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Impulse buying behavior of Vietnamese consumers in supermarket setting

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Abstract

The goal of this paper is to identify factors affecting consumer impulse buying behaviors at supermarkets in Vietnam. Impulse purchase or impulse buying portrays purchases that shopper makes without any intention planned before shopping trip. This study attempts to analyze the impact of various variables extracted from internal, external, demographics, social perspectives on consumer impulse buying behavior. Quantitative questionnaire is used to measure responses of participants. The statistical analysis method employed in this study is Factor Analysis using SPSS software. This consumer behavior is on a great rise due to pricing strategies, store characteristics, situational factors and promotional activities. At the end of this paper, a set of suggestions is outlined to be investigated in the subsequent research works.

Keywords: impulse buying behavior; unplanned purchase; consumer behavior; supermarket; Vietnam

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1. Introduction

An impulse purchase or impulse buying is an unplanned or spontaneous purchase (Clover, 1950; Stern, 1962; Rook, 1987). Kacen and Lee (2002) described typical characteristics of impulse buying as unplanned purchase made by a spontaneous decision and a subjective bias in favor of immediate possession. Stern (1962) sorted impulse buying behavior into 4 distinctive categories. Pure impulse buying: is a novelty or escape purchase which breaks a normal buying pattern. Reminder impulse buying: occurs when a shopper sees an item or recalls an advertisement or other information and remembers that the stock at home is low or exhausted. Suggestion impulse buying: occurs when a shopper sees a product for the first time and visualizes a need for it. Planned impulse buying: takes place when a shopper makes specific purchase decisions on the basis of price specials, coupon offers and the like.

Parboteeah (2005; based on Piron, 1991, p. 512) viewed impulse buying as unplanned purchase after being exposed to stimuli and finalize the purchase on the compelling urge. Ghani, Imran, and Jan (2011) described impulse buying as the instantaneous purchase decision inside a store without intention to buy certain products prior to shopping trip. As consumers browse inside shopping context without intention to buy any specific products, they are exposed to splendid in-store layouts or joyous and cheerful atmospheric cues, appealing product display, and many others, thus provoking consumers urging buying desire for unplanned items. Since sudden urge strikes on consumers' buying desire, it overpowers consumers' resistance, hence driving them to on-the-spot purchases without deliberative consideration of information and alternatives. During the process, consumers are influenced by internal and external factors that trigger cues for impulse purchase behavior.

1.1 Objective of the Study

The main objective of this study is to identify factors influencing consumer's impulse buying behavior in supermarket setting, hence distinguishing between direct and mediatory factors. The output obtained from this study modifies and corroborates the conceptualization framework of impulse buying behavior, summarizes and proliferates consumers' behavioral response model proposed previously by scholars and researchers from variety of geographical origins.

1.2 Contribution

Although impulse buying behavior of consumers in modern shopping format like supermarket is prevalent in emerging market of Vietnam, there has been a scarcity of researches into this affair. Therefore, the finding of this study contributes to the understanding of this commonplace phenomenon by providing a multidimensional insight into factors constituting this behavioral response of Vietnamese consumers. Through the observation and understanding of how and to what extent consumers behave in response to influential factors in shopping context, retailers and marketers can involve these factors in the setup of supermarkets to push up their profits through encouraging consumers into more impulse purchases.

1.3 Profile of supermarkets in Vietnam

The retail industry of Vietnam has substantially evolved as the country shifted from centrally planned economy to market economy since 1990s. Progressive industrialization and modernization, in common with the more prosperous lives of people and the mount in residents' living standard has altogether brought to the substantial rise in average household expenditure, contributing to the surge of sales in retailing market. The urbanization also exposes on the retail industry the requirement of shopping in hassle-free environment with

ventilation and hygienic food and dairy products, fashionable, eye-catching and hi-tech products etc., all of which creates advantageous condition for modern shopping setting like supermarket to evolve. From a few small-size and mini supermarkets opened back in 1990s, Vietnam has about 600 supermarkets up to now, and commercial centers with modern forms of retailing, utilities, commodity-price stability, high-quality merchandise that attracts consumers of all social classes (AC Nielson, 2013). The retail industry has observed the blossoming amount of superstores to more than 140 large-scaled supermarkets and hypermarkets with area coverage varying from hundreds to thousands of square meters in 2 biggest cities Hanoi and Hochiminh. Flagship supermarket brands can be narrated as Coopmart, Metro, Big C, Citimart, Maximark in Hochiminh; Fivimart, Seyiu, Intimex in Hanoi. Step by step, the supermarkets have penetrated into less urban provinces, especially the Mekong delta, Vinh Long, Can Tho, Dong Thap, Binh Duong (Huong & Jean-Paul, 2005).

1.4 Evolution of the Vietnamese consumer behavior towards modern retail formats

A decade of rapid economic growth has changed Vietnamese consumption culture. Alongside the blossoming of supermarkets, Vietnamese consumers have significantly shifted from shopping habit in traditional wet markets to shopping in modern shopping formats and supermarkets. Characterized by the youth element, Vietnam social demographical profile features half of its population as younger than 30, working-class, who represent a powerful and more demanding consumer force (Nielsen, 2013; Huong & Jean-Paul, 2005). Global integration and international acculturation show remarkable impact in Vietnam modern society, influencing and exposing Vietnamese consumers to less traditional lifestyle, where shopping in wet markets was prevailing; but sowing demands for increasing convenience and comfort in shopping-place. Modern Vietnamese shoppers increasingly prefer shopping in supermarkets where buying task can harmonize with leisure and recreation. Supermarkets are also favored by working people who have little time for shopping, in that broad range of commodities is available in one place. In addition, elements of hygiene and relaxing, which is inherently pertained to supermarket format, are earning appreciation of Vietnamese consumers. Along this trend, supermarkets are replacing traditional markets.

