



Research Paper

Role of Impulsiveness with respect to Desire for Instant Gratification: An Empirical Examination in the Context of Online Buying

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ABSTRACT: While most studies on instant gratification are in the field of psychology, research on Desire for Instant Gratification (DIG) in a consumer setting remains sparse. This research studies the effect of impulsiveness on the relationship between marketing mix tools and DIG in the online buying context. Adopting the Latent State-Trait (LST) theory as a conceptual framework, the paper classifies marketing mix tools as states or environmental cues and impulsiveness as a trait. The study used a retrospective survey and mixed-mode method of data collection to collect 350 responses, that were analysed using confirmatory factor analysis and structural equation modeling. The results show that impulsiveness positively moderates the relationship only between the marketing mix tool of process and DIG. The results also show that only four of the seven marketing mix tools directly relate to DIG in online purchasing viz. product, promotion, people and physical evidence. Impulsiveness emerges as a quasi-moderator that has a limited role in explaining online consumer behaviour. The research effort concludes DIG in consumer behaviour is expressed in a tempered form. The practical implications of the study resonate with online retailers.

KEYWORDS: Desire for Instant Gratification, Impulsiveness, Latent State-Trait Theory, Marketing Mix, Online Buying

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I. INTRODUCTION

The concept of DIG, defined as the desire for immediate pleasure or contentment without delay, involves a preference for immediate rewards and avoidance of immediate costs (Cheng et al., 2011; Yin and Shen, 2024). DIG fosters short-term perspectives, individualism, and self-centered pursuits (Bialaszek et al., 2015). In contrast to DIG is the inability to delay gratification, described as a planned, future-oriented, and goal-directed behaviour (Mischel and Ebbesen, 1970; Dawd, 2017). The 'marshmallow experiment' by Mischel and Ebbesen (1970) highlighted this concept, but its reproducibility has been questioned in studies with diverse populations (Benjamin et al., 2020), emphasizing the evolving nature of research findings in this area.

In the consumer behaviour context, DIG refers to the tendency of consumers to let go of their future consumption benefits for smaller but immediate returns (Baumeister, 2002; Bialaszek et al., 2015; Liu et al., 2013). Consumers satisfying this urge are less likely to consider the consequences or to think carefully before making the purchase. Watson and Milfont (2017) highlight that instant gratification is a failure to exercise self-control and self-regulation by consumers. Marketers often capitalise on this behaviour by creating appealing and enticing promotional messages, leading to increased sales and impulse buying. Consumer behaviour literature has largely overlooked the marketing aspects of DIG (Donoghue and Rabin, 2000).

There is a dearth of research that examines desire for instant gratification (DIG) from a consumer behaviour point of view. The knowledge about DIG has been largely obtained from research on addiction and overconsumption (Herndon, 2008). The most cited articles on instant gratification are in the field of psychology with a focus on self-control. An underlying preference for immediate gratification can explain a variety of behaviours in different fields. A preference for immediate gratification has important implications for a broad array of day-to-day consumer choices (Donoghue and Rabin, 2000).

Impulsiveness refers to individuals' tendency to act on matters quickly, without giving much forethought to the consequences (Kacen et al., 2012; Lo et al., 2016). Instant gratification, in turn, reflects the immediate satisfaction a person experiences after acting impulsively (Bialaszek et al., 2015; Cheng et al. 2011).

Youn and Faber (2000) highlight significant differences between impulsive and non-impulsive consumers, with impulsive shoppers seeking instant gratification that shopping offers, which hedonistically improves their moods. According to Bialaszek et al., (2015), impulsive people have a compulsion for instant gratification. The study of DIG and impulsiveness in the context of online purchasing is important because of the growing size of online retail purchasing (Eroglu et al., 2001), the differences in environments of online buying and offline buying (Aragoncillo and Orus, 2018) and most important the controversy in the literature about the role of DIG and impulsiveness in e-commerce.

Unplanned purchase feelings associated with DIG are often triggered by external stimuli, as highlighted by Lo et al. (2016). Eroglu et al. (2001) further assert that online spontaneous buying decisions, a manifestation of DIG, are influenced by various marketing cues. This research specifically delves into seven key marketing mix tools—product variety, price attributes, sales promotion, delivery, people, process, and physical evidence—to comprehend their comparative roles in causing DIG. The inclusion of these seven tools is strategic, covering all elements of the marketing mix and ensuring a comprehensive examination of marketing factors influencing DIG.

For a deeper understanding of any behavioural phenomena, such as online DIG, psychology researchers emphasise the importance of considering both, consumers' inherent traits and their current state of mind (Wells et al., 2011). Considering either of the one to study the phenomena may give only a partial understanding of the behaviour phenomena. Therefore, considering the interplay between individuals' traits, their current state and this interaction, as proposed by Steyer et al., (1999) in Latent State-Trait theory (LST) theory, gives a comprehensive study of the phenomena. Using LST theory, the study adopts marketing mix tools as states, representing environmental cues that are temporary and situational influences on consumers. Simultaneously, impulsiveness is categorised as a trait, representing a lasting personal characteristic. Together these environmental cues and traits are investigated to understand consumers' DIG in the online context.

The objective of the research is to investigate how various marketing mix tools influence DIG in the context of online purchases and how impulsiveness moderates this relationship between marketing mix tools and DIG. For that purpose, an empirical investigation was conducted in two phases, in which data from the pilot study was used to test scales of nine constructs. Data for the final study was collected from 350 respondents using a mixed mode of data collection and quota sampling, as it was used to test fifteen hypotheses with the help of structural equation modeling. The research findings reveal that only one hypothesis out of seven concerning the moderating role of impulsiveness is supported, suggesting a limited role of impulsiveness in arousing consumer's DIG. Results also reveal the unequal impact of various marketing mix tools on DIG in online purchasing.

