

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

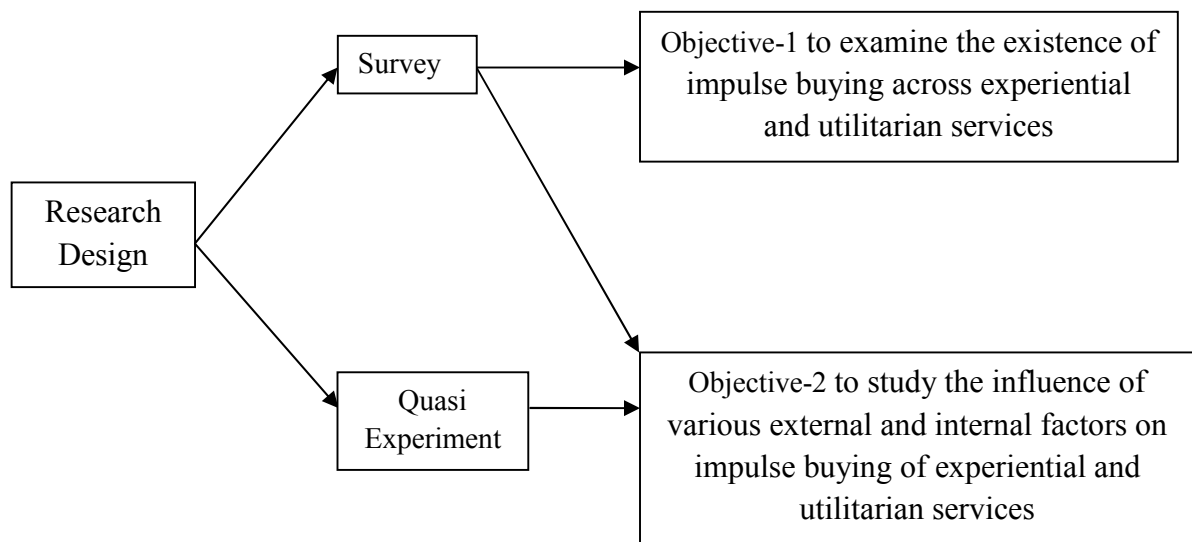
Research Methodology is considered as the blueprint of a research. In the light of that, present chapter discusses the methodology applied to achieve the research objectives. Current chapter describes the proposed research methodology utilized. The subsequent sections offer comprehensive information about the research design, sampling design, data collection procedure and the proposed data analysis technique.

3.1 Research Design

Exploring the existence of impulse buying in utilitarian and experiential services is the prime focus of the present study. Keeping this in mind, both descriptive and experimental research approaches are used. Quantitative research approaches are used in the present study. Such approaches make use of questionnaires, surveys and experiments to gather data in the form of numbers which allow data to be interpreted using statistical analysis (Hittleman and Simon, 1997).

A flow chart presenting the major steps in the research design is depicted in the following figure:

Figure 1: Flow chart of Research plan



To meet the first objective i.e. to examine impulse buying in utilitarian and experiential services a consumer survey is conducted using a separate scale derived from literature.

For the attainment of the second objective, a questionnaire containing imagery and hypothetical scenarios are prepared based on extant literature in order to conduct an experiment. Both the research instruments are subjected to pilot studies and necessary modifications are made after reliability and validity checks.

Both the approaches are described in detail in the following sections:

3.1.1 Study-I: The consumer survey

The survey method is used to achieve the first objective of the study. It is conducted among the urban population of Assam to understand the existence of impulse buying in services and to determine the influence of internal attributes on consumer impulse buying behaviour in different services. The empirical data thus generated provide information about the consumer impulse buying tendency in utilitarian and experiential services. Details on the sampling plan and data collection procedure are discussed in the subsequent sections.

3.1.1.1 Sampling design

Target population

The target population of this study is the general adults belonging to four major urban areas of Assam namely Guwahati, Silchar, Dibrugarh and Jorhat. Inclusion of these urban centres as a representation of the general population of Assam is discussed in earlier chapter (Chapter 1, Section 1.6). Details on the element, sampling unit, extent and time are provided in the following paragraphs.

a. Element

The basic unit of the population from which the information is drawn is called the element of the population. In the present study elements are the general adult (18 years to 65 years of age) belonging to major urban centres of Assam, namely Guwahati, Silchar, Dibrugarh and Jorhat. These are the places where the major commercial activities take place and migration from nearby places for employment opportunity is also higher (Desai, Mahadeviya and Mishra, 2014). These urban centres are selected because earlier studies of same nature suggest that impulse buying is more prevalent among the urban population where the affordability and disposable income is relatively high (Daswon, 1991; Lachat et al., 2011). Dittmar et al. (2005) also stated that impulse buying depends upon affordability and disposable income.

b. Sampling unit

The sampling unit is same as the element.

c. Extent

The survey is conducted within the territorial boundaries of Assam, a state in India. Among the fast-growing developing countries, service sector plays a distinctive role in Indian economy. The market in small towns and rural areas in India is drastically changing with the ever-increasing penetration of internet and social media and higher disposable income (Kumari, 2012; Nielson-CII, 2012). The emerging trend has created the need to study impulse buying because of the changing consumption habit, income and huge cultural differences when compared to developed economies (Kacen and Lee, 2008).

d. Time

The survey is conducted within a period of eleven months from October 2015 to August 2016. Even though it is not a time-bound study necessary data could be collected from the field within this period.

3.1.1.2 Sample size

Sample size determination is always contentious and has never been beyond controversy. This is more problematic and arguably difficult when the use of probabilistic sampling procedure is not possible due to the absence of sampling frame. Some dilemmas are faced while determining sample size for this study also. It is, however, tried to find a reasonable path while doing so.

The present study uses non-probabilistic sampling technique. The determination of sample size involve following reference size in similar studies. Sample size in the previous impulse buying studies ranges from 300 to 2000 with a median value of 1150 (however, more than 50% of such studies use sample size in between 300 to 1000) even when Cattell (1978) proposed that 500 is a good sample size. Services are different in nature and grouping them together for study requires a well-distributed sample size. The present study, therefore, keeps a higher sample size and decided at 1200 with the varying demographic profile.

