Why consumers behaved impulsively during COVID-19 pandemic?

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Abstract

Purpose – During coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, owing to several reasons, consumers behaved impulsively while shopping. Impulse buying has led to a distortion in the availability of various items in the stores. This study aims to explore the factors affecting the impulse buying behavior of consumers during a pandemic like COVID-19 in India.

Design/methodology/approach – Using an online questionnaire, 304 Indian consumers were surveyed using a convenience sampling technique. Proposed hypotheses and model were analyzed using structural equation modeling.

Findings – The study confirmed that fear and resource availability are the most significant factors affecting consumer's impulse buying behavior during a pandemic. The findings suggest that retailers can minimize the consumer's fear and manage impulse buying to their advantage by providing better resources to their patrons while they shop.

Originality/value – During the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, in the context of businesses, it is being observed that the purchase preferences of consumers have become chaotic and significant swings are visible in their shopping behavior. Thus, the study is an attempt to shed light on the factors that affect consumer impulse buying behavior in such disruptive settings.

Keywords Consumer buying behavior, Impulse buying, Fear, COVID-19, Pandemic

Paper type Research paper

1. Introduction

Pandemics around the globe have a very disruptive history. World Health Organization (WHO) declared coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) a pandemic on March 11, 2020 (WHO, 2020). The COVID-19 pandemic has wreaked havoc across the globe, forcing complete or partial lockdowns. Due to high transmission rates and lack of medical facilities, governments throughout the world have adopted the lockdown strategy. Mandates like social distancing and lockdowns have disrupted consumers' buying and shopping habits (Donthu and Gustafsson, 2020). According to a report, the lockdown compelled 1.3 billion Indians to stay at home (Statista, 2020). Also, consumers have been reportedly making more impulse purchases due to the fear of pandemic (Slickdeals, 2020). As the news of lockdown spread, consumers responded by stocking up the essentials, thereby emptying store shelves. Even though some relaxations were made to purchase items from stores, the fear of lockdown caused large-scale

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chaos among the consumers. Barnes *et al.* (2021) delineated that the rapid spread of the COVID-19 virus had caused unintended consequences in consumers' buying behavior. Despite no clear indication of shortage, consumers started buying products impulsively (Barnes *et al.*, 2021). In the same veins, consumers started hoarding items like groceries, ready-to-eat food, toilet rolls, medicines, sanitizers, face masks, etc. This has led to a meagreness of essential commodities in stores (Xiao *et al.*, 2020; Laato *et al.*, 2020).

The pandemic has brought unprecedented shopping behavior phenomena among the consumers, which gives a sudden shift to consumers' ways of impulsively purchasing the products (Donthu and Gustafsson, 2020; Febrilia and Warokka, 2021). Verma and Naveen (2021) suggested that consumer's impulse buying behavior may need to be studied with new dimensions. Earlier, research on pandemics focuses more on preventive health behaviors rather than studying consumer buying behavior (Laato *et al.*, 2020; Wang and Chappa, 2021). Accordingly, Larson and Shin (2018) reported a lack of research on consumption behavior during natural disasters. Possible explanations of impulse buying behavior due to COVID-19 appear different from other natural disasters. However, this phenomenon is not well understood (Barnes *et al.*, 2021). Yet, the unexpected situation for consumers capitulated by the COVID-19 pandemic demanded a careful examination of how the different factors affect consumer's impulse buying behavior. Therefore, exploring the association between disruptive events like the COVID-19 pandemic and consumers' resultant impulse buying behavior is crucial. Studies in the past have examined the role of price discounts, visual merchandising and presentation toward impulse buying (Grewal *et al.*, 2018; Verma *et al.*, 2016), but there is limited understanding regarding an increase in impulse buying during the fearful environment of COVID-19. Moreover, studies have dovetailed into the economic impact of the pandemic toward consumer purchasing habits, but impulse buying behavior has rarely been explored in Indian settings. Thus, this paper significantly contributes to the literature by exploring the factors affecting the impulse buying behavior of consumers during the COVID-19 pandemic. Taking cues from the past studies and relying on a sample of Indian consumers, this study attempts to explore the following research questions:

RQ1. What factors affect consumers' buying behavior during a pandemic?

