

**UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL**

**AN INVESTIGATION ON IMPULSE BUYING BEHAVIOUR AMONG  
STUDENTS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL**

**By**

**Sindie Dlamini (Kenny)  
200275708**

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of  
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**Supervisor: Dr. A. Gani**

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## DECLARATION

This research has not been previously accepted for any degree and is not being currently submitted in candidature for any degree.

I declare that this Dissertation contains my own work except where specifically acknowledged.

Signed: 

Date: 23 April 2008

096155

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## **ABSTRACT**

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Impulsive buying is another form of consumption behaviour that seems to be occurring more frequently today. This behaviour has both positive and negative effects, therefore, caution should be taken when making consumption decisions.

This study attempts to investigate impulsive buying behaviour among marketing students at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. It discusses factors that contribute to such behaviour, some of which were identified in a study conducted by Youn & Faber (2000). These factors include lack of control (impulsivity), stress and absorption. The study highlights cultural influences on impulse buying behaviour. It mentions the several differences between male and female consumers.

According to Zhou & Wong (2003), retailers need to understand how they can attract and retain a significant share of consumer impulse purchases for market survival. Understanding consumer behaviour helps in the development of effective marketing communications (Bothma *et. al* 2002). A literature review conducted to gain insight and understanding on impulse buying behaviour. A survey questionnaire was used to collect data from fifty University of KwaZulu-Natal marketing students. Findings on the study highlight vast unplanned consumption behaviours.



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## APPENDIX A: SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

Date of conducting research: November 2006

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### **SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE**

This study is being conducted to **investigate impulse buying behaviour among tertiary students**, which is in partial fulfilment towards an MBA (Masters in Business Management) programme at the University of KwaZulu-Natal in Westville. Responses are important to help uncover this behaviour. Completing the questionnaire should take between 3 to 5 minutes of your time. **Please remember that all information provided will be treated in the strictest of confidence.** Your co-operation will be highly appreciated.

Thank you for your help!

Researcher's Name: Sindie P. Dlamini (Kenny)

Institution: University of KwaZulu-Natal

Westville Campus, Durban

Graduate School of Business

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Kindly answer **ALL** the questions as honestly as possible.

### **SECTION A: Impulse products**

**Q1.** Which of these products, would you buy at impulse? **(Please circle as many as possible).**

- |               |                 |
|---------------|-----------------|
| (a) Sweets    | (e) Chewing gum |
| (b) Biscuits  | (f) Soft drink  |
| (c) Chocolate | (g) Bread       |
| (d) Fruits    | (h) Chips       |

**Q2.** Where would you expect to find these products? **(Please circle as many as possible).**

- (a) When entering a store
- (b) Near the pay point/till
- (c) On the store shelves
- (d) Other (please specify).....

**Q3.** How much would you expect to pay for each one of these products? **(Please circle one).**

- (a) Less than R2
- (b) Between R2 and R5
- (c) Between R5 and R10
- (d) More than R10

### **SECTION B: Personality Traits**

**Q4.** Which of the following would increase your likelihood to make an impulse purchase? **(Please circle as many as possible).**

- |                      |                     |
|----------------------|---------------------|
| (a) Having money     | (f) A shopping mall |
| (b) During Christmas | (g) When travelling |
| (c) Feeling happy    | (h) Feeling hungry  |

- (d) Receiving free samples    (i) Items on sale  
(e) Being with friends        (j) A favourite store

**Please circle the most appropriate number on the scale where:**

- |                                       |                              |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| <b>1 = Strongly agree</b>             | <b>4 = Disagree</b>          |
| <b>2 = Agree</b>                      | <b>5 = Strongly disagree</b> |
| <b>3 = Neither agree nor disagree</b> |                              |

**Q5.** I often buy something when I am lonely.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

**Please circle the most appropriate (True/False) among the following.**

**Q6.** I am often worried about myself.

True                      False

**Q7.** Music reminds me of the things I like.

True                      False

**Q8.** I always make a list of things I want to purchase.

True                      False

**Q9.** I never buy something I have not budgeted for.

True                      False

### **SECTION C: Gender differences**

**Please circle the most appropriate number on the scale where:**

- |                                       |                              |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| <b>1 = Strongly agree</b>             | <b>4 = Disagree</b>          |
| <b>2 = Agree</b>                      | <b>5 = Strongly disagree</b> |
| <b>3 = Neither agree nor disagree</b> |                              |

**Q10.** I make an impulse purchase because it makes me feel good about myself.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5



**Q11.** When I have money I buy something without giving it much thought.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

**Q12.** Making an impulse purchase shows that I can afford to buy whatever I want.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

**Q13.** Buying at impulse is fun.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

**Please circle the most appropriate (True/False) in the following question.**

**Q14.** People consider me as a spontaneous person.

True                      False

**SECTION D: Demographic information**

**(Please circle the most appropriate answer)**

**Q15.** Gender groups

- (a) Male
- (b) Female

**Q16.** Age groups

- (a) Less than 20 years
- (b) Between 20 and 25 years
- (c) Between 26 and 30 years
- (d) More than 30 years

**Q17.** Racial groups

- (a) African
- (b) Indian

(c) Coloured

(d) White

(e) Other (please specify).....

---

***Thank you for your co-operation!***

# **CHAPTER 1**

## **INTRODUCTION**

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### **1.1 INTRODUCTION**

Consumers are not only different in the common ways, which is by age, gender, occupation, education, marital status and living arrangements, but also differ in their activities, interests, preferences, opinions, what they eat and products they buy. Therefore, marketers are interested in understanding, predicting, and satisfying the needs and wants of consumers, whatever they are like, whatever they want, wherever they live (Schiffman & Kanuk 2000).

For any business to be successful, it is crucial to study how consumers behave, more importantly, what triggers such behaviour. It is important for marketers to be well aware of consumers' needs and wants and how consumers make their buying decision. According to Schiffman & Kanuk (2000), consumer behaviour focuses on how consumers go about making decisions on spending their available resources such as time, money, effort on consumption related items. Consumer behaviour includes what is bought, why it is bought, when it is bought, where it is bought, how often it is bought, and how often it is used.

### **1.2 THE PROBLEM STATEMENT**

This study will investigate impulse buying behaviour among marketing students, at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. Shopping suggests an increasing importance and frequency of unplanned, non-necessity purchases, otherwise known as impulse buying. Zhou and Wong (2003), states that in order to survive in the current marketplace, retailers need to understand how they can attract and retain a significant share of consumer impulse purchases.



### **1.3 RATIONALE FOR THE RESEARCH**

Much of the research on impulse buying behaviour has focused on defining and measuring the concept. It is important to understand the ways in which consumers construct, maintain and express their self-identity in consumption decisions. Marketers need to find out what constructs influence impulsive behaviour. It is imperative that retailers understand consumer impulse buying in order to formulate appropriate marketing strategies, allocate marketing budget, and design effective marketing tactics (Zhou & Wong 2003).

This research attempts to uncover differences, if any, on impulsive behaviour among students. The reviewed literature consisted mostly of research conducted on foreign countries, and not in South Africa. This would have provided more understanding and insight on South African consumers, especially students. Therefore an appropriate sampling frame would be tertiary students. Tertiary students who are currently studying Marketing have been identified as most suitable for conducting the research. Marketing students were chosen based on their familiarity on the consumer behaviour concept, a concept that is discussed in one of their modules.

### **1.4 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY**

It is becoming apparent that businesses are becoming more aware of and are increasingly recognising the importance of understanding consumer behaviour and the vital role it plays in their success. By learning more about how consumers behave, marketers gain further insight on how consumers make their buying decisions. An understanding of this behaviour makes it possible for organisations to develop marketing communications, which are focused on the way consumers react (Bothma *et al.* 2002).

Berkowitz *et al.* (1997) mention how psychology helps marketers understand why and how consumers behave as they do. Impulsive buying behaviours often occur in consumers' daily lives. Baumgartner (2002) classify impulse buying as a spontaneous hedonic purchase behaviour influenced by feelings rather than logical thinking. According to Anderson & Palma (2002), the fraction of unplanned purchases varies from 25% to 70% of total purchases, according to the commodity category.

The shift in defining impulse buying has drawn particular attention to systematically investigating factors that may underlie or cause impulse buying. Impulse buying was redefined as occurring 'when a consumer experiences a sudden, often powerful and persistent urge to buy something immediately. The impulse to buy is hedonically complex and may stimulate emotional conflict' (Youn & Faber 2000). There are several types of impulse products. Anderson & Palma (2002) define impulse goods as those goods that are not intentionally sought out, nor are consumers reminded that they need the goods. Such goods are not on shopping lists and have not been forgotten on shopping lists.

According to Schiffman & Kanuk (2000), personality involves those inner psychological characteristics (those specific qualities, attributes, traits, factors, and mannerisms) that both determine and reflect how a person responds to the environment. It distinguishes one individual from the other. This is why according to Hoch & Loewenstein (1991) cited by Youn & Faber (2003) impulse buying is perceived as a struggle between psychological forces of desire and willpower.

Bothma *et al.* (2002: 153) state that "the identification of personality variables that appear to be linked logically to product usage is likely to improve marketers' ability to segment markets and enable them to design specific products that will appeal to certain personality types, and to design promotional strategies that will appeal to the personality characteristics of existing target markets."



Verplanken & Herabadi (2001) have illustrated how a general impulse buying tendency is strongly rooted in personality. Impulse buying may be a way to elevate unpleasant psychological states (Baumeister 2002 cited by Verplanken *et al.* 2005). According to Youn and Faber (2000), impulse buying may be influenced by internal states or traits experienced by consumers, or by environmental factors. These authors state that three personality factors, lack of control, stress reaction, and absorption, contribute more towards impulse buying behaviours:

- *Lack of control (impulsivity)*: Consumers who are in control are reflective, cautious, sensible, careful and rational. Consumers lack control if their activities are unplanned. Their decisions are made rapidly and their emotional fluctuations are readily visible.
- *Stress reaction*: Consumers who are stressed respond to situational cues with negative emotions. Anger, anxiety, distress and guilt are some of the negative emotions they portray in their everyday life. Thus consumers who are highly stress-reactive are more prone to buying impulsively to relieve themselves from these negative emotions.
- *Absorption*: Highly absorptive people are more likely to have unusual and unconventional thinking and to be able to suspend disbelief. Such individuals are emotionally responsive to engaging sights and sounds; are readily captured by entrancing stimuli; and experience episodes of expanded awareness and altered states, among other things. Consumers that have high levels of absorption portray external sensory stimulation and therefore, engage more on impulse buying.

Impulse buying is set off when a consumer incidentally encounters relevant stimuli, normally the product itself, in the environment. Youn & Faber (2000) further state that various factors trigger impulse purchasing. These factors could be internal (self feelings, moods and emotional states) or external (marketer controlled and sensory factors, such as displays, cash machines, sounds, or

smells). Impulse purchases are often triggered in and by a shopping environment (Beatty & Ferrell 1998 cited by Verplanken *et al.* 2005).

According to Otnes & McGrath (2001), male and female consumers differ in their shopping behaviours. A classified list of the different genders' favourite possessions into different product categories discovered certain gender differences in choices. Women preferred goods with more sentimental value, while men preferred items relating to leisure and finances. Gender identity and impulse buying showed that men tend to impulsively buy instrumental and leisure items projecting independence and activity, while women tend to buy symbolic and self-expressive goods concerned with appearance and emotional aspects of self (Dittmar, Beattie, & Friese 1995).

Culture is defined as the sum total of learned beliefs, values, and customs that serve to direct the consumer behaviour of members of a particular society. Understanding various cultures of a society helps marketers to predict how consumer will accept their products. Kacen (2002) cited by Luo (2005) suggests that individual cultural differences systematically influence impulsive purchasing behaviour. The theory of individualism and collectivism holds important insights about consumer behaviour, and this can enable both academics and practitioners to gain further understanding of the impulsive buying phenomenon (Kacen & Lee 2002 cited by Wong 2005).