The findings prompt a reconsideration of some beliefs about the DIG and online consumer experience, suggesting that online buying does not universally elicit impulsive tendencies. In the view of the author, unlike in other fields where DIG can result in extreme behaviours, such as compulsive actions or substance abuse, the desire for immediate satisfaction in consumer settings tends to be less extreme. Most probably, rational, utilitarian and habitual purchase behaviours continue to work in the case of DIG in consumer behaviour. The practical implications of this study should resonate with e-tailers, as it offers guidance on which marketing tools will be more impactful in cultivating DIG.

II. THEORETICAL LENSES, CONSTRUCTS AND HYPOTHESES

The LST theory posits that human feelings, thoughts, and behaviour are influenced by situational and environmental cues, individual factors (traits), and their interplay/interactions (Steyer et al., 1999). LST theory has been widely used in psychology and consumer behaviour research to study personalities, self-concepts, attitudes, situations and tasks, impulsive buying, etc. LST theory has also been extended to the online context to study consumer behaviour (Chen et al., 2016; Wells et al., 2011). The study enlists marketing mix tools as 'states', which are external stimuli that consumers encounter in a purchase environment and impulsiveness as the individual's 'trait' that acts as cognitive and emotional factors (Sharma et al., 2010; Wells et al., 2011; Youn and Faber, 2000)

The study uses the tools of the seven P model of marketing mix as the states, which is an enlarged version of four elements (product, price, place and promotion) given by McCarthy and Jerome (1960) and three elements of marketing of services (people, process and physical evidence) given by Booms and Bitner, (1982). The authors of this study support the view that the Ps paradigm can adjust to environmental changes by incorporating additional components into each "P," (Dominici, 2009) and that the P framework even applies to the Internet (Smith, 2011).

2.1. State: Situational and environmental cues related to Marketing mix

Product variety: A product is a collection of characteristics that includes the features, quality, positioning, variety, design, packing, and packaging of a good or service (Kareh, 2018). Making a product

hedonistic, ready to use, and less expensive enhances the likelihood of buying it right away (Kacen et al., 2012; Nguyen et al., 2024). According to Sharma et al. (2010), a variety of choices offers a relief from monotony which is a feature of variety-seeking searches. Online buyers seek variety and are more likely to appreciate browsing websites with a wide variety of products (Lim and Dubinsky, 2004).

H1: Product Variety positively affects DIG while making a purchase online.

Price: Price is redefined as the money, time, and effort put in by the buyer for acquiring the product/service (Dominici, 2009). In the online context, consumers rely heavily on price information as the product is not available for examination before purchasing (Lee and Chen, 2018), and 40% of online buyers report price as the reason for their abandoned carts (Kukar and Close, 2010). Low prices have emotional effects that can evoke positive emotions. Price is an important element in predicting hedonic browsing (Kim and Eastin, 2011), which is an important characteristic of desire for instant gratification.

H2: Price attributes positively affects DIG while making a purchase online.

Sales Promotion: Sales promotions are a collection of different stimulation methods directed toward encouraging customers to make quick purchases (Kotler, 2012). The goal is to have an instantaneous influence on the buyers and to arouse purchase impulse (Dawson and Kim, 2010). When consumers face promotional incentives, they are afraid of giving up or finding the price higher later on and consequently experiencing emotional regret (Spears, 2006). If a consumer responds to sales promotion, they minimize regret and experience fulfillment (Zhou and Gu, 2015) and are likely to accomplish instant gratification. Chandon, et al., (2000) explain that the effectiveness of sales promotion is determined by the utilitarian or hedonic character of promotional benefits it offers. Sales promotional stimuli weaken self-control and increase impulse purchases (Nguyen et al., 2024).

H3: Sales promotion effectiveness positively affects DIG while making a purchase online.

Delivery: Delivery refers to the total time spent on shipping and handling (Howard, 2014). Instant gratification is arguably the biggest advantage of brick-and-mortar stores but now same-day delivery brings near-instant gratification to online shoppers (Howard, 2014). According to Dholakia (2000), knowledge of a product's availability for purchase or consumption may activate a latent desire for some consumers thereby triggering the urge to acquire it. Schaappa and Belanger (2005) highlight the role of parcel-tracking mechanisms in alleviating consumer anxiety. Free shipping allows customers to focus solely on the benefits of the products, reducing hesitation caused by the major concern of shipping costs (Dawson and Kim, 2010).

H4: Delivery positively affects DIG while making a purchase online.

People: According to Verplanken and Wood (2006), the way service is delivered by the people is important as consumers' get assurance for their intentions or actions. With the advancement of technology and artificial intelligence, the human component of the marketing mix is becoming more widely used online (Kushwaha and Agrawal, 2015). According to Wang et al., (2007), such tools such as chatbots can increase the perception of the presence of employees and thereby enhance the online experience of consumers. Good people intervention helps consumers in reducing anxiety and cognitive load and they proceed with the transaction with conviction.

H5: People positively affect DIG while making a purchase online.

Process: A process is a service architecture that involves methods and a series of steps that generate value propositions for the customer (Chen and Chang, 2003). The process influences the journey of a user entering a website and exerts a gentle yet powerful influence on the choice (Eroglu et al., 2001). Parboteeah et al., (2009) highlight that 'process' covers visual appeal and ease of use of a website, and indirectly influences the urge to buy. Parker and Plank (2000) explain process gratification as the enjoyment and satisfaction that an individual gets from engaging with the medium itself rather than the content. This type of gratification is related to consumers' online motives such as escape, relaxation, entertainment, or simply passing the time (Kim and Eastin, 2011).

H6: Process positively affects DIG while making a purchase online.

