



ASSOCIATION FOR CONSUMER RESEARCH

Labovitz School of Business & Economics, University of Minnesota Duluth, 11 E. Superior Street, Suite 210, Duluth, MN 55802

Exploring Impulse Purchasing on the Internet

Sreedhar Rao Madhavaram, Texas Tech University

Debra A. Laverie, Texas Tech University

ABSTRACT - This paper explores the concept of impulse purchasing behavior online. A comprehensive review and analysis of the literature suggests that there are some unresolved issues regarding the state of knowledge on impulse purchasing behavior. In addition, the current conceptualizations of impulse purchase behavior do not adequately capture impulse purchase behavior over the Internet. Therefore, we propose a broadened conceptualization to resolve those issues and to accurately capture impulse purchases that take place in retail stores as well as on the Internet. The results of our exploratory study are consistent with our conceptualization, and present a robust platform for future research.

[to cite]:

Sreedhar Rao Madhavaram and Debra A. Laverie (2004) , "Exploring Impulse Purchasing on the Internet", in NA - Advances in Consumer Research Volume 31, eds. Barbara E. Kahn and Mary Frances Luce, Valdosta, GA : Association for Consumer Research, Pages: 59-66.

[url]:

<http://www.acrwebsite.org/volumes/8849/volumes/v31/NA-31>

[copyright notice]:

This work is copyrighted by The Association for Consumer Research. For permission to copy or use this work in whole or in part, please contact the Copyright Clearance Center at <http://www.copyright.com/>.

Exploring Impulse Purchasing on the Internet

Sreedhar Rao Madhavaram, Texas Tech University

Debra A. Laverie, Texas Tech University

ABSTRACT

This paper explores the concept of impulse purchasing behavior online. A comprehensive review and analysis of the literature suggests that there are some unresolved issues regarding the state of knowledge on impulse purchasing behavior. In addition, the current conceptualizations of impulse purchase behavior do not adequately capture impulse purchase behavior over the Internet. Therefore, we propose a broadened conceptualization to resolve those issues and to accurately capture impulse purchases that take place in retail stores as well as on the Internet. The results of our exploratory study are consistent with our conceptualization, and present a robust platform for future research.

INTRODUCTION

The importance of understanding impulse purchasing in retail stores was first identified in the marketing literature over fifty years ago (Clover 1950). Impulse purchasing accounts for a substantial percentage of the products sold across a broad range of product categories (Colb and Hoyer 1986; Hausman 2000; Rook and Fischer 1995). Research on impulse buying has been based on varying conceptual definitions of the construct and has focused primarily on in-store retailing. In this article we attempt to broaden the concept of impulse buying and explore impulse buying on the Internet. With the prominence of online retailing it would seem appropriate to expand the concept of impulse purchasing to accurately capture impulse purchasing behavior online as well as in stores.

A number of researchers have made important contributions to our understanding of impulse purchasing behavior (Stern 1962; Rook and Hoch 1985; Rook 1987; Rook and Gardner 1993; Rook and Fisher 1987; Puri 1996; Weun and Beatty 1998; Beatty and Ferrell 1998; Hausman 2000). Stern (1962) identified four distinct types of impulse purchasing: planned, pure, reminder, and suggestion. Our understanding of impulse purchasing was enhanced when Rook and Hoch (1985) offered a psychological model of consumer impulse buying episodes. Beatty and Ferrell (1998) extended research by exploring the precursors of impulse purchasing and examining how in-store browsing, for recreational and informational purposes, influences impulse purchasing behavior. Recently, Hausman (2000) established that impulse buying is a common method of product selection, in part, because it provides hedonic rewards. Though, this research has made significant contributions to our understanding of impulse purchasing, researchers have not come to a consensus on the conceptualization of impulse purchasing. Thus, unresolved issues exist in the literature preventing a clear understanding and resulting in inconsistent operationalization of the construct.

Understanding of impulse purchasing is further confounded by the prevalence of online retailing, an easily available mode for making impulse purchases. Online retailing eliminates the constraints of time and space that often face shoppers (Kalakota and Whinston 1997; Eroglu, Machleit, and Davis 2001). Recently, Donthu and Garcia (1999) profiled Internet shoppers and found that Internet shoppers are more impulsive than in-store shoppers. However, consumer behavior on the Internet is not well understood (Sultan 2002). Thus, in this article we explore how to improve and broaden the concept of impulse purchasing and examine impulsive purchasing behavior online.

The purpose of this paper is to: (1) review and analyze extant research, and to broaden the concept of impulse buying in order to comprehensively account for impulse purchases over the Internet as well as in traditional retail stores; (2) identify specific unresolved issues that have relevance to the broadened conceptualization of impulse buying; (3) present exploratory research findings on consumers' descriptions of their impulse buying behavior online; and, (4) discuss conceptual implications and direction for future research.

