"Emotional vs Rational Decision Making in Ultra-Fast Grocery Shopping."

Dr. Kritika Malhotra[1], Ananya[2]

[1]Assistant Professor, National P.G. College

[2]Student, M.Com, National P.G. College

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ABSTRACT

10-minute grocery apps have undergone a tremendous change in terms of influencing consumer buying habits with respect to their focus on speed and convenience. The present study aims to analyse how the relationship between emotion and reason exists among consumers using these apps for fast deliveries within 10 minutes. Data collection involved surveying 70 individuals using a structured questionnaire containing questions related to demographic characteristics, motivations, emotional triggers, and purchasing behaviour.

The results indicate that the majority of customers fall into the 18–24 age range and are mostly students, suggesting high penetration among young digital consumers. In terms of rational motivators, convenience and saving time ranked top, with more than 75% of participants considering them as primary factors driving their decisions to use these platforms. Most consumers also evaluated their product necessities and compared prices, implying the presence of reasonable decisions.

However, emotions still affect consumers' choices to some extent. Almost half of the sample purchased items impulsively without prior planning, and many were satisfied with their actions after purchasing something. Discounts and promotions heavily influenced their decisions, whereas advertising played a minor role emotionally.

Keywords: rational, rapid, emotional, ultra-fast, grocery

INTRODUCTION

E-commerce has evolved drastically in recent years, and the availability of instant grocery orders through online shopping apps such as Blinkit, Zepto and Instamart has brought an era of ultra-fast delivery. These mobile applications have revolutionised the way people buy groceries in a few clicks while putting emphasis on the importance of speedy, accessible and convenient services. This phenomenon has not only affected the shopping behaviour of consumers but also altered their thinking process.

The contemporary market is flooded with various stimuli for the shoppers, which range from push notifications to flash sales and advertisements to limited-period deals. All these elements trigger excitement and happiness among the consumers, causing them to purchase items spontaneously without prior thought and consideration. On the other hand, consumers also adopt a rational approach when making a decision about their purchases as they analyse the necessity of the item, compare the prices and prefer convenience over everything else.

The current study will focus on determining the extent to which both the emotional and rational factors affect consumer behaviour while placing an order for 10-minute delivery platforms such as Blinkit, Zepto, and Instamart.

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The shift from conventional e-commerce to fast e-commerce is an entirely different psychological process. The conventional model necessitated that shopping be done with planned and high involvement activities; however, when it comes to fast shipping services, the level of involvement becomes minimal. As a result, there arises a dichotomy where, on one hand, there exists a logical aspect such as convenience, while on the other hand, it facilitates impulsive behaviour.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Yeh, L., wang, E.M.Y., and Huang, S.L. (2007) have researched the relationship between emotions and rationales as drivers of online buying behaviour by analysing primary data collected from people interacting with various website interfaces. Their study demonstrated that although website aesthetics and usability affect the likelihood of purchases, emotions generated by websites do not change consumers' thought processes and do not increase purchasing intentions substantially, thus calling for new approaches to website interface development.

Spanjaard, D., and Freeman, L. (2012) analysed emotions in food shopping through observation and video recording. The result has been that prolonged shelf time correlates with increased bodily interaction with products and heightened negative emotional expressions, while quick decision-making is associated with reduced visibility of emotions.

Kalnikaitė, v., Bird, J., and Rogers, Y. (2013) observed supermarket customers' shopping behaviours and found out that people use heuristics, which are "fast and frugal." Their research has revealed that such decisions are based primarily on health benefits and price. They have found that too much information, especially unreasonable information, from smartphones hampers the decision-making process; therefore, suggesting simplification of the technology.

Conducted by Hollis-Hansen, K., Seidman, J., O'Donnell, S., & Epstein, L. H. (2019), the experiment examined the effect of episodic future thinking (EFT) in online grocery shopping. It showed that those who used their imagination to see future results bought less food, demonstrating that psychological methods could lead people to make wiser decisions regarding food.

The study carried out by Ewerhard, A. C., Sisovsky, K., & Johansson, U. (2019) focused on consumer decision making in multi-channel selling of slow-moving consumer goods by means of observation and interviewing. They observed that consumers use multiple channels throughout their shopping process, which is supplementary to one another and emphasise the importance.

Analysing the issue of panic buying during COVID-19 by means of secondary data and theoretical analysis, Dickins, T. E., & Schalz, S. (2020) explained the phenomenon of panic buying as a behaviour of adaptation to risks and uncertainty.

Kim, H. (2021) conducted a study on the usage of mobile grocery shopping applications by South Korean customers via a quantitative survey design method. This study found that utilitarian motivation had a substantial influence on attitudes, in addition to subjective norms, on the purchase intentions and behaviour, as well as being more pronounced in users than non-users.

Kumar, A., Chaudhuri, D. S., Bhardwaj, D. A., & Mishra, P. (2021) examined the phenomenon of impulse buying and post-purchase regret amongst grocery buyers of Reliance Fresh and Big Bazaar. They observed a positive yet very low correlation between impulse buying and regret, where regret was dependent on income levels.

Wadhawan, K., & Wadhawan, D. (2024) have examined the issue of decision fatigue in online grocery buyers via secondary research. Decision fatigue leads to mental weariness, bad decisions, and dissatisfaction with choices made in the digital shopping interface.

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Goswami, A., & Kumari, R. (2024) have analysed the role of quick commerce in the consumer decision-making process by collecting primary data and doing statistical analysis. This quick commerce affects the satisfaction, impulsiveness and brand loyalty of consumers.

The study on digital nudges found that only strategies like financial penalties, eco-labels, and emissions information effectively promote sustainable choices among Gen Z, while others have limited impact. Similarly, Jain, M. (2025) found that ultra-rapid delivery increases impulsive buying due to speed and convenience.

Theoretical Framework

The study is grounded in Dual Process Theory, which explains decision-making as a combination of two cognitive systems: System 1 (intuitive and emotional) and System 2 (analytical and rational). In the context of ultra-fast grocery delivery applications, System 1 is activated through stimuli such as discounts, time pressure, and promotional offers, leading to impulsive purchases. Conversely, System 2 governs rational behaviours such as price comparison and evaluation of product necessity. The findings of this study align with this theory, indicating that consumer decisions are influenced by a combination of both systems.

The Theory of Planned Behaviour further supports this study by explaining how consumer attitudes toward convenience, perceived ease of use, and external influences shape purchase intentions. The popularity of ultra-fast delivery apps among younger users reflects favourable attitudes and high perceived behavioural control.

The Stimulus–Organism–Response (SOR) model is also relevant, where marketing stimuli such as discounts and limited-time offers (stimulus) influence consumers' internal emotional states (organism), resulting in impulsive buying behaviour (response).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The quantitative research design is adopted in this study to examine the polarity of emotions and rationality among consumers. The data was gathered using an online questionnaire survey administered to 70 current users of Blinkit, Zepto, and Instamart (rapid delivery companies).

Sampling procedure: the convenience sampling technique was applied by targeting the residents of the urban areas and the youth population aged 18 to 24 years, because they constitute the early adopters of fast commerce.

Instrumentation: a structured questionnaire with multiple-choice questions was developed to elicit standard answers for the quantitative analysis, while a five-point Likert scale ('strongly disagree', 'disagree', 'neutral', 'agree', 'strongly agree') was utilised to assess various variables such as demographic composition, impulsive purchasing behaviour, price sensitivity, and post-acquisition satisfaction.

Data analysis: The gathered data was subjected to descriptive statistics for analysing the trends regarding demographic involvement, purchase usage rate, and psychological stimuli leading to purchase decision-making.

OBJECTIVES

1. To study the emotional factors like mood, excitement, satisfaction, and advertisements that influence consumer decision-making.
2. To study the rational factors like convenience, necessity of product, comparison of prices, and planning involved in the decision-making process.
3. To study the impact of marketing mix (promotions, discounts, colours, alerts) on impulsive and rational decision making.
4. To study whether emotional or rational decisions play an important role in influencing consumer choice in ultra-fast delivery applications.

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DATA ANALYSIS

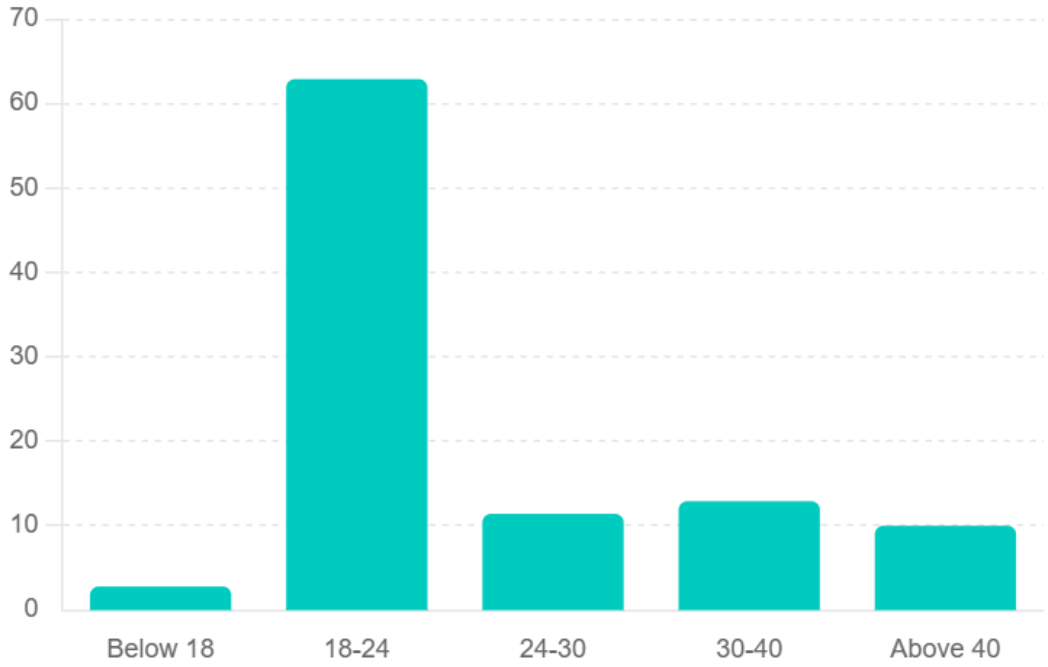

FIGURE 1: AGE DISTRIBUTION

From figure 1, we can conclude that the major responses are from ages between 18 to 24 years (62.9%). The next largest group is those between 30 to 40 years (12.9%), which shows that the primary audience for this research is the youth, followed by 24 to 30 years (11.4%). However, the least engagement is by the is by the audience of age group of above 40 years (10%) and below 18 years (2.8%) who are mainly school going youngsters.

