

IMPULSIVE BUYING BEHAVIOUR OF APPAREL MERCHANDISE AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN SOUTHERN GAUTENG

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An impulse purchase often occurs without consideration of the potential consequences, which may include non-usage of a product. When consumers establish that they have an inner contradiction between their values or opinions and their behaviour, unease or apprehension may lead to cognitive dissonance (after-purchase doubt or post-purchase reservations). Consumers often use shopping experiences and resulting impulse buying behaviour to satisfy a number of needs that do not fit into theories of economic utility. The primary purpose of this study is to identify the motivations behind the behaviour leading to impulsive buying of apparel merchandise among university students. A structured questionnaire containing 25 variables relating to impulsive buying behaviour was administered to three hundred and eighty-five students. Factor analysis produced four factors, namely, fashion involvement, hedonic motivation, emotional gratification and affect that influence impulsive buying behaviour with regard to buying apparel merchandise. Results show that male and female students differ with regard to the hedonic motivation and emotional gratification dimensions of impulsive buying tendencies. This study may assist marketers and retailers to understand impulsive buying behaviour in order to formulate appropriate marketing communication strategies and allocate marketing budgets.

Key words and phrases: impulsive buying behaviour, fashion involvement, emotions, hedonic motivation

1 INTRODUCTION

Impulsive buying behaviour is an enigma in the marketing world. This type of behaviour is normatively inappropriate, yet it accounts for a substantial volume of goods sold every year across a broad range of product categories (Rook & Fisher 1995:305). Impulsive buying behaviour is an act of making an unplanned or spontaneous purchase without any intention having been formed before entering a store (George & Yaoyuneyong 2010:294). It is hedonic in nature, made suddenly,

and lacks planning and deliberation resulting in feelings of pleasure, excitement, compulsion, lack of control at the time, and probable regret later in having in made the purchases (Lee & Yi 2008:68; Pentecost & Andrews 2010:48). Baumgartner (2002:287) defines impulsive buying as *“hedonic purchase associated with feelings and psychosocial motivations rather than contemplation about functional benefits of a product”*. Verplanken and Herabadi (2001:72) describe impulse buying as *“a self-regulatory mechanism aimed at reducing negative feelings, especially when these feelings have a basis such as a failure to live up to valued standards or low self-esteem”*.

In addition, the growth of e-commerce and new technologies such as television and on-shopping channels has expanded the incidence of impulsive buying by increasing the accessibility to products and services and the ease with which purchases can be done. Baumeister (2000:670) and Kacen and Lee (2002:163) have asserted that people choose to sacrifice self-control and allow themselves to make impulsive purchases if they think such purchases might make them feel better.

2 THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE OF IMPULSIVE BUYING

Several theoretical perspectives have been assembled to account for the impulsive buying phenomenon. Firstly, impulse buying resembles the situations in which there is immediate **gratification** by buying a product (Sweeney & Soutar 2001:204). In their study, the authors found that the majority of consumers who were given a choice between a small but immediate gratification and a bigger but delayed one, chose the gratification that was immediate. The study reveals that impulse buying shares some characteristics with the tendency toward immediate gratification.

A second aspect affecting the phenomenon of impulse buying is that of **self-regulation** (Faber & Vohs 2004:510), which assumes the consumer to be in conflict between the force of impulse and a counterforce called willpower. Although the operation of impulse does not require a particular energy, willpower does. The source of this energy may eventually be depleted. Hence, consumers are often impelled with an irresistible urge to buy and often go on frequent shopping trips and accumulate quantities of unnecessary and unwanted products (Ergin 2010:333). Their primary motivation appears to be the psychological benefits derived from the

buying process rather than the benefits derived from the possession of the purchased product.

