

STORE LOYALTY AND IMPULSIVE BUYING

Hina Rehman*

Assistant Professor, Department of Management Sciences
Assistant Professor, NUML, Islamabad.
hrehman@numl.edu.pk

Muhammad Zeeshan

PhD. Scholar, University Malaysia Terengganu, Malaysia
muhammadzeeshan_81@yahoo.com

Hamza Tahir

MPhil Scholar, School of Management Sciences
Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad
hamzatahirr@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

The objective of the study is to find out what factors trigger a customer to go for impulse buying decision. Previous researches show the relationship of different variables like situational characteristics i.e. availability of money, time and which make customers to go for impulsive buying. This research focuses on store environmental characteristics, loyalty of customers with the store, and emotions of the customers. The results of this study show a positive relationship between variables of store environment characteristics and store loyalty with the positive emotions of the customers and their direct impact also show a positive relationship with the impulsive buying. Both variables store loyalty and store environment characteristics have positive impact on customer positive emotions. Customer's positive emotions served as a mediating variable and results show a positive relationship which indicates a partial mediation. This study is helpful for retailers and companies to understand how customers are thinking these days. As this is observed those customers not only shop to fulfill the needs and wants but they shop to rewards themselves as well. Customers shop unplanned when they find their love brand well merchandized manner which reflects the original image of the brand.

Keywords: loyalty, buying, impulsive buying

INTRODUCTION

Impulsive buying refers to customer's behavior towards unexpected buying; this behavior is due to store environment or individual characteristics (Batty and Ferrell, 1998). Impulsive buying behavior is triggered by the store environment as design and interior of it, if the merchandizing is good enough that it attracts customers to visit all the shelves in the store and pay attention to products displayed in these shelves can create an urge in them to buy these products which they can avoid in normal circumstances.

Uniqueness of the store and its influence on the customer can lead customers to impulsive buying (Hulten, 2012). Outlook of the store plays a vital role to attract the attention of the customer. Store should be well designed that customer feels relaxed while visiting the store. Retailers need to take care of the store characteristics those include ambient, design and social interaction with employee (Milliman, 2000). One of the authors said that proper light and cleanliness of the store provide pleasure to customers which lead to impulsive buying (Kim & Kim, 2012). Retailers design the store in a way that customers feel interest while visiting the store by placing the routine products at the end so customers can have a look at other products that they might not need but they can have exposure of these available products.

Social interaction of the employees provides employees to engage customers and employees can give a reciprocal gift to customers. The relationship between employees and customers creates satisfaction and loyalty in customers (Hu & Jasper, 2006). Satisfied customers create positive word of

* hrehman@numl.edu.pk

mouth for the store and satisfied customers start spending more time in the store, the extra time customers spend in store provide employees a chance to create a social interaction with customers which create customer loyalty because customers feel importance for themselves while visiting the store.

Here in this study it is to explore that is there a connection of store loyalty exists impulsive buying behavior of the customers. Customers come in store to shop and they want that their visit results in a joyful experience. Employees of the store are very important for the customers as they can provide proper information to employees about where their required products are displayed. Customers feel importance and that will prolong their visit time in the store. These characteristics of the store trigger positive emotions in the customers and customer go for shopping more products which they have not planned. Emotions can be classified in to two categories one is positive and second is negative. Positive emotions of the customers are part of the study. Few years back customers keep in view about their needs and wants but know a day's people use to shop to give themselves reward which creates good feeling and they get emotional satisfaction (Pooler, 2003).

Customers with a good mood have a great tendency to go for impulsive buying. Customers shop to feel happy and this effort is to avoid the stress and problems they have in their daily routine of life. These stores have pleasant look and well decorated, these stores have loyal customers. This study provides the chance to the retail manager to know significance contribution of loyal customers of the stores and impulsive buying with mediating role of the customer positive emotions.

This study has seen only impact of store loyalty of the customer other factor like hedonic motivation and promotional schemes in the store can also be examined.

