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Impulse Buying Behavior in Distribution Centers of Kathmandu

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Abstract

Purpose: The study's primary objective was to pinpoint the variables impacting consumers' impulsive purchasing decisions in the distribution centers in Kathmandu, the capital city of Nepal. **Research design, data, and methodology:** The independent variables used to identify consumer impulse buying behavior were the in-store displays, store employee behavior, reference groups, and promotional activities. A 6-point Likert scale questionnaire was employed for collecting the primary data from customers at the retail center of Kathmandu. The study's sample size was 396, employing a convenient sampling method. Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) and Analysis of a Moment Structures (AMOS) have been used to show the relationships between dependent and independent variables. **Results:** The outcome of the path analysis using structural equation modeling demonstrates that in-store displays, reference groups, and store employees' behavior significantly influence the customers' impulse buying decisions in the distribution center. Additionally, it has been discovered that promotional activities have no significant impact on consumers' impulsive purchasing decisions made at the retail center of Kathmandu. **Conclusions and Implications:** The study's findings indicate that the actions of store personnel, reference groups, and in-store displays significantly contribute to the acceleration of impulsive purchases. Such findings provide researchers and business executives with a road map for the future.

Keywords: Consumer, In-Store Displays, Marketing, Promotional Activities, Reference Groups, Store Employees.

JEL Classification Code: C12, L94, M31.

1. Introduction

Impulse buying refers to an unplanned purchase made due to a spur-of-the-moment choice and a propensity toward instant possession. Intense emotions typically employ impulse buying since it is more emotional than rational. An

impulsive or unplanned purchase is known as impulse buying (Rook, 1987). Because they are done abruptly and without much consideration, impulsive purchases are not reflective. Impulsive buyers are less likely to consider all the options carefully or balance the benefits and drawbacks of a purchase because they are more focused on getting what they want right away than finding a solution to an existing

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problem or something that will fulfill a specific need. In keeping with general impulsivity, impulsive purchases are made immediately (Jones et al., 2003). According to Sharma et al. (2010), impulsive buying is a type of hedonistic decision-making behavior that uses emotions, psychological motivation, and symbolic meanings to buy things. According to Ghani et al. (2011), impulse buying is the sudden choice to purchase anything in a store without planning.

Consumers are exposed to beautiful in-store layouts, attractive displays of products, cherry environmental forces, and many others as they browse within the context of shopping without intending to purchase any specific products. This encourages consumers to urge buying desired unplanned items. Because a quick urge overwhelms customers' resistance and triggers their want to buy, they make impulse purchases without carefully weighing their options or gathering information. Impulse buying is a quick, persuasive, hedonistically complex purchasing activity in which the rush to make prevents any careful, intentional analysis of alternatives or long-term effects (Bayley & Nancarrow, 1998; Beatty & Ferrel, 1998; Kacen & Lee, 2002). Convenience goods, often known as "impulse purchases," are low-priced, commonly bought items that don't involve much thought on the part of the consumer (Rook & Hoch, 1985). Beatty and Ferrel (1998) described impulsive buying as making an immediate purchase inside a store without intending to do so.

Bayley and Nancarrow (1998) argued that impulse buying is "a sudden, compelling, hedonically complicated purchase behavior in which the quickness of an impulsive choice process excludes careful and thoughtful consideration of other information and options." Contrary to utilitarian behavior, which entails seeking actual and economic benefits, hedonistic behavior is defined by pleasure. Engel and Blackwell (1982) stated that impulsive buying is formed without prior cognitive awareness or a predetermined purchase goal before entering the store. They discovered that impulse purchasing could be influenced by hedonic purchasing decisions made within a store and does not include reminder purchases.

The researchers have found contradictory findings on the same topic of the study, which was carried out in different situations/countries/times. For example, Awan and Azhar (2014) argued that high income encourages impulse buying. In contrast, Awan and Abbas (2015) argued that demographic characteristics greatly influence people's propensity for impulsive purchases. According to Hadjali et al. (2012), salespeople's advice and group shopping do not significantly affect apparel impulse purchases. In contrast, Kim and Su (2020) found a substantial influence on sellers' guidance to the consumer's impulse buying behavior. Ullal and Hawaldar (2018) observed that in-store displays

substantially impacted consumers' impulsive purchasing decisions; however, Bhatti and Latif (2014) reported that store environment and in-store displays have no significant impact on consumers' impulsive purchasing behavior. Martaleni et al. (2022) argued that promotion has a substantial influence on impulse buying behavior, but Ittaqullah et al. (2020) argued that mobile marketing and discounts have no significant effect on impulse buying behavior. Therefore, it is necessary to identify the factors influencing impulse buying decisions in shopping centers.

