

Impulse buying emotional effects and subsequent future behaviour



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Impulsive purchasing involves getting a sudden urge to buy something, without advance intention or plan, and then acting on that impulse without carefully or thoroughly considering whether the purchase is consistent with one's long-range goals" (Baumeister 2002, pg. 670). An elaboration on this definition is that impulse buying does not include the consumption of an item not added to a shopping list, like a reminder item or simply an item that turns out to be out-of-stock at home (Beatty & Ferrel 1998).

Impulse buying leads to an experience with several implications. It is often linked with positive feelings and certain levels of excitement (e. g., Beatty & Farrell 1998; Rook & Gardner 1993). However, Rook (1987) mentioned in his studies that impulse purchasing also can be associated with negative effects such as regret and guilt. Taking together, people can experience different emotions that can lead to positive as well as negative effects. Emotional aspects that are experienced by consumers after a purchase is made, occurs in almost all consuming situations differentiating from a high degree of emotional effects to a lower degree (Holbrook 1986). But, how are these emotions you feel, after making an impulsive purchase, associated with the future behaviour?

While much research has been done on giving in to the impulse and on losing the internal struggle (Vohs & Faber 2007), information on the effects after an impulse purchase and its relations to post consumption behavior is rather scarce. Beatty and Ferrel (1998) also mentioned in their studies that more research needs to be done on how the reactions to the buying experience affect consumers' perceptions as well as future behaviour.

Satisfaction or dissatisfaction may not be sufficient for defining future

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behaviours (Soscia 2007). For this reason, this research will provide more in depth information on the different emotions, like gratitude, happiness, guilt and anger. This way, a clear association can be made between emotions experienced after an impulse purchase and subsequent future behaviour. Thus, the purpose of this research is to find out what impulse purchasing is and how consumer get to this point. Furthermore, it will be of relevance to examine what emotions the consumer will feel after an impulse purchase. Also, whether these emotions will change the perception on a specific product or action and what implications these feelings and perceptions have on future behaviour.

1. 2 – Problem statement

In which way are the emotional effects of impulse buying on consumers related to future behaviour?

1. 3 – Research questions

What is impulse buying?

What are the emotional effects of impulse buying?

What different behaviours do customers show after a purchase?

To what extent is future behaviour influenced by the emotional effects of impulse buying?

1. 4 – Conceptual model

Impulse buying

Emotional effect

Future behaviour

1.5 – Academic Relevance

Much has been written on the subject of impulse buying. Unfortunately, most literature focuses on what occurs before an impulse purchase is made. Thus, the factors that are of influence on the likelihood of buying impulsively. As Beatty and Ferrel (1998, pg. 170) mentioned in their studies " Most of the research on impulse buying has focused on the individual and situational aspects affecting impulse buying". This has been the case for many years now as Westbrook (1987) also mentioned in his studies a couple of years ago that most attention in current and past studies has been on the prepurchase processes consumers go through. It is thus of academic relevance to collect information about the other side of impulse buying. Namely, the emotional effects it has on consumers after making an impulse purchase. Although much research has been done on emotions, emotion scholars have examined many different aspects of emotions without really focusing on any specific one (Richins 1997).

This research will focus on consumption emotions which do not necessarily have to be related with emotions experienced in other contexts. It is necessary to focus on these particular emotions to be able to form a better understanding of consumer behavior in the future. Relatively little research has been done on the effect of emotional experience on consumption behavior (Haylena & Holbrook 1986). In order to make this research useful, and to determine how the emotional effects of impulse buying are related to future behaviour, it is crucial to make viable associations based on the

readily available literature. Finally, the collected information will be interlinked to come to new insights.

1.6 – Managerial Relevance

The interest of this thesis will be helpful for marketing practices since it is relevant for marketers to understand the emotional experience consumers go through when buying their products. Not only before and during, but also after the purchase. Negative experiences need to be avoided, but in order to do this more information needs to be collected on what causes these feelings. To create a positive impulse buying experience, consumers' cognitive beliefs and evaluations about impulse buying need to lead to feelings of pleasure (Miao 2010). This can be of influence on repetitive behaviour of buying specific products.

