

## **FACTORS AFFECTING IMPULSIVE BUYING BEHAVIOR OF ORGANIC BRANDED PRODUCTS AMONG CONSUMERS IN SRI LANKA**

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### **Abstract**

Sri Lanka's organic food market is still relatively small and is seen to be a niche one. Regardless of the importance of popularizing organic branded products among consumers through impulsive buying, a few have discussed this matter yet in the existing literature. In fact, the consumer behavior in the Asian market has been widely ignored. Therefore, the primary goal of this research study was to discover the factors influencing the impulsive buying behavior of organic branded food products among consumers in Sri Lanka. Based on prior studies, Web site stimulus, marketing stimulus, Product variety, impulsive traits and perceived enjoyment were considered as the dimensions in independent variable. The study used three hundred eighty-four (n=384) consumers for this study using convenience sampling technique. Pearson correlation and multiple regression analysis were used to test the hypothesis using SPSS software. Ideally, this study proved that website stimulus, marketing stimulus and impulsive traits have a positive impact on impulsive buying behavior of organic branded products. More interestingly, Product variety had a negative impact on impulsive buying behavior of organic brands whereas perceived enjoyment did not have a significant impact on impulsive buying behavior. Thus, the results of this research have given businesses some insight into the issues they are generally having, with convincing customers to buy organic brands.

*Keywords:* impulsive buying behavior, organic branded products, social influences, environmental attitudes

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## **1. Introduction**

Health issues, questions about the nutrition of food, and environmental concerns are all causing rapid changes in eating patterns of people. There is a considerable and growing demand for organic food products both worldwide and in Sri Lanka due to the perception that organic food is of high quality in many respects. In addition, despite its rapid expansion, Sri Lankans' way of life has changed over the past several decades as a result of the industrial revolution. Hence, more people become trapped in a never-ending cycle of buying and discarding, seeing consumption as a way to satisfy their own desires. Everything is produced with the goal of consumption. Demand for goods is fueled by habits and convenience, both of which are hard to change. Most clients have discovered over time that their purchasing choices have an immediate impact on a variety of ecological problems (Kumarasinghe & Padmini, 2017).

New marketing trends show that before buying a product, consumers look for information about the "natural component" of the food as well as any potential benefits. This has resulted in a large market demand for organic goods. While buying things, consumers are becoming more and more concerned about their health, especially when it comes to food items. Customers are currently most motivated to purchase organic products for this reason (Yin et al., 2010). As a result, organic products are becoming more readily accessible, especially at small boutiques, grocery stores, and farm stands. More importantly, during the past 20 years, there has been a worthwhile improvement in the consumption of organic food. However, marketers are determining the finest ways to advertise and establishing a culture to build an impulse for selling organic products (STATA 2022). Previous studies found that most Sri Lankan customers are health conscious and informed about where to acquire organic food (Gunawardana & Perera, 2014). However, customers are using organic food less frequently due to their slightly higher price when compared to conventional food, a lack of supply on the market, a poor amount of information reaching consumers regarding the product's availability and market, and customer distrust (Narmilan & Amuthenie, 2016). The main research problem arises since there is little literature on what influences consumers to make impulsive purchases of organic foods, and that can be seen as a research challenge. Small- and medium-scale producers are keen to learn more about it, and the researcher is extremely interested in learning about these factors.

Accordingly, understanding these elements to entice organic food businessmen or businesswomen's target markets through effective advertising efforts would be highly beneficial for them. The literature has noted that there are many factors that affect people's decisions to buy organic food products, but previous research has not been able to definitively identify the factors that cause people to purchase organic food products impulsively. This indicates that more research is necessary to identify the precise factors that cause people to purchase organic food products on impulse. Similarly, the researcher expects that this research will be extremely valuable for marketers to build their advertising strategies in a way that helps attract the target customers and determine which variables influence people to buy organic food impulsively.

### **Research objectives**

- i. To identify factors influencing the impulsive buying of organic branded food products among customers in Sri Lanka.
- ii. To measure the influence of various factors on the impulsive buying behavior of organic food consumption

### **Hypothesis development**

The alternative hypotheses were developed as follows: These hypotheses are justified by the literature.