RQ2. What are the relationships between these factors and consumer buying behavior during a pandemic?

The findings of the study will help compare the said behavior of consumers in other parts of the world. This study is expected to provide an advanced understanding of the underlying marketing conditions and provide recommendations to policymakers and practitioners.

2. Literature review and hypotheses development

The COVID-19 crisis is defined as a traumatic event (Kunimura, 2020). Consumers' psychology is affected by the pandemic globally, which led them to change their consumption behavior (Belbag, 2021). People were unable to buy in, and thus, offline stores were forced to come to buyers by switching to online platforms (Sheth, 2020). Roggeveen and Sethuraman (2020) reported that as the lockdowns affected the availability of resources, it effectively pushed consumers to demand local-made products. Alhaimer (2021) suggested that theories like theory of reasoned action, technology acceptance model, diffusion of innovations and theory of planned behaviour consist of decisive factors influencing consumer behavior. However, the literature suggests that none of these theories provides a conclusive list of the factors that influence consumer behavior during a pandemic. Moreover, these theories have not explored factors like fear, convenience and product availability in a pandemic. Thus, there is a need to consider variables based on more than one theory, as also suggested by Alhaimer (2021). Previous studies (Parashar *et al.*, 2015a, b, 2016) identified the factors influencing

consumer impulsive buying behavior in normal settings. Constructs like store atmospherics, hedonism, promotional offers, packaging, product display and socialization have been investigated in the past (Parashar *et al.*, 2015a, b).

However, the emerging behavior due to the pandemic where "contactless" shopping is becoming more relevant (Chhabra, 2020; Verma and Naveen, 2021), impulse buying may need to be studied with distinct factors.

During the COVID-19 crisis, convenience, along with factors like price and product availability, was considered important for studying impulse buying behavior (Nanada *et al.*, 2021). The novelty of the current study lies in the inclusion of factors such as fear, shopping convenience (access convenience and transaction convenience) and resource availability. Resource availability is considered as a function of time availability and money availability in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, the present study covers internal and external factors influencing consumer impulse buying behavior during the COVID-19 pandemic.

2.1 Impulse buying behavior

Consumer impulse buying behavior is defined as "an unplanned purchase of a product or services. It is a decision without pre-shopping intention; it is immediate and spontaneous" (Beatty and Ferrell, 1998). Rook (1987) defined the concept as "impulse buying occurs when a consumer experiences a sudden, often powerful and persistent urge to buy something immediately. The impulse to buy is hedonically complex and may stimulate emotional conflict. Also, impulse buying is prone to occur with diminished regard for its consequences". The intensity of impulsive consumer buying during COVID-19 was in a way unprecedented compared to earlier pandemics and emergencies (Xiao *et al.*, 2020). The normal decision-making process of consumers gets disrupted by impulsive buying. Self-indulgence and other stimulus affect consumer actions heavily and lead to impulsive buying (Aragoncillo and Orus, 2018). In previous researches, it has been observed that impulsive buying behavior is affected by various psychological factors like impulsive tendency, negative and positive state, self-esteem, self-image, self-identity and personality factors (Verplanken *et al.*, 2005; Sneath *et al.*, 2009; Mohan *et al.*, 2013; Bandyopadhyay, 2016; Lucas and Koff, 2017; Bellini *et al.*, 2017). Consumer impulsive buying behavior was contemplated to be influenced by emotions rather than rational behavior and hence considered negative in nature (Parashar *et al.*, 2015a, b).

During the COVID-19 pandemic, impulse buying resulted in shortage of essential supplies when the outbreak was at its maximum level (Xiao *et al.*, 2020). According to the theory of impulse buying introduced by Stern (1962), the occurrence of different circumstances and various external and internal sources can motivate and lead consumers toward impulsive buying.

During the lockdown, customers' drive to purchase products impulsively is influenced by fear and risk associated with shopping in an unpredictable situation (Naeem, 2020).