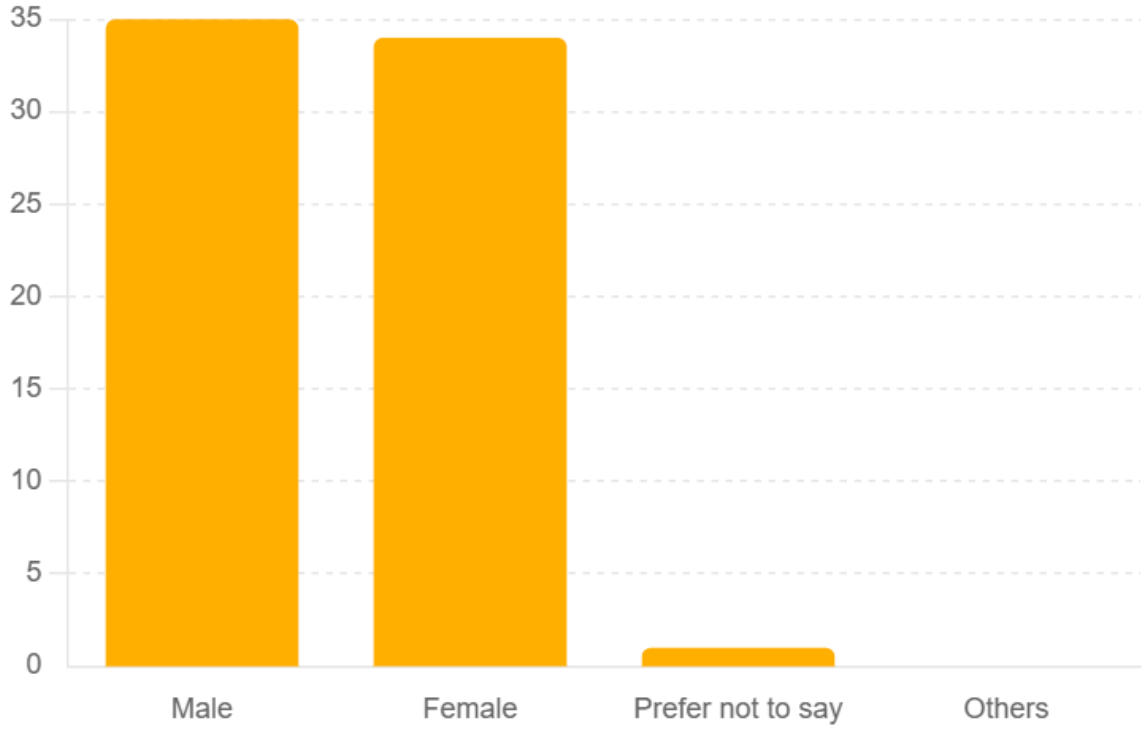

FIGURE 2: GENDER DISTRIBUTION

The chart in the figure 2 depicts the gender distribution among the respondents. The data shows that 50% of the respondents are male, while 48.6% are female. A very small portion, 1.4%, chose ‘prefer not to say’, and none identified as ‘others.

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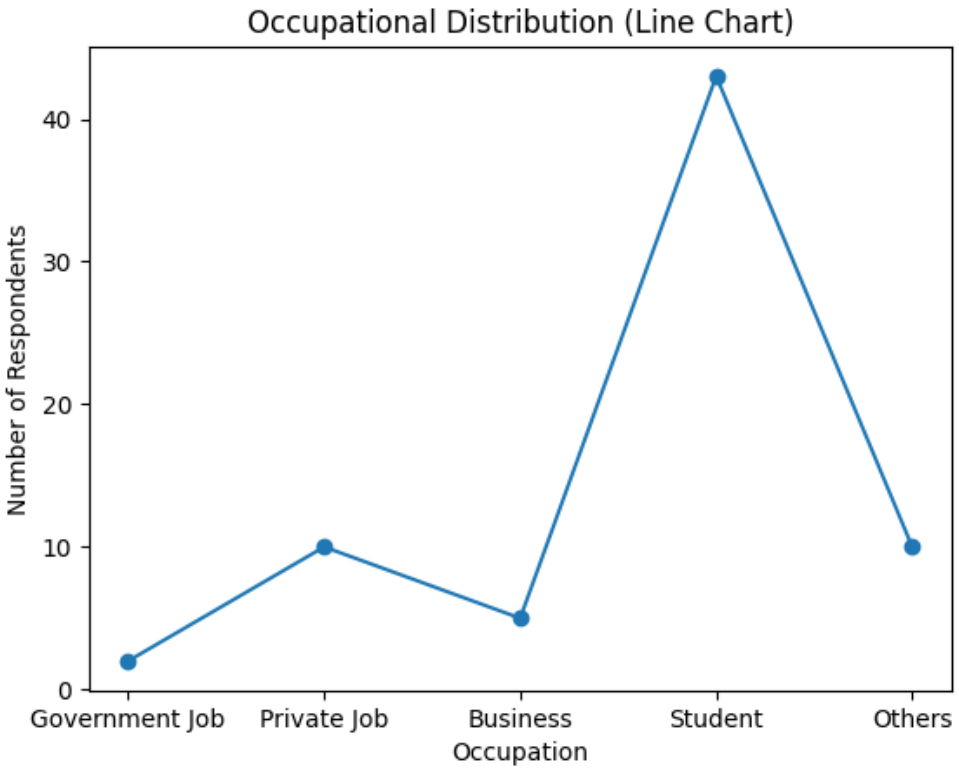

FIGURE 3: OCCUPATIONAL DISTRIBUTION

From figure 3, we can conclude that the maximum number of responses are from students (61.4%) followed by private job (14.3%) and other categories (14.3%). Followed by business professionals (7.1%) and government jobs (2.9%)

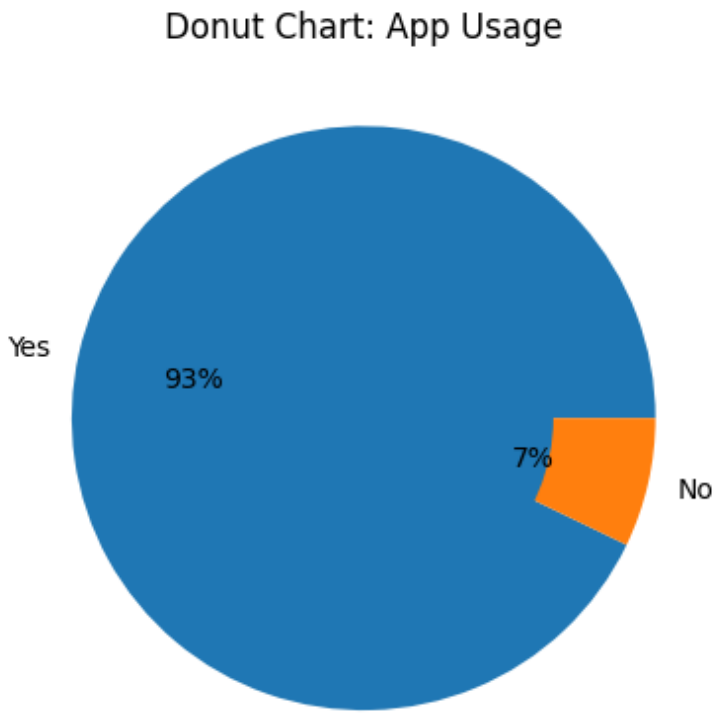

FIGURE 4:APP USAGE

From figure 4 it is evitable that 92.9% of respondents stated that they use 10-minute grocery delivery apps such as Blinkit, Zepto, or Instamart, whereas 7.1% reported that they don't use them.

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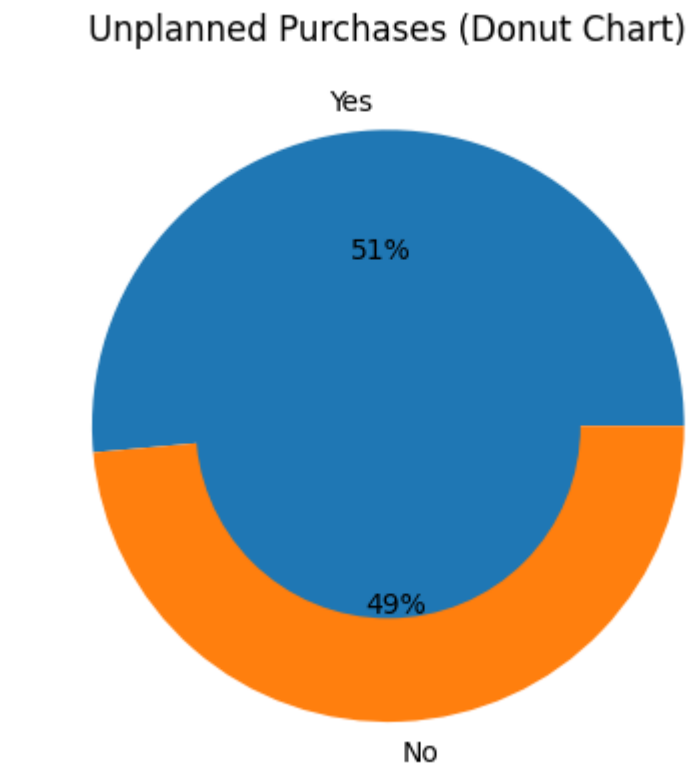

FIGURE 5: UNPLANNED PURCHASES

From the figure above, we can see that 51.4% of respondents make unplanned purchases, while 48.6% state that they do not make unplanned changes on 10-min grocery apps (Blinkit, Zepto, Instamart).