The holiday season also contributes to impulse buying. Many consumers at one point or another make purchases on the spur of the moment without plan or thought, but for some reason, impulsive buying increases dramatically during the holiday season. Waddell (2005) states that a consumer requires a shopping list, be it a mental one or a written one, in order to minimise impulse buying during the holiday season.

Most people believe that they are capable of controlling their impulses and desires. Yet statistics, such as 44.4% of students in undergraduate colleges across the United States of America indulge in binge drinking, often suggest otherwise (Weschler *et al.* 2002 cited by Ramanathan & Menon 2006). According to Othnes & McGrath (2001), shopping primarily has been regarded as a feminine activity. However, nowadays, even men have become involved in shopping. "Since consumption is now the primary means of identity construction in postmodern society, it has become acceptable, even for men" (Farat 1993 cited by Othnes & McGrath 2001). Today, not only are men shoppers, they also engage in impulsive shopping behaviour.

It is important for marketers to understand how they can attract and retain a recognisable share of impulse purchases, especially among students, as these are perceived as the most impulsive consumers. Marketers should focus their attention on discovering how such consumers make their impulsive buying decisions.

## **1.5 THE OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH/HYPOTHESES**

The main objective of the study is to investigate impulsive buying behaviour among marketing students at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. It will help:

- To discover whether personality traits (lack of control, stress reaction, and absorption) trigger impulse buying behaviour.
- To identify what impulse products are in terms of expected price and product location.
- To discover the differences between male and female consumers in impulsive buying behaviour.



The research hypotheses were formulated based on the research objectives. These hypotheses are as follows:

*Hypothesis 1:* Female consumers are more impulsive buyers than male consumers.

*Hypothesis 2:* Stress reaction, lack of control and absorption trigger impulse buying behaviour

## **1.6 BRIEF OVERVIEW OF RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

A critical literature review was conducted to gain more insight and further understanding of what causes impulsive buying behaviour among marketing students at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. The survey data collection method will be used for collecting the necessary data. According to Saunders *et al.* (2003) the survey collection method is appropriate because it enables the collection of large amounts of data and provides a high response rate. It is also a highly flexible research method, even though it can be quite expensive. The survey will be conducted through the use of a self administered survey questionnaire, which will be used as the main measuring instrument.

The survey questionnaire will consist mostly of close-ended questions. This questionnaire will be pre-tested on a few students to uncover irrelevant questions and determine the time it will take for respondents to answer questions. According to Shao (2002), pre-testing a questionnaire helps to refine the survey instrument and identify apparent errors to the target population. "For many research questions and objectives, it will be impossible either to collect or to analyse all the data available because of time, money and access restrictions. Sampling saves time, an important consideration when you have tight deadlines" (Saunders *et al.* 2003: 150).

The sampling frame for the study will consist of fifty University of KwaZulu-Natal marketing students. A convenience sample will be used, where marketing students will be selected haphazardly from marketing students round the campus from different levels of study. Using a large sample size does not necessarily mean more accurate information will be obtained compared to using a small sample size. Determining what the appropriate sample size is from a population is crucial to reduce sampling errors (Saunders *et al.* 2003).

For data analysis, statistical techniques will be used. SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) programme will be used to determine relationships in the study. Frequency tabulations (summaries of responses), and cross tabulations (descriptions of responses) will be used to illustrate the findings. The results will then be evaluated and analysis will be made based on the data obtained.

## **1.7 LIMITATIONS TO THE STUDY**

The chosen sample size of fifty students seemed to result in a more likely error in generalising the population. Some of the questions in the questionnaire were adapted from Youn & Faber (2000) instead of constructing original questions, which would have required more time. SPSS programme was suitable for data analyses purposes since it accessible at the university. There was limited access to other relevant information from various websites and other academic institutions. Time constraints were also another limitation. However, there was no major effect on the study as a result of these limitations.

## **1.8 STRUCTURE OF THE DISSERTATION**

*Chapter 1*, the research proposal, will provide an introduction to the entire research study.

*Chapter 2*, the literature review, will give a review of previous literature carried out on the topic by several authors.

*Chapter 3*, the research methodology, will focus on the research design, the sample plan, measuring instruments, the collection procedure and the statistical analyses used.

*Chapter 4* will provide the data analyses and findings on the research. It will demonstrate these results with the aid of tables and figures.

*Chapter 5* will give conclusions made on the study. Implications, recommendations, limitations and areas for future research will be included in this chapter.



# **CHAPTER 2**

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

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### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

Consumer behaviour is an important discipline of marketing. It is aimed at studying consumers and how they behave in their day-to-day decision making. Consumer's purchase decisions are influenced by numerous factors. Some of these include factors such as the environment the consumer may be exposed to, or the individual personality that each consumer possesses. The consumer's ability to make a purchase, or rather, the amount of buying power also plays a major role in consumption purchases behaviours. A study on how and why consumers make purchase decisions is therefore important, especially for marketers, in order to help formulate and implement effective marketing strategies and gain success in the marketplace.

This chapter attempts to discuss the nature of impulse buying behaviour, its formation, and also uncover the factors that influence consumer impulse consumption. It highlights among others things, gender differences that may occur as a result of impulsive consumption behaviours.

### **2.2 CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR BACKGROUND**

According to Strydom *et. al* (2003), consumer behaviour studies how individuals, groups and organisations select, buy, use and dispose of goods, services, ideas or experiences to satisfy their needs and desires. Marketers should therefore study their target markets' wants, perceptions, shopping and buying behaviour.

There are numerous ways in which consumers behave when making their day-to-day purchases. Shimp (1997: 533-534) classifies every brand purchase into four types of purchase behaviours:

- *Specifically planned* – which represents purchases of a brand that the consumer has indicated an intention to buy.
- *Generally planned* – which applies to purchases for which the shopper indicates an intention to buy a particular product, but had no specific brand in mind.
- *Substitute purchases* – in this instance the shopper does not buy the product or brand he or she indicates but opts for a substitute product.
- *Unplanned purchases* – here, the shopper makes purchases that he or she has no prior intention to buy.

Even though consumption behaviours may be intended to increase consumer utility, there is also a darker side to consumer behaviour, this being impulsive and compulsive behaviours. Impulse buying behaviour is another consumption pattern that marketers need to take into great consideration. Such behaviours may influence both the purchase and the consumption of products (Wansink 1994: 508).

According to Dholakia (2000: 955), impulsive consumption behaviours consist of a large number of consumer behaviours that have received little attention by consumer researchers. Although much of the research work done on impulsive buying behaviour focuses on defining and measuring the concept, less research has been directed towards determining factors underlying the tendency to buy at impulse (Youn & Faber 2000: 179).

### **2.3 EMOTIONS AND CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR**

Emotions involved in the consumption experience have become an important object of study in consumer behaviour. It has been proven that emotions elicited by products can enhance the pleasure of buying, owning and using them (Hirschman & Holbrook 1982 cited by Desmet *et al.* 2000). Consumers experience a wide array of emotions, ranging from the mild annoyance of waiting in line at a store to the joy of purchasing a first home. These emotions vary not only in type but also in intensity (Madrigal 2003: 148).

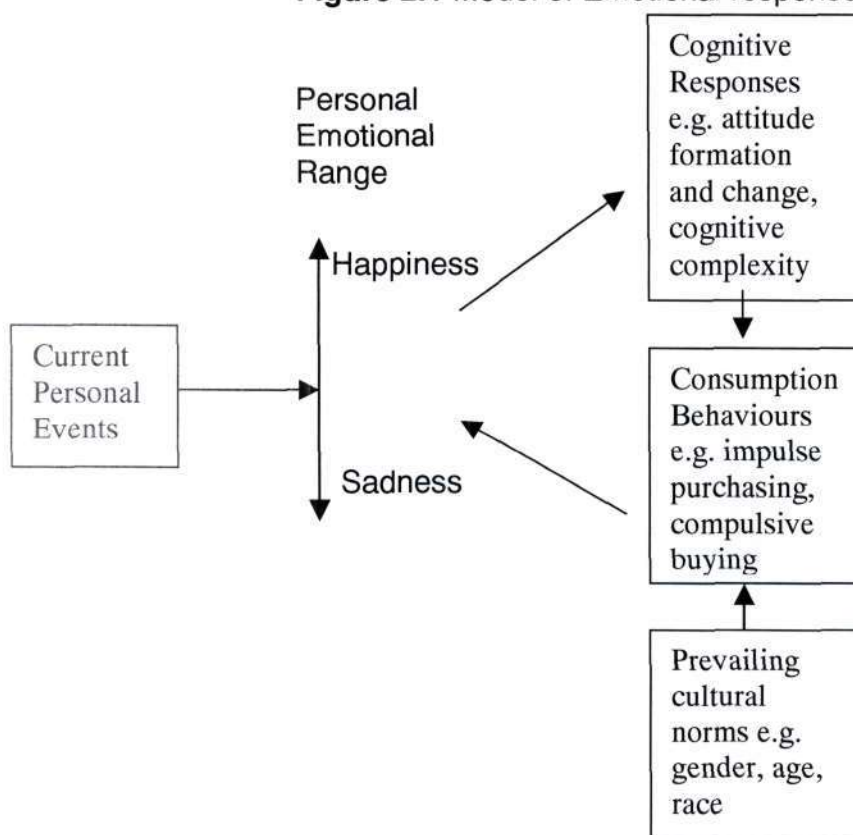
Previous research by Rook & Gardner (1993) cited by Madhavaram & Laverie (2004) shows that mood states impact on both consumers' mental and overt behaviours. Each of the three basic mood dimensions (pleasure, arousal and dominance) is linked to a primary core theme that either supports or dissuades consumer's buying impulses. This research suggests that pleasure is associated with motivation, arousal is associated with mobilization, and dominance is associated with capability (Madhavaram & Laverie 2004).

According to Lam (2001), the emotions affected by the environment can be fully described by three states, namely, pleasure, arousal and dominance (PAD). It has been noted that shoppers' emotional states are represented by the PAD dimensions. This emotional response leads to several behaviours and outcomes such the amount of time shoppers spent and the amount of money they spend inside the store.



**Figure 2.1** is a model of emotional response, developed by Hirschman & Stern (1999), which illustrates how every consumer has a personal emotional range which can move from extreme happiness to extreme sadness. The current personal events of a major and minor nature will have transient effects on adult consumers' emotional states. This model states the direct influence of emotion on a variety of cognitive responses, for example, attitude formation and recall, on a broad array of consumption behaviours, for example, impulse purchasing, consumption creativity, and innovativeness. The consumption behaviours feedback into cognition and emotion, in turn, the cognitive responses may also feedback into emotion. The model proposes that consumption behaviours occurring in response to consumer's emotional states are shaped by prevailing cultural norms.

**Figure 2.1** Model of Emotional response



**Source:** Adapted from Hirschman, E.C & Stern, B. B. 1999. The Roles of Emotion in Consumer Research, *Advances of Consumer Research*, Vol. 26, p5

Baumeister (2002) cited by Verplanken *et al.* (2005) observes that people who experience emotional distress may give up a degree of self-control and engage in activities that they expect to give immediate pleasure or satisfaction. Making impulsive purchases is one such behaviour that typically fits this category of activities that lead to short-term pleasure.

## **2.4 COMPULSIVE CONSUMPTION BEHAVIOUR**

According to O'Guinn & Faber (1989) cited by Hirschman & Stern (1999: 7), compulsive consumption is repetitive purchasing which is ultimately destructive financially and psychologically to the consumer, but provides momentary relief from tension, anxiety or sadness. On the contrary, impulse buying is associated with happy emotional states, when the consumer is feeling self-indulgent, optimistic, enthusiastic, and venturesome (Hirschman & Stern 1999).

