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An endless bookcase: Predictors of impulse buying of books

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**AN ENDLESS BOOKCASE:
PREDICTORS OF IMPULSE BUYING OF BOOKS**

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“Words are, in my not-so-humble opinion, our most inexhaustible source of magic.”

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Resumo

A compra por impulso é um tema ainda pouco estudado pela comunidade científica, embora se revele muito pertinente, visto ser um comportamento bastante complexo, abrangente, e sujeito a diversas influências. O objetivo deste estudo foi o de encontrar variáveis preditores da compra por impulso de livros.

Participaram deste estudo 347 portugueses, com idades compreendidas entre os 28 e os 73 anos ($M = 36.89$; $DP = 15.56$). A maioria da amostra era constituída por mulheres ($n = 285$; 82.1%), enquanto que 17.9% eram homens ($n = 62$). Os participantes tinham um nível educacional alto, com 78.8% da amostra tendo uma licenciatura ou um nível superior de educação. A amostra foi recolhida através de questionários aplicados de Julho a Dezembro de 2019. Foram analisadas a tendência a comprar por impulso, a tendência a comprar livros por impulso, a suscetibilidade à influência interpessoal, a necessidade de cognição, o materialismo e o self estendido.

Os resultados revelaram que a tendência a comprar impulsivamente e o self estendido predizem a compra por impulso de livros, sendo que este modelo explica 27% da variância. Este estudo contribui para um melhor entendimento da compra por impulso de objetos específicos, bem como fornece uma base para a investigação do comportamento de compra de livros dos portugueses. Os resultados oferecem vantagens para profissionais de marketing e psicologia do consumidor, podendo ser utilizados para cativar o interesse do consumidor e para a promoção de estratégias de marketing conscientes e éticas.

Palavras-chave: Tendência a comprar por impulso, Livros, Influência Interpessoal, NFC, Materialismo, Self estendido.

Abstract

Impulse buying is a topic still scarcely studied in the scientific community, although it proves to be very pertinent since it is a very complex, broad behavior, and influenced by several variables. The aim of this study was to find predictive variables for impulse buying of books.

347 Portuguese participated in the study, aged between 28 and 73 years old ($M = 36.89$; $SD = 15.56$). Most of the sample was composed by women ($n = 285$; 82.1%), while 17.9% were men ($n = 62$). The participants had a high educational level, with 78.8% of the sample having a bachelor's degree or a higher level of education. The sample was collected through questionnaires from July to December 2019. The impulse buying tendency, impulse buying tendency of books, susceptibility to interpersonal influence, need for cognition, materialism, and extended self were analyzed in this research.

The results revealed that the tendency to buy impulsively and the extended self predict impulse buying of books, this model explaining 27% of the variance. This study contributes to a better understanding of the impulse buying of specific objects and provides a foundation for the investigation of the Portuguese book-buying behavior. The results offer advantages for marketing professionals and consumer psychology and can be used to captivate consumer interest and to promote conscientious and ethical marketing.

Keywords: Impulse buying tendency, Books, Interpersonal influence, NFC, Materialism, Extended self.

Introduction

1. Impulse buying

Impulse buying has drawn significant attention for the past years, yet it remains one of the most fragmented concepts in psychology, marketing, and consumer research. In a society where consumerism and material goods increasingly play a crucial role in people's lives and there is a competitive business environment that fosters impulse buying behavior (Xiao & Nicholson, 2012), it becomes particularly pertinent to study this phenomenon.

There are some statistics that direct us to the relevance of this behavior, such as 40% to 80% of purchases, depending on the product category, are impulsive purchases (Amos et al., 2014). Furthermore, impulse buying represents 62% of supermarket purchases (Luo, 2005). A study carried out by Deco Proteste (2019) indicates that 34% of Portuguese consumers make purchases considered spontaneous. Besides, this type of shopping takes place mostly with clothes and shoes, and 44% of consumers say they are regretful after an acquisition of this sort (Deco Proteste, 2019).

Initially, and according to Stern (1962), the concept of impulse buying was considered a synonym for unplanned buying. However, the results of several investigations settled that, although impulse buying can usually be categorized as being unplanned, the opposite is not always the case, that is, not all unplanned purchases are impulsive (Amos et al., 2014). In this sense, and as the tendency to buy impulsively is influenced by a variety of factors, Stern (1962) distinguishes, based on this multiplicity of elements, three purchasing behaviors (planned, unplanned, and impulsive) and four different categories of impulsive purchases (pure, reminder, suggestion, and planned impulse buying).

According to Rook (1987), impulse buying occurs “when a consumer experiences a sudden, often powerful and persistent urge to buy something immediately”, resulting in a “hedonically complex and powerful impulse, which can unfold emotional conflict and little consideration consequences” (p.191). Impulse buying can be described as an attractive, urgent, fast, spontaneous, emotional behavior, that occurs in proximity to a given product and usually provides a disruption in the individual's normative buying behavior (Rook, 1987; Sharma et al., 2010).

The tendency to buy impulsively is understood as a complex behavior, which can be defined through three criteria: the spontaneity of the act of buying, accompanied by a positive emotional charge; little concern for the costs or consequences of this act; and the hedonic temptation of consumption, associated with feelings of self-fulfillment (Amos et al., 2014). Impulse buying is an intriguing phenomenon not only because it is influenced by a myriad of internal psychological factors, but also by market-related external stimuli (Iyer et al., 2020). This way, this type of behavior can be interpreted or influenced in several ways, with different purposes - negative or positive - and must, therefore, be studied comprehensively and holistically, without being associated with a theoretical framework or concrete study area (Santini et al., 2018).

