

# Impulsive Spending Patterns in Café Hopping Among Gen Z

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**Abstract**—Café culture has developed rapidly throughout India; many consumers, particularly those in the Generation Z demographic (i.e., 18-25 years old), have developed an almost obsessional relationship with café hopping wherein they have become increasingly impulsive with their spending habits. The aim of this paper is to investigate the impulsive buying behaviors of 18- to 25-year-olds in India who go to cafés and buy unplanned purchases. The sample will consist of young professionals, college students, and freelancers who have become involved with the café hopping craze within urban centers of India, specifically in Chennai, India. This research will also quantify how frequently Gen Z consumers are engaging in café hopping and purchasing products and how much they are spending on each visit. The research will also look at what kinds of promotional deals and offers Gen Z consumers are most attracted to, as well as use various environments created by cafés (e.g., the atmosphere created by a café) and marketing techniques employed by cafés to understand what types of products Gen Z consumers are most likely to purchase impulsively. Structured surveys and brief interviews will be conducted with the goal of gathering data on how frequently Gen Z consumers go to cafés and spend money and on the reasons, they buy products impulsively. The focus of the study will therefore include both behavioral and environmental factors that contribute to the impulsive spending by Gen Z consumers and provide businesses with valuable insight into how they can become more engaged with and sell more to this demographic through experiential marketing.

**Keywords**—Impulsive Buying, Café Hopping, Generation Z, Consumer Behaviour, Marketing Strategies.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Café culture has recently become exceptionally popular with Generation Z, and cities like Chennai are the best examples where café hopping has already become a common mean of relaxation and socialization. Ages 18 to 25 including students, young professionals and freelancers do not think of cafés as just places to eat. It's also a chill spot for studying, work meetings and unwinding. The trend is growing and along with it, impulsive spending is becoming a notable pattern, which, on the one hand, signifies the unplanned purchases that go beyond what was anticipated. The present research is an endeavour to comprehend the unplanned spending habits of Gen Z during café hopping.

It is mainly concerned about the items they buy on impulse, the frequency of such purchases, and how much is usually spent during these visits. The increase in the number of cafés playing to the young people's liking has led to stiff competition in the food and beverage sector. Many cafés emphasize on looking good, having a wide range of menu choices, and the use of customer engagement methods that sometimes result in impulsive buys as they try to entice and retain customers. The young customers are greatly influenced by things such as eye-catching product displays, seasonal promotions, and unique atmospheres. The upsurge of café hopping as a way of life by Gen Z makes their spending habits a key to understanding modern consumer behaviour in the hospitality sector. This research will reveal the extent to which impulsive buying is done during café visits and the commercial factors responsible for it. The study will also oversee how the marketing strategies are designed to encourage impulsive buying in a way. Strategies like product placements, loyalty programmes, promotional discounts, aesthetic interiors are not only for the purpose of ensuring satisfied customer experience but also to boost sales. The linkage of these promotion strategies and the impulsive spending habits of the Gen Z customer group will be a great source of information for the owners and marketers of the coffee shop sector. To draw the mentioned objective this survey will be taken to the people living in Chennai city who will share their opinions on the matter of atmosphere, discounts, and visual merchandising determining the purchase and consequently affecting the cafes' targeting of the Gen Z group in terms of overall profit, growth, and strategies.

## II. OBJECTIVES

1. To identify the various items that attract the Gen Z generation and result in unplanned purchases at cafés.
2. To study the frequency of café visits made by the younger generation and their unplanned purchase occurrences.
3. To quantify the amount of money that is spent impulsively in cafés during the visits of the respondents.

4. To examine the influence of the café's atmosphere, discounts, and product positioning on the customers' decision to buy.
5. To clarify the marketing measures of the cafes that are directed at attracting and enabling the consumer's impulse buying.

### III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

1. *Population*: The population for this study comprises Gen Z individuals aged 18–25, including college students, young professionals, and freelancers residing in Chennai.
2. *Sample Size*: The sample size for this study is 202.
3. *Sampling Technique*: Respondents are selected by simple random sampling.
4. *Data Collection*: Data is collected from both primary and secondary sources.
5. *Primary Data*: Data is collected by a questionnaire shared via google forms to understand café-hopping and impulsive spending behaviour.
6. *Secondary Data*: Data is collected from journals, research papers, articles, and reports related to consumer spending and café marketing strategies.
7. To clarify the marketing measures of the cafes that are directed at attracting and enabling the consumer's impulse buying.

