

Evaluation of the Influence of Fashion Involvement, Personality Characteristics, Tendency to Hedonic Consumption and Store Environment on Fashion-Oriented Impulse Buying

Hossein Vazifehdoost

Department of Business Management, Science and Research Branch,
Islamic Azad University, Tehran, Iran

Afshin Rahnama

Department of Business Management, Science and Research Branch,
Islamic Azad University, Tehran, Iran
Email: Afshin.rahnama@yahoo.com

Seyed Javad Mousavian

Department of Business Management, Rasht Branch,
Islamic Azad University, Rasht, Iran

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Abstract

The present research investigates the influence of involvement in fashion, personality characteristics, tendency to hedonic consumption and store environment on customers' fashion-based impulse buying. Statistical population of the present research included all fashion apparel purchasers in Ghazvin City, Iran. Questionnaire was used as data gathering instrument. Simple random sampling method was used to pick sample members with equal chance of being selected. In order to distribute questionnaires, three main arcades (Iranians arcade, Al-Ghadir arcade and Narvan arcade) were used as they were the main centers for buying fashion clothing in Ghazvin City. In each of the arcades, 100 people were selected randomly to distribute the questionnaires among them. 278 valid questionnaires were finally returned. Structural equations modeling method was used for testing research hypotheses. Investigation of research hypotheses revealed that involvement in fashion influences customers' impulsive purchase both directly and indirectly through inspiring positive feelings. Store environment and personality traits were found to have significant and direct influence on fashion-based impulse purchasing. Further, tendency to hedonic consumption had an indirect and positive influence on fashion-based impulse buying through inspiring positive feeling.

Keywords: impulse buying, involvement in fashion, store environment, personality traits, positive feeling, tendency to hedonic purchase

1. Introduction

One of the most challenging subjects in marketing and consumer behavior is consumer's selection and purchase behavior. There are many factors that affect purchase and make it complex. Important factors include individual factors, product-related factors and situational factors. All stores and buying centers across the world try to influence purchasers and convince customers to make purchase. They do so via environmental attractions, teaching employees, using new technologies and identifying personal behavior (HeidarZadeh and Taherkia, 2010). Development of commerce and societies which care about it has increased impulsive purchases. Few studies have been conducted on non-western countries on impulsive buying. This kind of behavior is observable in USA more than other countries and many studies have been conducted on this subject. However, none of the studies has investigated the influence of individual, environmental and fashion-based factors simultaneously on this kind of purchase. Impulse buying is an important phenomenon in the world and is considered as one of the main aspects of consumer behavior. Mogelonsky believes that in 1997, this kind of behavior accounts for 4.2 billion dollar of annual purchases only in USA. Smith (1996) and Abraham (1998) also concluded that this kind of purchase accounts for 80 percent of customers' purchases in a specific category of products. Mattila and Wirtz (2008) believed that 27% to 62% of stores purchases were impulsive or unplanned purchases. Furthermore, hausman (2000) showed that purchasers described 30 to 40 percent of their purchases as

impulsive. Considering research literature, it must be mentioned that if consumers make purchase when they need and completely logically, many products should be eliminated from producers portfolios and market economy should fail. This refers to the importance and role of impulsive purchases in consumption markets. Therefore, producers should identify factors which affect impulsive purchases and improve impulse purchases in order to increase their profitability. Further, academic studies have increased as a result of increase in such purchases in stores (Jones et al, 2003). The present research was conducted to investigate the influences of some factors on impulsive purchases. The main question of the present research is "how do individual, environmental and fashion-oriented factors influence impulsive purchases?". This question will be answered in the following sections.

2. Research Theoretical Background

Impulsive purchase and factors relating to it have a history about half a century. However, there is little information still on this subject. History of research on this field goes back to 1950s. at that time, researchers were concentrated on decisions made by individuals when they entered stores. Dupont Company conducted some studies on purchase habits over 1948-1956. It also referred to the role of impulse buying. Its studies introduced a new paradigm into business literature and their pivotal discussion was introduction of impulsive purchases into unplanned purchases category. Other studies were related to unplanned purchases and different product groups (Katona, 1955).