2. Books and book publishing industry

“A book is a special type of product and reading books is a special type of consumption activity” (Astous et al., 2006, p. 134). Throughout history its cultural value has been widely acknowledged, mainly due to the relationship of this object with the act of reading and literature, both recognized for their intellectual and erudite value (Neves et al., 2012). Presently, the book enters a more common domain of entertainment and culture, assuming itself as “a cultural asset with vast demand” and high “economic and financial potential” (Neves et al., 2014, p. 15).

In Western societies, there is a widespread practice of reading books in everyday life, and it can be said that people buy and read books for a variety of different reasons (Neves, 2011; Neves et al., 2014). There is a common assumption that to read a book is to live an experience, that experience related to several factors: utilitarian (e.g., reading to increase one’s expertise), hedonic (e.g., to enjoy oneself), and symbolic (e.g., to feel that one is knowledgeable) (Astous et al., 2006).

The book publishing industry is a complex sector, in constant evolution, its analysis depending on the country or the time period (Neves et al., 2012). Regarding the Portuguese market, it can be said that the book sales locations’ diversity contributes to the adjustment between supply and demand for these material goods (Neves, 2011). Even so, there is a trend in the popularity of traditional bookstores (for example, Bertrand) and large stores

(generalists, such as supermarkets, or specialized stores, such as Fnac) as the preferable places to buy books (Neves, 2011).

In addition, in recent years there has been a dynamic increase in the online book sales, even though the sales figures are not yet significant when compared to the purchase in physical stores (Leitão et al., 2018; Neves, 2011). Nevertheless, the tendency to buy more online is shown: in 2017, 34% of the population residing in Portugal reported having used the internet to place orders for products or services, having increased the number of people with internet access as well (Instituto Nacional de Estatística [INE], 2017). Data from 2019 points to an average of 25% of the Portuguese population buying books online (Federation of European Publishers [FEP], 2020). Even if the online channels are being more utilized, there is still a preference for printed books over the digital ones (e-book), although we can say the latter format has gained significant weight in the market since 2010 (Neves et al., 2014).

3. Impulse buying of books

The impulse purchase of a specific object is an uncommonly studied component of consumer psychology, since the tendency to buy impulsively has been seen as a general trait that manifests itself equally according to the category or product studied (Jones et al., 2003). That way, concerning books, there are scarce studies on the subject, usually with contradictory results.

Some authors mention that the decision to buy books is rarely impulsive, and there is usually prior planning of the chosen theme or author, even before the consumer visits the physical store or website (Leemans & Stokmans, 1992). This implies that when individuals shop for a book, the book they want is already chosen. However, some studies compare book-buying to a highly spontaneous process (Leitão et al., 2018). For instance, a study by the US Book Consumer Demographics and Book Buying Behaviors showed that there is an increasing trend in impulsive book-buying and that in 2012 28% of books bought in store were impulsive purchases (Publisher Weekly, 2013).

In the Portuguese context, a study by Leitão et al. (2018) references some results, such as the fact that the purchase of books tends to be more impulsive when the object is purchased for self-use, rather than when it is bought to offer to someone else. Some studies

have also showed that that impulse buying tendency is related to buying specific types of products such as wine (Campos, 2018) or tennis shoes (Gonçalves, 2018).

Hence, the following hypothesis is formulated:

H1. Consumer's tendency to buy on impulse is a predictor of the tendency to buy books impulsively.

4. Susceptibility to interpersonal influence

Susceptibility to interpersonal influence is defined as a general and variable trait, which represents how different individuals differ in their responses to social influence (Bearden et al., 1989). The buying process can be comprehended as a typically social phenomenon, and in the field of consumer psychology, susceptibility to interpersonal influence is considered as the need for an individual to improve his image through the purchase or use of certain products or brands (Aquino et al., 2020; Bearden et al., 1989). It is a two-dimensional construct, that is, it can manifest itself in two ways: normative influence or informational influence (Deutsch & Gerard, 1955).

The first one deals with conformity to the expectations of others, that is, the need for an individual to buy or use something to suit the expectations of others, or to come near members of a certain group (Burnkrant & Cousineau, 1975). Its relationship with impulse buying is well-reasoned, as the greater the susceptibility to social norms, that is, the more an individual conforms its personal purchasing decisions to the expectations of others, the greater the tendency of buying on impulse (Aquino et al., 2020; Lin & Chen, 2012).

On the other side, informational influence is the tendency to accept information given by others as unquestionable, that is, an individual seeks information through reliable sources, or makes inferences from observing the behavior of others (Deutsch & Gerard, 1955; Park & Lessig, 1977). In this sense, some studies show that online verbal communication, particularly online criticism or reviews, is a source of interpersonal influence in the consumer decision process and that this informational influence has a significant role in impulse buying behavior (Cheng et al., 2013; Cheung & Thadani, 2012).

This is because many individuals prefer accessing the opinion of other consumers about a certain product before making a purchase decision (Zhang et al., 2018). Lin et al. (2007) found that the intention to buy was stronger when there were more positive online

reviews, and Zhang et al. (2018) investigated the relationship between these online reviews and impulse buying, concluding that it happens through a mediating role of browsing.

In the case of books, individuals use specialized websites (for example, Goodreads) to search and study, through the criticism of other users, the book that best suits their personal needs (Lin et al., 2007), assuming then that the purchase intention is strengthened when consumers seek to read reviews online, manifesting themselves, in this case, through informational influence. Leitão et al. (2018) also found that impulsiveness in buying books is related to the relevance attributed to several characteristics, for example, recommendations from friends and family or the appearance of the cover and title.

Thus, it is expected that individuals who are more susceptible to interpersonal influence scale, particularly to the domain of informational influence, are more likely to buy impulsively.