2.2 Fear

Fear is a primal, natural and robust emotion that can affect consumer decision-making. Studies on disruptive events suggest that events with high disaster intensity threaten consumer safety and create anxiety (Larson and Shin, 2018). Owing to this fear, consumers start exploring compensatory options to hedge themselves from loss (Xiao *et al.*, 2020). It is evident that the COVID-19 has contributed to a heightened fear and uncertainty among consumers. The outbreak intensity of these disruptive events may lead consumers to adopt protective behaviors to escape fear or risk. During such crises, fear arousal or appeal is mainly used to motivate appropriate behaviors (Hassan and Soliman, 2021).

Fear has also been discussed as a negative emotion that can psychologically impact behavior, resulting in impulsive buying during lockdown (Naeem, 2020). Apprehensions related to partial and complete lockdowns have had a fear-inducing effect on consumers

resulting in impulse buying (Ahmed *et al.*, 2020). However, there has been a lack of investigation of how fear about the disruptive event like COVID-19 may drive people's behaviors as consumers (Chiu *et al.*, 2021). Based on the above, the following hypothesis has been crystallized:

H1. Fear has a significant and positive influence on consumer impulse buying behavior.

2.3 Shopping convenience and resource availability

Shopping convenience refers to perceptions of whether a shopping trip will be convenient or inconvenient (Berry *et al.*, 2002; Seiders *et al.*, 2007). It may include attitudes regarding operating hours, crowding and access to customer service support (Larson and Shin, 2018). During disruptive events, consumer requirement is to fulfil the food and other essential needs because it is difficult to estimate its intensity and how much time it may last (Mishra and Rampal, 2020). Barriers like store crowding, unavailability of products and shopping at inconvenient places have impacted the shopping patterns of consumers (Larson and Shin, 2018). Indian consumers, too, witnessed the same situation. Grocery retail store services eventually played an important role for Indian consumers throughout the hard time of COVID-19. The demand for groceries increased remarkably with consumer panic buying (Marusak *et al.*, 2021).

Larson and Shin (2018) have also reported that retail store service convenience may increase or decrease consumers' fear during disruptive events. It has also been reported that consumers motivated by fear may not expect higher service convenience during shopping.

Martin-Neuninger and Ruby (2020) stated that consumer shopping choices had been dictated by product availability, time availability and convenience during the pandemic. When consumers have enough time available, they carefully plan their purchases and engage in less impulse buying (Martin-Neuninger and Ruby, 2020). Moeller *et al.* (2009) defined shopping convenience as a multidimensional construct covering entailing decision, access to the store, product search, transaction and after-purchase convenience. Also, shopping convenience is the perceived extent of time and effort avoidance.

Larson and Shin (2018) proposed that the other dimension of service convenience, access convenience and transaction convenience directly affect consumers during the purchase process. Beatty and Ferrell (1998) discussed resource availability by splitting them into *time availability* and *money availability*. Time availability has been discussed in the context of a person with limited time to shop, select and complete shopping that can produce more frustration and negative effect, moving the consumer toward impulse buying. While money availability is discussed as lesser the money, a person has during shopping. Consumer behavior appears to be more affected by preparatory activities than is usually assumed. The consumer's preparation level for shopping influences consumer behavior inside the store in terms of planned/impulse buying. Specifically, the higher is the degree of preparation, the greater the tendency to plan purchases, the lower the chance of impulse purchases (Bellini *et al.*, 2017). Based on the above discussion, the following hypotheses have been considered:

H2. Shopping convenience has a significant and positive influence on impulse buying behavior.

H3. Resource availability has a significant and positive influence on impulse buying behavior.

Hence, the present study aims to gain deeper insights into the interplay of factors such as fear, shopping convenience and resource availability that lead the consumer to impulse buying. To further this objective, researchers have proposed a model (Figure 1) to explore the role of these factors that affect the impulse buying behavior of consumers during a pandemic or similar disruptive setting.

3. Research methodology

3.1 Sampling and data collection

The present study empirically examines the factors affecting consumer buying behavior in India during a pandemic. Researcher controller sampling was employed for generating data by administering an online survey. A structured questionnaire was developed using Google Forms, which was shared on various popular social media platforms including E-mail (LinkedIn, Facebook, WhatsApp and Gmail). A total of 323 responses were received, out of which 304 were selected for further analysis. The final sample comprised 304 valid consumers (Table 1). Among them, 69% were males and 31% were females. Of these, 74% were in the age range of 18–29 years and 21% were in the range of 30–39 years.