2.1 Definition of impulse buying

It refers to a sudden, complex, voluntary and impulsive purchase behavior. In this kind of purchase, high speed of decision-making prevents from reasonable and tactful investigation of all information and accessible choices. This behavior has more excitement and less exactness in comparison with pre-planned purchase and it can be hardly avoided (Mahmoudi, 2012). Since impulsive purchase behavior is made up of impulsive and unplanned purchases, emotional and cognitive forces which drive purchases are usually present at the time and place of purchase (Rook, 1987). Impulsive purchase is usually accompanied with strong emotional responses like strong need to purchase or feeling of excitement and pleasure feeling. Impulsive purchase satisfies hedonic motivations even in its false place (Sivera et al, 2008). Impulsive buyers consider hedonic issues in their purchases and their buying experiences are based upon strong motivational emotions like excitement and pleasure (Verplanken et al, 2005).

2.2 What is an impulsive purchase?

In marketing literature, impulse buying refers to unplanned purchases but impulse buying is beyond this definition. In fact, it is the experience of a tendency and eagerness for purchase. This eagerness is a sudden and severe feeling and usually tempting. Definition of impulse buying was concentrated on product rather than buyer before 1982. For instance, Stern (1962) classified impulse buying into three categories: planned purchases, unplanned purchases and impulse purchases. According to this classification, a planned purchase is one in which there is enough time and information for searching and decision-making (Hausman, 2000).

Later in 1982, researchers revised the definition of impulse buying and concentrated on behavioral dimensions of this kind of purchase. Cobb and Hoyer (1986), Piron (1991), Rook (1987), Rook and Fisher (1995), and Weinberg and Gottward (1982) agreed that an impulse buying is a behavior which is aimed to receive pleasure. For instance, Rook (1987) reported some impulse purchasers who thought some products called them to buy them. This emphasizes on the behavioral aspect of impulse buying and leads to the final definition of impulse buying:

Impulse buying takes place when a purchaser experiences a sudden, impulse, strong and usually steady motivation immediately for purchase. Impulse purchases are very complex in terms of pleasure they deliver to purchasers and may stimulate sentimental conflict. Further, impulse buying behavior is usually done without paying attention to outcomes of a purchase.

2.3 Environmental factors

Postrel (2003) concluded that purchase environments are becoming more and more beautiful in order to convince impulse purchasers-who look for experiencing pleasure-to buy products. Present purchase environments are fantastic environments which provide consumers with different types of amusements like music, theater and visual amusements. Therefore, store environment is designed in a way in which customers gain pleasure. Several researchers believe that

purchase can be a pleasing experience for a buyer (Abdolvand et al, 2011).

2.4 Fashion

Fashion-oriented impulse buying has a strong relationship with customers' level of involvement in fashion. In impulse buying literature, relationship between fashion involvement and impulse buying has been investigated by several researchers (Park et al, 2006; Tirmizi et al, 2009; and Phau& Lo, 2004). In fashion-oriented marketing, fashion refers to severe tendency and interest in luxurious and fashion products (for instance apparently). Fashion was first used to predict behavior of people in relation with stylish products (park et al, 2006). Han et al (1991) found that customers' involvement in fashion may increase customers' impulse purchases. If impulse purchases improve an individual's image from others' viewpoints for example by fashion clothes, purchasers may make sentimental rather than reasonable purchases (Phau&Lo, 2004). Park et al (2006) found a positive relationship between fashion, impulse buying and store environment. Ko (1993) concluded that environment affects impulse purchases positively.

2.5 Positive feeling

Perceived feeling is an important factor in making purchase decisions. Feeling is usually divided into positive and negative types (Watson and Tellengan, 1985).

Several studies reported improved morale and energy in buyers after purchase (Dittmar et al, 1996; Rook, 1987). A buyer's positive feeling can emerge by effective layout, a buyer's previous spiritual state and confrontation with environmental stimulants. Feelings are strong stimulants for impulse purchases (Rook and Gardner, 1993; Youn and Faber, 2000; Hausman, 2000; Beatty and Ferrel, 1998). Impulse buyers who have positive feelings after purchase tend to use simple processes for making purchase decisions (Isen, 1984). In comparison with negative feeling, an impulse buyer who has positive feeling after purchase make more impulse purchases due to higher energy, rewarding himself/herself and absence of evaluation of purchase (Rook and Gardner, 1993). Feeling can act like product quality and affect purchase value and satisfaction (Babin and Babin, 2001). Beatty and Ferrel (1998) found that positive feelings of purchasers have positive correlations with their motivation for purchase. This supports the result of the previous study-in which researchers concluded that an impulse customer is more sentimental than a customer who makes pre-planned purchases (Weinberg and Gottwald, 1982). Because impulsive purchasers show more positive feelings they spend more time in stores. Therefore, it can be concluded that positive feeling of a customer can be a determining factor in prediction of impulsive purchases.

