

## Are Brick and Mortar Apparel Shoppers Impulse Buyers?

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### Abstract

*Several researchers have established that online shopping encourages impulse buying as consumers are able to respond more easily to their changing moods. Shopping in brick and mortar stores is more popular in Nigeria, therefore, this study seeks to examine how much of the impulse buying advantages that Nigerian offline retailers are open to. This research was carried out in the city of Ibadan, among active mall shoppers in one of the biggest shopping malls in Nigeria. This study used mall intercept survey method and questionnaire was used to collect data from 50 customers in 8 apparel stores. Results showed that the respondents are fashion conscious and comfortable with making their own clothing decisions but they are not impulse buyers. Fashion marketing managers should give attention to the conversion of offline shoppers and window shoppers to impulse purchasers; this shift will play an important role in the growth of fashion businesses.*

**Keywords:** Impulse buying, Shopping behaviour, Apparel, Fashion, Brick and mortar, shopping environment

### 1.0 Introduction

In the typical traditional shopping process, when potential consumers recognize a need for some merchandise or service, they go searching for need-related information, rather than searching actively, at times potential consumers are attracted by information about products or services associated with the felt need. They then evaluate alternatives and choose the one that best fits their criteria for meeting the felt need. Finally, a transaction is conducted and post-sales services provided (Li and Zang, 2002). However, impulse buying is a sudden, compelling, hedonically complex behaviour in which the rapidity of an impulsive decision process precludes thoughtful and deliberate consideration of alternative information and choice (Bayley and Nancarrow, 1998; Beatty and Ferrell, 1998). When buying on impulse, individuals make an unintended, unreflective, and immediate purchase, and often feel a calling to buy the product (Jones et al., 2003; Rook, 1987).

Sharma et al. (2010) suggest emotions, low cognitive control, or spontaneous behaviour in the proximity of an appealing object activate impulse buying and such purchases may occur largely without regard to financial or other consequences. Researchers found that impulse buyers usually do not set out with the specific purpose of visiting a certain store and purchasing a certain item; the behaviour occurs after experiencing an urge to buy (Beatty & Ferrell, 1998), and such behaviours are influenced by internal states and environmental/external factors. Research findings suggest that impulse buying accounts for substantial sales across a broad range of product categories (Rook & Fisher, 1995). Underhill (1999) affirmed that if we went into stores only when we needed to buy something and if we bought only what we needed, the economy would collapse, therefore impulsive purchase is indeed also an important source of revenue for retailing. Since impulse buying is a pervasive aspect of consumers' behaviour and a focal point for strategic marketing plans (Rook, 1987), it is worthwhile for retailers to understand factors within the retail setting that trigger consumers' impulsive reactions. Although, this study did not focus on factors that trigger impulse buying, rather, the study is interested in impulse buying in relation to the shopping environment.

There have been intensive studies on impulse buying in recent years especially in relation to online shopping environment. Madhavaram and Laverie (2004) suggest that online retailing encourages impulse purchasing as consumers are able to browse and respond more easily to their changing moods (Donthu and Garcia, 1999; Lim and Hong, 2004; Madhavaram and Laverie, 2004).

Dittmar et al., (2004) reported that the nature of online transactions causes many consumers to overspend because the remote process does not really feel like spending money. Similarly, Eun et al., (2011) found online shoppers to be more spontaneous than those in bricks-and-mortar stores. Shopping in Brick and mortar stores is still very popular in this part of Africa, therefore this study seeks to examine the shopping behaviour and impulse buying behaviour of brick and mortar apparel shoppers. The specific objectives of this study are to (a) determine the socio-demographic characteristics and apparel shopping behaviour of the respondents. (b) Assess the apparel impulse buying behaviour of the respondents. A hypothesis stated in a null form was analysed- there is no significant relationship between socio demographic characteristics and impulse buying behaviour of the respondents. This study will help Fashion Marketing Managers to understand the apparel shopping behaviour and impulse buying behaviour of consumers in relation to their shopping environment.

## **2.0 Literature Review**

### **2.1 Consumers' Shopping Behaviour**

Hawkins and Coney (2001) state that consumer behaviour is the study of people, groups of people and organizations and the processes that are constructed for choosing, obtaining, using and assorting consumer goods and services, promoting ideas and experiences that satisfy their needs and desires; it also studies the impact of these processes both in public and in private consumption. Consumer behaviour considers the many reasons why—personal, situational, psychological, and social—people shop for products, buy and use them, and then dispose of them (saylor.org).