H2. Consumer's susceptibility to informational influence is a predictor of the tendency to buy books impulsively.

H3. Consumer's susceptibility to normative influence is a predictor of the tendency to buy books impulsively.

5. Need for cognition (NFC)

The need for cognition is defined as a cognitive resource that affects the processing of information, as well as an individual trait that relates to personal motivation for cognitive efforts (Cacioppo & Petty, 1982; Gomes et al., 2013). Initially, at the time of the first studies on this concept, NFC was outlined as the need to structure relevant situations of daily life in an integrated and substantial way (Cohen et al., 1955), or simply as the need to understand the world and the events around it (Katz, 1960). Murphy (1947) came to identify certain individuals as "thinkers", who were the ones who liked to question reality and what surrounded them, and who found the activity of thinking fun.

The adopted definition in this study was proposed by Cacioppo et al. (1984), inspired by the initial works of Cohen et al. (1955), that advocate the need for cognition as the individual tendency for the involvement and appreciation of cognitive efforts (Cacioppo et al., 1984; Cacioppo & Petty, 1982; Coelho et al., 2018).

In literature, the tendency to buy on impulse has been negatively correlated with higher levels of NFC (Lins et al., 2015), since impulse buying is associated with spontaneity and lack of deliberation, aspects not congruent with the need for cognition. However, high levels of NFC are correlated with several essential aspects of reading and book-buying habits, such as spending more time per day reading (Turner & Croucher, 2014). A motive for this correlation is the fact that the act of reading requires the application of several cognitive mechanisms that are motivated by the need for cognition (Juric, 2017).

It is also known that the typical reader profile comprises a higher level of education than the non-reader profile (Leitão et al., 2018). Several studies positively correlate high levels of education with purchasing and reading more books (Leitão et al., 2018; Phillips, 2017). Given the fact that individuals who score higher in need of cognition are usually individuals who achieve higher levels of schooling (Gomes et al., 2013), it is assumed that those with more NFC buy more books. Thus, given the results mentioned above, it is hypothesized that need for cognition predicts impulse book purchases.

H4. Consumer's NFC is a predictor of the tendency to buy books impulsively.

6. Materialism

The concept of materialism has been vastly studied in literature, highlighting two definitions in the field of consumer psychology. The first is that of Belk (1985), who assumes materialism as an intrinsic trait to the individual's personality, identifying material possessions as sources of importance, satisfaction, and happiness in that person's life. However, in this study, the definition proposed by Richins and Dawson (1992) is adopted, which conceptualizes materialism as a cultural value, assuming that it incorporates a set of beliefs about the importance that possessions have in an individual's life. Three recurring themes or ideas are pointed out in the various definitions that arise, over time, from this construct: the idea that success is defined by the possession of material goods; the centrality of goods in a person's life; and the belief that goods lead to happiness (Richins, 2004).

Materialism has been strongly correlated with the tendency to buy impulsively, with several studies finding a positive relationship between both constructs (e.g., Lins et al., 2015; Podoshen & Andrzejewski, 2012; Santini et al., 2018). This relationship represents a window of opportunity for companies, which, adjusting their marketing strategy, will be able to

allude to more materialistic people to buy more on impulse (Badgaiyan & Verma, 2014). Considering the aforementioned, it is expected that there will be a positive correlation between the two constructs, and that the more materialistic the person is, the greater their tendency to buy books on impulse.

H5. Consumer's materialism is a predictor of the tendency to buy books impulsively.

7. Extended self

“The people, and things, we love have a strong influence on our sense of who we are, on our self” (Ahuvia, 2005, p.171). According to Belk (2010), the fact that an individual chooses to acquire specific material goods aids him in defining his lifestyle, in his inclusion in social groups, and in the construction of his perceived personality. This is because, according to the same author, the meaning of possession is a social construction, which makes the material goods acquired central to the identity of individuals (Belk, 2010).

It is understood that the contemporary individual is considered as a modern, decentralized, and uncertain self - an extended self (Belk, 2010). This concept is constituted not only by physical characteristics and personality traits (the core self) but also by several other levels defined by the experiences, preferences, and possessions of individuals (Belk, 2010). “We are what we have” is, according to Belk (1988, p.139), one of the most basic assumptions and, even so, one of the most powerful in the area of consumer behavior. The idea sustained in this conjecture is that individuals perceive their acquisitions as part of themselves, eventually experiencing a loss or diminution of the self if those same goods were lost or even stolen (Belk, 1988, 2010; Heersmink, 2020). That way, this notion states that the self comprehends not only what is seen as 'me', but also what is seen as 'mine' (Belk, 1988).

Considering the vast number of objects and acts of purchase that make up our lives, it is assumed that a selection of these plays a special role in the perception of consumers' self (Ahuvia, 2005). The task of choosing and buying a book has been described as a complex activity since there are many options that are not comparable with each other (Leemans & Stokmans, 1992). However, whichever book is chosen, it represents an experience, associated with various utilitarian, hedonic, and symbolic motivations (Astous et al., 2006). Consumers appear to be more willing to developing emotional connections with some

objects than others, especially ones that represent fields where the person bases his self-worth (Villanova, 2018), and books seem to be a great example of this.

Thus, the purchase of a book is an involving process, since these objects may serve to define the identity of individuals (Leemans, 1988), and contribute largely to the notion of the extended self of the consumer. It is assumed that individuals who score higher in this construct are more likely to buy impulsively.

H6. Consumer's extended self is a predictor of the tendency to buy books impulsively.