Since covering a population of all the urban areas is beyond the scope of the researcher, quota sampling technique is chosen for collecting the sample from the four top urban areas of Assam. The researcher has identified the total urban population in top four

districts of Assam (Census of India, 2011). The total urban population of these four districts is 1,504,802 (Census of India, 2011). The predetermined sample size of 1200 is proportionately divided among the four centres based on the population according to the census of 2011. Total number of respondents for each urban area thus arrived at,

Table 1: Sample size			
Urban area	Population size	Total percentage	Sample size
Guwahati	968549	64.36	772
Silchar	228985	15.22	183
Dibrugarh	154019	10.24	123
Jorhat	153249	10.18	122
Total	1504802	100	1200

3.1.1.3 Sampling Procedure

As mentioned, the present study follows non-probabilistic sampling technique. According to Tashakkori and Teddlie (2003), the non-probability sampling technique is characterised when a person does not have an equal chance of being included in a sample. This is best suitable for the present study because ready-made sampling frame is not available for the desired population. Here, it is proposed to select the samples based on a mixed sampling- quota, judgment and convenience. Quota sampling is applied when choosing the major urban areas of Assam based on their characteristics as advocated by Kromrey (1980) and Friedrichs (1973). Judgment is exercised to determine the age of the respondents. Age is an important determinant in predicting impulse buying. Younger people are believed to face fewer risks when spending money. The impulse purchase is at a higher level between ages 18 to 39 and drops thereafter (Wood, 1998). The levels of age related to different phases of life such as from students to early and later years of married life up to retirement age. Likewise, income levels of the respondents are decided based on the income distribution of the Indian households which represent different classes from strugglers to aspirers and affluent consumers (BCG CCI proprietary Income database, 2015). Availability of purchasing power facilitates impulse buying process (Abratt and Goodey, 1990; Beatty and Ferrell, 1998) since it increases the purchasing power of the individual. Mogelonsky (1994) suggests that consumers with higher incomes have fewer constraints on acting on a more “open” buying list, which allows

them to pursue sudden and unplanned purchasing ideas with less difficulty paying for them.

Convenience is sought with regards to willingness to participate in the survey. To minimise the selection bias, an equal number of respondents based on demographic characteristics such as occupation and life cycle stages are tried to be interviewed.

The researcher visited households, private as well as government institutions and offices in order to select respondents. While choosing the respondents it is made sure that the respondents are willing to take part in the second survey also (detailed in section 3.4) which is why convenience of the respondent was of paramount importance.

3.1.2 Variables measured

As mentioned earlier, the study focuses on examining impulse buying in utilitarian and experiential services. For these, an extensive study of the existing literature is done in order to categorise services based on experiential and utilitarian attributes and accordingly variables are extracted to measure these attributes. Through a preliminary study, a total of 6 services, 3 in each category (utilitarian and experiential) are selected based on the respondent's impulse buying tendency. More than one service is kept under a category to see if any differences exist in terms of impulse buying across different services under the same category.

3.1.2.1 Experiential and Utilitarian value

Experiential services are characterized by higher levels of employee contact and customization, directed toward people and have a strong people orientation (Stafford and Day, 1995). When using a service, a consumer always feels the involvement in terms of need and interest. According to Boven and Gilovich (2003), experiences are those of a life event or series of events that one encounters, lives through, and "consumes".

Utilitarian buying motive, on the other hand, emphasizes on objective and tangible attributes of products, being more concerned with functionality, convenience-seeking, judgment of rationality/irrationality and price etc. (Ahtola, 1985; Bhatnagar and Ghosh, 2004; Hirschman and Holbrook, 1982; Rintamaki et al., 2006). Functional services have lower degrees of employee contact and are more equipment and object-oriented.

Chiturri et al. (2008) stated that within the range of product attributes observed by the consumers, these two groups hedonic and utilitarian are often studied by researchers. The difference between the utilitarian and hedonic/experiential attributes has an important

role in consumer research with the changing nature of consumer purchase behaviour (Veryzer and Wesley, 1998).

Variables extracted for each of the category in order to group the services in one of these two and their sources are mentioned in Table 2.

Factor	Definition/Description	Variables adapted	Source reference
Utilitarian	Utilitarian product attributes are useful, practical, functional and convenient	Useful Practical Functional Problem solving Object oriented	Albers-Miller and Stafford, 1999; Bhatnagar and Ghosh, 2004; Dabholkar, 1993; Mano and Oliver 1993; Overby and Lee, 2006; Strahilevitz and Myers, 1998; Reeves and Bednar, 1994, Johar and Sirgy, 1991, Batra and Ahtola, 1990, Hirschman and Holbrook 1982
Experiential	Experiential consumption as an experience is having symbolic meanings, aesthetics, emotions and hedonic responses	Symbolic appeal Emotion Sociability Enjoyment Self identity	Chitturi et al., 2008; Dhar and Wertenbroch, 2000; Pine and Gilmore, 1999; Schmitt, 1999, Day and Stafford, 1997, Bayley and Nancarrow, 1998, Holbrook and Hirschmann 1982; Batra and Ahtola, 1990; Hilgard, 1962

With an aim to prepare the first questionnaire which is to fulfil objective 1 and part of objective 2, an exhaustive study of the extant literature is conducted. It measures impulsive buying tendency and the internal factors contributed to such buying tendency.