Post-consumption behaviour are particularly interesting for marketing strategies, because such behaviour plays a vital role in the achievements of a company. For example, gratitude could lead to post-purchase phenomena such as repurchase behavior or positive word of mouth. This in turn could lead to opportunities to attract new customers and retain already existing ones, which consequently increases sales and profits. Thus, finding out why customers take on a particular post-consumption behaviour is crucial for marketers (Richins 1987). Strategies that focus on the positive outcome of impulse purchasing over the negative outcome of failure to self-control could also be relevant. The outcomes of this thesis are intended to contribute to the development of these strategies. Thus, better retailer and product manufacturer strategies will hopefully be determined to stimulate impulsive buying.

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1. 7 – Overview of the rest of the chapters

In chapter two research question 1 will be answered. The goal of this chapter is to fully understand what impulse purchasing is. This way, a clear foundation for the rest of the chapters will be set.

Chapter three will deal with the emotional effects of impulse buying on consumers. Thus research question 2 will be answered. Important in this chapter is to find out what role emotions play in consumer behaviour. This way a clear understanding can be set which will help in understanding the role of emotions in impulse buying. Specifically what emotional states or emotional effect impulse buying causes. In order to get to this answer, the anticipation of emotions will also be discussed as this may be interlinked.

In chapter four research question 3 and 4 will be addressed. The answers to these questions will determine what different behaviours customers show after making a purchase and how the emotional effects discussed in the previous chapter can be interlinked with these different behaviors. The findings of these questions in combination with the previous chapters will help determine what the influences are on future behaviour.

Finally, chapter five will include the conclusion, the discussion, recommendations, and limitations of the research. These sections will be set up by means of the previous chapters.

Chapter 2: Impulse buying

2. 1 – Introduction

Impulse buying is a widespread subject part of the consumer lifestyle. For this reason, this particular behaviour has received a lot of interest in the field of consumer research and many marketing practices have put a lot of emphasis on this phenomenon (Rook 1987). However, for some reason impulse buying has remained somewhat a riddle. Relatively little is known about the different variables that determine the internal mechanism for driving consumers into this behaviour (Herabadi 2003). The reason behind this relative small size of research in the field of impulse buying is partially caused by the difficulties encountered during these studies. Moreover, past research has not fully focused on the complete understanding of earlier findings on impulsive purchasing (e. g. Beatty & Ferrel 1998). This chapter will help in understanding the definition of impulse buying which will be done by defining the most important aspects of this behaviour.

2. 2 – Definition

Impulse buying has been defined as unplanned purchasing in early marketing research (Cobb & Hoyer 1986). However, Rook & Hoch (1985) criticized this as impulse buying is more than unplanned, since it entails feelings of a sudden urge to buy. This sudden impulse was also defined by them as being very strong and irresistible. Rook (1987, p. 191) defined impulse purchasing as when “ a consumer experiences a sudden, often powerful and persistent urge to buy something immediately”. Beatty & Ferrell (1998, p. 170) expanded this definition: “ Impulse buying is a sudden and immediate purchase with no pre-shopping intentions either to buy the

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specific product category or to fulfill a specific buying task. The behaviour occurs after experiencing an urge to buy and it tends to be spontaneous and without a lot of reflection (i. e., it is “ impulsive”). It does not include the purchase of a simple reminder item, which is an item that is simply out-of-stock at home”. This definition shows that impulse buying is much more specific than unplanned purchasing. Also, more narrow and explicit factors are included in this definition which are not defined in unplanned purchasing. A clear distinction will be the sudden urge customers experience during impulsive buying which is not involved in unplanned buying (Beatty & Ferrell 1998). Rook (1987) pointed out in his research that impulsive purchasing certainly includes a sudden urge to buy. One of his respondents states:

“ There is no stopping me. The urge just comes over me all at once and seems to take control. It is such an over-whelming feeling that I just have to go along with it. (male-52)”.

2. 3 – Types and Patterns

Weinberg & Gottwald (1982) identified three different types of impulse purchasing: the affective (high activation of the consumer), cognitive (little intellectual control of the buying decision) and reactive (largely automatic behavior actuated by a special stimulus situation). This distinction is important because it shows how different the purchasing situations can be. The common denominator in the three types is that rational thinking is either subdued or temporarily absent in the whole.

Different studies on impulse purchasing found similar patterns in this behaviour. These involve feelings of excitement or pleasure; unprompted

and immediate urges to buy; losing of self-control in such a way that all other deliberations are outweighed; and finally the disparagement of possible detrimental outcomes, which might lead to feelings of regret or guilt (e. g., Dittmar & Drury 2000; Rook 1987; Statt 1997; Wood 1998).

