

GENDER DIFFERENCES IN IMPULSE BUYING

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Impulse buying is not yet well understood. Impulse buying is a persuasive and distinctive aspect of consumers' lifestyles. Much human activity is driven by impulses that are biochemically and psychologically stimulated. The purpose of this study was to compare men and women for differences in affective and cognitive processes associated with impulse buying behavior. Buying tendency scale to measure general impulse was developed and validated. The scale includes cognitive aspects (e.g. lack of planning and deliberation) and affective aspects (e.g. feelings of pleasure, excitement, compulsion, lack of control, regret). A total of 180 Suleyman Demirel University students served as the sample. Using analysis of variance tests, males and females were found to be significantly different with respect to affective process components (irresistible urge to buy, positive buying emotion and mood management) and cognitive process components (cognitive deliberation and unplanned buying).

Keywords: Impulse Buying, Customer Behavior, Gender, Gender Differences

Gender Differences in Impulse Buying

Introduction

There are many internal and external factors that affect the purchasing behaviors of consumers. Besides, the buying behavior might be identified as a psychological process. Thus, it is a multifaceted issue. The individual and social features distinguish the consumers with very strict terms. Impulse buying is one of the purchasing behaviors and is a responsive type of purchasing that doesn't include any planning in the process of purchasing.

The impulse buying is defined as an unplanned, spontaneous and severe decision to buy a product or service, made just before a purchase once the consumer is exposed to any stimulus in the shopping place. It is also a type of purchasing, that the consumers cannot resist, made by ignoring the likely psychological and financial outcomes of purchasing and regarded sometimes as bad and stupid but also sometimes as smart and gracious by the community (Özdamar, 2011: 54).

Customers may buy a product for cheering themselves up, self-assertion or just for fun as well as their certain needs for it. This irrational way of purchasing is defined as impulsive buying (Verplanken and Herabadi, 2001: 71).

Another definition asserts that impulse buying is a whole of attempts to trigger self-gratification and it manifests itself more in purchasing latest fashion clothes. It is assumed that the excessive impulse buyers remain under the impact of irrational decisions that manifest the

emotional attractiveness unlike the rational decisions like quality or price (Erkmen and Yüksel, 2008: 686).

Once the consumer is attracted by a product, the emotions absolutely interfere with the decision. The word “emotion” is derived from the Latin root “motere” that means “move”. If the root gets the prefix “-e”, the meaning switches to “stay away” which gives the impression that each emotion triggers a certain action (Goleman, 2001: 20). The impact of the gender difference on emotional actions and behaviors is still being investigated and leads to heated debates (Konrad and Hendl, 2003: 171).

Is there a gender effect on the sense of appeal that that happens immediately after seeing the product and ends in buying the product? Before this question, another question that should be asked is: Do males and females react differently in emotional things? Generally, females are thought to be more “emotional” than males and so it seems so normal that females behave more emotionally in purchasing than males. Whether males and females actually experience emotions differently is controversial, but consistent support has been found for sex differences in emotional expression (Fisher & Dube, 2005: 850).

As the postmodernism does not acknowledge the dichotomy, any sorting (ranking) as well as classifications (male-female, country-city, public-private), it finds it irrelevant to sort customers considering gender difference (Odabaşı, 2004: 78). Thus, differences among buying behaviors of the male and female consumers are to be investigated in various contexts.

Establishing an emotional bond between the brand and the individual is already a must to sell the product. That is to say, whether most of the time that product meets a specific need raises a question mark in minds. (Bati, 2010: 191).

The probability of buying a product which doesn’t appeal to the senses is suspicious. Inherently, the tendency and speed to decide whether to buy a product may differ between females and males in the matter of appealing to the senses of males and females.

According to a study that was carried out by Buendicho (2003) on 130 people in a shopping mall, there is a correlation between gender and unplanned consumption; furthermore females are more inclined to buy without planning (cited by Yaraş et al., 2009: 5).

In a research that was carried out by Coley and Burges (2008) to determine the relationship between unplanned consumption and gender by using different product categories, with the analysis of the data collected from 277 students, it was put forth that there are differences between females and males in terms of unplanned consumption.

Kollat and Willet (1967)’s study proves that female consumers are more inclined to unplanned buying (cited by Ergin and Akbay, 2011: 278).

According to the pilot research that was carried out by Akturan (2009) on university students to determine the differences in the instinctive shopping tendencies of consumers in accordance with their genders, it was ascertained that females have more inclination for instinctive shopping compared to males. In addition to this, it was stated that females and males basically differ in the factors of not planning and enjoying the shopping.