Factor	Variable measured	Source
General impulsive buying behaviour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spontaneous • Unreflective • Immediate • Cognitive disequilibrium • Positive buying emotion • Emotional conflict • Unplanned buying • Disregard for the future 	Barratt, 1994; Rook and Fisher, 1995; Rook and Hoch, 1985; Rook, 1987; Wansink, 1994; Youn and Faber, 2000
Optimum Stimulation level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Variety seeking • Risk taking • Experimenting • Adventurous/Energetic 	Boedeker (1995), Mehrabian and Russell, 1976; Raju 1980; Steenkamp and Baumgartner, 1992
Lifestyle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost conscious • Fashion consciousness 	Khare, 2011; Kucukemiroglu, 1999; Sun, Horn and Merritt, 2004

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Novelty seeking • Social orientation • Perception of life 	
Self construal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Independent • Unique • Rule oriented 	Gudykunst, 1997; Markus and Kitayama, 1991; Park and Levine, 1999; Singelis, 1994
Perceived risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial • Time • Psychological • Social • Performance 	Laroche et al., 2004; Lee and Yi, 2008; Peter and Tarpey, 1975

Internal factors that are found relevant for the study are depicted in Table 3 and a general description of the variables are described below.

3.1.2.2 General Impulsive buying behaviour

Consumer's general impulsive buying behaviour is the "degree to which an individual is likely to make unplanned, immediate, and unreflective purchases" (Jones et al., 2003). Impulsivity is associated with personality attributes such as acquisitiveness (Belk, 1985), need for variety (Hirschman, 1980), and risk aversion. Consumers who have high impulsiveness traits are more impatient, self-indulgent, and low self control compared to those with low impulsiveness (Rook and Fisher, 1995).

3.1.2.3 Optimum stimulation level (OSL)

Optimum stimulation level is characterized by individual's general response to environmental stimuli. According to Hebb and Leuba (1955), every organism prefers a certain level of stimulation, which may be termed "optimum stimulation". When the environmental stimulation (novelty, ambiguity, complexity, etc.) is below optimum, an individual will attempt to increase stimulation; when it is above optimum s/he will strive to reduce it (Raju, 1980). Optimum Stimulation Level is highest at which a person feels most comfortable (Steenkamp and Baumgartner, 1992) and behaviour aimed at modifying stimulation from the environment in the general direction towards the optimum level has been termed "exploratory behaviour".

Raju (1980) categorized three general exploratory tendencies which are risk taking, variety seeking and curiosity-motivated behaviour. Risk taking describes the tendency to choose innovative and unfamiliar alternatives that are perceived as risky. Variety seeking

is expressed through an individual's switching within familiar alternatives, and an aversion to habitual behaviour. Curiosity-motivated behaviour involves information seeking and interpersonal communication. Sensory stimulation is associated with the exploratory acquisition of products which involves risk taking and variety seeking whereas cognitive stimulation is associated with exploratory information seeking (curiosity-motivated behaviour) (Baumgartner and Steenkamp, 1996).

3.1.2.4 Lifestyle

Lifestyle describes the behaviour of individuals, interacting with a small or large group of people (market segments) acting as potential consumers (Kucukemiroglu, 1999). The lifestyle relates to the economic level at which people live, spend, and allocate their time (Anderson and Golden, 1984; Kucukemiroglu, 1999).

3.1.2.5 Self construal

According to Markus and Kitayama (1991) individual's self construal as an internal factor that regulates impulse buying tendency depending upon the type of self construal a person possesses. The development of a particular self construal is strongly influenced by his culture. Independent self-construals are more common in individualist cultures while interdependent self-construal is more common in collectivist cultures (Markus and Kitayama, 1991). However, both types can be existed in a culture (Christopher et al., 2012; Zhang and Shrum, 2009).

3.1.2.6 Perceived Risk

Perceived risk is defined as the nature of uncertainty perceived by consumers in considering a particular purchase decision (Cox, 1967; Cox and Rich, 1964). The uncertainty may be in terms of monetary or nonmonetary loss (Mitchell, 1992).

3.1.2.7 Demographic variables

Literature suggests impulse buying is influenced by demographic factors such as age, gender and income status (Bellenger and Robertson and Hirshman, 1978; Boldero, and Wiseman, 1995; Dittmar, Beattie, and Friese, 1995; Kacen and Lee, 2002; Kollat and Willett, 1967; Rawlings, Rook and Hoch, 1985). It is important to understand if the demographic variables have any influence on impulse buying of services too.

Details of various demographic variables are explained below.

i. **Age:** Respondents in the age group between 18 years to 65 years are eligible to take part in the study. Age is one of the important demographic factors when studying impulse buying of consumers.

ii. **Gender:** It is another critical factor relevant in the context of the study. This is intended to find if impulse buying tendency in services differs across gender.

iii. **Education:** Education is another important factor in consumer behaviour study. In the present study, educational qualification is divided into categories. These categories are- 'upto high school', 'Under Graduate', 'Graduate', 'Post Graduate' and 'Others'. Respondents with a higher educational degree and from other professional courses are asked to mark as 'others'.

iv. **Occupation:** Occupation is divided into five categories- 'Student', 'Service', 'Self Employed', 'Business', 'Presently not employed', 'Retired' and 'Homemaker'.

v. **Monthly family income:** Monthly family income is divided into four classes- 'Rs. 6000 to Rs. 20,000', 'Above Rs. 20,000 to 40,000', 'Above Rs. 40,000 to Rs. 1,00,000', 'More than Rs.1,00,000'. According to the report of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation Ministry (2010-2011), the monthly income of an urban Indian is minimum Rs. 6000 and the average annual household income level is set based on the annual household income of the middle-class Indian which is between Rs. 3.4 lakh and Rs. 17 lakh (at 2009-10 price levels) (Aggarwal, 2010; PTI, 2013; Singhi, Jain and Sanghi, 2018).

vi. **Family life cycle stage:** Life cycle stages are adapted from the earlier literature on consumer behaviour (Peter and Olson, 2005; Schiffman and Kanuk, 2004; Wells and Prensky, 1996). The respondents are divided into four categories: 'Single', 'Married with children', 'Married without child', 'Grandmother/grandfather'.

