

The contribution of Product and Consumer characteristics to Consumer's Impulse purchasing Behaviour in Singapore

*Alireza Chavosh^a, ** Anahita Bagherzad Halimi^b, Javad Namdar^c,
Sahar Hosseinikhah Choshalyd, Bagher Abbaspour^e

^{a,b,c} Faculty of Management, Multimedia University, Cyberjaya, Malaysia

^d Graduate School of Business, National University of Malaysia (UKM), Malaysia

^e Faculty of Management and Accounting, Islamic Azad University, Branch of Kangan, Iran

e-mail: * vidranas@gmail.com, ** chakameh.1983@gmail.com

Abstract-This study intends to evaluate the impact of product characteristics and consumer characteristics on Singaporean consumer's impulse purchasing behavior. Therefore, in order to conduct the study, a sample of 100 Singaporean customers has been collected randomly in 3 major shopping centres in Singapore. Meanwhile, the SPSS tool has been used to assess the relationship between the variables. Based on the chi square analysis results, there is a significant relationship between consumer characteristics (Gender, Age, Mood, Materialism, Shopping enjoyment, Impulse buying tendency) and Singaporean consumers' impulse purchasing behaviour except for the variable of materialism which has no significant relationship with Singaporean consumers' impulse purchasing behavior. Moreover, there is also a significant relationship between product characteristics and consumers' impulse purchasing behavior in Singapore.

Keywords: *Impulse purchasing Behavior; Consumer characteristics; Product characteristics*

I. INTRODUCTION

Several studies have been conducted regarding consumer decision making. Consumers make an effort to have sensible reasons when they intend to select one choice from a collection of options. [28]. Although sometimes consumers do not decide rationally when they want to do some purchases. This happens when there is no adequate information about the product and when there is no prior intention to buy [31]. Therefore impulse buying may happen. According to prior studies, Researchers have declared that vendors can make customers to be impulsive through some store incentives, promotions, product packaging, sales and other things [9]. Therefore, since both the person and product are involved in the buying procedure, this study intends to evaluate the contribution of product characteristics and consumer characteristics on consumers' impulse purchasing behaviour. In fact, the idea of impulse buying in marketing was first introduced by [7]. The concentration of previous studies was on presenting models which could measure the impulse buying behaviour. Therefore, various kinds of impulse buying were realized. Impulse purchasing is a fast pace decision and there is a short time between observing the product and buying it; therefore, On the basis of [17] study, impulse purchasing does not engage reflection and impulse buying takes place without great amount of evaluation. Based on [11, 12] and [25] study, impulse buying is defined as an unplanned purchasing. Meanwhile, [2, 29] described impulse buying

as a response to incentives. Moreover, [22] claimed that impulse buying is an intelligent purchasing. He declared that intelligent customers do not predetermine about their shopping. They generally grab special offers, for instance sales and promotions in order to get more advantage and optimize the value. During the last decades, impulse purchasing has also become easier through some innovations; for example, credit cards, home shopping networks And telemarketing [26]. Based on [24] study, there are five important phases which identify impulse buying behaviour from non-impulse buying behaviour. These phases include:

- 1- Sense of an unexpected and unplanned intention to take action. This phase refers to attracting customer's attention by incentives which are offered by sellers which encourage them to have desire to purchase.
- 2- Being in a status of psychological imbalance. This phase takes place while customer's fail their self-control for the time being.
- 3- Being in situation of psychological conflicts. During this phase, Psychological conflict takes place while consumers try to get their self-control back. Therefore, they assess the instant positive side of their shopping rather than unpleasant side of it.
- 4- Eliminating cognitive evaluation. This phase is referred to a situation in which the customer's rationality is damaged. It occurs while customer loses his/her rationality in conflict with sudden incentives and then starts to make a decision with lack of adequate thinking.
- 5- Consuming with no consideration about the consequences. This phase takes place when a customer desires to select a little but immediate reward rather than a great reward which needs more waiting [24, 26]

Meanwhile, [26] suggested that impulse buying takes place: "when a consumer experiences a sudden, often 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." According to [23] study, none of the definitions of impulse purchasing completely described this interesting and complicated phenomenon. Moreover impulse buying has still remained an enigma and there is a little understanding about the exact factors which influence the

impulse buying behavior since there are no adequate empirical and theoretical studies in this field of research.