2. 4 – Characteristics

Impulse buying is characterized by several aspects. Some of the most important aspects will be mentioned briefly. First, personality profiles is key when discussing impulse behaviour. This, because personality traits such as: lack in planning, being unreflective in your considerations; and the urge to experience and explore new things are related to consumers that experience themselves more often in impulsive behavior (Herabadi 2003). Second, emotions are also an important aspect of impulse buying according to Herabadi (2003). Since impulse buying relates to the emotions and feelings a customer experiences with the purchase, it can be notified that impulse behaviour could be related to an emotional consumption experience. Third, we have demographic aspects of impulse buying. Factors such as gender, education, age and economic-status are important to consider. For example, previous research found an increase in impulse buying among consumers in their 20's, but after reaching the mid-30's a decline occurred (Bellenger et al, 1978; Wood, 1998). In addition, Wood (1998) found that female consumers show a higher tendency in impulse behavior than men, although it has to be mentioned that the difference has not always been significant. Finally, self-regulatory resource levels, available time and money and the mood that the consumer is in at the moment of purchase are also factors that are of influence on impulsive buying behaviour.

2.5 – Conclusion

Impulse buying is a broad subject which has been studied for many years now. As mentioned in this chapter, different definitions are assigned to this behaviour and still many differences in these definitions can be found. It can be concluded that impulse buying has not much to do with 'rational' types of consumer behaviour. This, because impulse purchasing is experienced by consumers without much consideration or self-control. It is more an automatic behaviour which cannot be compared to different types of consumer behaviour that do belong in a rational decision-making model. As Langer (1989) mentioned in his studies, impulse buying can be defined as 'mindless'.

Chapter 3: Emotions

3.1 – Introduction

"It is a state of conscious feeling, typically characterized by physiological changes such as arousal" (Baumeister, Vohs, DeWall & Zhang 2007, pg. 168).

Much attention has been placed on the subject of emotions in consumer behaviour. The consumption experience has therefore led to a very popular topic for many researchers (Havlena & Holbrook, 1986). Besides the functional sides of shopping, there are also emotional aspects attached to shopping. As Hirschman & Holbrook (1982) mentioned in their studies, it can be experienced as fun, relaxing, or exciting. Thus, people may find it enjoyable and not only shop out of necessity. The emotional aspects in impulse purchasing are therefore very important, since emotions play a

dominant role in this behaviour. Actually, emotions are the core of impulsive buying behaviour, since the urges customers experience during such a purchase are driven by emotions and subsequently lead to particular feelings and moods that can change throughout the consumption experience (Herabadi 2003). Herabadi (2003) also mentions in her study that a purchase can only be qualified as impulse buying when the elements of emotional responses are present. These elements are able to occur beforehand, simultaneously with, or after an impulse purchase.

3. 2 – Emotions in consumer behaviour

The traditional view of consumer behaviour indicates that consumers try to maximize their utility through the use of tangible resources. However, for the past years researchers criticized this view and extended this insight by incorporating the emotional side of consumption experiences (Holbrook & Hirschman 1982; Zajonc & Markus 1982; Holbrook 1986). Derbaix & Pham (1991) mentioned in their research that this is indeed the case, customers are seeking for emotional advantages over the benefits of tangible resources.

On top of that, different studies state that consumer behaviour involves a significant part of emotional factors. Actually a consensus is formed that emotions are key in consumer behaviour as recent developments in research indicate that emotion in all probability play a crucial role in the decision-making process of consumption behaviour. Thus, it must be recognized that people not only follow their rational thinking, but they are influenced by emotional concerns as well (Batra 1986). Shaping a consumer's will to go shopping for example or shaping a consumer's predilection for a certain <https://assignbuster.com/impulse-buying-emotional-effects-and-subsequent-future-behaviour/>

brand or product involves the central role of emotions. Basically, consumption behaviour – from in-store behaviour to prior and post shopping behaviour – are interlinked with the emotions a consumer experiences (Herabadi 2003). The experiential view of consumption as Holbrook and Hirschman (1982) point out in their studies should be typified by deep emotional effects – such as fear, joy, guilt, excitement, happiness, etcetera – rather than plainly satisfied or dissatisfied emotions (e. g. like-dislike).