Physical evidence: Pogorelova et al. (2016) highlight that there is a relationship between consumer preferences for physical evidence-related factors with their actual online buying of goods to tangibilise the intangible. Sinha et al., (2018) gave four physical evidence related parameters 'Purchase due to ease of use of the website', 'Purchase due to quick response time of website', 'Purchase due to good star rating by consumers', 'Good packaging of delivered products' which create a significant effect on consumer's online buying. Physical evidence holds great importance to the customer because they normally evaluate the quality of the service provided through physical evidence (Pogorelova et al., 2016).

H7: Physical evidence positively affects DIG while making a purchase online.

2.2 Trait: Individual factor Impulsiveness

Kacen et al., (2012) describe impulsiveness as experiencing spontaneous and sudden urges and taking action on these feelings. Impulsiveness stimulates individuals to satisfy their need for immediate gratification (Bialaszek et al., 2015). Impulsiveness is usually irresistible and consumers might pay less attention to the behavioural consequences (Higgins, 2014). Sensory stimuli can reduce self-control mechanisms, (Johnston,

2016) and this aspect may be of particular relevance to online businesses that can offer specific types of media experiences to consumers. Consumers who are naturally impulsive and are accustomed to making impulsive purchases are likely to experience greater gratifications than those who feel guilty about their impulsiveness (Liu et al., 2013).

H8: Impulsiveness positively affects DIG while making a purchase online.

2.1.3 Interaction Effects: State and Trait/ Marketing Mix and Impulsiveness

Considering environmental cues alone would provide a limited understating of the phenomenon as individual traits simultaneously influence the buying states (Chen et al. 2016; Wells et al. 2011). As identified by previous studies, impulsiveness as a personality trait plays an important role in influencing consumers’ buying intentions (Youn and Faber 2000). There is a significant difference between how impulsive and non-impulsive consumers react to different marketing stimuli (Youn and Faber (2000). Consumers with higher levels of impulsiveness are more likely to be influenced by external stimuli, experience an urge to respond and are more likely to engage in instant gratification.

Impulsiveness has been treated as a moderating variable in the study as it influences the nature of the relationship. In statistical terms, a moderator modifies either the strength and/or form of relationship between dependent and independent variables (Sauer and Dick, 1993). While previous studies consider impulsiveness to be a moderately stable personality trait (Wells et al., 2011), it is acknowledged that individuals are very diverse and have different levels of impulsivity (Rook and Fischer, 1995). Hence, the study contends the following hypotheses:

H9: Impulsiveness moderates the relationship between product variety and DIG; such that impulsiveness strengthens the relationship between product variety and DIG.

In H10 to H15 the words product variety have been replaced by ‘Price Attributes’ (in H10), ‘Sales Promotion (in H11), ‘Delivery’ (in H12), ‘People’ (in H13), ‘Process’ (in H14), ‘Physical Evidence’ (in H15).

Fig 1 depicts the conceptual model built with the help of the literature reviewed.

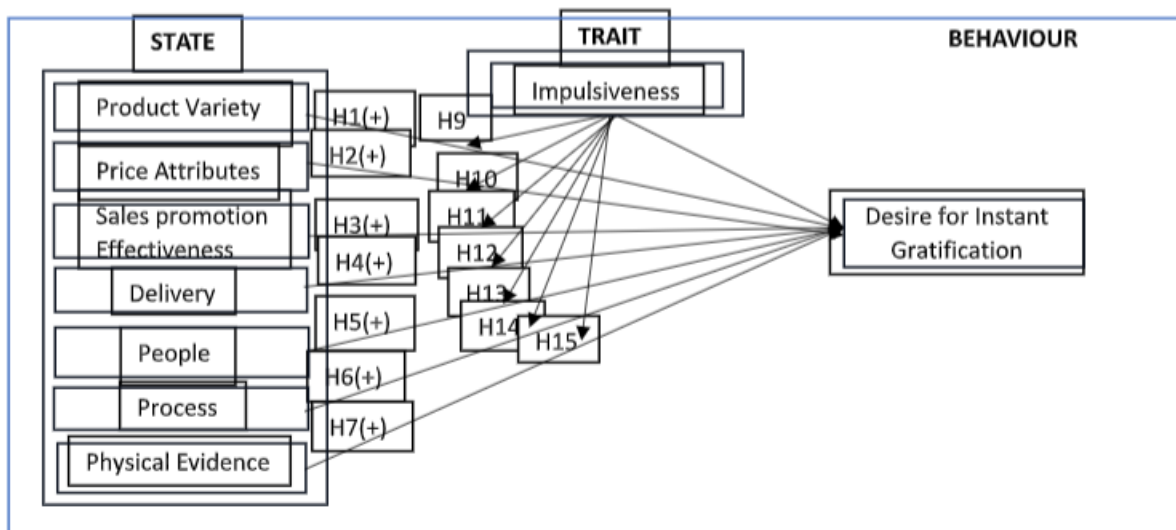


Figure 1. Conceptual Model for Consumers’ DIG in Online Purchase Environment, with Marketing Mix Tools as states, Impulsiveness as trait and DIG as Behaviour.

As can be seen in Figure 1, the study incorporates marketing mix tools and personality traits to investigate consumers’ DIG through the lenses of latent state-trait theory. The black arrows represent the direct hypothesised relationship between the marketing mix tools and DIG along with the number and the direction of the hypotheses. The dotted arrows represent the hypotheses testing the moderation of impulsiveness on the relationship between marketing mix tools and DIG. The selection of marketing mix tools is aligned with the seven Ps of marketing, focusing solely on those pertinent to DIG. Similarly, the choice of personality traits to study DIG closely aligns with the characteristics of DIG in online purchase settings.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The subsections give an account of materials used in the study, participants of the study, profile of the respondents and data analysis conducted.