3.1.3 Research Instrument-I: The questionnaire

The research instrument used for the survey is self-administered structured questionnaire where respondents are provided with multiple choices on a five point Likert scale (on a

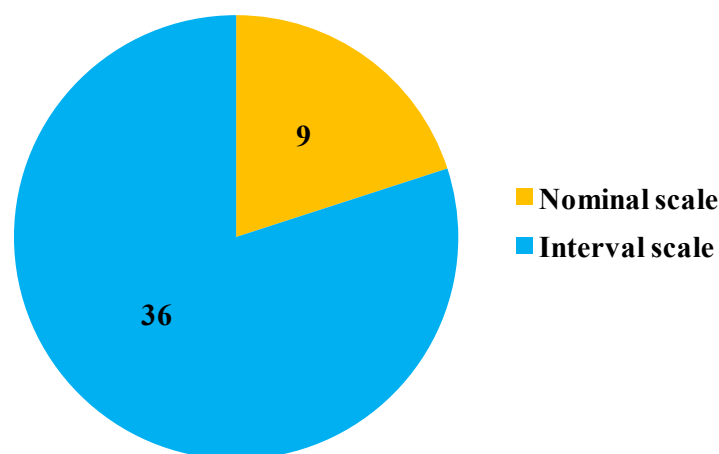
continuum of strongly disagree to strongly agree). The purpose of this questionnaire is to measure respondent's impulse buying tendency for different services in an interval scale. The questionnaire also provides demographic information of the respondents. Overall, it is designed in a manner that fulfils the first objective and a portion of the second objective of the study.

The questionnaire begins with a short introduction of the researcher and the research purpose. It starts with a request for cooperation. Finally the researcher thanks the participants for sparing their valuable time in the study.

There are sections containing sub-sections that measure respondent's service specific impulse buying tendency, general impulse buying tendency, psychographic and demographic information. Both nominal and interval scales are used depending upon the aim of the information to be collected.

The questionnaire contains questions under 6 heads which have sub questions. The first 5 questions are under the head of 'A', measures impulsive buying tendency of consumers for different services. Section B relates to the general impulsive buying behaviour measured by 5 items. Section C includes 5 questions targeted to measure variety seeking, novelty and risk taking behaviour. Section D has 5 questions to measure consumer lifestyle in relation to financial spending, openness, socialization etc. Section E relates to questions measuring self construal in terms of independent and interdependent decision making ability. Section F is about demographic information- age, gender, income, education, disposable income, occupation and family life cycle stage of the respondent.

Figure 2: Scales of measurement



Most of the questions are in interval scales and a few are in nominal which are about the demographic characteristics of the respondents. Figure 2 represents the number of items used under two different scales. The questionnaire is enclosed in Appendix A.

3.1.3.1 Pilot study-I

The pilot study is conducted to examine the feasibility, reliability and validity of research instrument and identify the services that are used in the main survey. According to Hair et al. (2007), pilot study is a test that is conducted before the actual questionnaire is distributed which helps in identifying the problems of the questionnaires such as whether the respondents understand the questions, and also the feasibility of the study in the given context. From that, the researcher can make improvements and adjustments until the final questionnaire is constructed and distributed to the targeted respondents.

The main objective of this pilot study was to classify the services into utilitarian and experiential categories based on the respondent's perception, as standard demarcation was not available for services based on these two attributes. In order to do that, a list containing various services usually availed by consumers in Indian context was prepared from an extensive literature review (Economic survey of India, 2014-15; Prasad, Sathish and Singh, 2014; Economic Review-RBI, 2013-14; Mukherjee, 2012) and respondents were asked to express their need, interest and involvement with the services. It determines the extensiveness of cognitive and behavioural processes during the customer choice process (Houston and Rothschild, 1978; Laurent and Kapferer, 1985). Involvement is found to influence consumers' propensity to make an impulsive purchase in a specific product category (Jones et al., 2003; Bellenger et al., 1978).

The respondents for the pilot study are purposively taken from Guwahati and Silchar. These two areas were selected because they represent the top urban populations in the two valleys of Assam that are Brahmaputra and Barak valley respectively. Guwahati is predominantly occupied by Assamese speaking people whereas in Silchar majority of the people speak Bengali language. It is assumed that due to the difference in language and culture, their lifestyle might also vary. The pilot study, therefore, aimed to cover mainly these two areas so that probable biased response can be avoided. The respondents were chosen keeping in mind the population of the main study.

Sample size of the pilot survey is fixed at 100, with 60 respondents from Guwahati and 40 from Silchar. It may be noted that Guwahati being the state capital has higher population than Silchar.

The pilot study identifies three top services for each of the category i.e. utilitarian and experiential. The steps that are followed in the classification and selection of top services are discussed in the following paragraphs.

- i. Popularity of the services among the respondents: Popularity of the services is calculated by summing up the total number of “yes” responses to the question i.e. whether they buy the particular services listed in the questionnaire. The services which are mostly bought by the respondents are considered as top services.
- ii. Determination of collective scores for each of the services with respect to Utilitarian and Experiential dimensions: As delineated in section (3.1.2.1) that there are 10 variables measured against the listed services. Out of these, 5 represents utilitarian dimension and the remaining 5 signifies experiential aspect. This collective score eventually help in determining the attractiveness of these services, which is the next step of calculation.

The formula for calculating the collective score is given below:

$$\text{Score}_i = \sum r * U_j + \sum r * E_k$$

Where, i= Total score

R=response

U_j=Utilitarian items

E_k= Experiential items

- iii. The mean average corresponding to the two aspects (utilitarian and experiential) for a specific service is finally taken to group utilitarian and experiential services. It is worth mentioning here that the respondents were asked to indicate if they buy the service. This indication shall give us a value, which signifies the popularity of the particular service among the respondents.

The calculated average responses are multiplied by the popularity (i.e., the number of respondents indicated that they consume the service) to have an index value for each of the services.

IndexU = Average of responses across Utilitarian variables.

IndexE= Average of responses across Experiential variables.

The above indices are filtered down to the top three utilitarian and experiential services so that six of these can be utilized in the main survey. Bank, Mobile and Internet are derived as top three utilitarian services and Restaurant, Movie and Television are derived as top three experiential services. However, the researcher has a confusion regarding the accuracy of the responses towards television- how the respondents have interpreted the questions in terms of repurchase intention associated with the service. Therefore, to avoid the probable selection bias, the next top most service i.e. leisure travel is taken as third highest experiential service.

