional Triggers, Purchase Behaviour, Demographic Variables, FOMO.

Introduction

Shift of customers from traditional Kirana stores to the multi-level super stores such as DMart, Reliance Fresh is the most significant event of the current decade. This shift is predominantly driven by tier 2 and tier 3 cities, similarly Nandurbar is one of the growing urban centres that witnessed this rapid evolution. The centre of this rapid growth is attractive physical stores of DMart, pricing strategies, offers and discounts offered by the DMart.

Nandurbar, which is predominantly agrarian based economy and rising middle class population and increasing choices of gen Z population of the city provided a vital ground of growth for the retail giant like DMart.

- **Retail Business** - It is a type of Business where Selling is specially focused to the final consumers, retail provides bridge between producer or wholesalers to the customers.
- **DMart** - it is a giant retail business chain where products of daily needs are provided with very affordable and pocket friendly prices. The enterprise is run by title of Avenue supermat limited. This company was started by Radhakishan Damani in May 2002 from Mumbai.

Further, emotionally driven unplanned buying behaviour is the tendency of customers to buy products by the influence of attraction of products, low prices, heavy discounts, unique shapes or varieties and most important large variety availability. This purchase happens due to emotions such as happiness, excitement, fear of missing out, sadness or social influence directly. Emotional purchase totally ignores rational or logical thinking of budget, use or need of the product at that particular time.

Features of Emotional Unplanned Purchase

- No prior planning
- Less or no comparison of features
- Quick decisions of purchase
- Instant satisfaction
- Driven by Psychological factors (FOMO, excitement, etc.)

Problem Statement

Customers purchase additional products which are not needed at that time. This purchase is totally unplanned also DMart creates a physical appearance that encourages customers to buy impulsive rather than emotionally.

Need of Study

- To know about purchase psychology of customers of Nandurbar DMart.
- Helps Students to know about business Strategies retail super market in Nandurbar.
- Support to the Retail Management and consumer behaviour literature

Objectives

- To study about factors influencing emotional purchase
- To examine impacts of DMart pricing strategies on purchase
- To study impacts of product display and presentation on the purchase
- To know about the relationship between demographic factors and emotional purchase.

Hypothesis

- H¹:** Emotional Factors i.e. Excitement, FOMO, happiness significantly influence the unplanned purchase.
- H²:** DMart pricing strategies i.e. Offers, Discount influences emotional purchase.
- H³:** Product Display layout significantly attracts the customers.
- H⁴:** Demographic factors i.e. age, income and social groups shape customers emotional purchase.

Literature Review

Abdul Rahim Munshi (August 2017)¹ In their research paper, they have highlighted the findings that atmospheric change has a significant impact on consumer purchasing behaviour. Which has shown similar results in this study. They have highlighted the importance of product assortment and crowd density on product purchasing behaviour with respect to DMart stores. Based on the recommendations on the study area of Vadodara region, these results should pay special attention to the product assortment of D-Mart stores. Special queue design should be implemented to avoid crowding so that crowd density can be maintained. (Munshi, 2018)

Harsha S.Parecha & Mahesh C. Dabre (March 2018)² In his research paper, he has concluded that the positive attitude of the consumer towards D-Mart Shopping Centre is visible due to the helpfulness of the officers and employees here. This mart has shown its stability as a huge chain. Consumers of Amravati city come to D-Mart once or twice a week to buy different types of goods and buy in large quantities. The consumers here have a positive perception towards the working style, product range and facilities provided by D-Mart. Thus, the consumers here are playing an important role in the success of D-Mart. (Parecha & Dabre, 2018)

Muhammad Sabbir Rahman (2012) revealed a strong connection between consumer perception and supermarket choice, where age, gender, and income significantly influence unplanned purchase behaviour, with age having the most significant effect.