3.1 Materials

Participants were provided with an easy-to-understand definition of DIG and were asked to recall and describe an incident from the past one year in which they as consumers opted to satisfy their DIG while buying online. Each of the nine constructs used in this research effort was measured with the help of reputed existing scales. The source and keywords of each item of all scales used in this study are given in Table 1.

Table 1: Scales, Items and their Factor loadings

Name of Construct	Author(s)	Number of items	Items	Factor Loadings
Product Variety	Park et. al., (2012)	4	Variety items	0.728
			Variety brands	0.806
			Variety prices	0.642
			Up-to-date items	0.661
Price attributes	Park et. al., (2012)	3	Reasonable	0.744
			Cheap	0.653
			Economical	0.729
Sale promotion effectiveness	Chandon et. al., (2000)	18	Savings	
			Saved money	0.831
			Good deal	0.822
		Quality	Spent less	0.831
			Higher quality	0.836
			Better-than-usual	0.800
		Convenience	upgraded	0.730
			Reminded	0.732
			Easy	0.804
		Value-expression	Remember	0.812
			Felt good	0.831
			Proud purchase	0.825
		Exploration	Smart shopper	0.848
			Trying new brands	0.778
			Avoid same brand	0.711
New ideas to buy	0.767			
Entertainment	Fun	0.838		
	Entertaining	0.796		
	Enjoyable	0.842		
Delivery	Schaupp & Belanger, (2005)	3	Minimum delivery time	0.611
			Made aware of delays	0.654
			Tracking number	0.671
People	Kushwaha and Agrawal, (2015)	4	Personal attention	0.738
			Politeness	0.796
			Willingness to help	0.780
			Responsive	0.799
Process	Yoo and Donthu, (2001)	7	Convenient to use	Item deleted
			Easy search	0.772
			Colourful	0.662
			Creative	0.692
			Good pictures	0.656
			Easy access	0.759
			Quick process	0.715
Physical evidence	Sinha et. al., (2018)	4	Ease of use	0.729
			Quick response time	0.667
			Ratings	0.685
			Packaging	0.687
Impulsiveness	Rook and Fisher. (1995)	9	Spontaneously	0.744
			Just do it	0.759
			Without much thought	0.865
			I see it, I buy it	0.799
			Buy now, think later	0.798
			Spur-of -the moment	0.827
			At the moment	0.796
			Plan purchases	Item deleted
			Reckless	0.601
Instant gratification	Liu et. al., (2013)	3	Immediate enjoyment	0.875
			Feel pleased	0.820
			Feel excited	0.806

As can be seen in Table 1, the scale on sales promotion effectiveness has six sub-scales and the items associated with them are also identified in the table. The remaining parts of Table 1 are described in section 4.1.

3.2 Participants

For the pilot study as well as the final study data was collected through retrospective experience sampling (Napa et al., 2009). Quota sampling and the mixed-mode data collection method were used to collect data for the pilot and final study. Mixed-mode method of data collection allows the use of two or more methods (De Leeuw, 2005); such as surveys, interviews, mail surveys, telephone surveys and internet which proved useful particularly when society was facing restrictions due to COVID-19.

3.3 Pilot study

Data for the pilot study was collected in August and September 2020 from a sample of 100 respondents from states/Union territories (UT) in North West India. The control measures used for the quota sampling were gender, age, state and city. Scales used in the pilot study were tested for reliability and validity using confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and the results were acceptable for all scales, except two. For the scale on Process the first item, 'Convenient to use' and for the impulsiveness scale the eighth item, 'Plan Purchases' did not load satisfactorily but the decision to drop the items was postponed till results were obtained from the larger main study, as these are reputed scales in Marketing Literature.

3.4 Main Study

The control measures of quota sampling used were gender, age and administrative divisions of states and UTs were based on the Census of India (2011) and Census of India (2020) Population Projections for India and States 2011-2036 Report. The sample size for the main study is 350 respondents. Data was collected over a period of five months from March 2021 to July 2021. Table 2 shows the profile of the sample of the main study.

Table 2.10: Profile of Sample for Final Study of Consumers

Categories and Sub-categories	Sample size	%	Categories and Sub-categories	Sample size	%
Gender			Age		
Male	192	55	15-19 years	50	15
Female	158	45	20-24 years	60	17
Total	350	100	25-29 years	57	16
State Divisions and UT			30-34 years	49	14
Delhi	80	23	35-39 years	38	11
Chandigarh	10	3	40-49 years	47	13
Ambala	20	6	50-59 years	27	8
Faridabad	18	5	60 years & above	22	6
Gurugram	16	4	Total	350	100
Hisar	23	7	Occupation		
Rohtak	27	8	Skilled workers	17	5
Karnal	18	5	Petty traders	14	4
Faridkot	10	3	Shop owners	13	4
Firozpur	16	4	Businessman /Industrialists	20	6
Jalandhar	57	16	Self-employed professionals	33	9
Patiala	45	13	Clerical/ Salesmen	19	5
Ropar	10	3	Supervisory	17	5
Total	350	100	Officers/ Executives (junior)	29	8
SEC			Officers/Executives (mid/senior)	32	9
A	145	41	Student	80	22
B	123	35	Housewife	55	15
C	65	19	Any other*	31	8
D	17	5	Total	350	100
Total	350	100			

*Categories other than mentioned.

Table 2 shows that the sample is heterogeneous, representing respondents from different genders, age groups and states. The sample is proportionate to the population for gender, age group and state respectively. SEC and occupation have also been reported to convey the heterogeneity of the sample. However, the presence of SECs is disproportionate as SEC A and SEC B supplied most of the respondents and it was difficult to locate Internet users in the lower SECs.