Shopping involves the examining of goods or services from retailers with the intent to purchase at that time. Shopping is an activity of selection and/or purchase. In some contexts it is considered a leisure activity as well as an economic one (Julia and Ohnfeldt, 2010). Shopping has become a pleasurable experience itself. A study conducted by Kinley et al., (2010) on shopping behaviour and involvement construct examined whether the degree of involvement with shopping (high, medium, low) for clothing affects: The frequency with which subjects seek the opinions of others when making clothing purchases for themselves. The non-personal sources, including marketing media, internet and brick-and-mortar store aspects that influence the frequency of clothing purchase. The findings showed that high involvement subjects were more comfortable making clothing decisions for themselves than were either low or medium involvement participants ( $p < 0.001$ ). Furthermore, chi square analysis indicated a significant difference in frequency of shopping for the different involvement groups ( $\chi^2 = 164.178$ ,  $df = 12$ ,  $p < 0.0001$ ). High involvement participants indicated they shop about once every two weeks, while the greatest number of low and medium involvement participants indicated they shop about four times a year.

Comfort with making decisions concerning product purchase can be related to the degree of confidence the consumer possesses with regard to the product category. The degree of confidence could reflect either certainty or uncertainty as to which judgment is correct or the best in that situation, thus affecting the strength of the relationship between attitudes and behaviour (O'Cass, 2004). Shim and Kotsiopulos (1993) sampled a female population to take advantage of the opportunity to understand in more detail the female shopper who is the more frequent shopper in their households. They segmented female participants into three unique profiles: highly involved apparel shoppers, apathetic apparel shoppers, and convenience-oriented catalog shoppers. Highly involved apparel shoppers were highly confident and highly concerned with appearance. Shim and Kotsiopulos identified these women as fashion leaders who enjoyed spending their time shopping. The second group, apathetic apparel shoppers, was not interested or concerned with apparel shopping. The last group, convenience-oriented catalog shoppers, was "most concerned with convenience of and time required for clothing shopping".

### **2.2 Impulse Buying**

Impulse buying behaviour is a sudden, compelling, hedonically complex purchasing behaviour in which the rapidity of the impulse purchase decision process precludes thoughtful, deliberate consideration of all information and choice alternatives (Rook 1987; Bayley & Nancorow, 1998). An article titled 'How people make buying decision' written by saylor.org established the stages involved in the consumer buying process; (1) realizing the need or want something, (2) searching for information about the item, (3) evaluating different products, (4) choosing a product and purchasing it, (5) using and evaluating the product after the purchase, and (6) disposing of the product. It was further reported that consumers do not necessarily go through all the buying stages when they are purchasing products. However, impulse buying brings up a concept called *level of involvement*—that is, how personally important or interested a consumer is in consuming a product.

Acting on impulse is a fundamental part of human nature. Impulse decisions can be part of many types of behaviours in our everyday lives, while disorders in impulse control can even lead to negative actions such as addictions (Mesiranta, 2009). Despite the negative aspects of impulse buying behaviour from past research, defining impulsive behaviour as an irrational behavior (Rook & Fisher, 1995; Solnick, Kannenberg, Eckerman, & Waller, 1980), resulting from a lack of behavioural control (Solnick et al., 1980), impulse purchases account for substantial sales across a broad range of product categories (Bellenger et al., 1978; Rook & Fisher, 1995). A study found that impulse purchases represented between 27% and 62% of all department store purchases (Bellenger et al., 1978).

Early studies on impulse buying were more concerned with the definitional issues distinguishing impulse buying from non-impulse buying and attempted to classify the types of impulse buying into one of several sub-categories (Stern, 1962; Bellenger et al., 1978), rather than to understand impulse buying as a trait of consumer buying behaviour. Therefore, this approach generated a theory that ignores the behavioural motivations of impulse buying for a large variety of products and, instead, focuses on a small number of relatively inexpensive products. However, this type of approach did not provide sufficient explanations as to why so many consumers appear to act on their buying impulse so frequently. Therefore, researchers began to re-focus attention on impulse buying behaviour and to investigate the behavioural motivations of impulse buying (Rook & Fisher, 1995; Weun, Jones, & Betty, 1998).

