INFLUENCE OF LIFESTYLE AND CULTURAL FACTORS ON CONSUMER IMPULSE BUYING BEHAVIOUR

Abu Bashar¹, Krishana Kumar Saraswat²
1, 2: Assistant Professor, IILM Academy of Higher Learning, Greater Noida, U.P, India.

Abstract

Impulsive buying is one of most researched area in consumer research recently, managers are putting every effort to understand the factors and formulate strategies to sell more and more on impulse. The main purpose of this study is to understand and predict the impact of cultural values and life styles on impulse buying behavior of customers. Survey methodology has been used to collect the data by adopting convenient sampling technique. An empirical method with appropriate statistical tests has been used to analyze the collected data. The T-test indicates that gender role is the only one variable of cultural values and life style of customers where significant difference exists between male and female customers while making impulse buying behavior. Correlation test is used to analyze the relationship among the variables of cultural values and life style; the results suggest that there exists significant relation among all the variables of cultural values and life styles. The results also suggest that impulse buying behavior is predicted by security, life satisfaction, gender role, financial satisfaction, in group contact and life style variables of cultural values and lifestyles of consumers.

Keywords: Cultural factors, Group contacts, Impulsive buying, Consumer behaviour, Buying Decision, individualism, gender role, life style variables.

*Corresponding author: *Abu Bashar¹

INTRODUCTION

Impulsive consumer buying behavior is a widely recognized phenomenon in the United States. It accounts for up to 80% of all purchases in certain product categories (Abrahams, 1997; Smith, 1996), and it has been suggested that purchases of new products result more from impulse purchasing than from prior planning (Sfiligoj, 1996). A 1997 study found that an estimated $4.2 billion annual store volume was generated by impulse sales of items such as candy and magazines (Mogelonsky, 1998). Paco Underhill, author of *Why We Buy: The Science of Shopping* (1999), affirms that many purchases are being made on the premises of stores themselves as customers give in to their impulses. Furthermore, technologies such as television shopping channels and the Internet expand consumers’ impulse purchasing opportunities, increasing both the accessibility to products and services and the ease with which impulse purchases can be made.

Impulsive buying behavior is a sudden, compelling, hedonically complex purchasing behavior in which the rapidity of the impulse purchase decision process precludes thoughtful, deliberate consideration of all information and choice alternatives (Bayley & Nancarrow, 1998; Rook, 1987; Thompson, Locander, & Pollio, 1990; Weinberg & Gottwald, 1982). This description is largely based on interviews and surveys of Westerners. The growth of e-commerce and the increasing consumer orientation of many societies around the world offer expanding occasions for impulse purchasing, but little is known about impulsive buying behavior in non-Western societies.

Most of the research on impulse buying focuses on consumers in the United States. A few studies have looked at consumers in Great Britain (Bayley & Nancarrow, 1998; Dittmar, Beattie, & Friese, 1995; McConatha, Lightner, & Deaner, 1994), and South Africa (Abratt & Goodey, 1990) and have found that United States consumers tend to be more impulsive than comparable British and South African samples. However, none of these studies examined explicitly the effect of cultural factors on impulse buying behavior.

1. **Literature Review**

*Impulse buying* is defined as “an unplanned purchase” that is characterized by “(1) relatively rapid decision-making, and (2) a subjective bias in favor of immediate possession” (Rook &
Gardner, 1993, p. 3; see also Rook, 1987; Rook & Hoch, 1985). It is described as more arousing, less deliberate, and more irresistible buying behavior compared to planned purchasing behavior. Highly impulsive buyers are likely to be unreflective in their thinking, to be emotionally attracted to the object, and to desire immediate gratification (Hoch & Loewenstein, 1991; Thompson et al., 1990). These consumers often pay little attention to potential negative consequences that may result from their actions (Hoch & Loewenstein, 1991; Rook, 1987; see also O’Guinn & Faber, 1989).

Previous research conducted in the United States and Great Britain (individualist cultures) has shown that many factors influence impulsive buying behavior: the consumer’s mood or emotional state (Donovan, Rossiter, Marcoolyn, & Nesdale, 1994; Rook, 1987; Rook & Gardner, 1993: Weinberg & Gottwald, 1982), trait buying impulsiveness (Puri, 1996; Rook & Fisher, 1995; Weun, Jones, & Beatty, 1998), normative evaluation of the appropriateness of engaging in impulse buying (Rook & Fisher, 1995), self-identity (Dittmar et al., 1995), and demographic factors, such as age (e.g., Bellenger, Robertson, & Hirschman, 1978; Wood, 1998).