3.5 Data analysis

Initially, tests were performed to check for normality and common method variance. To ensure the constructs' internal consistency as well as their convergent and discriminant validity, a measurement model was

developed and CFA was performed using AMOS. The norms employed for model fit, the goodness of fit and the badness of fit are those supplied by Hair et al. (2006) and are given in Table 3. Three models were prepared for testing the hypothesised relationships. The first structural model (Marketing Mix Model) tested the direct relationship between marketing mix tools as states and DIG as behaviour. The second structural model (Marketing Mix and Impulsiveness model) tested the relationship between marketing mix tools as states, impulsiveness as trait and DIG as behaviour without interaction. This model was then used to develop the third structural model (Interaction Model) for testing the moderating effect of impulsiveness as trait on the relationship between marketing mix tools as states and DIG as behaviour. Interaction terms were added to the Marketing Mix and Impulsiveness Model. A moderated hierarchical regression analysis using structural equation modeling was used to estimate the moderating effect of impulsiveness on DIG (Sauer and Dick, 1993). This approach was preferred to the multigroup analysis as it has higher statistical power (Jaccard et al. 1990) and lower error.

IV. RESULTS

The results of CFA are followed by the results of the structural model, in which main effects and interaction effects are discussed.

4.1 Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Figure 2 shows the measurement model that was tested using CFA.

As can be seen in Figure 2 the model has nine constructs viz. product variety, price, promotion, delivery, people, process, physical evidence, impulsiveness and DIG. While all the constructs are multi-item constructs (as elaborated in Table 1 also), the construct of sales promotion is unique as it has six factors, namely savings, quality, convenience, value expression, exploration and entertainment. The loadings of each item of each construct are given in Table 1. Two items with low loadings referred to in the description of the pilot study (item one in Process and item eighth in Impulsiveness) have been dropped from further analysis and the factor loadings of all the remaining items meet the stringent norm of loading above 0.60. The arrows connecting the constructs represent the correlations between them.

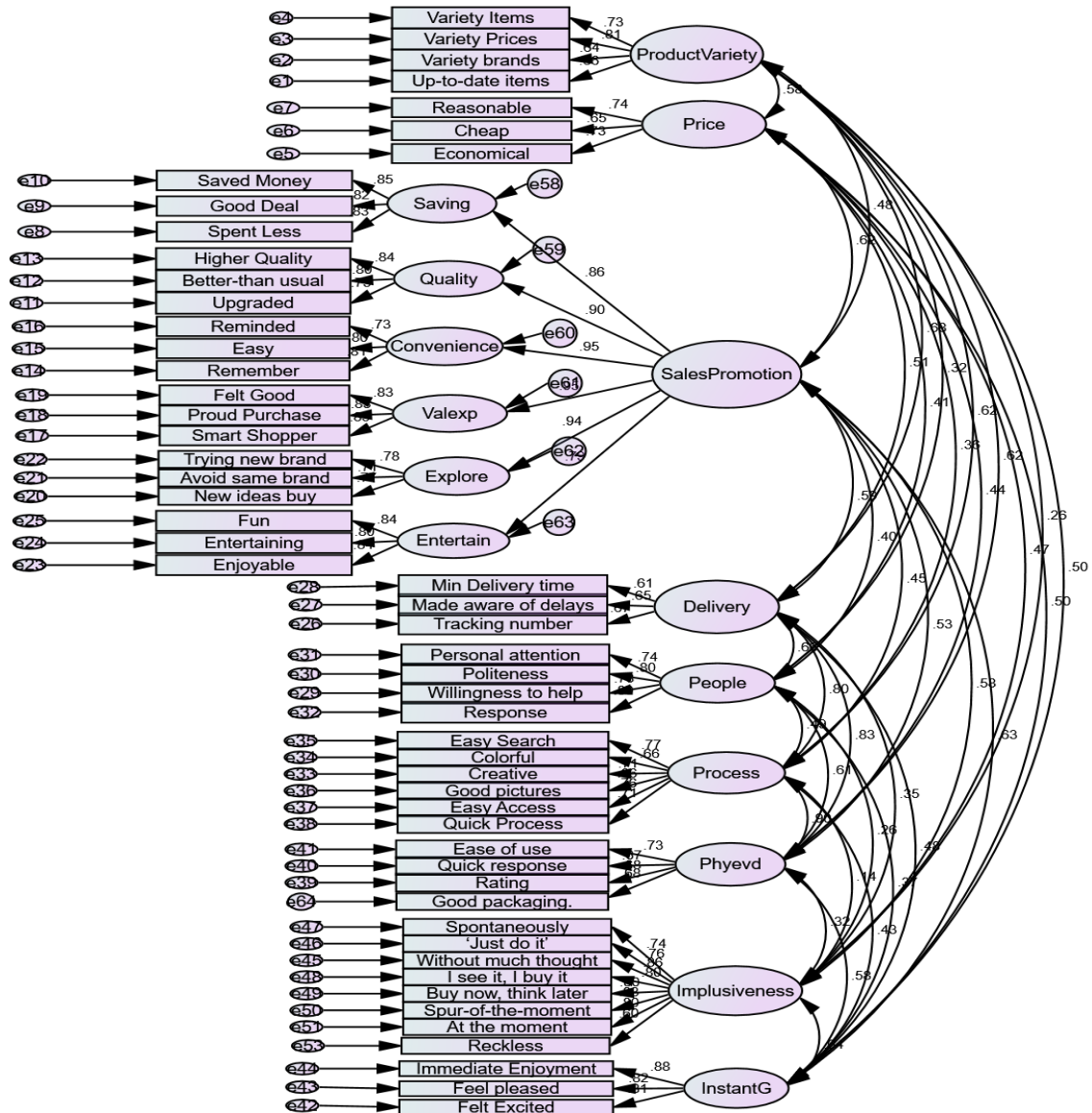


Figure 2: Measurement Model for Latent Constructs of Marketing Mix tools, Impulsiveness and Desire for Instant Gratification