### **2.2.1 Factors Influencing Impulse Buying**

Few recent studies investigated the factors that affect impulse buying. Researchers have suggested that internal states and environmental/external factors can serve as cues to trigger consumers' impulse behaviour to purchase. Research shows that situational factors have practical and theoretical significance in that many decisions are made at the point-of-purchase (Cobb & Hoyer, 1986) as a reflection of "low involvement" decision-making strategies. The research on situational influence can be described as examining the relationship among shopper characteristics and the features of retailing or point-of-purchase situations. Shopper characteristics might include involvement (Smith & Carsky, 1996), attitude (Reid & Brown, 1996), and ethnicity (Crispel, 1997), while the retailing features could include outlet size (Owen, 1995), retail format (Fernie, 1996; Fernie & Fernie, 1997), and store personality (Abrams, 1996; Burns, 1992).

## **3.0 Research Method**

### **3.1 Study Area, Sample Size and Technique**

This research was carried out in the city of Ibadan. Ibadan metropolis has a single large mall which is the biggest of its kind in Nigeria, the mall has several stores in which apparel products are being retailed. The study made use of primary data that was gathered by a survey carried out among active mall shoppers. This study used mall intercept survey method and data was collected from 50 customers in 8 different apparel stores in the mall.

### **3.2 Data Collection and Procedure**

Structured questionnaires were developed to measure the shopping behaviour and impulse buying behaviour of the apparel shoppers. The questionnaire consisted of questions concerning demographic information of the respondents, shopping behaviour and impulse buying behaviour of respondents. The shopping behaviour questions were adapted from previous study of Kinley et. al (2010) while the impulse buying behaviour questions were coined from the work of Jiyeon (2003) and some were developed by the researchers. Four point Likert scale was used to measure the impulse buying behaviour of the respondents. The respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement to each statement (1 = *strongly agree* to 4= *strongly disagree*). Research assistants were employed and trained in the administration of the questionnaire.

### **3.3 Data Analysis**

Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software version 20.0 was used to analyse the data using descriptive statistics such as frequency, percentage, and mean. Pearson Moment Correlation was used to analyse the hypothesis.

## 4.0 Findings

### 4.1 Demographic Profile of the Sample

A total of 400 respondents participated in the survey. Selected demographic characteristics of the sample including sex, age, education and marital status are presented in Table I.

**Table 1: Socio-demographic Characteristics of the Respondents**

Variable	Frequency	Percentage (%)
<b>Sex</b>		
Male	171	42.8
Female	229	57.3
TOTAL	400	100.0
<b>Age (years)</b>		
18 – 25	163	40.8
26 – 35	178	44.5
36 – 46	35	8.8
47 – 57	21	5.3
58 and above	3	0.8
TOTAL	400	100.0
<b>Marital status</b>		
Married	116	29.0
Single	275	68.8
Divorced	6	1.5
Widow	1	0.3
Separated	2	0.5
TOTAL	400	100
<b>Educational status</b>		
O' Levels	21	5.3
Undergraduate	121	30.3
Graduate	176	44.0
Postgraduate	82	20.5
TOTAL	400	100.0
<b>Employment status</b>		
Unemployed	125	31.3
Self-employed	141	35.3
Civil Servant	21	5.3
Private Company Staff	113	28.3
TOTAL	400	100.0

The sample consisted of 57.3% of female and 42.8 percent male respondents. Respondents were mostly between the ages of 26-35 (44.5%), followed by ages 18-25 (40.8%), others were 36-45 (8.8%), 46-56 (5.3%), 58 and above (0.8%), and the average age of respondents was between 26-35 years. Majority of the respondents were single (68.8%), while 29% were married, 1.5% divorced, 0.3% were widows and (0.5%) separated. Most of the respondents were graduates (44%), 30.3% were undergraduates, 20.5% had postgraduate qualification while 5.3% were O'level holders. More than half (35.3% and 28.3%) of the respondents were either self-employed or staff of a private company, 31.3% were unemployed.

