

# International Journal for Innovation Education and Research

ONLINE ISSN: 2411-2933 PRINT - ISSN: 2411-3123

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This article focuses on impulsive buying experience. It aims at exploring whether the explanatory variables of this type of purchase, which are used in the marketing literature in the West, may account for the impulsive buying behavior in the Algerian cultural context. An extensive literature review allowed clarifying the basic concepts of this research; it led, firstly, to determine the variables that stimulate the consumer emotions and arouse pure impulse purchase and its consequences, and secondly, to show its importance to producers and distributors. The empirical study was conducted on 590 buyers from the Wilaya (Province) of Tlemcen (Algeria). The results of the data analysis, using the software R, indicate that the variables used in this study have a better predictive power of achieving the favorable experience of impulse buying.

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**Published Date:** 9/30/2018

**Page:**55-64

**Vol 6 No 09 2018**

**DOI:** <https://doi.org/10.31686/ijier.Vol6.Iss9.1152>

# Consumption Experience of Impulse Buying in Algeria

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## Abstract

*This article focuses on impulsive buying experience. It aims at exploring whether the explanatory variables of this type of purchase, which are used in the marketing literature in the West, may account for the impulsive buying behavior in the Algerian cultural context. An extensive literature review allowed clarifying the basic concepts of this research; it led, firstly, to determine the variables that stimulate the consumer emotions and arouse pure impulse purchase and its consequences, and secondly, to show its importance to producers and distributors. The empirical study was conducted on 590 buyers from the Wilaya (Province) of Tlemcen (Algeria). The results of the data analysis, using the software R, indicate that the variables used in this study have a better predictive power of achieving the favorable experience of impulse buying.*

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## Introduction

Since the late 1970s, and especially starting from the year 1990, consumer behavior has evolved significantly towards a strong and real reassessment of the affective and emotional dimension in the act of purchase (Filser, 1996). The analysis of the purchasing decision process must no longer consider the consumer as a rational machine to process signals (price, design, quality, availability, etc) in order to maximize its utility, but rather as "a person seeking experiences that can provide social connections and hedonic rewards" (Holbrook, 1999). Nowadays, the consumer is not only considered as a rational human being but as an emotionally empowered individual who tries to make sense of his consumption (Giraud, 2000; Bessouh et al, 2015). He is always looking for the unexpected; he would like to be surprised by the offers proposed by companies. Executives have understood the issue as they try to play more and more on these dimensions. Their principles are based on transforming the act of purchase into experience. It is important to know that it is the affective dimension that explains why the consumer is sensitive to all that is unexpected (Piron, 1991; Akram et al, 2018). Everyone agrees on the fact that the need to make economic rationality coexist with emotional irrationality appears more and more in the consumer's behavior. Indeed, in his act of purchase, the individual is guided by a rational economic calculation, through which the technical characteristics of the offer and its price are evaluated and compared, but also through a sensitivity of his own that unconsciously teleguides him towards offers involving an emotional dimension. Many

studies have repeatedly demonstrated the influence of the affect on attitude and behavior. Moreover, recent years have highlighted and emphasized the predominant role of emotion which is seen as "*a facilitator of decision-making, on the one hand, and an essential regulator of behavior, on the other*" (Pillet, 1969; Mggoldrick, 1999). Thus, many researchers have acknowledged that emotion is one of the most important factors that can influence the consumer's responses to marketing stimuli. In a more global manner, one can assert that the experiential paradigm makes it possible to explain behaviors that would appear irrational in a cognitive approach. This naturally led us to focus on impulse buying as part of an experiential approach (Rook, 1987).

### **1. The impulse buying experience - Current state of research**

According to the distinction suggested by H. Stern (1962), the impulsive buying experience refers to emotional impulse purchasing, and/or to pure impulse buying. According to D. Rook (1987), who is considered as the main founder of this research stream, impulse buying is experienced by the consumer as an often striking emotional and cognitive experience. Impulses come in special circumstances, depending on whether the consumer is in a bad mood or in a good mood, whether he has money or not, whether the products are on sale or not, or whether he comes alone to the store or accompanied (Leblanc Maridor, 1989; Beatty and Ferrell, 1998; Youn and Faber, 2000). Impulse buying is closely related to experiential consumption which is generally accompanied by emotional responses. Therefore, the main objective of studying impulse buying as part of the impulse buying experience is to understand the sequence of affective, cognitive and sensory reactions that lead to impulse buying. Thus, not taking into account the emotional experience that tinges the impulsive experience is, however, a major limitation in understanding impulsive behavior through the cognitive approach. At this level of analysis, impulse purchasing can be defined by affective components, and the experience of impulse purchasing may be conceived as part of decisions that are influenced by conscious subjective aspect of feeling or emotion.

