

ONLINE IMPULSE BUYING BEHAVIOR AMONGST UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS IN TIANJIN, THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

Tingting Zou*

Abstract

The aim of this study is to understand online business, regarding impulse buying behavior amongst undergraduate students in Tianjin, China. This study concentrated on the Taobao.com platform, and considered variables of website quality (security, navigability, and visual appeal), hedonic shopping value (product novelty, fun and escapism), and product knowledge (word of mouth and social norms), to learn how online shop owners increase their profits by encouraging impulse buying behavior. The results suggest that Taobao.com online shop owners manage their websites to be physically attractive; consider changing their products; and even improve shopping through word of mouth regarding the products they offer.

Keywords: Impulse Buying Behavior, Online Shopping, Taobao.com, Internet, Chinese Market, Hedonic Shopping Value, Product Knowledge, Website Quality.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Internet

The internet now has a popular name - information superhighway. Whether you want to know the latest financial news, exchange information with friends, or browse through a library catalog, the internet is the method that will get your work done. The internet supplements traditional ways to correspond with friends, gather information, read news, and even analyse data. It has become the basis

for our personal lives, economics, and political advancement. With the internet, we are able to share almost everything; knowledge, expertise, and experiences can be sent immediately to others' computers regardless of their geographic location. The internet can be used by consumers 24 hours a day, allowing them to shop online any time they want, browse for anything they are interested in, and attain all kinds of information they may need. According to the Internet World Stats published online in 2015, the number of internet users has increased 832.5% from 2000 to

*Tingting Zou obtains a Master of Business Administration from the Graduate School of Business at the Assumption University of Thailand.

2015 with 46.4% of the world population using the services of the internet. The details are shown in Figure 1.

The internet makes a big impact on our daily lives. It is changing our way of life. There are three aspects of the internet which could explain how the internet has been able to change peoples' lives, namely through its impacts on communication, learning, and e-commerce.

1.2 E-commerce

E-commerce is becoming more and more important in a global context. As Wen et al., (2001) said in their research, electronic commerce (e-commerce) could be called one of the most revolutionary forms of business. It is no longer an alternative, it is an imperative.

E-commerce gives more power to the consumers, which will lead to increasing the differences between companies and consumers, and even between competitors in the marketplace. Willis (2004) also concluded that as e-commerce progresses, its fast growth could lead to the increase of productivity and downward inflationary pressure.

Along with the speedy development of the internet, more and more consumers in China now show an interest in online shopping. The government also published a series of policies to support and standardize the online shopping environment. The steady economic situation also has an effect on encouraging online shopping behavior. The GDP of the first quarter of 2014 in China was approximately 12.8 trillion Yuan, a growth rate of 7.4% when compared to the same period in the previous

INTERNET USAGE STATISTICS The Internet Big Picture World Internet Users and 2015 Population Stats

WORLD INTERNET USAGE AND POPULATION STATISTICS NOVEMBER 30, 2015 - Update						
World Regions	Population (2015 Est.)	Population % of World	Internet Users 30 Nov 2015	Penetration (% Population)	Growth 2000-2015	Users % of Table
Africa	1,158,355,663	16.0 %	330,965,359	28.6 %	7,231.3%	9.8 %
Asia	4,032,466,882	55.5 %	1,622,084,293	40.2 %	1,319.1%	48.2 %
Europe	821,555,904	11.3 %	604,147,280	73.5 %	474.9%	18.0 %
Middle East	236,137,235	3.3 %	123,172,132	52.2 %	3,649.8%	3.7 %
North America	357,178,284	4.9 %	313,867,363	87.9 %	190.4%	9.3 %
Latin America / Caribbean	617,049,712	8.5 %	344,824,199	55.9 %	1,808.4%	10.2 %
Oceania / Australia	37,158,563	0.5 %	27,200,530	73.2 %	256.9%	0.8 %
WORLD TOTAL	7,259,902,243	100.0 %	3,366,261,156	46.4 %	832.5%	100.0 %

Source: Internet World Stats (2015). Basis: 3,366,261,156 Internet users on November 30, 2015. Accessed date: May 8, 2016, available at: <http://www.Internetworldstats.com/stats.htm>.