- H1-Website stimulus has a significant impact on the impulsive buying behavior of organic products.
- H2-Marketing stimuli have a significant impact on the impulsive buying behavior of organic products.
- H3-Product variety has a significant impact on the impulsive buying behavior of organic products.
- H4-Impulsive traits have a significant impact on the impulsive buying behavior of organic products.
- H5- Perceived enjoyment has a significant impact on the impulsive buying behavior of organic products.

## **2. Literature Review**

Health issues, question about the nutrition of food, and environmental concerns all cause rapid changes in eating patterns of the people. There is a considerable and growing demand for organic food products both worldwide and in Sri Lanka due to the perception that organic food is of high quality in many respects. In addition, despite its rapid expansion, Sri Lankans' way of life has changed over the past several decades as a result of the industrial revolution. Hence, more people have become trapped in a never-ending cycle of buying and discarding, seeing consumption as a way to satisfy their own desires. Everything is produced with the goal of consumption. Demand for goods is fueled by habits and convenience, both of them are hard to change. Most clients have discovered over time that their purchasing choices have an immediate impact on a variety of ecological problems (Kumarasinghe & Padmini, 2017).

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customers use organic food less frequently as they are slightly higher in price when compared to conventional food, there is a lack of supply on the market, there is a poor amount of information reaching consumers regarding the product's availability and market, and because of customer distrust (Narmilan & Amuthenie, 2016). The main research problem arises since there is little literature on what influences consumers to make impulsive purchases of organic food, and that can be seen as a research challenge. Small- and medium-scale producers are keen on learning more about it, and as a result the researcher is extremely interested in learning about these factors.

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Although impulsive or unplanned purchases have long been acknowledged as a significant and important type of buying behavior, scientists are continuously discovering many elements and predictions that influence these kinds of purchases. As with Engel and Blackwell (1982), impulsive purchasing is the act of making a purchase without first recognizing that you need it or having a specific desire to do so, and another justification offered by Beatty & Ferrell (2000) said that impulsive shopping was abrupt in the context of retail. Hedonic enjoyment is intimately tied to impulsive purchases in today's market, which include both planned and unplanned purchases. When consumers are unexpectedly aroused by an encounter and when they make impulsive purchases of goods or services, this is known as an unplanned buy. (Lu & Wu, 2019) The study by Liu et al. (2013) further clarifies that the impulsive and unplanned buying have the same traits in them that they both entail decisions made on purchases without prior consideration or planning.

### **Website stimulus**

The qualities of a website are referred to as the website stimulus. Website stimulation discusses the attractiveness that the user interface design provides to the customers (Maiyaki & Mokhtar, 2016). whereas people gain an understanding of items and services through social media and online websites, and effective website design is essential and needs to be a key factor in grasping customers for any online market (Turkyilmaz et al., 2015). According to earlier studies, websites' aesthetic appeal is essential for drawing visitors and encouraging impulsive action (Wolfenbarger & Gilly, 2003). Also, it was discovered that the warehouse layout had a direct impact on spontaneous purchases. This includes factors like website usability, visual appeal, safety, and security, among others (Lo et al., 2016). Chinese internet customers' impulsive purchasing patterns were examined by Akram et al.

(2018) in China and the findings showed that the Chinese internet buyers' decisions to make impulsive purchases are significantly influenced by the quality of the website. As a result, Akram et al. (2018) discovered a substantial positive link between website quality and online impulsive purchases. The features of a website, such as its aesthetic appeal, transaction security, and navigation, are all important indications that directly affect consumers' impulse purchases (Wells et al., 2011). The quality of a website impacts users' preferences for a particular website by attracting and keeping new clients (Sharma & Lijuan, 2015). Accordingly, the first hypothesis is developed as follows:

*H<sub>1</sub>-Website stimulus has a significant impact on impulsive buying behavior of organic products.*