Due to its complexity and pervasive occurrence across an extensive product category range, impulse purchase is a crucial research topic for experts in consumer behavior (Ramanathan & Menon, 2006; Vohs & Faber, 2007). Unfortunately, only some research studies have been systematically conducted on impulse buying behavior in Nepal. Furthermore, this model has yet to be used to examine the consumer's impulse buying behavior toward distribution centers in Nepal. Therefore, these are the significant issues to be discussed the effect of the in-store display, the behavior of store employees, reference groups, and promotional activities on the impulsive buying decision of consumers in the shopping center in Kathmandu.

The study's primary goal is to investigate the variables influencing consumers' impulsive purchasing decisions in Kathmandu's retail malls. The followings are the specific goals of the study:

- To investigate the effect of in-store displays on consumers' impulsive purchasing decisions.
- To explore the effect of store employees' behavior on customers' impulsive purchasing decisions.
- To examine the impact of reference groups on customers' impulsive purchasing decisions.
- To identify the effect of promotional activities on consumers' impulsive purchasing decisions.

The study identified gaps in the current knowledge concerning impulse buying behavior. Literature noticed different researchers' controversial findings in the same research area. It shows the gap in the findings of the different researchers and knowledge about impulse buying behavior. Therefore, this study contributes to minimizing these gaps in the knowledge regarding consumer behavior. The study will provide more critical insights into the enduring value of preferences and evaluate the consistency of impulse buying behavior.

2. Literature Review

2.1. In-store Display

In-store display refers to how products are arranged in the store. A good in-store display can increase customers'

impulse buying in shopping centers. Shahwaz and Sequeira (2021) carried out research on the factors affecting consumer impulsive purchasing behavior in the supermarket in Bengaluru. Product category, store environment, product price, product promotion, and store layout are independent variables to identify consumer impulse purchasing behavior in supermarkets. Researchers found that product category, store environment, product promotion, and store layout significantly impact consumer impulse purchasing behavior in the supermarket. However, it is revealed that the product price has no significant influence on the consumer impulse purchasing behavior in the supermarket. Bagheri and Afsharinezhad (2019) examined the elements influencing consumers' impulse buying behavior in North Iranian malls. Personality, situational factors, store environment, and consumer product involvement were independent variables in measuring impulse buying behavior. Researchers found that all the variables like personality, situational factors, consumer product involvement, and store environment substantially influence impulse buying behavior in the shopping mall. Bhatti and Latif (2014) studied consumer impulsive buying behavior to determine how visual merchandising affected it. Researchers discovered strong correlations between consumer impulse buying behavior and shop brand names, floor merchandising, forum displays, and window displays. Window display and shop brand name are positively linked with customer impulse buying, while forum display is negatively related.

More and more modern consumers prefer the in-store experience to the product experience (Moore, 2006). The store's design promotes a pleasant shopping experience and consumer behavior objectives (Ullal & Hawaldar, 2018). When strategically built, retail shelves, a crucial component of store layout, significantly contribute to increased customer satisfaction and better connections. Vishnu and Raheem (2013) conducted a study to investigate the elements influencing impulsive purchasing decisions. The amount of consumer income and the appearance of the product display considerably impact consumers' impulsive purchases of fast-moving consumer items in Pakistan. Particularly well-decorated, serene, and bright retail environments inspire consumers to make purchases unintentionally, and window displays and visual merchandising are crucial in consumers' impulsive purchases. Muruganantham and Bhakat (2013) examined the practice of consumers making impulsive purchases. They found that in-store displays, credit availability, and personal disposable income influence customer impulse buying.

H1: In-store display positively influences the impulse buying behavior of consumers.

2.2. Store Employees

Store employees are salespeople who involve in the selling process in the distribution center. Store employees are the salesman of the shopping center, and the behavior of the store employees greatly influences the impulse buying behavior in distribution centers. Chein et al. (2020) conducted research on the factors affecting impulsive buying behavior in Malaysia. Visual merchandising, price, conscientiousness, extraversion, and individualism were independent variables in identifying impulse buying behavior. Researchers found a significant positive effect of visual merchandising, price, extraversion, and individualism on consumers' impulsive buying behavior. But it was found that their conscientiousness has negatively associated with consumer impulse buying behavior.