Figure 1: World Internet Usage and Population Statistics

year (National Bureau of Statistics of China, <http://data.stats.gov.cn/workspace/index?m=hgjd>, May 8, 2014). Chinese online shopping markets have attracted lots of capital investments from both local and international companies. Moreover, after an international financial crisis, the government has been boosting domestic demands in China. The new policies are promoting further demand from online consumers.

1.3 Impulse Buying Online

With the growing acceptance of the internet, most retailers have established a multi-channel sales process for their products. One of these, the online retailing channel offers the shopping service 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, allowing shopping to be carried out at the consumer's leisure. It also means that consumers can shop comfortably anywhere they want as long as they have an internet connection. Ninety percent of consumers have made an impulse buying decision, with thirty to fifty percent of purchasers possibly considered as impulse buyers (Hausman, 2000). Compared to the traditional brick and mortar stores, online shopping affords more convenience and hedonic value to the consumers, which encourages further impulse buying online (Dawson and Kim, 2010). Online shopping makes every shopping process much easier, triggering the impulse buying behaviour when shopping online. "Impulse purchasing constitutes an estimated 40% of all online expenditures (Source: <http://www.kinresearch.nl/featured-publications/the-influence-of-online-store-beliefs-on-consumer-online-impulse-buying-a-model-and-empirical-application/>, May 9, 2014)." It is evident that impulse purchases are critical

to the profits of online retailers.

Nowadays, the development and prosperity of online shopping is increasing awareness of the importance of e-commerce in our daily lives. Especially when talking about impulse buying behavior in an online context it is obvious that undergraduates are the most sensitive group of people when adjusting to the new trends. Undergraduates have more spare time to surf the internet for new knowledge or even just for fun. Moreover, studying undergraduates can give researchers and online shop owners more inspiration on future trends related to online shopping behavior. This research aims to understand the online impulse shopping behavior of undergraduates in order to establish safe and attractive website environments. From the perspective of online shop owners, they could learn how to improve their profits not only from physical website design, but also in choosing effective product categories and understanding how the influences of other people are important.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Website Quality

Website quality as defined by Anusha (2014), is based on the design of the website's navigation, information, and visual design. Galinium et al., (2016) suggested that websites can be evaluated by several dimensions, such as their content, navigation, structure and design, appearance and multimedia, and aspects of uniqueness. Examples of aspects of website characteristics are visual appeal or website pleasantness. Consumers have been found to buy impulsively because they were stimulated by certain circumstantial factors.

This means that cues from the environment can influence impulse buying decision making (Turkyilmaz et al., 2015). This is similar to the findings of Rook and Fisher (1995) regarding traditional shopping stores, whereby the shop's atmospheric cues could trigger impulse buying. Several researchers have identified characteristics of website quality, which itself represents the online shopping environment, can also lead to impulse buying (Liu et al., 2013). Lo et al. (2016) also indicated that the design of online stores was a hygiene factor rather than a motivator. The results of Turkyilmaz et al. (2015)'s study also indicated that website quality has an effect on the impulsiveness of consumers' online buying.

Besides the website quality, online shoppers sometimes pay attention to products' hedonic value, rather than its practicality.

2.2 Hedonic Shopping Value

Chaudhuri (2015) suggested that hedonic shopping combines different types of emotional experience, and stems from the fantasy of purchasing a product. Most researchers have concentrated on studying the importance of utilitarian shopping. They describe the expression of consumer behavior following utilitarian shopping value as reasonable, task-oriented, and goal-directed. In contrast, hedonic shopping value refers to the shopping value within the shopping experience itself, it is not connected with task-related activities. Many researchers have shown that hedonic shopping value is more likely to lead consumers to engage with impulse buying. For example, Kukar-Kinney et al., (2015) found that the shopping context for impulsive buyers, is due to both hedonic and social motives. It is easy for the internet shopper to make

unplanned purchases while they are shopping online, especially in the case of online stores which have an extensive number of products and services, as there are no limitations of time and location (Kim and Eastin, 2011). These opportunities, conferred by the online context, may lead to impulsive purchases (LaRose, 2011). In Yu and Bastin's (2010) research, they examined the relationship between hedonic shopping value and impulse buying behavior through five dimensions. Three of them are appropriate for testing in the context of online shopping, as in this research, namely novelty, fun, and escapism.

Searching for a new product online has always been an adventure. However, online shoppers may be inclined to refer to advice from others as well. All purchasing behavior is based on knowledge of the product whether it was learned from the shop's owner or from others who have experienced the product already.