Nielson, a market research institute, conducted a survey in 2013 into the supermarket retailing industry and its customers. The survey result exhibited most common reasons for consumers to choose shopping in supermarket with 30% for entertainment and 70% for shopping. The hygiene, good quality and trusty sources of merchandises, the broad assortment, novelty, and conservative pricing are the key incentives to direct consumers to supermarkets. Freshness and quality are of growing importance, while the ease of access and low price has become relatively less important. In-person interviews indicated that consumers prefer shopping in modern setting rather than in traditional markets due to more comfortable trading places, broader product assortment, attractive display, high-quality merchandises; especially food safety, cleanliness, and pleasant shopping atmosphere are of utmost concerns. Modern retail format with nicely ventilated, hygienic, entertaining, pleasant shopping environment with assurance for products quality are drawing consumers into supermarkets from traditional outdoor markets. The estimation showed that contribution of retailing industry to the nation's economy is about to hit 60% of nominal GDP by 2017 (Nielsen, 2013).

2. Literature Review

Impulse buying is a prevalent phenomenon of consumers shopping behavior that has been obtaining incremental attention of practitioners and scholars for over 60 years up to now (Clover, 1950; Stern, 1962; Rook, 1987; Beatty & Ferrell, 1998; Peck & Childers, 2006). In response to the necessary understanding of this consuming trait, researchers have unflaggingly investigated this pervasive consuming behavior to address factors influencing this buying pattern from diversified contexts. Internal, external and social, demographical factors are targets to be scrutinized.

People in different genders tend to have different shopping behavioral responses and women are prone to impulse buying more than men do (Giraud, 2001; Priyanka & Rooble, 2012). Mai, Jung, Lantz, and Loeb (2003)

found the reverse effect where men shop more impulsively than women. Researchers observed the high commonality and frequency of the impulse buying behavior from consumers aging from 18 to 39, and become descending thereafter (Wood, 1998; Ghani et al., 2011). On the other hand, others declared no difference in impulse buying behavior between consumers in different ages (Sharma, Sivakumaran, & Marshall, 2010; Priyanka & Rooble, 2012).

Impulse buying without prior intention reflects low cognition involved in decision making, but likely tilt to heuristic form of information processing (Michael, William, & Pandit, 2010). Far from thinking effort and functional benefits, Sharma et al. (2010) described impulse buying as a sort of hedonic behavior that involves feelings, symbolic meanings and psychology as momentum to acquire products. Weinberg and Gottwald (1982) claimed that impulse buyers incline to release greater feelings of amusement, joy, delight, energy and enthusiasm. Giraud (2001) noticed positive relationship between good mood and impulse purchases, arguing that those in good emotion tend to shop more irrationally or reward themselves more generously thus becoming more impulsive. Chang, Eckman, and Yan (2011) argued that consumers who had more positive emotional responses to the retail environment were more likely to make impulsive purchases. Researchers agreed that impulse buying involves hedonic and affective components (Cobb & Hoyer, 1986; Piron, 1991; Rook, 1987; Rook & Fisher, 1995; Weinberg & Gottwald, 1982).

Shopping enjoyment is also considered another variable affecting impulse buying, indicating that those who consider shopping as a form of recreation, do not stick to a buying list, and tend to make impulsive purchases (Sharma & Sivakumaran, 2004). Browsers usually make more unplanned purchases than non-browsers, and the increase in in-store browsing are monotonically boost the chance for buying impulsively (Crawford & Melewar, 2003; Sam, Jeffrey, Yanliu, & Jacob, 2013). In the meantime, convenient and high-imaged store layouts enhance the comfort of shopping that can be subsequently constructive to consumer's impulse buying (Crawford & Melewar, 2003). Malmberg (2010) found that the likelihood for a product to be purchased on an impulse depends on the broad range of product categories.

Impulse purchases are likely encouraged in a pleasant shopping atmosphere (Crawford & Melewar, 2003; Kaur & Singh, 2007). Mattila and Wirtz (2008) observed over-stimulating in-store environment (pleasant music background, warm colors, fragrance, scents, etc.,) positively influences impulse buying. Environmental stimuli were found to affect consumers' emotional states (Donovan & Rossiter, 1982), which are influential variables of impulse purchases (Rook, 1987; Zhou & Wong, 2003; Nikhil Jalan, 2006). Baumeister (2002) argued in favor of the influence of arousing and exciting shopping environment on reducing consumers' self-regulation while increasing self-indulgent, thus leading to rising chance for impulse purchases (Xu, 2007).