Assessment of model fit Indices: Goodness of fit and badness of fit for the measurement model are measured using model fit indices as shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Model fit indices

Fit Indices	Results of model fit indices	Norms
CMIN	3095.868	-----
DF	1394.0	-----
CMIN/DF	2.278	< 3good, < 5 sometimes permissible
CFI	0.895	> 0.90 traditional, > 0.08 sometimes permissible
SRMR	0.091	< 0.09
RMSEA	0.060	< 0.05 Good, 0.05 to 0.10 moderate

It can be inferred from Table 3 that the model fit indices of the data are within the thresholds. The value of chi-square fit statistics is 2.278 which is less than 3 indicating an overall fit for the model. Value of Comparative Fit Index (CFI) which indicates the goodness of fit is within the permissible norms. The Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) fit statistic for the model is 0.060 and values of 0.08 or smaller indicate acceptable fits.

Assessment of reliability and validity: Table 4 shows the reliability and validity results.

Table 4: Reliability and Validity results

	Instant gratification	Product (Variety)	Price (Low)	Promotion (Sales)	Place (Delivery)	People	Process	Physical evidence	Impulsiveness
CR	0.873	0.803	0.752	0.963	0.682	0.860	0.861	0.784	0.925
AVE	0.696	0.507	0.504	0.813	0.417	0.606	0.509	0.576	0.639
MSV	0.416	0.456	0.382	0.396	0.696	0.433	0.420	0.408	0.416
MaxR(H)	0.878	0.816	0.757	0.974	0.684	0.863	0.866	0.786	0.928
Instant gratification	0.834	0.501	0.498	0.629	0.484	0.370	0.433	0.583	0.645
Product (Variety)		0.712	0.579	0.477	0.675	0.323	0.616	0.615	0.260
Price (Low)			0.710	0.618	0.507	0.411	0.359	0.440	0.471
Promotion (Sales)				0.902	0.593	0.402	0.450	0.531	0.577
Place (Delivery)					0.646	0.658	0.798	0.834	0.353
People						0.779	0.492	0.605	0.262
Process							0.713	0.899	0.139
Physical evidence								0.690	0.315
Impulsiveness									0.799

Table 4 shows that except for the scale on place/delivery all the latent variables of the measurement model have the required validity and reliability. For Place/delivery, the value of CR at 0.682 is marginally less than 0.7 and the value of AVE at 0.417 is less than 0.5 and MSV and square value of AVE also are not within the threshold. As the results of this scale were not impacting the model fit indices, it was not thought advisable to delete the scale or any item in it especially as there are limitations to using Structural equation models with less than three items (Hair et al., 2006).

4.2 Structural models

As described earlier the study tested independent variables and interactions separately; thus, three nested models were generated. Figure 3 shows the Marketing Mix Model.

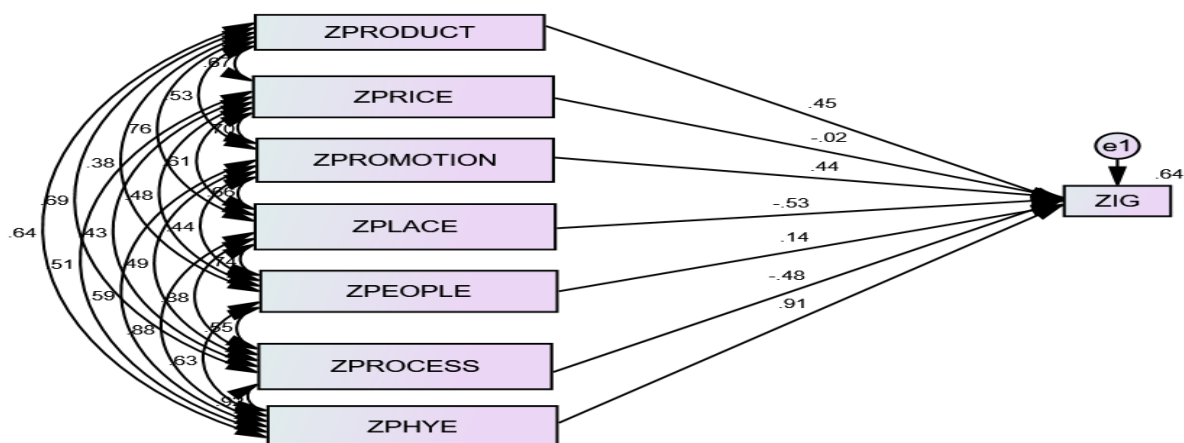


Figure 3: Structural model for Latent Constructs of marketing mix tools and outcome variable of Desire for Instant Gratification (Marketing Mix Model).

As can be seen in Figure 3, the Marketing Mix Model is for the hypothesised relationship from H1 to H7. To minimize the effect of multicollinearity, predictor and moderator variables were transformed to standard scores in SPSS (Jaccard et al. 1990). In the model, standardized regression weights are indicated by the single-headed paths and correlations among the constructs along the double-headed arrows, which show the

covariances. An exogenous unobserved variable called error term accounts for the unexplained error in estimation. A detailed explanation of the model follows in the section titled ‘Main effects.’

After testing the Marketing Mix Model, impulsiveness was added to the model to check the variance explained by this personality trait on DIG. It was observed that the total variance explained in the model increased by 9.69% from 64% to 73.69% after adding impulsiveness (H8). The figure of the Marketing Mix and Impulsiveness model is however not being given here due to the paucity of space.

The Interaction model, which tested the moderating effects of impulsiveness, is given in Figure 4.