Types of impulsive buying behavior

The impulse buying behaviors may come to various forms due to its scope. Odabaşı and Barış, in their study (2003: 378) splits impulse buying into four groups (Quoted by Özdamar, 2011: 67).

Completely Impulsive Buying

The individual wants to buy or try the product immediately after s/he has seen even if s/he doesn't need it or think about its affordability.

Recollectional Impulsive Buying

Kinds of buyings that are carried out when the individual remembers a product in her/his previous shopping list that s/he has forgotten to buy. The advertisement that the consumer has watched also contribute to recollectional impulsive buying.

Recommendational Impulsive Buying

Kinds of buyings that are carried out when a product which satisfies a need that was not felt before is met and after being attracted by the product or charm of other factors.

Impulsive Buying Caused by Planned Shopping

The situations in which we planned to buy one product, but we are attracted by another brand or its sales promotion and buy.

Table 1. Affective and cognitive psychological processes and related components pertaining to impulse buying

Affective process – involves emotions, feeling states, moods

Irresistible urge to buy	Desire is instant, persistent and so compelling that it is hard for the consumer to resist
Positive buying emotion	Refers to positive mood states generated from self gratifying motivations provided by impulse buying
Mood management	Impulse buying is in part, motivated by the desire to change or manage feelings or moods

Cognitive Process – involves thinking, understanding, interpreting

Cognitive deliberation	Refers to a sudden urge to act without deliberation or evaluation of consequences
Unplanned buying	Refers to lack of clear planning
Disregard for the future	The result of choosing an immediate option with lack of concern or consideration about the future

The Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to research the intutional (impulsive) buying tendencies of university students, to evaluate the purchasing behavior within the scope of gender and to determine whether there are differences between the purchasing behaviors of especially female and male consumers. In addition, the study also aims for, if there is any difference between female and male consumers' purchasing behaviors, determining the direction and strength of this difference.

Survey questions are composed of three parts. In the first part, demographic data are required. In the second part, there is impulse buying tendency scale which was developed by Verplanken and Herabadi (2001)-composed of 20 points. The questions are prepared using 5 points Likert scale: (5) completely agree – (1) completely disagree. Furthermore, in the third part, their moods in the process of shopping and different questions related to shopping are asked.

High scores in the scale means the prevalence of excessive impulse buying behavior. Verplanken and Herabadi (2001) report the scale as Cronbach Alpha .86.

The Scope of the Study

The population of the study is composed of 1050 students who are from Isparta Süleyman Demirel University Gönen Vocational School. The sampling of the study includes 230 students who are chosen by random sampling out of the population. For the sampling group to be representative of the population, studies about the necessary limit numbers are carried out in literature. (please look at the sampling numbers for different population sizes at a level of %95 reliability. Kurtuluş, 1989:42-61; Balçı, 2000:123-131).

Out of 230 surveys that are carried out on students, 195 surveys may be of use. Thus, the return rate of surveys is %85.

The Findings of the Study

Each question in the section that is related to demographic data is analyzed in terms of its frequency distribution when research findings are considered. The data acquired are presented as frequency and percentage in Table 2.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics.

Variables	Features	Frequency	%
Gender	Female	150	76,9
	Male	45	23,1
	Total	195	100,0
Monthly Allowance Annual Revenue (\$ 1= 1.79 Turkish Lira TL)	0-250 TL	92	47,2
	251-500 TL	72	36,9
	501-750 TL	13	6,7
	751-1000 TL	11	5,6
	1001-1250 TL	4	2,1
	1251TL and over	3	1,5
	Total	195	100,0
Number of siblings	0	10	5,1
	1	36	18,5
	2	54	27,7

	3	50	25,6
	4	20	10,3
	5 and over	23	11,8
	Total	193	99,0
Age	18 ve 20	139	71,3
	21-23	42	21,5
	24 and over	11	5,6
	Total	192	98,5

As illustrated in Table 2, approximately %76,9 of survey participants are females; %23,1 of them are males; %71,3 of them are between the ages of 18-20; %21,5 of them are between the ages of 21-23. It is seen that monthly incomes of %47,2 of participants are between 0-250 TL, %36,9 earn between 251-500 TL monthly. This situation is consistent considering the fact that participants are students. When the number of siblings are asked, the highest percentage- %18,5- belongs to the participants who have one sibling, %27,7 with 2 siblings, %25,6 with 3 siblings.