Excessive (compulsive) shoppers differ from ordinary consumers in a number of ways (Dittmar 2006):

- They were more motivated to buy in order to bolster their self-image.
- They have reported greater "gaps" between how they see themselves (actual self) and how they wish to be (ideal self).
- They hold stronger materialistic values, believing that acquiring material goods is a major route towards success, identity and happiness.

Such compulsive purchasing is closely related biochemically, psychologically and behaviourally to a host of other compulsive consumer activities such as substance abuse, and extreme excesses in behaviour, for example, eating disorders and compulsive sexuality, and also more marketplace oriented behaviours such as compulsive gambling and kleptomania (Hirschman & Stern 1999: 7). Impulsive behaviour, on the contrary, is driven by hedonic, or pleasure-

seeking, goals that may cause a person to experience desires for related objects or products (Ramanathan & Menon 2006).

## **2.5 IMPULSE BUYING BEHAVIOUR**

Several behaviours related to consumption have been found to be substantially shaped by genetics. For instance, impulse buying and drug addiction are now believed to result from extreme manifestations of normally distributed pleasure seeking traits (McGue & Bouchard 1998 cited by Hirschman & Stern 2001: 403). Roney & Johnson (1997) cited by Hirschman & Stern (2001: 405) suggest that a large proportion of impulse purchasing is due to mild to moderate adult levels of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), which is highly hereditary. ADHD is caused by slower than average metabolism in the frontal lobes of the brain, the region responsible for controlling attention and motor behaviours, as well as impulses (Hirschman & Stern 2001).

Factors triggering the impulse to purchase are divided into two types, external and internal cues (Wansink 1994 cited by Youn & Faber 2000). The external cues are specific triggers associated with buying or shopping, involving marketer controlled environmental and sensory factors. Internal cues, on the other hand, refer to consumers' feelings, moods, and emotional states. It is necessary to discuss the true nature of impulse buying behaviour before attempting to investigate its formation with regards to marketing stimuli, impulsivity traits as well as situational factors.

### **2.5.1 THE NATURE OF IMPULSIVE BEHAVIOUR**

According to Madharavam & Laverie (2004: 59), impulse purchasing accounts for a substantial percentage of the products sold across a broad range of product categories. Several authors have attempted to define impulse buying behaviour. Rook (1987) cited by Shiv & Fedorikhin (1999: 281) describes impulse buying as taking place when a consumer experiences positive affect spontaneously on confrontation with a product, which results in a sudden urge to choose the



product eliciting affective reactions. Another author, Dholakia (2000: 957), states that impulsive consumption behaviour can be viewed to occur as a result of a sudden, often powerful, and persistent urge to consume, without much deliberation. It is therefore evident in each of the author's definitions how the urge to consume is sudden, and how the purchase may be unplanned.

There are several themes in impulsive buying, identified by Rook (1987) cited by Burroughs (1996: 463). These include:

- The impulsive buying urge appears to arise spontaneously
- The impulsive buying urge feels intense
- The impulsive buying urge reflects animate forces
- The impulsive buying urge is synchronistic.

According to Hirschman & Stern (2001: 405), previous research defined impulse buying as a consumer's tendency to buy spontaneously, unreflectively, immediately and kinetically. Such behaviour often resulted from different factors, such as marketing stimuli or the situation a consumer may have been exposed to. Other studies have uncovered that impulse buying may be influenced by internal states or traits experienced by consumers, or by environmental factors. Many researchers have attempted to find out whether consumers that frequently engage in this behaviour have some common personality traits (Youn & Faber 2000: 179).

Even though there have been several studies (Shimp 1997; Burroughs 1996) that described impulse buying as unplanned behaviour, Madhavaram & Laverie (2004: 59) observe how researchers began to view impulse behaviour as a behaviour that was not unplanned. Stern (1962) cited by Madhavaram & Laverie (2004: 59) therefore outlined four types of impulse buying:

- *Pure impulse buying* – a novelty or escape purchase that breaks a normal buying pattern.
- *Reminder impulse buying* – takes place 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* – takes place when a shopper sees a product for the first time and visualises a need for it
- *Planned impulse buying* – occurs when the shopper makes specific purchase decisions on the basis of price specials, coupon offers and many more.

These different types of impulse buying have made it possible for more research to focus on the reasons behind impulse buying, as it has now been viewed as a planned behaviour. Anonymous (2006) suggests that impulse buying disrupts the normal decision making models in consumers' brains. The logical sequence of the consumers' actions is replaced with an irrational moment of self gratification.

### **2.5.2 IMPULSE BEHAVIOUR FORMATION**

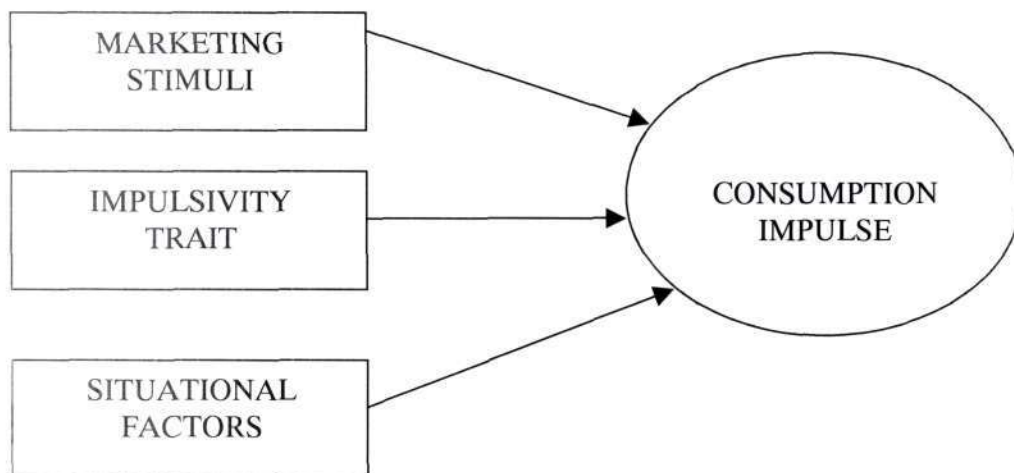
The consumer behaviour literature features 'impulse buying' as extraordinary, emotion-saturated buying that takes place largely without regard to financial or other consequences (Wood 2005). It is driven by hedonic, or pleasure-seeking, goals that may cause a person to experience desires for related objects or products (Ramanathan & Menon 2006).

According to Dholakia (2000: 956), consumers experience the urge to buy impulsively when they have been exposed to the product. The way in which the product is presented to the consumer, through attractive display, tempting graphics or sales promotions all play a major role. Situational factors, as well as personal and social factors surrounding a particular consumption occasion, may increase or decrease the propensity of a consumer to experience consumption



impulse. The author demonstrates this impulse behaviour in the CIFE (Consumption Impulse Formation and Enactment) model shown in **Figure 2.2**

**Figure 2.2** The CIFE Framework



**Source:** Adapted from Dholakia, U.M 2000. Temptation and resistance: An integrated model of consumption impulse formation and enactment, *Journal of Psychology and Marketing*, Vol. 17, p960

The three antecedents, marketing stimuli, impulsivity traits, and situational factors, which result in consumption impulse, are all experienced when the consumer is exposed to the product. The presence of one or more of these three antecedents to a sufficient degree culminates in the formation of the consumption impulse, an irresistible urge to consume (Dholakia 2000: 961). The three antecedents are discussed further.

#### **2.5.2.1 Marketing Stimuli**

Shimp (1997: 119) observes how consumers are more likely to attend to messages that serve their cognitive needs and those that make them feel good and bring pleasure (hedonic needs). Purchasing impulsively results from a stimulus which is created by a sales promotional device in a store. The consumer could be using this stimulus as an external memory aid (Applebaum 1951 cited by Madhavaram & Laverie 2004: 59).

Berkowitz (1993) cited by Shiv & Fedorikhin (1999: 279) states that there are three types of processes that are likely to occur on exposure to a stimulus event. Firstly, information related to the stimulus is subject to 'relatively basic and automatic processes'. Secondly, the information related to the stimulus is subject to more deliberative, higher order cognitive processing, the outcome of which may serve to strengthen or weaken the action tendencies arising from the lower order affective reactions. Finally, the affective significance of the outcome of the higher order processing may result in higher order affective reactions and action tendencies that are engendered relatively slowly compared to lower order affective reactions because the information is subject to more deliberative processes before their reactions can occur.

Even though earlier research states the product as the main stimulus, there could be other factors that may trigger impulse buying. Madharavam & Laverie (2004: 60) believe that advertisements, word-of-mouth and articles also act as stimuli. "Indeed, store and web layouts, product packaging elements, and in-store promotions all focus on promoting and regulating such impulsive purchases" (Dholakia 2000: 956). The stimuli may be an image, a description in an email, a banner advertisement, an article in a magazine or on the Internet, and a sign (Madharavam & Laverie 2004: 61).

Exposure to different marketing stimuli may have a huge impact on impulse consumption behaviours. According to Hoch & Loewenstein (1991) cited by Burroughs (1996: 463), the impulsive buying urge is unplanned. It appears to be set off when an individual incidentally encounters a relevant stimulus, which is usually a product, in the environment. Wansink (1994: 508) states that internal and external cues that stimulate an eating session affect one's perception toward that eating session. When this session is stimulated by external cues, perceptions of the food's versatility, perishability, and nutritional value mediates the amount of food that is consumed.

According to Kroeber-Reil (1980) cited by Madhavaram & Laverie (2004: 60), impulse buying is reactive behaviour and often involves an immediate action to stimulus. Such purchasing may occur as a result of marketer's environmental manipulations through atmospherics, merchandising stimuli such as retail shelf location, and amount of space affected impulse buying. A report by Ernst & Young cited in What Causes Customers to Buy on Impulse, (2002) reported that 88% of impulse purchases were because shoppers found products that were offered at good price or on sale. According to this survey it is clear that impulse buys are price-related and not due to any specific design or web layout.

#### **2.5.2.2 Situational Factors**

Situational factors also play a major role in impulse purchases. Verplanken et al. (2005: 430) believe that impulsive purchases are often triggered in and by a shopping environment. Dholakia (2000: 961) observes that one important category of situational variables pertains to environmental conditions surrounding the particular consumption occasion. Store environments could affect shopper's behaviour in several ways. The store environment, the physical surroundings of a store, is all made up of several elements, including music, lighting, layout, directional signage and human elements. This environment can also be divided into external environment and internal environment (Lam 2001: 190).

Impulse purchase (2006) reports that candy, chewing gum and mints are prominently displayed at the checkout aisles to trigger impulse buyers to buy what they might not have otherwise considered. Alternatively, impulse buying can occur when a potential consumer spots something related to a product that stirs a particular passion in them, such as seeing a certain country's flag on the cover of a certain DVD.