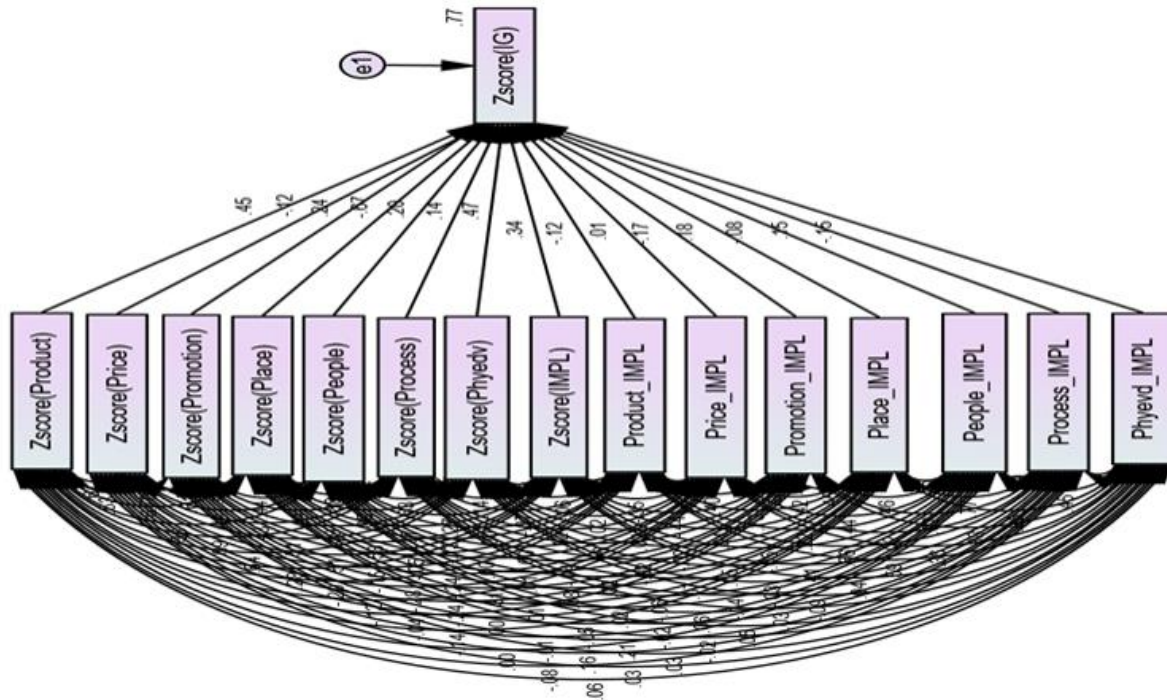


Figure 4: Structural model for Latent Constructs of Marketing Mix tools, Impulsiveness, Interaction terms and Desire for Instant Gratification (Interaction Model).

The Interaction Model tested moderation by adding the interaction terms to the variables from the previous model. H9 to H15 pertains to the interaction effect between marketing mix tools and impulsiveness and its effect on DIG. A similar procedure of transforming standard scores in SPSS was followed to compute interaction terms and avoid the effects of collinearity (Jaccard et al. 1990). A detailed explanation of the model follows in the section titled ‘Moderating effects.’

Table 5 presents the standardised beta weights for the independent variables, and the R² of instant gratification at each step. It also shows the standardised (b) estimates, t-statistics and fit statistics of the structural models.

Table 5: Structural equation models results

Variable /hypotheses /results	Marketing mix Model			Marketing mix & Impulsiveness Model			Interaction Model		
	Std B	t-value	p-value	Std B	t-value	p-value	Std B	t-value	p-value
Direct effects									
Product→DIG	.45	6.99	.000***				.45	8.21	.000***
Price→DIG	-.02	-.43	.667(ns)				-.12	-2.51	.012***
Promotion→DIG	.44	8.21	.000***				.24	5.25	.000***
Place→DIG	-.53	-4.50	.000***				-.67	-5.96	.000***
People→DIG	.14	2.51	.000***				.20	3.95	.000***
Process→DIG	-.48	-4.62	.012***				.14	1.33	.000***
Physical evidence →DIG	.91	9.67	.000***				.47	5.06	.000***
Moderator effects									
Product×Impulsiveness							-.12	-2.67	.039***
Price×Impulsiveness							.01	.115	.909(ns)
Promotion×Impulsiveness							-.17	-3.12	.002***
Place×Impulsiveness							.18	1.97	.058(ns)

V. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The study contributes to the existing body of literature on consumer behaviour and e-tailing by exploring how the trait (impulsiveness) and states (marketing mix tools) interact to influence specific behaviour (DIG). To the best of our knowledge, this is the first study to systematically investigate this interaction in triggering DIG. This study holds significance not only as it addresses a gap in the literature concerning marketing aspects of online DIG but is also relevant due to the increasing e-commerce activity and consumer impatience.

Findings reveal that the trait of impulsiveness has a direct, positive relationship with DIG (H8). While previous research has made tangential reference to such an effect, the results of this study provide support for the relationship between consumer impulsiveness and DIG. Impulsiveness and DIG share underlying cognitive processes related to reward processing and decision-making (Bialaszek et al., 2015). Impulsiveness and DIG are linked to heightened sensitivity to rewards and a preference for novel or exciting experiences. Impulsiveness is often associated with a lack of self-control and difficulty in delaying gratification, leading impulsive people to prioritise immediate urges (Johnston M. 2016; Lo et al., 2013)

Impulsiveness does not moderate (positively) the relationship between six of the seven marketing mix tools. In fact, for a couple of marketing mix tools, it moderates the relation negatively. H9, H11, H13 and H15 showed significant results but these cannot be accepted as the interaction coefficients are negative indicating that the one percent increase in predictor variables \times impulsiveness leads to a *beta* percent decrease in DIG. Rejection of the price and delivery hypotheses with moderating role of impulsiveness respectively (H10) and (H12) was not surprising as there was no direct relation between these marketing tools and desire for instant gratification when tested without the moderator. Results for process are a welcome observation as process was found to positively affect desire for instant gratification when moderated by impulsiveness (H14). The results, when read with the Marketing mix model, imply that process do not directly influence a person's DIG, rather it influence DIG through impulsiveness.