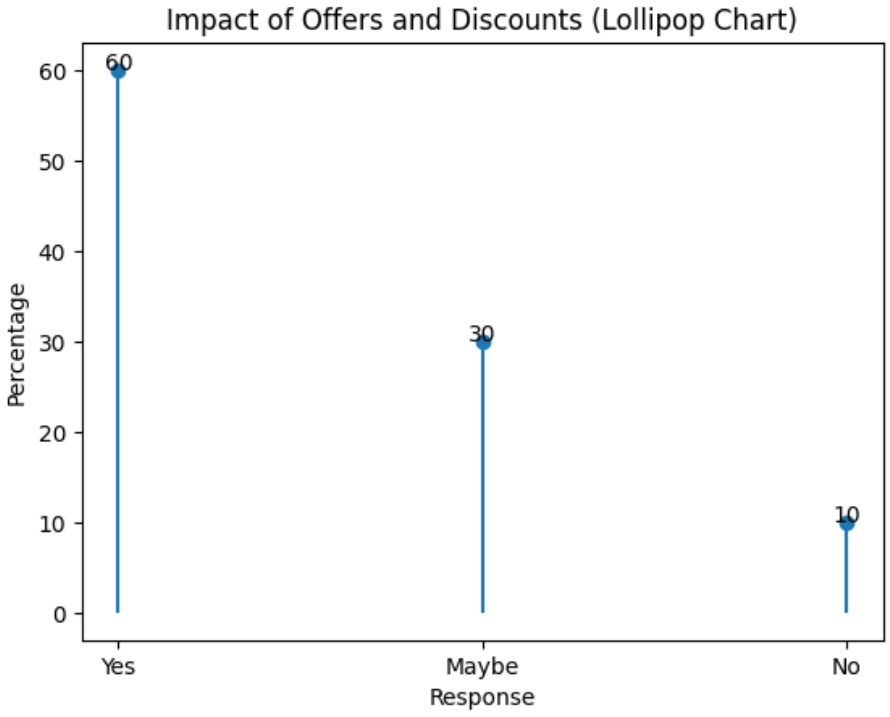

FIGURE 6: IMPACT OF OFFERS AND DISCOUNT

Figure 6 represents whether offers and discounts affect their purchase decision. A majority of respondents (60%) answered ‘yes’, indicating that such promotions influence their buying behaviour. While 30% said ‘maybe’, suggesting partial influence, and 10% responds ‘no’, showing they are not affected by these marketing tactics.

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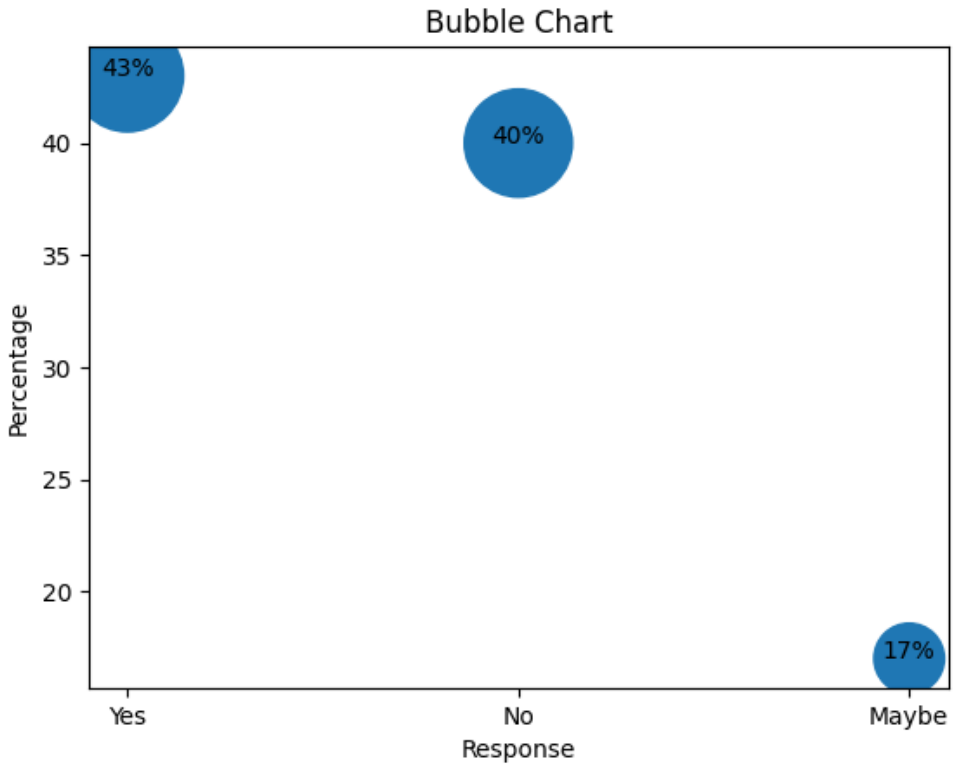

FIGURE 7: EXCITEMENT WHILE ORDERING

Figure 7 shows that 42.9% of respondents answered 'yes', 40% said 'no', and 17.1% responded 'maybe'. It represents the responses of the participants regarding whether they feel a sense of excitement while placing an instant grocery shopping

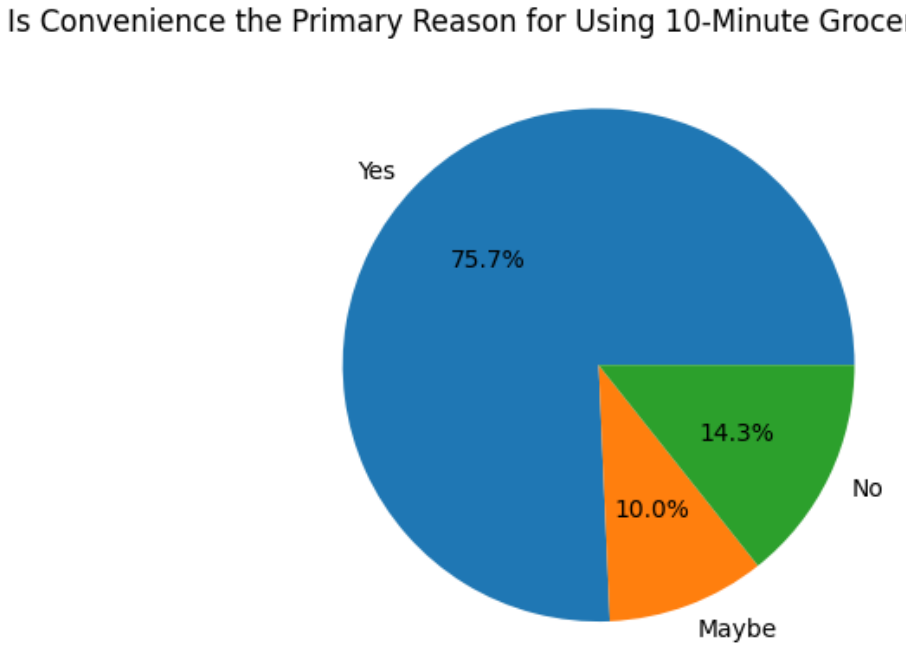

FIGURE 8: CONVENIENCE AS PRIMARY REASON

From Figure 8, we can understand that a large majority of 75.7% respondents said 'yes', 10% answered 'maybe', and only 14.3% responded 'no' about whether convenience is the primary reason for using 10-minute grocery delivery apps.

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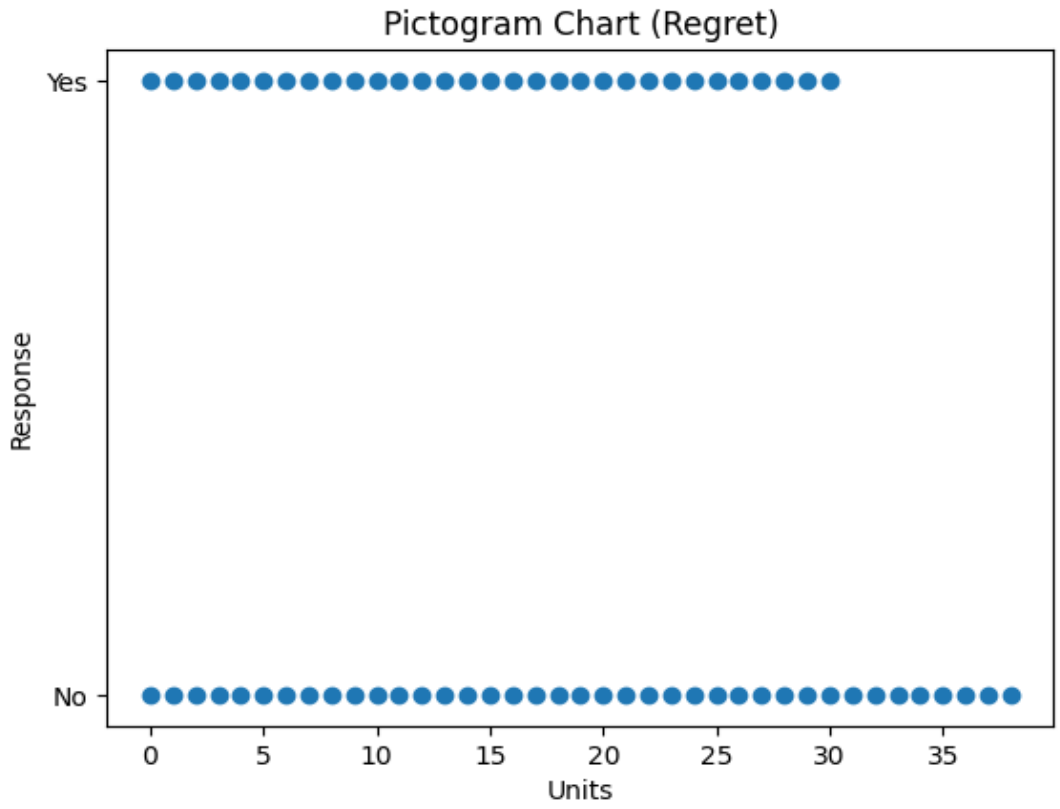

FIGURE 9: IMPULSIVE PURCHASE REGRET

From Figure 9, we can conclude that 55.7% of respondents answered 'no' while 44.3% of respondents answered 'yes', regarding whether they have regretted making impulsive purchases through 10-minute delivery apps.