IMPULSE BUYING

A decade after Clover's (1950) preliminary research study on impulse purchases, Stern (1962) delineated four distinct types of impulse buying: pure, reminder, suggestion, and planned impulse buying:

- (i) *Pure impulse buying: is a novelty or escape purchase which breaks a normal buying pattern*
- (ii) *Reminder impulse buying: occurs when a shopper sees an item or recalls an advertisement or other information and remembers that the stock at home is low or exhausted*
- (iii) *Suggestion impulse buying: occurs when a shopper sees a product for the first time and visualizes a need for it, and*
- (iv) *Planned impulse buying: takes place when the shopper makes specific purchase decisions on the basis of price specials, coupon offers and the like.*

Stern's (1962) contribution is quite significant, because even today most research studies use his concept of impulse purchases as a starting point (Beatty and Ferrell 1998, Dittmar et al. 1996; Han et al. 1991; Rook 1987).

Applebaum (1951) introduced the notion of exposure to stimulus into the concept of impulse buying, and defined impulse buying as "buying that presumably was not planned by the customer before entering a store, but which resulted from a stimulus created by a sales promotional device in the store". Although this was an improvement over the earlier definition, it was still a limited definition because the stimulus that Applebaum (1951) discusses is restricted to sales promotional devices in the store which the consumer could be using as an external memory aid. Over time, researchers began to look at consumer characteristics rather than product characteristics or stimuli as it was agreed that impulse purchasing is not confined to any particular product or product category (Rook 1987). The hedonic or affective components of this type of purchasing became central in many studies (Cobb and Hoyer 1986; Piron 1991; Rook 1987; Weinburg and Gottwald 1982). Rook (1987) reported that consumers often felt a calling to purchase the product.

As researchers began to focus on the behavioral dimensions of impulse buying they moved away from viewing impulse buying as an unplanned purchase. Rook and Hoch (1985) state the growing consensus among researchers when they suggest that defining impulse purchasing as unplanned is neither a sufficient condition nor a necessary condition for construal as an impulse purchase, since consumers clearly use store layout as external memory aid. In fact, consumers may plan impulse buys. Rook (1987) discusses situations wherein consumers have occasionally described how they plan to go on impulse buying excursions.

Rook (1987) suggests impulse buying occurs:

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 (p. 191).

This definition has acquired much wider acceptance than the other previously discussed definitions. However, many have viewed impulse buying negatively, perhaps due to the lack of perceived behavioral control that is associated with impulsivity (Hausman 2000). Recently, consumer research suggests that individual consumers do not view their specific purchases as wrong and indeed retrospectively report a favorable evaluation of their behavior (Hausman 2000). Interestingly, Rook (1987) reports a relatively low number of informants (only 20 percent) report feeling “bad” about their impulse buying, but an astonishingly large number of informants (41 percent) report that they actually feel good about their impulse purchases, which is ironic as the definition does not accommodate for such behavior.

Piron (1991) argues Rook’s definition is too narrow since it implies that emotional and cognitive reactions must accompany the purchase, because whether or not customer experiences emotional and cognitive reactions may depend on the economic, personality, and cultural factors on behalf of the customer and characteristics and price on behalf of the product. Beatty and Ferrell (1998) overcome the issues in Rook’s definition that Piron (1991) argues are problematic. Beatty and Ferrell (1998) state that:

Impulse buying is a sudden and immediate purchase with no pre-shopping intentions either to buy the specific product category or to fulfill a specific buying task. The behavior 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 (p. 171).

Similar to Rook’s (1987) definition this definition does not consider the role of stimuli in the impulse purchase decision. While early impulse purchase research focused on the product as stimuli, it is likely that advertisements, articles and word of mouth can act as stimuli. In the following section we will discuss issues that we argue are unresolved yet important in understanding impulse buying.

Considering that (1) there is a consensus among researchers that defining impulse purchasing as simply unplanned purchasing is faulty (Rook and Hoch 1985) (Unplanned purchases of milk, candy, and toilet paper may be triggered by a reminder and are not impulsive purchases); (2) definitions of impulse purchasing are too narrowly focused on either emotional and cognitive reactions (Piron 1991) or the unplanned element (Rook and Hoch 1985); (3) most conceptualizations do not account for impulse purchases online; we propose the following conceptualization of impulse purchasing:

Impulse buying is a result of a purchaser’s immediate reaction to external stimuli that is often hedonically charged. An impulse buying episode signifies a change in purchaser’s intention to purchase that particular product before and after the exposure to stimuli. The stimuli is not limited to just the product and change in purchaser’s intention does not include a reminder item that is simply out of stock at home.

The definition takes into account Wolman’s (1973) definition of impulse: not consciously planned, but arises immediately upon confrontation with a certain stimulus. The definition also broadens the exposure to “stimulus” element by mentioning that the stimulus need not be just the product, and thereby accommodates impulse purchases on the Internet. This definition improves upon the earlier definitions by bringing in an element of “change-in-intentions” into the concept of impulse purchases. Finally, the definition incorporates the hedonic elements that likely accompany an impulse decision. This definition takes into account that brand switching and purchasing substitute products could sometimes be impulse purchases.