3.2 Measures

Measures to gather data on constructs of interest were adopted from previously used validated scales. These scales have been deployed in earlier studies on consumer shopping behavior during disruptive events like natural disasters. However, the scales were subjected to face testing with the help of a panel of academic experts and practitioners. Based on feedback received, scale items were rephrased and some were dropped. The *second* section had 26 items related to the constructs of interest. Five items to measure *fear* were adapted from the hierarchy of consumer emotions based on the work of Laros and Steenkamp (2005). The construct, *shopping convenience,* consisted of nine items and was measured using two dimensions of the SERVCON scale, i.e. *access convenience* and *transaction convenience* (Seiders *et al.*, 2007). Five items for *resources availability* were drawn from the study by Beatty and Ferrel (1998) by clubbing the *time* and *money available* dimensions. Out of the seven items

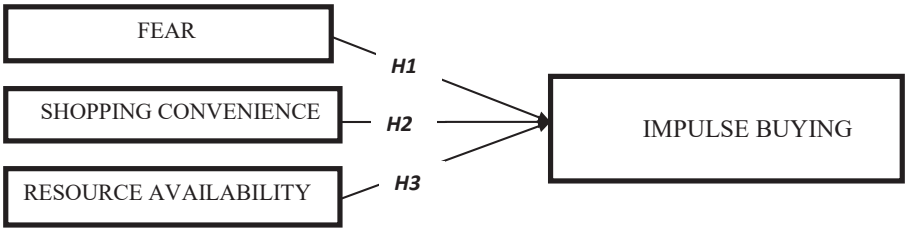


Figure 1.
The hypothesized research model

Respondent profile	Frequency	Percentage
Age		
18–29	222	74%
30–39	066	21%
40–49	008	02.6%
50 above	008	02.6%
Gender		
Male	212	69.7%
Female	092	30.2%
Monthly family income in INR (1$ = 74.99 INR approx)		
Up to–50,000	142	46.7%
50,000–100,000	090	29.6%
Above 100,000	072	23.6%

Source(s): Survey data

Table 1.
Demographic profile of respondents

used to measure *impulse buying*, four items were drawn from study by Aragoncillo and Orus (2018), two items from scale used by Chang *et al.* (2011) and one item from the study by Yi and Jai (2020). All the scales were based on a five-point Likert scale.

3.3 Common method bias

Furthermore, to reduce the common method bias form the present study, both procedural and statistical steps were taken. For the procedural part, proper research design was followed and discussed with academicians prior to data collection as suggested by researchers (Podsakoff *et al.*, 2003, 2012; Jordan and Troth, 2020). In addition, Harman's single factor test was conducted and the total variance explained by single factor was less than 50%. It delineates that data are free from common method bias (Podsakoff *et al.*, 2003, 2012; Jordan and Troth, 2020; Islam *et al.*, 2021).

4. Data analysis

4.1 Exploratory factor analysis

Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was then employed to explore the underlying variables. Several researchers have suggested conducting EFA on adapted scales because of the modifications made in the items (Zeithaml *et al.*, 2002; Ladhari, 2010; Ahmed *et al.*, 2020). EFA was performed using SPSS (Version 22) on 26 items used in the scale. Principal component analysis method with varimax rotation and Kaiser Normalization was used for factor extraction. Items with low factor loadings (less than 0.4) were not retained, leading to reduction in number of items to 19. Several researchers have taken similar steps in the past (Hair *et al.*, 2014; Khan and Adil, 2013; Metin *et al.*, 2012). The KMO (Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin) value was found to be 0.762, which was higher than the acceptable level of 0.6 (Khan and Adil, 2013).