II. IMPULSE PURCHASING

In the body of literature, [4] also addressed impulse purchasing as an immediate purchase with no prior intend or objective to buy the product. [29] Study enhanced the understandings about impulse buying to a great extent by identifying four category of impulse buying. He offered four different kind of impulse purchasing including:

- 1- Pure
- 2- Reminder
- 3- Suggestion
- 4- Planned impulse buying

The first category belongs to pure impulse buying which is a purchase that happen impulsively and does not follow a usual buying pattern” [29]. The second category belongs to Reminder impulse buying which happens when customer observes a product which reminds him/her that there is a requirement for that product. The third category belongs to Suggestion impulse buying which takes place when customer observes and notices a product for the first time with no preceding knowledge about it, then imagines a need for that. Therefore, customers preceding knowledge about the product make the Reminder impulse buying different from Suggestion impulse buying [29]. Meanwhile, the fourth category belongs to planned impulse buying which takes place when customers do not plan their shopping but they look for promotions and attempt to benefit from sales and promotions in order to enhance their purchasing power [22]. Although, all the four kinds of impulse buying are different in level of emotional aspects, they share a feature in common which is they are all the consequence of customer’s experience of some incentives [23]. Today still most research studies take advantage of [29] theory of impulse purchasing [4, 10& 26] According to related previous studies, there are many general factors that influence impulse purchasing behavior. These factors are presented in four general groups. Therefore, marketing and consumer behavior researchers consider these general factors when they want to evaluate consumer’s impulse purchasing behavior. These four groups are as follow:

- Product characteristics
- Consumer characteristics
- Situational factors
- store characteristics

Since both the person and product are involved in the buying procedure, this study intends to evaluate the contribution of product characteristics and consumer characteristics as independent variable on consumers’ impulse purchasing behaviour as dependent variable among the Singaporean consumers.

III. PRODUCT CHARACTERISTICS

Prior studies on impulse purchasing categorize products as impulse and non-impulse items. Many studies examined the frequency of impulse purchasing in different product class [2, 19&34] across different retail shops [7]. Nowadays, impulse purchasing behaviour is still discussed regarding different types of products which are or are not impulsive [1, 6& 10]. Therefore, accordingly, product characteristics can also influence consumer’s

impulsive buying behaviour [17] and Variables such as the appearance of products in the retail environment and some of the product features have been suggested to be effective on consumer impulse buying behavior [4]. According to [29], products which are purchased on impulse are generally inexpensive. Moreover, previous studies show that particular products are generally purchased impulsively based on their characteristics. According to prior studies, from one perspective, there are two types of product categories with different applications. The first category belongs to hedonic products which are mainly used for their hedonic advantages and the second category belongs to functional products which are mainly used for practical values. [5]. Based on previous studies, Impulse purchasing generally takes place in hedonic products which are not mostly supposed to accomplish practical needs [26] because Impulse purchasing happens while a customer is motivated by sudden and influential incentives to purchase a product. On the other hand, [24] realized that considering and putting emphasis only on the type of product presents a restricted perspective, in view of the fact that it is the persons, not the products, who experience the impulse purchasing. Moreover, [8] discussed that while focusing on the contribution of product characteristics, researchers have not paid enough attention to the impact of consumer characteristics on impulse purchasing behavior. Consequently, many researchers suggested that research studies in which products are categorized into impulsive and non-impulsive groups are too restricted in outlook and do not adequately consider the consumer. Therefore this study intends to evaluate the influence of both the product and consumer characteristics on impulse buying.

IV. CONSUMER CHARACTERISTICS

Consumer characteristics includes age, gender, mood, materialism, impulsive buying tendency and shopping enjoyment. Studies on the consumer characteristics and impulsiveness have indicated that younger shoppers do more impulse purchasing in compare to elder consumers [15, 27]. According to previous studies, age and impulse purchasing have a negative relationship with each other; it means that younger consumers have less self control over their purchasing behaviour rather than elder consumers [21]. This might be Because of the reason that younger customers illustrate more emotional reactions rather than elder customers, therefore they can hardly conquer their emotional feelings but elder customers mostly illustrate a better control over their emotional feelings [20]. Another consumer’s characteristic factor is Gender which also affects the consumers’ impulsiveness. Based on previous studies, Men and women do not have same preferences when they do shopping. Basically, Women select products which are associated with emotions and relationships and they mostly consider social identity while men generally pay for products with practical and instrumental application and they mostly consider personal identity when they do shopping [10]. Studies have indicated that the customer’s mood have also impact on the consumer’s impulse purchasing behaviour. Previous studies defined Positive feeling as affects and moods that extremely influence the consumer decision for shopping. Therefore, negative and positive moods