Method

1. Participants

347 Portuguese participated in this study, with ages ranged from 18 to 73 years ($M = 36.89$; $DP = 15.56$). A major proportion of the sample ($n = 285$; 82.1%) consisted of women, while only 17.9% of participants ($n = 62$) identified as male. Regarding educational level, 47.8% of respondents had a bachelor's degree, while 31.1% had an even higher degree, and 20.2% hold lower degrees. A demographic profile of survey participants is summarized in Table 1.

Table 1

Demographic Profile of Participants

Baseline characteristics	Frequency	Per Cent
Gender		
Male	62	17.9
Female	285	82.1
Age		
20 or below	42	12.1
21-30	118	34.0
31-40	46	13.3
41-50	56	16.1
51-60	55	15.9
Over 60	30	8.6
Professional Situation		
Student	99	28.6
Working Student	24	8.4
Worker	192	55.3
Unemployed	11	3.2
Retired	14	4
Other	2	0.6
Educational level		
9th year or lower	6	1.8

12th year (secundário)	64	18.4
Bachelor's Degree	166	47.8
Master's Degree	99	28.5
Doctorate's Degree	9	28.5
Other	3	0.9
Family income (in euros)		
500 or below	8	2.3
501-1000	57	16.4
1001-1500	102	29.4
1501-2000	68	19.6
2001-2500	54	15.6
Over 2500	58	16.7

2. Instrument

The questionnaire applied consisted of questions related to book-buying behavior, sociodemographic variables, and instruments. The items used in the questionnaire were retrieved from previous literature when the scales used were proven valid and reliable. These scales were modified to fit the present study and are listed individually below. All constructs were measured using a seven-point Likert scale, with responses ranging from (1) totally disagree to (7) totally agree.

In order to assess the internal consistency of each dimension, Cronbach's alpha scores were calculated. The reliability of the research instrument was assured since Cronbach's alpha values for all dimensions were over 0.7, suggesting that the items have an adequately high degree of internal consistency (Taber, 2018).

2.1. Impulse Buying Tendency of Books (IBT-Books)

To measure Impulse Buying Tendency of books it was used an adapted version of the 9-item scale by Rook and Fisher (1995) (e.g., *I often buy books spontaneously*; *"Just do it" describes the way I buy books*; *I often buy books without thinking*; $\alpha = .88$).

2.2. Impulse Buying Tendency (IBT)

Impulse buying tendency was measured through the 9-item scale previously mentioned (Rook & Fisher, 1995) (e.g., *I often buy things spontaneously; "Just do it" describes the way I buy things; I often buy things without thinking; $\alpha = .84$*).

2.3. Interpersonal Influence

Consumer susceptibility to interpersonal influence was measured through a 12-item two-dimensional scale (Bearden et al., 1989). Normative influence was accessed using 4 items (e.g. *If I want to be like someone, I often try to buy the same brands that they buy; It is important that others like the products and brands I buy; $\alpha = .89$*) and informational influence was measured using 8 items (e.g. *I often consult other people to help choose the best alternative available from a product class; To make sure I buy the right product or brand, I often observe what others are buying and using; $\alpha = .78$*).

2.4. Need for cognition (NFC)

To measure NFC we used the NCS-6 scale (Coelho et al., 2018), consisting of 6 items withdrawn from NCS-18 (Cacioppo et al., 1984) (e.g., *I would prefer complex to simple problems; I like to have the responsibility of handling a situation that requires a lot of thinking; Thinking is not my idea of fun; $\alpha = .79$*).

2.5. Materialism

Materialism was accessed using the 9-item version of Material Values Scale (MVS) (Richins & Dawson, 1992), developed by Richins (2004). This scale includes items to evaluate all three domains of the construct: success, centrality and happiness (e.g., *I admire people who own expensive homes, cars, and clothes; I like a lot of luxury in my life; I'd be happier if I could afford to buy more things; $\alpha = .87$*).

2.6. Extended self

Integration of books into the “extended self” was measured through Sivadas and Machleit (1994) scale, drawn from Belk’s (1988) view of extended self. The scale comprised 6 items (e.g., *My books help achieve the identity I want to have; My books help narrow the gap between what I am and what I try to be; My books are central to my identity; $\alpha = .88$*).

3. Procedure

This study is a causal research with a quantitative approach. This research was conducted in Portugal and data was collected from a non-probability snowball sampling between July 2019 and December 2019. The sample was collected via an online survey (see Appendix 1) developed on the Survey Monkey® platform, which was made available via email and on the social network Facebook. Participants previously agreed to an informed consent that guaranteed anonymity and confidentiality of their answers. This also clarified the voluntary participation in this study. At the end of the survey, participants found the investigator's email address and acknowledgment for participating.

Results

1. Book-buying behavior

Respondents were asked about their book-buying behavior, with 45.8% of participants saying that they frequently bought books. A large proportion of the sample (95.7%) said that they preferred physical copies over e-books. The most purchased genre of books was romance (79.3%), technical (41.2%), thriller (40.6%), poetry (25.1%), and science fiction (25.1%). Regarding the context where respondents usually buy their books, the most mentioned place was physical bookstores (92.5%), followed by book fairs (62.8%) and online websites (50.1%).

In relation to the reasons for purchasing this type of article, the participants referred primarily to their interest in a specific author or topic (90.5%), recommendations from friends and/or family (56.8%), and discounts or promotions (46.1%). It is noteworthy to mention that 34.9% of participants mentioned that recommendations on specialized book reviews websites were also a factor to consider when purchasing these goods.