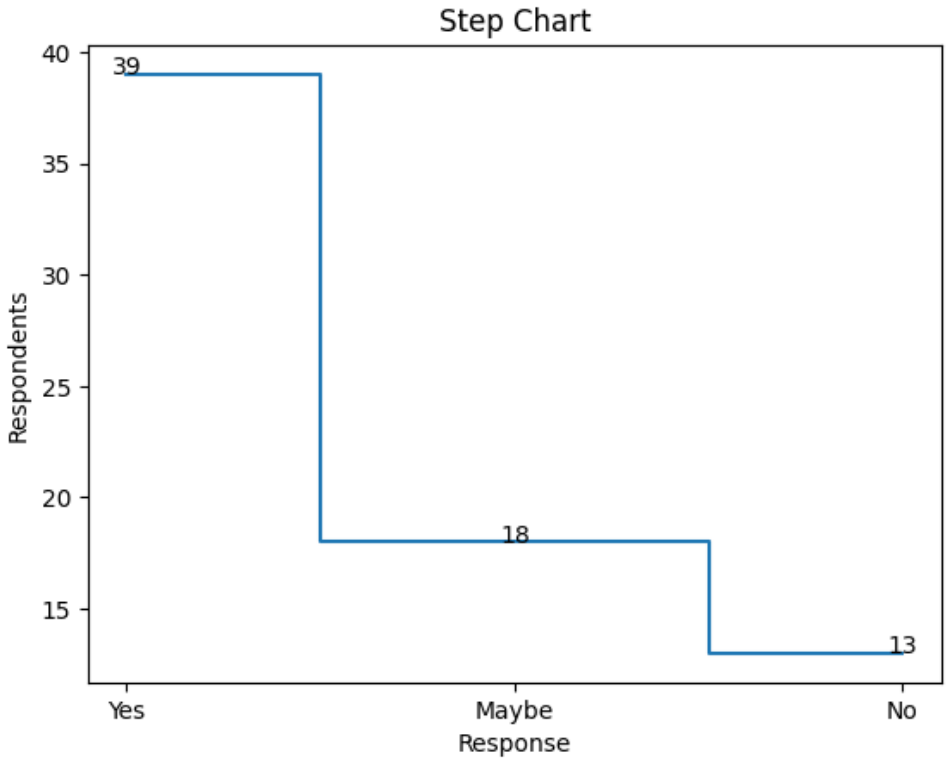

FIGURE 10: LOGICAL THINKING

From the above chart, we can conclude that 55.7% people said 'yes', 25.7% responded 'maybe', and 18.6% said 'no', about whether they believe they think logically before every purchase on quick delivery apps.

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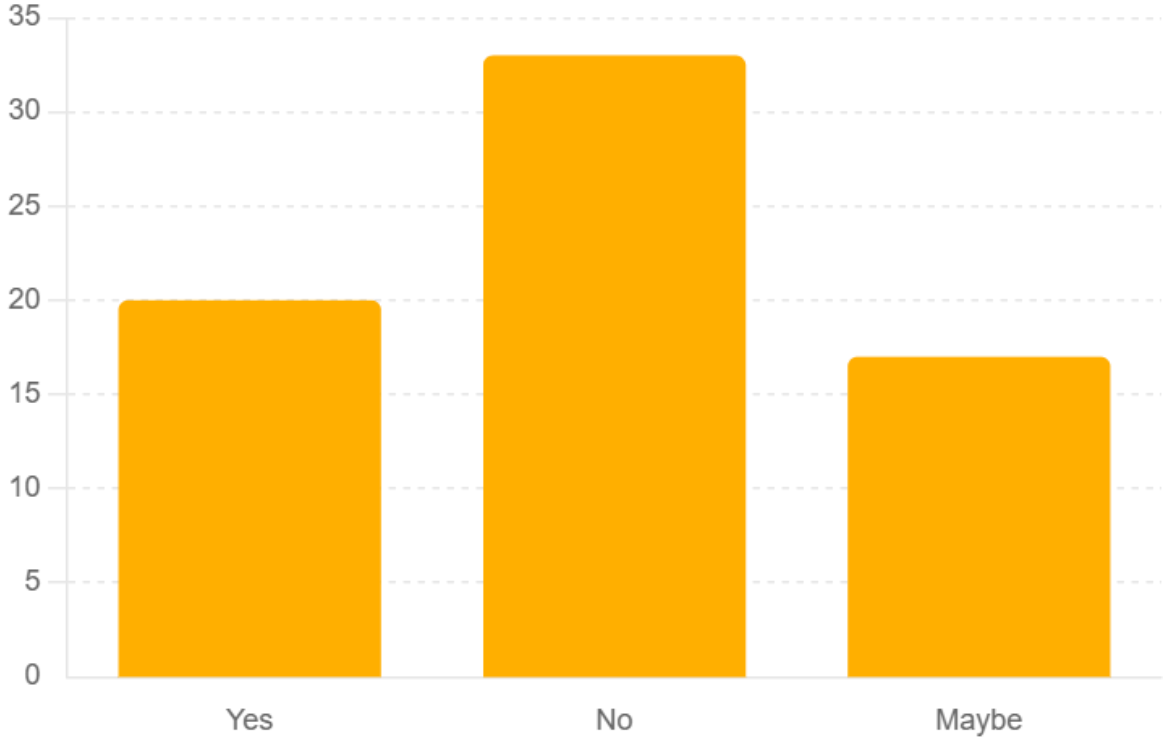

FIGURE 11: EFFECTS OF ADS AND IMAGES

From the following chart, we can understand whether advertisements or product images on 10-minute delivery apps affect their buying choices. The data shows that 28.6% of the respondents answered ‘yes’, whereas 47.1% said ‘no’ and 24.3% responded with ‘maybe’.

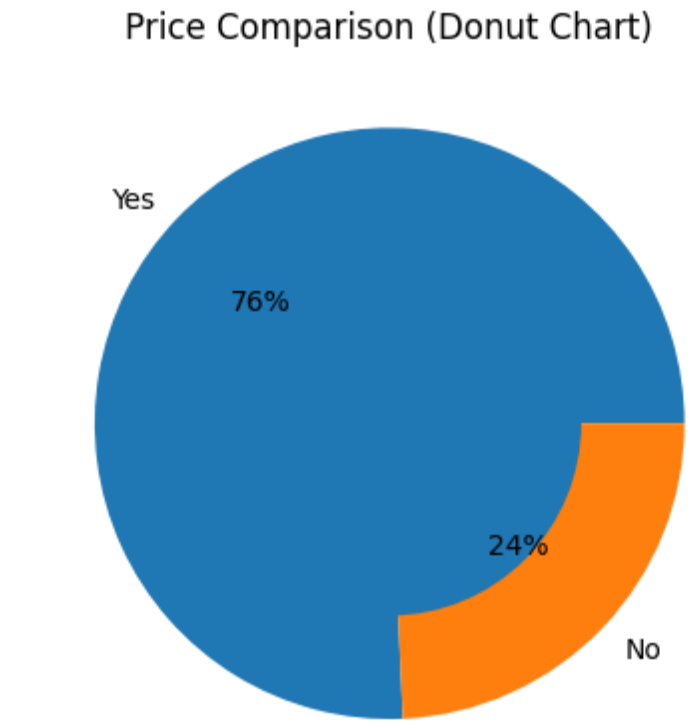

FIGURE 12: PRICE COMPARISON

Here, from the above figure, we can conclude that a large majority of 75.7% people say ‘yes’, while 24.3% said ‘no’ regarding whether they compare prices with other apps before purchasing through 10-minute delivery platforms.