### IV. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

1. Almaz, Bimo, and Bethani Suryawardani. "The Influence of Store Atmosphere on Gen Z Visit Intention." *Golden Ratio of Marketing and Applied Psychology of Business* 6.1 (2026): 251-263. This studies how store atmosphere plays a big role on influencing Gen Z's visit to String Café Bandung. It also shows the impact of layout, visuals, ambiance and lighting.
2. Anisah, Aan, Siti Tuhfah Maulidina, and Susanti Kurniawati. "Serial mediation effect of self-confidence in the relationship between hedonic lifestyle and consumptive behaviour in generation Z." *ASEAN Journal of Community and Special Needs Education* 3.1 (2024): 41-50. The results of this study show how hedonic lifestyle and consumptive behaviour are related to self-confidence. Hedonic lifestyle influences students to consume more through self-confidence.
3. Aswanto, Gabriella NadyaLarasati. "'I FEEL LIKE SHOPPING TODAY...': ANALYSIS OF EXTERNAL AND SITUATIONAL FACTORS TOWARD ONLINE IMPULSE BUYING BEHAVIOR AMONG GENERATION Z AGED 18-24 YEARS." This study aims to find out how external and situational factors influence Gen Z's impulsive buying behaviour online and to determine which factor has the greatest impact to come up with productive marketing strategies.
4. Budiman, Santi, and RadianDananjoyo. "The effect of cafe atmosphere on purchase decision: Empirical evidence from generation Z in Indonesia." *The Journal of Asian Finance, Economics and Business* 8.4 (2021): 483-490. This studies how the four factors such as exterior and interior design, point-of-purchase displays and store layout influence Gen Z's purchase decisions. It proves that a well thought out café environment is very important to attract Gen Z customers.
5. Fahriansah, Fahriansah, Nanda Safarida, and Shelly Midesia. "Buy Now, Think Later: Impulsive Buying Behaviour among Generation Z in Indonesia." *Share: Jurnal Ekonomi Dan Keuangan Islam* 12.2 (2023): 386-421. This study looks at how fun or enjoyable shopping experiences, word-of-mouth, and celebrity influencers affect Gen Z's impulse buying in Aceh, Indonesia. The results show that enjoying shopping experience, hearing others talk about products, all shape the way Gen Z buys. These factors lead to a lifestyle that includes more impulsive purchases. The study shows how emotional appeal and influencer marketing can push Gen Z to buy on the spot whirl also suggesting they should be more mindful about their spending.
6. Hodžić, Ajla. Impact of Generation Z values and attitudes on their consumer behaviour. Diss. [A. Hodžić], 2024. This study oversees how Gen Z's values, digital skills and exposure to product information influence their buying decisions.
7. Laohaviraphap, Tila. "Factors influencing Café hopper's choice of cafes in Bangkok using the AHP approach. This study shows that for people in Bangkok factors like price, unique experiences, promotions and cleanliness play an important role on satisfaction from café-hopping.

8. MU'AWIYAH, Siti, and Jurana JURANA. "Financial Behaviour Patterns Of Generation Z: Analysis of the Fear Of Missing Out (FOMO) Phenomenon." *Journal of Tourism Economics and Policy* 5.1 (2025): 23-34. This study shows how Gen Z base their financial behaviour based on FOMO phenomenon by analysing Instagram and TikTok. The results show that social media advertisements, influencer reviews and promotions influence impulsive spending. It shows how it is important to educate Gen Z financially and help them overcome FOMO.
9. Musunuri, Durgamohan. "Generation Z and specialist coffee shops in India: a perspective of the needs, motives, and issues of generation Z." *The Indian Hospitality Industry*. Apple Academic Press, 2017. 299-324. This study dives into the growth and competitive market of coffee shops in India in relation to consumers of Gen Z which is known for being tech-savvy and choice-driven. The aim is to understand their need, motives and challenges in relation to coffee shops.
10. Simatupang, Sudung, et al. "Gen Z Doom Spending Lifestyle That Influences Impulsive Consumer Shopping Behaviour." *SULTANIST: Jurnal Manajemen dan Keuangan* 13.1 (2025): 1-11. This study finds that Gen Z's trend following interest motivates them and influences them to spend on impulse.