Several studies demonstrate the effect of consumers’ moods and affective states on impulsive buying behavior. Rook and Gardner (1993) found that consumers’ positive moods were more conducive to impulsive buying than negative moods, although impulse buying occurred under both types of moods. Beatty and Ferrell (1998) also found that a consumer’s positive mood was associated with the urge to buy impulsively, while the impulse buyers in Weinberg and Gottwald’s (1982) study were more “emotionalized” than nonbuyers. Donovan et al. (1994) discovered a positive association between consumers’ feelings of pleasure in the shopping environment and impulse buying behavior. In each of these studies, pleasurable feelings led to increased unplanned spending.

Cognitive, clinical, social, developmental, and consumer psychologists have studied the general trait of impulsiveness and impulse control (Eysenck & Eysenck, 1978; Eysenck, Pearson, Easting, & Allsopp, 1985; Helmers, Young, & Pihl, 1995; Hilgard, 1962; Logue & Chavarro, 1992; Logue, King, Cavarro, & Volpe, 1990; Mischel, 1961; Puri, 1996; Rawlings, Boldero, & Wiseman, 1995; Rook & Fisher, 1995;
Weun et al., 1998). Trait impulsiveness is characterized by unreflective actions (Eysenck et al., 1985) and is significantly correlated with thrill-seeking (Weun et al., 1998), and the psychological need to maintain a relatively high level of stimulation (Gerbing, Ahadi, & Patton, 1987). Rook and Fisher (1995) recently developed a nine-item measure of trait buying impulsiveness that was significantly correlated with impulse buying behavior. In addition, they found that consumers’ normative evaluation of the appropriateness of engaging in impulse buying in a particular situation moderates an individual’s trait impulsiveness. Specifically, when consumers believe that impulse purchasing is socially acceptable, they act on their impulsive tendencies, but when it is socially unacceptable these tendencies may be thwarted. The literature on compulsive shopping (Elliot, 1994), self-gifts (Mick, DeMoss, & Faber, 1992), and impulse purchases (Dittmar et al., 1995) highlights the role of perceived social image and the expression of self-identity in the purchase decision. Dittmar et al. (1995) hypothesized that impulse purchases were more likely to be items that symbolize the preferred or ideal self and as such should be affected by social categories such as gender. They argued that women value their possessions for emotional and relationship-oriented reasons, whereas men value their possessions for functional and instrumental reasons. The results of the study supported their hypothesis: Men reported more personal (independent) identity reasons for their purchases whereas women reported more social (relational) identity reasons.

An individual’s impulsive behavior tendencies have also been related to demographic characteristics such as a consumer’s age. Based on a national sample of adults in the United States, Wood (1998) found an inverse relationship between age and impulse buying overall. However, the relationship is non-monotonic — between the ages of 18 and 39 impulse buying increases slightly and thereafter declines. This is consistent with Bellenger et al. (1978) who found that shoppers under 35 were more prone to impulse buying compared to those over 35 years old. Research on trait impulsiveness indicates that younger individuals score higher on measures of impulsivity compared to older people (Eysenck et al., 1985; Helmers et al., 1995; Rawlings et al., 1995) and demonstrate less self-control than adults (Logue & Chavarro, 1992).

Most of researchers’ findings are that positive moods facilitate impulsive buying, but a few researchers also found that “negative” moods also facilitate impulsive buying (Gardner & Rook, 1987) Negative moods adversely affect “self control”, therefore, the individual fell prey to
Impulsive buying (Herman & Polivy, 2004). Consumer in negative mood turns to purchasing with the hope that this would alleviate their unpleasant mood (Mick & Demoss, 1990). Researchers have found a relationship between age and impulsive buying. Impulsive buying tends to increase between the ages 18 to 39, and then it declines thereafter (Bellenger & Robertson & Hirshman, 1978). An inverse relationship was found between age and impulsive buying. It was also found that the relationship is non monotonic. It is at a higher level between age 18 to 39 and at a lower level thereafter (Wood, 1998).

A relationship between gender and income was also found. Men and Women relate the material possession differently. The research demonstrates that women preference is for items related to elemental values, while men preference is for items related to leisure and finance. The reasons for the respective preference were that women value their possessions for “emotional” and “relationship” reasons. Men on the other hand value their possession for “functional instrument reasons”. It was also found that the men purchase items for personal identity reasons (independent). Women on the other hand make purchase for social identity reasons (Ditmar et al, 1995).