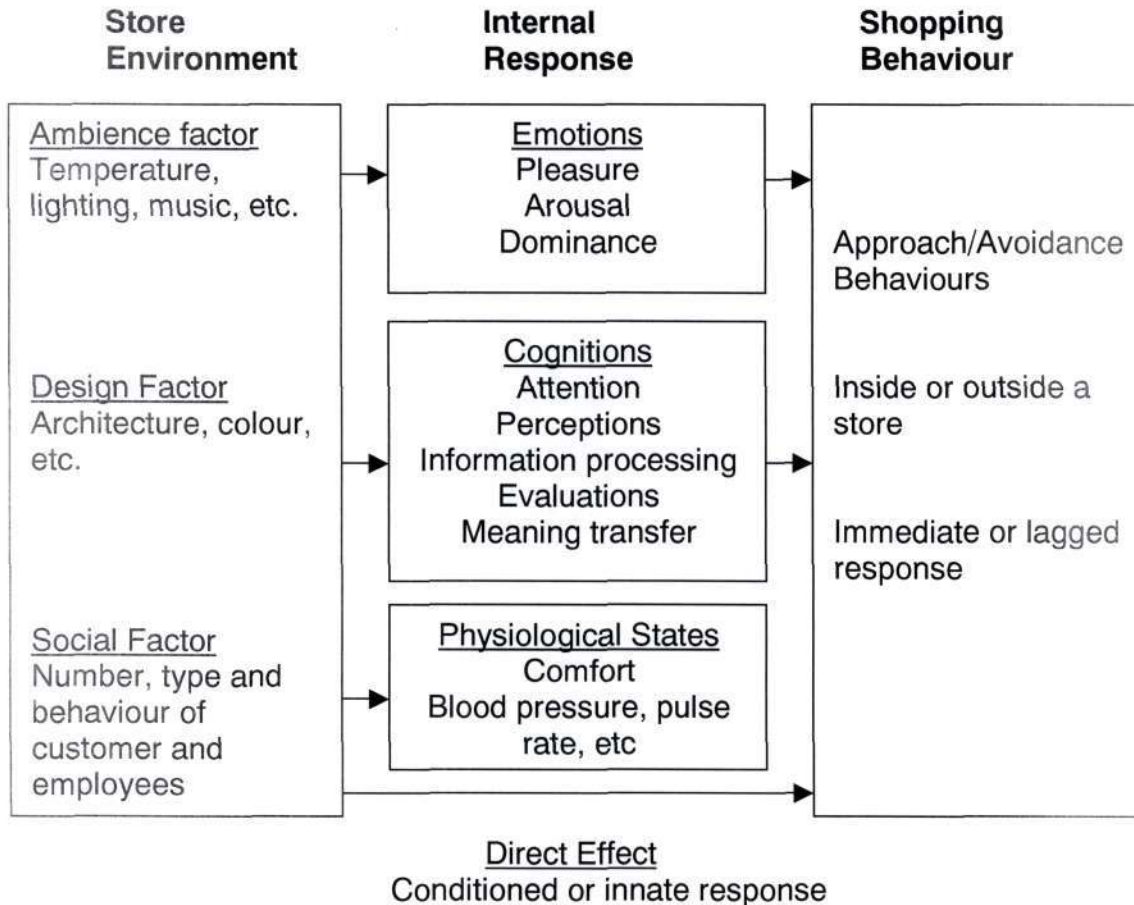
The amount of time spent in a store may also have an impact on the consumer's purchase decisions. Clifford (2006), states that retailers have long thought that shoppers are less impulsive when they enter a store, and become more impulsive the longer they shop. The consumer's current mood may also affect consumption purchases. According to Dholakia (2000: 961), a positive mood state increases the risk seeking propensity of individuals, making them less willing to process information.

In a report conducted by Point-of-Purchase Advertising Institute (POPAl), it confirmed that in-store media, signage, and displays heavily influence consumer's purchase decisions (Shimp 1997: 533). Other areas in a grocery store pushing impulse items include (Montaldo 2006):

- Displays at the end of the aisles.
- Announcements of price specials over the store intercom.
- Samples that are being cooked and entice us with the aroma and sizzling sounds.
- Fresh baked goods that have strong aromatic powers over consumer impulses.
- Introductory low prices on new products.

A study conducted by Lam (2001), describes how the store environment also influences various stages of shoppers' cognitive process inside a store, including attention, perception, categorization and information processing. Some of the ways in which store environment affects shoppers' behaviour is illustrated in **Figure 2.3**

**Figure 2.3:** An integrative framework of Store Environmental effects



**Source:** Lam, S.Y. 2001. The effects of store environment on shopping behaviours: A critical review, *Advances in Consumer Research*, Vol. 28, p191

According to the author, the factor level includes the ambient, design and social factors:

- *The ambient factor:* consists mainly background characteristics, for example, temperature, noise, lighting, music and ambient scent.
- *The design factor:* consists of stimuli that exist at the forefront of our awareness, for example, architecture, colour, and materials.
- *The social factor:* consists of social conditions represented by the number, type, and behaviour of customers and employees.

Numerous stages of shoppers' cognitive process inside a store such as attention, perceptions, categorization and information processing influence store environment. The influence of store environment on these cognitive stages would affect evaluations of the store, its merchandise and service, and hence on the shopping behaviours or outcomes (Hui *et al.* 1997; Ward *et al.* 1992 cited by Lam 2001). The store environment may also have lagged or carryover effects on shopping behaviours. Shoppers' physiological states are affected by environmental conditions such as noise, temperature, and air quality. This tends to influence whether people stay in or enjoy a particular environment (Lam 2001: 191).

Hoch and Loewenstein (1991) explain the impulse buying as a struggle between the psychological forces of desires and willpower. Understanding how grocers set up their stores in order to tempt shoppers with impulse items will help even the most frugal shopper to enjoy a little walk on the 'impulse' wild side (Montaldo 2006).

#### **2.5.2.3 Impulsivity Trait**

Impulsivity trait is described as the tendency to respond quickly and without reflection, and characterised by rapid reaction times, absence of foresight, and a tendency to act without careful plan (Doob 1990 cited by Dholakia 2000: 961). According to Dholakia (2000), impulsivity is characterised well by a single dimension and is associated with other personality characteristics such as inquisitiveness, need for variety and risk aversion.

Youn & Faber (2000: 180) observe that impulsive buying may be one manifestation of a personality representing a lack of control (or impulsivity). A generalised impulsivity would seem to be a contributor to impulse buying behaviours. According to Puri (1996) cited by Shiv & Fedorikhin (1999: 281), one aspect that differentiates people who are high on consumer impulsivity



(impulsives) and those who are low on this factor (prudents) is the accessibility of cognitions related to impulse behaviours. Prudents spend more time thinking about the consequences of engaging in such behaviours.

Montaldo (2006) suggests that consumers who wish to avoid impulse buying from being a total waste of money need to ask themselves questions such as:

- How will I use it?
- When will I use it?
- Why am I buying it?
- Is the price reasonable?

According to Anonymous (2006), other questions that consumers need to ask themselves include:

- Does this product replace a product already in my trolley? If it does, compare them side-by-side and then choose.
- Why am I buying this? Did I have a bad day?
- Am I hungry? Do I deserve a reward?
- Do I really need or want this?

### **2.5.3 IMPULSIVE PRODUCTS**

Several products in the marketplace may be classified as impulsive products. This is because there are a variety of products made from unplanned purchases. Verplanken *et al.* (2005) notes that this tendency to buy on impulse is strongly related to the habit of eating snack foods. Point-of-purchase materials play a major role in influencing unplanned purchasing and increasing such sales (Shimp 1997: 533).

Anonymous (2006) mentions that impulse items may be new products, samples, well-displayed items or products at unexpectedly low prices. Dholakia (2000: 956) characterises impulse products as low cost, frequently purchased products. Some types of consumer goods make more likely impulse purchases than others, and those which were reported most frequently, clothes, jewellery, ornaments, are closely linked to self-image and appearance (Dittmar 2006).

Impulse items appeal to the emotional side of consumers. Most items bought on impulse are not functional or necessary in the consumer's life (Impulse purchase 2006). According to Anderson & Palma (2002), impulse goods are those that are not intentionally sought out, nor is the consumer reminded that he or she needs the good. Such goods are not found on shopping lists, nor are they forgotten from shopping lists. They are not search goods, that is, the consumer does not actively search out the good but instead comes across it on shopping trips with other purposes. Dittmar (2006) observes that consumer goods play an increasingly stronger psychological role in people's lives because they can and do function as material symbols of who a person is and who they would like to be.

"High impulse" goods are bought for different reasons than "low impulse" goods. For "low impulse" goods, functional motivations are most important consumers are concerned with whether the purchase is good value for money, and whether it is practical or useful (i.e. they are "rational decision-makers"). For "high impulse" goods, however, psychological buying motivations become more powerful than price and usefulness. Consumers buy because the purchase "puts them in a better mood", "makes them feel more like the person they want to be" and "expresses what is unique about them" (Dittmar 2006).

## 2.6 CULTURE AND IMPULSIVE BEHAVIOUR

According to Festinger (1954) cited by Ackerman *et al.* (2000: 173), how people think and feel about products is influenced by those around them. Social comparison theory suggests that individuals compare themselves to others in order to value the ability level and the suitability of their opinions. Culture has been treated as a self-contained, internally consistent and largely taken for granted constellation of meanings and practices (Thompson & Tambyah 1998: 58).

Bothma *et al.* (2002: 49) state how the impact of culture is so natural and automatic that we usually take for granted its influence on behaviour. Often, it is only when we are exposed to people with different cultural values or customs that we become aware of how culture has moulded our own behaviour. Through socialisation, people learn cultural values, form beliefs, and become familiar with the physical manifestations, or artefacts, of these values and beliefs. The artefacts of culture are charged with meaning, which is transferred from generation to generation (Shimp 1997: 110).

According to Bothma *et al.* (2002: 49), culture exists to satisfy the needs of people within a society. It offers order, direction and guidance in all phases of human problem-solving by providing tried and trusted methods of satisfying physiological, personal and social needs.

Previous research suggests that different cultures differ in the preferred order of values and in the emphasis they put on one value over the other (Shoham *et al.* 1998).



## 2.7 GENDER SIMILARITIES/DIFFERENCES

It is necessary to find out how whether or not there is a relationship between consumption and gender. According to Shoham *et al.* (1998), the importance of values and demographics in consumer behaviour has grown in recent years. The globalisation of markets increases the need for cross cultural comparison of consumer behaviour issues including values and their variation across cultures and demographics.

Gender is a demographic trait that divides consumers into two groups, male or female. It is of great importance to marketers because it influences the consumer's values and preferences (Bothma *et al.* 2002: 81). According to Otnes & McGrath (2001), shopping is regarded as a feminine activity. Women constitute the majority of customers. Hirschman & Stern (1999: 7) observe that women tend to be more binge eaters, kleptomania and compulsive buyers. On the contrary, men are more into gambling and hard drug users.

Values also play a major role as far as culture and consumption is concerned. Williams (1979) cited by Shoham *et al.* (1998) mentions that values have an impact on consumers' judgements, preferences, and choices. According to Lascue *et al.* (1996) cited by Shoham *et al.* (1998: 468) these values are characterised as transcendental. Since they are internalised, they become unconscious and conscious criteria in guiding behaviour. Women prefer goods with more sentimental value, while men prefer items relating to leisure and finances. Gender identity and impulse buying shows that men tend to impulsively buy instrumental and leisure items projecting independence and activity, while women tend to buy symbolic and self-expressive goods concerned with appearance and emotional aspects of self (Dittmar *et al.* 1995).



Three common stereotypes of male shopping behaviours are discussed in **Figure 2.4 Male Shopping Behaviour**

**Figure 2.4 Male Shopping Behaviour**

<b>Stereotype description</b>	<b>Reality refuting the stereotype</b>	<b>Reality description</b>
Grab item and leave store Quickly (Grab and Go)	Alternative evaluation Bargaining Shopping together Browsing behaviour Consumer socialisation	Examine products Negotiate in store Teach other to shop Compare/discuss items Unfocused exploration
Complain about shopping, Stand passively (Whine And Wait)	No actual whining Enjoyment of shopping Helping behaviour	Enrolment in process Evaluate items or facilitate shopping
Aversion of products Associated with female Body or domestic sphere (Fear of the Feminine)	Admission of 'shopping like a lady' Purchase of feminine symbols Purchasing feminine products Furtherance of intimacy	Long trips; careful shopping Buying crystal and china Buying lingerie Buying goods to enhance relationships with other

**Source:** Otnes, C. & McGrath, M. A. 2001. Perceptions and realities of male shopping behaviour, Journal of Retailing, Vol. 77, p119

## 2.8 PERSONALITY TRAITS

According to Ramanathan & Menon (2006), people always have control over their desires and testify to tendencies not only to indulge but also to overindulge. Such impulsive acts are often attributed to personality traits, specifically, the extent to which a person is impulsive.