Based on the pilot study, modifications are done on the questionnaire. Items found ambiguous are simplified and items which did not correspond to the scales are removed (for example, I am happy as I am). Socially desirable items in the impulse buying, lifestyle and self construal measurement are identified through frequency distribution and reliability analysis and modified accordingly for further use.

Table 4: Classification and selection of utilitarian and experiential services								
	Services	Yes	No	Utilitarian	IndexU	Experiential	IndexE	Selected
Top Experiential	Restaurant	92	8	849	<i>256.68</i>	1140	<i>328.44</i>	<i>Ok</i>
	Beauty Care	74	26	666	<i>213.12</i>	646	<i>218.3</i>	
Top Utilitarian	Mobile	98	2	1339	<i>372.4</i>	901	<i>298.9</i>	<i>Ok</i>
Top Utilitarian	Bank	94	6	1435	<i>376</i>	720	<i>249.1</i>	<i>Ok</i>
	Laundry	55	45	591	<i>176.55</i>	345	<i>125.95</i>	
Top Utilitarian	Internet	79	21	948	<i>259.12</i>	656	<i>238.58</i>	<i>Ok</i>
Top Experiential	Leisure travel	50	50	366	<i>140</i>	455	<i>171.5</i>	<i>Ok</i>
	Health care	77	23	906	<i>256.41</i>	486	<i>182.49</i>	
	Adventurous activities	48	52	403	<i>120.96</i>	466	<i>159.84</i>	
	Television	83	17	739	<i>253.15</i>	786	<i>280.54</i>	
Top Experiential	Movie	79	21	625	<i>210.14</i>	913	<i>299.41</i>	<i>Ok</i>
	Insurance	66	34	738	<i>225.72</i>	454	<i>167.64</i>	
	Advisory services	17	83	176	<i>43.35</i>	126	<i>36.04</i>	
	Coaching	35	65	331	<i>101.15</i>	217	<i>79.45</i>	
	Air travel/Cab	63	37	731	<i>206.64</i>	443	<i>156.24</i>	
	Clubbing	21	79	163	<i>49.14</i>	226	<i>63.84</i>	

3.1.3.2 Reliability and validity for the survey

Reliability concerned with consistency of the measured scale. The primary objective of reliability is to test the consistency and stability of the research instrument (Cronbach, 1951; Parker et al., 1988; Santos, 1999). In short, it indicates how closely the variables are connected in a group (Malhotra, 2010; Nunnally and Bernstein, 1999).

There are three widely used measures of reliability – test-retest, alternative-form and internal consistency reliability (Netemeyer et al., 2003). The present study uses internal consistency reliability to check the item correlation. Cronbach’s alpha (Bryman and Bell, 2007; Cronbach, 1951) is the most widely used measure for internal consistency in this category. The value of Cronbach’s Alpha can be ranged between negative infinity to positive 1 (Tavakol and Dennick, 2011). A value above 0.60 is accepted as a good reliability measure and it implies a strong association among the variables (Malhorta,

2010). The calculated cronbach's alpha is 0.70, and here it can be safely assumed that the questionnaire is reliable.

Content validity is established in the present questionnaire through literature review. The variables are used from standard scale and adapted in context of services (refer to Section 3.1.2).

3.1.4 Study-II Experiment

Experimental design refers to a research process where the researchers manipulate the independent variables to examine the effect on the dependent variables (Kent, 2007; McDaniel and Gates, 2007). In the present study, a quasi experimental design is used. Previous studies have used such experimental design to study consumer behaviour (McCaleb, Anderson, and Hueston, 2008; Reiser and Simmons, 2005; Siby and James, 2011; Spence, Engel and Blackwell, 1970). The rationale of using quasi experimental design is participants are not randomly assigned to the groups. They are selected based on their score on impulsive buying in the pretest. Assigning the groups based on any other factors related to impulsive buying, such as mood, time and money availability were beyond the control of the researchers and could have influenced the results. The study also lacks a control or comparison group who are not exposed to external stimuli.

3.1.4.1 Design of experiment

After examining the above facts, the author has decided to use one-group pretest-posttest design (Campbell and Stanley, 1971) which has been used in consumer behaviour studies (Adelaar et al. 2003; Moran, 2012; Patwary, 2018; Thwaites et.al. 2012; Vohs and Faber, 2007). In the post test, participants are exposed to external stimuli and their impulsive buying is observed (Bajpai, 2015, Vargas, Duff and Faber, 2017). The external stimuli are given using a questionnaire which contains imagery advertisements and scenario based questions. Luo (2005) used similar method when studying impulsive buying of products in presence of friends and family. Waterlander et al. (2012) used virtual supermarket to study consumer purchasing behaviour. Borgmeier and Westenhoefer (2009) studied the impact of different food label formats on food evaluation and choice of consumers.

In the present study, the purpose is to explore the effects of different types of external impulse trigger cues on the respondent's level of impulse buying. Here, it is used to compare the relative influence of internal and external trigger cues on impulse buying of

services. In the experiment, participants are presented with external stimuli of imagery advertisement and hypothetical buying scenario and asked to respond their willingness to buy in terms of yes/no responses. Further, the respondents are asked to support their answers by rating the external stimulus (discount, advertisement, and reference group) on a five point likert scale strongly agree to strongly disagree continuum.

3.1.4.1.1 Source of data

The study is one-group pretest-posttest experimental design; therefore, the universe for this study is the same as that of the first survey.

3.1.4.1.2 Size of participants

The participant's size for the present study is 300 as most of the experimental studies have used sample size in between 30 to 800 (Hayness et al., 2012). As recommended by Guilford (1954), a minimum sample size of 200 is appropriate for any kind of research. Adelaar et al. (2003) studied the response of 95 participants to see the effect of media formats on emotions and impulse buying intent. Likewise, Sabbir and Birmeji (2010) used 153 respondents for their study on comparing the price and non-price promotional strategy on the first introduction of consumer products. Keeping in mind the second objective of the study, 100 respondents from each of the category high, medium and low on impulse buying in services are taken from the first survey. External stimuli are presented only to these three hundred respondents and observation is made accordingly.