4.2 Measurement model

The confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was employed to organize all the sets of observed variables for testing the hypotheses of the proposed model, internal reliability, validity and structure model (Ahire *et al.*, 1996; Khan and Adil, 2013; Ahmad and Khan, 2017). Thus, CFA was applied on four factors, namely, *fear, resource availability, shopping convenience* and *impulse buying* using AMOS (analysis of a moment structures). The fit indices from the CFA results suggest a satisfactory model fit (chi-square fit statistics/degree of freedom (CMIN/df) = 1.469, goodness-of-fit index (GFI) = 0.885, comparative fix index (CFI) = 0.916, adjusted goodness of fit index (AGFI) = 0.84, root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) = 0.056) (Hair *et al.*, 2010; Hooper *et al.*, 2008; Hu and Bentler, 1998; Malhotra and Dash, 2011).

4.3 Reliability and validity results

The validity of the scale was measured using average variance extracted (AVE) as suggested by several researchers (Fornell and Larcker, 1981; Hair *et al.*, 2010). The AVE for all the constructs was above 0.5 except resources available (RA), indicating adequate convergent validity (Fornell and Larcker, 1981; O'Leary- Kelly and Vokurka, 1998; Hair *et al.*, 2010; Adil *et al.*, 2013; Khan and Adil, 2013). Low value of AVE for RA may be attributed to the exploratory nature of the study. The scale validity results demonstrate significant discriminant validity, as the square root of AVE (diagonal values highlighted in Table 2) for each construct is higher than inter-construct correlation (Adil *et al.*, 2013; O'Leary-Kelly and Vokurka, 1998; Hair *et al.*, 2010; Khan and Adil, 2013; Fornell and Larcker, 1981).

The composite reliability (CR) for each factor was above the threshold value (0.70), indicating adequate scale reliability (Fornell and Larcker, 1981; Hair *et al.*, 2010; Malhotra and Dash, 2011).

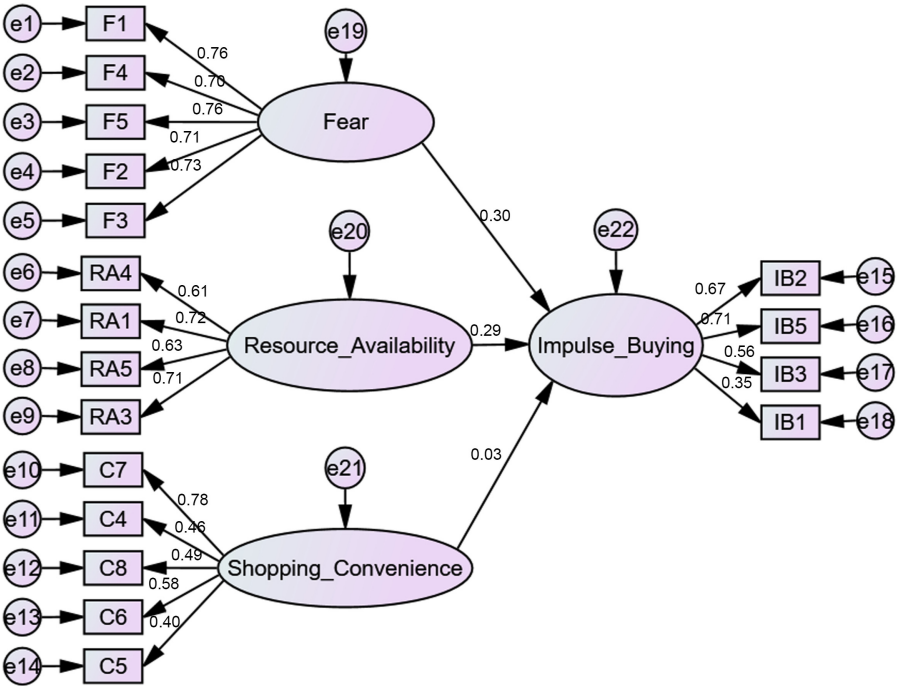
4.4 Structural model and hypotheses testing results

In order to test the proposed hypotheses and model, structural equation modeling (SEM) was employed. The SEM technique can estimate the latent variable via observed variable and help in estimating the model fit. Results of the SEM analysis for the proposed research model (Figure 2) are summarized in Table 3. The key fit indices for the proposed model suggested acceptable model fit (CMIN/df = 1.740; CFI = 0.865, AGFI = 0.823, GFI = 0.885 and RMSEA = 0.070). Thus, the impact of *fear, resource availability* and *shopping convenience* due to COVID-19 crisis were assessed on consumer's impulse buying behavior using SEM. Out of