### **Marketing stimulus**

Marketing stimuli are the kind of products, prices, promotions, and extras offered to persuade a customer. Price is an essential part of the marketing stimuli that's commonly utilized to research how impulsively consumers behave (Park et al., 2012; Xu & Huang, 2014). Customers spend less when prices are reduced because they perceive a price reduction as pleasing and enticing, which influence their decision to make an impulsive purchase. Price cuts are offered alongside discounts to attract consumers' immediate need to purchase, and they may serve as an introductory element (Koschate-Fischer et al., 2012). Customers are eager to take the benefit of opportunities to purchase things at lower prices (Sundström et al., 2013) than to pass them up. Price reduction is one of the mostly used marketing promotional strategies since it can increase the likelihood that a customer would make a purchase (Park et al., 2012; Sundström et al., 2013). Price reduction has a significant impact on impulsive purchases and the customers appear to be more impulsive during discounts or price decreases (Rizwan et al., 2014). Thus, a product's discounted price is the main element encouraging impulsive purchases (Lim & Yazdanifard, 2015). Accordingly, the 2<sup>nd</sup> hypothesis is developed as follows:

*H<sub>2</sub>- Marketing Stimulus has a significant impact on impulsive buying behavior of organic products*

### **Product variety**

Although it is not a permanent personality characteristic, "impulsive purchasing, refers to impulsive decisions made when shopping. It is considered to be a historical personal characteristic that comprises drives to make impulsive and abrupt purchases as well as dispositions to act on such urges (Amos et al., 2014). Consumer impulsivity, consumer dynamical incentives, and environmental elements like a predisposition to enjoy purchasing are, generally speaking, the three main components. Exploratory searches frequently lead to boredom; thus, the range of shopping experiences available provides a break from routine and a chance to prevent it (Blakeney et al., 2010). According to Hawkins et al. (2007), people will switch brands on the spur of the moment if they learn about new options. These options will also inspire customers to make impulsive purchases. Few studies have shown that variety-seeking activity will enable customers to engage in impulsive

buying behavior since variety-seeking is strongly related to impulsive buying, like Sharma et al. (2010). Consequently, the third hypothesis can be developed as follows:

*H<sub>3</sub>- product variety has a significant impact on impulsive buying behavior of organic products.*

### **Impulsive traits**

According to Rook and Fisher (1995), buyers with high impulsive purchasing traits are more likely to be relatively unreflective in their thinking, receptive to spontaneous, unexpected buying ideas, and fascinated by the promise of quick pleasure, which causes them to respond quickly and positively to their buying impulses. Impulsive buying decisions are referred to as "impulsive purchases even though they are not a permanent personality trait. According to Amos et al. (2014) and Beatty and Ferrell (1998), it is thought to be a historical individual characteristic that includes impulses to make impulsive and abrupt purchases as well as dispositions to act on such desires. In general, the three key factors are consumer impulsivity, consumer dynamical incentives, and ambient factors like a propensity to love shopping. Ultimately, the 4<sup>th</sup> hypothesis can be developed as follows:

*H<sub>4</sub>- Impulsive traits has a significant impact on impulsive buying behavior of organic products.*

