



# ASSOCIATION FOR CONSUMER RESEARCH

---

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

## **Measuring the Antecedents of Impulsive Buying Behavior on the Www**

Arne Floh, WU Wien, Austria

Maria Madlberger, WU Wien, Austria

Literature review of existing impulsive buying research shows a significant lack of studies explaining unplanned purchases of online shops. This paper tries to fulfill this gap by measuring the antecedents of impulsive buying. Additional explaining factors like technical constraints or browsing suggested by the IS literature are added into the causal model. The results of a pilot study show satisfactorily local fit indices indicating high construct validity of the used scales. The supposed hypotheses of the causal are only partially confirmed. The authors suggest conducting further studies focusing on different product categories and personal characteristics.

### **[to cite]:**

Arne Floh and Maria Madlberger (2007) , "Measuring the Antecedents of Impulsive Buying Behavior on the Www", in NA - Advances in Consumer Research Volume 34, eds. Gavan Fitzsimons and Vicki Morwitz, Duluth, MN : Association for Consumer Research, Pages: 650-749.

### **[url]:**

<http://www.acrwebsite.org/volumes/12715/volumes/v34/NA-34>

### **[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/>.

information processing styles, a good mood will lead to the heuristic thinking approach, because people with a heuristic thinking approach evaluate events based on available and applicable heuristics and employ less cognitive effort and capacity. On the contrary, a bad mood will lead to the systematic thinking approach, and people with a systematic thinking approach process information in a more analytical style; they analyze events more rationally and don't give judgments based solely on environmental cues.

Furthermore, people with different information processing styles will exhibit varied responses to marketing messages. This study suggests that people with different information processing styles pay attention to different product attributes, meaning that when shopping in a store or making purchasing decisions, the importance and attractiveness of the product attributes will change as the consumers' information processing styles change. Product attributes have been dichotomized into intrinsic and extrinsic cues (Olson and Jacoby 1972): intrinsic attributes are the physical composition of the product, for example, color, texture and size. Extrinsic attributes are external to the product, such as brand name, advertising, and brand image (Olson and Jacoby 1972). Obviously, the evaluation and comparison of intrinsic attributes among several products requires more cognitive labor, while using extrinsic attributes, for example, brand reputation, to determine which to buy requires less cognitive resources. Therefore, it is proposed that the consumers who employ heuristic thinking tend to pay more attention to extrinsic attributes, while the consumers who employ systematic thinking tend to be concerned more with intrinsic attributes.

In this study, the influences of mood on the consumers' cognition of product attributes are examined. All the 60 respondents were randomly assigned to the three experimental conditions: good, bad, and neutral mood. Short films were then applied to elicit good, bad, and neutral moods. After seeing the 2 minutes short movies, all respondents were told to complete questionnaires about their favorite movie styles and movie-watching behaviors as the experimental filler—the purpose of the filler was to avoid the respondents guessing the objective of this study. When the questionnaires were completed the experimenter asked them to help with an “unrelated survey”—the digital camera purchasing decision survey. In the questionnaire, several intrinsic and extrinsic attributes were listed, and respondents were asked to evaluate the importance of every attribute to their purchasing decisions.

The data of this research show that the consumers in a good mood are inclined to focus on extrinsic attributes more than intrinsic attributes ( $t=2.21, p=0.0453$ ); the consumers in a bad mood are inclined to pay more attention to intrinsic attributes ( $t=-2.33, p=0.0352$ ). For the neutral mood respondents, there is no difference between the intrinsic and extrinsic attributes in their decision weight ( $t=-0.12, p=0.9401$ ).

Therefore, this study shows that moods do indeed influence the cognition of product attributes via differing information processing approaches. A good mood results in concerns about extrinsic attributes, whereas a bad mood results in a focus on the intrinsic attributes. This is a meaningful and useful result that can be extended to advertising and market research, for example, the effect of retail settings, the service quality of waiters, or the advertisement context on mood and attitude.

## Measuring the Antecedents of Impulsive Buying Behavior on the WWW

Arne Floh, WU Wien, Austria

Maria Madlberger, WU Wien, Austria

### Introduction

Marketing practitioners have long realized the importance of impulsive consumer actions and use new technologies like collaborative filtering to enhance unplanned cross- and upselling. Amazon.com, for example, generated 23% of its sales from purchases made by suggesting customers' products which “similar” customers had already bought (Economist, 2000).

However, marketing scholars have not spent much attention on this research topic. Madhavaram and Laverie (2004) state a significant deficit in conceptual and empirical research concerning online impulsive buying behavior. This gap is surprising given the fact that online shopping is an easily mode for making unplanned purchases (Donthu & Garcia 1999).

The purpose of this paper is to: (1) review and analyze existing research (2) broaden and adopt the concept of impulsive buying to the online shopping environment (3) discuss different antecedents of unplanned purchases on the internet and (4) present exploratory research findings of a pilot study.