Vinish et al. (2020) studied the subject of female shoppers' impulsive purchases by analyzing the effect of particular retail environment factors. With the exception of "attention to the window display" and "pleasant personnel," all twelve study parameters were discovered to affect impulse purchases strongly. However, a good shopping experience, a well-organized layout, and a welcoming business atmosphere are important elements in influencing consumer happiness. Furthermore, according to the study's findings, store staff size and sales prowess are crucial determinants of impulsive purchasing in the garment sector and significant advantages to the retail business. Moreover, poor customer service, maximum employee turnover, and a shortage of employees could make it difficult for the store to make sales.

Hadjali et al. (2012) looked into the variables influencing impulsive purchasing. Researchers discovered that self-esteem, irritation, shopping environment, marketing tactics, and gender significantly impact impulsive buying behavior, particularly when buying clothing. On the other hand, this survey did not support the value of seller guidance and group shopping. A skilled salesperson can lessen customer annoyance by assisting the customer in purchasing, directing them, and encouraging impulse buying behavior (Tinne, 2010). The warmth of store staff significantly impacts customers' impulsive buying decisions. Additionally, the detrimental effects of perceived crowding on impulsive purchases may be mitigated by the perceived friendliness of store staff (Mattila & Wirtz, 2008).

Masouleh et al. (2012) researched factors influencing impulsive purchases. Gender, age, race, and weights are the three sub-factors connected to demographic characteristics. Therefore, demographic factors such as race, income, gender, and age are the most significant elements for impulse buying behavior. The last factor is related to situational factors, which comprise the presence of other people, culture, store design, availability of time and

conditions of the local market, store employees, and self-service concerning relative importance.

H2: Store employees' activities positively influence the impulse buying decision of consumers.

2.3. Reference Group

Reference groups are those groups that are associated with impulse buyers. If impulse buyers take the ideas and suggestions from any group is called the reference group. Reference groups directly influence the impulse buying behavior of customers. Ahmed et al. (2020) investigated the causes of impulsive buying among US citizens during the COVID-19 pandemic. The study's outcomes revealed that peer shopping and a shortage of essentials in-store positively influence the sharp swings in impulse buying habits. Different groups of purchasing patterns significantly affect one another. Human purchase decisions result from learning about other people's beliefs, behaviors, and fads and fashions that peer group interaction creates (De Veirman et al., 2017). Hearing positive and negative evaluations from their peers and witnessing what their neighbors and peers were buying increased people's propensity to make impulsive purchases (Addo et al., 2020).

Kim and Su (2020) asserted that consumers adjust to peers' expectations regarding their purchasing choices and learn about a product's suitability by seeing how others behave. Luo (2005) researched the variables influencing others' presence in impulse purchases. The study's findings showed that participants have a strong propensity for making impulsive purchases when shopping with friends. Therefore, it implies that the presence of people affects impulsive purchasing. Pradhan (2016) researched the topic of consumers' impulsive buying behavior in the Kathmandu Valley. Product category and financial independence are minimal in impulsive buying behavior when all other factors are considered. However, impulsive purchase behavior can be significantly impacted by factors such as the cash available, the mood of the consumer, the facility of ATM, pricing, retail layout, time available, product advertising, the atmosphere of the store, and reference group.

H3: Reference groups positively influence the impulse buying decision of consumers.

2.4. Promotional Activities

Promotion is the activities that are undertaken to provide information to prospective buyers. Promotional activities are used to inform, remind, persuade prospective buyers, and reassure existing buyers. Promotional activities influence the impulse buying behavior of customers in

shopping centers. Karbasivar and Yarahmadi (2011) evaluated the variables influencing shoppers' purchasing decisions in Iranian shopping malls. The study aimed to identify how credit cards, displays, and marketing initiatives influenced consumers' in-store impulse purchases. The study's findings demonstrated the importance of display, credit card, and promotional activities in influencing consumers' impulsive purchasing decisions. To understand Vietnamese shoppers' in-store impulse purchase patterns, Cho et al. (2014) studied impulsive buying behavior in Vietnam. This study made an effort to examine how several factors drawn from internal, external, demographic, and societal perspectives affected consumer impulse buying. Due to pricing tactics, store features, contextual considerations, and promotional campaigns in the low involvement product purchase, this consumer behavior is significantly increasing.