### **2. Definition of the impulse buying experience**

Specifically, only the affective approach seems to have an explanatory scope of impulsive buying. Rook (1987) was the first to give an impulsive purchasing definition that is mainly based on impulse. For this same author, "*There is impulse when the consumer feels an irresistible desire to buy something immediately. This impulse is quite complex at the hedonic level and can give rise to emotional conflicts. In addition, it often takes place with a diminished consideration of the consequences*".

O'Guinn and Faber (1989) define impulse buying as "*The inability to master an irresistible urge to buy. The latter permeates their lives and the results are significantly important; sometimes it has serious consequences*" (p. 147).

- For Rook and Gardner (1993), impulse buying occurs either to prolong a happy mood, or to comfort a person in a bad mood.

According to Piron F. (1993), impulse purchase is generally accompanied by strong emotional and/or cognitive reactions. It responds to a sudden and strong desire to buy something.

- Moreover, Leblanc-Maridor (1989) defines impulse buying as a purchase made by an individual when he is happier or more depressed than usual.
- According to Puri (1996), emotional impulse buying is "A sudden event in which the purchase decision is made immediately, with no prior intention to buy". For him, impulse purchase occurs when the consumer feels a strong desire to buy; this action tends to be spontaneous and without much thought. In addition, Puri suggests that "Impulse" is the result of choosing an option that offers immediate hedonic benefits but serious long-term consequences.
- For Haussman (2000), impulsive purchase is strongly linked to emotions experienced at the point-of-sale. Similarly for Giraud (2002) who indicates that impulse buying is an eminently emotional behavior. The purchase is made in response to an impulse. Giraud says that the store's environment spurs the consumer to make an impulse purchase.

### **3. Purchase impulses and impulsive buying at the point-of-sale**

A purchase impulse is defined as "A sudden and powerful desire to buy something immediately" (Rook, 1987). Impulse buying is a purchase made in response to such an impulse. A consumer plagued by the purchase impulse is overwhelmed by a desire so powerful that it tends to dominate his judgmental abilities and annihilate his capacities to resist. Products bought impulsively are often superfluous but the desire felt by the consumer is such that he is willing to pay, sometimes a high price, to get them. Impulse purchases are lucrative and therefore financially attractive for producers and distributors. Therefore, the concept of impulsive behavior in marketing and psychology (Hoch and Loewenstein, 1991) allows highlighting the fact that an impulse occurs when the consumer projects himself into a buying and consuming experience and then anticipates a sufficiently strong emotional benefit so that the idea of not yielding to one's desire, and also of not having access to that gratification, is frustrating.

Impulse purchases may therefore be related to the characteristics of the buyers, i.e. level of impulsiveness, personal control, etc. (Rook and Hoch, 1985; Youn, 2000), of the product, i.e. low price, hedonic potential, etc. (McGoldrick, 1999; Youn and Faber, 2000), of the point-of-sale atmosphere (Spies et al., 1997). Impulse purchases may also be due to situational factors, such as mood, time pressure, crowd, etc. (Betty and Ferrel, 1998; Lichtlé and Plichon, 20015). Resisting a buying impulse requires a high level of personal control. It will be all the more difficult to resist an impulse of purchase that this impulse is powerful or that the consumer feels several successive impulses for different products when he is at the point-of-sale. Impulse is a driving force or emotion that triggers the emotional impulse buying. Therefore, the following strategic question is worth examining in this article: *How can signs, clues or icons stimulate purchase impulses?*

Stone's research (1954) is one of the main and founding references in this field. This author identified four purchasing orientations that constitute attributes that he himself favors; these are the search for low prices, different facets and practicality, time saving, and a purchase seen as a constraint that one seeks to avoid (the apathetic buyer). Tauber (1972) initiated this axis of research by analyzing the comments of thirty men and women about their shopping activity. It is widely accepted that emerging motivations are of social nature (encounters, co-presence, meeting people and being in public, sharing a common interest, etc.),

and/or of personal nature (breaking out of the daily routine, self-gratification, etc.). These are some of the reasons for frequenting a shopping place (see table1).