Wong and Zhou (2003) added product price in the conceptualization of variables affecting impulse purchases. Consumers incline to purchase on a whim since they visualize sales or product specials, or other promotional activities (Dholakia, 2000). Harmanciouglu (2009) put forth that to promote the impulse buying and willingness to try new products, marketers should emphasize excitement; fun and variety in their promotional activities. While, Mattila and Wirtz (2008) gave credit on the influence of social factors on impulse buying, such as store employees' friendliness and shopping with others. Positive word-of-mouth from referenced groups on products can positively affect product evaluation and decision making of individual shoppers, spontaneously convincing them to buy unplanned items (Luo, 2004). Praises, friendliness, and helps from store employees can provide cues for impulse purchases through perceived positive emotions of consumers like feeling cared and concerned (Yu & Bastin, 2010).

3. Research method

After reviewing previous literature, researcher selected a set of variables (table 1) that were found to significantly affect impulse buying. The survey is constituted by 39 item statements that represent 1 dependent variable assumed as "impulse buying behavior"; and 9 independent variables referred to internal, external,

situational and social perspectives; 2 open ended questions are designed for demographical profiles of respondents. Quantitative measure, in conjunction with five-point Likert scale (1= total disagree to 5= total agree), is used to measure responses/ rating of participants to all survey items. Data were collected from a convenience consumer sample and the sample size is 241 respondents. Statistical Packages for Social Sciences' (SPSS) software is used for the data analysis. Set of statistical data analysis methods include descriptive analysis, principal component and reliability analysis, T-test, and Pearson correlation test and Regression analysis.

3.1 Research hypothesis

From set of variables anticipated to have significant impact on consumer's impulse buying behavior, researcher formulates 11 hypothesis described below:

H1: Female consumers purchase more impulsively than male consumers.

H2: Impulse buying behavior is at higher level to consumers from 18 to 40 of age and at lower level thereafter.

H3: Perception of shopping experience as enjoyment positively influence to impulse buying.

H4: Positive mood positively impact the impulse buying.

H5: Negative mood positively impact the impulse buying.

H6: Perceived pleasant shopping atmosphere positively leads to impulse buying.

H7: Consumers who are in favor of in-store browsing tend to present more impulse purchases.

H8: Positive perception of the in-store layout positively leads to consumer's impulse buying.

H9: Consumers- salespersons interaction has positive effect on impulse buying.

H10: Promotion schemes perceived as discounted/ reduced price offers / "buy 1 get 1 "have positive impact on impulse buying.

H11: Shopping with referenced groups (family-based group and peer-based group) positively induce individual consumer's impulse buying behavior.

4. Data analysis:

4.1 Descriptive Statistics for demographics

Descriptive statistics for demographics provide information about participants' demographical profile of gender and ages groups. The frequency of female respondents capturing 56.8% (137 respondents) is slightly greater than that of male respondents, featuring 43.2% (104 respondents) of total sample size. As consistent to the common trend of Vietnam demographic background from which more than half of Vietnamese population are younger than 30, the vast majority of respondents ages less than 40, accounting for 93.8% of total sample size; the "above 40" respondents score 6.2%. There is no missing data reported.

4.2 Descriptive Statistics for variables

An application of five-point Likert scale to measure responses, ranging from Total Disagree = 1 to Total Agree = 5, explains that 10 sections in the survey questionnaire can be regarded as supported by respondents if the section is scored above 3 in the scale. The first section of the survey results in 3.20 of mean score, indicating that Vietnamese consumers have disposition to purchase on impulse. Section 2 through to section 10 is

constructed to measure the influences of internal, external and social factors on consumer's impulse buying behavior. The average mean scores of majority of variables propose the relevant awareness of respondents on various factors influencing their purchase decision. On the other hand, the variable "Negative Emotion" scored less than 3 (2.99) in mean scale may suggest that this variable is not rated as strongly as Positive Emotion (3.80). The differences in impulsive purchasing behavior of consumers in different genders and age groups will be observed in T-test analysis. Bivariate correlation between variables, directional relationships and influences of independent variables on consumer's impulse buying behavior will be examined afterward, using Pearson Correlation and Regression analysis.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics for Variables

Variables	Number of Valid Cases	Mean	Standard Deviation
Consumer's impulse buying behavior	241	3.2075	.62310
Shopping Enjoyment	241	3.5176	.78126
Positive Emotion	241	3.8022	.73979
Negative Emotion	241	2.9917	.90928
Store Atmosphere	241	3.5284	.75661
In-store Browsing	241	3.3250	.78935
In-store Layouts	241	3.9720	.60034
Appearance of Salespersons	241	3.9035	.65810
Promotion	241	3.7123	.73739
Appearance of Referenced Group	241	3.7566	.79799

4.3 Data reduction analysis

Prior to the main analysis, principal component analysis with Varimax rotation and Eigen value greater than 1 in the setting up is conducted to observe the homogeneity of items representing consumer's impulse buying behavior variable and identify major components, also termed variables, casting influences on consumer's impulse purchasing in supermarket. The first section in the survey, measuring consumer's impulse buying behavior, will be tested separately as dependent variable to ensure the consistency of 6 representative items. All six items are loaded into single component with KMO value of 0.753 and Eigen value of 2.871 (Table 2 and Table 3). It indicates that all involved items represent the identical concept in relation to consumer's impulse buying behavior.