Ittaquallah et al. (2020) explored the effects of mobile marketing, discount, and lifestyle on consumers' online impulse purchasing behavior. Martaleni et al. (2022) studied the factors influencing flash sales on impulsive online buying and the mediating role of emotions in Indonesia. The marketing tactic used in e-commerce is flash sales. Researchers discovered that a flash sale directly affects buyers' emotions. However, flash sales have no discernible effect on the growth of impulsive purchasing. The research findings demonstrate that flash sale indirectly influences impulse buying behavior in a good and significant way through emotions. This research establishes that feelings play a moderating role in online impulse purchases. Gupta and Kumar (2022) examined what influences Indian consumers' impulsive purchases. They discovered that discounts, monotony, and various goods influence customers' impulsive buying. Rasheed et al. (2017) researched the topic of impulse buying behavior in shopping malls. They found that a neat atmosphere, attractive points of purchase display, and promotional activities significantly positively impact consumer impulse buying behavior.

H4: Promotional activities positively influence the impulse buying decision of consumers.

Based on previous studies, various factors influence impulse buying behavior. Among them, only the in-store display, salesman activities, reference groups, and promotional activities are undertaken as independent variables to measure impulse buying behavior in the shopping centers in Kathmandu. The research model of the study is as below:

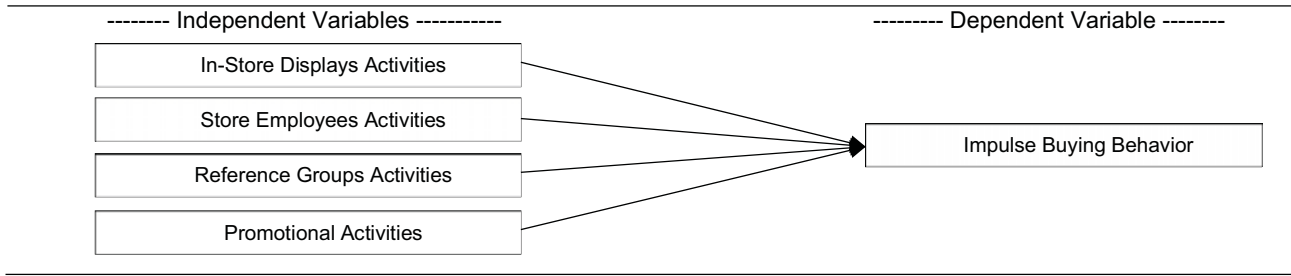


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

3. Materials and Methods

The study examines the impact of in-store displays, store employees' behavior, reference groups, and promotional activities on unplanned buying decisions among consumers in the distribution centers in Kathmandu. This study has been based on a positivist epistemology and has used a controlled and structured methodology through pre-set hypotheses. The quantitative research method was used in the study, and it was based on a single reality ontological foundation. A causal research design has been utilized to examine the primary data in the study. The study's population was the impulse shoppers of distribution centers in Kathmandu.

The study relied on convenient sampling. Three hundred ninety-six impulse shoppers were the sample size of the study of distribution centers in Kathmandu. A survey was used to acquire primary data. The data was collected using a structured questionnaire with a six-point Likert scale, with 1 denoting strongly disagree and 6 denoting strongly agree. The measure can be consistent with the 6-point Likert scale used in the study by Ong et al. (2015). Because of social desirability bias, a five-point Likert scale with a middle of "3" and "neither agree nor disagree" will skew the results of the study (Garland, 1991). A higher validity and reliability of an even number response scale than an odd number response scale was also found to exist (Coelho & Esteves, 2007).

Table 1: Questionnaire Structure

| Group and Area | Qs | Measurement Scale | Remarks |
|--------------------------------------|----|---|--|
| Group A: Demographic Information | 2 | Various Options 6-point Likert Scale | 1 = strongly disagree to 6 = strongly agree |
| Group B: In-store Display | 3 | | |
| Group C: Behavior of Store Employees | 3 | | |
| Group D: Promotional Activities | 3 | | |
| Group E: Reference Group | 4 | | |
| Group F: Impulse Buying Behavior | 6 | | |
| Total | 21 | | |

3.1. Exploratory Factor Analysis

Exploratory Factor Analysis was employed to investigate the constructs' validity. Each construct's factor loading was found to be between 0.55 and 0.851. As suggested by Hair et al. (2010), the threshold value exceeded 0.5 of all the construct values. According to Kaiser and Rice (1974), the KMO value must be more than 0.6, and the p-value must be lower than 0.05. The KMO value is more than 0.6, and the p-value is less than 0.05, which suggests that factor analysis is appropriate.