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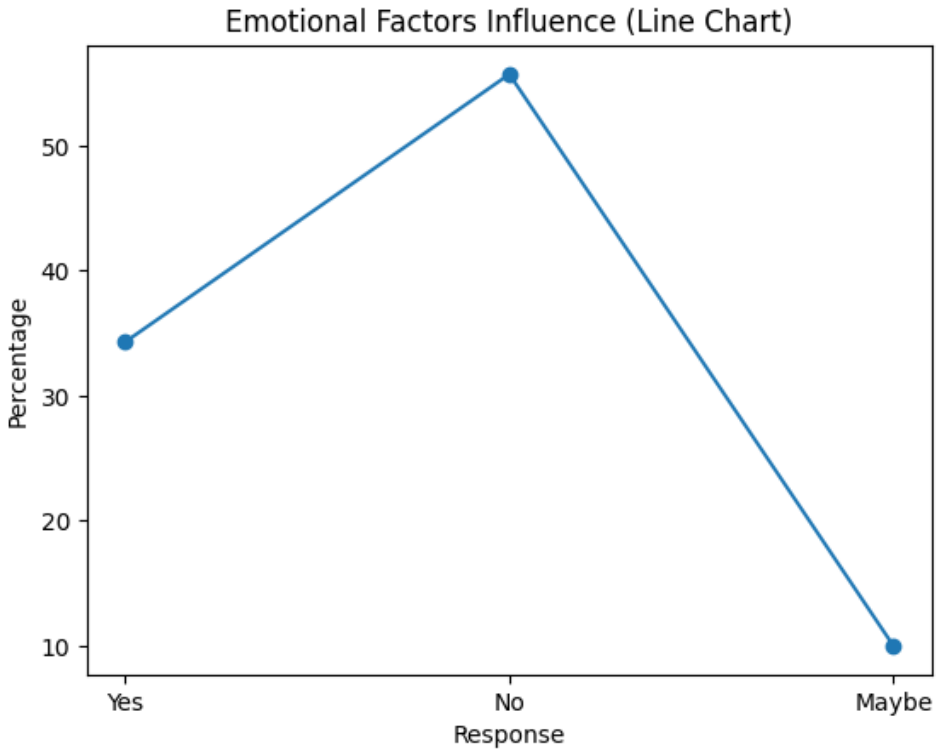

FIGURE 13: EMOTIONAL INFLUENCE

Figure 13 shows participants' responses on whether emotional factors such as mood or stress influence their decision to buy via instant grocery delivery apps. The data shows that 34.3% of respondents said ‘yes’, 55.7% said ‘no’, and 10% responded ‘maybe’.

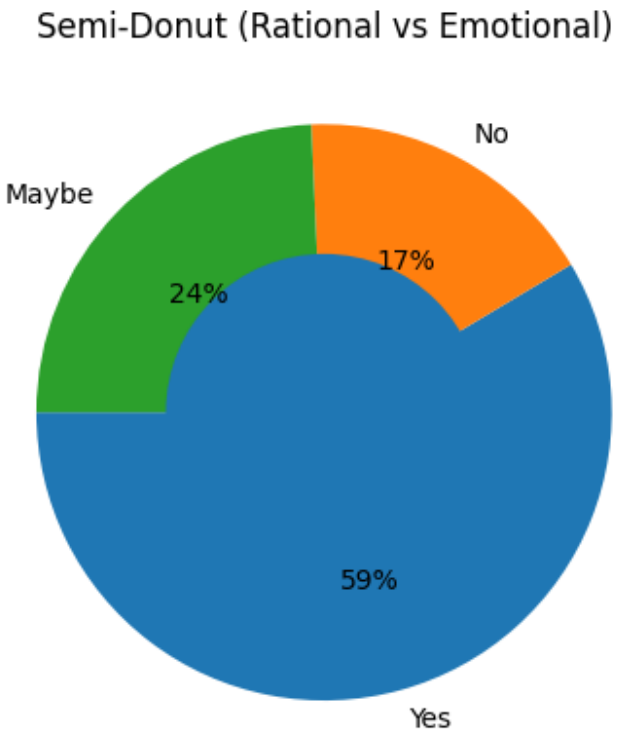

FIGURE 14: RATIONAL VS EMOTIONAL

From the figure above, we can determine whether participants consider themselves rational rather than emotional shoppers. Here we can see that 58.6% of people responded with ‘yes’, 17.1% with ‘no’, and 24.3% with ‘maybe’.

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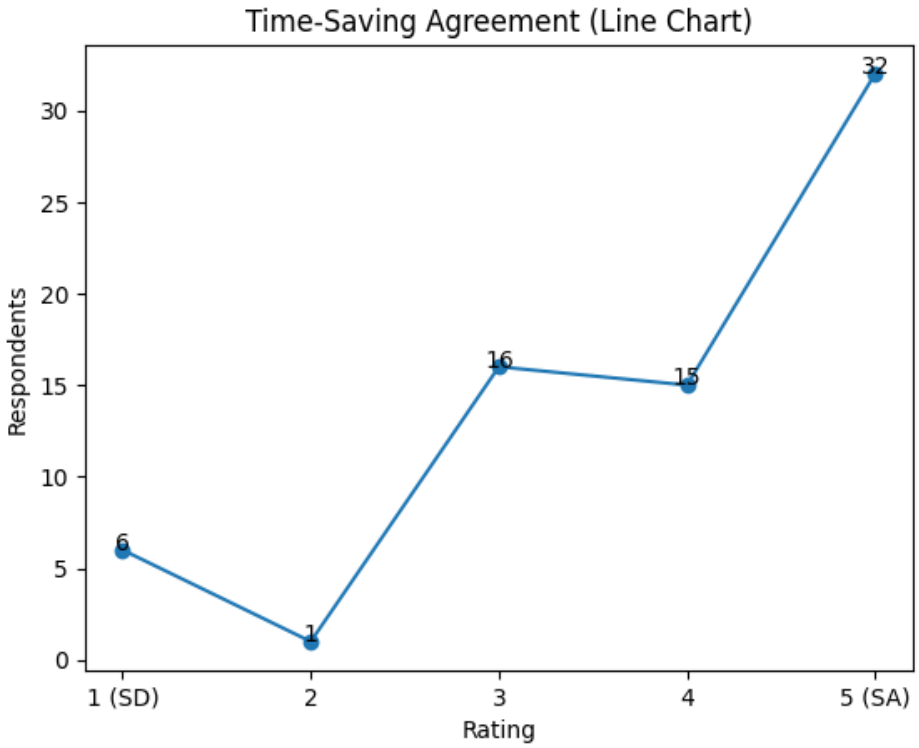

FIGURE15: TIME-SAVING AGREEMENT

The results reveal that 45.7% of respondents agree that using 10-minute grocery apps saves them time, while 21.4% agree. Additionally, 22.9% respondents reflected a neutral opinion. On the other hand, 8.6% and 1.4% respondents indicated disagreement with the statement. Overall, the findings suggest that most participants use 10-minute grocery apps mainly because they save time.

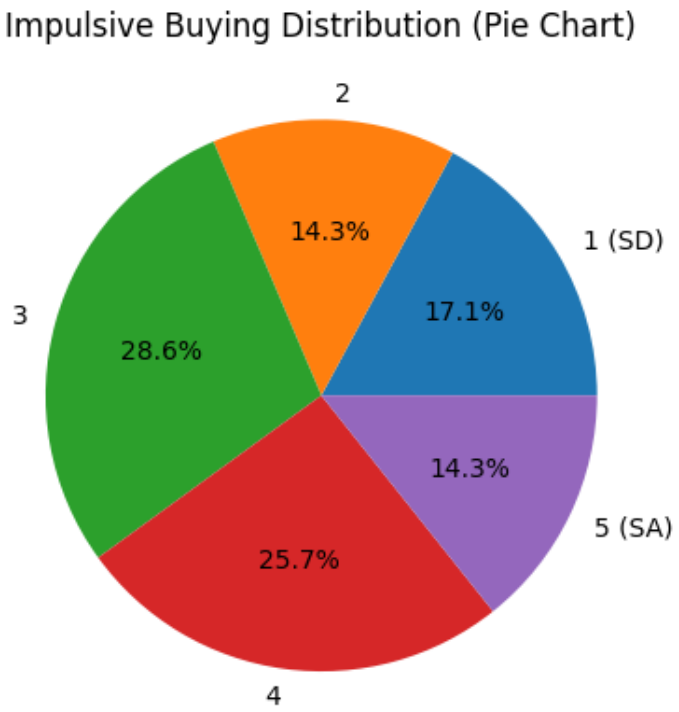

FIGURE 16: IMPULSIVE BUYING

The respondents are neutral (28.6%) on whether they impulsively buy items when they see limited-time offers. Followed by 25.7% respondents, suggesting agreement. Whereas 14.3% people show strong agreement. On the other hand, 17.1% and 14.3% respondents indicated disagreement.

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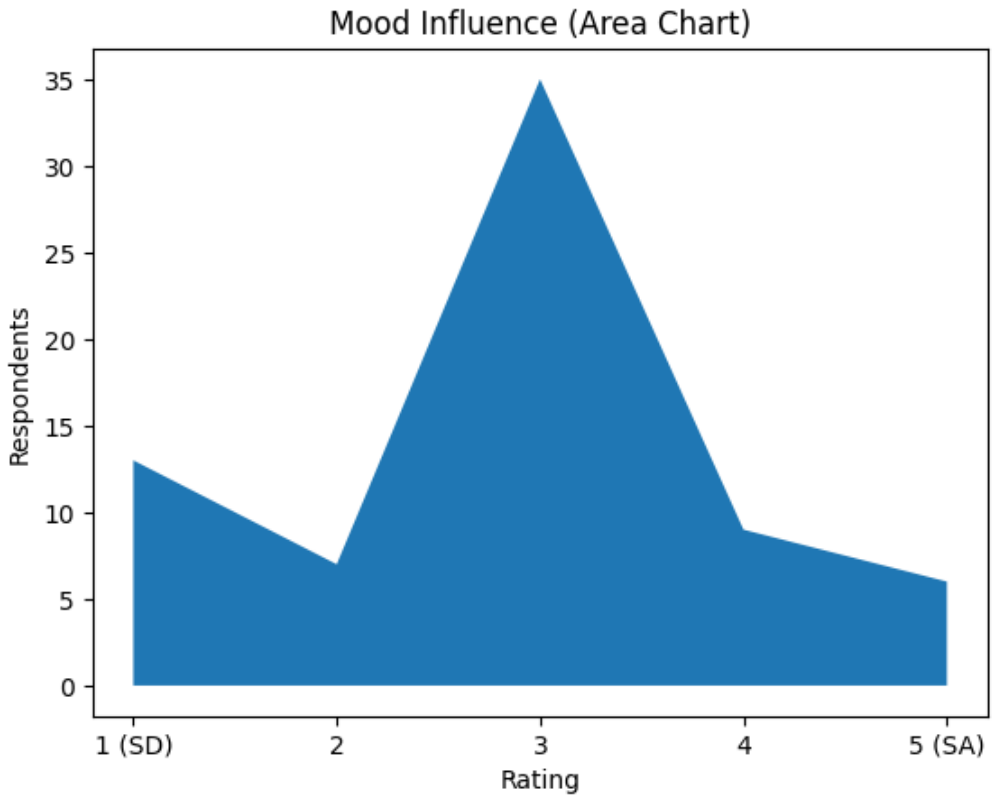

FIGURE 17: MOOD INFLUENCE

50% people showed neutrality that their mood is strongly affected when they buy from these apps. Followed by 18.6% of the people strongly disagreeing and 10% also indicating disagreement. 12.9% and 8.6% people showed agreement and strongly agreed, respectively.