The second part of the study aims to draw conclusions on how the subjects of the questionnaire describe themselves during shopping. The subjects are also asked if they enjoy shopping and keep up with the fashion in the second part of the study. The answers are analyzed by using descriptive statistics (frequency, percentile, paired comparison, etc.) and demonstrated in the tables below.

Table 3. Self-Description in the Process of Shopping.

	Frequency	Percent age(%)
Logical	35	20,0
Emotional	22	11,3
It changes. Sometimes logical, sometimes emotional	133	68,2
Total	194	99,5

When the students who participated in the survey were asked the question: “How do you define yourself while you are shopping?”, %20 of the participants stated that they are ‘logical’, %11,3 ‘emotional, %68,2’ which is more than half, sometimes logical sometimes emotional in the process of shopping as seen in Table 3.

Accordingly, the subject students have been asked about their moods during shopping and told that they could choose more than one option. You can find the answers on Table 4.

Table 4. Participants' Definition of Themselves During Shopping.

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Hasty	52	26,7
Hectic	33	16,9
Coldblooded	53	27,2
Timid	51	26,2
Slow	21	10,8
Indecisive	48	24,6
Angry	40	20,5
Irritable	17	8,7
Happy	83	42,6
Curious	24	12,3
Other	24	12,3

According to Table 4, %42,6 of the participants stated that they are happy during shopping; %26,7 hasty; %27,2 coldblooded; %26,2 timid; %24,6 indecisive and %20,5 angry.

Attitudes Related to Impulsive Buying Scale

In this part of the study, chi square crosstabs test is used to examine whether there is a difference between participation levels of students who take part in the study in questions to measure their impulsive buying attitudes tendency and their genders (at a level of $P < 0,05$), the data are interpreted. For this purpose, hypotheses concerning these questions are brought forward.

Table 5. Chi square Crosstabs Test.

Impulse Buying Tendency Scale	Hypotheses	Sig (p)	Accept /Reject
I usually think before I buy something	agreement level with the statement varies according to gender. (H1 _A)	0.716	Reject
I usually only buy things that I intended to buy	agreement level with the statement varies according to gender. (H2 _A)	0.297	Reject
If I buy sth, I usually do that spontaneously	agreement level with the statement varies according to gender.(H3 _A)	0.824	Reject
Most of my purchases are planned in advance.	agreement level with the statement varies according to gender. (H4 _A)	0.357	Reject

I only buy things that I really need.	agreement level with the statement varies according to gender. (H5 _A)	0.598	Reject
It is not my style to just buy things.	agreement level with the statement varies according to gender. (H6 _A)	0.375	Reject
I like to compare different brands before I buy one.	agreement level with the statement varies according to gender. (H7 _A)	0,753	Reject
Before I buy something I always carefully consider whether I need it.	agreement level with the statement varies according to gender. (H8 _A)	0.275	Reject
I am used to buying things 'on the spot'.	agreement level with the statement varies according to gender. (H9 _A)	0,021	Accept
I often buy things without thinking.	agreement level with the statement varies according to gender. (H10 _A)	0,912	Reject
It is a struggle to leave nice things I see in a shop.	agreement level with the statement varies according to gender. (H11 _A)	0.033	Accept
I sometimes cannot suppress the feeling of wanting things I see in shops.	agreement level with the statement varies according to gender.(H12 _A)	0,231	Reject
I sometimes feel guilty after having bought something.	agreement level with the statement varies according to gender.(H13 _A)	0.161	Reject
I'm not the kind of person who 'falls in love at first sight' with things I see in shops.	agreement level with the statement varies according to gender. (H14 _A)	0.245	Reject
I can become very excited if I see something I would like to buy.	agreement level with the statement varies according to gender.(H15 _A)	0,232	Reject
I always see something nice whenever I pass by shops.	agreement level with the statement varies according to gender. (H16 _A)	0,043	Accept
I find it difficult to pass up a bargain.	agreement level with the statement varies according to gender.(H17 _A)	0,585	Reject
If I see something new, I want to buy it.	agreement level with the statement varies according to gender. (H18 _A)	0,009	Accept
I am a bit reckless in buying things.	agreement level with the statement varies according to gender. (H19 _A)	0,017	Accept
I sometimes buy things because I like buying things, rather than because I need them.	agreement level with the statement varies according to gender. (H20 _A)	0,637	Reject

As a result of chi square crosstabs test, hypotheses that are suggested at the level of $P < 0,05$ are constructed and it has been said that there is not any statistically meaningful difference in the cases of $P > 0,05$ between agreement levels of the participants with the statements and gender (Table 5).