UNRESOLVED ISSUES IN THE IMPULSE PURCHASING LITERATURE

Stimuli

In the original conceptualization of impulse purchasing, the notion of the product as stimuli was a very important part of the definitions of types of impulse purchases. Applebaum (1951) suggested that impulse purchasing might stem from the consumer’s exposure to sales promotion stimulus. Wolman (1973) defines an impulse as not consciously planned, but arises upon confrontation with a certain stimulus. Kroeber–Reil (1980) also argues that impulse buying is reactive behavior and often involves an immediate action response to a stimulus. Impulse purchasing may occur as a result of marketer’s environmental manipulations through atmospherics (Kotler 1974), merchandising stimuli such as retail shelf location (Rook, 1987), and amount of shelf space affected impulse buying (Cox 1964; Patterson 1963). Yet, Rook’s (1987) definition focuses on the consumer and does not mention explicitly what causes that sudden, often powerful and persistent urge to buy something immediately. However, it is implied at various places in his research that the product itself acts as stimulus. Rook (1987) suggests that consumers have the most difficult time resisting the urge in the moments following the encounter with the object and the consuming impulse originates from within the product (Rook and Hoch 1985). Others have considered the product itself to be the stimulus effecting impulse purchases research (Weun et al. 1998) and link browsing to urge and impulse buying (Beatty and Ferrell 1998).

While some research focused on the product as stimulus, certainly other factors can trigger impulse purchasing. One possible reason for researchers treating product as being the only stimulus is probably one of the greatest advantages that a traditional physical retailing store can offer: the ability to personally experience a product on a multisensory basis (Alba et al. 1997; Rosen and Howard 2000). As Hirschman and Holbrook (1982) mention, one aspect of hedonic consumption is the experience of products through their tastes, sounds, tactile impressions, and visual images. But, Childers et al. (2001) suggest, if shoppers believe that the sensory information available via the interactive media is sufficient, there is reason to believe that the shoppers will enjoy using the new media for web-shopping. Following Kotler’s (1974) observation that impulse purchasing may occur as a result of marketer’s environmental manipulations through atmospherics, there is a possibility that “webosphirics” which according to Childers et al. (2001) represents the virtual environment counterpart to the physical surroundings associated with the retail atmosphere (such as graphics, text, pop-up windows, search engine configuration, audio, color, streaming video, and organization and grouping of merchandise), may lead to impulse buying.

One plausible reason for some researchers’ conceptualizing the product as the only stimulus that can cause impulse purchases,

could be their perception that a purchase decision made immediately upon exposure to a stimulus other than the product, but away from the point-of-purchase, can translate either into a planned purchase or into a rescinded purchase decision. But, is product the only stimulus that invokes the impulse that will immediately lead to a purchase? Danthu and Garcia (1999) imply the contrary and say that Internet shoppers are more impulsive due to the stimuli to which they are exposed to. Within a store environment the stimuli that effect impulse purchases could be something other than the product. Stern (1962) implied that stimulus could be something other than the product itself when he concluded that the tone of in-store advertising may change in the light of increased impulse buying and explained that signs, pole cards, and the like may serve less as attention seekers and provide more information and explanation. The stimuli may be an image, a description in an email, a banner advertisement, an article in a magazine or on the Internet, and a sign. In sum, research based on just the product being the stimulus is inadequate to capture the phenomenon of impulse purchases.

Consumer Focus

Early research on impulse purchases classified products as impulse versus non-impulse items. Most studies investigated frequencies of impulse buying across various product categories (Applebaum 1951; Clover 1950; Katona and Mueller 1955; West 1951) and in different retail settings (Clover 1950). Even today, impulse buying is still discussed in terms of which products are and are not impulse items (Assael 1985; Bellenger et al. 1978; Dittmar et al. 1996; Dittmar and Drury 2000). However, Rook and Hoch (1985) argued that placing sole emphasis upon product type provides a limited perspective, since it is the individuals, not the products, who experience the impulse to consume. Cobb and Hoyer (1986) also state that in the process of focusing on the influence of type of product and type of outlet, investigators have not considered adequately the influence of consumer characteristics on impulse purchase behavior.

Although their definitions of impulse purchases are very different, both Kollat and Willett (1967) and Rook (1987) agree that impulse purchasing is not confined to any particular product or product type. In fact, Kollat and Willett (1967) state that the impulse-purchasing phenomenon has been used to describe purchases of such products as: durable goods (Katona and Mueller 1955); jewelry, apparel, hardware items, furniture (Clover 1950); drugs and toiletries (Drugstore Brand Switching and Impulse Buying 1963); and grocery products (West 1951; Stern 1962; Consumer buying habits studies 1945, 1949, 1954, 1959, 1965). Similarly, Rook (1987) argues that the product dimensions of impulse buying extend well beyond snack items and gossip magazines. He argues that impulse buying extends to the outer limits of one's cash and credit and can likely include an extra TV set, a VCR, or a vacation cruise (Rook 1987). Most researchers agreed that the taxonomical research that classified products into impulse and non-impulse categories is too limited in perspective and fails to focus on the consumer. But does that mean that classification should be based on people (i.e., impulsive and non-impulsive consumers)?