3.1.4.1.3 Selection of participants

From a number of 1200 respondents, 300 respondents are selected based (refer to Chapter 5 section 5.1) on their responses to the first survey. These participants represent three categories that are high, medium and low on impulse buying tendency for services. This selection criterion helps in knowing the influence of external stimuli across different levels of impulse buying tendency. They are conveniently chosen from high, medium and low stratum.

3.1.4.1.4 Time

The experiment was conducted within a period of three months from August 2016 to October 2016. As the study depends on the analysis of the previous survey result, a minimum of two months time gap is kept between the survey and the experiment. A

minimum time gap in such studies helps avoiding response bias related to treatment effect. It is chosen based on researcher's convenience and at the same time without affecting the research purpose.

3.1.4.2 Variable measured

External stimuli refer to marketing cues that are placed and controlled in an attempt to lure consumers into purchase behaviour (Youn and Faber, 2000). Impulse buying is partly influenced by external stimuli and most of the external stimuli are in the form of promotion. Promotion helps consumers maximize utility and effectiveness of their purchases (Chandon et al, 2000; Kchaou and Amara, 2014). Consumers may experience an impulsive urge to buy when visually encounter cues such as promotional incentives (Dholakia, 2000; Rook, 1987). Advertisement as external stimuli plays an important role to minimize the level of intangibility which exists within services (Berry and Parasuraman, 1991; Cutler and Javalgi, 1993; George and Berry, 1981; Legg and Baker, 1987; Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry, 1988; Shostack, 1977). Reference group also provides confidence on consumer decision particularly in services (Beatty and Smith, 1987; Dowling and Staelin, 1994). Individuals compare themselves with a reference group to whom they look for guidance for their own behaviour (Hyman, 1942). In the present study, the researcher has considered external stimuli such as sales promotion (discount and advertisement), and reference group (family/friends influence, review/rating). A questionnaire consisting hypothetical buying scenarios and imagery advertisements are used and subject's willingness to purchase the services is recorded in terms of yes/no responses. Further, likert scale (strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree, strongly disagree) is used to see the treatment effect of the manipulating variable. The main objective of this questionnaire is to examine the impulse buying tendency of the respondents when they are exposed to external stimuli. In the study, the researcher controls extraneous variables such as brand name, requirement and general level of impulse buying tendency, perceived risk, and repeat purchase of services.

A synthesis of various factors that are relevant in context of the present study is discussed in the following sections.

3.1.4.2.1 Advertisement

Advertising is a process that gives information to the masses about products. Advertisement influences consumer behaviour by presenting symbolic and functional appeal of a service (Park, Jaworski, and MacInnis, 1986; Snyder and DeBono, 1985).

Advertisement is used as a mental imagery to influence consumer (Rossiter, 1982). Imagery is believed to be closely associated with long-term memory and is more personally relevant (Burns, Biswas and Babin, 1993). Starch (1966) found that advertisements with visuals are remembered better than ones without them. Visual elements may generate more positive attitudes and purchase intentions (Stafford, 1996). Visual tangible cues should be advantageous to services marketers as these cues provide observable means of intangible services. Visualization refers to the creation of a vivid, mental picture of a service's qualities which enable customers in experiencing the service mentally (Stafford, 1996).

3.1.4.2.2 Discount

Discounted price believed to be the most commonly used promotional techniques (Santini et al., 2015). The concession or reduction in price is given to the customers and they save money on the purchase. The same features of the products are offered to the customers at lower price. Thus customers' value for money is enhanced.

By presenting discount, retailers create the feeling of availability of purchasing power and increase the level of temptation by removing the barriers of perceived financial risk. Price is one of the factors having the most direct influence on impulse buying (Stern, 1962). According to Sharma (2012), consumer sometimes feel irresistible urge to buy products specially when there is a discount offer.

Price discount promotions are used to measure buying tendency for utilitarian products because they solve the consumers' external needs, such as monetary savings and decision costs. Price cuts and increased visibility only lead to an increase in purchases of the promoted product or product category (Bell et al., 1999; Santini et al., 2015).

3.1.4.2.3 Reference group

Reference group signifies people who can exert direct or indirect influences on someone's attitude or behaviour. In the context of researches on consumer behaviour, the most common reference groups are family, friends, and neighbours. The values, attitudes

and behaviours of the reference group are perceived to have relevance upon the evaluations, comparison and buying behaviour of another individual in the group. A consumer's behaviour is influenced by the behaviour of reference groups (Bearden and Etzel, 1982; Fournier and Richins, 1991; Rook and Fisher, 1995). According to Luo (2005), the presence of reference group would increase or decrease the impulse buying tendency.

3.1.4.2.4 *Review/rating*

Rating or review can be defined as evaluations about a service by its users. Consumers get prior ideas about the quality and usefulness of a service. Consumers use reviews or rating for information search and the evaluation of alternatives (Kohli et al., 2004). Information seeking is itself a source of interest or pleasure for some consumers (Mathwick and Rigdon, 2004).

3.1.4.3 Research Instrument-II

The questionnaire used in the second phase consists of imagery cues and scenario based items of advertisement, discount and reference group (Luo, 2005; Rook and Fisher, 1995). The participant chose from the previous survey on the basis of high, medium and low internal impulse buying tendency are asked to take part in the second phase of the study. As the participants are familiar with the study, researcher had skipped the introductory part and started with describing the questionnaire. Finally, as in the previous case, the participants are acknowledged for their time and support in the study (Questionnaire in Appendix B).

There are 17 questions including the personal information of the respondents. The questions here are also based on the same services as of the first survey which represents utilitarian and experiential category. The first three questions are about current mood of the respondents, frequency of buying a particular service and the reasons for buying the services. Q. No. 4, 7 and 13 to 16 are scenario based questions related to different services. For question no. 5, 6, 8 and 9 to 12 imagery hypothetical advertisements are used. Additional information is asked through Q. No. 17, which is about different services that are currently being availed by the respondents.