2. Correlations between variables

To explore the relations between the variables in this investigation, an analysis of Pearson's r correlations was performed (see Table 2). IBT-Books had a moderate positive correlation (Schober et al., 2018) with impulse buying tendency, $r = 0.49$, $p < .001$. Also, IBT-Books had significant yet slightly weak positive correlations with materialism, $r = 0.13$, $p < .050$, and extended self, $r = 0.22$, $p < .001$.

IBT presented positive correlations with all variables except need for cognition, which can be observed in depth in Table 2. IBT had a slightly weaker correlation with extended self, $r = 0.14$, $p < .001$, than IBT-Books.

Materialism also correlated positively to IBT, $r = 0.4$, $p < .001$, informational influence, $r = 0.43$, $p < .001$, and normative influence, $r = 0.57$, $p < .001$. Finally, need for cognition only had a significant correlation with extended self, $r = 0.30$, $p < .001$.

Table 2*Correlations Between Variables*

Correlations								
	M (SD)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. IBT-Books	3.17 (1.17)	1						
2. IBT	2.60 (1.03)	.49**	1					
3. Informational influence	3.25 (1.30)	-.00	.16**	1				
4. Normative influence	1.81 (0.89)	.04	.23**	.53**	1			
5. Need for cognition	4.68 (0.72)	.10	.05	.01	-.09	1		
6. Materialism	2.38 (1.0)	.13*	.40**	.43**	.57**	.06	1	
7. Extended self	4.25 (1.52)	.22**	.14**	.07	.05	.30**	.10	1

**: $p < .01$; *: $p < .05$

3. Multiple linear regression analysis

Multiple linear regression analysis was employed to test hypothesis H₁, H₂, H₃, H₄, H₅, and H₆. The data was checked for assumptions of multiple linear regression, such as normality, multicollinearity and homoscedasticity. The technique was helpful to identify, based on the confirmatory method (*Enter*), the main predictors of impulse buying of books.

The ANOVA results confirm the significance of the regression model tested with the set of predictors explaining about 27% of the variance of buying books impulsively, $R^2_{Adj} = .27$, $F(6, 340) = 21.79$, $p < .001$. Significant predictors in the full model included IBT, $B = 0.58$, $\beta = 0.51$, $SE = 0.58$, $CI\ 95\% = 0.47;0.69$; $p < .001$, and extended self, $B = 0.11$, $\beta = 0.14$, $SE = 0.04$, $CI\ 95\% = 0.04;0.18$; $p < .050$ (see Table 3). Informational influence, $p = .227$, normative influence, $p = .845$, need for cognition, $p = .474$, and materialism, $p = .388$, were found to be non-significant predictors. Table 3 indicates the full multiple linear regression model. The results of this study confirm H₁ and H₆. H₂, H₃, H₄, and H₅ were refuted. Consequently, only impulse buying tendency and extended self were found to be predictors of the tendency to buy books impulsively.

Table 3.*Multiple Linear Regression Analysis (Enter method)*

	Coefficients						
	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients			95% CI	
	<i>B</i>	Std. Error	β	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	Lower bound	Upper bound
(Constant)	1.30	.40		3.26	.001	.52	2.09
IBT-Books	.58	.06	.51	10.02	.000	.47	.69
IBT	-.06	.05	-.07	-1.21	.227	-.16	.04
Normative influence	-.02	.08	-.01	-.20	.845	-.18	.14
Need for cognition	.06	.08	.04	.72	.474	-.10	.21
Materialism	-.06	.07	-.05	-.87	.388	-.20	.08
Extended self	.11	.04	.14	2.92	.004	.04	.18

Discussion and Conclusion

Literature suggests that in addition to external stimuli and product characteristics, there are several characteristics of the consumer himself that influence purchasing behavior. Marketers and retailers should understand these characteristics and the different types of buying behaviors, especially impulse buying, which is revealed to be increasingly meaningful, given its possible impact on sales and profits in the book industry.

In relation to book-buying habits, a significant part of consumers noted that recommendations from family, friends, and closed ones or from online reviews were an important factor to consider in the moment of purchase. Even though informational influence wasn't proven to be a significant predictor of the tendency to impulsively buy books, this descriptive result can still be linked as a meaningful motivation to buy books. Furthermore, most consumers still prefer to buy physical copies of books on a physical store, which can be linked to more traditional practices of consumption regarding this object, as was seen before by Neves (2011) and Leitão et. al (2018). These results together can be an advantage for retailers, since the more time spent by shoppers in a site, the greater the chance to buy on impulse (Muruganantham & Bhakat, 2013), and since susceptibility to informational influence is linked to impulse buying through the role of browsing (Zhang et al., 2018). Additionally, it is known that informational influence, particularly when translated in recommendations from other consumers, had an important role in the book-buying process (Chen, 2008).

There were also several other interesting results regarding correlations between variables. It was observed that materialism was positively correlated to both the tendency to impulsively buy books and the tendency to buy impulsively on general. The link between materialism and impulse buying has been strongly recognized by several studies (e.g., Lins et al., 2015; Luo, 2005; Podoshen & Andrzejewski, 2012; Santini et al., 2018). Given that this construct is closely linked to the extended self, it would be interesting to observe its mediating effect in the relation between the extended self and IBT-books.

Materialism was also positively correlated to both dimensions of susceptibility to interpersonal influence (informational and normative). This could be explained in a way by the findings of Santini et al. (2018), that concluded that there is an influence of the perceived

norms of friends and susceptibility, particularly to advertising, on the materialistic consumption, especially in youth.