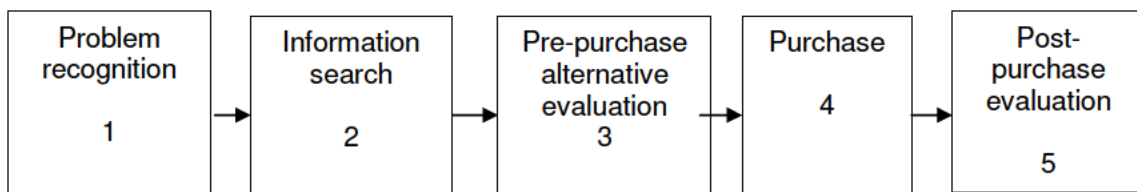
Finally, impulse buying may be attached to the notion of a **motivational orientation** that implies the compatibility between valence and behavioural tendencies of approach and avoidance (Zeithaml & Bitner 1996:527). Specifically, stimuli that possess a positive valence facilitate behaviours of approach and a stimulus that possesses a negative valence facilitates a behaviour of avoidance. Positive feelings generally lead to approach behaviours, while avoidance is associated with experiences of negative feelings (Hu & Jasper 2006:31; Ezeh & Harris 2007:68). Approach behaviour involves such responses as physically moving toward a facility or affiliating with others in an environment (Skandrani, Mouelhi & Malek 2011:54). Avoidance behaviour produces contrary results in an attempt by the consumer to move away from the environment and a tendency to remain non-responsive to the environment.

The process of impulsive buying differs from the traditional consumer buying process. Both buying processes are discussed in the sections which follow in order to illustrate variations in the buying processes.

2.1 THE CONSUMER BUYING PROCESS

The traditional decision-making process consists of a sequence of five steps as illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Steps of the decision-making process (Source: Kotler 2000:179)



2.1.1 Problem Recognition

Problem or need recognition is the first step of the consumer decision-making process and occurs when an individual realises a difference between what a consumer perceives to be ideal or a desired state of affairs (the situation the

consumer wants to be in) compared with the actual state of affairs (the consumer's current position) at a point in time.

2.1.2 Search for Problem-Solving Information

The second step in the consumer decision-making process is searching for problem-solving information. Once need recognition has occurred, the consumer may then engage in a search for potential need satisfiers.

2.1.3 Alternative Evaluation

Alternative evaluation is the third step in the consumer decision-making process, which can be defined as a process by which alternatives are evaluated and selected to meet consumer needs.

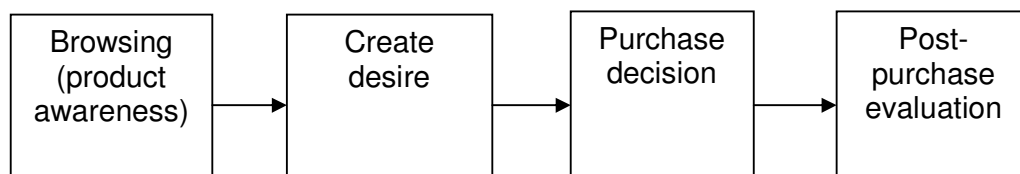
2.1.4 Purchase

Once an alternative is chosen and a final decision has to be made, the consumer then moves to the purchase phase – where the consumer attempts to put the thoughts into action. There are certain concerns which the consumer has to address in executing a purchasing action, such as whether or not to buy, when to buy, what to buy, where to buy and how to pay. It is at this stage that a consumer makes a purchase.

2.1.5 Post-Purchase Evaluation

The post-purchase evaluation is the last step in the consumer decision-making process, which involves the way in which a consumer evaluates or consumes a product after making a purchase. The model of decision-making process as illustrated in Figure 1 does not lend itself to explaining the decision-making process of an impulse buyer. Considering the nature of impulse buying, which occurs in a short period of time without prior plans, Churchill and Peter (1998:143) suggested a model (Figure 2) that describes the impulsive buying process.

Figure 2: Impulse buying processes (Source: Churchill and Peter 1998:143)



This model omits some of the steps from the routine consumer decision-making process such as need recognition, information search, and alternative evaluations, by reclassifying influencing factors. The model commences with product awareness. Impulse buyers begin browsing without an intention to purchase a certain item or by visiting a certain store. As consumers browse, they are exposed to stimuli which trigger their urge to buy. When impulse buyers feel the desire to buy, they make a purchase decision without searching for information or evaluating alternatives.