**Table 2: Shopping Behaviour of the Respondents**

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
<b>Are you a fashion conscious person?</b>		
Yes	289	72.3
No	111	27.8
TOTAL	400	100.0
<b>How frequently do you shop for clothes?</b>		
Once a week	18	4.5
Once in two weeks	35	8.8
Once in a month	136	34.0
Once a season	176	44.0
Yearly	35	8.8
TOTAL	400	100.0
<b>How often do you travel for the purpose of shopping?</b>		
Never	157	39.3
Seldom	182	45.5
Often	51	12.8
Always	10	2.5
TOTAL	400	100.0
<b>How comfortable are you purchasing your clothes yourself?</b>		
Extremely uncomfortable	41	10.3
Uncomfortable	12	3.0
Comfortable	179	44.8
Extremely comfortable	168	42.0
TOTAL	400	100.0
<b>Average amount of time spent on shopping</b>		
1 hour	153	38.3
2 hours	123	30.8
3 hours	76	19.0
4 hours	31	7.8
5 hours	11	2.8
6 hours	6	1.5
TOTAL	400	100.0

Table 2 describes the shopping behaviour of the respondents; majority of the respondents admitted that they are fashion conscious (72.3%), 44% of the respondents shop once a season, 34% shop once in a month while the percentage of those that shop once in two weeks and yearly are 8.8%, 4.5 % shop weekly. Forty-five point five percent (45.5%) seldom travel for the purpose of shopping, 39.3% never do, 12.8% often travel while 2.5 % always travel for shopping of clothing items. The results showed that majority of the respondents are comfortable purchasing clothes for themselves, this was deduced by calculating the mean value for the statement and the calculated mean score was 3.19. A close percent of the respondents spend 1hour (38.3%) and 2 hours (30.8%) shopping while 19.0 % of the respondents spend 3hours shopping for apparel.

**Table 3: Impulse Buying Behaviour of the Respondents**

Variable	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE	TOTAL SCORE	MEAN SCORE
<b>When I see a good deal I tend to buy more than I intended</b>				
Strongly agree	162	40.5	1297	3.24
Agree	179	44.8		
Disagree	53	13.3		
Strongly disagree	6	1.5		
TOTAL	400	100.0		
<b>I feel a sense of excitement when I make an impulse clothing purchase</b>				
Strongly agree			1046	2.62
Agree	55	13.8		
Disagree	166	41.5		
Strongly disagree	149	37.3		
TOTAL	30	7.5		
	400	100.0		
<b>I have difficulty controlling my urge when I shop</b>				
Strongly agree	43	10.8	963	2.41
Agree	137	41.5		
Disagree	160	37.3		
Strongly disagree	60	7.5		
TOTAL	400	100.0		
<b>I buy apparel products without a lot of thinking</b>				
Strongly agree			764	1.91
Agree	11	2.8		
Disagree	62	15.5		
Strongly disagree	207	51.8		
TOTAL	120	30.0		
	400	100.0		
<b>When I find apparel that I like I purchase it immediately</b>				
Strongly agree			847	2.12
Agree				
Disagree	18	4.5		
Strongly disagree	77	19.3		
TOTAL	180	45.0		
	125	31.3		
	400	100.0		

**Mean Key**

0.5-1.0 = Strongly Disagree

1.5-2.0 = Disagree

2.5-3.0 = Agree

3.5-4.0 = Strongly Agree

Overall Impulse Buying mean score =  $\frac{\text{Total mean Likert score}}{\text{Number of statements}}$

$$12.3/5 = 2.46$$

Overall Impulse Buying mean score= 2.46 (Disagree)

Table 3 shows the impulse buying behaviour of the respondents. A larger group of the respondents (85.3%) agreed that when they see a good deal, they tend to buy more than they intended to buy while 14.8% disagreed.

Fifty-five point three percent (55.3%) of the respondents agreed that they feel a sense of excitement when they make an impulse clothing purchase, however, 44.8% also disagreed, the mean score for this statement is 2.62 which indicates that on the average, the respondents agreed. The respondents disagreed that they have difficulty controlling their urge when they shop (mean= 2.41). Also, majority (81.8%) of the respondents disagreed that they buy apparel products without a lot of thinking while only 18.3% agreed (mean= 1.91). Finally, 76.3% of the respondents disagreed that when they find apparel they like, they purchase it immediately while only a few (23.8%) agreed; this statement has a mean score of 2.12. The overall mean score for the impulse buying statements is 2.46 which indicate an average disagreement of respondents to the statements.

#### 4.2 Hypothesis Testing

H<sub>0</sub>: There is no significant relationship between socio demographic characteristics and impulse buying behaviour of the respondents.

