

THE INFLUENCE OF AFFECT AND COGNITION ON IMPULSE BUYING BEHAVIOR

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Abstract: The purpose of the study is to investigate the impulse buying tendency of the consumers while taking into consideration their self-perception in order to enrich the literature and provide new points of view for managerial use. The design of the study consists of a questionnaire administered to a total of 284 university students, adapting existing scales to Turkish context. The scales of affective and cognitive tendency showed high internal reliability and are used in the analysis. The findings revealed that impulse buying is purely affective and does not have any significant correlation with the used demographic variables. These results emphasize the importance of emotional shopping environment and the use of affective components in marketing campaigns for firms as well as the determination of these affective components for the researchers.

Keywords: *Impulse Buying, Impulse Buying Tendency, Buying Behavior, Consumer Behavior*

DUYGUSALLIK VE BİLİŞSELLİĞİN PLANSIZ SATIN ALMA DAVRANIŞINA ETKİSİ

Özet: Bu çalışmanın amacı, yazını zenginleştirmek ve yönetsel kullanım için yeni bakış açıları sağlamak üzere, tüketicilerin kendilerini algılayışlarını göz önüne alarak plansız satın alma davranışı eğilimlerini incelemektir. Çalışmanın araştırma tasarımı, diğer çalışmalarda kullanılan ölçekleri Türk tüketicisine uyarlayan, toplamda 284 üniversite öğrencisi üzerinde gerçekleştirilmiş bir anket çalışmasından meydana gelmektedir. Duygusal ve bilişsel eğilim ölçekleri yüksek iç tutarlılık, güvenilirlik göstermiş ve analizlerde kullanılmışlardır. Bulgular, plansız satın alma davranışının tamamen duygusal olduğunu ve demografik özelliklerle bir ilişkisi olmadığını göstermiştir. Bu sonuçlar, firmalar için duygusal alışveriş ortamı yaratmanın ve pazarlama kampanyalarında duygusal unsurların kullanımının önemini vurgularken, araştırmacılar için de bu duygusal unsurların saptanmasının önemini vurgular.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Plansız Satın Alma, Plansız Satın Alma Eğilimi, Satın Alma Davranışı, Tüketici Davranışı*

I. INTRODUCTION

In today's world, retailers know that a certain percentage of their sales are made to consumers who buy in response to a sudden impulse. The competition in every industry is getting fiercer so even minor differences between shoppers are becoming important for firms in their efforts to better target consumers. The impulse buying behavior tendency alters from consumer to consumer and the affective and cognitive decision processes play an important role even during an impulsive purchase [1].

Impulsive buying behavior as a function of affect and cognition has been used in many research as a framework to study the relationship between affect and cognition. In his study, Youn argued that if the affective state overcomes cognition during decision making, impulsive buying behavior becomes more likely [2]. So, impulse buying behavior, characterized by an urge to buy or feelings of pleasure and excitement, consists of unplanned and sudden purchases [3]. The decision to buy occurs when the person sees the item and cognitive and affective forces are initiated at the same time [4].

Accordingly, the impulse buying behavior, defined as the discretionary purchase of goods and services by consumers without prior planning or explicit buying intentions [4, 21], is very important for firms trying to boost sales as Bellenger et al. showed in their study that 38.7% of department store purchases are made impulsively [5]. The high incidence of impulse buying behavior is also reported in other studies showing that almost 90 per cent of consumers make purchases on impulse occasionally [6] and between 30 per cent and 50 per cent of all purchases can be classified by the buyers themselves as impulse purchases [7]. Consistent with the results of these studies and the given importance of impulse buying for increasing sales and for better targeting customers, marketing researchers, have developed scales to measure consumers' generalized impulse purchasing tendency in order to better understand and predict impulse buying [8,9]. Impulse buying tendency can be defined as the degree to which an individual is likely to make unintended, immediate, and unreflective, impulsive purchases. Consumers with a high impulse buying tendency have a general tendency to purchase items of all product categories on impulse. Thus, most of the studies on impulse buying tendency used

scales without specifying a particular product category [3].

During decision making, the action or reaction to stimuli is processed affectively, cognitively or both. This process of thoughts and emotions and differences in consumer behavior are of great interest to firms that are actively seeking methods to benefit from the impulse buying tendency in their marketing activities. Thus, the impulse buying tendency and the way the consumer classifies himself/herself are interesting areas of investigation. This study will enrich the existing literature and provide future research areas as well as insights and hints for managerial use to better understand and use the impulse buying characteristics. The study will continue with a brief literature review, the methodology then the results and the implications of these results will be discussed followed by the conclusion part.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Kollat and Willet, the meaning of impulse purchase varies from study to study [10]. Consequent to the various operationalization of impulse buying and the definition of impulse buying, findings regarding impulse buying have been inconsistent [11]. In their study of operationalization of impulse or unplanned purchasing, Cobb and Hoyer suggested the comparison of the items that a customer planned to buy before they enter a store and the items that they actually purchased [7]. However, Rook, positioned impulse buying as the powerful and persistent urge to buy something immediately [1]. Each of these definitions depicts the essence of impulse buying; however, they are still criticized by many researchers.