2.2 Impulse-Buying Process

On examining the impulse-buying process advocated by Churchill and Peter (1998:143), it is evident that various factors influence the buying behaviour in an impulse-buying situation. The pertinent factors that are commonly reported in the literature that influence impulsive buying are discussed.

2.2.1 Situational Factors

According to Belk (1975:158) situational factors refer to *“all those factors particular to a particular time and place of observation which do not follow from knowledge of personal and stimulus attributes which have a demonstrable and systematic effect on current behavior”*. Situational factors include physical surroundings (decor, sounds, aroma, lighting and visible configurations of merchandise), social surroundings (the presence of other persons), task definition (the need to shop) and antecedent states of the consumer (momentary moods or conditions of buying such as anxiety, pleasantness or cash on hand).

2.2.2 Hedonic Factors

Hedonic factors include those behavioural aspects related to multi-sensory, fantasy, and emotional consumption, which are driven by benefits such as fun, pleasure and excitement in using the product (George & Yaoyuneyong 2010:294). The shopping experiences of impulse buyers tend to be driven by high-arousal emotions such as excitement and leisure (Verplanken, Herabadi, Perry & Silvera 2005:429). In hedonic consumption, different types of emotional feelings, which are psychological by nature, play major roles. Hedonic consumption often takes place in a high-

involvement situation, where an individual is deeply involved in a consumption event (Sarkar 2011:60).

Although previous research indicates that there is an element of fun involved in impulse buying, there is also evidence suggesting that impulse buying serves the function of alleviating unpleasant psychological states. For example, Mick and Demoss (1990:322) revealed that people sometimes reward themselves with “self-gifts” as a means of elevating a negative mood. Hence, hedonic shopping behaviour encompasses recreational, pleasurable, intrinsic and stimulation-oriented motivations. The hedonic value in shopping for apparel is often induced by arousal, heightened involvement and escapism (Neda & Kambiz 2011:7451). Consumers are more likely to engage in impulse buying when they are motivated by hedonic desires or by non-economic reasons, such as fun, fantasy, and social or emotional gratification. Since the shopping experience goal is to satisfy hedonic needs, products purchased during these shopping trips appear to be made without prior planning, thus representing an impulse-buying outcome.

In addition, fashion-oriented impulse-buying behaviour is motivated by new versions of fashion styles and ways through which consumers express their identity, which drives consumers to hedonic shopping experiences (Rathnayake 2011:121). Research has shown that emotional support needs may also be satisfied by the social interaction inherent in the shopping experience (Thompson, Locander & Pollio 1990:346). For example, Cobb and Hoyer (1986:385) reported that consumers feel uplifted or energised after shopping experiences. These sources appear to offer conceptual support for a link between hedonic shopping motives and impulse-buying behaviour.

2.2.3 Affect

The affective dimension reflects an irresistible urge to buy, which is driven by positive buying emotions and mood management (Youn 2000:25). Affect or mood has been identified as a variable that influences impulse purchases whereby the act of buying may temporarily elevate the mood and self-esteem (Johnson & Attmann, 2009:394). As the emotionally irresistible desire to buy competes and takes over the cognitive control of willpower, impulse buying takes place (Youn & Faber 2000:180).

As impulse-buying behaviour consists of unplanned and sudden purchases with a powerful urge to buy, the cognitive and affective forces takes over and guide the time and place of purchase (Rook 1987:191).

3 PROBLEM STATEMENT

An impulse purchase often occurs without consideration of the potential consequences, which may include non-usage of the product (Beatty & Ferrell 1998:170). In instances when consumers establish that they have an inner contradiction between their values or opinions and their behaviours, unease or apprehension may lead to cognitive dissonance (after-purchase doubt or post-purchase reservations) (Lamb, Hair, McDaniel, Boshoff & Terblance 2008:72). These consumers may later find that the brand or the product is not "*good enough*" and refrain from using it (Phillip & Swinder 2002:188). Besides the unfortunate economic consequences of such behaviour, these wasteful purchases may often be associated with consumer feelings of remorse, anger and guilt.