Table 2

KMO and Bartlett's Test for dependent variable Impulse buying behavior

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.753
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	390.529
	df	15
	Sig.	.000

Subsequently, the remaining items in the survey will be tested as a whole. Responses will be subject to principal axis factoring with Varimax rotation to reduce potential multicolinearity and overlap among a cluster of items. The computation KMO and Bartlett's test shows 0.833 in magnitude of KMO value, which is much greater than alpha 0.5 and insinuates no error occurrence in 83.3% of the whole sample (Table 4). Ranging in meritorious band, this KMO statistical value suggests that factor analysis is appropriate for the set of data. Thirty- three items are loaded into nine orthogonal factor components. The result showing 67.28% of the overall variance indicates that the variance of original items is well captured by these nine orthogonal components. The sequences of Eigen value of nine factors are reported as greater than required level of 1.

Table 3

Factor analysis for dependent variable Impulse buying behavior

Factors/Items	Factor loading	Cronbach's alpha
Impulse buying		.781
I often buy things spontaneously	.699	
It is irresistible to buy a seductive product	.615	
You do not think much when making purchases	.745	
When something is very attractive, you buy without concerning consequences	.737	
You often buy things which you did not intend	.652	
You often end up spending more money than you initially set out to spend	.693	

Nine components, noted as independent variables, are extracted by factor analysis. In addition, all items in dependent variable are homogeneously loaded in single component, making 10 components in total. Internal consistency was checked using Cronbach's alpha in the next stage to ensure the reliability of data reduction (Table 5).

Table 4

KMO and Bartlett's Test for independent variables

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.833
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	3524.304
	Df	528
	Sig.	.000

Table 5

Factor analysis for independent variables

Factors/Items	Factor loading	Cronbach's alpha
Shopping Enjoyment		.775
Going to supermarket is a good option to entertain	0.727	
Strolling in supermarket is a good choice for relaxation even though you do not plan to buy anything	0.706	
You do not bring detailed shopping list when you go to supermarket for relaxation	0.776	
You suddenly buy something while strolling inside supermarket, although you did not plan to buy that product before	0.707	
Positive Emotion		.685
Positive emotional state positively influence your shopping behavior	0.707	
You often buy more things than needed when you are pleasant	0.775	
You often buy more than needed to reward yourself for having work well-done	0.658	
Negative Emotion		.826
When you are gloomy, shopping is "cheer me up" solution	0.743	
When your mood goes low, you often buy more than needed to lift your mood up	0.843	
You tend to buy more things than originally planned to lessen the stressfulness	0.762	
In-store Atmosphere		.713
You are delighted in the joyful shopping environment in supermarket	0.729	
You feel relaxed when the background music is funny	0.817	
You feel comfortable when the background scent is pleasant.	0.714	

Table 5 … continued

Factor analysis for independent variables

Factors/Items	Factor loading	Cronbach's alpha
In-store Browsing		.751
The more time you spend on looking at products, the greater is the chance of buying	0.584	
The longer you wander inside supermarket, the greater is the total number of products bought	0.832	
The longer paths you travel in-store, the more chances to buy additional items.	0.814	
In-store Layouts		.664
Appealing interior arrangement of supermarket comforts your shopping experience.	0.712	
Directional signage facilitate your shopping experience	0.768	
Eyes-catching product display triggers your new need of buying	0.434	
You are willing to spend more time wandering if the layout is nicely designed.	0.476	
Salespersons		.833
The dedication in service of stores' staffs positively affect your buying decision	0.815	
Staffs' willingness to communicate with consumers positively affect your buying decision	0.846	
The convincible recommendation from salespersons trigger your new needs of buying	0.780	
Friendliness of staffs positively affects your shopping decision.	0.711	
Promotion		.889
You feel urged to buy products on promotion	0.692	
buy 1 get 1 free can be a reason for you to buy on a whim	0.789	
You will buy unplanned products if there are price bargain	0.840	
When you see good offers, you often buy more than needed	0.745	
Free gifts can be a reason for your impulsive buying	0.716	
You often buy things if they are on sale	0.751	
Reference Groups		.767
You feel more delighted to have companions in the shopping trip.	0.637	
You often buy more than you need when you go shopping with your friends	0.774	
You often buy more than needed when you go shopping with your family members.	0.798	

4.4 T-test for genders in relation to consumer's impulse buying behavior

H1: Female consumers purchase more impulsively than male consumers

Table 6

T-test for genders in relation to consumer's impulse buying behavior

		Genders		t	*p*
		Male (n = 104)	Female (n = 137)		
Consumer' impulse buying behavior	**Mean**	3.22	3.19	**0.366**	**0.715**
	Std	0.645	0.608		

T-test analysis (Table 6) exhibits no difference between 2 different genders in relation to impulse buying behavior (Ms = 3.22 vs. 3.19, t = -0.366, p = 0.715). Mean scale also reveals a slightly higher level of male consumers' impulse buying behavior than that of female. The output of T-test corroborates the finding of Mai et al. (2003). Although women hold almost responsibility for daily shopping task and enjoy shopping in leisure time than men do, however as they are often perceived as family oriented, then by chance the frequent shopping

activity progressively grow a habit of planning buying task more carefully that serve for the utilitarian benefits of family. Conversely, when it comes to buying task, men have less experience on bargain seeking and generate less evaluation effort on alternatives than women, thus incline to buy things without much consideration. Furthermore, young people in both genders are increasingly exposed to inter-cultural media and highly influenced by movies, Western culture, fashion trend and modern lifestyle; thus the level of acceptance to try new things, especially hedonic commodities, increase alongside in pursuit of fashion and self-indulgent. Therefore, it is understandable that both young female and male consumers reflect impulsiveness in their buying habit.

