

Methodology

Harris Interactive® fielded the study on behalf of National Endowment for Financial Education from September 13-17, 2012, via its QuickQuerySM online omnibus service, interviewing 2,339 U.S. adults aged 18+. Data were weighted using propensity score weighting to be representative of the total U.S. adult population on the basis of region, age within gender, education, household income, race/ethnicity, and propensity to be online. No estimates of theoretical sampling error can be calculated; a full methodology is available.

Key Findings – Past Month Impulse Purchases

68% of American adults have purchased something on impulse in the past month. Among those who have...

- 62% have bought something for themselves/a family member
 - 50% have purchased something for themselves
 - 24% have purchased something for their child(ren)
 - Women (28%) are significantly more likely to indicate this than men (20%)
 - 23% have purchased something for a spouse/significant other
 - 5% have purchased something for a parent
 - 3% have purchased something for another member of the household
- 22% have purchased something on impulse for their home/car
 - 19% have purchased something for their home
 - 6% have purchased something for their car
 - Men (8%) are significantly more likely to indicate this than women (4%)
- 6% have bought something else on impulse in the past month

32% of Americans have not bought anything on impulse in the past month

Key Findings – Impulse Purchase Triggers

89% of American adults make impulse purchases for themselves, their child(ren), other family members or their home.

Among those who do...

- 49% are triggered to make an impulse purchase by sales/discounts
 - Women (57%) are significantly more likely to indicate this than men (41%)
- 15% say that receiving a windfall (e.g., tax refund, inheritance, lottery/gambling winnings) is what triggers impulse purchases

- 10% indicate that life events (e.g., news of a promotion, stressful day) trigger impulse purchases
- 7% are triggered to make impulse purchases by children asking/pleading
- 6% make impulse purchases because of the latest technology product releases
 - Men (11%) are significantly more likely to indicate this than women (2%)
- 4% are influenced to make impulse purchases by family members' lifestyles and purchases they make
 - Men (5%) are significantly more likely to indicate this than women (2%)
- 2% say that friends' lifestyles and purchases they make trigger impulse purchases
- 8% say something else causes them to make impulse purchases

Key Findings –Past Year Impulse Purchase Spending

Among those who make impulse purchases for themselves, their child(ren), other family members or their home, 71% have made impulse purchases that they regretted in the past year for themselves, their child(ren), other family members or their home in past year.

The average spend among this group was \$728. Interestingly, men spent significantly more than women on impulse purchases that they later regretted for themselves, their child(ren), other family members or their home in past year (\$909 compared to \$553)

- 40% spent \$100 or less-women (47%) are significantly more likely to indicate this than men (32%)
 - 9% spent \$1-\$25
 - 13% spent \$26-\$50
 - Women (17%) are significantly more likely to indicate this than men (9%)
 - 18% spent \$51-\$100
- 20% spent \$101-\$300
- 40% spent \$301 or more
 - Men (48%) are significantly more likely to indicate this than women (32%)

Key Findings –Past Year Impulse Purchase Regrets

Among those who have made impulse purchases that they regretted in the past year for themselves, their child(ren), other family members or their home in past year...

- 47% bought clothing/shoes
 - Women (59%) are significantly more likely to say this than men (34%)
- 37% spent it on dining out
- 21% purchased toys for children
- 21% purchased technology products
 - Men (28%) are significantly more likely to say this than women (14%)
- 19% bought jewelry and/or other accessories
 - Women (23%) are significantly more likely to indicate this than men (16%)
- 18% spent it on decorative items for the home (e.g., knickknacks, art)
 - Women (23%) are significantly more likely to say this than men (12%)
- 16% spent it on hobbies or craft supplies (e.g., scrapbooking, card collecting)
 - Women (20%) are significantly more likely to indicate this than men (11%)
- 13% bought sporting goods (e.g., tennis racquets, golf clubs, skis, organized sports equipment)
 - Men (20%) are significantly more likely to say this than women (6%)
- 9% purchased collectibles
- 9% spent it on gym/workout equipment (e.g., bicycles, treadmills, memberships)
- 9% bought tools
 - Men (13%) are significantly more likely to indicate this than women (4%)
- 7% spent it on vacations
 - Men (9%) are significantly more likely to say this than women (5%)
- 4% purchased automobiles (recreational)
 - Men (7%) are significantly more likely to say this than women (2%)
- 16% made some other type of impulse purchase they regretted in the past year

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