Feeling is an important factor which affects impulsive buying (Gardner & Dennis, 1988). Positive and negative feelings are two distinguishable dimensions and we use them like positive and negative impulsive states. Positive feelings of an individual are affected by his/her effective temperaments, previous impulsive state and his/her responses to environment. Therefore, it is a complex mediating factor between an individual and situational variable (Beatty et al, 1987). Psychology literature suggests that when an individual is in good impulsive conditions, he or she has more interest in moving forward and doing action and has less interest in preventive and avoidant behavior. Studies have shown that positive feelings make individuals reward them generously and feel more freedom of action and behave in a way that brings positive states (Isen, 1984). Results of a study revealed that 85% of respondents impulsive state and positive feeling has more influence on tendency to impulsive purchase than a negative feeling. Respondents felt that in positive state they have higher levels of energy and tend to reward themselves. Further, results of another study showed that impulsive purchasers express more eagerness and enjoyment and enjoyment is positively related to tendency to purchase freely in a shopping center (Beatty et al, 1987).

2.6 Tendency to hedonic consumption

Hedonic consumption concerns those behavioral aspects which are related to multi-sense, imaginary and sentimental consumption which are influenced by benefits like enjoying having a product and attraction of haggling and arguing on a product price, which are two enjoying purchase-related experiences. This indicates that purchase experience may be more important than buying a product (Hirschman and Holbrook, 1982). Impulsive purchase plays an important role in satisfying hedonic desires. This role is indicative of a conceptual bond between hedonic purchase motivation and impulsive purchase behavior. In other words, consumers make impulsive purchases mostly when they have non-economic and hedonic reasons like entertainment, imagination and feelings. Since a purchase is intended to satisfy hedonic needs, bought products are selected without any former planning and this is indicative of an impulsive buying.

Fashion-oriented impulsive purchase behavior is stimulated by new fashion styles and brands (Goldsmith and Emmert, 1991). Consumers who are more willing to impulse buying are influenced more by marketing stimulants like advertisement, visual elements or promotional rewards and therefore get involved in searching stores and tend to respond positively to impulse buying temptation (Dawson & Kim, 2009). Impulsive purchase is related to different consumers' behaviors both inside and outside purchase environments. These behaviors include attraction to stores showwindows, stimulants in stores and inability to find a desired product (Dholakia, 2000).

2.7 Personality characteristics

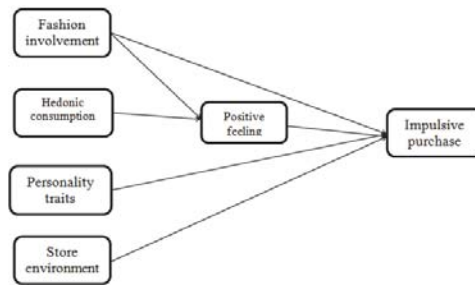
Studies show that personality traits can contribute to determination of the degree of tendency to impulsive purchase (Dawson & Kim, 2009). Individuals' tendencies to impulsive buying are different. Some people have more tendencies to impulsive purchase and some have less tendency. The first category makes purchase usually based on temptation and respond positively and quickly to their needs. In purchase environments, customers' impulsive purchase possibility depends on their tendencies to such purchases, ideas and norms. A customer's eagerness and excitement for purchase may be restricted and adjusted by his or her thoughts about being appropriate or inappropriate or being right or wrong in purchase (Rook & Fisher, 1987). Further, Beatty & Ferrell (1998) suggested that a person who has tendency to impulsive purchase experiences more excitements and such excitements are repeated (Park & Kim, 2008).