Another noteworthy result was the fact that normative influence was not found to be a significant predictor in this model, showing stronger correlations with the general impulse buying tendency than with impulse buying tendency of books. Bearing in mind that this construct has been strongly associated with impulse buying (eg., Aquino et al., 2020; Lin & Chen, 2012; Luo, 2005), an explanation for this lack of effect may be the fact that this construct has been evaluated in a specific context, that is, with the object of books. As Lins (2020) had already observed, when specifying a product, the better the possibility of identifying determinant variables in the impulse buying behavior of said product, than when evaluating a general tendency to buy impulsively. It seems that, in the case of books, they do not prompt susceptibility to interpersonal influence, that is, they do not exert influence in the need of improving the personal image considering the expectations of others.

There was found no association between need for cognition and the tendency to buy books on impulse, which is in line with several results that state that impulse buying is characterized by being a more emotional and less rational act (Xiao & Nicholson, 2012). This buying decision is considered feeling-based, accompanied by emotions and less influenced by information processing. Thus, impulsive consumers use simple cognitive assessments at the time of purchase, even if it is a specific object such as books, and even if this object is associated with a higher level of intelligence or need for cognition.

This study main aim was to understand which consumer characteristics are significant predictors of the tendency to impulsively buy books. This way, consumers' impulsive buying tendency, susceptibility to interpersonal influence, need for cognition, materialism, and extended self were considered as dependent variables on a multiple linear regression analysis. The results of this analysis revealed that the model proposed in this study is significant and explains 27% of the variance in the tendency to impulsively buy books. The tendency to generally buy impulsively and the extended self were found to be the only significant predictors in this model.

Consumers scoring high on the general tendency to buy on impulse are more likely to buy impulsively books. This result is corroborated by several studies that imply that the consumer's impulsiveness is related positively to impulse buying (e.g., Santini et. al, 2018; Xiao & Nicholson, 2012). The concept of impulsiveness is complex and can be analyzed through different perspectives. Nevertheless, it is a behavior that is associated with emotional attachment to the product (Bratko et al., 2013), which explains the two significant

predictors of the model in this study. With this study we understand that the stronger the consumer's impulsiveness and emotional connection to an object, the greater the likelihood of buying that object on impulse.

This research has some limitations. The quality of the sample stands out, as it does not fully represent the Portuguese population, since it is mainly made up of females, thus showing a bias. Another limitation is the strength of the correlations as they are not considered very strong (Schober, et al., 2018). This restriction is justified by the fact that this is an exploratory study, so obtaining significant correlations is in itself a noteworthy result.

As it known, the whole environment and context impact consumer behavior, and given the current state we live in, with the Covid-19 pandemic, it is of extreme importance to study its psychological impact on buying behaviors. This type of event triggers panic, fear, and/or anxiety, which in turn can induce, for example, panic buying or hoarding (Lins & Aquino, 2020).

On the other side, this pandemic has also affected the channel consumers choose to buy books. While there has been a considerable increase in reading activity, with 33% of people worldwide reading more books while at home (FEP, 2020), the book publishing industry has suffered strong consequences. In Portugal, at the peak of this crisis, book sales were down 80% (FEP, 2020). Although the revenues of the publishing industry have declined considerably, with some publishing houses closing, the purchase of books online or in e-book format has increased, with demand increasing up to 150%, as is the case of Fnac (Marcela, 2020). This way, as a suggestion for future studies, the inclusion of these factors in an investigation is recommended, to comprehend how this public health crisis affected the purchase of books. Also, this could help understand how this market will evolve considering this high demand for the online format that was not previously seen.

Overall, this investigation provides a foundation for understanding Portuguese consumer's book-buying habits and impulse buying predictors, since there is not much literature on impulse buying of specific objects, especially in Portugal. The findings deliver interesting advantages to product management, marketing and social and consumer psychology professionals, who can use and adapt them as several tools to captivate the consumers' interest.

Since the tendency to buy impulsively and the extended self were found to predict the tendency to buy books on impulse, this impulsiveness and the emotional connection with books can be encouraged through advertising, for example. Additionally, and given the

unique situation that is lived nowadays with the global Covid-19 pandemic, it is pointed the need to invest in online channels in Portugal, assuming there is a tendency in consumers searching and preferring online alternatives to the traditional practices of book-buying. Nonetheless, a balanced practice of consumption must be promoted, tailored to the consumers' needs and income, through conscious and ethical marketing campaigns.

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Appendix

Appendix A – Online Survey

Appendix A

Online Survey

Consentimento informado

Introdução e contexto

Convido-o a participar no estudo “Compra por impulso de Livros”, que está a ser realizado no âmbito da minha dissertação de mestrado em Psicologia, pela Faculdade de Psicologia e de Ciências da Educação da Universidade do Porto (FPCEUP).

Objetivos do estudo e procedimentos

O objetivo deste estudo é investigar os comportamentos e hábitos dos Portugueses em relação ao consumo de livros. Serão pedidos alguns dados pessoais, como idade, género, informações relativamente a escolaridade, situação profissional, rendimento aproximado do agregado familiar. Em nenhum momento será pedido o seu nome, e-mail, ou outro dado que o possa identificar pessoalmente, garantindo o seu anonimato. O preenchimento do questionário demorará apenas alguns minutos. Não existem respostas boas ou más, nem respostas certas ou erradas. Só interessa a sua opinião pessoal.

Elegibilidade

Poderá participar neste estudo qualquer indivíduo Português.

Riscos e benefícios

Não há riscos previsíveis associados à sua participação neste estudo. Embora a sua colaboração não o beneficie pessoalmente, espero que os resultados ajudem a conhecer melhor o modo como as pessoas pensam sobre os assuntos abordados no questionário. Considero também que a participação neste estudo será interessante e informativa e/ou lhe vai permitir refletir sobre questões importantes.

Participação voluntária

A participação neste estudo é totalmente voluntária. É livre de recusar participar ou de parar de responder a qualquer momento (para isso, basta fechar o *browser*).