2.3 Product Knowledge

Product knowledge comes from three basic types of consumer knowledge, which are subjective, objective, and experience (Huang, Li-Ting, 2016). The same paper, also indicated that product information, store information and the sharing of experience all contributed to the formulation of product knowledge. Associated descriptions from Harmancioglu et al. (2009), define subjective knowledge as what the consumer believes about a company or its products and services; while objective knowledge comes from the use or ownership of the product or service; and experienced product knowledge is the information that the consumer has attained through actual interactions with the company

or its products and services. Usually, consumers do not have a concept regarding innovative products. In other words, consumers may have a lack of objective knowledge, leading to an increase in the influence of subjective knowledge in their evaluation processes (Harmancioglu et al., 2009).

2.4 Impulse Buying

The core issue in this research is to understand the impulse buying behavior. There is plenty of research on the topic of impulse buying behavior, which is a main characteristic to understand consumers' behavior in their daily lives. Impulse buying is “*When a consumer experiences a sudden, often persistent urge to buy something immediately. The impulse to buy is hedonically complex and may stimulate emotional conflict. Also impulse buying is prone to occur with diminished regard for its consequences*” (Rook, 1987, pp. 191). Impulse buying was referred to in the research of Tremblay (2005) where it was identified to have the same meaning as “compulsive buying” (1994, cited by Tremblay, 2005), the researchers claiming that compulsive buying

is also known as buying mania, compulsive shopping, addictive or impulsive buying and so on (Tremblay, 2005).

Baumeister (2002) said impulse buying is when the shopper has no prior intention to purchase the product before he/she feels the urge to buy it, and that it is a spontaneous behavior. Piron (2002) concluded in his research that there are four components of impulse buying: the purchase was unplanned; the purchase was driven by a specific stimulus; the purchase decision was made “on-the-spot”; and the purchasing action was done as a reaction of cognition and/or affection. Stern (1962) refined the definition of impulse buying under four classifications, considering a variety of situations, such as economic, personality, location, time and cultural differences. The consumer can change their mind in many different situations when they are shopping. Impulse buying is classified under four types, pure, reminder, suggestion, and planned (Stern, 1962).

3. RESEARCH DESIGN

This research was designed to study the relationships between the dependent variable, online impulse buying behavior, and three

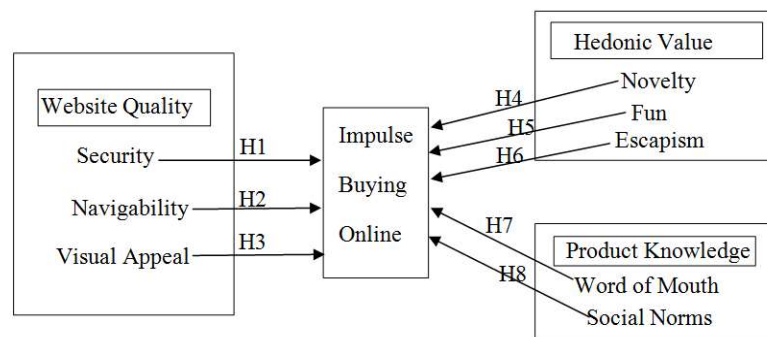


Figure 2: The Conceptual Framework

independent variables: website quality in terms of website security, website navigability, and website visual appeal; hedonic shopping value in terms of perceived novelty, fun, and escapism; and product knowledge in terms of word of mouth and social norms.

Website security, navigability, and visual appeal are related to the website quality of Taobao.com in China. Website quality was evaluated as an environmental factor regarding online shoppers. It has an effect on consumers' affection and cognition, which could influence their buying decisions, and therefore the likelihood of online impulse buying. Hedonic shopping value, which is influenced by the consumer's perception of novelty, fun, and escapism from the shopping process, is considered as an emotional factor regarding online impulse buying. Product knowledge from online word of mouth and social norms has an effect on the Chinese customers' impulse buying decision making and purchasing behavior. The conceptual framework, to identify the influence of website quality (security, navigability, and visual appeal), hedonic shopping value (novelty, fun, and escapism), and product knowledge (word of mouth and social norms) on impulse buying of new products on Taobao.com, is shown above.