This study based on the theme provided by Chang (2014) that focuses on impulsive buying behavior with personal characterisitic and human behavior. Chang (2014) recommended to check the emotions of customers to test the impulsive buying behavior of the customers.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Impulsive Buying

Sometimes it happen that customers buy what they have not planned, customers made their mind suddenly and take decision to buy a product, this behavior refers to an urge to buy (Beatty and Ferrell 1998). Unplanned purchasing refers to impulsive buying of the customers and there are multiple reason and factors to go for the unintentional buying. Impulsive buying occurs with an urge to buy where customers purchase products without critically viewing the available option and make their decision in a hurry (Dholakia et al. 2005). There are so many other factors which can trigger the desire to purchase the product other than an urge to buy.

When an individual is so deliberate to purchase a product and it became an unusual situation for him or her and unplanned buying can occur. Impulsive buying is not only because of customer personality but there are some activities which are designed to attract customer and to make them to purchase what they avoid to buy. Customers get habitual of impulsive buying as marketing activities are based on to trigger the urge to buy in customers (Sharma et al., 2010).

Those customers who are want to evade perception as low self esteem or change in moods mostly negative have a trend to go for impulsive buying (Verplanken & Herabadi, 2001). Those customers who try to fell happy and to experience the self esteem experience the impulsive buying. Impulsive buying is an unplanned activity which is not based on a rational analysis of the available products. Impulsive buying is linked with an urge to buy which can be caused by feeling of thrill and delight (Beatty & Ferrell, 1998). If an individual is felling happy and his or her mood is good they prefer to buy more. When customers entered in any store, it is important to observe how much time they spend in a store, do they go to specific corners or shelves where routine or daily use products are available or they like to visit the other sides of the store as well. It is important for the retailers to make the outlook of the store impressive as customers like to spend more time in the store. It is the store characteristics which make customers to take interest in the products which are displayed in the store.

Previous researches propose that the store environment and retailer characteristics influence the customer behavior within the store and effect the customer future investment (Hulte, 2012). The physical location of the store plays a vital role in making customer to spend more time in the store. when customer enter in store and they found store environment neat and clean proper lightened and attractive it would made them to stay in the store for a longer period of time which give customers

chance to visit those areas and departments of the stores which they might not planned to visit. The extra time customers spend in store give them chance to go for unplanned buying.

Impulsive or unplanned buying is caused by so many factors which are explained by researchers as situational factors which create an urge to buy in customers. This urge is because of some situation which is created by the retailers and these different situations cause an abnormality in the behavior of the customer which leads to an unplanned buying. Personality of the customer also define the behavior of the customers as if someone is conscious about self esteem and don't want to let his or her self down has a high tendency towards impulsive buying. Mood and positive emotions of the customers also help to create an urge to buy which results in impulsive buying so feeling of pleasure and enjoyment can also lead to unplanned buying. Retailer always like to sell more to generate revenue which maximize their profitability, they try to create situations with the help of companies , physical outlook of the store and create bounding of customers with the store to make customers buy more.

Theoretical Framework

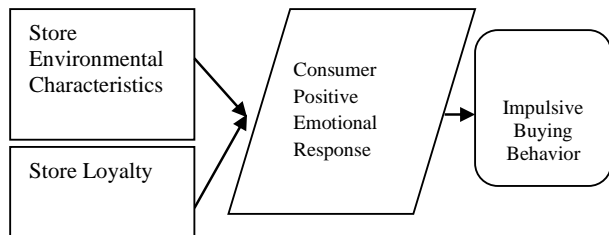


Figure 1 Theoretical framework of the study

Consumers’ impulse buying behavior represents behavioral response in the S-O-R paradigm. An expanded version of the S-O-R paradigm, which includes situational characteristics such as time availability, money availability, and task definition, is presented in proposed framework, the three characteristics of the store environmental (i.e. ambient, design, social) will influence consumers’ positive emotional responses to the environment, which in turn, impact impulse buying behavior.

Additionally, three situational variables are hypothesized to moderate the relationship between positive emotional responses to the store environmental characteristics and impulse buying behavior as Belk (1975) suggested.