4.5 T-test for age groups in relation to consumer's impulse buying behavior

H2: Impulse buying behavior is at higher level to consumers from 18 to 40 of age and at lower level thereafter

T-test analysis (Table 7) presents no difference between 2 different age groups in relation to impulse buying behavior (Ms = 3.21 vs. 3.22, t = -0.094, p = 0.925). The output result is inconsistent with the finding of Mai et al. (2003). It is likely to root from the demographical profiles of respondents aging over 40 that most of those are male. As those in this age range often have more incomes and savings than young consumers, arguing for the better purchasing capability. In addition, they have been through traditionally austere lifestyle during their young adulthood as back to the time of centrally planned economy in 1990s where commodities were scarce. That is why they incline to spend more money on symbolic-meaning things that can satisfy their hedonic demands and offset what they lacked back in past time as their budget or purchasing capability increase.

Table 7

T-test for age groups in relation to consumer's impulse buying behavior

		Age groups		t	*p*
		<40 (n = 226)	>= 40 (n = 15)		
Consumer' impulse buying behavior	**Mean**	3.21	3.22	-0.094	0.925
	Std	0.612	0.798		

4.6 Pearson correlation, regression results and discussions

Pearson Correlation outcome shows the cross-relation of all variables, in which p-value less than 0.01 can be deem strongly correlated. Regression analysis results suggest the significance of the anticipated influence of independent variables on dependent variables, in which significance (p-value) less than 0.05 should be considered supporting the hypothesis.

Table 8

Pearson correlation

	Factors	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)
(1)	Impulse buying	1									
(2)	Shopping enjoyment	.250**	1								
(3)	Positive emotion	.394**	.367**	1							
(4)	Negative emotion	.339**	.287**	.308**	1						
(5)	In-store atmosphere	.198**	.264**	.207**	.210**	1					
(6)	In-store browsing	.470**	.260**	.349**	.392**	.206**	1				
(7)	In-store layouts	.344**	.233**	.344**	.265**	.282**	.225**	1			
(8)	Salespersons	.254**	.166**	.272**	.208**	.206**	.198**	.414**	1		
(9)	Promotion	.294**	.285**	.327**	.395**	.319**	.421**	.364**	.198**	1	
(10)	Reference groups	.394**	.269**	.375**	.231**	.254**	.311**	.400**	.235**	.432**	1

Table 9

Multi-linear regression for hypothesis test

	Coefficients								
Hypotheses	H3	H4	H5	H6	H7	H8	H9	H10	H11
B	.014	.121	.075	.007	.240	.127	.045	-.055	.142
Sig.	.777	.024	.075	.882	.000	.060	.428	.332	.005

Note. Dependent Variable: Consumer's impulse buying behavior

Table 10

Additional Regression test for mediatory role of In-store Browsing

Variables	Shopping Enjoyment	Negative Emotion	In-store Atmosphere	In-store Layouts	Promotion
B	.098	.208	.034	.038	.298
Sig.	.116	.000	.594	.647	.000

Note. Dependent Variable: In-store Browsing

Table 11

Additional regression test for mediatory role of positive mood

Variables	In-store Atmosphere	In-store Layouts	Shopping Enjoyment	Appearance of Salespersons
B	.044	.262	.269	.143
Sig.	.462	.001	.000	.047

Note. Dependent Variable: Positive Emotion

H3: Perception of shopping experience as enjoyment positively influence to impulse buying

Pearson correlation analysis exhibits a significant correlation between Shopping enjoyment perception and impulse buying behaviors ($p < 0.01$). However, result generated from Regression analysis (table 10) is not consistent to that of bivariate correlation test, p-value greater than alpha 0.05 suggesting that Shopping enjoyment did not cast significant influence on consumer's impulse buying behavior. Therefore, the hypothesis is not statistically supported.

The significant relationship observed from the result of Pearson correlation test may come from the correlation of shopping enjoyment with other variables having significant directional relationship on consumer's impulse buying behavior revealed by Regression test. The correlation coefficient (r) between shopping enjoyment and positive emotion are highest among coefficients with other variables significantly influencing consumer's impulse buying behavior (r = 0.367), justifying for the significant correlation even though no significant directional influence found between shopping enjoyment and consumer's impulse buying behavior (table 8). The result observed from the additional Regression test of mediatory role of positive mood (Table 11) present significant influence of shopping enjoyment on positive mood ($p = 0$, <0.05). The strong correlation between shopping enjoyment and positive emotion suggests that those who consider shopping as enjoyment often have good mood for shopping, thus enhancing the involvement of affective in information processing and reducing perceived risk on purchase that may lead to buying on the spur of moment.

H4: Positive mood positively impact the impulse buying behavior

Pearson correlation analysis shows significant correlation between positive emotion and impulse buying of consumers ($p < 0.01$). In addition, the correlation coefficient between positive mood and impulse buying behavior of consumers (r = 0.394) is relatively high, indicating a fairly strong correlation between 2 variables. Consistent to expectation, Regression test (Table 9) reveals p-value smaller than alpha 0.05, indicating a directional relationship where positive emotion significantly influence the consumer's impulse buying ($p = 0.024$). Thus, the hypothesis is statistically supported.