3.1.4.3.1 Imagery advertisement

Since actual product trial is impossible in case of services, being able to vividly imagine the performance of a service is the best alternative to form concrete expectations about a service (Goossens, 1995). Imagery advertisement plays a significant role in mediating ad-evoked feelings and attitudes (Bone and Ellen, 1992; Burns, Biswas and Babin, 1993; Mitchell, 1986). Mental imagery can be expected to be more personally relevant and leads to self-sell as they are self-generated cognitive processing (Lee and Gretzel, 2011; Tormala and Petty, 2004). According to MacInnis and Price (1990), mental imagery has a positive influence on consumer attitudes and leads to greater confidence that events will unfold as expected.

Imagery can be stimulated by various external elements such as pictures, words, sounds, and instructions to imagine (Babin and Burns, 1997; Bone and Ellen, 1992; Lutz and Lutz, 1977; MacInnis and Price, 1987; Miller and Marks, 1997). Past research has revealed that a consumer's mental image of a service such as tourism and restaurant can be the main source of information available to enhance expectations and facilitate purchasing decisions (Miao and Mattila, 2013; Walters, Sparks, and Herington, 2007). Olson, McAlexander, and Roberts (1986) found that pictures presented in destination advertisements have an influence on a consumer's perception of the vacation experience through the association of variety of pictures with certain types of experiences (Miller and Stoica, 2004).

In the present questionnaire, the imagery advertisement contains both symbolic appeal and utilitarian (price and performance) aspect of a service. Since services are too diverse, same advertisement approach is not appropriate. In case of travel services in question number 5, symbolic appeal and discounted price are given more importance. In question number 6, symbolic appeal and popularity of the places have given importance. The advertisement in question number 8 is presented with fun, enjoyment and comfort of watching a movie. In question number 9, status, symbolic beauty, quality and luxury are presented in a restaurant environment. Question number 10, 12 and 14 is trying to communicate the price benefit, convenience and performance of the services.

3.1.4.3.2 Scenario based question

Studies on impulse buying have used scenario based questions to measure impulse buying of particular product (Miao and Mattila, 2013; Burnett, 2006; Luo, 2005; Rook

and Fisher, 1995). In this method, respondents are exposed to shopping scenarios where they require imagining themselves with the situation and respond accordingly. The accuracy of the response depends on how the scenario is successful at creating the real life situation and also the respondent's level of engagement with such situations.

Participants are presented with hypothetical impulse buying scenarios where they are exposed to situational cues such as convenience of shopping, discount, advertisement appeal, reference group's influence and their response (yes/no/can't say) determine whether an impulse purchase is made. Researchers have used such scenario based impulse buying situation mostly in brick and mortar shopping context (Luo, 2005; Rook and Fisher, 1995). For this study, the buying scenario is revised to fit in service context, as well as to measure influence of external cues for a particular service.

3.1.4.4 Pilot Study-II

The second pilot study is conducted for perfecting the instrument for the experiment. The respondents for the Pilot Study-II are conveniently chosen. The imagery advertisements used in the questionnaire are collected and edited from various websites (Makemtrip, restaurant websites, mobile shopping sites, online bank sites and shopping sites) where service advertisements are much more evident. The imagery and scenario based questions are created based on existing literature (Luo, 2005; Ma et al., 2009; Siby and James, 2011) and adapted in the context of services. A study with a convenient sample of 14 respondents is conducted for an *initial screening* of the imagery and scenario based items. It also tested the feasibility of the questionnaire among the respondents. Here, items of three different services were given together which created a redundancy among the respondents. Based on this result, questionnaire was modified and only one service at a time is introduced in the final questionnaire for second round of testing (Pilot Survey II). It was done with 25 respondents from Tezpur town of Sonitpur districts in Assam. The samples are general adult in the age group between 18 to 65 years. They are conveniently chosen, however, it is kept in mind that the samples resembles the criteria that are same as of the first survey.

The objectives of the pilot study II were:

1. To find whether the items can evoke equal desirability among the respondents
2. To verify if the distribution of the responses between the utilitarian and experiential items are significantly differed.

3. To examine the feasibility of the questionnaire
4. To make modification in the questionnaire, if necessary

Corrections in the second questionnaire were done based on the results of frequency distribution, paired sample T-Test and validity analysis.

(a) Frequency distribution for the yes and no responses

Frequency distribution suggested the total Yes/No responses to the questions which were presented with external stimuli (discount, reference, advertisement). Thus, an almost equal distribution of responses (Yes and No) indicated that questions are able to distinguish the respondents in terms of their interest, need and willingness to buy a particular service that ultimately suggests that the questions are equally desirable among the respondents.

(b) Paired sample T-Test

A significant difference ($p < 0.05$) in impulse buying between the utilitarian and experiential services is found through performing paired sample t-test of the 25 sets of data which suggests that the questions for both the categories are able to differentiate the services and are successful at generating different responses among the respondents which establish concurrent validity of the questionnaire.

(c) Independent sample T-Test

Independent sample t-test is done to see the significant differences between the 'Yes' and 'No' responses for a particular stimulus in a service. Significant differences ($p < 0.05$) in the responses of Yes/No are found against each of the external stimuli. This, again, indicates that the questionnaire is capable of differentiating the respondents based on their utilitarian and experiential need.

3.1.4.5 Reliability of the second questionnaire

Sekaran (2003) states that the reliability of ensures consistent measurement across time and items in the instrument and helps to assess the goodness of a measure. It determines the consistency across observations or interviews. Reliability is concerned with the consistency, accuracy and predictability of the research findings. In order to increase the reliability of the findings, the sample is kept fairly large in the present study. Cronbach's

alpha for three different variables i.e. Discount, Advertisement and Reference Group ranges from 0.65 to 0.80, which indicates an acceptable level of reliability (Hair et al., 2010; Nunnally, 1978).