4. RESEARCH METHODS

Both qualitative and quantitative approaches were employed in this research. Surveys are the most common research instruments in business research, and are used in this study to obtain primary data. Personal interviews were also used as research instruments in this study. Using survey techniques, researchers can analyze and

describe a large proportion of a population fairly quickly and at relatively low cost (Zikmund, 2003). Primary data were gathered through questionnaires from the online shoppers of Taobao.com at the universities of Tianjin, China over a two-week period. The questionnaires were distributed through the internet using QQ, micro blog, and also e-mail. Apart from questionnaires, personal interviews were conducted with the undergraduate students in order to gain more insight into the development of online shopping for Chinese undergraduate students. The questionnaire was developed using the literature previously reviewed by the researcher. The reliability of the questionnaire was tested using a pre-test. A formal research survey was conducted based upon the success of the pre-test.

4.1 Target Population

This study aims to determine the factors which motivate undergraduate students while shopping online and those which lead to making an impulse purchase decision, in the case of Taobao.com in Municipality of Tianjin. The target population of this study was undergraduate students, studying at universities in the Municipality of Tianjin and who also had experience shopping on Taobao.com.

4.2 Sample Size

Hussey (1997) defined sample size as "a subset of population and should represent the main interest of the study." The actual sampling is a separate stage of the research process, which involves "a process of using a segment, or a sample, of a population to represent the entire population's activities, attitudes, opinions, and interests, such that the results

from the sample study can be inferred upon the population” (Zikmund, 2003).

4.3 Sampling Procedure

Multi-stage sampling, involving a non-probability sampling method, was used in this study. As Zikmund (2003) explained, “the probability of any particular member of the population being chosen is unknown”, the outcome cannot be predicted because it largely depends on chance. However, this random sampling procedure requires a minimum knowledge of the population, in order to better analyze the data, and eliminate computing errors. Hence, the techniques employed to target respondents included: (i) judgmental sampling, (ii) quota sampling, and (iii) convenience sampling.

Both primary and secondary data were used in this study. These two kinds of data can be used together during analysis, to gain a deeper understanding of the research topic. They will also help upon the framework built and conclusion summary for this thesis. Questionnaires were distributed in Tianjin Nankai University, to gather data from undergraduate students, amounting to a total of 402 valid questionnaires.

4.4 Statistical Treatment of Data

Both descriptive and inferential analyses were employed in the statistical treatment of data. For the descriptive statistics, percentage, arithmetic mean, and standard deviation were calculated, to explain the demographic information of respondents and calculate the proportion of the respondents. The SPSS program was used for the inferential statistics, examining the hypotheses set up for this study

using the Pearson Correlation Coefficient, the most popular technique. Pearson Correlation Coefficient can describe the connection among variables as well as how strongly they are associated, and whether the relationship is positive or negative. Normally, a correlation coefficient is used to measure interval scale and ratio scale in a bivariate analysis.

5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study purpose of this research was to understand the relationships between impulse buying behavior on Taobao.com in The People’s Republic of China and the other variables, including: website quality in terms of security, navigability, and visual appeal; hedonic shopping value, such as novelty, fun, and escapism; and, product knowledge, including word of mouth and social norms. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the data of the research. In order to test the correlation coefficient, Pearson’s product moment correlation was used. This section of the analysis represents the respondents’ demographic characteristics, the independent variables (website security, website navigability, website visual appeal, novelty, fun, escapism, word of mouth, social norms), and a summary of hypothesis testing.

Data was collected from 402 respondents among the undergraduate students, with shopping experience on Taobao.com in Tianjin, The People’s Republic of China. Table 6.1, based on the questionnaire data collected from the 402 respondents, shows that the gender with the highest percentage of the respondents, was female, totaling 53.7% (216) of respondents. The age category with the highest percentage of the respondents was ‘21 years old’, accounting for 24.1% (97) of the total,

while, 'juniors' also accounted for 36.8% (148) of respondents. One third of the respondents 33.3%, came from each of the three universities in Tianjin, i.e. Nankai Normal University, Tianjin University, and Tianjin Normal University, by using a quota sampling method.

Eight out of the nine variables showed a medium or high positive correlation with online impulse purchasing behavior of the undergraduate students in Tianjin, The People's Republic of China. Based on the summary of findings in the previous section, the results of SPSS show that all of the null hypotheses, as discussed in section 3, should be rejected.

The details and implications of all eight hypotheses are discussed below:

H1o: There is no significant relationship between website security and online impulse buying.