As can be seen in the table above, there is a statistically meaningful correlation between gender and agreement levels of the participants with the statements in 5 hypotheses out of 20 hypotheses. The tables belonging to hypotheses which are accepted are given below.

Table 6			Female	Male	Total	
“It is a struggle to leave nice things I see in a shop”	Never	s	21	15	36	
		%	14,1%	33,3%	18,6%	
	Sometimes	s	58	13	71	
		%	38,9%	28,9%	36,6%	
	Often	s	28	10	38	
		%	18,8%	22,2%	19,6%	
	Usually	s	23	3	26	
		%	15,4%	6,7%	13,4%	
	Always	s	19	4	23	
		%	12,8%	8,9%	11,9%	
	Total	s	149	45	194	
		%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	
	Pearson Chi-Square		10,471	Sig(p):		0.033

H11_A: The agreement level with the statement “It is a struggle to leave nice things I see in a shop” varies according to gender.

H11₀: The agreement level with the statement “It is a struggle to leave nice things I see in a shop” doesn’t vary according to gender.

According to Table 6, while the hypothesis H11₀ is rejected at the level of $P < 0,05$, H8_A is accepted, namely there is a statistically meaningful correlation between the agreement levels of participants with the statement and gender. Looking at the table, while %14,1 of female students answered “never” ; %33,3 of male students answered in the same way. Moreover, while %15,4 of female students answered “usually”, %12,8 “always”; only %6,7 of male students answered “usually”, %8,9 “always”.

Table 7

			Female	Male	Total
“I always see something nice whenever I pass by shops”	Never	s	6	7	13
		%	4,0%	15,6%	6,7%
	Sometimes	s	84	27	111
		%	56,0%	60,0%	56,9%
	Often	s	31	5	36
		%	20,7%	11,1%	18,5%
	Usually	s	19	3	22
		%	12,7%	6,7%	11,3%
	Always	s	10	3	13
		%	6,7%	6,7%	6,7%
	Total	s	150	45	195
		%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%
	Pearson Chi-Square		9,847	Sig(p): 0.043	

H16_A: The agreement level with the statement “I always see something nice whenever I pass by shops” varies according to gender.

H16₀: The agreement level with the statement “I always see something nice whenever I pass by shops” doesn’t vary according to gender.

According to Table 7, while the hypothesis H16₀ is rejected at the level of P<0,05, H10_A is accepted, namely accepted namely there is a statistically meaningful correlation between the agreement levels of participants with the statement and gender. Looking at the Table 13, while %4 of female students answered “never”; %15,6 of male students answered in the same way. In addition to this, %20,7 of female students answered “often”, %12,7 “usually”; %11,1 of male students answered “often”, %6,7 “usually”.

Table 8

			Female	Male	Total
“If I see something new, I want to buy it.”	Never	s	22	15	37
		%	14,9%	34,1%	19,3%
	Sometimes	s	82	13	95
		%	55,4%	29,5%	49,5%

Often	s	15	8	23
	%	10,1%	18,2%	12,0%
Usually	s	15	3	18
	%	10,1%	6,8%	9,4%
Always	s	14	5	19
	%	9,5%	11,4%	9,9%
Total	s	148	44	192
	%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%
Pearson Chi-Square		13,445	Sig(p):	0.009

H11A: The agreement level with the statement “If I see something new, I want to buy it” varies according to gender

H110: The agreement level with the statement “If I see something new, I want to buy it” doesn’t vary according to gender.

According to Table 9, while the hypothesis H180 is rejected at the level of $P < 0,05$, H11A is accepted, namely there is a statistically meaningful correlation between the agreement levels of participants with the statement and gender. Looking at Table 14, while %14,9 of female students answered “never”; %34,1 of male students answered in the same way. In addition to this, %55,4 of female students answered “sometimes”, %10,1 “often”; only %29,5 of male students answered “sometimes”, %18,2 “often”.

Table 9

			Female	Male	Total
“I am a bit reckless in buying things.”	Never	s	76	15	91
		%	51,7%	34,1%	47,6%
	Sometimes	s	53	14	67
		%	36,1%	31,8%	35,1%
	Often	s	12	10	22
		%	8,2%	22,7%	11,5%
	Usually	s	4	4	8
		%	2,7%	9,1%	4,2%
	Always	s	2	1	3
		%	1,4%	2,3%	1,6%

Total	s	147	44	191
	%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%
Pearson Chi-Square	12,073	Sig(p):		0.017

H19_A: The agreement level with the statement “I am a bit reckless in buying things” varies according to gender.

H19₀: The agreement level with the statement “I am a bit reckless in buying things” doesn’t vary according to gender.

According to Table 9, while the hypothesis H19₀ is rejected at the level of P<0,05, H12_A is accepted, namely there is a statistically meaningful correlation between the agreement levels of participants with the statement and gender. Looking at the table, while %51,7 of female students answered “never”; %34,1 of male students answered in the same way. Furthermore, while %8,2 of female students answered “often”; %22,7 of male students answered “often”.

With the completion of analysis of scale questions in the study, whether 2 questions that are in the survey and are thought to be correlated with the sudden buying behaviors of the participants vary according to gender is again analyzed using chi square Crosstabs test. The results are below.

Table 10

		Female	Male	Total
“Do you like shopping?”	No	s 57	5	62
		% 38,3%	11,1%	32,0%
Yes	s	53	18	71
		% 35,6%	40,0%	36,6%
Sometimes	s	39	22	61
		% 26,2%	48,9%	31,4%
Total	s	149	45	194
		% 100,0%	100,0%	100,0%
Pearson Chi-Square		13,824	Sig (p)	0.001

H21_A: The agreement level with the question “Do you like shopping?” varies according to gender.

H21₀: The agreement level with the question “Do you like shopping?” doesn’t vary according to gender.

According to Table 10, while the hypothesis H21₀ is rejected at the level of P<0,05 , H21_A is accepted, namely there is a statistically meaningful correlation between the agreement levels of participants with the statement and gender. Looking at the table, while %38,3 of female students answered “no”; %11,1 of male students answered in the same way. Furthermore, %35,6

of female students answered “yes”; %40 of male students answered “yes”; %26,2 of female students answered “sometimes”; %48,9 of male students answered in the same way.

Results

Instinctive shopping tendency is the tendency of the consumer for the urge which develops spontaneously and suddenly to buy something. Instinctive shopping, is a consumer behaviour and it develops based on the consumer. Therefore, a tendency for instinctive shopping may be defined as an individual difference.

The aim of this study is to find out whether females and males differ in their tendencies for instinctive buying. It is considered that the results of this study will make contribution to the controversial findings on differences in tendencies of females and males in instinctive buying by providing additional findings.

According to the results of chi square Crosstabs test that was carried out for this purpose, it was determined that females and males differ in instinctive buying in terms of some variables. These differences are as follows:

The statement: “I am used to buying things on the spot”, is under cognitive dimension in instinctive buying tendency.

Females tend to buy things more on the spot than males. This result may mean that males think in a more detailed way when buying a product.

When the statement: “I am a bit reckless in buying things” is asked, it is seen that males score higher than females. This situation puts forward that female students give higher importance to shopping than males.

Statements like “It is a struggle to leave nice things I see in a shop”, “I always see something nice whenever I pass by shops”, “If I see something new, I want to buy it” are under emotional dimension in instinctive buying tendency. In addition, it defines the joy of shopping. When this aspect is considered, it can be said that females behave more emotionally in their instinctive shopping tendencies compared to males. Namely, females go through a struggle to leave nice things they see in a shop, they cannot suppress the feeling of wanting something to buy and if they see something new, they want to buy it.

Nevertheless, a catchy situation was faced for the question “Do you like shopping?” since half of the females answered it “yes” and the other half “no”. Totally, %88,9 of males said “yes” or “sometimes”, only %11 said no. This may be thought to show that males now like shopping.

It is inversely proportionate to the question above, the ratio of people who say no to the question: “Do you follow fashion while you are shopping?” is higher in men. However, parallel with the question above, the ratios of females and males who answered the question “yes” and “sometimes” are close to each other.

Thus, it is more probable that males follow fashion, too and it should be said that they make up a vast consumer profile for marketing. The results of this study also contribute considerably to the aspect of management. Retailers must determine strategies considering females’ characteristics of planning less and enjoying shopping more for activities-like product placement, promotions, the recommendations of sales people, a shop atmosphere that will create positive mood-which will urge consumers to buy suddenly and without thinking. Furthermore, it shouldn’t be forgotten that now males enjoy shopping more and they can fit in the suitable customer profile using several strategies in heading to products with brands.

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