In a study conducted by Youn & Faber (2000), they uncovered factors that underlie the tendency for consumers to buy impulsively. The study focused on the relationship between impulse buying tendencies and personality traits. They identified eleven personality dimensions; wellbeing, social potency, achievement,

social closeness, stress reaction, alienation, aggression, control, harm avoidance, traditionalism, and absorption. From the eleven dimensions, three of them seemed to have particular relevance for the study of impulse buying.

These dimensions were: lack of control (impulsivity), stress reaction, and absorption. These three personality traits are discussed below;

- *Lack of control (Impulsivity)* – such consumers lacking control are seen to be spontaneous, reckless, and careless. They make their decision fast and have visible emotional fluctuations. Such behaviour has been seen to be a potential contributor to impulse buying behaviours.
- *Stress reaction* – such reaction is characterised by salient themes such as tension, jumpiness, and worry-proneness. Consumers feel vulnerable and miserable without reason. They are nervous, sensitive, easily upset, irritable, and troubled by feelings of guilt. Therefore, highly stress-reactive people may be more likely to engage in impulse buying in order to escape from the negative emotional states they more frequently (or more intensely) experience.
- *Absorption* - Highly absorptive persons are more likely to have unusual and unconventional thinking and to be able to suspend disbelief. They are emotionally responsive to engaging sites and sounds; are readily captured by entrancing stimuli; think in images and synaesthetic and other cross modal experiences; become absorbed in vivid and compelling recollections and imaginings; and experience episodes of expanded awareness and altered states.

These three personality traits were measured using the Multidimensional Personality Inventory sub-scales. 24 items were used to measure the lack of control, 26 items to measure stress reaction, and 34 items used to measure absorption. Through a factor analysis, the three traits demonstrated a high internal consistency.

Buying goods in order to bolster one's self-image is probably a motivation that plays some role in most buying behaviour, but it might be particularly important when people engage in non-planned "spur of the moment" purchases. Such impulsive buys, without careful deliberation and prior intent, are often later regretted (Dittmar 2006). Yet, at high frequency levels these behaviours may be harmful and, in the extreme case, self-destructive (Verplanken *et al.* 2005). It is therefore necessary for marketers to be well aware of consumption decision making, and implement strategies that will not be harmful to consumers, strategies that will not lead consumers to behaviour irrationally and inappropriately.

## **2.9 CONCLUSION**

This chapter provided a review of previous literature by other authors on impulsive buying behaviour. Many of these authors have stated how this behaviour is unplanned and may be a result of individual emotions. The nature, formation and possible causes of such behaviour have been highlighted.

The next chapter states the research methodology used in conducting the research.



# **CHAPTER 3**

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

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### **3.1 RESEARCH DESIGN**

This chapter discusses the methodology used in collecting the required data to be used in answering the research hypotheses. It describes the instrument and procedures used to collect the required data. Secondary data was collected by reviewing literature discussed by numerous authors. Reviewing such literature helped in providing more clarity and understanding of the research topic. Saunders *et al.* (2003: 200) believe that secondary data saves resources such as time and money, which therefore enables the researcher to spend more time and effort making analyses and interpretations of the data. A survey research was conducted to help in collecting primary data, using a self administered questionnaire.

### **3.2 SAMPLING**

Sampling helps to provide more accurate information. It is also cheaper to collect data from a sample compared to the entire population. The population chosen for the study were marketing students currently studying at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. This was perceived the appropriate population because of the unlimited access to students studying at the institution, especially because of limited resources such as time and money. Most research conducted on impulse buying behaviour focuses students outside South African. A sample based on South African students would help provide a better understanding of impulsive behaviour consumption.



Marketing students were identified as the most appropriate respondents for this research because they are perceived as much more familiar with the impulse buying concept, which is entailed in the marketing syllabus. The convenience sampling technique, which is a non-probability sampling method, was used for conducting the research. This technique allows easy access to the sample frame since the selection of respondents is conducted until the required sample size is achieved. It is also perceived as being less costly. However, this technique is prone to bias and influences that are beyond the researcher's control as the cases only appear in the sample because of the ease of obtaining them (Saunders *et al.* 2003).

Saunders *et al.* (2003: 155) suggest that a larger sample size reduces the likelihood error of generalising to the population. However, larger sample sizes do not necessarily guarantee accuracy in results. For the study, fifty students were haphazardly chosen among marketing students at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. The size, fifty, was perceived as the appropriate size to obtain an accurate analysis.

### **3.3 DATA COLLECTION**

For this study, the survey method was chosen for data collection. Surveys are perceived as the most popular and common technique for conducting research. The survey method enables the collection of a large amount of data from a sizeable population in a highly economical way. They are also standardised, making it easy for comparison (Saunders *et al.* 2003). The survey was carried out through the use of a self administered questionnaire.

### 3.3.1 QUESTIONNAIRE DESIGN

A self-administered questionnaire was designed for collecting the necessary data for analyses. The questions were constructed with reference to a study conducted by Youn & Faber (2000), "Impulse buying: Its relation to personality traits and cues." The research objectives were taken into consideration during the construction of every question.

The questionnaire consisted of four sections. *Section A* (Impulse products), contained questions that would help in determining what products were considered as impulse products, taking into consideration the price and location of the product. Respondents were provided with a list of products from which to choose from, places from which they expected to find these products, how much they expected to pay for the products and conditions that would increase likelihood to make impulse purchases.

*Section B* (Personality Traits), consisted of questions that were likely to trigger impulsive behaviour, with regards to the personality traits identified by Youn & Faber (2000). These questions would help to determine whether impulse buying behaviour is triggered by these three personality traits or not.

*Section C* (Gender Differences). The questions in this section would help to identify differences, if any, on impulse buying behaviour among the two gender groups. *Section D* (Demographic Information) contained demographic questions which were necessary for making further analyses on the types of respondents that took part in the study.

The questions were mainly close-ended. Some questions consisted of lists (several items offered for respondents to choose from), category (where only one response needs to be selected) and ratings (where a rating device is used when recording responses). The rating questions were constructed using the Likert-

style rating scale. There were five options available for respondents to choose from where; 1= strongly agree, 2= agree, 3= neither agree nor disagree, 4= disagree, and 5= strongly disagree.

### **3.3.2 PRE-TESTING**

“The purpose of a pilot test is to refine the questionnaire so that the respondents will have no problem in answering the questions and that there will be no problems in recording the data” (Saunders et al. 2003). The survey questionnaire was pre-tested on five friends, because of time constraints, in order determine whether questions were properly constructed, and instructions clear. This helped in reconstructing some of the questions that seemed to be ambiguous, or leading to a specific response. Pre-testing also helped determine the amount of time it would take respondents to complete answering the questions. The survey questionnaire has been attached as **APPENDIX A**.

### **3.4 DATA ANALYSIS**

The survey questionnaires were edited to ensure respondents had attempted to answer all questions. After editing, each question was coded using numerical values, in order to eliminate or reduce data errors. The data was then processed through SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences). Various techniques were used to conduct data analysis of the study. Frequency tabulations, which are statistical procedures used for summarising responses to specific questions, were also used for analyses purposes. Tables and figures were used to illustrate these analyses.

### **3.5 VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY**

Saunders *et al.* (2003) believe that the validity and reliability of the data collected, together with the response rate achieved, depend on the design of the questions,



the structure of the survey questionnaire, as well as the rigour of the pilot testing. By pre-testing the questionnaire, it helped to improve the validity and reliability of the collected data. Both validity and reliability occur when the researcher is clear about the information requirements when designing the questionnaire, the way in which respondents decode the questions is the same way intended by the researcher, and the researcher decodes the answers in the way the respondents intended (Saunders *et al.* 2003).

In order to establish the reliability of the collected data, the alternative form technique was used. Responses were compared to alternative forms of the same question by using check questions. For validity purposes, a pilot test was conducted on a group of individual friends and colleagues. This helped to identify poor construction of questions. Some of the questions were also adapted from the questionnaire used by Youn & Faber (2000), in their study on impulse buying.

### **3.6 CONCLUSION**

The research methodology provided an outline of how the research was conducted, as well as the research instrument and the analytical procedures that were implemented. The next chapter will provide analyses and findings of the data collected for the study. Tables and figures will be used to represent these findings.



# CHAPTER 4

## DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

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### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter illustrates the analyses and findings on the entire research, through the use of labelled tables and figures.

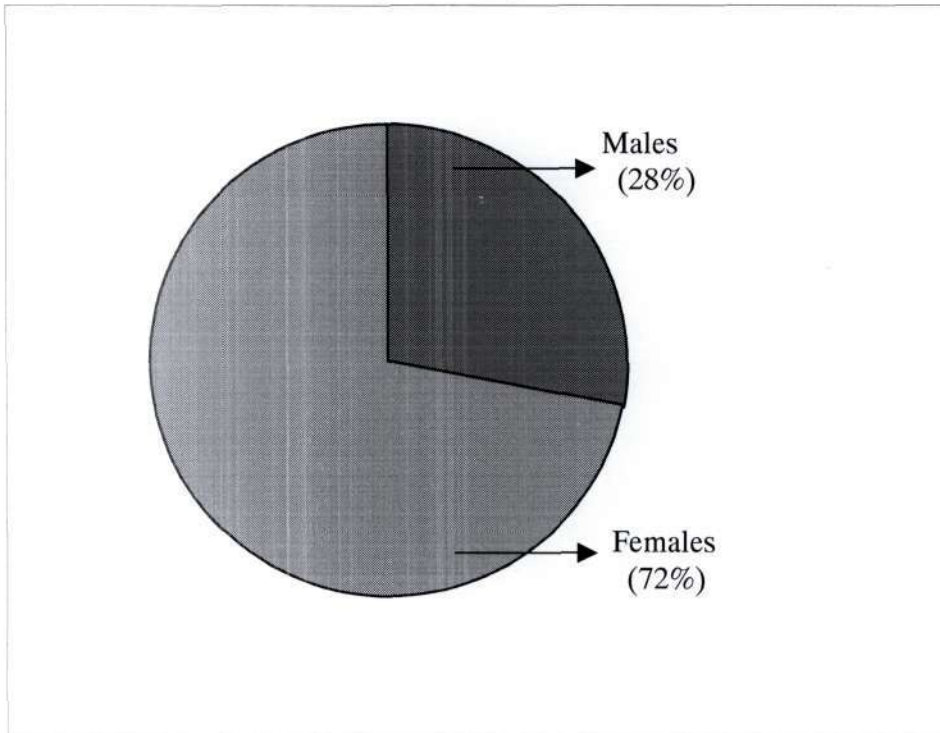
After collecting data from fifty respondents, each questionnaire was edited. This ensured that answering the questions was completed and that no questions were left unanswered. Each question was then coded using numerical variables.

SPSS, a Statistical Package for the Social Sciences program, was used to analyse the findings. Some of the analyses include frequency tabulations, and cross tabulations. These findings are shown in the tables and figures.