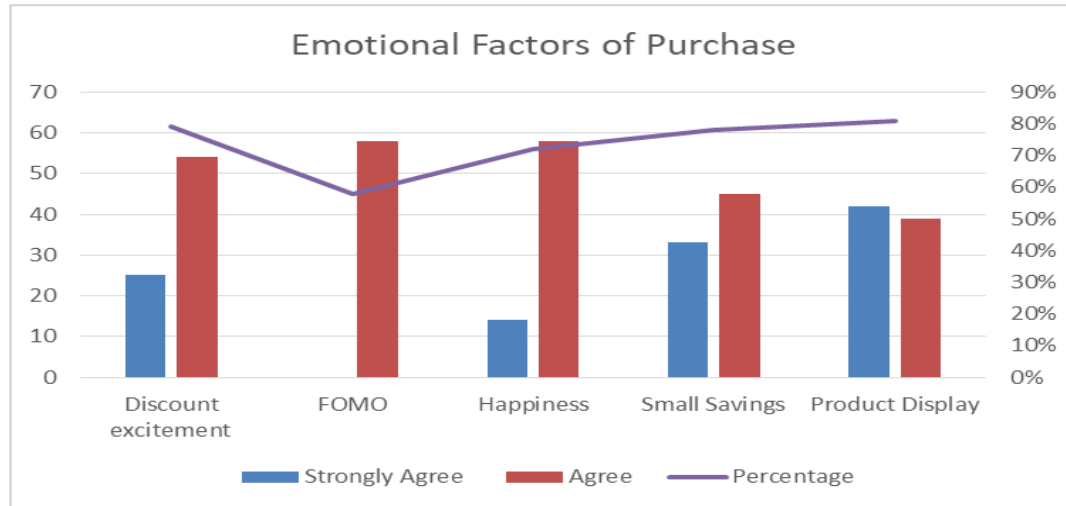
Methodology

Both primary and secondary data is used in the study to examine unplanned buying purchases of DMart customers. Primary data is gathered through questionnaires (Google forms) and Participative observations. While secondary data is collected from various journals, views of researchers, and with the help of the internet.

- **Sampling Technique** - Convenience Sampling
- **Analysis Technique** - Percentage analysis, Cross tabulation and correlation analysis
- **Area** - Nandurbar, Maharashtra
- **Number of Respondents** - 100
- **Research Type** - Descriptive research

Data Analysis

- **Percentage Analysis (Emotional factors vs Purchase decision)**



Emotional Factor	Strongly Agree	Agree	Total	Percentage
Discount excitement	25	54	79	79%
FOMO	0	58	58	58%
Happiness	14	58	72	72%
Small Savings	33	45	78	78%
Product Display	42	39	81	81%

Above table reflects that how various emotional factors shapes customers' purchase behaviour in a retail environment such as DMart. The percentage indicates the proportion of respondents who either **strongly agreed or agreed** that a particular factor affects their purchase decision.

Interpretation

- **Product Display (81%)** recorded the highest response, which implies that most customers are largely influenced by how products are arranged, presented, and displayed in the store. Attractive presentation increases attention and encourages unplanned buying.
- **Discount Excitement (79%)** shows that discounts create strong emotional attraction among customers. When consumers see reduced prices, they feel excited to purchase unplanned items.
- **Small Savings (78%)** indicates that customers feel happy when they perceive they are saving money, even on small amounts. This feeling of getting value encourages additional purchases.
- **Happiness (72%)** suggests that positive emotions while shopping also contribute to buying decisions. Customers often purchase more when they feel happy, relaxed, or emotionally satisfied during shopping.
- **FOMO – Fear of Missing Out (58%)** has comparatively lower influence than other factors, but still more than half of respondents agree that limited offers or fear of losing a deal encourages purchase behaviour.

The results clearly indicate that **visual and financial emotional triggers are stronger than psychological fear-based triggers** in influencing consumer buying behaviour. Product presentation and price-related emotions play a major role in stimulating impulse purchase.

- **Correlation between - Discount and Unplanned purchase**
- **Correlation between - Excitement and Unplanned purchase**
- **Correlation between Discount and Unplanned Purchase**

r = 0.7845

Interpretation

There is a strong positive correlation between discount and unplanned purchase ($r = 0.7845$). This indicates that discounts strongly influence consumers to make unplanned purchases at DMart.

Meaning

- Higher discount perception → More chances of unplanned purchase
- Consumers emotionally attracts to savings and price reduction

Correlation between Excitement and Unplanned Purchase

r = 0.7023

Interpretation

There is a **strong positive correlation** between **excitement** and **unplanned purchase** ($r = 0.7023$). This means emotional excitement significantly encourages consumers to purchase unplanned.

Meaning

- More excitement during shopping → more unplanned purchase

Variable Pair	Correlation	Strength
Discount ↔ Unplanned Purchase	0.7845	Strong positive
Excitement ↔ Unplanned Purchase	0.7023	Strong positive