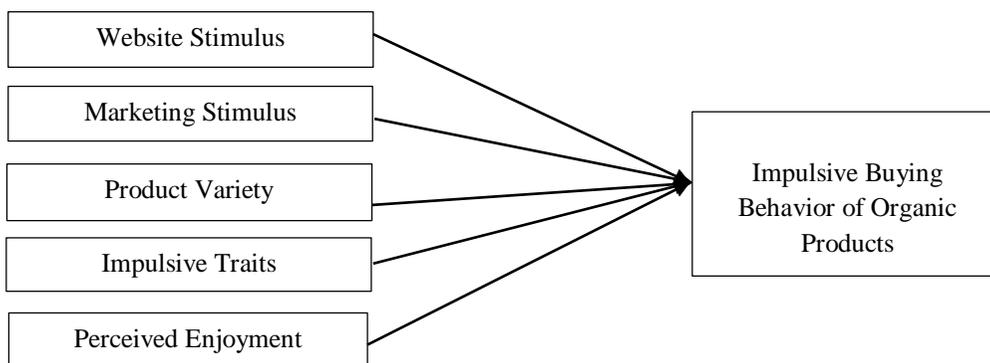
### **Perceived enjoyment**

When it comes to purchasing behavior, enjoyment refers to a person's emotional state in any situation. An example of perceived delight is the joy a customer could have when shopping (Mohan et al., 2013). Excitement, delight, relaxation, and inspiration are examples of good consumer feelings (Verhagen & van Dolen, 2011). The likelihood of a customer making an impulsive purchase rises as their enjoyment of utilizing online platforms grow. Consequently, to encourage impulsive buying behavior, it is important to have a tacit grasp of the aspects affecting consumer delight while creating e-commerce support systems (Do et al., 2020). According to Sohn and Lee (2017), consumers' emotional experiences had a favorable impact on their impulsive purchases. According to research by Hasima et al. (2020), people felt that the online business atmosphere, promotions, and impulsive purchases could all be mediated by enjoyment, and enjoyment has a direct, positive, and substantial link to online impulse buying. Moreover, Baskaran et al. (2019) examined people's propensities for making impulsive purchases and found that these tendencies are really driven by the energizing effects of perceived pleasure. As per the above, the 5<sup>th</sup> hypothesis can be developed as follows:

*H<sub>5</sub>- perceived Enjoyment has a significant impact on impulsive buying behavior of organic products.*

### 3. Methodology

**Figure 3.1: Conceptual framework**



Source: Norazira et al, 2022; Md Wasiul, 2021

The present study concentrated on observing the significant factors that influence consumers' impulsive buying behavior toward organic branded food products in Sri Lanka. This research can predict exact relationships, which means that the researcher can develop directional hypotheses regarding the research. Based on the nature of the objective, the research philosophy adopted belongs to the philosophy of positivism. The researcher applied quantitative techniques to measure reality through valid tools adopted by previous scholars. The study had a big challenge in selecting a sample to represent the whole population of consumers who purchase organic food in Sri Lanka. There is no official data source that lists down the consumers who purchase organic food. Therefore, the study used a convenience sampling technique to select the sample since food consumers may be available in every part of the country. This study mainly focused on the collection of primary data gathered from consumers through a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was developed by considering two items used by previous scholars to measure the main variables. The study measured factors influencing consumers' organic-branded food impulsive buying behavior using five dimensions. First, the enumerator identified some organic brands via different social media channels and was able to identify organic brand consumers on social media official pages. Then, in the next stage, they were connected, and questionnaires were sent to them online. However, the response rate was fairly moderate. The enumerator sent 400 questionnaires but was only able to collect 298; only 221 were analyzed after removing the outliers.

#### 4. Analysis and Results

##### Test of validity

Validity indicates the items that are used in measuring the variable and the concepts are more accurate. Validity can be identified as the most important aspect of the quality of the test, so measuring validity is important and a prerequisite requirement before carrying out further analytical tests.

**Table 1: Validity Test**

Variable	Chi-square Value	Significance 0.05 >	KMO Value 0.5 <	Composite Reliability 0.7 <	Average Variance Extracted (AVE) 0.5 <	Discriminant Validity				
						Website stimulus	Marketing Stimulus	Product Variety	Impulsive Traits	Perceived enjoyment
Website Stimulus	208.913	.000	.760	.702	.648	<b>.804</b>				
Marketing stimulus	323.649	.000	.698	.721	.592	.466	<b>.769</b>			
Product Variety	287.353	.000	.716	.890	.729	.328	.478	<b>.853</b>		
Impulsive Traits	692.259	.000	.873	.809	.675	.518	.538	.337	<b>.821</b>	
Perceived enjoyment	341.659	.000	.728	.704	.602	.579	.521	.327	.570	<b>.839</b>
Impulsive Buying organic Products	875.632	.000	.755	.843	.664	.495	.336	.385	.515	.316

Source: Compiled by author

In here, the coefficients are greater than zero ( $P < 0.05$ ) and it fulfilled the sampling adequacy for all the variables and convergent validity was used to measure the validity. ( $CR > AVE$ ), additionally the shared variance values are smaller than Average variance extracted (AVE) and thus discriminant validity was also ensured. The highlighted diagonal values show the square root of AVE and which are larger than the correlation between latent variables in other cells.