The result of Regression is found to be in line with previous findings about influence of positive emotion on impulse buying of consumers (Giraud, 2001). Positive emotion serves positively to favorable judgments on target objects, thus exacerbating potential to buy unplanned products on a whim (Chang et al., 2011). As observed from Pearson Correlation table, positive emotion also has strong correlation with in-store browsing (r = 0.349), suggesting that those in good mood engage in more in-store browsing.

H5: Negative mood positively impact the impulse buying

Although significant correlation between negative emotion and impulse buying of consumers is visualized from bivariate correlation test ($p < 0.01$), in contrast, result observed from Regression analysis (Table 9) exhibits no significant impact of negative emotion on consumer's impulse buying ($p > 0.05$). Thus, the null hypothesis is not rejected.

Significant correlation displayed in Pearson correlation test may be attributable to the strong correlation coefficient (r = 0.392) between negative emotion and in-store browsing, which features a strongest directional relationship with consumer's impulse buying observed from Regression test (Table 9). Moreover, the outcome from the additional Regression analysis for the mediating role of in-store browsing (Table 10) also denotes the significant relationship of negative mood and in-store browsing ($p = 0$). This result instigate that those who go shopping in negative mood may travel longer inside supermarket and take appealing ambience of in-store environment as source of amusement to alleviate the gloominess and pick their moods up. While wandering in-store, they may expose themselves to various stimuli such as surrounding environment stimulus and diversified products stimulus that may drop hints on unintentional products purchase.

H6: Perceived pleasant shopping atmosphere positively lead to impulse buying

Regression test (Table 9) reports no significant influence of shopping atmosphere on consumer's impulse buying behavior ($p > 0.05$); albeit result obtained from Pearson correlation argues for a significant correlation between these two variables ($p < 0.01$). Thus, the hypothesis is not statistically supported.

The significant correlation between shopping atmosphere and consumer's impulse buying behavior is likely explicable by the correlation of this variable with other variables having strong directional relationship with consumer's impulse buying behavior presented from the Regression analysis (positive emotion). The output is in keeping with Chang et al. (2011). It is expected from the result that pleasant background music, scent and other elements making of the in-store atmosphere may positively affect consumers' mood where risk perception is abating and spontaneous purchase intentions are more likely to be evoked on shopping-site.

H7: Consumers who are in favor of in-store browsing tend to present more impulse purchases

In-store browsing is found to be a strongest influential factor on consumer's impulse buying behavior, in that p-values generated by both Pearson correlation test (Table 8) and Regression analysis (Table 9) are correspondingly equal to 0 ($p = 0$). In addition, the correlation coefficient (r = 0.47) and influential coefficient ($\beta = 0.24$) are highest amongst other variables. The p-value of Regression analysis less than 0.001, in conjunction with high value of (β), provide sufficient and excellent evidences about the existence of the absolute directional relationship where in-store browsing significantly and directly influences the consumer's impulse buying behavior. Thus, the hypothesis statically supported.

The results observed from statistical analysis are in similar line with previous researches (Crawford & Melewar, 2003; Sam et al., 2013), indicating that the more consumers browse inside stores or supermarkets the more of ambient and merchandise stimulus to which they expose. As the confrontation on appealing retail setting and attractive products display increase during shopping trip, the chances for consumers to initiate new demands and desires of buying can monotonically be augmented. The increase in visualization of pleasant shopping environment and eye-catching products display can also positive affect consumers' emotion, boosting the chances for the impulse buying behavior.

H8: Positive perception of the in-store layout positively leads to consumer's impulse buying

The p-value of Regression analysis ($p > 0.05$) exposes no significant influence between the in-store layout and consumer's impulse buying behavior (table 9) notwithstanding the significant relationship is observed from simple bivariate test ($p < 0.01$). Thus, the hypothesis is not statistically supported.

The high value of correlation coefficient (r = 0.344) and significant p-value computed by Pearson correlation may have been caused by the correlation of in-store layouts with other variables having strong relationship and influence on consumer's impulse buying behavior. Variables including positive emotion and browsing should be considered to have inextricable relationship with in-store layout. Results obtained from Pearson Correlation (Table 8) outcomes high value of coefficient (r = 0.344); the significant influence of in-store layout on consumer's positive mood (Table 11) is also noticed from the additional Regression test for the mediatory role of positive mood ($p = 0.001$). It shows that the appealing and logical in-store layouts appear to be comfortable and convenient to facilitate consumers' shopping behavior in which they can easily navigate where certain products are located. Alongside, the eye-catching product assortment and availability of broad range of product categories may satisfy the variety seeking habit of consumers and boost the stimulus exposed to consumers, reminding or triggering new demands of buying unplanned items on the urge of increasing stimulus (Malmberg, 2010).

H9: Consumers-salespersons interaction has positive effect on impulse buying

Although the Pearson correlation test suggest a significant correlation ($p < 0.01$), the Regression analysis (Table 9) produced the insignificant p-value ($p > 0.05$), denoting the insignificant directional influence of consumer-salesperson interaction on consumer's impulse buying behavior. Thus, the null hypothesis is not rejected. The correlation of the two variables may have been mediated by other variables having significant directional influence on consumer's impulse buying.