Psychological theory and research has long considered "impulsiveness" to be a personality trait (Freud 1949; Goldenson 1984; Kipnis 1971; Mead 1981; Phypers 1979; Reich 1925; Winshie 1977). This notion was adopted in consumer research (Rook 1987; Rook and Gardner 1993; Rook and Hoch 1985). In addition, studies drew from this idea and developed an instrument to measure consumer impulsivity as a lifestyle trait (Heslin and Johnson 1985; Weun et al. 1998). The scale is designed to measure impulsive buying tendency.

Hence, just as categorizing products into impulsive and non-impulsive products is a limited perspective; similarly categorizing people as impulsive and non-impulsive consumers presents a limited perspective. According to Welles (1986), there is evidence that nine out of ten shoppers occasionally buy on impulse. As the person and product both are involved in the purchase process, studying impulse purchase behavior with strictly product or strictly person orientation puts forward a limited perspective. However, if our understanding of the concept of impulse purchases can be improved either through product or person orientation, then the researchers should definitely investigate according to the appropriate orientations.

Mood and Affect

In an effort to improve our understanding of the impulse-purchasing construct researchers have explored how mood states (Gardner and Rook 1988; Rook 1987), in-store browsing (Beatty and Ferrell 1998), and positive and negative affect (Beatty and Ferrell 1998) influence impulse purchases. Beatty and Ferrell (1998) draw parallels between their utilization of orthogonal constructs of positive and negative affect and the positive and negative moods addressed by Rook and Gardner (1993).

Rook and Gardner (1993) undertook an exploratory study of the mood antecedents of impulse buying after observing that findings from other lines of research demonstrate that mood states, despite their diffuse and short-lived nature, impact both consumers' mental and overt behaviors (Belk 1984; Gardner 1985, 1987). Rook and Gardner (1993) propose that each of the three basic mood dimensions (pleasure, arousal, and dominance) is associated with a primary core theme that either supports or dissuades consumer's buying impulses. They suggest pleasure is associated with motivation; arousal is associated with mobilization; and, dominance is associated with capability. Rook and Gardner (1993) suggest that a mood state sufficiently motivates consumption, mobilizes a transaction, or induces a subjective sense of capability to do so, generates psychological associations that increase the likelihood of making a purchase.

Pleasurable moods range from positive to negative and can either motivate or demotivate a buying impulse (Rook and Gardner 1993). Similarly, Beatty and Ferrell (1998) argue positive affect is related to in-store browsing, examining a retailer's merchandise for recreational and/or informational purposes without an immediate intent to buy. Furthermore, impulse buying has been related to hedonic motivations, such as fun, novelty and surprise (Hausman 2000).

It seems likely that exploring consumers' responses to online retailing can shed light on the influence of mood states on impulse purchasing. In-store browsing on the Internet is easy and consumers can examine the on-line retailer's merchandise for recreational and/or informational purposes without an immediate intent to buy in the comfort of their home. Drawing from the findings of Beatty and Ferrell (1998), browsing is often related to positive affect. Browsing is related to activation and the mobilization of the mental and physical resources that a particular impulse purchase requires (Rook and Gardner 1993). They claim that a vast majority of their survey respondents indicated a positive mood would be more conducive to impulse buying than a negative mood. However the effects of negative moods on behavior are unclear. Sometimes they produce effects similar to those produced by positive moods, while at other times they produce opposite effects (Clark and Isen 1982). In sum, whether a person is in a positive mood or in a negative mood, the Internet makes it easy to browse the merchandise and also minimizes the expenditure of physical and mental resources, and hence goes long way toward motivating the buying impulse.

The traditional focus on impulse purchasing as unplanned purchasing is especially problematic when considering online purchasing. By focusing on the consumer and hedonic dimensions, we can better understand what motivates consumers to engage in shopping online and online impulse purchases. Online retailers create an immersive, hedonic environment that is seen as a positive shopping environment by many consumers (Childers et al. 2001) with many atmospheric cues that influence shopping behavior (Eroglu, Machleit and Davis 2002). From this perspective, the addition of hedonic components suggests that impulse buying can be viewed as a valued shopping behavior rather than just a means of acquiring unplanned goods (Hausman 2000).

EXPLORATORY STUDY

This study explored the concept of impulse purchasing in the context of Internet purchases. Due to the exploratory nature of our proposed conceptualization, this research used an open-ended paper and pencil approach. We set out to: (1) to discover what consumers associate with impulse purchases, (2) to explore elements that influence impulse purchases on the Internet, (3) to investigate what kinds of stimuli cause impulse purchases on the Internet.