## V. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The data collected from 202 respondents in urban areas of Chennai city provides significant insights into the impulsive spending patterns among gen Z during café hopping. The results have been organized and interpreted under five thematic segments corresponding to the survey design.

### *5.1 Buying Patterns and Impulse Behaviour Among Young Café Visitors*

#### *5.1.1 Age Group and Impulse Buying Level:*

The survey resultsshow that young adults between 18 and 28 years represent the largest group of café visitors. This age group also shows the highest level of impulse buying behaviour.

Their spending patterns show that cafés operate as social spaces which create situations where customers make unplanned purchases.

#### *5.1.2 Frequency of Café Visits and Impulse Occurrence:*

Most respondents visit cafés only occasionally, yet they tend to buy things they did not plan to purchase during those visits. The study proves that even short periods of time spent in cafés lead to major changes in customer spending habits.

#### *5.1.3 Level of Impulsive Purchases:*

Most study participants reported that they engage in unplanned buying at least once. The study results show that cafés have a moderate ability to create unplanned customer purchases through the actual situations and environmental elements which customers experience during their time at the café.

#### *5.1.4 Psychological Factors Influencing Impulse Buying:*

The most important psychological factors which affect buying behaviour include attractive food presentation and café ambiance and new menu items. The two elements create emotional excitement and curiosity which drive customers to make unplanned purchases.

#### *5.1.5 Promotional Influences on Spending:*

Discounts, seasonal specialties, and social media advertisements were found to have a significant impact on consumer spending habits, especially among younger customers. These promotional strategies increase visibility and create urgency, thereby strengthening impulse buying behaviour.

#### *5.1.6 Conclusion:*

The study results show that young café customers particularly those who belong to the 18-28 age group show high sensitivity to both environmental factors and psychological elements.

### *5.2 Factors Influencing Impulse Buying in Café*

#### *5.2.1 Café Ambiance:*

Lighting, music, decorations, and seating are all part of the ambiance and have a great impact on the customers. A nice and cozy atmosphere will attract more customers to the café, which makes unplanned purchases possible.

#### *5.2.2 Product Display and Visual Appeal:*

Excellent placement of food and drinks, especially at the counters and on the menu boards, is a great factor in provoking the impulse buy. When the products are presented in a desirable manner, consumers are more likely to buy on impulse.

### *5.2.3 Promotions and Special Offers:*

Discounts, combo offers, happy hours and time-limited deals produce the feeling of urgency and excitement to customers. These promotional tactics are often the reason why Gen Z consumers end up buying impulsively.

### *5.2.4 Social Influence and Peer Pressure:*

Gen Z is always under the influence of friends, group behaviour, and the latest trends on social media. The sight of others ordering things or blogging about them on the net creates an urge in the individual to follow the same, thus leading to the unplanned buying.

### *5.2.5 Emotional and Psychological Factors:*

The impulses to buy are also influenced by mood, stress, excitement, and the craving for rewards, etc. A significant number of Gen Z consumers see café visits as a diversion or self-reward, which results in spontaneous and emotionally motivated purchases.

## *5.3 Challenges Faced due to Impulse Buying by Gen Z*

### *5.3.1 Encourages Overspending Among Youth:*

The constant triggering of impulses might eventually make the young consumers spend more than what they have planned, thus, adversely affecting their financial habits.

### *5.3.2 Promotes Unhealthy Eating Habits:*

The regular consumption of sweets and snacks that are often purchased on impulse could lead to serious health issues if not controlled.

### *5.3.3 Short-Term Focus on Sales:*

The excessive concentration on impulse selling might take the focus away from the quality of the product and customer satisfaction.

### *5.3.4 Risk of Customer Dissatisfaction:*

If the items bought on impulse do not live up to the expectations, then the customers may feel sorry and decide not to come back.