4 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to identify the motivations behind impulsive buying of apparel merchandise products among university students within a South African context. The secondary purpose was to then use the identified factors to examine gender differences with regard to impulsive buying.

5 METHODOLOGY

A quantitative approach was used. A fully structured questionnaire through personal interviews was utilised. The steps in the design of the empirical study are elucidated in the sections that follow.

5.1 Population and Sampling

The population comprised students from two universities located in Southern Gauteng. The sample was randomly selected and the questionnaire was distributed amongst a sample of 400 students. The sample size was determined using past studies on impulsive-buying behaviour. The sample size is consistent with that used

in other studies (Hausman 2000:410; Park 2001:438; Rook & Fisher 1995:307). A total of 385 questionnaires were useable for the final analysis.

5.2 Questionnaire Development

The questionnaire consisted of two sections. Section A was in a format of a seven-point Likert scale, consisted of 25 items. The variables in section A were transformed into a seven-point Likert scale where strongly agree =7 and strongly disagree =1. Section B consisted of 9 items covering demographics and personal details of the respondents.

A pilot testing of 50 respondents was undertaken in order to refine the measuring instrument. Cronbach alpha of all the variables that constituted the impulsive-buying behaviour scale with alpha values below 0.70 were eliminated after examining the inter-item correlations. A value of 0.70 or greater is deemed to be indicative of good scale reliability (Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson, Tatham & Black 2010:641). The scale returned a Cronbach alpha value of 0.945.

6 ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

Data analysis comprised four phases namely, sample composition, an assessment of the underlying dimensions of the instrument by using exploratory factor analysis, correlations, t-test to examine gender differences, an assessment of reliability (by computing Cronbach alpha) and validity of the instrument.

6.1 SAMPLE COMPOSITION

The sample comprised 45.4% (n=176) males and 54.55% (n=209) females. The greater majority of the respondents, 45.4% (n=175) were in the age categories of 17 to 20 years. The majority of the population category was African, 86.2 % (n=332). Newspapers were the most frequently reported media, 55.5% (n=214) from which students obtained information on where and what kind of clothing to buy. The majority of the respondents, 78.9 % (n=304) paid cash for their purchases.

Most respondents, 43.1% (n=166) shopped for clothes in boutiques. Approximately 76.1% (n=293) of the respondents obtained money to purchase clothing from their parents or guardians. In terms of students' impulsive buying tendencies, 31.4 %

(n=121) of the students admitted to making such purchases at least once a month and 44.1% (n=170) of the students visited shopping outlets for clothes unaccompanied.

6.2 EXPLORATORY FACTOR ANALYSIS

Prior to factor analysis of the variables regarding impulsive buying behaviour, the appropriateness of factorability was initially established by conducting both the Bartlett's tests of Sphericity and the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin tests (KMO), a measure of sampling adequacy (MSA). The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy (KMO) was 0.921, which is considered "marvellous" by Kaiser (1974:35). The approximated chi-square for the Bartlett's test was 3802.123 (df=171) at an observed significance level $p < 0.000$. Both measures indicated that the data was suitable for factor analysis.

Exploratory factor analysis was performed whereby variables were analysed using principal component analysis with Varimax rotation which aided with the data reduction process. Varimax rotation was also used in order to minimise the number of variables with high loadings on a factor, thereby enhancing the interpretability of factors (Malhotra 2010:643). Variable loadings of 0.5 and above were deemed appropriate. This is consistent with Hair *et al.* (2010:385) that factor loadings greater than ± 0.30 are considered to meet the minimum levels, loadings of ± 0.40 are considered important, and loading of ± 0.50 and greater are considered more important. Item reduction and scale purification was then undertaken whereby items with low factor loadings, communalities and low-item-to-total correlations were investigated.