Confidencialidade e anonimato

As suas respostas são totalmente anónimas e confidenciais. Os dados recolhidos não serão analisados individualmente, mas de forma agregada, ou seja, no conjunto das respostas dadas por todas as pessoas que respondem ao estudo.

Responsável pelo tratamento de dados e encarregado pela proteção dos dados

A mestranda Mariana Martins, sob orientação do Professor Doutor Samuel Lins, será a responsável pelo tratamento e proteção dos dados recolhidos neste questionário, comprometendo-se a respeitar e a salvaguardar a privacidade e confidencialidade das suas

respostas; assegurar a proteção dos seus dados pessoais; respeitar as normas e orientações nacionais e europeias aplicáveis ao seu tratamento e armazenamento.

Finalidade do tratamento de dados e disseminação dos resultados

A recolha e tratamento de dados é, exclusivamente, para fins de investigação científica. Os resultados finais do estudo poderão ser publicados em revistas científicas e jornais académicos ou apresentados em seminários, conferências, aulas ou outras atividades académicas.

Contacto

Para esclarecer qualquer questão acerca deste estudo poderá contactar a responsável, Mariana Martins, através do email: up201403433@fpce.up.pt.

Declaro que tenho 18 anos ou mais; li e compreendi as informações acima e aceito participar de livre vontade neste estudo.

Sim	<input type="checkbox"/>
Não	<input type="checkbox"/>

Autorizo a recolha, tratamento e armazenamento dos dados pessoais acima identificados para o fim a que se destinam - investigação científica.

Sim	<input type="checkbox"/>
Não	<input type="checkbox"/>

Estou de acordo com o modo de disseminação dos resultados.

Sim	<input type="checkbox"/>
Não	<input type="checkbox"/>

Dados iniciais

1. Costuma comprar livros? Indique o grau que melhor se adequa à sua situação.

1	2	3	4	5
Nunca	Não tendo a comprar	Por vezes compro	Tendo a comprar	Compro frequentemente

2. Indique a frequência aproximada com que compra livros.

Nunca	
Uma a duas vezes por ano	
Uma a duas vezes por mês	
Uma a duas vezes por semana	
Outra. Qual?	

3. Que tipo de livros costuma comprar?

Romance	
Ficção Científica	
Poesia	
Livros técnicos	
Livros infantis	
Thriller ou Suspense	
Bandas desenhadas	
Livros de autoajuda	
Outro. Qual?	

4. Qual o formato de livro que prefere?

Exemplar físico	
E-book	
Outro. Qual?	

5. Em que contexto(s) costuma comprar livros?

Sites online (Book Depository, Amazon, etc)	
Feiras do Livro	
Livrarias Físicas (Fnac, Bertrand, etc)	
Supermercados (Continente, Pingo Doce, etc)	
Alfarrabistas	
Aeroportos	
Outro. Qual?	

6. Quais os motivos que o levam a comprar livros?

Popularidade (por exemplo, estar numa lista de <i>best sellers</i>)	
Recomendações de familiares/amigos	
Recomendações em sites especializados (por exemplo, Goodreads)	
Desconto ou promoções	
Oferecer a outras pessoas	
Obrigatoriedade (por exemplo, leitura obrigatória para uma disciplina/unidade curricular)	
Outro. Qual?	

1. Gostaria de conhecer melhor a sua **relação com os seus livros**.

Perante as afirmações que se seguem indique, o mais sinceramente possível, o nível que cada um o/a descreve (sendo 1 “**Discordo Totalmente**” e 7 “**Concordo Totalmente**”).

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Frequentemente compro livros espontaneamente.							
“Simplesmente compro” descreve a maneira como compro livros.							
Costumo comprar livros sem pensar.							
“Eu vejo, eu compro” descreve a maneira como compro livros.							
“Compro agora, penso sobre isto mais tarde” descreve a maneira como compro livros.							
Às vezes fico com vontade de comprar livros no impulso do momento.							
Compro livros consoante me sinto no momento.							
Planeio cuidadosamente a maioria das minhas compras de livros.							
Às vezes sou distraído com os livros que compro.							

2. Peço que responda às seguintes questões com a máxima **sinceridade** possível, imaginando-se nas seguintes situações. Indique o grau em que concorda ou discorda de cada uma delas, selecionando um dos **números** de acordo com a escala de resposta (sendo 1 “**Discordo Totalmente**” e 7 “**Concordo Totalmente**”).

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Os meus livros ajudam-me a atingir a identidade que quero ter.							
Os meus livros ajudam-me a diminuir o intervalo entre quem sou e quem tento ser.							
Os meus livros são centrais para a minha identidade.							
Os meus livros são parte de quem sou.							

Se os meus livros fossem roubados, sentir-me-ia como se a minha identidade tivesse sido retirada de mim.							
Eu adquiero alguma da minha identidade através dos meus livros.							

3. Perante as afirmações que se seguem indique, o mais sinceramente possível, o nível que cada um o/a descreve (sendo que **1** é “**Discordo Totalmente**” e **7** “**Concordo Totalmente**”).

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Os meus amigos frequentemente procuram as minhas sugestões sobre livros.							
Às vezes influencio o tipo de livros que os meus amigos compram.							
Os meus amigos procuram-me mais vezes para obterem informações sobre livros do que eu a eles.							
Sinto que sou geralmente tido pelos meus amigos como uma boa fonte de conselhos sobre livros.							
Consigo pensar em pelo menos duas pessoas com quem eu falei sobre livros nos últimos seis meses.							
Frequentemente procuro os conselhos dos meus amigos em relação aos livros que tenciono comprar.							
Passo muito tempo a falar com os meus amigos sobre livros.							
Os meus amigos geralmente dão-me bons conselhos sobre quais livros comprar.							