Table 1: The Analysis between Website Security and Online Impulse Buying Behavior
Correlations

		MWS	MIMB
MWS	Pearson Correlation	1	.815(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	402	402
MIMB	Pearson Correlation	.815(**)	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	402	402

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

The results from hypothesis one show that the null hypothesis should be rejected, indicating a relationship between website security and the online impulse buying behavior of undergraduate students. The correlation

coefficient of hypothesis one is .815, indicating that website quality has a very strong positive influence on online impulse buying behavior on Taobao.com among undergraduate students in Tianjin, The People's Republic of China. This result supports the findings of Wells et al., (2011), where it was determined that website quality in terms of website security can encourage customers to make impulsive purchases when shopping online. Benbasat, et al., (2008) concluded that online customers find it hard to identify a shopping website's security. In this research, the results imply that when the shopping website's security is trusted by the undergraduate students, they are more tempted to make online impulse purchases. This concurs with the article of Vaidyanathan and Mautone (2009), whereby information security, especially confidentiality, authentication, and integrity in shopping websites were found to be critical to an online shopping website, as they are related to the impulse buying behavior of undergraduate students shopping online.

H2o: There is no significant relationship between website navigability and online impulse buying.

Table 2: The Analysis between Website Navigability and Online Impulse Buying Behavior
Correlations

		MWN	MIMB
MWN	Pearson Correlation	1	.480(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	402	402
MIMB	Pearson Correlation	.480(**)	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	402	402

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

The results for hypothesis two indicate that the null hypothesis should be rejected, indicating a relationship between website navigability and the online impulse buying behavior of undergraduate students. The correlation coefficient of hypothesis two is .480, indicating that website navigation has a moderate positive influence on online impulse buying behavior on Taobao.com among undergraduate students in Tianjin, The People’s Republic of China. Ease of navigation has been valued as a crucial determining variable influencing the visit of individuals when they are shopping online (Nielsen, 2000). Pamer (2002) and Rabah, et al., (2011) also concluded that navigation and website content are the key aspects of website design which could have influence on shopping decision-making. This concurs with other researchers, who found that interface design could lead to the success of a shopping website.

H3o: There is no significant relationship between website visual appeal and online impulse buying

Table 3: The Analysis between Website Visual Appeal and Online Impulse Buying Behavior

Correlations

		MWV	MIMB
MWV	Pearson Correlation	1	.504(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	402	402
MIMB	Pearson Correlation	.504(**)	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	402	402

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

There is a significant relationship between website visual appeal and online impulse buying. The correlation coefficient of hypothesis three equals .504, which shows that website visual appeal has a moderate positive influence on online impulse buying behavior regarding Taobao.com among undergraduate students in Tianjin, The People Republic of China. As Demangeot and Broderick (2010) indicated in their research, the online shopping environment in terms of visual impact, an attribute of page clarity and site architecture is a key factor to the satisfaction of the customers. This was also proved by Wells et al., (2011) who stated that website visual appeal is positively related to online impulse buying behavior. Wei-Shang and Ming-Chun (2010) also summarized in their research that the visual appeal of a website can make website information easier to understand, so as to improve website quality, which is in turn related to online impulsive buying behavior.

H4o: There is no significant relationship between perceived novelty and online impulse buying.

Table 4: The Analysis between Perceived Novelty and Online Impulse Buying Behavior

Correlations

		MHN	MIMB
MHN	Pearson Correlation	1	.684(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	402	402
MIMB	Pearson Correlation	.684(**)	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	402	402

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

The result for hypothesis four indicates that the null hypothesis should be rejected, indicating a relationship between product novelty and online impulse buying. The correlation coefficient of hypothesis four is .684, which indicates that novelty has a strong positive influence on online impulse buying behavior on Taobao.com among undergraduate students in Tianjin, The People's Republic of China. Novelty creates a desire for new products or new experiences, which easily leads to impulse buying in the online context (Khare et al., 2010). Nowadays, novelty impulse shopping is viewed as a kind of new impulse buying behavior (Venkatraman and Price, 1990). Novelty, as one dimension of hedonic shopping value, is related to online impulse buying (Yu and Bastin, 2010), and is a brand new influencing factor for impulse buying.

H5o: There is no significant relationship between perceived fun and online impulse buying.