Construct	CR	AVE	SC	*F*	RA	IB
Shopping convenience	0.714	0.512	0.715			
Fear	0.853	0.538	0.379	0.733		
Resource availability	0.764	0.488	0.505	0.309	0.698	
Impulse buying	0.701	0.501	0.235	0.371	0.373	0.707

Note(s): IB= Impulse buying, SC= Shopping convenience, RA = Resource availability, F = fear

Table 2. Reliability and validity results



Key notes: IB *= Impulse buying,* ***SC*** *= Shopping Convenience,* ***RA*** *= Resource availability,* ***F*** *= fear*

Figure 2. Structural model results

three proposed hypotheses; two were supported based on the results of path analysis (please refer to Table 3). *Fear* and *resource availability* were found to be having a significant and positive impact on consumer impulse buying behavior during pandemic or similar events. However, *shopping convenience* was not found to be having a significant bearing on impulse buying behavior in case of Indian consumers. Therefore, H1 ($\beta = 0.305$; $p < 0.05$) and H3 ($\beta = 0.301$; $p < 0.05$) were supported while H2 ($\beta = 0.06$; $p > 0.05$) stands rejected.

5. Discussion

The study provides novel insights about Indian consumers' purchasing behavior during a pandemic like COVID-19. As it is clear from the results, the study concludes that *fear* and *resource availability* influence consumer buying behavior during the COVID-19 crisis on Indian consumers, thus leading them to behave impulsively during the shopping process. Hence, the unpredictable nature of the pandemic resulted in impulse buying behavior for Indian consumers.

The present study results are also identical to the inferences made by Loxton *et al.* (2020) concluded that consumer buying behavior during the COVID-19 pandemic tends to be congruous with the actions seen during previous disruptive events. Furthermore, studies like Belbag (2021), Addo *et al.* (2020), Mejía-Trejo (2021) and Chiu *et al.* (2021) also reported impulsive consumer buying behavior during the COVID-19 crisis in different settings.

Studies conducted in developed economies (Ahmed *et al.*, 2020; Chiu *et al.*, 2021; Islam *et al.*, 2021) discovered that *fear, resource availability* and quantity scarcity significantly influenced consumer impulse buying behavior during the COVID-19 crisis. Our findings echo with works of previous researchers. Withal, studies by Kemp *et al.* (2021), Kim (2020) and Naeem (2021) have also reported similar results in the case of impulse buying behavior exhibited by consumers due to the influence of *fear* and unavailability of products, price increase concerns and stockpiling during COVID-19 crisis. This study also reflected similar results with *fear* and *resource availability* has significantly impacted consumer impulse buying behavior.

However, *shopping convenience* was found to be insignificantly related to impulse buying behavior. Consumers did not want to go to supermarkets during the pandemic because there is more chance of getting infected at shopping centers. Therefore, consumer prefers online shopping instead of going outside for shopping (Belbag, 2021).

6. Implications of the study

6.1 Theoretical implications

The present research explores the factors that affect consumer impulse buying behavior during a pandemic and other such disruptive events. Looking at the fact that there is a dearth of literature in the domain, especially in the Indian context, the study contributes significantly to the extant literature as it enriches the extant literature in the context of factors like *fear, shopping convenience, resource availability* and *impulse buying*. Further, as a comprehensive study framework did not exist in the related literature for exploring impulse buying behavior during a pandemic, this study makes a sincere effort at explaining the factors that affect consumers while shopping in such settings. Researchers have reported that fear appeal and