3.1.4.6 Validity of the second questionnaire

Validity is a term of a test which measures what it is supposed to measure. Bryman and Bell (2007) describe it as the issue of whether or not an indicator that is devised to test a concept that really measures the concept. Since a novel approach is adapted in designing the questionnaire and using it in the context of services, therefore, a rigorous approach had to be used to check the validity of the items. Different types of validity that is used to test the questionnaire are mentioned below:

i. Face validity

Checking face validity is crucial while developing new measures. Face validity reflects on the content of the concept in the questions (Bryman and Bell, 2007). According to Anastasi (1954), a test can be considered to have face validity if it “looks like” it is going to measure what it is supposed to measure. In the present study, face validity is established by taking the opinion of respondents of the pilot study about the ability of the scale to measure the proposed objective. Authors’ main objective is to determine the external stimuli influence on impulsive buying of services. In the questionnaire, 6 services (same as in the questionnaire 1) have been used with three external stimuli: discount, advertisement and reference group. Moreover, measures used in the study are developed based on previous literature. Thus the author believes that face validity is established.

ii. Concurrent validity

According to Bryman and Bell (2007), concurrent validity refers to the use of relevant measures in the questionnaire. The main objective of the questionnaire-2 is to determine the influence of external stimuli on impulse buying of utilitarian and experiential services. It is to see how discount (price promotion), advertisement (non-price promotion) and reference group (friends or family) influence the impulse buying of utilitarian and experiential services. The author strongly believes that the measures are relevant to the main concepts of the study. For example, the author has used both

ipsative/forced choice (yes/no/can't say) and normative response choices (five point Likert scale) to measure the purchase intention and the reason behind buying of such products which determines the strength of external stimuli. The author has used such items to verify the confidence and willingness of buying the service presented in the questionnaire (Harrison and Rutstrom, 2008).

iii. Discriminant validity

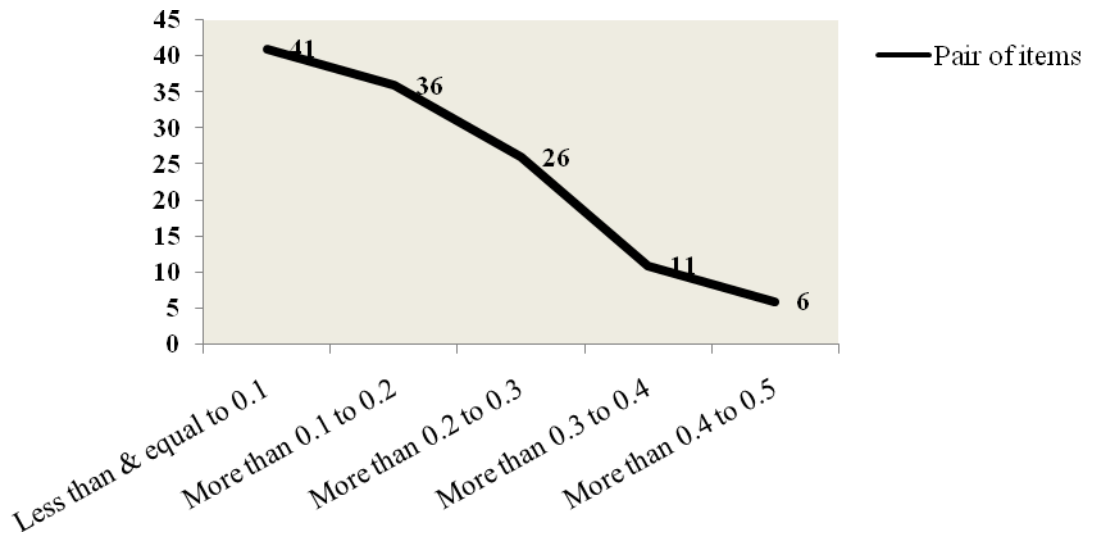
Discriminant validity is the degree to which two conceptually similar concepts are distinct (Hair et al., 2006). A successful evaluation of discriminant validity shows that a test of a concept is not highly correlated with other tests designed to measure theoretically different concepts (Campbell and Fiske, 1959).

The present research uses discriminant validity to check whether the different components or measures on their effect on impulse buying of services are distinctive from one another. Here, discriminant validity is used because services are different in their need, interest and usability. The purchase of one service based on some external stimuli does not necessarily create same buying tendency for another service. For example, a consumer may feel impulse buying tendency when seeing a heavy discount in a mobile service but the same person may not feel the same tendency when seeing discount on a movie ticket. Impulse buying tendency depends on his interest and involvement with mobile services. Therefore, discriminant validity is used to measure how distinctive impulse buying is for different services. In the present study (as done by Bagozzi and Heatherton, 1994) correlation method is used to ascertain the distinctiveness of components or variables. The correlation value of each pair variables or measure of a component is compared to the measures of other components. The concepts or measurements of one component are not supposed to be related with the concepts of other components. According to Bagozzi and Heatherton (1994), discriminant validity is established in a test when the correlation between constructs is significantly less. The highest correlation calculated in the present context between dimensions is 0.684 (between the Bank reference and rating scales) and the lowest correlation is 0.005 (Movie reference and Rating). The associated significance level is 0.000 and 0.959 respectively.

The graphical representation in Figure 3 suggests that only 6 variables have correlation above 0.5 and majority of the variables have correlation less than or equal to

0.1. Hence, it can be stated that discriminant validity is supported for all pairs of dimensions.

Figure 3: Graphical representation of correlation between pairs



3.2 Analytical techniques and software package used

SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) version 20.0 and R software version 3.4.2 are used for data analysis. The collected data are processed and coded as per the compatibility of the software.

Both, descriptive and inferential statistics are used for data analysis. Frequency, percentage, Average and test of differences are conducted. Inferential statistics (t-test and One-way ANOVA, two way ANOVA, Regression analysis) have been done to find out various relationships among the variables. Finally, Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) technique is applied to test a theoretical model of impulse buying tendency in services using R software.

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