4. Leia cada afirmação cuidadosamente e indique o grau em que concorda ou discorda de cada uma delas, seleccionando um dos **números** de acordo com a escala de resposta (sendo **1** “**Discordo Totalmente**” e **7** “**Concordo Totalmente**”).

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Prefiro os problemas complexos aos problemas simples.							
Gosto de ter de lidar com situações que requerem muito pensar.							
Pensar sobre as coisas não é a minha ideia de diversão.							

Prefiro fazer algo que exija pensar pouco do que algo que vai, com certeza, desafiar as minhas capacidades pensantes.							
Gosto realmente de tarefas que envolvam a descoberta de novas soluções para os problemas.							
Prefiro uma tarefa importante, intelectual e difícil, do que outra, que até é importante, mas não exige muito pensar.							

5. Gostaria de conhecer melhor os seus **hábitos de consumo**.

Peço resposta às seguintes questões com a máxima sinceridade possível, indicando o grau em que concorda ou discorda de cada uma delas, selecionando um dos **números** de acordo com a escala de resposta (sendo **1 “Discordo Totalmente”** e **7 “Concordo Totalmente”**)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Frequentemente consulto outras pessoas para ajudar a escolher a melhor alternativa disponível a partir de uma classe de produtos.							
Se eu quiser ser como alguém, muitas vezes tento comprar as mesmas marcas que os outros compram.							
É importante para mim que os outros gostem dos produtos e das marcas que eu compro.							
Para ter a certeza que estou a comprar o produto ou a marca certa, muitas vezes observo o que os outros estão a comprar e a usar.							
Raramente compro os novos estilos de moda até que tenha a certeza que os meus amigos os aprovem.							
Muitas vezes identifico-me com outras pessoas ao comprar os mesmos produtos e marcas.							
Se eu tenho pouca experiência com um produto, muitas vezes pergunto aos meus amigos o que acham dele.							
Ao comprar produtos, geralmente compro as marcas que acho que os outros vão aprovar.							
Gosto de saber que marcas e produtos causam boas impressões nos outros.							
Recolho frequentemente informações de amigos ou familiares sobre um produto antes de o comprar.							

Se as outras pessoas podem ver-me a usar um produto, muitas vezes compro a marca que os outros esperam que eu compre.							
Alcanço um sentido de pertença quando compro os mesmos produtos e marcas que os outros.							

6. Perante as afirmações que se seguem indique, o mais sinceramente possível, o nível que cada um o/a descreve (sendo que 1 é “Discordo Totalmente” e 7 “Concordo Totalmente”).

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Admiro pessoas que possuem casas, carros e roupas caras.							
Gosto de gastar dinheiro com coisas caras.							
A minha vida seria melhor se eu tivesse muitas coisas que não tenho.							
Comprar coisas dá-me muito prazer.							
Seria mais feliz se pudesse comprar mais coisas.							
Gosto de ter coisas que impressionem as pessoas.							
Gosto de muito luxo na minha vida.							
Incomoda-me quando não posso comprar tudo o que quero.							
Gastar muito dinheiro está entre as coisas mais importantes da minha vida.							

7. Perante as afirmações que se seguem indique, o mais sinceramente possível, o nível que cada um o/a descreve (sendo que 1 é “Discordo Totalmente” e 7 “Concordo Totalmente”).

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Frequentemente compro coisas espontaneamente.							

“Simplesmente compro” descreve a maneira como compro as coisas.							
Costumo comprar as coisas sem pensar.							
“Eu vejo, eu compro” descreve a maneira como compro as coisas.							
“Compro agora, penso sobre isto mais tarde” descreve a maneira como compro as coisas.							
Às vezes fico com vontade de comprar as coisas no impulso do momento.							
Compro as coisas consoante me sinto no momento							
Planeio cuidadosamente a maioria das minhas compras							
Às vezes sou distraído com o que compro							

Dados Sociodemográficos

1. Género

Feminino	
Masculino	
Outro. Qual?	

2. Idade

3. Nacionalidade

4. Situação profissional

Estudante do Ensino Secundário	
Estudante do Ensino Superior	

Trabalhador(a)-Estudante	
Trabalhador(a)	
Desempregado(a)	
Outro. Qual?	

5. Escolaridade

1º ciclo (4º ano)	
2ª ciclo (6º ano)	
3º ciclo (9º ano)	
Licenciatura	
Mestrado	
Doutoramento	
Outro. Qual?	

6. Escolaridade dos pais (escolha o grau mais alto que um dos pais tenha, p.ex, se um tiver o 9º ano e outro a licenciatura, seleccione licenciatura)

1º ciclo (4º ano)	
2ª ciclo (6º ano)	
3º ciclo (9º ano)	
Licenciatura	
Mestrado	
Doutoramento	
Outro. Qual?	

7. Em que nível se localiza o rendimento do seu agregado familiar por mês? Escolha aquele que melhor se adequa à sua situação (vive sozinho, com os pais, com o/a companheiro/a, etc)

Até 500€	
501-1000€	
1000-1500€	
1501-2000€	
2001-2500€	
Mais de 2500€	

8. Se desejar escrever algum comentário (impressões, críticas, depoimentos, sugestões, etc), utilize este espaço:

Se estiver interessado em conhecer as conclusões deste estudo, ou se tiver qualquer dúvida, envie um e-mail para up201403433@fpce.up.pt e responder-lhe-ei o mais rapidamente possível.

Mais uma vez, obrigado pela sua valiosa colaboração!