Goodness of Fit Index (GFI), Comparative Fit Index (CFI), Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index (AGFI), and Root Mean Square Error Approximation (RMSEA) were introduced by Byrne (2010) and Hair et al. (1998) as model fit criteria for the measurement model. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) has been applied to test the model. Before testing the hypotheses, the model fit indices were examined. Various fit indices have been provided in the section below for evaluating the overall model.

3.2. Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Confirmatory factor analysis was used to validate the findings of the exploratory factor analysis. The 396-person sample was subjected to CFA using SPSS AMOS 23. The

Table 2: Summary of Overall Model Fit

| Fit Indices | Suggested level by Byrne (2010) and Hair et al. (1998) | Model Value | Result |
|-------------|--|-------------|------------|
| CMIN/DF | <3=good, 3-5=Acceptable | 3.141 | Acceptable |
| GFI | >.9=good, >.8= Acceptable | 0.883 | Acceptable |
| AGFI | >.9=good, >.8= Acceptable | 0.843 | Acceptable |
| CFI | >.9=good, >.8= Acceptable | 0.919 | Good |
| RMSEA | <.05=good, <.08= Acceptable | 0.074 | Acceptable |

Table 2 shows that the CMIN/DF value was 3.141, below the recommended values (Byrne, 2010; Hair et al., 1998). Therefore, this model was appropriate. The values of CFI, GFI, RMSEA, and AGFI surpassed a specified cut-off number (Byrne, 2010; Hair et al., 1998). It seems possible to analyze the structural model as a consequence.

3.3. Validity and Reliability

Structural Equation Modeling has been used to examine the structural model and measurements. Before the model testing, the accuracy of the average variance extracted, the composite reliability, instrument reliability, discriminant validity, and convergent validity were evaluated. The test's findings are as follows:

Table 3: Insights of Reliability and Validity Statistics

| | CR | AVE | MSV | MaxR(H) | SEA | PA | RGA | IBBA | ISDA |
|------|-------|-------|-------|---------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| SEA | 0.881 | 0.664 | 0.209 | 0.995 | 0.815 | | | | |
| PROA | 0.869 | 0.627 | 0.087 | 0.918 | 0.295*** | 0.792 | | | |
| RGA | 0.864 | 0.614 | 0.209 | 0.880 | 0.457*** | 0.267*** | 0.784 | | |
| IBBA | 0.862 | 0.616 | 0.138 | 0.941 | 0.371*** | 0.167** | 0.225*** | 0.785 | |
| ISDA | 0.903 | 0.758 | 0.137 | 0.953 | 0.284*** | 0.075 | 0.234*** | 0.371*** | 0.871 |

No validity concerns here.

The sufficiency of the reliability, average variance extracted, composite reliability, discriminant validity, and convergent validity were assessed before the model was tested. Using composite reliability (CR) for the CFA, the constructs of the measurement model have been assessed for reliability. According to Bagozzi and Baumgartner (1994), the average variance extracted (AVE) values must be higher than 0.5 ($AVE > 0.5$), the CR value must be higher than the value of AVE, and all three values must be higher than 0.7 ($CR > 0.7$) for convergent validity to occur.

According to Table 3, all CR and AVE values were more than the acceptable range of 0.7 and 0.5, respectively. In addition to being greater than the AVE values, the CR values were also within the recommended range. The model was shown to have convergent validity as a result. If the AVE is bigger than the maximum shared variance (MSV), according to Fornell and Larcker (1981), discriminant validity is legitimate. Table 3 reveals that all the values of AVE were higher than MSV. Therefore, there was no problem with the study's measuring model.

4. Results

The data situation was described using descriptive statistics, and correlation analysis was utilized to investigate the relationship between independent factors and impulsive purchasing behavior. The factor loadings were investigated using exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). The effect of independent factors on impulsive buying behavior has been examined using structural equation modeling (SEM) with SPSS AMOS 23.

