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# IMPULSE BUYING BEHAVIOR AMONG WORKING LADIES: A LITERATURE REVIEW

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**Abstract:** Impulse buying behavior is used to be an interesting issue to be figured out by many researchers and marketers, among consumer behavior's studies. Increased access to education and employment opportunities are improving the social status and economic independence of women. There is no doubt that women are driving the world economy. Provided with various marketing techniques and innovations, it is much easier for consumers to buy impulsively, thus it is worthwhile to look in details how these marketing factors trigger impulse buying and which of them exerts the greatest effect. This research aim is to investigate how extrinsic cues affect the impulse buying behavior amongst working ladies. The five extrinsic cues involved in this research are price, store atmosphere, brand reputation, country of origin and social influence. This research is providing useful information to the marketers of Malaysia's apparel industry in understanding consumers' needs deeper in order to contribute in the growth of their business. Target population of this study is full-time working ladies, aged between 16 to 35 years. Due to large population, sampling of 400 questionnaires was distributed in One Utama shopping mall, Selangor. Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) was used to analyzed the data collected. It was found that price, store atmosphere and social influence are having significant relationship with impulse buying behavior among working ladies while brand reputation and country of origin of product are not.

**Keywords:** Impulse Buying Behavior, Working Ladies, Extrinsic Cues, Apparels

#### Introduction

In this highly competitive market, being able to sustain a place in customers' mind and profitability becomes the focus of a business. Customer is always the core of a business, therefore consumer buying behavior is an essential key component to succeed (Sundstrom, Balkow, Florhed, Tjernstorm & Wadenfors, 2013; Veeerayeekenna & Latha, 2016). Growth in consumer spending is given a rise due to increasing affluence, blooming of retail strategy and the ease in technology accessibility (Bellman, 2015). Today, shopping has mostly meant for sense of pleasure and self-fulfilment, arising the growth and significance of impulse buying behavior (Mittal, Chawla & Sondhi, 2016).

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Issue may arise during economic downturn as consumers tend to be cautious in spending during recession (Puzzanghera, 2016). Yet the fact that some business boomed during recession proves it in another way, by capitalizing on timely technology or latched on to powerful trends that defy the recession. Tupperware and Coleman are well-demonstrated businesses which are able to gain benefit from recession. (Newman, 2009) This is supported by Quelch (2008), that economic downturn is not going to stop consumer spending. The key is to study the needs of consumers thoroughly and adapt the strategies to the market trend.

### **Problem Statement**

Impulse buying is not only extraordinal phenomenon, it actually influences retailer's profit even accounts up to 80% of the sales revenues (Lewis, 2013; Lim & Yazdabifard, 2015). A study shows that more than half of shoppers in malls were found to buy impulsively, indicating that impulse buying is significant to retailers' profit (Dawson & Kim, 2009). It gives opportunities to the marketers to trigger the impulse buying among consumers in order to boost up the overall sales revenues, hence confirm that impulse buying behavior contributes a major role for modern retailers (Alton, 2016). As discussed that it is easier for consumers to buy impulsively, it is worthwhile to investigate in details how these marketing factors trigger impulse buying and which one exerts the greatest influence (Lee, Jeon, Li & Park, 2015).

The rate of female labor force participation has increased to 54.3% in 2016, implicates that women's participation is more than half of the total workforce (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2016). Increased access to education and employment opportunities are improving the social status and economic independence of women (Bernama, 2016; The Malaysian Economy in Figures, 2016). Females being involved in impulse buying is higher to males on average too (Seinauskiene, Mascinskiene & Jucaityte, 2015). Given the facts that economic growth is resulted by increase in number of working women, thus being economic independent leads to increase in their purchasing and spending power, which impels economical changes of a country (Cooney, 2017; Hayden, 2016). Showing these facts, it would be foolish to underestimate the female consumer (Luscombe, 2010).

Various studies have been conducted on this particular issue in western countries, however there is limited literature in the context of Malaysia. Therefore, there is a considerable gap in the existing literature. It may give different result due to culture differences as culture would vastly affect the empirical result of this research (Durmaz, 2014).

The primary objective of the study is to investigate on the factors influencing working ladies' impulse buying behavior. Currently, this area of study has gained attention and interest of many marketers and researchers globally (Ayadi, Giraud, & Gonzalez, 2013).