### 4.2 DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION RESULTS

Gender, age and racial groups were the required demographics for the study. The respondents' demographic information was essential in helping achieve some of the research objectives. **Question 15, Question 16** and **Question 17** are all demographic questions. The findings are shown in the following **figure 4.1:**

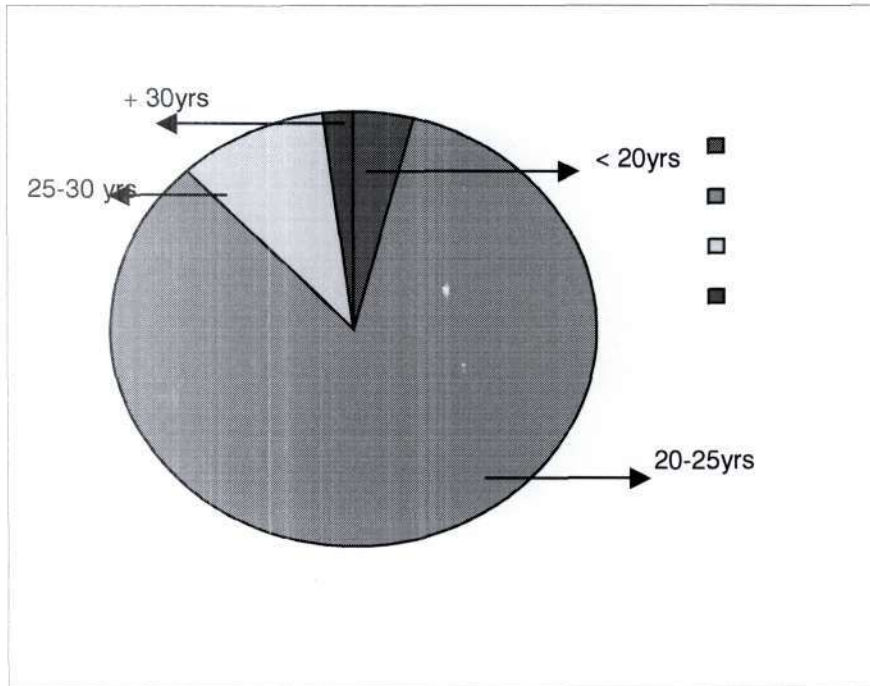
**Figure 4.1 Gender Groups of respondents**



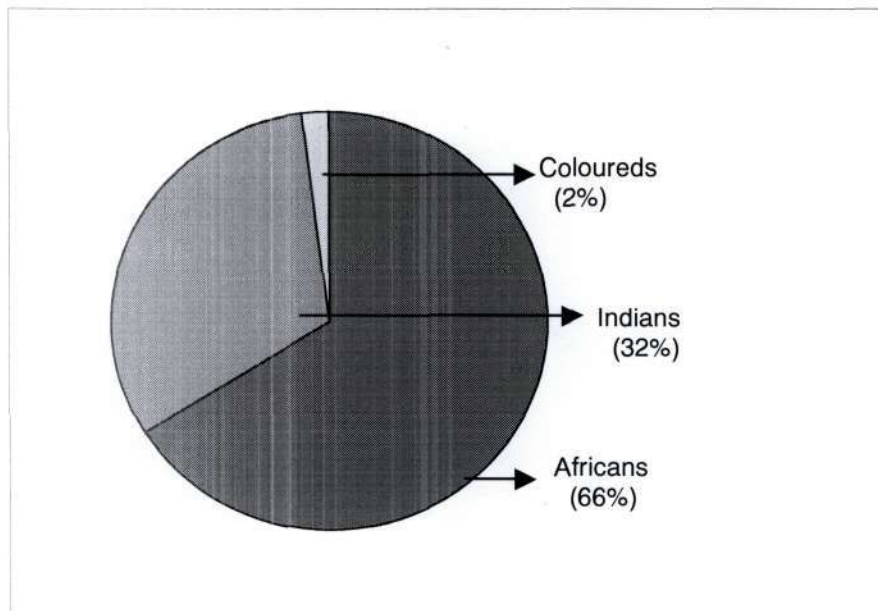
**Figure 4.1** illustrates the gender of the respondents. The study was conducted among 50 respondents. Among these, 72% consisted of female respondents and only 28% were male respondents.

**Figure 4.2** demonstrates the different age group of the respondents. The findings show that 84% of the respondents were between age group 20 and 25 years. This is because a majority of students enrolled at the institution are between this age group. 10% of the respondents were between 25 and 30 years old, 4% were below 20 years, and only 2% were over 30 years old.

**Figure 4.2 Age Groups of respondents**



**Figure 4.3 Racial groups of respondents**



**Figure 4.3** represents the various racial groups of the respondents. 66% of these respondents were Africans. This was expected because Africans are the most common racial group within the institution. This race group was also more willing to participate in the study. 32% of the respondents were Indians and only 2% belonged to the coloured race.

#### **4.3 FREQUENCY TABULATIONS RESULTS**

**Question 1, Question 2, and Question 3** consisted of a list of products, various prices they expected to pay and places where respondents expected to find these products. According to Anonymous (2006), impulse items include new products, well-displayed or products at unexpectedly low prices. Respondents were therefore, asked questions based on the expected price and expected location for such products based on this previous study. This would help to identify what impulse products are. For **Q1** and **Q2**, respondents were required to choose more than one answer from the lists provided. **Q3** only required one answer. The findings are illustrated in **Table 4.1, Table 4.2 and Table 4.3** respectively.

In **Table 4.1**, the respondents were provided with a list of products, from which they were required to choose products they normally bought impulsively. From the findings, it is evident that products considered as being impulse products were mainly sweets, chocolate, chips, chewing gum, and biscuits, as these were the most common choices made. Soft drinks were only chosen rarely. Even though bread is purchased without any planning, none of the respondents admitted purchasing this product at impulse.



**Table 4.1 Products bought at impulse**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Sweets	1	2.0	2.0	2.0
	1 2 3 4	1	2.0	2.0	4.0
	1 2 3 5	2	4.0	4.0	8.0
	1 2 3 8	2	4.0	4.0	12.0
	1 2 4 8	1	2.0	2.0	14.0
	1 2 5 8	1	2.0	2.0	16.0
	1 2 6	2	4.0	4.0	20.0
	1 2 8	1	2.0	2.0	22.0
	1 3 4 5	1	2.0	2.0	24.0
	1 3 4 8	2	4.0	4.0	28.0
	1 3 5	1	2.0	2.0	30.0
	1 3 5 6	2	4.0	4.0	34.0
	1 3 5 8	9	18.0	18.0	52.0
	1 3 6 8	4	8.0	8.0	60.0
	1 3 8	4	8.0	8.0	68.0
	1 4 5	1	2.0	2.0	70.0
	1 4 5 8	2	4.0	4.0	74.0
	1 5	1	2.0	2.0	76.0
	1 5 6	3	6.0	6.0	82.0
	1 5 6 8	2	4.0	4.0	86.0
	1 5 8	2	4.0	4.0	90.0
	1 8	3	6.0	6.0	96.0
	1,3,5,8	1	2.0	2.0	98.0
	4 5 8	1	2.0	2.0	100.0
	Total	50	100.0	100.0	

1=Sweets

2=Biscuits

3=Chocolate

4=Fruits

5=Chewing gum

6=Soft drink

7=Bread

8=Chips

**Table 4.2** demonstrates that over 76% of the respondents acknowledged that they expected to find impulse products at the pay point area. 12% said they expected these products to be located both, at the store entrance and the pay point. 6% highlighted these products would be found on the store shelves. 4% said impulse products would only be available when entering the store A mere 2% of the respondents expected to find impulsive products at the store entrance, the pay point and places such as the flea market.

**Table 4.2 The location of impulse products**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 1	2	4.0	4.0	4.0
1 and 2	6	12.0	12.0	16.0
1, 2, 4	1	2.0	2.0	18.0
2	38	76.0	76.0	94.0
3	3	6.0	6.0	100.0
Total	50	100.0	100.0	

1=Entering store  
3=Store shelves

2=Pay point  
4=Other

**Table 4.3** illustrates the findings on the costs that respondents expected to pay for impulse products. 50% of the respondents expected to pay between R5 and R10 for each of the impulse products they purchased. 44% of them expected prices to range between R2 and R5. 4% expected to impulse products to be over R10, and only 2% expected impulse products to cost less than R2.

**Table 4.3 The price of impulse products**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid less than R2	1	2.0	2.0	2.0
between R2 and R5	22	44.0	44.0	48.0
between R5 and R10	25	50.0	50.0	98.0
more than R10	2	4.0	4.0	100.0
Total	50	100.0	100.0	

**Question 4** provided the respondents with several reasons that would increase their likelihood to make an impulse purchase. The respondents were requested to choose as many reasons as possible. The findings are shown in **Table 4.4 (a)**. It highlights that the respondents stated that having money and the Christmas festive seasons as influential reasons for making impulse purchases. Other reasons to increase likelihood o buy impulsively include feeling happy and being at a shopping mall. Factors that were less likely to increase impulsive behaviour were; receiving free samples, travelling, items on sale, feeling hungry, being with friends, or a favourite store.

**Table 4.4 (a) The likelihood to make impulsive purchase**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 1 2 3	1	2.0	2.0	2.0
1 2 3 10	1	2.0	2.0	4.0
1 2 3 4	1	2.0	2.0	6.0
1 2 3 5	4	8.0	8.0	14.0
1 2 5 10	3	6.0	6.0	20.0
1 2 5 6	4	8.0	8.0	28.0
1 2 5 7	1	2.0	2.0	30.0
1 2 5 8	3	6.0	6.0	36.0
1 2 6 10	4	8.0	8.0	44.0
1 2 6 7	2	4.0	4.0	48.0
1 2 6 8	8	16.0	16.0	64.0
1 2 6 9	6	12.0	12.0	76.0
1 2 7 10	3	6.0	6.0	82.0
1 2 7 8	1	2.0	2.0	84.0
1 2 8	2	4.0	4.0	88.0
1 2 9	2	4.0	4.0	92.0
1 5 7	1	2.0	2.0	94.0
2	1	2.0	2.0	96.0
2 3 7 8	1	2.0	2.0	98.0
2,3,7,9	1	2.0	2.0	100.0
Total	50	100.0	100.0	

1=Having money  
2=During Christmas  
3=Feeling happy  
4=Getting free samples  
5=Being with friends

6=A shopping mall  
7=When travelling  
8=Feeling hungry  
9=Items on sale  
10=A favourite store

**Table 4.4 (b)** identifies some of the common cues that are likely to trigger impulse buying among the respondents. Two cues (having money (94%) and during Christmas (98%)) were mentioned by at least half of the respondents as items that would highly likely increase buying on impulse. Other cues that would increase likelihood to buy impulsively include being at a shopping mall (48%), feeling hungry (30%), being with friends (28%), being at a favourite store (22%), when travelling (20%), feeling happy (18%), when items are on sale (18%), and receiving free samples (2%).

**Table 4.4 (b) Cues triggering impulse buying behaviour**

<b>Cue</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Having money	47	94%
During Christmas	49	98%
Feeling happy	9	18%
Receiving free samples	1	2%
Being with friends	14	28%
A shopping mall	24	48%
When travelling	10	20%
Feeling hungry	15	30%
Items on sale	9	18%
A favourite store	11	22%

#### **4.4 CROSS TABULATION RESULTS**

Cross tabulations were used to describe responses, if any, that existed between one of the demographic variables, **Question 15** (gender groups) and two other variables. The demographic was cross tabulated with **Question 13** (whether the individual thinks impulse buying is fun), and **Question 14** (whether the individual is considered spontaneous). The findings are illustrated as follows:

**Table 4.5 Gender and whether the individual thinks impulse buying is fun**

		Gender groups		Total
		Male	Female	
Impulse purchasing is fun	strongly agree	1	17	18
	Agree	2	11	13
	Neither	7	4	11
	Disagree	4	3	7
	strongly disagree	0	1	1
Total		14	36	50



**Table 4.5** presents findings on gender groups tabulated with whether an individual thinks impulse buying is fun. The results show that out of 36 female respondents, 17 and 11 strongly agreed and agreed respectively, that buying impulsively was fun. A mere 1 strongly disagreed, 3 disagreed and only 4 neither agreed nor disagreed to impulse purchasing being fun. Among the 14 male respondents, 2 of them agreed and 1 strongly agreed to impulse buying being fun. 4 males disagreed and 7 neither agreed nor disagreed to having fun while buying impulsively. The findings show that even though both males and females engage in impulse buying behaviour, half of the male respondents were neutral about impulse buying being fun.