Correlation between Product Display and Unplanned Purchase

Correlation between Product Display and Unplanned purchase	0.683673
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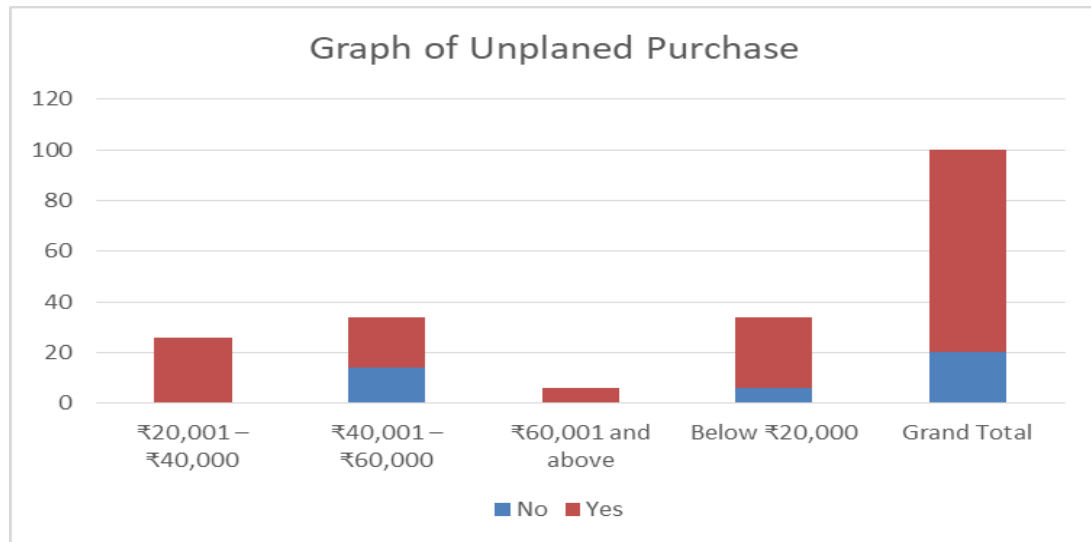
Pearson correlation analysis reveals that product display has a positive and considerable impact on unplanned purchase behaviour. A correlation coefficient of 0.6837 suggests that visual presentation plays an important role in stimulating impulse buying decisions.

- **Cross Tabulation Method**

Age Group	Emotional Purchase Frequency					Grand Total
	1	2	3	4	5	
21–30	2	1	7	21	25	56
31–40			4	11	4	19
41–50	3	12	1	5	4	25
Grand Total	5	13	12	37	33	100

Consumers in the 21–30 age group demonstrate the strongest emotional purchase behaviour, as a majority of respondents fall under high emotional purchase scores (4 and 5). This indicates that younger consumers are more likely to purchase products beyond actual need at DMart.

Count of Unplanned Purchase			
Income	Unplanned Purchase		Grand Total
	No	Yes	
₹20,001 – ₹40,000		26	26
₹40,001 – ₹60,000	14	20	34
₹60,001 and above		6	6
Below ₹20,000	6	28	34
Grand Total	20	80	100



Below ₹20,000 income group shows the highest unplanned purchase tendency

Because:

- 28 out of 34 respondents purchased unplanned

Findings

- There is a positive relation between emotional factors such as excitement, FOMO, happiness on unplanned purchase behaviour of customers of DMart Nandurbar.
- Strategies of creating excitement using offers, discounts and price drop increases the probability of unplanned purchase.
- Younger customers especially in between age group of 21 – 30 has more responses toward unplanned purchase most probably due to mental satisfaction on shopping.
- Customers having low income slab attracts more towards offers and discounts to get benefits of savings.
- Attractive product presentation and placements layout increases chances of more unplanned purchase by the customers.
- Females customers are more attractive towards discounting price competitively males.

Suggestions

- Promotional strategies should not only depends on prices cut, offers or discount but also clubbed with urgency and creating positive fear of missing out.
- Young consumers should be treated as a specialised target segment because they respond strongly to excitement, visual appeal and perceived savings; therefore retailers should create dedicated promotional clusters for this age group.
- Retailers should design **checkout psychology zones**, where affordable and emotionally attractive products are placed near billing counters to capture last-minute decisions.
- Store layout should be redesigned periodically based on customer movement and behavioural observation.
- Future retail competitiveness will depend on how effectively stores convert planned shoppers into emotionally engaged buyers.

Conclusion

The study concluded that emotional and environmental factors play vital role in framing customer purchase decisions in organised retail stores. Emotional triggers such as excitement, happiness and fear of missing out significantly increase the probability of unplanned purchase. Pricing

strategies, especially discounts and price drop, strongly influence customer perception and encourage additional purchases. Attractive product display and effective presentation further strengthen buying intention by improving visual appeal and product attention at DMart.

The analysis also confirms that demographic variables such as age, income, gender frames unplanned purchase behaviour. Younger consumers, particularly those in the **21–30 years** age group, are more emotionally responsive, while low and middle-income consumers react strongly to savings and promotional benefits. These findings suggest that customer's behaviours toward retail purchase is shaped by a combination of psychological, economic and demographic factors.

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