This research is exploratory in nature since it was established in the earlier sections of this paper that extant research falls short of providing an accurate account of impulse purchases; an exploratory design that prioritizes discovery over confirmation is more appropriate (Kaplan 1964; Deshpande 1983). Similar to Rook and Gardner's (1993) observation on impulse buying, since online impulse buying research is relatively immature, conceptually driven exploratory studies are still appropriate (cf. Anderson 1983; Deshpande 1983; Peter and Olson 1983) and qualitative inquiry can also elicit new or different issues of concern to respondents overlooked in previous work. More specifically, this study proposes to explore impulse purchasing on the Internet, while clarifying the unresolved conceptual and exposure to stimulus issues concerning impulse purchases.

Method

This study is based on data collected using a self-administered screening questionnaire followed by an in-depth questionnaire. The initial questionnaire consisted of an open-ended question that asked the respondents define impulse purchases in their own words and questions that asked respondents to describe impulse purchases they had made on the Internet. The open-ended question on defining impulse purchase was included to gain insights into consumer's understanding of an impulse purchase. The respondents were asked to describe purchases that they had made on the Internet and to respond to some questions regarding those purchases.

The informants who had made purchases on-line formed a convenience sample of consumers who made an impulse purchase on the Internet according to their definitions; they then completed an in-depth questionnaire consisting of open-ended questions aimed at exploring the characteristics associated with impulse purchases online and clarifying the unresolved issues with impulse purchases.

Results

The 263 respondents each described how they defined an impulse purchase. The definitions were content analyzed to obtain insight into how consumers define impulse purchases. A summary of the categories that emerged from the content analysis appears in Table 1. Approximately, 22% of the respondents (57 out of 263) made impulse purchases on the Internet. The respondents' understanding of impulse purchases is consistent with our conceptualization. The major characteristics that emerged were:

unplanned, response to stimulus, change in intentions and spontaneous reaction. Almost, all of the respondents, who made impulse purchases on the Internet, browsed the Internet for both informational and recreational purposes. It can also be clearly seen that the new definition by introducing the concepts of "exposure to stimuli other than product", and "change of purchaser's intention" accommodates for impulse purchases in traditional retail stores and also on the Internet.

Consistent with extant research (Kollat and Willett 1967; Rook 1987), respondents showed that impulse purchasing is not confined to any particular product or product type. The impulse purchases of the respondents included products such as CDs, clothing, cosmetics, DVDs, shoes, books, toys, car air filter, computer, computer hardware, amplifiers, golf equipment, life jacket, wet suit, printer, and so on.

Respondents were asked to describe stimuli that influenced their impulse purchases on the Internet. See Table 2 for a summary of the responses. The responses demonstrate that images, banner advertisements, price, and special offers can all be stimuli for impulse purchases. Most of the respondents also indicated that there was a hedonic element related to a good mood would be more conducive to impulse purchasing and Internet browsing. Statements suggest good moods are conducive to shopping on-line. However, some respondents expressed that they are indifferent to moods while browsing or shopping and a few have also mentioned that they are more prone to impulse purchasing when in a bad mood. Hence, the concepts of in-store browsing, online browsing, and mood states potentially could become increasingly relevant to understanding impulse purchasing behavior.

In our data collection, we also attempted to explore consumers' perception of shopping online versus in stores. See Table 3 for a summary of responses. In addition, concerns with purchasing in online retail stores such as security, credit card information, delivery, and inability to use sensory organs with products could inhibit consumers from impulse purchases online. Efforts on part of online retailers to convince the potential customers in specific, and everyone in general that the above concerns can be taken care of with sufficient technology and better service could help increase the confidence of potential customers to shop over the Internet.

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The introduction of online retailing and diffusion of marketing innovations (Rook 1987; Rook and Gardner 1993) such as 24-hour retailing, telemarketing "cash machines", "instant credit", and home shopping networks make it increasingly easy for consumers to purchase products. As Stern (1962) pointed out, ease of buying is likely to increase impulse purchasing. Hence this paper has sought to analyze the extant research for unresolved issues and shortcomings, and broaden the concept of Impulse purchases to accurately capture all kinds of impulse purchase in the stores as well on the online.

The results of this exploratory study are consistent with the broadened conceptualization of impulse purchase behavior. The concept of "Exposure to Stimulus" is analyzed in detail and is broadened to include stimuli other than the product itself. This is important because if research is centered on product being the only stimulus and assumes that only physical proximity leads to impulse purchases then it fails to account for impulse purchases on the Internet. The findings suggest that impulse purchases exist on the Internet, and there are "stimuli other than the product", that cause the eventual impulse purchases.