Table 5: The Analysis between Perceived Fun and Online Impulse Buying Behavior

Correlations			
		MHF	MIMB
MHF	Pearson Correlation	1	.881(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	402	402
MIMB	Pearson Correlation	.881(**)	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	402	402

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

There is a significant relationship between perceived fun and online impulse buying. The correlation coefficient for hypothesis five is .881, which indicates that fun has a very strong positive influence on online impulse buying behavior on Taobao.com among undergraduate students in Tianjin, The People's Republic of China. According to the research of Eun-Joo et al., (2006), impulse buying decisions happen in relation to fun shopping experiences. This concurs with Martin and Turley (2004)'s conclusion, stating that a fun feeling during the time of shopping could generate impulsive purchase activities. A fun feeling during online shopping is one dimension of hedonic shopping value, and is positively related to online impulse shopping (Yu and Bastin, 2010).

H6o : There is no significant relationship between perceived escapism and online impulse buying.

Table 6: The Analysis between Perceived Escapism and Online Impulse Buying Behavior

Correlations

		MHE	MIMB
MHE	Pearson Correlation	1	.738(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.006
	N	402	402
MIMB	Pearson Correlation	.738(**)	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.006	
	N	402	402

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

There is a significant relationship between perceived escapism and online impulse buying behavior. The correlation coefficient of hypothesis six is .738, which shows that escapism has a strong positive influence on online impulse buying behavior on Taobao.com among undergraduate students in Tianjin, The People’s Republic of China. Kukar-Kinney et al., (2015) indicated that escapism as a kind of hedonic shopping experience, could create impulsive purchases. Yu and Bastin (2010) also found that the incidence of impulse buying in the online context is highly related to a feeling of escapism in each customer’s shopping time period.

H7o : There is no significant relationship between word of mouth and online impulse buying.

Table 7: The Analysis between Word of Mouth and Online Impulse Buying Behavior

Correlations

	MWOM	MIMB
MWOM Pearson Correlation	1	.494(**)
Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
N	402	402
MIMB Pearson Correlation	.494(**)	1
Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
N	402	402

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

There is a significant relationship between word of mouth and online impulse buying. From the correlation coefficient of hypothesis seven, which equals .494, it is indicated that

word of mouth has a moderate positive influence on online impulse buying behavior on Taobao.com among undergraduate students in Tianjin, The People’s Republic of China. Mayzlin’s (2006) research indicated that word of mouth in the context of online shopping, is a special method of communication. Good comments or user experiences will enhance the feeling of impulsiveness generated while online shopping. The research of Harmancioglu et al., (2009) also pointed out that product knowledge, which can come from word of mouth, is a factor related to the incidence of impulse purchasing online. Sometimes actual impulse buying decisions are made due to other customers’ experiences or opinions on the product (Yubo, et. al., 2011).

H8o : There is no significant relationship between social norms and online impulse buying.

Table 8: The Analysis between Social Norms and Online Impulse Buying Behavior

Correlations

	MSN	MIMB
MSN Pearson Correlation	1	.323(**)
Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
N	402	402
MIMB Pearson Correlation	.323(**)	1
Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
N	402	402

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

There is a significant relationship between social norms and online impulse buying. From

the correlation coefficient of hypothesis eight, which equals .323, it is indicated that social norms have a weak positive influence on online impulse buying behavior on Taobao.com among undergraduate students in Tianjin, The People's Republic of China. Sometimes, social norms can be the source that stimulates the enjoyment of online impulsive shopping (Lu et al., 2005). Harmancioglu et al., (2009) studied the triggers of impulse buying decisions, social norms were viewed as an internal trigger to impulse buying behavior. Social norms are one of the related factors to impulse buying behavior, but not the most crucial one.

6. CONCLUSIONS

Nowadays, online shopping is not only a fashion trend for younger people, it causes extremely big changes on everyone's daily lives. Especially in China, online shopping gives shoppers more options in different levels; it happens without consideration of the actual location of the products; it definitely helps to save time and energy; it makes our lives easier and happier than the traditional store shopping experience. Impulse buying behavior is not only found in the online shopping context, but it's happens more easily while shopping online since online sources don't have the limitations of product viewing time, place, or brands. What customers need here is an internet connection. Impulse buying could happen in different product categories and for different reasons. The understanding of impulse buying behavior is really helpful for online storeowners to know how to generate more profits from online business. These study results could become a guidebook on how to make a successful online business, and bring more possibilities to define online shopping behavior

as well.