Store Characteristics

Researchers explore that store characteristics impact on consumer behavior, and there are three different store characteristics (ambience, design, social) which impact on consumer behavior (Ailawadi & Keller, 2004). Store owners try to sell more to generate revenue for that reason they made their store attractive and well designed. To make store visits pleasurable for customers Ambient, design of store and social interaction of the employees with customers are the three characteristics of the store which make customer to go for impulsive buying (Turley & Millimam, 2000). These characteristics of store have impact on customer’s mood and emotions which make store a comfortable place where they can spend their time resulting in more purchase.

Ambience of the store refers to the non visual characteristics of the store which can be the cleanliness and lightening in the store (Baker et al., 1994). The clean environment provide customer to visit store with the fresh mind and during visit time it would please customers. Proper lightening of the store would high light the display of the companies (Areni & Kim, 1994). Customers feel pleasure because of the level of environment stimuli in the store (Kim & Kim, 2012). The cleanliness of the store help retailers to attract customers because it makes customers to feel happy and they consider their visit is not wasted. The Ambient characteristics of the store have a positive impact on the customers and it make customer to change their mood positively. Because of the surroundings of the environment customers react differently as impulsive buying (Mohan et al, 2013). Store environment is design to bring positive emotional response from the customers, these response are extra time spend in the store, impulsive buying and frequency of purchasing (Bellizzi & Hite, 1992).

The physical outlook which is tangible and customer can not feel it but can touch it make difference in mind of the customer, if the material of the shelves is good which have bright color and these shelves make merchandizing more attractive will catch the attention of the customer and the visit of these shelves make customer to buy the products. Proper and different design of the retail store can make difference as if the available product is targeting a class which is very low in number and they are

sensitive about how their desired brand is presented to them will make a difference in eyes of its customers. If a lavish brand is not treated well by the store it would destroy the brand image. Design element is the clear signals that show the relationship with customer buying intention (Bellizzi & Hite, 1992).

Social interaction of the employees is integral part of the store as customers need attention and store employees who are sales employees of the store have a direct link with the customers (Turley & Milliman, 2000). If the sales people of the store are likeable for the customers they feel at ease and the relationship is based on trust worthiness between them, this relationship help in creating loyalty and positive word of mouth (Hu & Jasper, 2006). The relationship with customers and store sales employees create a trust level which result in a social bounding. Store employees may not offer them a discount or other tangible gifts but they can offer reciprocal gift to their customers.

Store Loyalty

Customer store loyalty is considered as the frequency of purchase by the customers (DuWors & Haines, 1990). Repetition of the customer is a sign about the satisfied customers. If customer is satisfied he or she will like to revisit the store that shows the loyalty of the customer. A better relationship of the employees with customers is an investment for the store and if customers are happy with the attitude of the employee which leads into a social bounding with employees of the store by the customer in their mind (Landry et al., 2005). These satisfied customers are the loyal customers of the stores. The loyalty of the customers makes these customers to spend time in store with pleasure and during their visit because of their pleasure in shopping, customers buy some products which they have not planned to purchase. This behavior of unplanned shopping refers to impulsive buying behavior of customers which is made due to store characteristics and loyalty of the customers with store.

Retailers need to build a relationship with customer in order to make them loyal customer, so they create a culture in store that make their customers loyal. Three main outcomes of customer relationship are perceived relationship investment, loyalty, perceived relationship quality (De Wulf et al.'s 2001). Perceived relationship investment refers to how much store is willing to allocate its resources for relationship building with customer. If customers feel that store is putting its resources to satisfy customers need and wants their will be a psychological linkage with customers and store as social exchange theory refer it (Blau, 1964). Perceived relationship refers to how much customer is willing to continue relationship with the store and it is very much dependent how much efforts are being put by the store.

Customers get loyal with the store if they feel that store is fulfilling their need and want and they can fulfill their needs conveniently (Shoemaker & Lewis 1999). True customer loyalty is difficult to built and sustain if store don't take customer attitude in account (Kumar & Shah, 2004). Store loyalty is because of both attitude and behavior, so bogus or timely loyalty would not be taken as true and intentional loyalty (Dick & Basu1994). Loyalty cannot be measured with the frequency of visits and number of purchases. If customers are coming in store because of discounts their revisits cannot be taken as they are loyal with the store.