Table 1. Personality and environmental characteristics studied in relation to impulsive purchase background

Keywords	Researchers (publication date)
Outer innovation	Verplanken & Herabadi(2001) Phau & Lo (2004)
materialism	Kacen & Lee(2002) Troisti, Chritopher & Mark(2006)
Behavioral tendencies	Rook and Fisher(1995)
Tendency to impulsiv purchase	Omar & Kent (2001) Peck & Childers(2006)
Internal norm	Zhang, Prybutok, &Strutton(2007)
Nature of impulsive purchase	Michael, Kristy, Seungoo& Sharon(2003)
Hedonic consumption	Hausman(2000)
Spiritual-impulsive consumption	Weinberg & Gottwald (1982), Gardner & Rook (1988) Beatty and Ferrel (1998) and Park, Kim and Ferroni(2006)
Store environment	Youn& Faber(2000)
Product stimulator	Zhou & Wong(2003)
Advertisement stimulators and excitement	Mattila & Wirtz(2001)
Store stimulators environment	Anna S. Mattila&JochenWirtz(2008)
Environmental stimulator and social factors	
Impulsive purchasers involvement in	Kwon & Armstrong(2002)
Sports team things	Park, Kim and Ferroni(2006)
fashion	
Products grouping	Bellenger, Robertson & Hirschman(1978)
Clothing, shoe and stationary	Shamdasani& Rook(1989) Dittmar, Beattia&Friese(1995) Mai, Jung, Lantz & Loeb(2003)
Hedonic consumption	Park & Kim.(2008)
Emotional dimensions	Sivera et al.(2008) Dawson& Kim(2009)

3. Research Conceptual Model

The present research model is based upon (Park, et al., 2006; Abdolvandand, et al., Rahnama et al., 2012 & Jaeha, 2006) model.



4. Research methodology

The present research is aimed to investigate factors influencing on fashion-oriented impulsive buying. It is an applied research in terms of its goal. In terms of data collection method, it is a descriptive study. Furthermore, it is a correlation study in terms of data analysis method and analysis was conducted by means of structural equations modeling method.

4.1 Statistical sample and population

Statistical population of the present research included all buyers and users of fashion clothing in Ghazvin City in Iran. The following equation was used for sample size determination due to unlimited population size and presence of multi-valued variables:

$$n = \frac{Z_{\alpha/2}^2 \times P(1 - P)}{\epsilon^2}$$

Z is standard normal probability value, alpha is error level, P is success ratio and epsilon is exactness (Momeni, Fa'alGhayyoumi, 2007: 220). In the present research, certainty level is 95% and exactness was assumed 6%. Considering the fact that there was no estimation for success ratio, its value was assumed to be equal to 0.5 and sample size is maximized in this case.

$$n = \frac{(1.96)^2 \times 0.5 \times 0.5}{(0.06)^2} = 267$$

Three arcades called Iranians, Al-Ghadir and Narvan arcades which were the main centers for apparel distribution were selected for sampling and 100 people were selected from each arcade for distribution of questionnaires.

4.2 Data collection instrument

Questionnaire was used as a data collection instrument in this research. Five-point Likert scale was used as measurement scale of the items (=questions). In order to test reliability of the questionnaire, first we distributed 30 questionnaires among fashion clothing users in Ghazvin City in the form of a pretest. Cronbach's alpha was used for measurement of reliability and the results showed that alpha values were greater than 0.7 for all constructs and total questionnaire (Cronbach's alpha values of constructs and total questionnaire have been summarized in table 1). Additionally, the questionnaire was verified by experts and professors and therefore its validity was verified. Thus, the questionnaire had acceptable reliability and validity to be distributed among sample members.

Table 1: Cronbach's alpha coefficients

Research variables	questions	Calculated Cronbach's alpha
Involvement in fashion	1-3	0.72
Tendency to hedonic consumption	4-6	0.78
Store environment	8-11	0.76
Personality traits	12-17	0.82
Positive feeling	18-21	0.79
Fashion-oriented impulsive purchase	22-25	0.86

Considering the calculated sample size and because some questionnaires may not have been returned, 300 questionnaires were distributed. They were randomly distributed among population members and 278 acceptable questionnaires were returned and questionnaire return rate was about 92.6%. Table 2 presents demographic information of respondents.