**Table 4.6 Gender and whether the individual is considered spontaneous**

		Gender groups		Total
		male	Female	
Spontaneous person	True	3	27	30
	False	11	9	20
Total		14	36	50

**Table 4.6** demonstrates the gender groups of the respondents tabulated with whether an individual is considered a spontaneous person. The findings show that 27 out of 36 female respondents believed they were considered spontaneous, and only 9 believed they were not considered spontaneous. Out of 14 male respondents, 3 stated that they were considered spontaneous individuals, and 11 stated they were not considered spontaneous. According to Youn & Faber (2000), impulse-ridden individuals are spontaneous, reckless, and careless; they prefer to "play things by ear." Their decisions are made rapidly and their emotional fluctuations are readily visible. They tend toward immediate gratification of their desires even when such gratification is inconsistent with the reality of their situation or their own ultimate goal. It is evident from the findings that female consumers are more spontaneous, which makes them more impulsive when purchasing than male consumers. This could also be as a result of the sample which comprises of more females than male respondents.

**Table 4.7 Gender and cues likely to increase an impulse purchase**

<b>Cues</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Having money	14 males, 33 females	28% males, 66% females
During Christmas	14 males, 35 females	26% males, 68% females
Feeling happy	1 male, 8 females	2% males, 16% females
Receiving free samples	0 males, 1 female	2% females
Being with friends	3 males, 13 females	6% males, 26% females
A shopping mall	7 males, 17 females	14% males, 34% females
When travelling	3 males, 7 females	6% males, 14% females
Feeling hungry	6 males, 9 females	12% males, 18% females
Items on sale	1 male, 8 females	2% males, 16% females
A favourite store	5 males, 6 females	10% males, 12% females

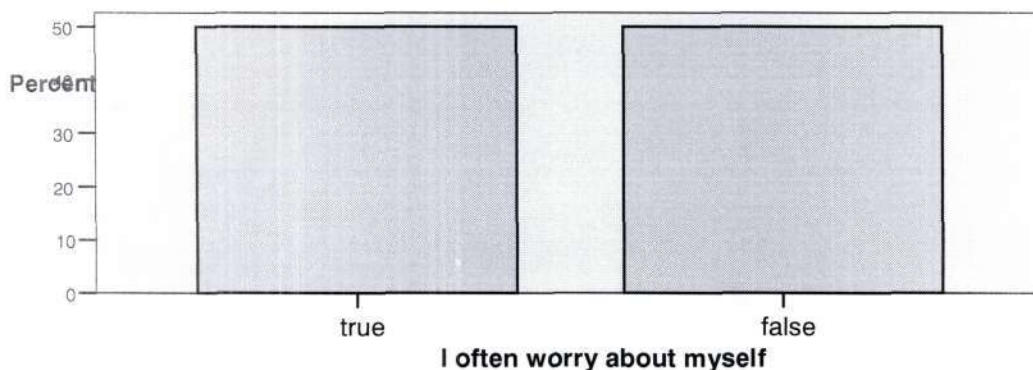
**Table 4.7** illustrates some of the cues that would increase likelihood to buy impulsively among the male and female respondents. Having money comprised 28% males and 66% females; during Christmas, 26% males and 68% females; a shopping mall, 14% males and 34% females; being with friends, 6% males and 26% females; feeling hungry comprised 12% males and 18% females; items on sale and feeling happy comprised of 2% males and 16% females respectively; when travelling, 6% males and 14% females; receiving free samples only 2% females, and a favourite store, 10% males and 12% females. The findings show that both male and female portray cues that trigger impulse buying behaviour.

#### 4.5 OTHER FREQUENCY TABULATION RESULTS

Frequency tabulations were used as data analyses for **Question 6**, **Question 7**, **Question 8**, **Question 9**, **Question 10** and **Question 12**. Some of these questions were used to investigate consistency among three personality dimensions (lack of control, stress reaction, and absorption) identified by Youn & Faber (2000).

**Figure 4.4** shows the stress reaction dimension, **Question 6** (I am often worried about myself) and **Question 5** (I often buy something when feeling lonely). According to Youn & Faber (2000), stress reaction is characterised by salient themes such as tension, jumpiness, and worry-proneness. Highly stress-reactive people may view their own emotional responses as unwarranted overreactions or even as strange.

**Figure 4.4 Stress dimension and individual worried about self**



The findings in **figure 4.4** show that 50% of the respondents stated they were often worried about themselves. According to Youn & Faber (2000: 180), this may lead to individuals to engage in behaviours that can provide some relief, such as impulse buying. Another 50% of the respondents mentioned that they were never worried about themselves. Individuals who are less stress-reactive may be less likely to engage in impulse buying in.



**Table 4.8 Buying something when feeling lonely**

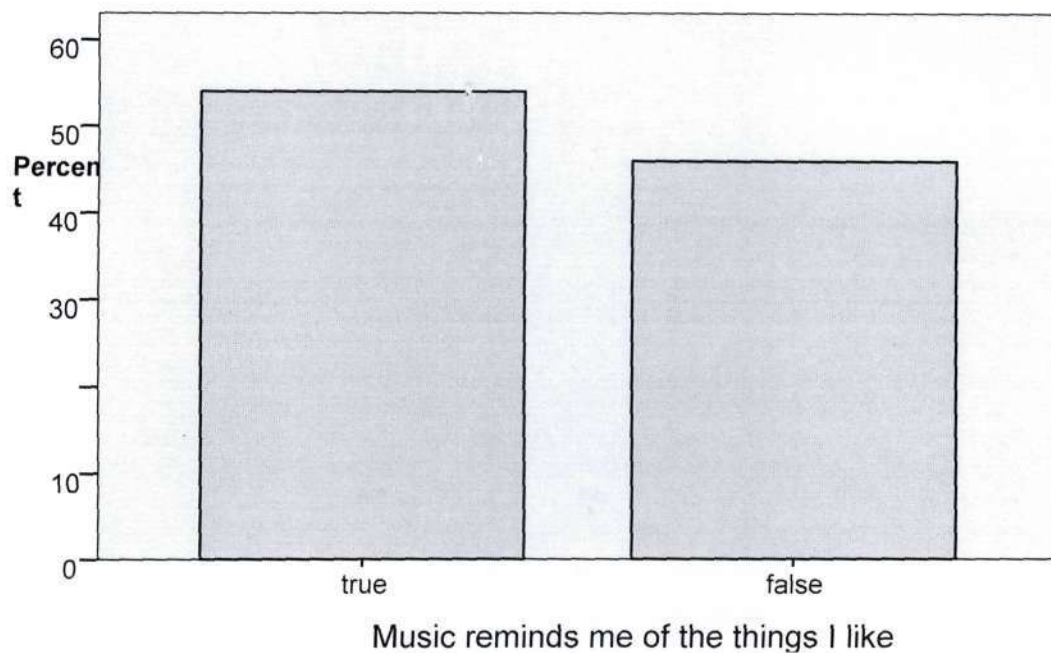
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	strongly agree	9	18.0	18.0	18.0
	Agree	24	48.0	48.0	66.0
	Neither	9	18.0	18.0	84.0
	Disagree	7	14.0	14.0	98.0
	strongly disagree	1	2.0	2.0	100.0
	Total	50	100.0	100.0	

**Table 4.8** shows that among the respondents, 18% strongly agreed and 48% agreed that they often bought something when they felt lonely. Only 14% disagreed and 2% strongly disagreed to making purchases when lonely. 18% of these respondents neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement. This behaviour is typical with impulsive behaviour. Chronic negative emotionality may lead people to engage in behaviours that can provide some relief (Youn & Faber 2000).

**Figure 4.5** displays findings on the absorption dimension and **Question 7** (music reminds me of the things I like). From the findings, **Figure 4.5** shows that 54% of the respondents stated that music reminded them of things they liked. 46% of the respondents stated this was not true about music reminding them of things they liked. Highly absorptive people are emotionally responsive to engaging sights and sounds, thus influencing product consumption (Youn & Faber 2000: 180).

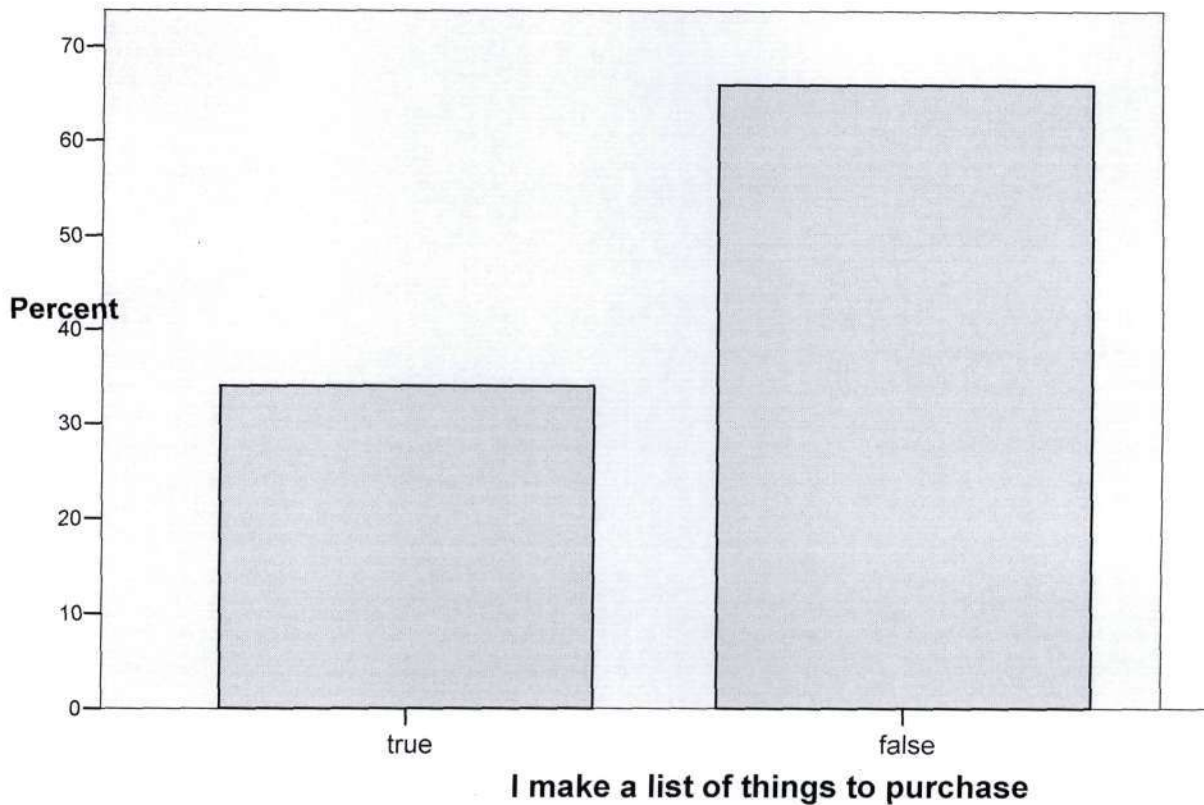


**Figure 4.5 Absorption and music as a reminder of things liked**



**Figure 4.6, Table 4.9 and Table 4.10** highlight findings on the lack of control (impulsivity) dimension, **Question 8** (I always make a list of things I want to purchase), **Question 9** (I buy something which I have budgeted for), and **Question 10** (I make an impulse purchase because it makes me feel good about myself).

**Figure 4.6 Lack of control and making a list of purchases**



**Figure 4.6** shows that 34% of the respondents admitted it was true that they always made a list of items to buy. 66% admitted to not having made any shopping list. According to Tellegen (1982) cited by Youn & Faber (2000), individuals with control are reflective, cautious, careful, rational, and sensible. They like to plan their activities. The findings demonstrate that most of the respondents are impulsive buyers since no planning was involved in their shopping activity.