Beatty and Ferrell suggested that impulse buying was a sudden and immediate purchase with no pre-shopping intentions either to buy the specific product category or to fulfill a specific buying task [12]. The behavior occurs after experiencing an urge to buy and it tends to be spontaneous and without a lot of reflection. Such a buy is possibly but not necessarily followed by a feeling of regret or a perception that one's self-control failed [19].

Rook introduced the personal trait of buying impulsively and argued that a relationship exists between impulsiveness, personality characteristics and general consumer behavior [1]. Thus, the impulse buying tendency indicates that some people have a greater likelihood of making an impulse purchase more than others. Coley and Burgess, also found that females and males differ in their affective and cognitive processes of impulse buying [20]. In that manner, consumers seeing themselves as impulse buyers can be more prone to impulsive buying. Further support was offered by Rook and Fisher's and Beatty and Ferrell's research, which

revealed a significant relationship between impulse buying tendency and actual impulse buying behavior [3,12].

However, Puri indicated that there are not any specific items that are likely to be purchased more impulsively than others, because impulse buying behavior may be influenced by many intervening variables [8]. Accordingly, he also suggested that an impulsive trait and impulsive behavior is moderated by consumer's evaluations about the appropriateness of the behavior. Moreover, the impulse buying tendency and actual purchasing behavior are different constructs, such that the tendency for buying impulsively does not necessarily lead a person to actually conduct impulse buying. So, even if an individual's personality trait is capable to strongly influence his or her tendency to engage in impulse buying behavior a number of other factors are likely to interfere with the completion of impulse buying behavior intentions.

Although, there are other factors which can play an important role during the purchasing process, this study focuses on impulse buying tendency and the personal impulsive trait in order to shed light to the impulse buying phenomenon.

In addition to the impulse buying tendency, there is also a need to take into consideration some personal factors that affect consumers purchasing behavior and decisions. As mentioned previously, consumers may have a personal tendency to engage in impulse buying. So, the influence of the individual personality, the way that the consumer sees himself/herself as an impulse buyer may also play an important role in consumers' impulse purchase behaviors.

III. METHODOLOGY

An impulse purchase is more frequent in younger adults and a level of education beyond high school level is significantly associated with impulse buying behavior [13]. Consequently, in order to investigate the affective and cognitive processes of impulse buying and compare consumers according to their impulse buying attitude, the final questionnaire was administered to a sample of graduate and undergraduate university students. The initial questionnaire was modified and developed after a pretest realized on a sample of 24 students. Finally, a researcher visited each class and discussed the purpose and objectives of the study, answered questions and collected the completed questionnaires. A total of 304 questionnaires were collected but 20 questionnaires were removed due to incompleteness, leaving a final sample of 284 students with complete and usable questionnaires.

Several demographic questions were asked of each respondent including gender, age, estimated monthly

family income, number of family members, shopping frequency and one question about whether the subject sees himself/herself as an impulse buyer. Table 1 shows the demographic characteristics of the sample.

In the second section of the questionnaire, using existing literature and especially Verplanken and Herabadi [14] affective and cognitive aspects of impulse buying tendency are measured. The cognitive aspect is related to lack of planning in association with purchase decisions, and the affective aspect is associated with feelings of excitement and urges to buy. Items from this study, which related to affective and cognitive aspects, were chosen because of the generality of their nature and representation of each variable as suggested in the literature. Responses to these items were measured using five-point Likert scales, varying from strongly disagree to strongly agree (Strongly disagree=1, Strongly agree=5). Some items were recoded such that high values indicate a high impulse buying tendency. This section of the questionnaire represents an adaptation of the Verplanken and Herabadi [14], impulse buying tendency scale to the Turkish context and both the cognitive (Cronbach alpha: 0,82) and affective (Cronbach alpha: 0,85) scales showed high internal reliability.

In order to provide more stringent results, a t-test analysis was applied to affective and cognitive scales to test if the individuals varied in their tendency to act impulsively. The question about the self perception of the individuals was used to obtain two groups of subjects perceiving themselves as being impulsive buyers or not. This question is also used to test if the individuals perceiving themselves as an impulsive buyer are more emotional and affective than the others and it will be confirmed whether impulsive buying is tied to reflexes and feelings and to personality as in many research such as Youn and Faber [15] or there is still a cognition involved in the impulse buying process. To add more details to that point, demographic characteristics were also used to compare the two groups according to these characteristics to expand the analysis.