**Table1 : Atmospheric variables (Turley & Milliman 2000)**

External variables	General interior variables	Layout and design variables	Point of purchase and decoration variables	Human variables
Exterior signs	Flooring and carpeting	Space design and allocation	Point-of-purchase displays	Employee characteristics
Entrances	Color schemes	Placement of merchandise	Signs and cards	Employer uniforms
Exterior display windows	Lighting	Grouping of merchandise	Wall decorations	crowding
Height of building	Music	Work station placement	Degrees and certificates	Customer characteristics
Size of building	P.A. usage	Placement of equipment	Pictures	privacy
Color of building	Scents	Placement of cash registers	Artwork	
Surrounding stores	Tabacco smoke	Waiting areas	Product displays	
Lawns and gardens	Width of aisles	Waiting rooms	Usage instructions	
Address and location	Wall composition	Departement locations	Price displays	
Architectural style	Paint and wallpapaer	Traffic flow	Teletext	
Surounding areas	Ceiling composition	Racks and cases		
Parking availability	Merchandise	Waiting cues		
Congestion and traffic	Temperature	Furniture		
Exterior walls	cleanliness	Dead areas		

## 4. Empirical analysis

Referring to the works of Belk (1975), Rook (1987), Haussman (1991) and Giraud (2002), it is found that the store's environmental factors are important stimuli that are capable of triggering the desire to buy impulsively. For this reason, this study attempts to determine the link between impulse buying and the store variables. However, after the description of our investigation, a preliminary analysis of the data is carried out, and then a presentation of the link between the point-of-sale environment and the impulse purchase is made.

### 4.1. Research methodology

In order to test the hypotheses proposed in this research, a field study was conducted among 590 individuals who visited the clothing stores (Men / Women) located in the center of the city of Tlemcen. The questionnaire was administered in times when no special sales or discounts were offered. Our sample was chosen based on the fact that these stores pay particular attention to the physical environment. Note that the physical environment and the global atmosphere within the store are two explanatory variables of our research.

### 4.2. Survey results

The first descriptive results of our survey will be presented later.

#### 4.2.1. Socio-demographic variables

The socio-demographic portrait of the buyers in our sample is presented in this section, through different variables, namely gender, age, educational level, income level, family situation and occupation.

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Woman</b>	56.36%
<b>Man</b>	43.63%
<b>Age</b>	
<b>Under 25</b>	22.86%
<b>Between 25 and 34</b>	28.83%
<b>Between 35 and 44</b>	23.64%
<b>Between 45 and 54</b>	16.88%
<b>Between 55 and 64</b>	4.67%
<b>Between 65 and 74</b>	2.6%
<b>Over 74</b>	0.52%
<b>Income</b>	
<b>Less than 18000 Algerian Dinars</b>	10.65%
<b>From 18000 to 21001 AD</b>	34.55%
<b>From 21001 to 35000 AD</b>	27.53%

<b>From 355001 to 50000 AD</b>	16.1%
<b>From 50001to 70000 AD</b>	10.39%
<b>More than 70000 AD</b>	0.78%
<b>Family situation</b>	
<b>Single</b>	63.12%
<b>Married</b>	31.43%
<b>Divorced</b>	4.42%
<b>Widow (widower)</b>	1.03%
<b>Profession</b>	
<b>Executive and intellectual profession</b>	11.43%
<b>Intermediate profession</b>	16.10%
<b>Employee</b>	22.34%
<b>Laborer</b>	20%
<b>Student</b>	12.99%
<b>Craftsman, trader and entrepreneur</b>	7.01%
<b>Retired</b>	7.53%
<b>Jobless</b>	2.6%

One can easily note that impulse purchase involves all socio-professional categories. This means that these parameters are crucial for the segmentation of the market, i.e. to recognize the profile of impulsive buyers more easily.