Impulsivity is a personality trait defined as a tendency towards acting without forethought, making quick cognitive decisions, and failing to appreciate the circumstances beyond the here and now (Barratt, 1993). It is one of those dimensions of individual differences that are frequently associated with the biological bases of personality; a state involving non-specific physiological activation and the non-directional component of alertness (Anderson and Revelle, 1994). For over fifty years, consumer researchers have strived to form a better definition of impulse buying.

Early studies on impulse buying stemmed from managerial and retailer interests. Research in this vein placed its emphasis on the taxonomic approach to classifying products into impulse and non-impulse items in order to facilitate marketing strategies such as point-of-purchase advertising, merchandising, or in-store promotions. This approach is limited by a definitional myopia, which simply equates impulse buying to unplanned purchasing (Bellenger et al., 1978; Kollat and Willet, 1967; Stern, 1962). Impulsive buying has been defined as the spontaneous or sudden desire to buy something, and when compared to more contemplative approaches to
decision-making, is considered emotional, reactive, and “prone to occur with diminished regard” for the consequences (Rook, 1987: 191).

Hence these studies show that not only culture, life style but many other factors influence the consumer impulse buying behaviour. Tirmiziet al. (2009) defined that only the pre-decision stage affect the impulse buying and show a weak association with others factors like fashion involvement, consumer’s life style and post decision stage of consumer behaviour. A recent research was conducted by Yang et al (2011) find that different buying situations lead to different impulse buying behaviours like as when consumers enjoy shopping, they go for more impulse buying or if they have a lot of time, they go for more impulse buying.

On the basis of the literature, following research question was made.

**Research question:** How much variance in impulsive buying can be accounted for by cultural and lifestyle factors?

**Hypothesis**

The hypotheses formulated after review of the literature are given below:

H1: There is significant relationship between the variables of cultural values and lifestyles of customers.

H2: There exist significant gender differences among the cultural values and lifestyles of customers.

H3: Cultural values and lifestyles of Indian customers have significant impact on impulsive buying behaviour of customers.

The testing of the hypotheses is confined to the primary data collected from the area of Delhi & NCR.
1. Methodology

The purpose of the study is to analyze the degree of association and dependence between cultural & lifestyle factors and impulse buying behaviour of consumer in Delhi & NCR. For this a questionnaire was developed to collect the data. First part of the questionnaire was taken from the study of Sun et al. (2004) to measure the cultural values and lifestyles of the customers while the second part of questionnaire was taken from the study of Rook and fisher (1995) to measure the impulsive buying behaviour.

The data was collected from the respondents of Delhi & NCR and convenient sampling technique was used. A total of 300 questionnaires were distributed and only 250 useable responses were collected back for the analyzing the data.

The sample characteristics are somewhat different from those samples which are normally witnessed in Western studies in terms of gender distribution and age. For the analyses of data statistical software SPSS 16 was used.

2. Research Results and Discussions

Reliability

Reliability is defined as the uniformity of results while measuring the items of research repeatedly (Kim et al, 2004). Later on, Hair et al. (2007) suggests different acceptable values of Cronbach’s alpha for the measurement of reliability of the scale. According to him the value of $\alpha$ <0.06 is poor, the value of $\alpha$ ranges from 0.60 to <0.70 is moderate, the value of $\alpha$ ranges from 0.70 to <0.80 is good, the value of $\alpha$ ranges 0.80 to <0.90 is very good and the value of $\alpha$ more than 0.90 is excellent. The calculated value of $\alpha$ which is 0.765, depicting the good reliability of the scale.

Independent sample T-test was used to understand the differences among the customer’s cultural values and lifestyle as indicated in table 1.
Table 1: Independent Sample T-Test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Life Satisfaction</td>
<td>3.44</td>
<td>.068</td>
<td>.528</td>
<td>405</td>
<td>.598</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Satisfaction</td>
<td>.008</td>
<td>.930</td>
<td>1.482</td>
<td>406</td>
<td>.154</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lifestyle</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.992</td>
<td>.504</td>
<td>404</td>
<td>.615</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Orientation</td>
<td>.050</td>
<td>.587</td>
<td>1.362</td>
<td>404</td>
<td>.174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Influence</td>
<td>.295</td>
<td>.882</td>
<td>.123</td>
<td>406</td>
<td>.902</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender Roles</td>
<td>.887</td>
<td>.347</td>
<td>6.632</td>
<td>405</td>
<td>.107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Security and Stability</td>
<td>.553</td>
<td>.466</td>
<td>1.373</td>
<td>406</td>
<td>.171</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Significant at 0.05 level (two tailed).