3. 3 – Influence on behaviour

Who does not recognize feelings of guilt, joy, pride and so on? For many people, living without emotions would be out of question. On the other hand, emotions also cause people to act in mindless or stupid ways leading to undesirable behaviours which may be regretted later on in time (Baumeister, Vohs, DeWall & Zhang 2007). How is behaviour influenced by emotion? Does emotion have a causal influence on behaviour? A very improvident theory is one in which emotion is directly related to behaviour, in other words emotion directly causes behaviour. Many theories on emotions indicate that emotion directly causes behaviour. As Russell (2003) described in his research “ Everyone knows that fear brings flight and anger brings fight” (p. 161). This means that behavioural acts are a direct result of a person’s emotional state. Loewenstein, Weber, Hsee, and Welch (2001) also support this view as they state “ The idea that emotions exert a direct and powerful influence on behavior receives ample support in the psychological literature on emotions” (p. 272). It is expected that emotional variables are interlinked with the clarification and the prediction of postpurchase consumer behaviour (Westbrook 1987). The postpurchase behaviors he describes include

complaint actions aimed at sellers, word-of-mouth exposure, repurchase behaviour and behaviour which leads to disposition.

But, instead of this direct relationship Baumeister et al. (2007) declare a view of emotion in the framework of a feedback system. With this is meant that generally speaking emotion does not have a direct link to act as a cause for a particular behaviour. Instead, emotional expression demonstrate feeling states.

Emotions could be experienced without evident behavioural consequences (Baumeister et al. 2007). An extreme example would be one in which people are experiencing different emotional states during a movie without resulting in any visible behavioural consequence. This while, movies and other media induce a wide range of emotions such as fear, joy, sadness and happiness.

Thus, emotions would be an effect, and not a cause. For this reason, emotions would fit in the view in which they carry the role of a feedback system over one in which it is directly causing a particular behaviour.

Or say an impulse purchase results in emotions of guilt. These emotions of guilt will prompt a consumer to think of what he/she did to assess the decision making process and probably to form conclusions about how a better or different emotional outcome (without guilt) could be formed. These conclusions are stored in memory including the guilt and the regretted action and lead to a change in future behaviour (Baumeister et al. 2007). Again, this example shows that much behavioural acts are emotional adjustments, as these try to form desired emotional feelings later on. Thus emotion

provides feedback on your behaviour. Positive emotions approve a person's
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behaviour, since it turned out well or at least it led to positive emotions. The opposite holds for negative emotions (Baumeister et al. 2007). Future behaviour will be influenced because the next time one is in a similar situation to behave in the same way, the person will be warned by its memories not to make the same mistake (Baumeister et al. 2007). Here again, emotion acts as a feedback system as it stimulates cognitive processing and not behaviour. However, the output of emotion-directed cognitive processing will have an influence on future behaviour (Baumeister et al. 2007).

Next to that, Isen (1984; 1987) notified that it is hardly possible to interlink emotion directly to causing behaviour. This, because he states that people try to put effort in changing emotions which leads to a behaviour. Thus, people are hesitant to find themselves in unpleasant states which subsequently leads to an urge to modify these states, and the behaviour that leads out of this originates from emotion regulation instead of the emotions itself. Manucia et al. (1984) confirm this as they found in their studies that behaviour emulates emotional outcomes. An example she gave in her research is one in which people felt sad. In order to feel better, these people started helping. Thus, emotion was not directly causing behaviour, but behaviour was pursuing emotional outcomes since helping was done to overcome sadness. If it would not overcome sadness, people would not be helping.

3.4 – Anticipation of emotions

In Rook's research (1987) impulse buying has shown to lead to possible emotions of regret. Anticipations of emotions might be the cause of this, <https://assignbuster.com/impulse-buying-emotional-effects-and-subsequent-future-behaviour/>

since many impulsive customers may not have experienced anticipated regret before acting impulsively (Herabadi 2003). Other emotions such as gratitude, guilt, joy and pride could also be anticipated. Herabadi (2003) also indicates that impulsive behaviour might outweigh anticipated emotions because of other considerations like self-image concerns. Subsequently, consumers will have more courage to take risks in the purchase, which leads toward impulse buying.

3. 5 – Emotional states aroused by an impulse purchase

3. 6 – Conclusion