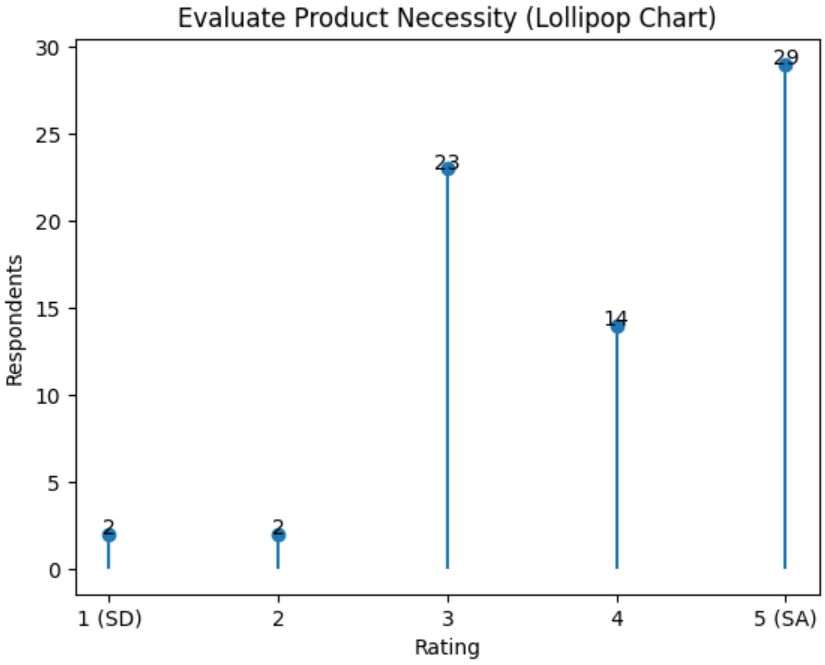

FIGURE 18: EVALUATING PRODUCT NECESSITY

Here, 41.4% people responded showing strong agreement that they carefully evaluate product necessity before adding it to their car, followed by 20% respondent indicating agreement. 32.9 respondents showed neutrality regarding the statement, whereas only 2.9% each showed disagreement.

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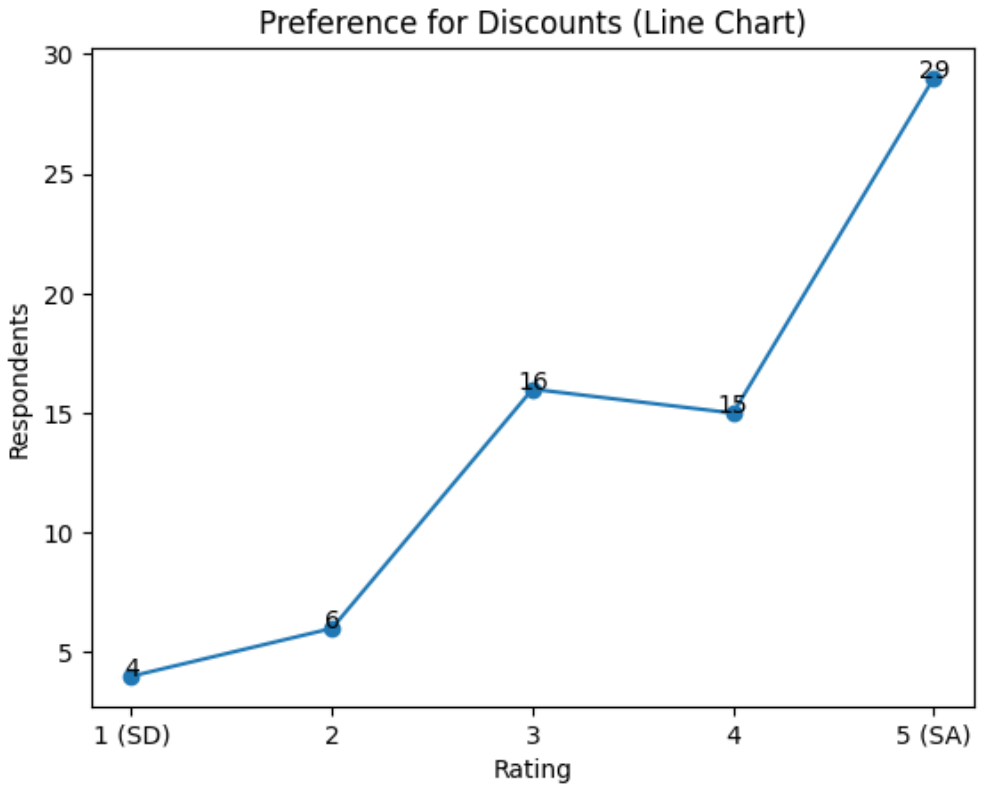

FIGURE 19: PREFERENCE FOR DISCOUNTS

The figure here shows 41.4% people strongly agree that they prefer buying from apps that offer free delivery and discounts, followed by 21.4% people agreeing. 22.9 people remain neutral, and 8.6% and 5.7% people disagree and strongly disagree, respectively.

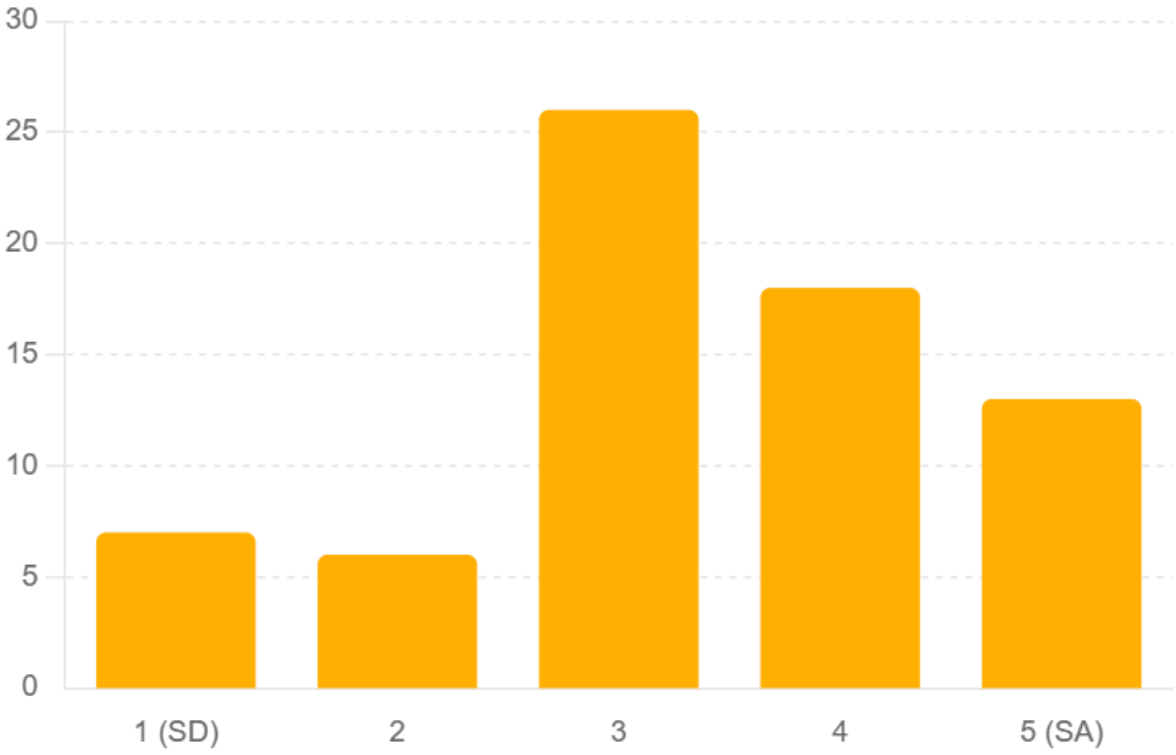

FIGURE 20: SATISFACTION AFTER ORDERING

37.1% people show neutrality that they feel satisfaction or happiness immediately after placing an order, 25.7% respondents show agreement, and 18.6% are strongly agree with the statement. 10% and 8.6% people strongly disagree and disagree, respectively.