Positive Emotions of Customers

With the passage of time the concept on shopping is emerged, few years back customers keep in view about their needs and wants but nowadays people use to shop to give themselves reward which create good feeling and they get emotional satisfaction (Pooler, 2003). These shoppers feel different and they shop for thrill and after getting in to it they feel positive and happy. People do shopping to satisfy their selves and emotions, to improve their mood and forget their problems (Arnold & Reynolds, 2003).

When customers came to shop their visit to store is trigger by some thoughts and senses. This can be taken as a process and customers can think about hedonic and utilitarian benefits (Hirschman, 1984). Shopping can be categorize in to two aspects which is hedonic and second is utilitarian view point. Utilitarian shopping is concerned with what is the objective of the shopping and what quality of product they purchasing, how convenient is the trip to the store. Utilitarian shopping is related to rational decision making (Griffin et al., 2000). When customers entered in store they act according to what they planned and what they encounter in the store. SOR model explain the concept where stimuli came to customer mind and because of the store outer look and its environment, because of that encounter thoughts come to customers mind what they feel when they encounter the situation while entering the store. After the encounter and organism there is a response of the customers which is very much related to the situation in the store premises and that is the emotional state of the customer.

There are two types of emotions one is positive emotions and second is negative emotions (Isen, 1984). Positive emotions of the customer is explained by excitement pleasure which is because of customer pre existing mood, nature and the encounter with the current environment which impact on customer mood positively like desired products and their availability, sales promotions.

A consumer's emotional state impacts buying behavior. That is, positive emotion, such as excitement may positively influence impulse buying behavior. Consumers who are in positive emotional states are tending to experience less decision complexity and shorter decision times (Isen, 1984). Those customers who are with good mood and under the positive emotion don't go for the rational thinking and decide immediately which reduce the time and results in impulsive buying behavior. Customer with positive emotions is willing to spend more time in the store and extra money (Donovan & Rossiter, 1982). Customers with positive emotions have greater tendency to go for impulsive buying because they are the state of mind that they want to reward themselves, and they are feeling less controlled and they are with high level of energy (Rook & Gardner, 1993).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This was cross sectional and hypotheses testing study conducted to explore the impact of store loyalty on impulsive buying behavior of the student. The significance of the relationship was studied on the survey based primary data. The study includes the buying behavior of the departmental stores of Rawalpindi and Islamabad as Metro, Madina Cash and Carry, Punjab Cash and Carry Alfath Mall. The questionnaire was distributed to 200 customers of the hyper stores of twin cities Islamabad and Rawalpindi. This sample size was obtained by using the formula of Green (1991) $N > 50 + 8m$; $N > 50 + 8(2)$; $N > 50 + 16$; $N > 66$. Non-probability sampling method was used by the mostly researchers because it was used according to the interest of researchers in they can select the peoples of their interest and they can exclude as per their convenience. So, data was collected on non-probability convenience sampling technique from Rawalpindi and Islamabad retail stores. The questionnaire was one of the main tools to collect data from the respondents. The instruments were compromised of adapted items. To measure consumers' perceptions of retail environmental characteristics, researchers modified the scale developed by Baker et al. (1994) to include ambient, design, and social characteristics. This portion of the questionnaire asked consumers to evaluate retail environmental characteristics on a five-point Likert-type scale (strongly disagree to strongly agree).

The scale developed by Beatty and Ferrell (1998) is adapted to measure consumers' positive emotional responses. The scale developed by (Zeithaml et al.1996) is adapted to measure Customer loyalty with store. Customers will be ask to share what they think about the store from where they shop and will they do business with store for a long period of time, Customer will also sharing their thoughts about their satisfaction with the store and will they recommend this store to their friend to shop. The scale developed by Rook, Dennis W. and Stephen J. Hoch (1985) is adopted to measure response of customers about their buying behavior.