The determination of the number of factors to be extracted were theoretically accomplished by applying a combination of statistical techniques namely, percentage of variance explained, the eigenvalue criterion, the scree plot and taking into account the interpretability of factors. Four factors with nineteen variables were extracted. The final factors structure and the psychometric properties of the scale are reported in Table 1.

Table 1: Factor loading matrix and psychometric evaluation of the scale

Scale item no	Factor 1 Fashion involvement	Factor 2 Hedonic aspects	Factor 3 Emotional gratification	Factor 4 Affect	Item-to-total Correlation
Fashion clothing means a lot to me	.733	.176	.209	.141	.714
I am an experienced user of fashion clothing	.765	.085	.120	-.020	.702
Fashion clothing is a significant part of me	.706	.294	.176	.006	.720
I usually dress for fashion	.766	.038	.150	-.122	.692
I am interested in fashion clothing	.796	.124	.129	.034	.752
I go shopping to keep up with trends	.681	.240	.205	-.035	.684
I am very familiar with fashion clothing	.751	.239	-.061	.133	.708
I feel I know about fashion clothing	.741	.274	-.041	.052	.714
I would classify myself as an expert on fashion clothing	.673	.304	.053	-.167	.669
For me fashion clothing is an import product	.752	.253	.118	-.076	.748
Shopping satisfies my sense of curiosity	.336	.697	.080	-.064	.626
Shopping offers new experiences	.162	.761	.035	.179	.594
I feel I am exploring new worlds when I shop	.245	.730	.141	.064	.642
To me shopping is an adventure	.221	.654	.280	-.096	.602
Buying things give me pleasure	.186	.657	.346	-.063	.625

Scale item no	Factor 1 Fashion involvement	Factor 2 Hedonic aspects	Factor 3 Emotional gratification	Factor 4 Affect	Item-to-total Correlation
When my mood is down I go shopping to feel better	.116	.390	.410	.844	.708
To me shopping is a way to relieve stress	.006	.032	.077	.923	.708
I feel energized after shopping	.126	.206	.819	.044	.563
I feel uplifted when I shop	.179	.189	.794	.105	.563
Eigenvalues	7.710	2.040	1.119	1.063	Overall Cronbach h α 0.942
% of variance	40.577	10.739	5.887	5.594	
Cumulative % of variance	40.577	51.316	57.203	62.797	
Cronbach alpha	0.924	0.824	0.829	0.717	

Loadings of 0.50 and more were considered significant. Extraction method: Principal Component Analysis. Varimax rotation.

6.3 CORRELATIONS

The Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (r) was used to analyse the bivariate relationship between the four dimensions of impulsive buying behaviour with gender. Correlations range from -1.00 to +1.00. The value of -1.00 depicts a perfect negative correlation while +1.00 represents a perfect positive correlation. A value of 0.00 represents a lack of correlation. High correlation coefficients reflect strong level of association between variables. The following rule of thumb as proposed by Field (2009:111) was used in examining the level of association between the four dimensions of impulsive buying and gender.

- 0 to + 0.25 (or -0.25) = little or no relationship
- + 0.26 (-0.26) to + 0.60 (or -0.60) indicates a moderate relationship
- above + 0.60 (or -0.60 and above) indicates a strong relationship

Table 2 reports on the correlations between the four dimensions of impulsive buying behaviour with gender.

Table 2: Correlations – four dimensions of impulsive buying behaviour with gender

	Factor 1 Fashion involvement	Factor 2 Hedonic aspects	Factor 3 Emotional gratification	Factor 4 Affect	Gender	Source of information	Relation-ship with gender
Factor 1 Fashion involvement	1.000	.556**	.295**	.345**	.070	-.047	None
Factor 2 Hedonic aspects	.556**	1.000	.489**	.468**	.142**	-.024	Moderate
Factor 3 Emotional gratification	.295**	.489**	1.000	.361**	.277**	-.028	Moderate
Factor 4 Affect	.345**	.468**	.361**	1.000	.088	-.061	None
** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).							