4.1. Descriptive Statistics and Correlation Analysis

The mean and standard deviation of the responses have been used to analyze their distribution, and the correlation has been utilized to identify the relationship between the independent variables and consumers' impulsive purchasing patterns. Consumer impulsive buying behavior (IBBA) is the dependent variable here, and in-store displays (ISDA), store employees (SEA), reference groups (RGA), and promotional activities (PRO) are the independent factors.

Table 4: Descriptive and Correlation Analysis

| Variables | Mean | SD | IBBA | ISDA | SEA | RGA | PA |
|-----------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|----|
| IBBA | 3.6271 | .86597 | 1 | | | | |
| ISDA | 3.8475 | .60376 | .362** | 1 | | | |
| SEA | 3.4499 | .63197 | .308** | .383** | 1 | | |
| RGA | 3.4838 | .91460 | .483** | .124* | .123* | 1 | |
| PA | 3.7235 | .48703 | .207** | .202** | .324** | .143** | 1 |

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

According to Table 4, the mean scores for the in-store display, store staff, reference groups, and promotion are 3.85, 3.45, 3.48, and 3.72, respectively, on 6 points Likert

scale. The mean value of impulse buying behavior is 3.63. Therefore, these four variables significantly influence impulse buying behavior when people shop at supermarkets.

It shows that most respondents tended to concur on impulsive buying behavior, and it is inferred that these four characteristics significantly impact consumers' impulsive purchases.

The correlation analysis between the variables under research is also described in Table 4. It shows a substantial positive correlation between in-store displays and impulsive purchasing behavior ($r = 0.362, p < 0.05$), store workers and impulsive buying behavior ($r = 0.308, p < 0.05$), reference groups and impulsive buying behavior in the distribution centers ($r = 0.483, p < 0.05$), and promotion and impulse buying behavior ($r = 0.207, p < 0.05$). As a result, there is a strong relationship between independent factors and customers' distribution center impulse buying decisions. Furthermore, the outcome demonstrates a low relationship between promotion and impulsive buying behavior and a high correlation between reference groups and impulsive buying behavior in distribution centers.

4.2. Structural Model for the Study

The structural model has been used to measure the relationship between the constructs empirically. Two indexes have been examined in the structural model. The first is the path coefficients (β), which depict the association between dependent and independent factors, and the second is the value of R^2 , which reveals the proportion of variation that can be explained by independent variables and reveals how well the model predicts the future. The results of the multivariate test of the structural model showed that the in-store display elements, store employees, reference groups, and promotional activities explained 61 percent of the variance in the consumer's impulse buying behavior in the distribution centers, with the remaining 39 percent being explained by other variables.

An estimated path diagram from a structural model is given in Figure 2. The computed parameters are standardized path coefficients, three of which are significant at the 95 % level, while the fourth is not.