IV. RESULTS

Men comprised 62% of the sample and this can be explained by the proportion of the men to women in the classes where the questionnaire was administered but although the proportion is unequal it is still acceptable for the types of statistical tests used in the analyses. The average age of the sample is 22,35 (st.dev. 1,99) and it varies between 19 and 33. Concerning the education level, 95% of the sample is formed of graduate or undergraduate students. Taking age into consideration 95% of the sample is not married. In addition, more than 55% of the sample has a monthly disposable income more than 3.000TL level with 30% shopping everyday or at least once a week. Finally, the average number of people living

in the household is 4. Based on previous research demonstrating relationship between demographic characteristics and impulse buying [16, 13] it can be affirmed that the sample shows a good demographic pattern for the study.

Table.1. The Demographic Characteristics of the Sample

Gender	N	%	Marital Status	N	%
Female	108	38	Married	14	5
Male	176	62	Not married	270	95
Age	Number of family members				
18-22	100	35,2	2	11	3,9
23-26	142	50	3	60	21,1
27-30	21	7,4	4	139	48,9
30+	21	7,4	5	42	14,8
Education level			5+	32	11,2
Undergraduate	150	53	Shopping frequency		
Graduate	120	42	Everyday	28	9,9
Other	14	5	Once a week	58	20,4
Monthly family income level (TL)			Once in two weeks	70	24,6
0-1000	25	8,8	Once in a month	78	27,5
1001-2000	55	19,4	Less than once in a month	50	17,6
2001-3000	48	16,9	Impulsive buyer		
3001-4000	76	26,7	Yes	146	51,4
4001-5000	56	19,7	No	138	48,6
5000+	24	8,4			

In order to test the difference between impulse buying tendency, firstly the sample was regrouped according to the self perception of the individuals and continued with the t-test to see if the means of the items in the scales differed significantly for these two groups (impulsive buyer N=146, Non impulsive buyers N=138). Consistent with many previous studies [15], the means of the items for affective facet of the impulsive behavior were significantly higher. The only exception being that the significance value for the affective item no. 9 is bigger than .05 but since it's only one item, it does not change the overall aspect. The means and the t-test results for cognitive and affective items are represented in Table.2 and Table.3 respectively.

Table.2. T-test Results for Cognitive Scale

Cognitive items		Mean	Std. Dev.	t	t-Test sig.
1. I usually think carefully before I buy something	Impulsive buyer	1,83	1,02	0,88	.123
	Non impulsive buyer	1,80	0,83		

Table.2. T-test Results for Cognitive Scale (cont.)

Cognitive items		Mean	Std. Dev.	t	t-Test sig.
2. I usually only buy things that I intended to buy	Impulsive buyer	1,80	1,08		
	Non impulsive buyer	1,76	0,83	1,13	.157
3. If I buy something, I usually do that spontaneously	Impulsive buyer	3,03	1,13		
	Non impulsive buyer	2,75	1,26	1,26	.675
4. Most of my purchases are planned in advance	Impulsive buyer	3,18	1,00		
	Non impulsive buyer	3,17	1,07	0,95	.321
5. I only buy things that I really need	Impulsive buyer	3,04	1,09		
	Non impulsive buyer	3,21	0,99	0,15	.133
6. It is not my style to just buy things	impulsive buyer	2,88	1,16		
	Non impulsive buyer	3,16	1,28	1,11	.978
7. I like to compare different brands before I buy one	Impulsive buyer	3,90	1,03		
	Non impulsive buyer	4,11	0,90	1,13	.432
8. Before I buy something I always carefully consider whether I need it	Impulsive buyer	2,35	0,94		
	Non impulsive buyer	2,04	0,78	0,18	.736
9. I am used to buying things 'on the spot'	Impulsive buyer	3,22	1,12		
	Non impulsive buyer	2,90	1,12	0,14	.077
10. I often buy things without thinking	Impulsive buyer	3,05	1,11		
	Non impulsive buyer	2,85	1,11	0,55	.098