In order to explore any gender differences regarding the four impulsive buying tendencies among consumers, **independent sample t-tests** were computed. The result of the t-test is reported in Table 3 and the means are reported in Table 4. Practical significance was also computed to establish effect sizes (small, medium and large) using Cohen's d-statistic. The following guideline, as suggested by Field (2009:32), was used to measure effect sizes:

- R=0.10 (small effect)
- R=0.30 (medium effect)
- R= 0.50 (large effect).

7 DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

In terms of the factor structure, factor one, labelled fashion involvement, comprised nine variables and accounted for 30.36% of the variance. The eigenvalue was 5.76.

Table 3: Independent sample t-test

Impulsive buying dimensions		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means					Cohen's d-statistics	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Diff	Std. Error Diff	d	Effect size
Fashion	Equal variances assumed	.382	.537	-1.365	383	.173	-.222	.1630	0.02	No effect
	Equal variances not assumed	-	-	-1.367	374	.172	-.222	.1627	-	-
Hedonic	Equal variances assumed	5.742	.017	-2.814	383	.005*	-.443	.1577	0.14	Small effect
	Equal variances not assumed	-	-	-2.778	347	.006	-.443	.1598	-	-
Emotion	Equal variances assumed	.662	.416	-5.651	383	.000*	-1.133	.2005	0.28	Small effect
	Equal variances not assumed	-	-	-5.630	366	.000	-1.133	.2012	-	-
Affect	Equal variances assumed	.705	.402	-1.729	383	.085	-.327	.189	0.08	No effect
	Equal variances not assumed	-	-	-1.720	363	.086	-.327	.190	-	-

*Significant at $p < 0.05$

The items that loaded onto the factor relate mainly to the level of fashion involvement and how it influences impulsive buying behaviour. Researchers argue that customers who are highly involved in fashion are more likely to purchase more clothing than those that are low in fashion involvement (Fairhurst, Good & Gentry1989:10).

Table 4: Means and standard deviation

Gender		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Fashion	Male	176	3.821	1.5774	.1189
	Female	209	4.044	1.6062	.1111
Hedonic	Male	176	4.225	1.6640	.1254
	Female	209	4.669	1.4307	.0990
Emotion	Male	176	3.233	2.0049	.1511
	Female	209	4.366	1.9212	.1329
Affect	Male	176	4.46	1.905	.144
	Female	209	4.79	1.798	.124

Previous research (O’Cass 2004:871) revealed that fashion clothing involvement and knowledge of fashion influences consumer confidence in making purchase decisions and are more likely to generate the emotions needed for an impulsive purchase. The second factor labelled *hedonic motivation*, comprised three variables and accounted for 15.66% of the variance. The eigenvalue was 2.97. According to Arnold and Reynolds (2003:80), hedonic shoppers are adventurous and like to feel as if they are in “another world”. Consistent with literature on hedonic purchases, for this category of consumers shopping offers new experiences and gives them pleasure, an escape into relaxation and diversion (Jamal, Davies, Chudry & Al-Marri 2006:68; Park & Sullivan 2009:184; Radder, Li & Pietersen 2006:28).

The third factor labelled *emotional gratification*, comprised two variables and accounted for 10.1% of the variance. The eigenvalue for the hedonic factor was 1.92. Positive emotional states tend to reduce decision complexity and consumers opt for shorter decision times which lead to impulsive buying behaviour (Youn & Faber 2000:182). Impulse buyers also tend to have a desire to reward themselves by shopping to gratify their emotions (Cha 2001:46). The fourth factor labelled *affect*, comprised two variables and accounted for 9.1% of the variance. The eigenvalue is 1.74. Impulse buying is in part motivated by consumers wanting to change or manage their feelings or moods (Youn 2000:46). The affective component

encompasses feelings or moods, in which consumers tend to feel energised and uplifted after a shopping experience. For such consumers, shopping provides an outlet for psychological compensation which assists in reducing anxiety and stress in everyday lives (Ergin 2010:337).