### **Importance of Research**

This research proposal will provide useful information to the marketers, retailers and advertisers of Malaysia's apparel industry to understand how these extrinsic cues influence impulse buying behavior of working ladies. Since consumers are the central focus of businesses, this study will help retailers to obtain further insight in understanding their consumers' needs deeper and utilize these cues to gain more consumers.

This study will help in developing the knowledge on this area of consumer behavior. It contributes to researcher in future who is interested to conduct the study on the field of impulse buying behavior.

### **Literature Review**

### Impulse Buying Behavior

Since after Clover started the study of impulse buying in the 1950, more and more researchers contributed to this area of study (Abratt & Goodey, 1990; Beatty & Ferrell, 1998; Hausman, 2000; Peck & Childers, 2006; Rook, 1987; Rook & Fisher, 1995; Rook & Gardner, 1993; Rook & Hoch, 1985; Stern, 1962). Beatty and Ferrell (1998) and Kotler (1974) extended research by exploring the precursors of impulse buying and examining how in-store browsing, influences impulse buying behavior.

Impulse buying in most circumstances is activated or triggered by the external cues, as the initiator of impulse. Thus, it is now important to understand the effect of various external factors which are not in controlled of the customer, on customer impulsivity (Kannan & Vinayagamoorthy, 2014).

The fundamental framework of impulse buying began with Stern (1962) study where buying behavior has been classified into planned, unplanned and impulse. Planned buying requires information searching and rational analysis, which takes longer time. In contrast, unplanned buying needs not advance planning. While impulse buying is different from the unplanned buying in terms of quick decision making. For impulse buying behaviour, it involves experiencing a sudden, strong, and irresistible urge to buy (Stern, 1962; Sundtrom et al., 2013).

Meanwhile, Stern (1962) further identifies impulse buying behavior into few types which includes pure, planned and reminded and suggestion impulse buying. Suggestion impulse buying was introduced by Han and his colleagues (Han, Morgan, Kotsiopulo & Kang-Park, 1991). He modified the Stern (1962) classification mix in context of fashion products and hence suggestion impulse buying also named as fashion-oriented impulse buying.

Planned impulse buying is purchase decisions made based on certain conditions including low price promotion of the product. Reminded impulse buying happens when shopper gets reminded the lack of certain goods, in the store. Suggestion impulse buying refers to purchase decision resulting from self-suggestion that the product is needed whereas pure impulse buying is sudden purchase which shoppers do not follow the usual purchase pattern (Madhavaram & Laverie, 2004; Muruganantham & Bhakat, 2013).

Consumers are generally not search for information and evaluate when having impulse buying. They browse products and start to have product awareness. During the time, they are exposed to various external stimuli which possibly able to trigger their desire to make purchases impulsively. (Muruganantham & Bhakat, 2013; Tinne, 2010).

There are various definitions on impulse buying, from the past, as an emotional, irrational, unplanned purchase that is characterized by relatively rapid decision-making without reflection and a subjective bias in favor of immediate possession (Bayley & Nancarrow, 1998; Beatty & Ferrell, 1998; Rook & Gardner, 1993) till now, as sudden and spontaneous purchase decision

with no prior intention to buy the specific product (Bhatti & Latif, 2014; Cho, Ching & Luong, 2014; Zeb, Ali & Iqbal, 2016)

As impulse buying behavior has become a significant issue, it is vital for retailers to focus on better understanding the consumers' mind in order to stay advantage in this competitive industry (Badgaiyan & Verma, 2014).

#### Price

An unexpectedly low price can be a factor to initiate impulse buying, letting shoppers to think that they are spending lesser than originally planned (Koschate-Fischer et al, 2012). In other words, it is referring to a good price, with different types of deals or discounts. Being able to get a product at discounted price, making shoppers to have strong positive feeling of wanting to seize the opportunity instead of letting it go (Sundstrom, et. al, 2013).

Price discount is an important factor of impulse buying and it is one of the most popular marketing promotion tactics as it is able to bring positive affective, which results impulse buying in return (Park, Kim, Funches & Foxx, 2012; Sundtrom et al., 2013). More specifically, consumers tend to be more impulsive whenever there are sales or price promotions. (Mahmud, Jusoff & Hadijah, 2013; Rizwan, Umair, Fiaz & Rashid, 2014). Hence, the cheaper price of a product is the main determinant to cause people purchase impulsively (Lim & Yazdabifard, 2015).