The T-test table indicates that gender role is the only one variable of cultural values and life style of Indian customers where significant difference exist between male and female customers while making impulse buying behaviour which is significant at p <.001. Coley and Burgess (2003) studied that gender differences play a vital role in cognitive and affective impulse buying. They also found that Gender affects differently on buying decisions, because male and female have different psyche to do things, hence, they make decisions in different styles.

A simple correlation test was used to understand the relationship among the constructs of cultural values and life styles of consumers as shown in table 2.
### Table 2: Correlation Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Life Satisfaction</th>
<th>Financial Satisfaction</th>
<th>Lifestyle Influence</th>
<th>Group Influence</th>
<th>Family Orientation</th>
<th>Gender Roles</th>
<th>Security and Stability</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Life Satisfaction</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Satisfaction</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>.256**</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lifestyle</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>.273**</td>
<td>.259**</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Influence</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>.150**</td>
<td>.190**</td>
<td>.178**</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Orientation</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>.179**</td>
<td>.029</td>
<td>.128*</td>
<td>.124*</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender Roles</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>.090</td>
<td>.145**</td>
<td>.048</td>
<td>.231**</td>
<td>.174**</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Security and Stability</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>.252**</td>
<td>.125*</td>
<td>.237**</td>
<td>.102*</td>
<td>.211**</td>
<td>.235**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).
A simple Pearson Correlation test is used to analyze the relationship among the variables of cultural values and lifestyle, the results suggest that there is significant relationship among all the variables of cultural values and life styles. All variables are significant at the 0.01 level and 0.05 levels (2-tailed) as shown in table 2.

Multiple regression analysis was used to analyze the impact of cultural values and life styles on impulse buying behaviour of customers. The results are shown in table 3.

**Table 3: Regression Co-efficient**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>β</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Collectivist and individualist Lifestyle values</td>
<td>.104</td>
<td>2.158</td>
<td>.032</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>.170</td>
<td>3.569</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life Satisfaction</td>
<td>.182</td>
<td>3.766</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Satisfaction</td>
<td>.141</td>
<td>3.013</td>
<td>.003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lifestyle</td>
<td>.057</td>
<td>1.217</td>
<td>.224</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Influence</td>
<td>.093</td>
<td>1.972</td>
<td>.049</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Security and Stability</td>
<td>.121</td>
<td>2.521</td>
<td>.012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$R^2$</td>
<td>.235</td>
<td>17.069</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjusted $R^2$</td>
<td>.221</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Dependent variable is impulsive buying behavior

The results suggest that impulse buying behaviour is predicted by security, life satisfaction, gender role,
financial satisfaction, in group contact and life style. The results table 3 are indicating the strength of security (β=0.121; P<0.05), life satisfaction (β=0.104; P<0.05), gender roles (β=0.093; P<0.05) financial satisfaction (β=0.170; P<0.001), in group contact (β=0.141; P<0.05), and Life style (β=0.182; P<0.01), and in predicting the impulse buying behaviour among customers. Most of these variables are also predicted by Sarki et al., (2012) while predicting the cultural values and lifestyle on meaning of branded products.

3. Conclusion

The purpose of the research was to understand the influence of consumer’s individualist and collectivist values and life styles impulse of buying behaviour. This research concludes that the some constructs such as Gender role construct of cultural values and lifestyles of respondents vary across genders. This clarifies that role of gender is clearly described in Indian culture.

The results indicated that cultural values and lifestyles of respondents had significant relationship among all the variables of reference group influence. The study also found that constructs of the cultural values and lifestyles (life satisfaction, financial satisfaction, life style, in group contact, gender role and security) had significant impact on the impulsive buying behaviour of indian consumers.

Several important limitations must be kept in mind when considering the results of this study. The use of a small sample in the region of Delhi & NCR is an obvious limitation here. Moreover, it is necessary to replicate the findings using a large and dispersed sample of consumers.

Overall, this study has attempted to develop our understanding of the causes of impulse buying behaviors. This behavior may well stem from several different causes that include cultural and lifestyle factors as one of the most important among it. The result so concluded shows that the study is logical and have enough worth to study further extensively.
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