This research studied impulse buying behavior in customers shopping online at Taobao.com, especially on innovative products. Undergraduate students in Tianjin were used as the study group, since the younger generation's shopping behavior is the reference model for shopping behavior in the future society. Furthermore, undergraduate students are highly accepting towards online shopping in China, and may learn faster than people in other age groups regarding innovative products. The research considered three categories of influencing variables for studying impulse buying behavior in an online context, namely, website quality in terms of perceived website security, website navigability, and website visual appeal; hedonic value in terms of fun, escapism, and novelty; product knowledge in terms of word of mouth and social norms. From studying these independent variables, we can determine how to trigger online impulse buying through website design, shopper needs, and online social platforms which may have influential effects. A total of 402 questionnaires were collected from undergraduate students in Tianjin, who had online shopping experience at Taobao.com. All the hypotheses tested were shown to have a positive relationship through analysis in the SPSS software package. The outcomes of this study clearly match the proposed model.

In conclusion, all of the correlations between the variables have a positive relationship with perceived website security, and perceived fun having a very strong positive relationship with online impulse buying behavior. In summary, website security is a key factor for undergraduate customers to decide to shop online and even to make

impulsive purchasing decisions. The perceived fun is a main influencing factor to online impulse buying, regarding undergraduate students. Besides perceived fun in the shopping experience, another two variables of hedonic shopping value showed a strong positive relationship with impulse buying behavior, with regards to undergraduate students shopping online, namely these were, the perceived product novelty, and the feeling of escapism during shopping. Therefore, online impulse buying behavior is likely to happen when the shoppers feel that the aimed product is easy to get and that it will help them to find fresh new ideas outside. Website navigability, visual appeal, and the product's word of mouth are valuable to the undergraduate students as well, when they are making impulsive shopping decisions online. However, since online shopping is more private and part of the purpose of online shopping is to be unique and have fun for themselves, social norms are not quite so important to young online shoppers in the online context.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

Firstly, the results of hypothesis one (H1), hypothesis two (H2), and hypothesis three (H3), showed that perceived website security had a very strong positive relationship with impulse buying behavior on Taobao.com. Likewise, website navigability and visual appeal also had a strong positive relationship with impulse buying behavior on Taobao.com. Therefore, we can tell that website quality is the main factor for customers to choose a shopping website. In Taobao.com's case, this website makes an example of a good shopping website for various other shopping websites to follow. As a result, it is recommended that

the website designer should be concerned mostly with website security, in terms of keeping customers' private information and shopping details safely, investing in high-tech equipment and keeping security protocols up-to-date. This is the basic condition which can pull more traffic to a shopping website, as customers will feel safe to shop there.

The next step is improving website design, in terms of navigability and visual appeal. As previously defined, navigability will help customers to find their dream products on the website faster and even help them to dig more into their dreams. Good navigability also works on up- and cross-selling strategies, which stick to customers' impulse buying behavior (Dawson and Kim, 2009). Online shop owners could add recommendations based on products function, a product comparison function, or allow searching for products using different descriptions, such as price, size, functions, colors, user age, special definition, etc. The researcher encourages online shop owners to decorate their site to delight customers visually as well. The shop decoration style should be consistent with the concept of the products being sold.

Secondly, based on the study results of online hedonic shopping value, the variables in terms of novelty (H4), fun (H5), and escapism (H6) are positively related to the dependent variable. Especially regarding the fun feeling, which was identified as having a very strong relationship with online impulse buying behavior among undergraduate students. It is therefore recommended that online shop owners should do some research on the trends and fashion products regarding the younger generation. Nowadays, undergraduate students do online shopping to search for something unique and special, which

can show their taste of fashion or create more confidence in front of their friends. As the online environment does not have limitations when searching for innovative products, shop owners should try to offer more stylish or fashionable products to drive more traffic to their shop. Taobao.com also has the responsibility to gather more creative shops online to generate more traffic on their own website. Moreover, online shop owners or Taobao.com could create more promotions or notices to inform shoppers when they have qualified for a promotion, in order to enhance the feeling of fun, during the online shopping experience.