While impulsiveness is relevant for understanding DIG, it has not emerged as strong a trait as was hypothesised. Probable reasons for this can be found in the online purchase context and online buying behaviour. The online purchase context has several unique features that previous authors have highlighted as reasons for reducing impulsiveness. Features like delayed possession, hence delayed satisfaction, shipping costs, and refunds might discourage impulsiveness (Aragoncillo and Orus, 2018). Additionally, the ease of comparison and research available online allows consumers to conduct thorough evaluations of products and prices, mitigating impulsive urges (Lim and Dubinsky, 2004). Furthermore, the prevalence of online reviews and recommendations provides consumers with social validation and reassurance, reducing the effect of impulsiveness in driving purchasing decisions in the online context (Wells et al., 2011). The limited presence of sensory experiences in online buying can also rationalise buying and reduce the desire for immediate consumption (Lo et al., 2016).

The acceptance of four out of seven marketing mix tools in directly contributing to online DIG, namely product variety, sales promotion effectiveness, people and physical evidence suggest that a number of well-designed online marketing mix tools, regardless of online impulsiveness, increase the likelihood of DIG. The findings also suggest that different marketing tools vary in the type of impact they have on DIG, even tools that have a positive impact on DIG differ in their strength (e.g. the beta value for product variety is 0.45 whereas for people it is 0.14). The hypotheses that are borne out, support the literature on which they are based. The result regarding product variety is consistent with previous literature that when a consumer experiences DIG, all attention is focused on the product (Dholakia, 2000). The results of the sales promotions hypothesis are in keeping with the purpose for which these tools are used by marketers, to encourage consumers to make unintended purchases (Dawson and Kim, 2010; Nguyen et al., 2024). The results regarding the hypothesis on people are supportive of the line of thought that the virtual presence of people expedites decision-making and ensures seamless transactions (Moriuchi et al, 2021), all of which might increase consumers' DIG. The results for physical evidence also affirm the positive role it plays in encouraging instant gratification in online purchases.

The three hypotheses not borne out could also be due to online purchase context and online purchase behaviour. The inconsistent results regarding price can be attributed to the reasoning that consumers practice rationality instead of spontaneity, given their ability to easily compare prices in an online shopping environment (Lee and Chen, 2018). The complexity of the cognitive processes involved in pricing decisions may have contributed to its lack of significance (Zhou and Gu, 2015). The significant but negative results of the hypothesis related to Place/delivery (H4) can be because, unlike offline shopping where delivery is typically instantaneous, online shopping often involves a delay in delivery (Voccia et al., 2019). This delay might influence consumer perceptions and diminish the immediate gratification associated with online purchases. Furthermore, the ease of comparing shipping and refund costs online (Kukar and Close, 2010), could deter DIG. The significant but negative results for Process (H6) can be because, in a competitive online marketplace, the

ease of one retailer's website may not be a significant differentiator if others offer similar simplicity, shifting consumer focus to alternative factors such as pricing or product variety (Liu et al., 2013).

In the view of the researcher, the results are because DIG in consumer behaviour is tempered by a multitude of factors beyond instant gratification such as price and delivery considerations. Consumer behaviour decision-making hinges on the simultaneous functioning of reason and emotion. Thus, outer marketing activities play an essential role in evoking the inner world of consumers (Zaltman, 2003). A consumer's decision to buy a particular product does not arise solely from emotions, rather it is influenced by the value derived (Almquist et al., 2016). Consumer behaviour is routine oriented and low involvement is a norm (Tanrikulu, 2021). Thus author expects DIG in consumer behaviour to be different from DIG in other fields. Results also support Zaltman (2003) that consumers are complex living systems and not subject to the kind of influence so confidently claimed in the popular press.

The author also highlights the need for more robust theories for investigating online unplanned consumer behaviour. Online buying is constantly evolving with technological advancements and may not be adequately addressed by traditional consumer behaviour theories which often prioritise individual-level factors and deliberate decision-making (Chan et al., 2017). Pham (2013) stresses that theories should not be regarded as definitive truths but rather as tools for conceptual coherence in understanding observed phenomena. Therefore, future researchers should be open to the co-existence of multiple theories to study DIG. The author suggests augmenting the LST theory with complementary frameworks such as Construal level theory and Regulatory focus theory to study DIG.

VI. IMPLICATIONS, LIMITATIONS, AND DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The study offers some managerial implications. DIG can be aroused even in those who are not impulsive by relying on marketing mix tools. Online retailers should choose the relevant tools from their toolbox and not rely on all tools equally when they want to create DIG in their audience. Product, promotion, people, process and physical evidence should be their tools of choice. Online retailers should design an easy-to-follow website process, offering a variety of products for selection and convincing physical evidence through attractive packing.

There are some limitations of the research technique used that are therefore limitations of this research too e.g., data collection using non-random sampling, though Kline (2015) has highlighted that the majority of samples tested using structural equation modeling are not chosen randomly. The research effort could suffer from common method variance due to single-source bias. The scale on delivery did not confirm convergent and discriminant validity but was accepted as it showed no adverse effect on the model with and without.

The rejection of nine of the 15 hypotheses has offered rich avenues for future research. The probable reasons offered by the researchers for the rejection of the hypotheses related to price, delivery, process and moderating role of impulsiveness are only conjunctures till they are confirmed by empirical research. While the present study focused on the seven Ps of the marketing mix, future research can include other e-marketing mix tools like personalisation and customisation. Future researchers can also use a more robust theory to explain DIG in online consumer behaviour.

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