### *5.3.5 Creates Dependence on Promotions:*

Customers might gradually become accustomed to the very frequent discounts and as a result, their readiness to pay the full price might get reduced.

## *5.2 Perceived Trends and Broader Impact*

### *5.4.1 Demographic Influence:*

Respondents believe that demographic factors which include age show strong effects on impulse buying behaviour in cafés. Young consumers between the ages of 18 and 28 are the most active café visitors and are most likely to make spontaneous purchases. Among them people who use social media frequently show high engagement with promotional content.

### *5.4.2 Marketing and Social Media:*

Most respondents believe that social media trends and influencer promotions together with attractive online content have created major changes in café consumption patterns. The combination of seasonal offers and limited-time items with online advertisements generates excitement which leads to unplanned spending.

### *5.4.3 Consumer Behaviour Impact:*

The participants believe that café culture has created new lifestyle spending patterns which young adults now follow. Cafés provide their customers with dining options while they also serve as social hubs and entertainment venues which create an environment for product-based consumption.

### *5.4.4 Conclusion:*

The segment demonstrates that impulse buying behaviour in cafés represents an extended pattern which develops through both personal activity and marketing strategies. Young adult spending patterns result from three factors which include their demographic information and digital media usage as well as their interest in experiential activities.

## *5.5 Expectations and Consumer Recommendations*

### *5.5.1 Infrastructure Improvement:*

The ambiance of cafés needs improvement in light, music, and seating to draw in customers and increase the amount they spend on impulse.

### *5.5.2 Display and Visual Appeal Enhancement:*

Displays of food and beverages should be made in a more attractive way to catch the customers' attention and provoke the customers to purchase what they had not planned for.

*5.5.3 Frequent Promotional Activities:*

Discounts, happy hours, and bundle offer should be resorted to as promotions that will be able to strategically increase the frequency of purchases.

*5.5.4 Introduction of New Items:*

The introduction of seasonal, limited-time menu items can create a sense of wonder and then, eventually, the customers start to buy on impulse.

*5.5.5 Inducing Customer Engagement:*

To attract and stimulate impulsive buying of young adults, stronger social media interaction through visually appealing content and timely updates can be very effective.

The combined findings confirm that:

- ✓ Young adults between 18 and 28 years form the largest segment of café visitors and display the highest level of impulse buying behavior.
- ✓ The café environment creates unplanned spending through impulse purchases which mainly happen during occasional café visits.
- ✓ Psychological factors such as appealing food presentation, ambiance, new menu items, along with discounts and social media promotions, significantly drive impulsive buying decisions.

VI. FINDINGS

1. Young adults between 18 and 28 years old make up the largest group of café visitors and this age group shows the highest level of impulse buying behaviour.
2. Café visits are not common but during such rare visits is when impulsive buying happens.
3. Majority of the participants make impulsive purchases sometimes this shows that cafés trigger unplanned spending quite well.
4. The most effective psychological factors behind the impulse buying are the appealing food presentation, atmosphere, and the introduction of new products in the menu.

5. Discounts, seasonal specialties, and social media ads have a significant impact on the consumers' spending habits, particularly among the younger demographic.

VII. SUGGESTIONS

1. Cafés should enhance their social media presence through attractive visual content and short video clips and their operational schedule updates because young adults show strong responsiveness to digital content and online trends.
2. The establishment of special menu items that customers can only access during specific times will generate excitement while creating a sense of FOMO which drives instant purchases.
3. The use of discount programs together with happy hour specials and combination deals enables businesses to drive higher customer spending through increased purchase behaviour and unplanned purchases.
4. Businesses should design food and beverage displays with attractive designs and creative arrangements that help products to catch customer attention and lead to unplanned shopping.
5. The customer experience at cafes becomes better through improved ambiance which includes enhanced lighting and better seating and appropriate background music.

VIII. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that young adults are the most likely to purchase on an impulse in cafés. The impulsive purchasing occurs when the cafés have an aesthetic ambiance, mouth-watering food displays and irresistible offers. Most people don't go to cafés much often, but they still end up spending more than they had planned to because of interesting food items and good deals. Additionally online visibility, through media ads and promotions impacts customer behaviour. Therefore, cafés need to focus on creating a well-designed space with attractive menu items and smart promotions.