Thirdly, the results analysis for product knowledge in terms of word of mouth (H7) and social norms (H8), suggests that while they are positively related to online impulse buying behavior, they are not that critical for the online environment, when compared with other variables. However, it is still recommended that online shop owners should manage their shop's image on social media and other channels effectively and positively. Word of mouth and social norms are important when new products enter the market. Opinion leaders provide a special mode of communication for online shoppers in the online context (Mayzlin, 2006), and thus, could make a new product either a great success or complete failure.

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QUESTIONNAIRE

This questionnaire is a part of MBA Thesis programme at Assumption University, Bangkok. The topic for thesis is “Online impulse Buying Behavior amongst Undergraduate Students in Tianjin, China”. Kindly fill out the questionnaires in the following pages. Your responses shall be kept confidential and be used only for analyzing to find out results in this study. Thank you very much for your time and consideration.

Part 1: Screening Questions

Kindly answer the following before continuing to answer further questions.

Have you shopped online with Taobao.com?

- Yes No (Stop doing the questionnaire)

Indicate the level of your agreement as with each of the statements below;

- ① Strongly Disagree
② Disagree
③ Neutral
④ Agree
⑤ Strongly agree

Part 2: Demographic Data

1. Gender: Male Female
2. Age: <=18 19 20
 21 >=22
3. Level of Education:
 Freshman Sophomore
 Junior Senior

Part 3 : Perception of Website Quality		1	2	3	4	5
Website Security	1. I am confident that the information I provide during the transaction will not reach inappropriate parties during storage in this retailer's database.	1	2	3	4	5
	2. I believe inappropriate parties cannot deliberately observe the information I provide during my transaction with this web retailer during transmission.	1	2	3	4	5
	3. In my opinion, inappropriate parties will not collect and store the information I provide during the transaction with this web retailer.	1	2	3	4	5
Website Navigability	4. Navigating these web pages is easy for me.	1	2	3	4	5
	5. I find that my interaction with this website is clear and understandable.	1	2	3	4	5
	6. It is easy for me to become skillful at navigating the pages of this website.	1	2	3	4	5
Visual Appeal	7. The website is visually pleasing.	1	2	3	4	5
	8. The website displays visually pleasing design.	1	2	3	4	5
	9. The layout of the website is attractive.	1	2	3	4	5
Website Quality	10. Overall, I feel easy and pleasing to shop with Taobao.com.	1	2	3	4	5
	11. All things considered, I think it's safe to shop with Taobao.com.	1	2	3	4	5
	12. The overall quality of the website-Taobao.com is high.	1	2	3	4	5

Part 4: Hedonic Shopping Value		1	2	3	4	5
Novelty	13. Finding unique things online makes me excited.	1	2	3	4	5
	14. It seems that I explore a new world when I go shopping online.	1	2	3	4	5
Fun	15. Online shopping is a wonderful experience.	1	2	3	4	5
	16. Compared to others, spending time on online shopping is so enjoyable.	1	2	3	4	5
	17. During online shopping, I feel excited.	1	2	3	4	5
	18. Online shopping activity makes me happy.	1	2	3	4	5
Escapism	19. When I am shopping online, I can escape from reality.	1	2	3	4	5
	20. When I am shopping online, I feel excited taking risks.	1	2	3	4	5
	21. I can forget troubles during online shopping.	1	2	3	4	5
	22. Online shopping is a way to relieve pressure from myself.	1	2	3	4	5

Part 5: Product Knowledge		1	2	3	4	5
Word of Mouth	23. I rely on word of mouth/opinion leaders when purchasing a new product.	1	2	3	4	5
	24. Opinions of others encourage me buy products spontaneously.	1	2	3	4	5
	25. I have heard about most of the products I buy from others.	1	2	3	4	5
Social Norms	26. I look for other's advice before I buy something new.	1	2	3	4	5
	27. I tend to buy things according to the social norms.	1	2	3	4	5
	28. I tend to buy things that are relevant to other's expectation	1	2	3	4	5

Online Impulse Buying Behavior Amongst Undergraduate Students in Tianjin, The People's Republic of China

Part 6 : Impulse Buying Behavior		1	2	3	4	5
Impulse Buying Behavior	29. I often buy things spontaneously.	1	2	3	4	5
	30. I often buy things without thinking	1	2	3	4	5
	31. Sometimes I feel like buying things on the spur of the moment.	1	2	3	4	5
	32. Sometimes I am a bit reckless about what I buy.	1	2	3	4	5

Thank you so much for your valuable time!