Table 2: demographic features of the research

variable	dimensions	frequency	Frequency percentage
Gender	male	108	39
	female	170	61
Age	21-30	106	38
	31-40	99	32
	41-50	53	19
	51 and above	30	11
Education	High school	64	23
	Associate's degree	50	18
	Bachelor degree	117	42
	Master degree and above	47	17

5. Data Analysis and Hypotheses Tests

Since the research model measures relationships between several latent variables, we used structural equations modeling method for data analysis and hypotheses test. This method is a statistical modeling technique which includes other statistical methods like multivariate regression, factor analysis and path analysis and its main concentration is on latent variables which are defined based on measurable and clear variables. its main advantage is that it investigates relationships among variables simultaneously.

PLS method was used for testing the conceptual model of the research and it is variance path modeling technique and facilitates simultaneous investigation of the theory and measurements (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). Contrary to covariance-oriented methods, this method is applicable to small sample sizes and also cases in which variables distribution is not normal. Calculations concerning data analysis and testing the hypotheses were conducted by means of smart-pls software.

5.1 Outer model

In PLS models, two models are tested. Outer model is the equivalent of measurement model and inner model is similar to structural model in structural equations modeling technique. Inner model indicates factor loadings of the observed variables. In outer model, internal consistency or reliability of the model is measured by calculating composite reliability (PC). If we want all structures of the model to have high composite reliability, the calculated values of composite reliability coefficients should be greater than standard value (0.6) (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988). Composite reliability coefficients have been presented in table 3. As it can be seen, all coefficients are greater than 0.6 and therefore the model has a high internal consistency. In order to investigate convergent validity, Average Variance Extracted (AVE) index is used (Azar et al, 2012: 162). Convergent validity means that constructs set can explain their main variable. In a simpler definition, each index only measures its own construct and their combination should be in a way that all constructs are separated well from each other. Results of AVE index for variables have been summarized in table 3. Results showed that all constructs have AVE values greater than 0.5 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

Table 3: outer model of the research and AVE and P_c coefficients

Construct	Question	Factor Loading	Significance Number (t)	AVE	P _c
Involvement in fashion	q1	0.835468	20.36308	0.639922	0.84173
	q2	0.743583	11.90253		
	q3	0.817829	22.00661		
Tendency to	q4	0.847422	16.72754	0.744741	0.897429
	q5	0.85455	21.78133		
	q6	0.886477	25.50442		

Store environment	q7	0.784755	14.58663	0.543834	0.855806
	q8	0.668407	8.820982		
	q9	0.784383	12.99855		
	q10	0.752701	10.66762		
	q11	0.689019	10.08932		
Personality traits	q12	0.715107	10.73993	0.542326	0.876414
	q13	0.785764	16.45599		
	q14	0.736391	12.52632		
	q15	0.709384	9.259038		
	q16	0.684643	9.665143		
Positive feeling	q18	0.753412	15.34347	0.584497	0.849062
	q19	0.781404	14.52283		
	q20	0.772925	17.23035		
	q21	0.749901	10.65604		
Fashion-oriented impulsive purchase	q22	0.800902	22.02757	0.623675	0.868912
	q23	0.78246	10.81438		
	q24	0.792662	15.15424		
	q25	0.78275	13.25922		

As it can be seen in table 3, t values for all variables are greater than 1.96. Therefore, these indicators provide suitable factor loadings for measuring dimensions studied in the research model. Further, AVE values and Composite reliability coefficients are in their allowable limits.

5.2 Internal model

After testing the outer model, it is necessary to investigate the internal model which is indicative of relationships among latent variables of the research. Using internal model we can investigate research hypotheses. Tested conceptual model has been presented in figure 2. The numbers which have been written on the lines are in fact beta coefficients resulted from regression equation of variables which is the very path coefficient. The numbers written in circle indicate R² value of the model the predicting variables of which are inserted into that circle via an arrow.