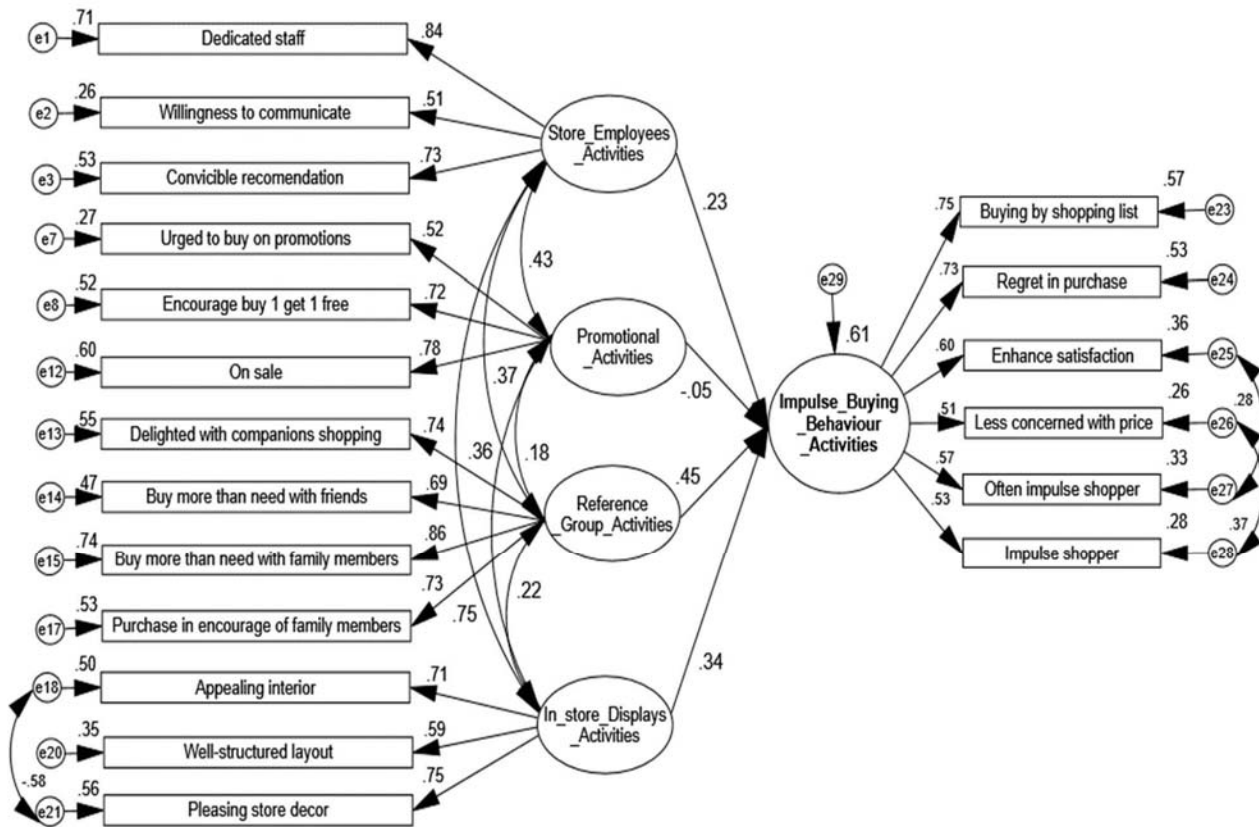


Figure 2: Structural Model

Path analysis has examined the level of impact of in-store display, store employees, reference groups, and promotional functions on the impulsive buying decision of

consumers. Table 5 shows the parameter estimates of each model's path.

Table 5: Results of Hypothesis Testing

| | Path | | Estimate | S.E. | C.R. | P | Results |
|------|------|------|----------|------|-------|------|----------|
| IBBA | <--- | SEA | .23 | .095 | 4.521 | *** | Accepted |
| IBBA | <--- | PA | -.05 | .074 | 1.201 | .230 | Rejected |
| IBBA | <--- | RGA | .45 | .053 | .386 | *** | Accepted |
| IBBA | <--- | ISDA | .34 | .046 | 5.664 | *** | Accepted |

Table 5 shows that the store employee significantly influences shoppers' impulsive purchasing decisions in shopping malls ($\beta = 0.23$, $p = 0.000$), supporting the hypothesis (H2). This outcome supported the hypothesis that store personnel behavior significantly influences consumers' impulsive purchasing decisions in distribution centers in Nepal. Next, it was found that promotional actions have no significant effect on shoppers' impulsive purchasing decisions at Malls ($\beta = -0.05$, $p = 0.230$). This result refuted the hypothesis (H4) that promotional activities significantly affect shoppers' impulsive buying behavior. Likewise, it is found that there is a noticeable influence of reference groups on consumers' impulsive purchasing decisions in distribution centers ($\beta = 0.45$, $p = 0.000$), and the hypothesis (H3) was accepted. This finding supported the idea that reference groups significantly impacted impulsive purchasing. Finally, the study discovered that in-store displays significantly influence shoppers' propensity to make impulsive purchases in distribution centers ($\beta = 0.34$, $p = 0.000$), supporting hypothesis (H1). Therefore, this result proved that in-store displays significantly affect consumers' impulsive purchasing decisions in Nepali distribution centers.

5. Discussions

The study's main objective was to explore the impact of in-store displays, store employees' behavior, promotional activities, and reference groups on consumer impulse buying behavior in distribution centers. The hypothesis was that in-store displays significantly influence consumer impulse buying behavior. The result of the research found that the display in stores significantly influences the consumer's impulsive buying decisions in distribution centers. So, the hypothesis (H1) was accepted. Furthermore, previous findings (Bagheri & Afsharinezha, 2019; Chein et al., 2020; Shahwaz & Sequeira, 2021; Ullal et al., 2020) were consistent with the finding that in-store displays significantly influence consumers' impulse buying behavior.