particularly negative moods influence the consumer's impulse purchasing behaviour. So impulse purchasing can help customers to change their mood from negative to positive [13]. According to [32] study, because of the reason that impulse buying happens with lack of purchase planning and since it is an emotional reaction from the customer, it mostly comes up with non-logical motives such as intending to change a mood, expressing identity or enjoying and having fun. When talking about impulsiveness, customers who consider value with a materialism outlook mostly prefer to avoid doing impulse buying. They mainly choose to collect money rather than spending it [30]. These customers do not usually get affected by impulse buying. Another consumer characteristic variable which influences the impulse purchasing is impulse buying tendency that is the extent to which customers are probable to do impulse buying [17]. Impulse buying tendency is also associated with a consumer's lifestyle [26]. [8] suggested that shopping life style and impulse buying behavior are highly associated but merely in the case of impulse purchasers. Consequently, Customers are different in impulse buying tendency. Therefore, customers with high amount of impulse buying tendency are more probable to have intention to purchase some types of products impulsively [17]. Moreover, Shopping is also considered as fun for some customers and they sometimes spend their spare times on shopping although they do not buy any product [3]. Therefore, as long as customers are shopping and enjoying their time, vendors may encourage them to stay longer at their shops and stimulate them to do impulse purchasing. Moreover, vendors may motivate the customers to purchase by some incentives such as promotions that lead to a higher amount of impulse purchasing [3]. Consequently, according to Psychological studies, "impulsiveness" is suggested to be a personality feature [14, 18 & 33].

V. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

To evaluate the impact of customer and product characteristics on consumers' impulse buying behaviour, secondary and primary data has been used. Meanwhile, primary data has been collected through a questionnaire which was properly designed based on previously conducted studies. The validity of the questionnaire has been double checked and confirmed by two professors of marketing and consumer behaviour. The reliability of the questionnaire is also affirmed as the cronbach's alpha for each variable was satisfying and the total cronbach's alpha was 0. 898. The questionnaire has been developed with three major sections. Each section contains some questions that evaluate the study model variables. Meanwhile, the questionnaire was distributed face to face between 100 customers in 3 major shopping centres in Singapore (Marina Square Shopping Mall, Suntec City Mall and Ngee Ann City). The sample includes 57percent female and 43 percent male and range of the participants age is between 20 and 50 years. The method of sampling is simple random sampling. Moreover, the secondary data has been collected through online data base such as ProQuest and Emerald.

VI. RESEARCH MODEL

To study and evaluate the impact of consumer's characteristics and product characteristics as independent variables on the impulse buying behaviour of Singaporean consumers, as dependent variable, the study takes advantage of the following study model to examine the relationship between variables.

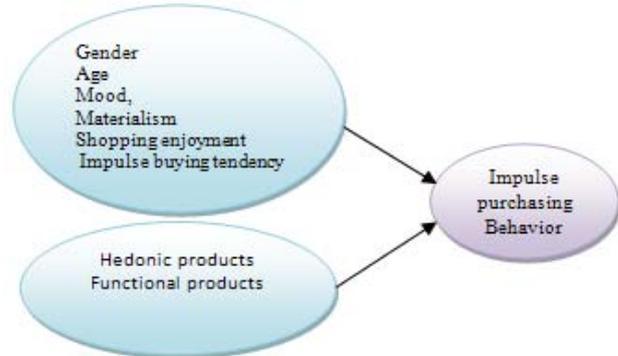


Figure 1. Study model

VII. DATA ANALYSIS

To conduct the study, SPSS tool has been used in order to examine the variable relationships. Therefore, each variable of consumer characteristics (Age, Gender, Mood and etc.) is categorized by groups. The table 1 shows each variable and the frequency of groups for each variable. Moreover, the relationship between consumer characteristics (gender, age, mood, materialism, shopping enjoyment, and impulse buying tendency), product characteristics (hedonic products and functional products, product price) with the consumer's impulse buying behaviour has been evaluated by Chi-square analysis. Finally, the result of the relationships is illustrated in table 2.