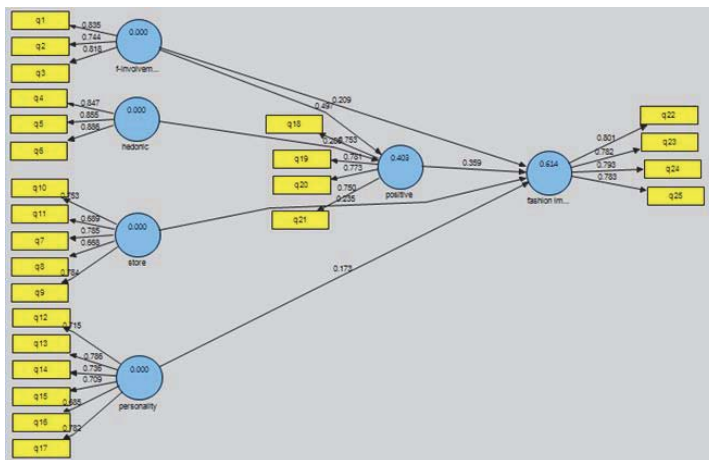


Figure 2: tested model of research in smart-pls software

Table 4 shows standard beta values and also significance numbers values for relationships among variables of the hypotheses.

Table 4: beta and significance values for internal model

Relationships among variables	Factor loadings	T value	conclusion
Fashion-oriented impulsive purchase---- involvement in fashion	0.209319	2.397428	verified
Positive feeling---- involvement in fashion	0.496706	6.364563	verified
Positive feeling ---- tendency to hedonic consumption	0.285713	3.246061	verified
Fashion-oriented impulsive purchase ---- Positive feeling	0.359446	3.661724	verified
Fashion-oriented impulsive purchase ---- store environment	0.23473	3.015278	verified
Fashion-oriented impulsive purchase ---- personality traits	0.173288	1.964127	verified

Because certainty level was assumed to be 0.95 for testing the hypotheses, all hypotheses the significance numbers of which are out of +1.96 and -1.96 range are verified. According to table 4, all hypotheses of the research are verified. In other words, fashion involvement, store environment and personality traits have positive influences on fashion-based impulsive purchase in fashion apparel purchasers in Ghazvin City. Furthermore, tendency to fashion-oriented consumption has positive influence on fashion-oriented impulsive purchase indirectly and via positive feelings. Involvement in fashion has both direct and indirect influence on fashion-oriented impulsive purchase. Furthermore, R² values indicate that in total, 61.4% of variations in impulsive purchase can be explained both directly and indirectly by involvement in fashion, store environment and personality traits, tendency to hedonic consumption and positive feeling. Additionally, 40.3% of variations in positive feeling mediating variable can be predicted by involvement in fashion and tendency to hedonic consumption.

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

All of us may face purchases for which we have not any pre-determined plan. In the present research, we investigated impacts of individual and environmental factors and involvement in fashion on fashion-based impulsive purchases. From applied viewpoint, results of the present research can be used by storekeepers and researchers. Our analyses revealed that involvement in fashion both directly and indirectly (through positive feeling) influences on impulsive buying and tendency to hedonic consumption influences indirectly (through positive feeling) on customers' impulsive purchases. Further, results showed that personality traits, store environment and positive feeling influence directly on impulsive purchase of customers. Considering the fact that fashion directs individuals' apparel purchase, storekeepers are advised to use fashion-consistent strategies to influence individuals' purchases. Storekeepers should pay attention to feelings of customers when they enter their stores because pleasant experiences of customers in stores can stimulate them and they may make impulsive purchases in such situations. Storekeepers should concentrate on entertaining, attracting and exciting customers as much as they emphasize on fashion products and fair prices. Storekeepers should strengthen positive feelings of consumers and their impulsive purchases through designing their stores, displaying their products, products packaging, designing stylish decoration, and ... Customers who spend a lot of time in a suitable store environment may also spend more money to make purchase from that store. Even customers who enter stores unwillingly tend to spend more time in stores which have calm and attractive environments. Results showed that customers who have high level of involvement in fashion and customers who are extrovert and innovative express more positive feelings and make more impulsive purchases. Therefore, storekeepers should attract such individuals using appropriate marketing and sales strategies and this requires more studies in this field. Later researchers are advised to develop model and support results using other variables which influence on impulsive buying of customers like enough time accessibility, social factors, access to money and ... The present research can be conducted on other products like cosmetics and personal accessories. Furthermore, the present research model can be applied to other populations and can be applied to other geographical areas in order to increase the generalizability of the results.

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