Table 3. Results of hypotheses testing

Hypothesis	Relationship	β	p- value	Result
H1	Fear → Impulse buying	0.305	<0.05	Supported
H2	Shopping Convenience → Impulse buying	0.065	>0.05	Not Supported
H3	Resource availability → Impulse buying	0.301	<0.05	Supported

fear, as a factor, play a crucial role during disruptive events and pandemics (Larson and Shin, 2018; Addo *et al.*, 2020). However, this aspect has remained unexplored, and rarely have researchers ventured to examine the impact of fear on consumer impulse buying behavior in such settings. Thus, this study contributes to the extant literature by examining the impact of fear on impulse buying behavior. Several attempts have been made to explore the factors that affect impulse buying behavior, and factors like *shopping convenience* and *resource availability* have been studied along with impulse buying behavior (Beatty and Ferrell, 1998; Bellini *et al.*, 2017). However, these constructs to date have not been explored during a pandemic or similar disruptive events. The present work carries novelty by proposing a comprehensive model and using SEM to measure the impact of *fear, shopping convenience* and *resource availability* on impulse buying behavior in the context of a disruptive event like an ongoing pandemic.

6.2 Managerial implications

The study suggests insightful implications for marketing managers, policymakers, retailers, service providers and government agencies tackling disruptive events like the COVID-19. Deloitte (2020) reported that the hoarding of FMCG & other essential products increased during the lockdown, resulting in a display of chaotic buying behavior by consumers. In some instances, companies had to increase production to meet the sudden rise in demand. However, it was challenging to run their manufacturing units following government-mandated COVID-19 protocols. Several companies even reported workers getting infected by the COVID-19 virus resulting in the shutdown of manufacturing units for extended periods (Deloitte, 2020). It is still unclear how long the COVID-19 pandemic will last and whether there will be a need for lockdowns in the future. Therefore, retailers need to ensure that they update the product stocking information to reduce the fear element among the consumers. Manufacturers need to change their production, demand and supply models drawing lessons from previous lockdowns.

Ernest and Young (2020) reported that the situation owing to COVID-19 is still evolving. Consumers are shifting their monthly budgets from non-essentials items to stockpiling essentials such as personal care products, eatables, food, masks and different disinfectants. Retail shop managers have also shown concern about consumers' changing purchasing patterns, adversely affecting supply chains. It has not been easy for store managers to procure the products and maintain stocks based on historical data. During the lockdown, smaller retailers faced issues in re-stocking to meet the sudden rise in consumer demand. Thus, companies need to embrace a real-time monitoring system of stocks and even plan to expand their range of items, particularly those likely to be in demand during such disruptive events.

Exorbitant prices, unfair selling practices and the uncertainty of lifting lockdown have encouraged consumers to purchase impulsively. It has been argued that impulse buying may prove beneficial to retailers and shopkeepers. Yet, due to stockpiling and hoarding, businesses must be ready for adverse consequences such as artificial shortage of supplies resulting in decreased revenue and increased unpredictability in sales. Thus, government policymakers, service providers and retailers need to frame and adopt fair pricing policies. At the same time, consumers have to be educated to discourage hoarding of items that may otherwise result in artificial scarcity. Companies have to work toward building trust with impulsive shoppers. Retailers need to be aware of consumer's desires, required response time and consumer-related challenges during the shopping process. Retailers must ensure that they are ready to help consumers as far as possible during challenging times like a pandemic. Businesses need to realize that consumer satisfaction and well-being must be their priority apart from profit.

Businesses resolving customer problems within promised time can reduce their sense of fear and better manage impulse buying. Offline retailers can also use e-commerce platforms

so that customers can easily connect to them. Businesses need to embrace social media frequented by their target audience to offer better customer support and regularly update them about product availability. That can also help prevent spreading rumors and fake news of stock-out situations and resultant chaos.

7. Limitations and future research directions

The present research has certain limitations to be addressed by future research studies. First, researchers need to identify constructs that may be at play when consumers engage in impulse buying behavior during times of pandemic, particularly in the context of emerging economies. Second, the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak was unexpected. Data have been collected through an online survey due to lockdown may have its drawback. In future, research studies may collect data through offline surveys in rural and semi-urban areas. Third, data generalization is another limitation. Since the data were collected from online consumers in India, the study results may lack generalizability. Therefore, it is recommended that future researchers may generate data from a more representative respondent base using a mixed-method approach. Cross-cultural studies may be conducted to explore other factors that may have a role to play in consumer impulse buying behavior during a pandemic.

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