The second hypothesis was that store employees' behavior remarkably impacts impulse buying behavior. The

study's result also found that store employees' activities significantly influence consumer impulse buying behavior in distribution centers, and this finding supports the hypothesis (H2). This finding is similar to the other's findings of Tinne (2010) and Vinish et al. (2020) that the behavior of store employees significantly influences the impulsive buying decision of consumers.

The third hypothesis was that reference groups have a noteworthy effect on impulse buying behavior. The result of the structural equation modeling path analysis indicates that the hypothesis (H3) has been supported. The study's result shows a substantial influence of reference groups on the impulsive buying decision of consumers in distribution centers. This finding is consistent with previous findings of (Addo et al., 2020; Ahmed, 2020; Kim & Su, 2020), which defined that the reference groups significantly affect the consumer's impulsive buying decision.

Lastly, the fourth hypothesis was that promotional activities have a noteworthy effect on impulse buying behavior. The statistical result of the research found no substantial effect of promotional activities on the impulse buying decision of consumers in distribution centers, and this finding did not support the hypothesis (H4). This finding is inconsistent with previous findings of (Gupta & Kumar, 2022; Martaleni et al., 2022; Shahwaz & Sequeira, 2021) that promotional activities significantly influence consumers' impulsive buying behavior, but this finding is consistent with the previous finding of Ittaquallah et al. (2020) that there is no noteworthy impact of promotional activities on the consumer impulse buying behavior.

6. Conclusion and Implications

The study has explored the influence of the in-store display, store employees, reference groups, and promotional activities on the impulsive buying decision of consumers in distribution centers in Kathmandu. The result of the study supports the hypothesis (H1) there is a substantial influence of displays in the store on the consumer's impulsive buying behavior. Nepalese customers considered the display in the store. Therefore, customers consider in-store displays when

engaging in impulsive shopping at malls. The additional environment and display may attract consumers to the distribution centers.

Another variable used for measuring impulse buying behavior is store employees' behavior, and it is found that employees' activities significantly influence the consumer's impulsive buying behavior. Thus, customers may find the advice and demeanor of the staff members working at shopping centers to be pleasing and alluring. The behavior of the employees can contribute to the consumer's impulse buying behavior. The purchasing decision of customers within the store can be influenced by the behavior of the employees working in the store.

Likewise, another variable that is used in the study as an independent variable is the reference group. Reference groups refer to the friends and family members involved in unplanned buying. The research found a significant influence of reference groups on impulsive buying behavior. Therefore, it is concluded that the suggestions of friends and family members may influence consumers' impulse buying behavior. Nepalese consumers make their purchase decision by taking the suggestions of peer groups and family members. Therefore, they make their purchase decision based on the suggestions of friends and family members in unplanned buying behavior.

The study shows that promotional campaigns do not significantly influence consumers' impulsive buying behavior. It is concluded that consumers do not consider promotional activities when making impulsive purchases. Nepalese consumers only make unplanned purchase decisions based on promotional activities.

The managerial implications are the most important part for the marketing managers for the distribution centers. The marketing manager can apply the study's results in formulating marketing strategies for distribution centers. In addition, the study's outcome confirmed that the behavior of store employees, reference groups, and the in-store display has an important role in the boost up of unplanned purchasing, and promotional activities do not have any significant role in the improvement of unplanned buying. Therefore, based on these findings, the marketing manager must consider the behavior of store employees, the suggestions of others, and the store's decoration in formulating marketing strategies. Still, it is optional to consider promotional activities in designing marketing strategies for the sales increase in the distribution centers.

There are some limitations of the study, which might limit the findings of the study. Only the in-store display, behavior of store employees, reference groups, and promotional activities are included in the study. Many other variables that may influence impulse buying behavior have been excluded. Only limited distribution centers are taken

for the study in Kathmandu Valley. The findings of the study are based on the responses given by the sample respondents.

Based on the limitations mentioned earlier in the study, there are several suggestions for future research directions. The study's findings provide guidelines for future researchers. This study has been conducted in the developing country of Nepal, which can be conducted in other developed and underdeveloped countries. Other variables not included in the study can be used to measure impulse buying behavior. The model can use demographic variables as moderating variables. These findings will be pioneer empirical evidence and be a foundation stone for future study under different contexts. The sample size can be increased, and the sampling location can be expanded to make a more valid conclusion of the study.

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