RESULTS

SEC → CUSTOMERS POITIVE EMOTIONS → IMPULSIVE BUYING

Mediation Analysis using Barron and Kenny (1986) (N=140)Store Environment Characteristics

Steps		R ²	Adjusted R ²	F	B	t
Step-1						
SEC (IV)	IB (DV)	0.262	0.256	48.87	.51	6.99
Step-2						
SEC (IV)	CPE (MV)	0.172	0.166	28.71	.41	5.35
Step-3						
CPE (MV)	IB(DV)	0.285	0.280	55.08	.53	7.42
Mediation						
SEC(IV)	IB(DV)	0.387	0.378	43.192	.35	4.76
CPE (MV)					.38	5.28

**p<0.01

All values of R square are varying above 0.7 which explains the model fitness. Values of F shows that the model is good enough to explain the hypothesis build to check the relationship of variables. Direct impact of store environment characteristics (SEC) is observed on impulsive buying of customer (IB) which has a t value of higher than 2 which is expectable and showing a significant impact of store environment characteristics on impulsive buying. Impact store environment characteristics on positive emotions (PE) shown a positive impact as t value is above than 2 so it can be stated as store environment characteristics have a significant impact on positive emotions of the customers. Mediating variable of positive emotions is treated as an Iv to check the impact of positive emotions of the customer on impulsive buying which is DV and results shows that a positive relationship exist between them as t value is above 2 which shows that a significant impact of positive emotions of the customer on impulsive buying.

In fourth step impact of store environment characteristic and positive emotions of the customers collectively checked on impulsive buying which explains that a positive relationship exist and t value is above 2 and both of these variables have a significant impact on impulsive buying as collectively they have a positive impact which shows a partial mediation exist between them. Partial mediation is occurring in this model after the analysis is done. Store environment characteristics, store loyalty was regressed on the impulsive buying which is dependent variable and results of that refers to a positive relationship with in these variables. Positive emotion of the customers was used as a mediating variable and it was regressed directly on dependent variable impulsive buying which shows a positive relationship. Store environment characteristics and store loyalty separately with combination of positive emotions of the customers was regressed on dependent variable impulsive buying, as collectively their impact on impulsive buying is positive partial mediation exist in this case, as not only independent variables have a positive impact on dependent variable but collectively with the mediating variable of positive emotions of the customers positive relationship was found. The analysis of these variable indicates a partial mediation.

** $p < 0.01$

All values of R square are varying above 0.7 which explains the model fitness. Values of F shows that the model is good enough to explain the hypothesis build to check the relationship of variables.

Mediation Analysis using Barron and Kenny (1986) (N=116) Store Loyalty

Steps		R ²	Adjusted R ²	F	B	t
Step-1						
SL (IV)	IB (DV)	0.283	0.278	54.463	.53	7.380
Step-2						
SL (IV)	CPE (MV)	0.236	0.231	42.695	.48	6.543
Step-3						
CPE (MV)	IB(DV)	0.285	0.280	55.08	.53	7.42
Mediation						
SL (IV)	IB(DV)	0.382	0.373	42.413	.35	4.641
PE(MV)					.36	4.696

Direct impact of store loyalty is observed on impulsive buying of customer which has a t value of higher than 2 which is expectable and showing a significant impact of store loyalty on impulsive buying. Impact of store loyalty on positive emotions shown a positive impact as t value is above than 2 so it can be stated as store loyalty has a significant impact on positive emotions of the customers. Mediating variable of positive emotions is treated as an IV to check the impact of positive emotions of the customer on impulsive buying which is DV and results shows that a positive relationship exist between them as t value is above 2 which shows that a significant impact of positive emotions of the customer on impulsive buying.

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CONCLUSION

This study identified the relationship between impulsive buying and other variables like store environment characteristics, store loyalty and positive emotions of the customers. The purpose of this study is to know what factors trigger the impulse buying behavior. Store loyalty taken as a new variable to check its relationship with impulsive buying. There are many reasons for customers to be loyal with the store and their loyalty cannot be judged by only viewing their frequency of visit to store and what amount they spend in store. It is also needed to observe at what time span customers visited the store. If their visit is at that times span when store was offering some discounts or trade offers, then that circumstances customers are not viewed as loyal customers of the store. Customers who start to advocate the store in front of their family, friends, peers and spread positive word of mouth are the loyal customers of the store.