Conforming with the analysis provided earlier in this paper, it is established that a strictly product or people orientation of impulse purchasing behavior is problematic as most people at one time or

TABLE 1
Impulse purchases online

1. Respondents' understanding of impulse purchases (n=263)	Relevant Components: Unplanned, un-researched 75% Response to stimuli 55% Change in intentions 43% Spontaneous / Immediate Reactions 66%
2. Of all the respondents,	Proportion who made impulse purchases over the Internet 22%
3. Of those who made impulse purchases over the Internet,	Proportion who made impulse purchases in a traditional retail store 100%
4. Of those who made impulse purchases over the Internet,	Proportion who browse for recreational purposes 97% Proportion who browse for informational purposes 100%

TABLE 2
External stimuli and mood influences of impulse purchases online

Relevant Issues with online impulse purchases	Sample answers by category
1. Stimuli responsible for impulse purchases over the Internet	Virtual customization of the product Reading the copy and viewing the graphics Appeal of the product, the extra discount that was given Ads on the Internet, or friend mention it, looks, benefits of having that product Advertisement on the web page Clicked on banner and ended up purchasing The product just jumped at me and said BUY ME, BUY ME NOW I liked what I saw Price Great price, couldn't have bought the item for less in town URLs in magazines Brother's suggestion Sales price, good deal
2. Influence of mood states impulse purchases over the Internet	Mood doesn't matter I am more apt to shop when in a good mood Good mood will make me want to buy something More carefree when in good mood Because I feel like doing something fun and exciting I feel better and willing to shop Feel like I need to buy something to better my mood...it gets your mind off things I really don't think my mood affects purchasing I don't think it matters Bad mood- don't feel like waiting for pages and pictures to browse or look through Mood is not a factor

another indulges in impulse purchases (Welles 1986). The findings are consistent with the problems that exist with strictly product or strictly people orientation of impulse purchasing behavior. However, the importance of avoiding speculation and accurately profiling impulsive and non-impulsive products if they so exist is noted for the purposes of better understanding the concept of Impulse purchases.

In addition, this paper incorporates variables such as in-store browsing (Beatty and Ferrell 1998), mood states (Rook and Gardner 1993) that influence impulse purchases. We then theoretically extended the application of these variables to impulse purchases on the Internet, as online retailing makes it easier for people to browse and respond to their respective mood states. The results support that both in-store browsing and mood states influence impulse pur-

TABLE 3
Impressions of online retailing

Relevant Issues with online retail stores	Sample answers
<p>1. Differences between traditional retail stores and online retail stores</p>	<p>Quality/Experience with the product Can tell quality when in a store In a retail store you can see and confirm quality and colors of product, on internet it can only be seen In the store you can actually see and feel the product On internet you are going on pictures. In the store you can try it on, feel the fabric Can't try things on Can't ask questions</p> <p>Selection/Delivery On the Internet you more likely to find exactly what you need On the Internet there isn't a guarantee of satisfaction and no instant gratification More selection Pay for shipping</p> <p>Ease/Convenience Not crowded, no lines, no salespeople Go at your own pace and no closing times No lines and shop in your underwear Took place of catalog shopping for me Quicker</p> <p>Impulse More likely to think through a purchase in a store Easier and faster, no salespeople and clutter</p> <p>Returns Not easy to return items</p>
<p>2. Concern with online retail stores</p>	<p>Security Auction sellers are crooks Credit card information Problem using credit card, afraid company will keep charging my card and send me more stuff Credit card fraud Worried about abuse and misuse of credit cards</p> <p>Returns Returning items, clothes don't fit</p> <p>Delivery Delivery time Time it takes to actually get the product</p>
<p>3. Mood influences on browsing</p>	<p>Good mood, I'm not on computer when in bad mood Generally good mood– browsing is recreational Mood doesn't really affect browsing If I'm in a bad mood, I don't have the patience to browse I like the internet so mood is not a factor A bad mood makes me feel like I need to buy something Affects browsing retail sites– browse less in bad mood</p>

chases on the Internet. Furthermore, consumers suggest online retailing makes it easier to make impulse purchases. Yet, perceptions of quality and experience with the product are not as realistic online. Online retailers, according to our respondents, offer ease and convenience but security and returns are a concern. Our conceptualization brings together all the elements that go into making an impulse purchase and is differentiated from all earlier definitions of Impulse purchases.

It is important to note that this is an exploratory study. The limitations include: (1) the use of a convenience sample (2) this study was exploratory and descriptive and thus not generalizable; and, (3) this discussion and findings are somewhat speculative and we would require methodological variations and replication to make more evidence available in support of broadening the concept of impulse purchases. However, this study brought forth some significant findings that provide a robust platform for future research. With reference to online impulse purchasing behavior, results suggested that: (1) impulse purchases are reflected in change in intentions due to response to stimuli; (2) In addition to the product, there are other stimuli that may influence consumers, which will then affect impulse purchasing; (3) Atmospheric cues are likely to influence impulse purchases; (4) Mood and affect may influence consumers' desire to use the Internet and their subsequent desire to make online purchases impulsively; (5) Positive hedonic experiences are related to impulse purchases online.