**Table 2: Reliability test**

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Comment
Website Stimulus	0.726	Accepted
Marketing stimulus	0.769	Accepted
Product Variety	0.815	Accepted
Impulsive Traits	0.839	Accepted
Perceived Enjoyment	0.774	Accepted

Source: Compiled by author

The reliability was ensured since the Cronbach Alpha ( $\alpha$ ) value of each and every one of the variables was higher than 0.7. Thus, it fulfilled the need of having the internal consistency of the measurement.

**Table 3: Correlation**

		Website stimulus	Marketing stimulus	Product variety	Impulsive traits	Perceived enjoy	Impulsive buying
Website stimulus	Pearson Correlation	1	.466**	.328**	.518**	.579**	.495**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	221	221	221	221	221	221
Marketing stimulus	Pearson Correlation	.466**	1	.478**	.538**	.521**	.336**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	221	221	221	221	221	221
Product variety	Pearson Correlation	.328**	.478**	1	.337**	.327**	.385**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000	.000	.001
	N	221	221	221	221	221	221
Impulsive traits	Pearson Correlation	.518**	.538**	.337**	1	.570**	.515**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000
	N	221	221	221	221	221	221
Perceived enjoy	Pearson Correlation	.579**	.521**	.327**	.570**	1	.316**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000
	N	221	221	221	221	221	221
Impulsive buying	Pearson Correlation	.495**	.366**	.385**	.515**	.316**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.001	.000	.000	
	N	221	221	221	221	221	221

Source: Compiled by author

Notes: \*\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

According to the details in Table 3, all independent factors have a positive relationship with the impulsive buying behavior of organic food products. Where the impulsive traits possess the greatest positive correlation with the impulsive buying behavior of organic food (the value of the Pearson correlation is 0.515).

### **Multiple Regression Analysis**

Multiple linear regression analysis was used to test the research hypothesis. Dependent Variable: Impulsive Buying Behavior

**Table 4: Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
	.898 <sup>a</sup>	.812	.814	.46750

Source: Compiled by author

Notes: a. Predictors: (Constant), website stimulus, Marketing stimulus, product variety, Impulsive Traits.

Table (5) shows the summary of regression analysis. The explanatory power (R<sup>2</sup>) indicates the degree to which extent the variance of the dependent variable is explained by the independent variables. Just looking at adjusted R<sup>2</sup>, it can be considered that 81% of the dependent variable, the impulsive buying behavior is demonstrated by independent variables.

**Table 5: ANOVA table**

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	60.386	5	12.077	39.530	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	126.790	415	.306		
	Total	187.176	420			

Source: Compiled by author

Notes: a. Dependent Variable: Impulsive buying

b. Predictors: (Constant), Perceived enjoy, website stimulus, Product variety, Impulsive traits, Marketing stimuli

The Table (6) Anova determines whether the developed model is significant or not. Accordingly, it can be concluded that the developed model Table (5) is significant since the  $P < 0.05$ .

**Table 6: ANOVA Table**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
Constant	1.087	.162		6.681	.000
Website stimulus	.174	.059	.170	2.957	.015
Marketing stimuli	.152	.058	.150	2.613	.029
Product variety	-.269	.060	-.237	-4.486	.000
Impulsive traits	.416	.050	.441	8.402	.000
Perceived enjoy	.040	.056	.038	.721	.462

Source: Compiled by author

Multiple regression analysis was conducted to test how all these factors influences the student intention when they are taken as a whole. The multiple models can be mentioned as

$$Y = 1.087 + 0.174(X1) + 0.152(X2) + (-0.269)(X3) + 0.416(X4)$$

where it revealed that web site Stimulus, Marketing stimulus, Product Variety have a positive affect towards impulsive buying behavior of organic brands and only product variety has a negative impact on impulsive buying behavior of organic brands. However, the researchers found that perceived enjoyment is not significant since the P value of Perceived enjoyment is greater than 0.05 and which is 0.462. Accordingly H<sub>1</sub>, H<sub>2</sub>, H<sub>3</sub> and H<sub>4</sub> are accepted while the H<sub>5</sub> is rejected.