The relatively high correlation coefficient between the consumer-salespersons interaction and positive emotion (r = 0.272) found in Pearson correlation test may justify for the significant correlation between consumer's impulse buying behavior and consumer-salespersons interaction. Moreover, the result achieved from the additional Regression analysis for the mediatory role of positive emotion (Table 11) also indicate the significant influence of store staffs' assistance on consumer's positive mood ($p < 0.05$). This expectation is consistent with findings of Yu and Bastin (2010), prompting that the friendliness and dedicated service of staffs and salespersons may have positive affect on consumers' emotion. Since the considerate service of staffs can bring up the feelings of comforts, unconstrained and caring in consumers' perception and make them more delighted and elated in shopping trip, thus exposing them to more favorable judgment on surrounding objects and causing the spontaneous response noted as impulse buying.

H10: Various promotion schemes perceived as discounted/reduced price offers have positive impact on impulse buying

Although significant in correlation p-value computed by Pearson correlation test ($p < 0.01$), the variable promotion is not found to significantly influence the consumer's impulse buying behavior as exposed by Regression analysis ($p > 0.05$) (table 10). Thus, the hypothesis is not statistically supported.

The significant correlation between these two variables may have been attributable to the inextricable correlation of variable promotion and other variables having significant directional influence on impulse buying behavior. The value of correlation coefficient between promotion and in-store browsing (r = 0.421) is perceived as very high, suggesting that promotion may allure consumers to browse longer in supermarket for bargain seeking, thus exposing themselves to more unintended and irresistible temptation such as attractive products and diversified product categories and result in potential impulse purchase subsequently. The result computed by additional Regression test on mediating role in-store browsing (Table 10) also signify a significant influence of

promotion on in-store browsing, confirming the anticipation of high value of coefficient brought by Pearson Correlation analysis.

H11: Shopping with referenced groups (family-based group and peer-based group) positively induce impulse buying behavior

The results obtained from Pearson correlation test ($p < 0.01$) and Regression analysis ($p < 0.05$) consistently show a strong directional relationship where shopping with referenced groups significantly influence consumer's impulse buying behavior. Since the p-value of Regression analysis (Table 10) is less than 0.01 ($p = 0.005$), the variable shopping with others is predicted to strongly affect degree of consumer's impulse buying behavior. Thus, the hypothesis is statistically supported.

The result is identical with the findings of previous researches (Luo, 2004; Mattila & Wirtz, 2008). However, there is a slight difference in the finding of this study with previous researches. Since the mean score is scrutinized, the researcher discerns there is no significant difference in behavioral response of individual consumers when shopping with family members or their peers/ friends. Respondents rated above 3 in response to 2 statements in section 10 denoting specifically the identity of referenced groups accompanying individual consumers in shopping trip, which is peer-based groups or family-based groups. This may indicate that the cohesiveness between members in a family, high intimacy in other word, may lead to the isomorphic in consumption norm from which hedonic buying desires can be highly sympathized and understood among members. The transformation in lifestyle and norms of young generation, who pay more attention on hedonic desire gratification, in conjunction with the substantially mounting incomes of vast majority of Vietnamese urban residents, are likely to be advocatory for hedonic buying as long as the products are not detrimental to consumers' health.

5. Conclusion

This study provides obvious insight into the issue of impulse buying behavior of Vietnamese consumers, outlining how consumers adopt various strategies (recreational browsing, informational browsing, and task accomplishment) of shopping and how they respond to in-store stimulus that potentially cause impulse purchases. In return, recommendation for retailers to entice more of impulse purchases is given.

5.1 Theoretical Implication

This study theoretically contributed to the existing model and overall understanding of consumer's impulsive response in shopping context by placing a set of multitude potential variables under scrutiny. Three variables such as Positive Emotional States, In-store Browsing, and the presence of Referenced group set off both as directional and distinguished predictors for impulse buying behavior and as mediators to estimate the indirect impact others on the incident of impulse buying in the specific shopping context. Beside the local contribution as defining and identifying influential variables guiding Vietnamese consumers into making impulse buying in supermarket context, this study also marks a call for more researches into this field of consumers' behavior where there is an obvious scarcity of papers investigating about this phenomenon. Impulse buying behavior is anticipated to be prevalent in shopping behavior of Vietnamese consumers, especially when the supermarket format is taking notable role to be major shopping channel in the near future.

5.2 Marketing Implication

More than half of Vietnam population are younger the age of 30, alongside the acculturation caused by comprehensive integration with developed countries on global scale, the young population are less likely to be influenced by traditional values where leading an austere and thrifty life is a mainstream. Young people are becoming prevailing in consumer force and gearing toward modern lifestyle (Mai et al., 2003), where shopping in fully-facilitated supermarket become more common. It gives sense on the importance of this study from which

retailers/ practitioners/ managers can utilize to adjust retailing setting of supermarkets to allure more consumers into unplanned purchase, thus boosting the sale volume and profits.

The results obtained from statistical analysis highlights the pivotal role of in-store browsing as a strongest influential predictor of impulse buying behavior. As in-store browsing and positive mood are perceived as 2 distinguished variables alongside the impact of the presence of referenced groups. Therefore, it is apparent when almost managerial suggestions aim at turning on consumers' positive mood, inspiring them to travel more sections and aisles in-store, and encouraging individual consumers to have referenced groups of companies (friends, peers, family members) with them in shopping trip in order to increase the level of stimulus exposure on consumers, making them excited and elated, and responding more favorably to the surroundings and products evaluation.