**Table 4.9 Lack of control and making purchases based on budget**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	true	1	2.0	2.0	2.0
	false	49	98.0	98.0	100.0
	Total	50	100.0	100.0	

**Table 4.9** shows that 98% of the respondents admitted that they never made a purchase of something they had budgeted for. A mere 2% admitted that their purchases were always made on the basis of their budget. According to Youn & Faber (2000: 180), impulse buying may be one manifestation of a personality trait representing a lack of control.

**Table 4.10 Impulse purchases make me feel good about myself**

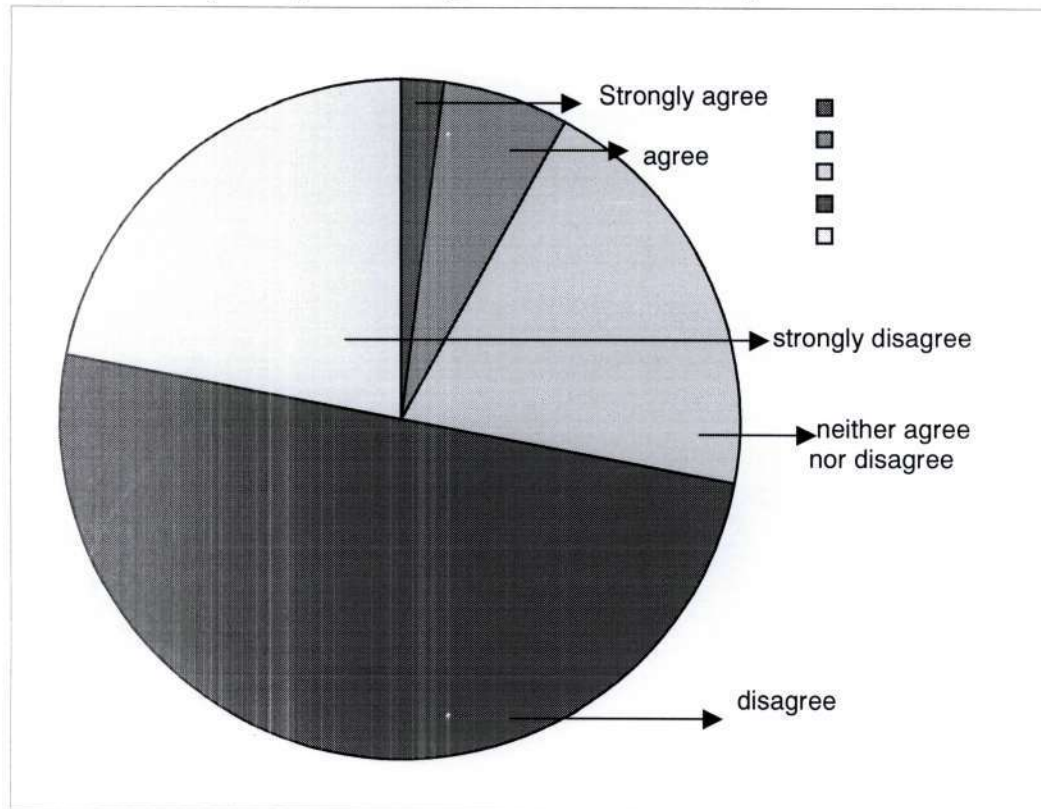
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid strongly agree	12	24.0	24.0	24.0
Agree	15	30.0	30.0	54.0
Neither	16	32.0	32.0	86.0
Disagree	7	14.0	14.0	100.0
Total	50	100.0	100.0	

The findings in **Table 4.10** demonstrate that 24% and 30% of the respondents strongly agree and agree respectively, to feeling good about themselves when making an impulse purchase. 32% neither agree nor disagree to this statement. Only 14 % of the respondents disagree to feeling good about themselves when making an impulse purchase. For highly stress-reactive people, it is speculated that the short-term gratification accompanying impulse buying would enhance their positive self-feelings and mood states. They may have greater difficulties with feeling deprived by not buying or by delay of gratification (Youn & Faber 2000).

**Question 12** (making an impulse purchase shows affordability) highlights whether an individual does take into consideration the price of the product or not when making an impulse purchase.



**Figure 4.7 Impulse purchasing shows affordability**



**Figure 4.7** demonstrates that from the respondents, 50% disagreed and 22% strongly disagreed that buying impulsively meant they were able to afford whatever they wanted. Only 6% agreed and 2% strongly agreed this meant affordability. 20% neither agreed nor disagreed with this statement. According to Anderson & Palma (2002), even if the purchase is unplanned, the consumer will not buy if it is too expensive. If the good is passed over for being too expensive the first time it is encountered, the consumer may nonetheless buy it when he comes across it later at a lower price, if that price is below his reservation price for unplanned good.

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#### **4.6 CONCLUSION**

The findings of the study highlight that unplanned consumption behaviours are vast. Both the marketers and the consumer are capable of making such behaviour pleasant and not destructive or lead to compulsive consumption, as long the appropriate decisions to enhance consumption are made.

The next chapter will provide a conclusion of the study, where each objective will be discussed in detail, to determine if these have been achieved by the research. Recommendations will be made for consumers, as well as marketers in order help implement effective marketing strategies on impulse buying behaviour. It will also mention areas for future research.

# CHAPTER 5

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides a discussion on the findings highlighted in the previous chapter. It makes recommendations for both the consumer and the marketer on impulsive consumption behaviour. Areas for future research on this kind of consumption behaviour will also be discussed.

### 5.2 CONCLUSIONS OF RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The conclusions on the study refer to the objectives of the research, previously stated in chapter one (the research proposal). An attempt to investigate impulsive buying behaviour among tertiary students is the main objective of the study. The objectives are discussed below:

#### *5.2.1 To discover whether personality traits trigger impulse buying behaviour.*

Triggers to impulse buying could either be internal or external. From the analyses, 50% of the respondents mentioned they were often worried about themselves, while 48% and 18% of the respondents agreed and strongly agreed, respectively to buying something when feeling lonely (indications of stress reaction). People who are highly stressed acknowledge responding disastrously to the minor mishaps and setbacks that have been referred to as daily hassles. They might feel vulnerable and miserable without any particular reason. Such people are nervous, sensitive, become upset easily, irritable, and troubled by feelings of guilt (Tellegen 1982 cited by Youn & Faber 2000).

54% of the respondents stated that music reminded them of the things they liked (an absorption indication). According to Youn & Faber (2000), atmospheric cues in the retail environment, such as sound, and consumers' self-feelings, moods and emotional states are important triggers that can influence a desire to purchase impulsively. Emotionality may lead consumers to engage in behaviours that may provide some relief such as impulse buying.

66% of the respondents admitted to never make a shopping list and 98% of the respondents admitted making purchases on products they had not budgeted for (both indications of lack of control). Controllers are reflective, cautious, careful, rational, and sensible. They like to plan their activities (Tellegen 1982 cited by Youn & Faber 2000). The formulated hypothesis stated that stress reaction, lack of control and absorption trigger impulse buying behaviour. The analyses conclude that these three personality traits identified by Youn & Faber (2000) trigger impulse buying behaviour.

#### *5.2.2 To identify the types of products classified as impulse products.*

Respondents were provided with a list of products to choose from. The products chosen frequently included sweets, chocolate, chewing gum, chips and biscuits. Respondents were required to determine the price they were willing to pay for these products. 50% of them stated they expected to pay between R5 and R10 for these products. 44% expected to pay between R2 and R5. The respondents were also given a list of where they expected impulse products to be located. 76% stated paypoints or tills as the best location for these products. Others mentioned the store entrance as the appropriate location for such products.

Anonymous (2006) mentions that impulse items may be new products, samples, well-displayed items or products at unexpectedly low prices. The findings show that impulse products are those products displayed near paypoints or open



environments, where consumers can easily notice or have easy access to them, especially while still queuing to make other payments. Impulse purchase (2006) states that sweets, gum and mints are prominently displayed at the checkout aisles to trigger impulse buyers to buy what they might not have otherwise considered. These impulse products are low priced to enable consumers to buy without much consideration of how much they cost.

The study chose to focus on products mainly sold within the campus, products that were purchased on a daily basis. Such products included sweets, chewing gum, biscuits, chocolate, chips, fruits, and soft drinks, to mention a few. Most of these products were sold in vending machines or at the campus cafeteria. Products such as CD, DVDs, or clothing were not considered in the study because of their relatively higher prices.

### *5.2.3 To discover the differences between male and female consumers in impulse buying behaviour.*

The findings show that 27 out of 36 female respondents were considered spontaneous, and only 3 out of 14 male respondents were also considered spontaneous. 17 and 11 female respondents strongly agreed and agreed respectively to having fun when buying impulsively. Half of the male respondents neither agreed nor disagreed to enjoying buying on impulse. However, this does not mean that men are impulsive shoppers. 33 out of 36 female respondents and all 14 male respondents admitted that having money made them buy products without much thought. Having money, according to Youn & Faber (2000), is one of the cues that trigger impulse buying.

Dholakia *et al.* (1995) cited by Otnes & McGrath (2001), states that more men reported being responsible for a particular type of shopping. It is therefore safe to say that even though female consumers engage in numerous impulse shopping behaviour (this is portrayed by their spontaneity and enjoyment of impulse



purchases), male consumers also engage in impulsive behaviour, except that they are not involved in numerous activities. The hypothesis that female consumers are more impulsive than male consumers is rejected since both genders engage in impulse buying behaviour.

### **5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

The study has shown how impulse buying occurs in everyday lives of consumers. Impulsive purchases involve consumption of low prices items such as snacks. Snack eating is not considered as a healthy diet. Verplanken *et al.* (2005) mentions how unhealthy eating starts with unhealthy shopping. Impulsive purchasing behaviour may be seen to be improper consumption behaviour because of the products consumers tend to buy.

Taking into consideration the findings on the three personality traits (stress reaction, absorption and lack of control, as well as the findings on the two gender groups engaging in impulse buying behaviour, it is evident that more consumers are involved in impulsive consumption behaviour. Therefore, it is necessary to make impulse purchasing fun and not destructive for the consumers. The findings also show that many consumers expected to find impulse products on tills or paypoints. These locations should therefore be displayed with healthier products such as energy bars, dried fruits, and nuts, to mention a few, for consumers to choose from. This would avoid the portrayal of Impulse buying as unhealthy consumption behaviour but rather, as another form of normal consumption behaviour. Further research should be conducted on how impulse buying could be seen as normal consumption behaviour, through the consumption of healthier products, which are more fulfilling for consumers. Impulsive consumption should not be viewed as another darker side to consumer behaviour.

#### **5.4 CONCLUSION**

It is important that marketers become more responsible in their formulation and implementation of marketing strategies. The consumer should not be exposed to products that will have negative impacts, because of harmful consumption decision making. Impulsive consumption should be made fun and enjoyable. Since impulsive behaviour is another form of consumption behaviour, both retailers and marketers can make it an effective and profitable experience, not only for themselves, but also for consumers. The entire study attempted to investigate the existence of impulsive buying behaviour among tertiary students at the University of KwaZulu-Natal.



**UNIVERSITY OF  
KWAZULU-NATAL**

RESEARCH OFFICE (GOVAN MBEKI CENTRE)  
WESTVILLE CAMPUS  
TELEPHONE NO.: 031 - 2603587  
EMAIL : [ximbap@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:ximbap@ukzn.ac.za)

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27 NOVEMBER 2006

**MRS. S DLAMINI (KENNY) 200275708  
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF BUSINESS**

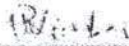
Dear Mrs. Dlamini (Kenny)

**ETHICAL CLEARANCE APPROVAL NUMBER: HSS/06742A**

I wish to confirm that ethical clearance has been granted for the following project:

**"An investigation on impulse buying behaviour among tertiary students at the University of KwaZulu-Natal"**

Yours faithfully

  
MS. PHUMELELE XIMBA  
RESEARCH OFFICE

cc. Faculty Office (Christel Haddon)  
cc. Supervisor (Dr. A Gani)