The results of the Pearson correlations coefficients revealed that hedonic aspects correlates positively with gender ($r=0.142$; $p<0.01$). There is also a significant relationship between gender and emotional gratification ($r=0.277$; $p<0.01$). Deducing from literature, by comparison, women tend to value emotional and symbolic possessions for different reasons and women also have more emotional and relationship-oriented reasons while men have a more functional, instrumental and activity related focus (Dittmar, Beattie & Friese 1995:491). Therefore, in terms of gender and emotions, women are more emotional shoppers than men. The affect dimension shows no significant relationship with gender ($r=0.088$; $p<0.01$).

In terms of gender differences and impulsive buying behaviour the results of the **t-test** and **Levenes's test** results indicated that both groups (male vs. female) with equal variance assumed, were significantly different for hedonic motivations of shopping and emotional gratification ($\text{sig}=0.00$; $p< 0.05$) and affect ($\text{sig}=0.000$; $p< 0.05$). Table 4 shows that female respondents possess a slightly higher propensity to impulsive buying tendencies compared to their male counterparts with regard to hedonic motivation of shopping ($M=4.0$, $SE=0.09$) and emotional gratification ($M=4.36$, $SE=0.132$).

However, on the sub-scales fashion involvement and affect, the scores of both males and females showed no statistical differences. In terms of practical significance both the hedonic motivation and emotional gratification dimensions showed small effect sizes of 0.14 and 0.28 respectively. These findings are consistent with previous studies (Dittmar & Drury 2000:139; Hung & Chun 2010:854) in which the authors revealed that hedonic motivation and emotional gratification seem to play more of a role among females, compared to males, in impulsive buying tendencies. Women seem to have positive attitudes towards browsing, shopping, social interaction and they perceived the act of buying as a leisure activity (Ergin 2010:334). Male shoppers tend to focus on the outcome to get the actual goods with the minimum

effort. In other words, when shopping, females are not only engaged in the buying involvement but are comparatively motivated more by emotional factors (for example, adventure, sociality, fashion and value) (Hung & Chung 2010:854).

Hedonic shoppers seem to express enjoyment during shopping trips and enjoy the quality of shopping as compared to the actual acquisition of the products and the more they prolong these trips or the more trips they make the more fun they can experience (Boedeker 1995:19). Men and women have been found to process information differently (Peter & Olson 1999:112), relate to material possessions differently, purchase different items for different reasons (Dittmar & Drury 2000:132) and approach the shopping task differently (Park 2001:440). It has been argued that women, because of their propensity to shop more than men in general, make purchases that are more impulsive. However, on the contrary, Sunder (2000:482) suggests that, if the number of purchases is held constant, men and women may have the same degree of susceptibility to impulse purchases.

Underhill (1999:216-217) established that for many women, there are psychological and emotional aspects to shopping that are lacking among men. The author states “women can go into a kind of reverie when they shop - they become absorbed in the ritual of seeking and comparing, of envisioning merchandise in use”. Women have higher demands within a shopping environment than men do. In general, men move faster than women in store aisles, spend less time looking, usually do not like to ask where things are, and in many cases tend not to look at anything they had not intended to buy. Because of this phenomenon, stores generally gear the entire shopping experience from the packaging design to advertising, from merchandising to store and fixture design toward the female shoppers.

8 RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY

Internal consistency reliability was undertaken through the computation of Cronbach alpha coefficients. The standardised Cronbach alpha computed for the scale was recorded at 0.942. The reliability for the sub-scales ranged from 0.924 to 0.717 for the four dimensions of impulsive buying which was above the acceptable level of 0.70 and considered satisfactory (Malhotra 2010:319).