The results of the study showed that all the above mentioned variables having positive relationship with the impulsive buying. Customers get chance to visit those areas and shelves of store which he or she might not visit when they spend more time in it. Stores are designed to attract customers to generate more revenue from it. Companies help retailers to achieve this objective in a way to merchandize their products well and catchy enough to attract customers. It is in the interest of companies that customers find a good and relaxing area to shop. Store loyalty in customers can not only observed through the money they spend in the store but it is to take care if customer are happy in visiting store and became the advocate of the store in front of their social circle are considered to be the loyal customers of the store. Emotions of the customers can be classified in positive or negative emotions. Positive emotions are considered in study to observe the relationship between emotions of the customers and impulse buying. Nowadays trend is change, now people shop to reward themselves rather than to satisfy their needed and want. When someone is in good mood he or she enter in the store have a great tendency to shop unplanned which leads to impulsive buying. Customer who are in good mood want to reward themselves as they might be happy because of what they want to achieve they achieved on that occasion they want themselves to be appreciated and they give themselves gift. Customers shop not only because of their needs and wants but they want to get themselves out of stress and frustration they could have. Positive emotions of the customers are observed as a positive relationship with the impulsive buying. There is significant relationship of the store characteristic with positive emotions of the customer.

Positive emotion of the customers is a mediating variable for store characteristics, store loyalty, and impulsive buying. These variables have a significant impact on impulsive buying not only these variables have significant impact but positive emotions proved to be a mediating variable in this study which shows that there is a partial mediation exist in these variables.

Future study may take the other variables which can be included in the study and not taken these variables can be situational characteristics like available time, money and inside store situations. These variables can help to observe more closely the situations where customers go for unplanned buying. By adding variables like situational characteristics it would be more helpful to understand the phenomena of impulsive buying. In future store loyalty can be observed as a variable that impact on the behavior of the customer. where questions is to observe that loyal customers feel change in their behavior and they get use to shop more and unplanned buying became their habit. Store loyalty create a habit in them that they prefer to shop when they are in store rather than to completely came with a proper planned behavior to shop.

This study helps managers to understand the factors which change the decision pattern of the customers. manager not only from the retailers can have benefit from the study but the managers from the companies also can take lead for how to make customers to make decisions which not only benefit retailer and companies but for themselves as well.

It is good for retailer to know how customers are thinking these days. Price conscious customers can be there but retailers need to know other factors like availability of their required brand, how their brand it merchandize, presentation of brand which customer is loyal have a great meaning for the customers. If the presentation of the brand is not supporting the image of the brand it would make customer feel bad in result chance of buying that product become less but on the other side if the presentation is good that brand is placed on proper location and the place where it is available in the store compete with the image of the brand will helpful to be select by the customer when he or she see it , in that case customer might not planned for that brand to purchase but its presentation made him or her to purchase that brand. Customers think different know they shop for the enjoyment and to reduce the problems and stress they feel in their daily routine of life so they came in these stores to minimize the stress they fell during their daily routine of life. It is important for the retailer to understand the thinking of the customers in order to server them well.

It is important for the retailers to understand that frequency and amount customers pay in the store during their visit in the store don't explain the store loyalty of the customers. Price conscious customer can switch where they find prices down so it is to take care that retailers create a better environment in the store that attract customers to present in store for a long period of time and they can feel happy. Positive emotions of the customer can be a pre entrance situation where customer is in a good mood when he entered in the store from here the function of the store start if the environment of the store is attractive enough that help to maintain the positive emotion in the customer than it is good for the store and customer that his trip for the shopping will not be wasted. Another situation where store environment can be important is when customer entered in store in a stress and is looking for to reduce the stress and frustration of daily life store environment compliment the thoughts and expectations of the customers in order to provide them a better environment to shop and that customers can enjoy themselves this situation in customers have a great tendency that they can go for impulsive buying.

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