Although an apparent impact of in-store ambience is not noticed, however, retailers should also place more attention on keeping the fresh and healthy shopping atmosphere. As it has been long suggested in previous studies, consumers are observed to stay longer in shopping context where there are freshened scents, funny and relaxed background music, pleasant ventilation, and splendid store-layout. Consumers might not have significantly been captivated by intangible elements like background scent; they may easily find it uncomfortable if the scent is intensive or not pleasant; then mild and fresh herbal scent, in combination with high ventilation brought by spacious shopping area and increase capacity of air-conditioning, are highly recommended for retailing setting to reduce the discomfort of regular hot temperature as typical attribute of tropical climate. Beside, background music played can be anonymous soundtrack with tender and funny melody to soothe the possible strain of consumers after being exposed to stressful traffic congestion on the way to shopping venues. Supermarkets should be kept clean to reinforce the perception of hygiene; consumers usually have grudge against shopping context where things are messy and disorder. Although slightly working out, the in-store atmosphere is still of the author's expectation to have impact on consumers' mood and relaxation, that in turn luring consumers to stay longer in the shopping context. In addition, retailers should show more attempt to positively affect consumers' emotion because it plays a crucial role in enticing consumers to stay longer and become more willing toward risk acceptance in trying new products.

Store managers can place multitude of appealing and curiosity-provoking environmental design variables on consideration to augment stimuli in their shops. Retailers should enable more shortcuts connecting sections to make an easier access to more areas in supermarket; the application of graphical striking directional and promotional signage is recommended to grab consumers' attention and trigger their sense of curiosity, hence, more likely to travel to more unintended areas in-store for exploration. The capacity of offering broader range of product variety worth the increased attention, from which consumers may feel gratified with variety seeking habit, or vicarious shopping experience, or visually satisfied with broad alternative selections that provoke additional desire to buy unplanned items to match with planned ones. Furthermore, retailers should pay higher attention on assorting highly-related product categories into particular section on shelves or among aisles. Complementary products can be placed adjacent to others or even be bundled into specific solutions that address specific needs of consumers. That sort of product presentation undoubtingly triggers the cues for buying more things, from which one single product might promote for others in the neighboring.

As long as consumers commonly feel comfortable and amused to shop in pleasant retail setting, they are prone to spending more time browsing around both for recreational and bargain seeking purposes. Consumers who stay longer in a shop are more likely to engage in price comparisons, search for price bargain and promotions. Thus, marketers can consider to proliferating the products assortment as well as offering cross-promotion activities such as coupon-offering, "buy 1 get 1 free", discounted offers…to decoy the increased in-store browsing of consumers (Tendai & Crispen, 2009). Various promotional activities in supermarket, therefore, may trigger sense of curiosity and convince consumers to travel more areas in supermarket, exaggerating the exposure to shopping stimulus, likewise the chance for impulse purchases. By giving a slight proportion of profit margin on sale-off or "buy 1 get 1" products, retailers can make it up for the sharp increase

in sale volume by provoking consumers' sense of curiosity and excitement that create the feelings of having energy and comfort to travel and explore more of the store.

Consumers also incline to enjoy a shopping experience with supportive and friendly shop assistants, thus shop assistants and salespersons should be trained to be capable of figuring out consumers' emotional states, their common behaviors and expectation to guide and aid them properly and become more proactive and friendly to mitigate the perceived negativity of intensive crowding and density. In addition, retailers should involve non-verbal cues into employees' behavioral training session. Voice tone used when communicating with consumers should not be high, but better be humble, pitch should be kept in middle range instead of being strident. Body gesture should be gentle and harmonize with the conversation, voice tone and facial expression; smiling face and being dedicated is critically a prerequisite requirement that store' assistant have to pin in mind no matter what consumers- store assistant situation they encounter. Behavioral etiquette, friendliness and courtesy, although not evidently impact on the impulse buying, but obviously act on consumers' mood in response. Any misbehavior, indecent response to consumers' request could make them feel irritated and lead directly to the absolute "turn-off" of buying intention, or it can even go worse when consumers ward off certain shopping environment for the improper attitude of store- assistants.

Consumers share corresponding disposition to indulge in impulsive buying behavior since surroundings like atmosphere, layouts, and promotions, friendly and persuasive salespersons can positively affect consumers' emotion and induce them to visit more aisles and areas in supermarkets, thus triggering consumers' impulse to buy. The prudential and harmonious combination of multitude of marketing strategies such as in-store design, product variety assortment, promotion, etc. can bring about the substantial increase of commodities shopped in consumers' shopping cart. Thus, it demands more human power to handle and carry back home, and subsequently creating chance to draw more friends/ peers/ family members of individual consumers into shopping environment, whose recommendation is another distinguished momentum explaining the impulse buying behavior of consumers.

5.3 Limitation and Suggestion for future researches:

Vast proportion of sample in this study is consumers under 30 years of age; it may not reflect comprehensively the impulse buying phenomenon of Vietnamese consumers in all age groups. This study focus on research the behavioral responses of consumers in supermarket setting, however, none of particular product categories are focalize as items that are commonly bought on impulse as consequences of in-store stimulus exposure. Therefore, the effect of various promotional schemes cannot be observed obviously on different types of product in different setting of promotional activities. Future research can employ cross-methods to ameliorate the respondents' answer evaluation for multidimensional insights into the issue as results gained from different measures can be different. Thus, a set of cross measures comprising quantitative, qualitative and empirical methods is recommended to future researches.

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