**Table 3: Pearson Correlation Analysis**

Impulse Buying Behaviour	Sex	Age (years)	Marital status	Educational status	Employment status
when I see a good deal, I tend to buy more than I intended	-.334**	-.042	-.005	-.065	.007
I feel a sense of excitement when I make an impulse clothing purchase offline	-.100*	.174**	.064	.102*	.112
I have difficulty controlling my urge when I shop offline	-.178**	.116*	.076	.070	-.015
I buy apparel products online without a lot of thinking	-.079	.101*	-.030	.119*	.102*
when I find clothings I like online, I purchase it immediately	-.134**	.026	-.039	.038	.141**

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 3 above, shows a significant relationship between sex and age while marital, educational and employment status do not have a significant relationship with the impulse buying behaviours measured; it could be deduced that there is no significant relationship between the socio demographic characteristics of the respondents and their impulse buying behaviour, hence, H<sub>0</sub> was accepted.

#### 5.0 Discussion and Implications

The study sought to assess shopping behaviour and impulse buying behaviour of brick and mortar apparel shoppers. In order to address the objectives and hypothesis of the study, 400 questionnaires were analysed.

The result revealed that a greater percentage of the respondents were female (57.3%), this shows that the female gender is more interested in the issue of fashion and they visit apparel stores more than men. The average age of respondents of this study was between 26 and 35 years, the older shoppers seemed to shop more in a hurry; this is consistent with Garnett (2010) who found that men and older consumers shop quickly for apparel, thereby giving little time to shopping activities. There have been intensive studies on impulse buying in recent years especially in relation to online shopping environment. Madhavaram and Laverie (2004) suggested that online retailing encourages impulse purchasing as consumers are able to browse and respond more easily to their changing moods (Donthu and Garcia, 1999; Lim and Hong, 2004; Madhavaram and Laverie, 2004). Dittmar et al., (2004) reported that the nature of online transaction causes many consumers to overspend because the remote process does not really encourage spending money. Similarly, Eun et al., (2011) found online shoppers to be more spontaneous than those in brick and mortar stores.

The marital status of most the respondents were single (68.8%) and mostly students; based on past work in the area of fashion, impulse buying and shopping, the youth have mostly been the focus (Jiyeon, 2003; Xueming, 2005; Kinley et.al, 2010; Eun et.al, 2011); this may be as a result of the fact that this group has lesser responsibilities in terms of looking after other people and mostly rely on relatives for their up keep. Therefore, having time to give more importance to their appearance and paying attention to the fashion world has it changes.

The shopping behaviour explored were fashion consciousness, apparel shopping frequency, frequency of shopping trips, comfort and confidence in making clothing choices during apparel shopping and amount of time spent shopping, this is in accordance with the shopping behaviours that were considered by Kinley et.al., (2010). Majority of the respondents admitted that they are fashion conscious; it can be assumed that the survey was responded to by the right set of people especially for a fashion based study as this. Majority of the respondents are comfortable purchasing clothes for themselves, which will enable them make their own fashion decisions.

Results showed that the respondents of this study are not impulse buyers, this is inconsistent with Bellenger et al. (1978) who found that shoppers under 35years old were more prone to impulse buying compared to those over 35.

Although a large group of the respondents agreed that when they see a good deal they tend to buy more, however, the average impulse buying behaviour score (mean= 2.46) shows that the respondents disagreed to most of the impulse buying behaviour statements; this is in spite of the fact that majority of the respondents were under 35years old. This is not surprising as research has shown that offline shopping environment gives more room for shoppers to give careful thoughts to their purchases and consider their options objectively. Furthermore, Jiyeon (2003) confirms that online shoppers are more spontaneous than those in brick and mortar stores.

This study considered respondents' demographic status in relation to their impulse buying behaviour. The result showed that there is no significant relationship between respondents' marital status, educational status and employment status, however, sex and age showed a significant relationship.

### **5. 1 Conclusion and Recommendation**

The respondents of this study are apparel shoppers, fashion conscious, brick and mortar store shoppers but averagely not impulse buyers. Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that Brick and mortar store apparel shoppers are not impulse buyers.

It is therefore recommended that fashion marketing managers should give attention to the conversion of offline and window shoppers to impulse purchasers; this shift will play an important role in the growth of fashion businesses. Retailers can trigger impulsive purchase with intelligent store design and other visual merchandising practices, such as product displays, packaging, and also by selling at the lowest price possible since most consumers tend to buy more when they see a good deal.

Further study should address the role of socio-demographic and psychographic consumer attributes, especially personality traits in relation to impulse buying to gain a better understanding of the characteristics of brick and mortar store shoppers.

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