Table.3. T-test Results for Affective Scale

Affective items		Mean	Std. Dev.	t	t-Test sig
1. It is a struggle to leave nice things I see in a shop	Impulsive buyer	3,43	1,16		
	Non impulsive buyer	2,86	1,19	3,62	.004
2. I sometimes cannot suppress the feeling of wanting to buy something	Impulsive buyer	3,38	1,16		
	Non impulsive buyer	2,83	1,22	4,49	.000
3. I sometimes feel guilty after having bought something	Impulsive buyer	3,12	1,21		
	Non impulsive buyer	2,64	1,23	2,92	.001
4. I'm not the kind of person who falls in love at first sight with things I see in a shop	Impulsive buyer	3,37	1,16		
	Non impulsive buyer	2,07	1,03	3,87	.000
5. I can become very excited if I see something I would like to buy	Impulsive buyer	3,17	1,20		
	Non impulsive buyer	2,13	1,16	4,83	.021
6. I always see something nice whenever I pass by shops	impulsive buyer	3,81	1,07		
	Non impulsive buyer	3,01	1,11	3,53	.020
7. I find it difficult to pass up a bargain	Impulsive buyer	3,90	1,25		
	Non impulsive buyer	3,00	1,17	3,84	.000
8. If I see something new, I want to buy it	Impulsive buyer	3,08	1,09		
	Non impulsive buyer	2,70	1,10	3,22	.044

Table.3. t-test Results for Affective Scale (cont.)

Affective items		Mean	Std. Dev.	t	t-Test sig
9. I am a bit reckless in buying things	Impulsive buyer	3,16	1,09	1,47	.082
	Non impulsive buyer	2,68	1,17		
10. I sometimes buy things because I like buying things, rather than because I need them	Impulsive buyer	3,03	1,28	4,78	.031
	Non impulsive buyer	2,46	1,26		

To test whether the impulsive buying behavior is completely tied to affective process and doesn't represent any amount of cognitive involvement, it was decided to continue the analysis with t-tests and correlational analysis using demographic characteristics. Surprisingly, impulse buying behavior did not correlate to any of the demographic variables. This is important since both academic and general sources imply strong gender and income effects on the buying process therefore this result showing a lack of demographic variables represents a contribution.

V. DISCUSSION

In order to investigate the impulse buying tendency of the consumers according to their self-perception, the study adapted the scales of affective and cognitive tendency which showed high internal reliability. The scales were based on two sets of items, which refer to cognitive and affective aspects of impulse buying respectively. Cognitive facet concerns the lack of planning and deliberation during shopping. Affective facet concerns feelings of pleasure and excitement, an urge to buy. The analysis revealed that impulse buying is purely affective, and the feeling of wanting to buy something (item 2), the excitement (item 5) and the liking (item 10) are the strongest items. So, the affective facet is more related with feelings and emotions, in that way, the impulse purchase might be a way to deal with emotions. These results also emphasize the importance of emotional shopping environment and the use of affective components in marketing campaigns.

The study also showed that impulse buying behavior wasn't in correlation with any of the demographic variables. Although many research imply that demographic factors are affecting the impulse buying decisions [20, 22, 23] the correlational analysis showed

no significant differences in terms of demographic variables. This result doesn't support the literature. An explanation may be the sample used in the study. But, it seems important to keep on focusing on demographic variables in impulse buying, because these might also reflect more fundamental underlying processes [11,16].

VI. CONCLUSION

Drawing on previous research, this study affirms that impulse buying is purely affective and is not related to demographic variables. This could be explained by the fact that consumers buy products for non-economic reasons, such as fun, fantasy, and social or emotional gratification. For this reason, previous researchers conclude that impulse buying is irrational. Besides affective and demographic variables, there are undoubtedly other situations and personality factors that motivate impulsive buying.

Previous research has advanced the notion that consumers differ in their general tendency to purchase items on impulse. Accordingly, several scales have been developed to measure consumers' overall impulse buying tendency [3,8,9,17]. The current study adapted the Verplanken and Herabadi [14] study on impulse buying tendency scale to the Turkish context with a high internal reliability.

The study's findings suggest several implications for the industry. The impulsive buying behavior is related to the affective facet and seems to be a pure affective phenomenon so it is very important for the retailers to create an emotionally positive shopping environment. Accordingly, academic researchers should determine more precisely the components of the affective process. These affective components may also be used in store signage and advertisements to trigger impulsive buying emotion.

One possible concern with the present study might be the question of generalizability, due to the use of a student sample. A number of researchers have suggested that the lack of external validity inherent in using a student sample limits the generalizability of results [18]. However, student samples are fairly representative of the increasingly important young adult market segment. Nevertheless, especially considering the fact that relatively little previous research exists in this domain; it might be desirable to replicate the present findings in a representative sample of adult consumers. Future research should wipe out this concern. Future research should also examine the individuals self esteem in depth to gain a more complete understanding of the impulsive buyers. Since, using a single question of self perception of the individual may be problematic due to error in the measurement of this construct. Yet, due to the unique nature of impulse buying researchers often rely on single

question to measure this behavior such as Beatty and Ferrell [12] and Rook and Fisher [3].

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