## Store Atmosphere

Store atmosphere is a particular shopping situation constituted by very important determinants to impulse purchases (Ramankutty, Babu & Venugopal, 2014). The various stimuli inside the store directly or indirectly influence the customer as different store atmosphere gives different store images in the mind of customers. (Chang, Yan & Eckman, 2013; Vonkeman, Verhagen & Dolen, 2017).

Some recent studies showed that the variables of the store atmosphere (sounds, views and odors) are important stimulus that is able to bring desire to buy impulsively (Graa et al., 2014; Samarin & Morini, 2012). Marketers could enhance the store layout to increase the convenience of the customers in store (Crawford & Melevar, 2003). Receiving good salespersons' retail service quality exhibit greater impulse buying and store revisit intention too (Huang, 2016; Pornpitakpan, Yuan & Han, 2017). Hence, a store environment with attractive atmospheric factors which exert a favorable influence on customers' mood (Chih, Hsi-Jui & Li, 2012; Osman, Ong, Othman & Khong, 2013), which in turn, affects impulse buying behavior (Leenders, Smidts & Haji, 2016).

# Country of Origin

Product country of origin gives consumers the overall perception on the product, produced from certain country, based on their previous experience or perception on the country's production (Roth & Romeo, 1992). Country of origin is a potentially powerful image variable that can be used to gain competitive advantage in international marketing (Parameswaran & Pisharodi, 1994). Country of origin is credited to impact consumers' evaluation of products (Sirgy, Johar, Samli & Claiborne, 1991). Finally, Samli (1995) summarizes well the phenomenon, stating that

the "COO concept is a critical information cue, which plays a major role in having the product accepted in different world markets."

## **Brand Reputation**

Duarte et al. (2013) claimed that product brand is one of the factors triggering impulse buying because of the brand's message delivered. It was saying that customers rely heavily on brands in order to evaluate on the product information such as quality and genuineness so to keep them protected. Massage conveyed will affect customers' brand preference. It eventually increases positive affect that consumers feel, which stimulates impulse buying (Liapati, Assiouras & Decaudin, 2015).

# Social Influence

Studies were done indicated that opinion-based social interactions which provide review quality and source credibility are efficient in causing impulsive purchase (Yu & Bastin, 2010; Zhang, Hu & Zhao, 2014). Number of people purchasing a deal signals people's interest in it. Given a large number of shoppers, customers may judge the product as a good deal and may be pleased to have it (Ju & Ahn, 2016). It means when the market share of the product could reach to people around the consumer, it can be one of the contributors to impulse buying.

Studies found that social presence influences a consumer's pleasure and arousal (Guido, 2006; Hassanein & Head 2006). It was reaffirmed in study of Borges, Chebat, and Babin (2010), which found that consumers express significantly more positive affect when shopping with a companion due to the reason that peers' comments are highly valued by shoppers (Lai, 2017). Hence, more impulse purchasing occurs given a social presence (Ju & Ahn, 2016).

#### **Framework**

Price

Dependent Variable

Store Atmosphere

Impulse
Brand Reputation

Country of Origin

Social Influence

Figure 1.1. Conceptual Framework of Research

The above proposed conceptual framework reveals the purpose of this study on how the extrinsic cues can affect the impulse buying behavior of working ladies. Relationship between five independent variables (IV) and dependent variable (DV) will be tested.

### Methodology

In order to fulfil the research objectives and solve the research questions, quantitative approach is used to explain the relationship between the independent variables (price, brand reputation, country of origin, store atmosphere and social influence) and dependent variable (impulse buying behavior). There is no sampling frame in this study, hence purposive sampling under non-probability sampling techniques is chosen. 400 questionnaires will be distributed to full-time employed ladies, aged from 16 to 35 years, in the largest mall in the state of Selangor – One Utama Shopping Mall (Caitlyn, 2014).

### **Conclusion**

This research article provides the preliminary understanding on background of the research study and reviews of prior studies conducted. It is noticeable that the working ladies are playing a very important role in driving the world economy with their growing purchasing power. This study aims to produce results which might be useful for further studies and reference to other researchers.

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