## 5. Analyzes and results

### 5.1. Measuring impulse buying

The assessment of the impulse buying tendency is essential if one wants to identify unplanned purchases through a filter question that is asked when the respondent leaves the store:

*Have you made a purchase that you have not planned to do today?*

The main objective is to determine the products which were not planned to be purchased. In order to simplify the way in which the questionnaire was administered and to facilitate its acceptability, the respondents were asked to cite one or two purchases they had not planned to make. This question was asked to buyers who had already checked out. Only impulse purchasers can participate in the survey; then, the questions related to the different variables were asked. This is an open question for which there is no pre-established answer. It should be noted that the interviewee has complete freedom of choice in his response. This mode of question was chosen because it represents the major advantage sought in this study.

### 5.2. Physical environment

*measuring the atmosphere at the point-of-sale*





	<i>Strongly disagree</i>	<i>Rather disagree</i>	<i>Neither agree nor disagree</i>	<i>Rather agree</i>	<i>Strongly agree</i>	
<b>Dependent</b>	1	2	3	4	5	<b>Independent</b>
<b>Commanded</b>	1	2	3	4	5	<b>Leader</b>
<b>Weak</b>	1	2	3	4	5	<b>Strong</b>
<b>Guided</b>	1	2	3	4	5	<b>Autonomous</b>
<b>Influenced</b>	1	2	3	4	5	<b>Influential</b>
<b>Obedient</b>	1	2	3	4	5	<b>Master of myself</b>

**6. Preliminary results of the study**

*Characteristics of impulse buyers*

During our survey, the questionnaire was administered to 590 visitors to the family clothing store. Of the 380 people who made impulse purchases, 56% were women and 44% were men.

**Table 2: Percentage of purchasers who participated in the survey, by gender.**

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Women</b>	<b>56.36%</b>
	<b>Men</b>	<b>43.64%</b>

These percentages indicate that women are more impulsive than men. This means that the uncontrollable frenzy of buying affects mainly women.

**Table 3 : Measuring the atmosphere at the point-of-sale**

<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>Somewhat agree</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>
<b>32.47%</b>	<b>43.12%</b>	<b>24.41%</b>

It is important to mention that nearly 75% of those surveyed appreciate the atmosphere of the store they visited.

**Table 4: The P.A.D (Pleasure – Arousal – Dominance) scale**

<b>Characteristics</b>	<b>Pleasure</b>	<b>Arousal</b>	<b>Dominance</b>
	* Happy	* Appeased	* Master of myself
	* Satisfied	* Calm	* Autonomous
<b>%</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>90</b>

When reading the table, it appears that:

- 87% of those surveyed expressed a certain degree of agreement with the two items of the *Pleasure* measurement scale, namely "*Happy*" and "*Satisfied*".
- Regarding the *Arousal* scale, it is noted that more than 75% of the individuals express a degree of agreement with the items "*Appeased*" and "*Calm*".
- Concerning the scale for the measurement of "*Dominance*", more than 90% agree with the items "*Master of myself*" and "*Autonomous*".

## Conclusion

The results of the present study confirm the fact that the atmosphere at the point-of-sale (music, smell, color, etc.) can be considered as an important element of management that can exert a significant influence on the behavioral, emotional and cognitive states of customers. Their sensitivity to the environment can lead them to feel impulses that they cannot or will not control. However, it turns out that the interior design of the store is capable of generating a positive experience for the consumer. Here, we place ourselves in a framework which indicates that the consumer goes through an affective experience when he is in a re-enchanting business environment. It is therefore essential for the store manager to offer distraction and pleasure to the consumer. It is also important for retailers to take care of the environment in their stores and to create an atmosphere that helps trigger purchasing impulses. It is therefore required to multiply stimuli inside the store (billboards, assistants, colors, smell, sounds, etc.). Thus, the diffusion of music, smells in certain departments (hygiene, beauty, pastry, flowers, etc.), and warm colors (yellow or red) are all elements that can impel individuals to engage in impulsive purchasing. As a result, the layout of the store or point-of-sale is one of the main pillars of business success. It allows highlighting the quality of the products and services offered and encourages sales opportunities.

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