The advent of Internet makes it easier than ever before for consumers to buy impulsively. Researchers should pay particular attention to the tremendous role that Internet can play in facilitating easier and interesting browsing opportunities, opening newer possibilities for immediate gratification based on mood states, and providing hedonic shopping environment.

Hence, future research needs to spend more time and renewed efforts on broadening the concept of impulse purchases to accommodate impulse purchases in the retail stores and as well as on the Internet. Also, research would benefit from paying individual attention to the concepts of exposure to stimuli (other than product), browsing the Internet for recreational or informational purposes, and mood states. Consequently experimental studies (For example, experimenting with different retail web-sites with different stimuli to measure stimuli to explore implications for web-page layouts), structured quantitative studies would greatly enhance our overall understanding of impulse buying phenomena in traditional retail stores as well as online.

In addition, research paying specific attention to stimuli such as (1) graphics, text, pop-up windows, audio, color, e-mail, streaming video, and organization and grouping of merchandise for online retail stores; and (2) price specials, coupons, product usage demonstrations, store layout, and store atmospherics for traditional retail stores could contribute immensely towards our understanding of impulse purchasing behavior. Also, influence of website effectiveness elements on impulse purchasing behavior could be studied. However, researchers should note the possibility that in case of some products (food, clothing) customers still rely on experiencing the product on a multisensory basis (taste, sound, smell, scent).

REFERENCES

- Alba J., Lynch J., Weitz B., Janiszewski C., Lutz R., Sawyer A., and Wood S. (1997), "Interactive home shopping: consumer, retailer, and manufacturers incentives to participate in electronic market places", *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 61 No. 3, pp. 38-53.
- Anderson, P.F. (1983), "Marketing, Scientific Progress, and Scientific Method", *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 47, Fall, pp. 18-31.
- Applebaum, W. (1951), "Studying Consumer Behavior in Retail Stores", *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 16, October, pp. 172-178.
- Assael, H. (1985), *Marketing Management: Strategy and Action*, Belmont, CA: Kent, pp. 127-135.
- Beatty, S. E. and Ferrell M. E. (1998), "Impulsive Buying: Modeling Its Precursors", *Journal of Retailing*, Vol. 74 No. 2, pp. 169-191.
- Belk, R.W. (1984), "Applications of Mood Inducement in Buyer Behavior", *Advances in Consumer Research*, Vol. II, ed. Thomas Kinnear, Provo, UT: Association for Consumer Research, pp. 544-547.
- 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.
- Childers, T.L., Carr C.L., Peck J., and Carson S. (2001), "Hedonic and utilitarian motivations for online retail shopping behavior", *Journal of Retailing*, Vol. 77, 2001, pp. 511-535.
- Clark, M. S. and Isen A. M. (1982), "Toward Understanding the Relationship Between Feeling States and Social Behavior", pp. 73-108 in Albert Hastorf and Alice Isen (Ed.), *Cognitive Social Psychology*, New York: Elsevier / North Holland.
- Clover, V. T. (1950), "Relative Importance of Impulse Buying in Retail Stores", *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 25, July, pp. 66-70.
- Cobb, C. J. and Hoyer W. D. (1986), "Planned Versus Impulse Purchase Behavior", *Journal of Retailing*, Vol. 62, Winter, pp. 67-81.
- Consumer Buying Habits Studies*, E.I. Dupont de Nemours and Co., 1945, 1949, 1954, 1959, 1965.
- Cox, K. (1964), "The Responsiveness of Food Sales to Shelf Space Changes in Supermarkets", *Journal of Marketing Research*, Vol. 1, May, pp. 63-67.
- Deshpande, R. (1983), "Paradigms Lost: On Theory and Method in Research and Method in Marketing", *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 47, Fall, pp. 101-110.
- Dittemar, 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.
- _____, and John D. (2000), "Self-image- is it in the bay? A qualitative Comparison between 'ordinary' and 'excessive' consumers", *Journal of Economic Psychology*, 21, pp. 109-142.
- Donthu, N. and Garcia A. (1999), "The Internet Shopper", *Journal of Advertising Research*, 1999, pp. 52-58.
- Drugstore Brand Switching and Impulse Buying*, New York: Point of Purchase Advertising Institute, 1963.
- Engel, J. F., Blackwell R., and Kollart D. T. (1978), *Consumer Behavior*, Hinsdale, IL: Dryden Press.
- Eroglu, S. A., Machleit K. A., Davis L. M. (2001), "Atmospheric Qualities of Online Retailing: A Conceptual Model and Implications," *Journal of Business Research*, November, Vol. 54 Issue 2, pp.177-184.
- Frued, S. (1920/1949), "Aspects of Development and Regression", *A General Introduction to Psychoanalysis*, New York: Perma Giants, pp. 297-312.
- Gardner, M.P., and Rook D. (1988). "Effects of Impulse Purchases on Consumers' Affective States", in *Advances in Consumer Research*, Vol. XV, Ed. M. Houston, Provo, UT: Association for Consumer Research, pp. 127-130.