The validity of the scale was assessed through content, convergent and discriminant validities. Content validity was ascertained by pre-testing the questionnaire. In addition, a pilot test was undertaken where changes were made to the questionnaire regarding the deletion and addition of items, and rephrasing of questions. Jun and Cai (2010:213) suggest that a scale exhibits convergent validity if the correlations between the items of the derived factors revealed that all the within-factors correlate with one another and are significantly different from 0. The scale's convergent validity was assessed for statistical significance by using Pearson's correlation coefficients in which all the correlations were positive and significant, ranging from $r=0.256$ to $r=0.556$ (Table 2), thus providing evidence of convergence.

Discriminant validity was measured by including an item in the study relating to the sources of information, in other words the media that the respondents use to get information about what clothes to buy. The correlation in Table 2 depicts negative correlations ($r=-0.047$; $r=-0.024$; $r=-0.028$ and $r=-0.061$) between the sources of information and the four dimensions namely, fashion, hedonic motivation, emotional gratification and affect, thus providing evidence of discriminant validity.

9 RECOMMENDATIONS

A number of recommendations for retailers are apparent, as they will assist retailers to assemble marketing communication strategies to attract impulsive buyers. Since fashion involvement, hedonic motivation, emotional gratification and affect were the four identified dimensions of impulsive buying behaviour, marketers should develop their marketing strategies around these four dimensions to influence impulsive buying tendencies. Material used to communicate to consumers in retail shops may require detailed adaptation in order to attract shoppers who are motivated for different hedonic reasons, keeping in mind that they are a significant proportion of the shopping public. Retailers can achieve this by making the total shopping experience an adventure or a place in which to relieve tension and stress.

Marketers can consider motivational factors when designing promotional and other communication programmes targeted to retail clothing stores. In-store displays or promotions may become important, given the tendency to make purchases based on impulse (Zhung, Tsang, Zhou & Nicholls 2006:40). Since positive buying emotion and

mood management are significant components of the affective process, it is recommended that retailers should constantly work on creating a positive shopping environment. Store atmospherics is essential in attracting and keeping the consumers excited about a shopping experience. This will help to enhance mood and emotion, which may trigger affective tendencies leading to impulsive buying behaviour.

Using affective appeals of in-store signage and public announcements or advertisements may also elicit impulsive buying emotion. These elements can be used to motivate shoppers to make an impulse purchase as a way to manage or prolong a mood. Various marketing strategies related to merchandising and promotions of products such as friendly and educated sales associates and well designed displays should be considered. Retailers can increase the level of temptation to make an impulse purchase by removing barriers, for example, eliminating long queues that could lead to the decision not to make an impulse purchase. Acceptance of credit cards, automatic teller machines, and money-back guarantees can strengthen or create temptations and increase impulse buying. Retailers might attempt to influence the time consumers have available in the store by making shopping more efficient. This can be accomplished by aiding the shopper in finding the items quickly.

Shoppers who patronise a store because they like the environment may unexpectedly spend more money because of the positive mood-inducing atmosphere (Kim & Forney 2006:442). The authors also assert that even if consumers are in a negative emotional state, upon entering a store they may become emotionally uplifted and spend more money than intended and hence they may buy on impulse. Customers may feel better through suitable layout, cleanliness, colours, effective and a friendly salesperson at the point of purchase. Retailers need to focus as much on entertainment, interest and excitement as they do on getting the right merchandise mix and pricing.

10 IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

A combination of quantitative and qualitative research methods, for example, observational or experimental research methods is recommended for future research. Future research should be conducted which expands this study to include a non-student sample, demographic subcultures, social classes and lifestyle factors. Also of interest would be to explore impulse buying within television, the Internet,

direct-mail shopping and other non-store formats. This research focused mainly on apparel merchandise therefore future studies should endeavour to include other products such as electronics and furniture.

11 CONCLUSION

The study provided insights into the dimensions of impulse buying and the relationship with gender. The four identified dimensions, fashion involvement, hedonic motivation, emotional gratification and affect influence impulsive buying tendencies among university students. The results confirm gender differences indicating that females are more affected by impulsive buying tendencies especially with regard to the hedonic motivation and emotional gratification dimensions.

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