## 5. Discussion

When compared to the literature, our findings slightly differ from the prior ones while also being fairly comparable. According to Wolfenbarger & Gilly (2003), a website's aesthetic appeal is essential for drawing visitors and encouraging

impulsive action, and Akram (2018) further demonstrated that there is a substantial positive link between the website quality and the online impulsive purchase, which is very similar to this study. Thus, the marketing stimulus was very similar to the existing literature, where Rizwan (2014) found that marketing stimulation and promotional activities such as price discounts, encourage impulsive buying of the customers, and Lim & Yazdanifard (2015) justified that a product's discounted price is the main element encouraging impulsive purchases. Accordingly, the above findings were similar to our findings since marketing stimulus significantly impacts impulsive buying of organic foods. Somehow, when it comes to product variety, our findings clearly differ from the literature. Hawkins et al. (2007) claimed that the consumers will switch brands on the spur of the moment if they sense new or different options, and these options will entice them to buy right away or without giving it much thought. Few studies, such as Sharma et al, (2010) showed that the variety-seeking activity would enable consumers to engage in impulsive buying behavior since variety-seeking is strongly associated with impulsive buying.

However, it is very strange to see why product variety has a negative impact on impulsive buying of organic branded foods in Sri Lanka, and future researchers are encouraged to identify this difference. The fourth independent variable is impulsive traits, and it was discovered by Rook and Fisher (1995) that buyers with high impulsive buying traits are more likely to buy impulsively. Amos et al. (2014) and Beatty and Ferrell (1998) also emphasized that chronic personal traits include impulses to make impulsive purchases, which tie in with the current research findings. However, finally, there was a disagreement between the literature and the current research findings. According to Sohn and Lee (2017), consumers' emotional experiences had a favorable influence on their impulsive purchases. According to research by Hasima et al. (2020), people felt that the online business atmosphere, promotions, and impulse purchases could all be mediated by enjoyment, and enjoyment has a direct, positive, and substantial link to online impulsive buying. Moreover, Baskaran et al. (2019) examined people's propensities for making impulsive purchases and found that these tendencies are really driven by the energizing effects of perceived pleasure. However, our findings are mismatched with these findings since, in this study; there was not any significant impact of perceived enjoyment on impulsive buying of organic foods.

## **6. Conclusion**

The findings of this study may be highly worthwhile to fulfil the theoretical, contextual, and practical gaps and have implications for consumers' impulse buying behavior towards organic food. Ideally, it is worthwhile to identify which factors can have a direct impact on the impulsive buying behavior of organic food, and according to the above research, marketing and website stimulus are phenomenally impactful factors next to the impulsive traits. This is somewhat different from the findings in Product varieties negatively affecting impulsive buying behavior, whereas perceived enjoyment has no significant influence on the impulsive buying behavior of organic food. The research points out that more product variation will negatively affect the impulsive buying behavior of customers. Accordingly, these findings may be worthwhile for marketers and organic producers to develop their

strategies in order to attract customers. Ideally, the consumers and marketers of organic products must identify that Sri Lankan consumers are highly concerned about the market, website stimulus, traits, and perceived enjoyment. Further, organic marketers and companies should maintain their websites more attractively and keep them updated with correct information. From a theoretical point of view, this study supports the notion that studying the links between antecedents and patterns of impulsive buying behavior will improve our understanding of how individuals' impulsive buying behaviors differ from one another.

### **Limitation and future research direction**

It was found that there were some limitations in this research, and the main constraint was the time limitation. However, the data related to this research was gathered through online platforms such as social media. Moreover, Sri Lankan internet users were used as respondents for this study. Literature reveals that impulsive traits, websites, and marketing stimuli have been highly concerned about impulsive purchase studies, mainly in the areas of online purchasing. However, it was vital to mention that product differentiation has been poorly considered in the area of online impulsive buying, and it is worthwhile to mention that a few more factors are needed to be applied in order to study the impulsive purchase of organic food products. However, it is strictly recommended that future studies be carried out covering the entire country of Sri Lanka, including rural, urban, and semi-urban areas, using an offline questionnaire. Therefore, it is highly recommended that future studies also focus on other individuals since impulsive buying behavior may differ based on situational conditions such as time and availability of money. Similarly, the research study should focus on the differences in buying behavior between genders. Future researchers are encouraged to explore more factors other than the variables used by these researchers.

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