- Gardner, M.P. (1985), "Mood States and Consumer Behavior: A Critical Review", *Journal of Consumer Research*, 12 (December), pp. 281–300.
- _____, (1987), "Effects of Mood States on Consumer Information Processing", *Research in Consumer Behavior*, Ed. Jagdish Sheth, pp. 113–135.
- Goldenson, R.M. (1984), *Longman Dictionary of Psychology and Psychiatry*, New York: Longman.
- Han, Y. K., Morgan G. A., Kotsiopulos A., and Komg-Park J. (1991), "Impulse Buying Behavior of Apparel Purchasers", *Clothing and Textiles Research Journal*, Vol. 9, Spring, pp. 15–21.
- 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.
- Heslin, R. and Johnson B. T. (1985), *Approach to Life Scales Manual*, West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University.
- Kaplan, A. (1964), *The Conduct of Inquiry*, San Francisco: Chandler.
- Katona, G. and Mueller E.(1955), *The Dynamics of Consumer Reactions*, New York: New York University Press, pp. 30–88.
- Kipnis, D. (1971), *Character Structure and Impulsiveness*, New York: Academic Press.
- Kollat, D. T. and Willet R.P. (1967), "Consumer Impulse Purchasing Behavior", *Journal of Marketing Research*, Vol. 4, February, pp. 21–31.
- _____ and _____ (1969), "Is Impulse Purchasing Really A Useful Concept in Marketing Decisions?", *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 33, January, pp. 79–83.
- Kotler, P. (1974), "Atmospherics as a Marketing Tool", *Journal of Retailing*, Vol. 49 No. 4, Winter, pp. 48–64.
- Kroeber-Rile, W. (1980), *Konsumentenverhalten*, Munich: Vahlen.
- Mead, E. (1981), "Impulse Control and Cognitive Functioning in Lower-and-Middle SES Children: A Developmental Study", *Merrill-Palmer Quarterly*, Vol. 27, July, pp. 271–285.
- Patterson, L. W. (1963), *In-Store Traffic Flow*, New York: Point-of-Purchasing Advertising Institute.
- Peter, J.P. and Olson J.C. (1983), "Is Science Marketing?", *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 47 No. 4, pp. 111-125.
- Phypers, J. M. (1970), "Delay of Gratification and Adjustment in Elementary School Children", *Dissertation Abstract International*, 30, pp. 4796–4797.
- Piron, F. (1991), "Defining Impulse Purchasing", *Advances in Consumer Research*, Vol. 18, pp. 509–514.
- Puri, R. (1996), "Measuring and Modifying Consumer Impulsiveness: A Cost-Benefit Accessibility Framework", *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, Vol.5 No. 2, pp. 87–113.
- Reich, W. (1925), *The Impulsive Character and Other Writings*, New York: The New American Library.
- Rook, D. W. (1987), "The Buying Impulse", *Journal of Consumer Research*, Vol.14, September, pp. 189–199.
- Rook, D. W. and Fisher R. J. (1995), "Normative Influences on Impulsive Buying Behavior", *Journal of Consumer Research*, Vol. 22, December, pp. 305–313.
- Rook, D. W. and Gardner M. P. (1993), "In the Mood: Impulse Buyings' Affective Antecedents", pp. 1–28 in Janeen Arnold-Costa and Russell W. Belk (Eds.), *Research in Consumer Behavior*, Vol. 6, Greenwich, CT: JAI press.
- 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.
- Rosen K.T., and Howard A.L. (2000), "E-retail: gold rush or fool's gold?", *California Management Review*, Vol. 42, spring, pp. 72-100.
- Runyon, K. E. (1977), *Consumer Behavior and the Practice of Marketing*, Charles E. Merrill Publishing Co., Columbus, OH.
- Stern, H. (1962), "The Significance of Impulse Buying Today", *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 26, April, pp. 59–63.
- Sultan, F. (2002), "Consumer reponse to the Internet: an exploratory tracking study of on-line home users," *Journal of Business Research*, Vol. 55, pp. 655-663.
- Welles, G. (1986), "We're in the Habit of Impulsive Buying", *USA Today* (May 21), 1.
- Weinburg, P., and Gottwald W. (1982), "Impulsive consumer buying as a result of emotions," *Journal of Business Research*, Vol. 10, pp. 43-57.
- Weun, S. , Jones M. A., and Beatty S. E. (1998), "The Development and Validation of the Impulse Buying Tendency Scale", *Psychological Reports*, 82, pp. 1123–1133.
- West, J. C. (1951), "Results of Two Years of Study into Impulse Buying", *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 15, January, pp. 362–363.
- Winshie, H. (1977), *The Impulsive Personality*, New York: Plenum Press.
- Wolman, B. (1973), *Dictionary of Behavioral Science*, New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold.