

# Consumers' Impulsive Buying Behaviour of Tourism and Travel Products in E-commerce

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**Abstract:** Studies have demonstrated that impulse buying drives many sales online and in physical retail stores. The tourism industry has embraced this trend, through various e-commerce stores. The current study investigates the behavior of impulse buying in tourism e-commerce. Marketing and website quality have the greatest influence on impulse buying tendencies while personality and social values appear to have a weak relationship, statistically speaking. However, qualitative analysis reveals that they are still pertinent factors in driving impulse buying behaviors. It appears that their weakened influence is attributable to the increased personalization of marketing, which targets different people based on different traits.

## 1. Introduction

The digital economy accounted for 6.5 percent of the United States' GDP, equating to \$1.2 trillion [1][2]. Between 2006 and 2016, the digital economy grew by 5.6 percent annually, exceeding the entire economy's growth by 1.5 percent. By 2016, employment in the digital economy accounted for 3.9 percent of employment in the U. S, or 5.9 million jobs [3][4]. Census Bureau e-commerce (2018), e-commerce activity increased by an estimated 14.5 percent in the third quarter of 2018, compared with the third quarter of 2015.

### 1.1. Online consumer impulse shopping behavior

Online shopping is becoming relevant to the tourism sector and hospitality industry. The aspects of tourism that continue to be impacted by growth of information technology are the sectors' products and service delivery [5]. The most significant area of growth has been in hotel bookings, for which online penetration increased from 24.5 percent to 25.7 percent in 2018 [6]. Vacation rental penetration increased from 8.5 percent to 9.1 percent in 2018. Another statistical source shows that the penetration rate is 11.4 percent [7].

The aim of this study is to develop an understanding of impulse buying of travel and tourism products.

### 1.2. Research questions

Guiding research questions:

What is the relationship between personality and impulse shopping?

How does website quality relate to impulsive shopping behavior for tourism products?

Is there a relationship between marketing messages and impulsive buying behavior?

What social values have the strongest relationship with impulse buying of tourism products?

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1. Tourism and travel products

Purchase decisions in tourism and travel products are influenced by four variables: image, attitude, perceived risk and cognitive dissonance [8]. These 'products' include the destination country, hotel, resorts, carriers and packaged trips.

## **2.2. Impulse shopping behavior**

Impulse buying is different from compulsive buying in the sense that impulse buying is driven by external stimuli, whilst compulsive buying behavior is driven by internal factors. Impulse buying is a different and typically less problematic behavior because the impulse to shop comes from external cues or stimuli.

## **2.3. Personality and impulse shopping**

Studies have explored the influence of personality on the process of buying. Prominent work by Mathai and Haridas (2014) using the big five personality traits: extroversion, agreeableness, emotional stability, openness to experience, and conscientiousness, were able to research the relationship between buying experience, promotional factors, and the store environment [9].

## **2.4. Website quality and mediating factors**

Owing to the ubiquity of online shopping today, both impulsive and compulsive shopping behaviors and offline stores. In their 2015 study, Bighiu et al found that the majority of impulsive internet buyers were women one of the major drivers of impulse buying on the internet is the quality of the website being navigated. Pabalkar (2014) measured impulsive buying behaviors in relation to the quality of various websites. Quality in this study was measured in terms of the attractiveness of the website's content, the use of high-quality well-designed graphics, the ease of navigation and the appeal of the commercials [10].

## **2.5. Research questions**

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## **3. Research Design and Methodology**

### **3.1. Research method**

From the literature reviewed, it was ascertained that there is a strong link between the stimulus - internal or external - acting on an organism and the response it yields. Based on this finding, the Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) model was selected as the basis of the current study.

### **3.2. Data collection**

A sample of twenty students was selected using a mix of stratified and convenience sampling methods. Participants were asked to complete a questionnaire.

Stratified sampling was used in the study. The research selected 20 people using convenience sampling at a convenience store. The inclusion criteria were that an individual had to have made at least one online purchase related to tourism or travel products in the last five-year years.

A survey and interview were used in the study. Participants who agreed to take part were issued with a survey questionnaire to complete in their own time, and mail back to the researcher within a week.

The researcher included provision for additional narratives regarding purchase behaviors. In each section, the participants were asked to elaborate on their experiences. When interrogating marketing, participants were prompted to describe an example of a marketing or promotional message that they had received prior to their impulse purchase. As regards website quality, participants were asked to outline the way in which they had navigated to the website. In describing values, participants were invited to elaborate on their values and lifestyle choices.

### **3.3. Ethical considerations**

Participants were randomly selected and their consent for inclusion in the study explicitly sought.

Meanwhile, the study methods employed were approved by the institutional review board. In reporting the data, no identifiable information is presented; the researcher has only outlined descriptive statistics, including average ages, the frequencies of genders, mean and median incomes and the frequencies of different educational classes.

#### 4. Presentation of Findings

##### 4.1. Impulse buying and Marketing

A regression analysis was conducted on the obtained data. In the analysis, it was observed that there is a positive correlation between the frequency of marketing and the likelihood of impulse buying, as illustrated in Table 1 below.

Table 1 Impulse shopping and marketing

SUMMARY OUTPUT								
Regression Statistics								
Multiple R	0.570368							
R Square	0.325319							
Adjusted R Square	0.287837							
Standard Error	0.41297							
Observations	20							
ANOVA								
	Df	SS	MS	F	Significance F			
Regression	1	1.480203	1.480203	8.679289	0.00864			
Residual	18	3.069797	0.170544					
Total	19	4.55						
	Coefficients	Standard Error	t Stat	P-value	Lower 95%	Upper 95%	Lower 95.0%	Upper 95.0%
Intercept	0.18401	0.183156	1.004663	0.328375	-0.20079	0.568807	-0.20079	0.568807
Marketing	0.137056	0.046522	2.946063	0.00864	0.039317	0.234794	0.039317	0.234794

In the Table above, marketing exposure was measured as the frequency with which the participants were exposed to marketing messages.

##### 4.2. Impulse buying and website quality

In the survey, website quality was rated as high, poor or medium. The majority of the participants reported that the website quality was high. Only 15 percent of the participants observed that the website quality was low, as outlined in Table 2 below.

Table 2 Website quality summary statistics

Rating	High	Medium	Low	N
Frequency	12	5	3	20
Percentage	60%	25%	15%	100%

Table 3 Website quality and impulse shopping

Regression Statistics								
Multiple R	0.729616							
R Square	0.53234							
Adjusted R Square	0.506359							
Standard Error	0.343823							
Observations	20							
ANOVA								
	Df	SS	MS	F	Significance F			
Regression	1	2.422146	2.422146	20.48948	0.000261			
Residual	18	2.127854	0.118214					
Total	19	4.55						
	Coefficients	Standard Error	t Stat	P-value	Lower 95%	Upper 95%	Lower 95.0%	Upper 95.0%
Intercept	-0.50228	0.265918	-1.88886	0.075133	-1.06096	0.056391	-1.060956739	0.056391
Website Quality	0.47032	0.103903	4.526531	0.000261	0.252028	0.688611	0.252027782	0.688611

Analysis of the regression for website quality and impulse buying shows that there exists a significant positive relationship between website quality and impulse buying.

### 4.3. Impulse buying and values

Personal values were also analyzed as a possible contributing factor in occurrences of impulse buying behaviors. Table 4 below summarizes the frequencies of responses.

Table 4 Values and impulse buying

Rating	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	N
Frequency	13	3	4	20
Percentage	65%	15%	20%	100%

Table 5 below captures the summary statistics from a regression analysis using values and impulse shopping behaviors.

Table 5 Impulse buying and values analysis

Regression Statistics								
Multiple R	0.149816							
R Square	0.022445							
Adjusted R Square	-0.03186							
Standard Error	0.497096							
Observations	20							
ANOVA								
	Df	SS	MS	F	Significance F			
Regression	1	0.102124	0.102124	0.413281	0.528414			
Residual	18	4.447876	0.247104					
Total	19	4.55						
	Coefficients	Standard Error	t Stat	P-value	Lower 95%	Upper 95%	Lower 95.0%	Upper 95.0%
Intercept	0.432432	0.356218	1.213954	0.240453	-0.31595	1.180819	-0.31595	1.180819
Values	0.088803	0.138135	0.64287	0.528414	-0.20141	0.379015	-0.20141	0.379015

### 4.4. Quantitative data analysis

Analysis of the quantitative data revealed that two variables are significant in explaining impulse buying behavior amongst those who purchase tourism and travel products.

The survey required participants to outline the frequency and forms of marketing messages to which they had been exposed in the past. One of the most prominent themes noted in tourism and travel marketing messages was that of pleasurable experiences. According to the participants, the majority of messages promoted positive qualities such as happiness, relaxation and luxury.

Website quality was found to have a significant influence on impulse shopping. However, in reality, this element often seems to merge with marketing. Insofar as quality is concerned, participants regarded websites that were easy to navigate as being of good quality.

Based on the outcome of the qualitative analysis, it appears that the influence of values is mixed. At one end of the spectrum, values do indeed drive impulse purchases, whilst at the other end, they do not appear to have much influence.

Whilst neither the purchase decision nor personality were found to have a significant relationship with impulse purchases in the quantitative data analysis, qualitative data revealed contradictory results. The majority of participants who reported that they had made an impulse purchase previously noted that they had extroverted or agreeable personality types.

#### **4.5. Summary of findings**

From the quantitative analysis, it is posited that neither personality nor values have much influence on impulse shopping behavior. Indeed, marketing messages and website quality are far more likely to influence impulse buying behaviors. Marketing was found to be the strongest motivating factor for impulse buying behavior. Personality and values have mixed results.

### **5. Conclusions, Interpretations, and Recommendations**

#### **5.1. Discussion of findings**

The study's results indicate that marketing has a significant influence on impulse buying. This influence can be understood using the stimulus-organism-response (SOR) approach. Marketing, as a stimulus, yields a set of affective and cognitive reactions in the buyers. The marketing process begins before the consumer visits the e-commerce site.

Whilst an individual's personality may be embedded deep within them, it is observed in their everyday reactions to situations and events. However, in this study, it appears that no specific personality type or trait was more prone to impulse buying than any other.

#### **5.2. Limitations**

One of the challenges of the current study was the population of the participants, as the study used a limited sample size in order to draw both qualitative and quantitative data from each participant. Another limitation is the nature of the collected data.

An additional limitation to the study was conducted using self-reported participant data.

#### **5.3. Interpretation and recommendations**

The study has important implications for tourism marketers, particularly insofar as it finds that social values and personality have an insignificant influence on impulse marketing. As firms move towards greater personalization, customers get what they want and therefore it is hard to differentiate between impulse and normal buying.

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