### Conceptual Framework

Impulsive buying is defined as a purchase decision made within the store without an explicit recognition of a need for this purchase before entering the store (Abratt & Goodey, 1990; Bellenger, Robertson, & Hirschmann, 1978). Basically, the four main factors can be distinguished to have a direct or indirect influence on impulsive buying behavior. Most of them have been subject to thorough analysis in store-based retailing (Kollat & Willet 1967; Rook 1987; Youn & Faber 2000), but have not been validated in an online shopping context:

The relevance of in-store *marketing stimuli* for unplanned purchases is evident (Belk, 1975; Kollat & Willet 1969; Rook 1987). Possible stimuli of an e-retailer are banners, pop-ups and newsletters. We add electronic marketing stimuli to our model and suggest a positive effect of banners, pop-ups etc. on impulsive buying behavior. [H1]

*Situational factors* are environmental conditions that surround the buying process and may hinder or favor unplanned purchases (Stern, 1962). Situational factors are diverse constraints at the time of the purchase as well as the individual's current mood (Dholakia, 2000). The authors suggest a negative influence of constraints on impulsive buying behavior and differ between technical (registration, online payment systems) and other constraints (time, money). [H2]

*Personal factors*: In their article from 1986, Cobb and Hoyer pointed out that early impulsive buying research had widely neglected the role of consumer characteristics. In social sciences research, impulsivity trait has been identified as an appropriate dimension of impulsive behavior (Plutchik & van Praag, 1995). We suppose a positive effect of impulsive trait on impulsive buying behavior. [H3]

*Technical factors:* This category of influencing factors has been added due to different characteristics of online shops compared to an offline in-store environment (Adelaar et al., 2003). The authors suggest including website quality and browsing as additional explaining variables (Seethamraju, 2004). Both variables have a supposed positive effect on impulsive buying behavior [H4, H5]

### Method

This study is based on a focus group with frequent online shoppers, followed by a data collection using a web questionnaire. The focus group shows (1) the high practical relevance of impulsive buying in online shopping (2) the important role of constraining factors (3) the most frequent unplanned product categories purchased in an online shop (books, CDs and DVDs). Afterwards, an email was sent out to 2,000 students. 290 completed the questionnaire. However, only 91 students quote online impulsive behavior in the past.

### Results

All used items and scales meet the recommended levels of fit indices (Hair, Anderson, Tatham, & Black, 1995): (1) substantially high positive factor loadings (2) indicator reliability above .4 (3) factor reliability higher than .6 (4) values greater than 0.5 for the average variance extracted and (5) GFI above .9 (6) RMSEA below the recommended upper limit of 0.08.

Standardized regression weights are significant at .01-level, supporting all hypotheses except H3. Based on these results, we conclude that the model has been validated successfully and can be seen as appropriate for the explanation and prediction of online impulsive buying behavior.

### Summary

Literature review of existing impulsive buying research shows a significant lack of studies explaining unplanned purchases of online shops. This paper tries to fulfill this gap by measuring the antecedents of impulsive buying. Additional explaining factors like technical constraints or browsing suggested by the IS literature are added into the causal model. The results of a pilot study show satisfactorily local fit indices indicating high construct validity of the used scales. The supposed hypotheses of the causal are only partially confirmed. The authors suggest conducting further studies focusing on different product categories and personal characteristics.

### References

- Abratt, R., & Goodey, S. D. (1990). Unplanned Buying and In-store Stimuli in Supermarkets. *Managerial and Decision Economics*, 11, 111-121.
- Adelaar, T., Chang, S., Lancendorfer, K. M., Lee, B., & Morimoto, M. (2003). Effects of media formats on emotions and impulse buying intent. *Journal of Information Technology*, 18, 247-266.
- Belk, R. (1975). Situational Variables and Consumer Behavior. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 2(December), 157-164.
- Bellenger, D., Robertson, D. H., & Hirschmann, E. C. (1978). Impulse Buying Varies by Product. *Journal of Advertising Research*, 18(December), 15-18.
- Cobb, C. J., & Hoyer, W. D. (1986). Planned versus impulse purchase behavior. *Journal of Retailing*, 62, 67-81.
- Dholakia, U. M. (2000). Temptation and Resistance: An Integrated Model of Consumption Impulse Formation and Enactment. *Psychology & Marketing*, 17(11), 955-982.
- Donthu, N., & Garcia, A. (1999). The Internet Shopper. *Journal of Advertising Research*, May-June, 52-58.
- Economist, T. (2000). E-Commerce: Shopping Around the World. *February*, 26, 5-54.
- Hair, J., Anderson, R. E., Tatham, R. L., & Black, W. C. (1995). *Multivariate Data Analysis with Readings* (Fourth Edition ed.). Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall.
- Kollat, D. T., & Willet, R. P. (1967). Consumer Impulse Purchasing Behavior. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 4(February), 21-31.
- Kollat, D. T., & Willet, R. P. (1969). Is Impulse Purchase Really A Useful Concept in Marketing Decisions? *Journal of Marketing*, 33(January), 79-83.
- Madhavaram, S. R., & Laverie, D. A. (2004). Exploring Impulse Purchasing on the Internet. *Advances in Consumer Research*, 31, 59-66.
- Plutchik, R., & van Praag, H. M. (1995). The nature of impulsivity: definitions, ontology, genetics and relations to aggression. In E. Hollander & D. Stein (Eds.), *Impulsivity and aggression* (pp. 7-24). New York: John Wiley & Sons.
- Rook, D. W. (1987). The buying impulse. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 5, 87-113.
- Seethamraju, R. (2004). *Measurement of user-perceived web quality*. Paper presented at the 12 th European Conference on Information Systems (ECIS), Turku, Finland.
- Stern, H. (1962). The Significance of Impulse Buying Today. *Journal of Marketing*, 26(April), 59-63.
- Youn, S., & Faber, R. J. (2000). Impulse Buying: Its Relation to Personality Traits and Cues. *Advances in Consumer Research*, 27, 179-185.

## Uncertainty, Virtual Consumption, and Prolonged Happiness

Cheng Qiu, National University of Singapore, Singapore  
Yih Hwai Lee, National University of Singapore, Singapore

### Abstract

People generally dislike uncertainty. However, recent research shows that uncertainty associated with positive events may actually prolong people's happiness. The present research further suggests that whether an uncertain positive event (e.g., winning a lucky draw