TABLE I. FREQUENCY TABLE

Variable	Frequency	Percent
Gender		
Male	43	43%
Female	57	57%
Age		
20-35	64	64%
36-50	36	36%
Mood		
Positive mood	78	78%
Negative mood	22	22%
Materialism		
High Materialism	63	63%
Low Materialism	37	37%
Shopping enjoyment		

Hedonic	54	54%
Utilitarian	46	46%
Impulse buying tendency		
High impulse buying tendency	55	55%
Low impulse buying tendency	45	45%

TABLE II. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CONSUMER AND PRODUCT CHARACTERISTICS AND IMPULSE PURCHASING BEHAVIOR

Variables	Asym. Sig	Significant/Not significant
Consumer characteristics		
Gender	0.016	Significant
Age	0.034	Significant
Mood	0.007	significant
Materialism	0.407	Not significant
Shopping enjoyment	0.048	significant
Impulse buying tendency	0.022	significant
Product characteristics		
Product characteristics	0.012	significant

VIII. CONCLUSION

Basically in this study, the results show that among the consumer's characteristics, Gender, Age, Mood, Shopping enjoyment and impulse buying tendency have impact on the consumer's impulse buying behaviour and the variable of materialism doesn't have any significant impact on the consumer's impulse buying behaviour among Singaporean consumers. Therefore, based on the table 2, the factor of gender has a significant relationship at (Asym. Sig 0.016), Moreover; impulse buying seems to be more popular among women rather than men. This is Perhaps due to the fact that women are usually more influenced by emotional desires rather than men. The factor of age has a significant relationship at (Asym. Sig 0.034). In this study, young consumers (age between 20-35) do more impulse buying rather than older consumers (age between 36-50). Regarding the variable of mood, there is a significant relationship at (Asym. Sig 0.007). The result illustrates that the customer's mood plays an important role in their impulse buying behavior. So, people with a negative mood are more likely to do impulse buying. Moreover, the variable of shopping enjoyment has also significant relationship at (Asym. Sig 0.048) and consumers who do shopping mostly for fun are more likely to do impulse buying. Moreover, impulse buying tendency is significant at (Asym. Sig 0.022). Therefore, people with high level of impulse buying tendency are more likely to buy impulsive rather than those with low level of impulse buying tendency. Finally,

the results show that there is no significant relationship between materialism and impulse buying behaviour in Singaporean customers as (Asym. Sig is 0.407). Regarding the product characteristics, based on the outcomes, there is a significant relationship between product characteristics and the consumer's impulse buying behaviour (Asym. Sig is 0.012). Consequently, the outcomes of this study also affirm most of the previous study's results; for example, based on [17] study, product characteristics can also influence consumer's impulsive buying behaviour. Meanwhile, the relationship between consumer characteristics and impulse buying behaviour in this study is also supported as other previous studies, for instance [15, 27, 10, 13& 17]. Surprisingly, in contrast with the preceding studies such as [30] study, the results shows that there is no significant relationship between the variable of materialism and impulse buying behaviour among Singaporean customers. Meanwhile, more study is required to generalize this result more effectively among Singaporean consumers.

IX. STUDY CONTRIBUTION

Nowadays, Retailers understand the significance of impulse buying phenomenon, and attempt to attract more customers through some incentives that get consumers to be impulsive in stores. While impulse buying generates a large amount of product sales every year [16], it is important for marketers and managers to plan more effective strategies to increase consumers' impulsive buying in order to make more profit. The main contribution of this study is to enhance the understanding of consumer impulse purchasing behaviour and to provide insights to aid marketers and managers to make better decisions and more successful plans in order to attract more customers and engage them in an impulsive behavior.

X. STUDY LIMITATIONS

Marketing studies has been always restricted by limitations. Paying attention to these limitations will improve the effectiveness of further studies and will highlight the challenges in directing marketing researches. In this study, cost and time limitations posed authors to collect primary data from three major shopping centres in Singapore which can restrict the generalizability of the study. Furthermore, in body of the literature, lack of sufficient studies regarding impulse buying behavior among Singaporean consumers is obviously observed and this created a limitation for authors in making comparative inferences.

REFERENCES

- [1] Assael, H. (1985), *Marketing Management: Strategy and Action*, Belmont, CA: Kent, pp. 127-135.
- [2] Applebaum, W. (1951), "Studying Consumer Behavior in Retail Stores", *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 16, October, pp. 172-178.
- [3] Bellenger, D. and Korgaonkar, P.K. (1980), "Profiling the Recreational Shopper," *Journal of Retailing*, 56:3, 77-92.
- [4] Beatty, S. E. and Ferrell M. E. (1998), "Impulsive Buying: Modeling Its Precursors", *Journal of Retailing*, Vol. 74 No. 2, pp. 169-191.

- [5] Babin, B.J., Darden, W.R., and Griffin, M. (1994), "Work and/or Fun: Measuring Hedonic and Utilitarian Shopping," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 20:4, 644-656.
- [6] Bellenger, D., Robertson D. H., and Hirschman E. C. (1978), "Impulse Buying Varies by Product", *Journal of Advertising Research*, Vol. 18, December, pp. 15-18.
- [7] Clover, V. T. (1950), "Relative Importance of Impulse Buying in Retail Stores", *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 25, July, pp. 66-70.
- [8] Cobb, C. J. and Hoyer W. D. (1986), "Planned Versus Impulse Purchase Behavior", *Journal of Retailing*, Vol. 62, Winter, pp. 67-81.
- [9] Dholakia, M (2000), Temptation and resistance: An integrated model of consumption impulse formation and enactment. Volume 17, Issue 11, pages 955-982,
- [10] Dittmar, H., Beattie, J., and Friese, S. (1996), "Objects Decision Considerations and self-image in men's and Women's impulse purchases", *Acta psychologica*, 93, pp. 187-206.
- [11] Davidson, W.R. (1966), *Retail Management*, The Ronald Press Co.: New York, NY.
- [12] Engel, J.F. and Blackwell, R.D. (1982), *Consumer Behavior*, Dryden Press: Hinsdale, IL.
- [13] Faber, R.J., and Christensen, G.A. (1996). In the mood to buy: Differences in the mood states experienced by compulsive buyers and other consumers. *Psychology & Marketing*, 13 (8), 803-819.
- [14] Goldenson, R.M. (1984), *Longman Dictionary of Psychology and Psychiatry*, New York: Longman.
- [15] Helmers, K. F., Young, S. N., & Pihl, R. O. (1995). Assessment of measures of impulsivity in healthy male volunteers. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 19(6), 927-935.
- [16] Hausman, A. (2000), "A multi-method investigation of consumer motivations in impulse buying behavior", *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, Vol.17 No.5, pp. 403-417.
- [17] Jones, Michael A., Kristy E. Reynolds, Seungoo Weun, and Sharon E. Beatty, 2003b. The product-specific nature of impulse buying tendency. *Journal of Business Research*, 56 (7), 505-11.
- [18] Kipnis, D. (1971), *Character Structure and Impulsiveness*, New York: Academic Press.
- [19] Katona, G. and Mueller E.(1955), *The Dynamics of Consumer Reactions*, New York: New York University Press, pp. 30- 88.
- [20] Lawton, M. P., Kleban, M. H., Rajagopal, D., & Dean, J. (1992). Dimensions of affective experience in three age groups. *Psychology and Aging*, 7, 171-184.
- [21] Logue, A. W., & Chavarro, A. (1992). Self-control and impulsiveness in preschool children. *Psychological Record*, 42, 189-204.
- [22] Nesbitt, S. (1959), "Today's Housewives Plan Menus as They Shop," Nesbitt Associates Release, 2-3.
- [23] Piron, F. (1991), "Defining Impulse Purchasing", *Advances in Consumer Research*, Vol. 18, pp. 509-514.
- [24] Rook, D. W. and Hoch S. J. (1985), "Consuming Impulses", *Advances in Consumer Research*, Vol. 12, eds. Morris B. Holbrook and Elizabeth C. Hirschman, provo, UT: Association for Consumer Research, pp. 23-27.
- [25] Runyon, K. E. (1977), *Consumer Behavior and the Practice of Marketing*, Charles E. Merrill Publishing Co., Columbus,OH.
- [26] Rook, D. W. (1987), "The Buying Impulse", *Journal of Consumer Research*, Vol.14, September, pp. 189-199.
- [27] Rawlings, D., Boldero, J., & Wiseman, F. (1995). The interaction of age with impulsiveness and venturesomeness in the prediction of adolescent sexual behavior. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 19(2), 117-120.
- [28] Shafir, E., Simonson, I., & Tversky, A. 1993. Reason-based choice. *Cognition*, 49, 2, 11-36.
- [29] Stern, H. (1962), "The Significance of Impulse Buying Today", *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 26, April, pp. 59-63.
- [30] Tatzel, M., (2003), "The Art of Buying: Coming to Terms with Money and Materialism, *Journal of Happiness Studies* Volume 4, Number 4, 405-435
- [31] Tversky, A. and Kahneman, D. (1981), "The Framing of Decisions and the Psychology of Choice," *Science*, 211, 453-458.
- [32] Verplanken, B., & Herabadi, A. (2001). Individual differences in impulse buying tendency: Feeling and no Thinking. *European Journal of personality*, 15, S71-S83.
- [33] Winshie, H. (1977), *The Impulsive Personality*, New York: Plenum Press.
- [34] West, J. C. (1951), "Results of Two Years of Study into Impulse Buying", *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 15, January, pp. 362- 363.