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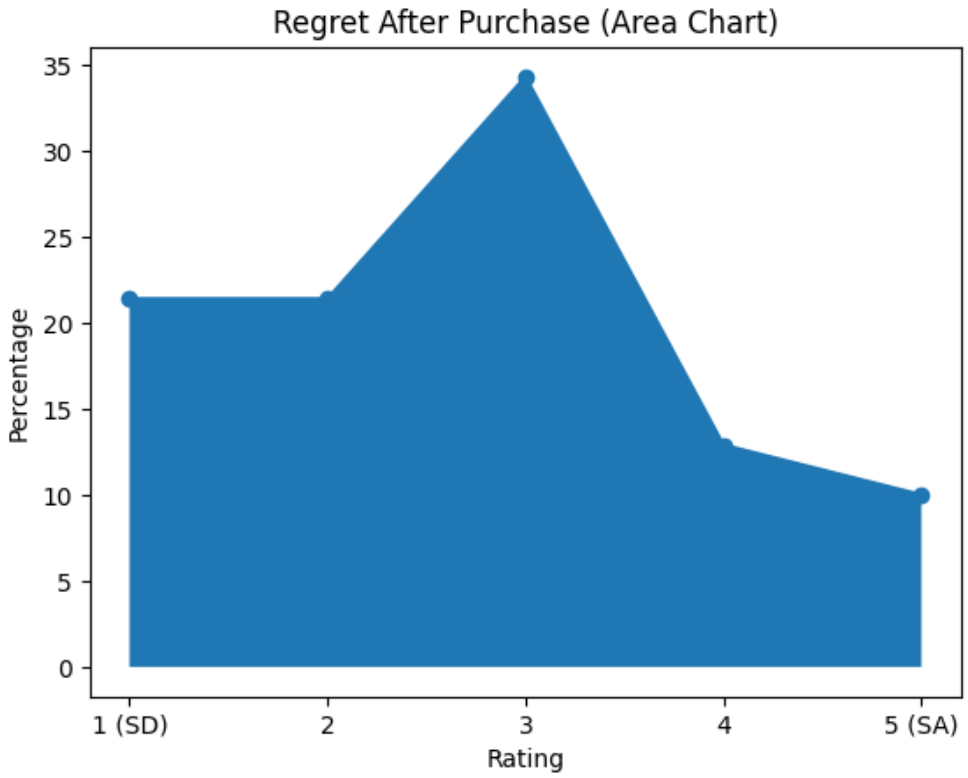

FIGURE 21: REGRET AFTER PURCHASE

34.3% people show neutrality, which means they sometimes regret their purchases after delivery, followed by 21.4% strong disagreement, and 12.9% and 10% respondents show agreement and strong agreement, respectively.

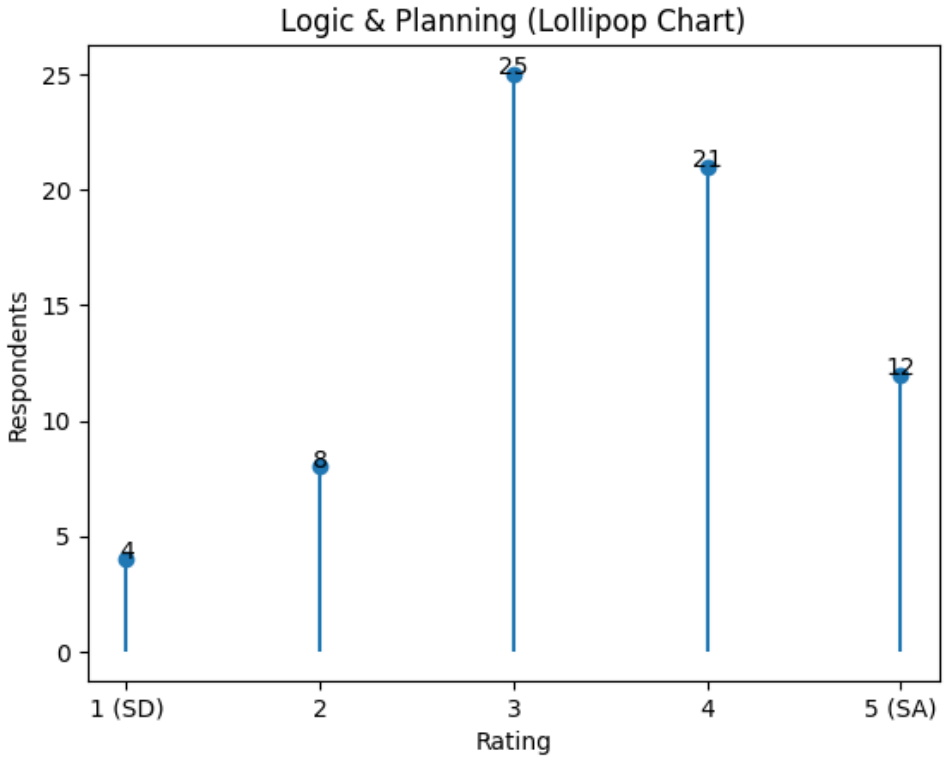

FIGURE 22: LOGIC AND PLANNING

Here, 35.7% respondents showed neutrality that they rely on logic and planning while shopping on ultra-fast apps, followed by 30% respondents agreeing with the statement. 17.1% respondents strongly agree that they rely. 11.4% respondent and 5.7% respondents showed disagreement and strong disagreement, respectively.

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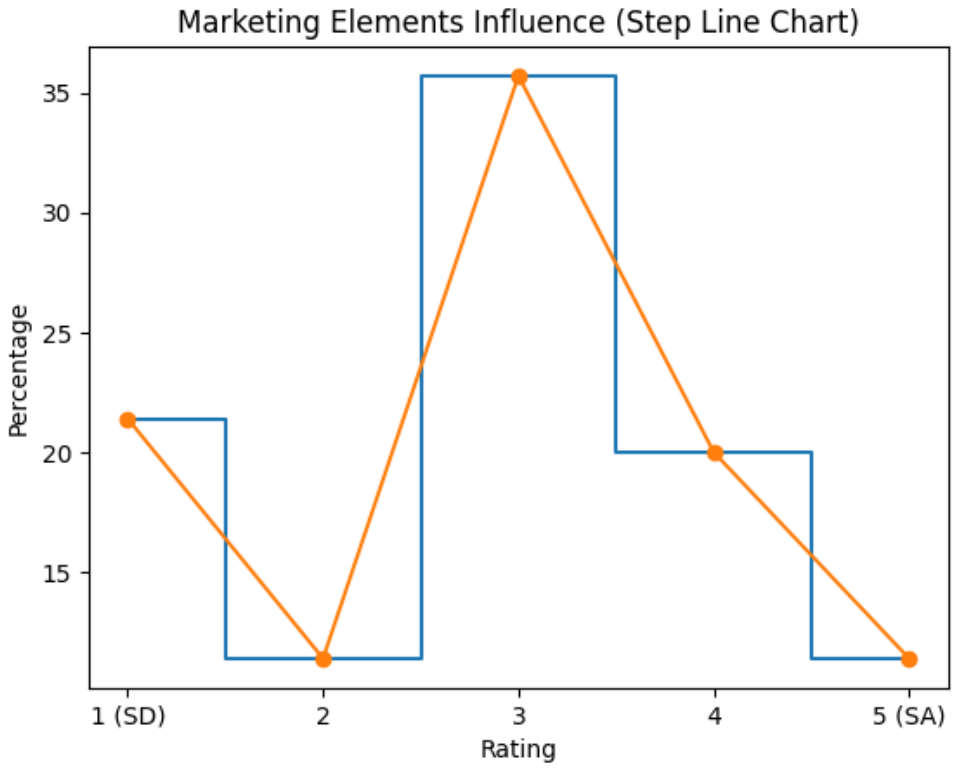

FIGURE 23: MARKETING INFLUENCE

35.7% respondents show neutrality that marketing elements like colours, notifications, and banners trigger their interest to shop, whereas 21.4% respondent show strong disagreement, and 11.4% respondents indicate disagreement.20% respondents show strong agreement, and 11.4 respondents

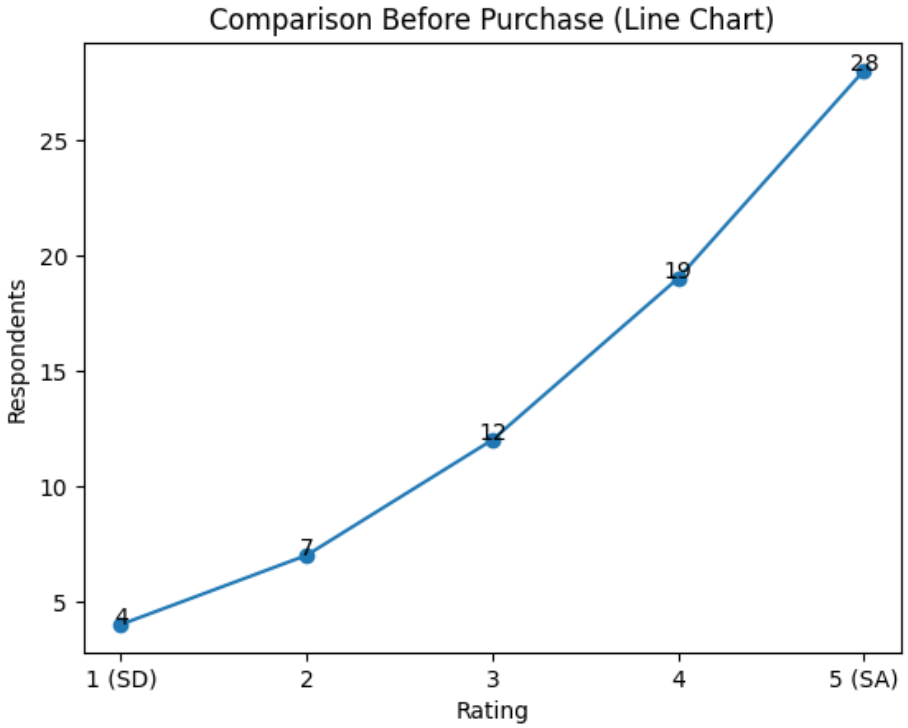

FIGURE 24: COMPARISON BEFORE PURCHASE

The figure above shows responses about whether they compare multiple options before finalizing a product, where 40% respondent strongly agree, and 27.1% respondents agree with the statement.17.1% respondents are neutral.10% respondents and 5.7% respondents are showing disagreement and strong disagreement, respectively.

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FIGURE 25: SPENDING BEHAVIOUR

27.1% respondents strongly agree, and 20% respondents agree that they believe quick delivery apps make them spend more than traditional shopping. 24.3% respondents are neutral. 12.9% respondents and 15.7% respondents show disagreement and strong disagreement, respectively.

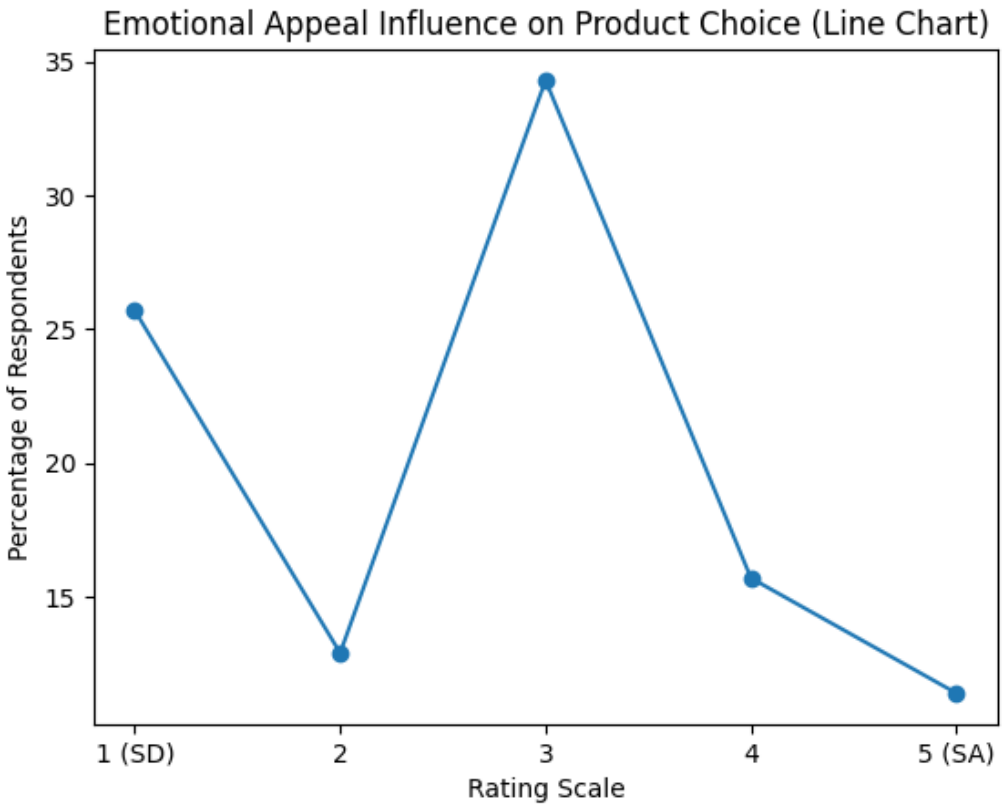

FIGURE 26: EMOTIONAL APPEAL INFLUENCE ON PRODUCT CHOICE

The chart presents 34.3% respondents remain neutral that emotional appeal in advertisements influences their product choices, 25.7% respondents show strong disagreement, and 12.9% respondents indicated disagreement.15.7% respondents agree, and 11.4%respondents are strongly agree that they get influenced by emotional appeal in advertisements.

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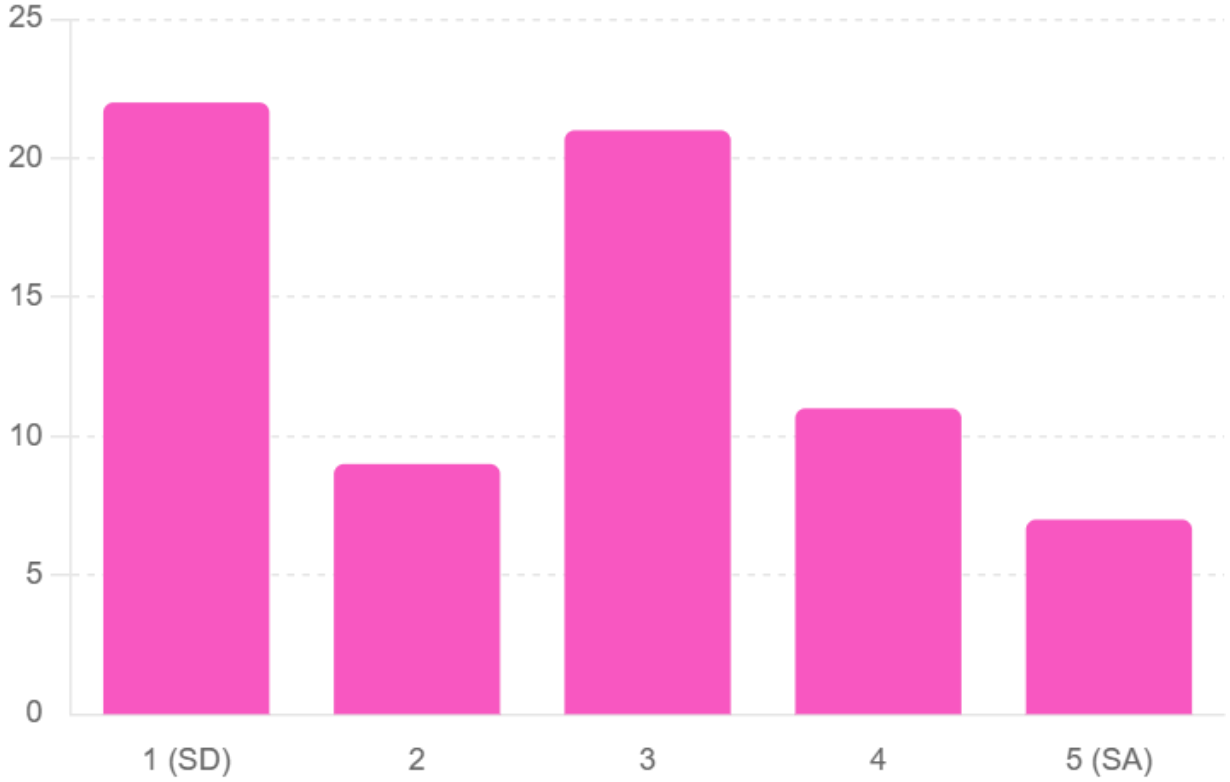

FIGURE 27: EMOTIONAL VS LOGIC

The chart shows 31.4% respondents strongly disagree that overall, they make grocery decisions based more on emotions than logic, followed by 12.9% disagreement, 30% respondents are neutral, 15.7%respondents are agreeing and10% respondents strongly agree that they buy logically and not emotionally.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PLATFORMS

As per Marketers, being "Convenience" as the core rational motivator, apps must pay attention to features such as "One-Click" reordering. For Consumer Protection, a Budget Tracker can be considered within platforms to monitor their unplanned expenses, promoting trust and eliminating any buyer's remorse detected through this research. Research on "Subscription Effect," i.e., Zepto pass or Blinkit VIP, should be conducted to identify whether loyalty cards increase rationality or encourage even more impulsive decisions. Considering convenience to be the leading rational motivator, app designers might consider incorporating features such as "one-click" reordering. The platform can incorporate a budget tracker feature, allowing tracking of their impulsive purchases to build trust while eliminating any buyer's remorse that was revealed during this study. Additional research should be conducted on the effect of subscriptions like Zepto pass or Blinkit VIP to determine their influence on rational vs impulsive behaviours.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The findings are based on a narrow outlook as compared to a broad outlook for the entire country, with a sample size of 70 people. There is a very high number of respondents in the 18-24 age group, which makes it hard to understand the interaction of middle-aged and elderly people who manage household budgets. Respondents may think that they are logical beings; therefore, there may be a slight inclination towards understatement of any impulsive behaviour.

CONCLUSION

The present study examines consumer decision-making in the context of 10-minute grocery delivery applications, highlighting the interplay between rational and emotional factors. Rational considerations—such as convenience, time-saving, and price comparison—are the main drivers, with consumers favouring these apps for efficiency, ease of use, and meeting urgent needs.

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At the same time, emotional factors play a supporting role in shaping purchase behaviour. Many users, particularly from younger demographics, engage in impulsive buying when exposed to discounts, limited-time offers, or attractive deals. These triggers create a sense of urgency and excitement, encouraging unplanned purchases. However, despite such impulsive behaviour, most consumers do not experience significant post-purchase regret, suggesting a level of satisfaction or justification of their decisions.

The study also reveals that promotional offers are more effective than advertisements in influencing consumer behaviour. While advertisements aim to create emotional appeal, practical benefits such as discounts and savings have a stronger impact in this fast-paced environment. This suggests that consumers prioritise tangible value over persuasive messaging.

Although consumers often perceive themselves as rational decision-makers, their behaviour reflects a combination of logic and emotion, especially in situations involving time pressure and convenience. This hybrid decision-making process underscores the complexity of modern consumer behaviour in digital shopping environments.

In conclusion, consumer choices in ultra-fast grocery delivery platforms are driven by a balance of rational and emotional factors, with rationality forming the foundation and emotions subtly influencing final decisions. Understanding this balance is essential for marketers, app developers, and researchers aiming to enhance user experience, design effective strategies, and promote responsible consumption.

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