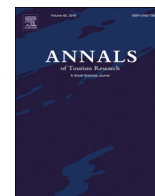




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Research note

Impulsive buying in hospitality and tourism journals

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ABSTRACT

Although impulsive buying remains one of the most important topics in understanding customers' behavior, limited studies have provided theoretical and empirical developments in the tourism and hospitality area. This study addresses this gap and provides an updated systematic review of impulsive buying research until 2018 in leading hospitality and tourism academic journals. Previous studies have provided an understanding of the possible antecedents (e.g., marketing factors, environmental factors, social factors, and individual characteristics) and consequences (e.g., perceived value, brand attachment, word of mouth, revisit intention, and willingness to pay more) of an impulsive purchase. However, they did not expound on the underlying mechanism of impulsive buying behavior. This review provides future directions for research in terms of topics, contexts, and research methodologies.

Introduction

The concept of impulsive buying refers to an unplanned purchase (Rook & Gardner, 1993) and purchase decision without explicit recognition of a need for the purchase (Abratt & Goodey, 1990). Customers' impulsive buying is related to a rapid decision-making process, subject to bias toward the possession, and more complex and paradoxical than planned purchase (Rook & Gardner, 1993). Customers' impulsiveness is also related to excessive buying behaviour. According to Rook and Hoch (1985), customers' impulsive buying is influenced by internal psychological affective and cognitive conditions. Jeffrey and Hodge (2007) revealed the four characteristics of impulsive buying, namely, unintentional, sudden decision, emotional, and intellectual responses to stimulus. Thus, impulsive buying is associated with customers' affective states (e.g., persistent/powerful urge and positive buying emotion/mood) and cognitive components (e.g., inner instability and low level of rational assessment of the consequence after purchasing).

Many researchers have investigated the concept of impulsive buying due to the importance of customers' impulsive buying in company performance. Jones, Reynolds, Weun, and Beatty (2003) argued that customers' involvement is significantly associated with impulsive buying. The impact of customers' impulsive buying on their positive mood was suggested because of product satisfaction and quenching of an urge (Gardner & Rook, 1988). Also, Li (2015) examined that impulsive buying influences customers' post-purchase emotion and satisfaction. Scholars agree that the concept of impulsive buying is important because it offers an opportunity to increase a firm's profit and cultivate an improved consumption experience (Chang, Stansbie, & Rood, 2014; Miao, 2011).

Although consumer and marketing studies have investigated impulsive buying behavior (Khachatryan et al., 2018), this concept has been relatively underdeveloped in tourism and hospitality literature. Moreover, little is known about how customers' experience

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with the tourism and hospitality services leads to their impulsive buying behavior (Su & Lu, 2018). Thus, this study aims to fill this gap by investigating previous studies. The authors provide a holistic review of impulsive buying in tourism and hospitality literature. By consolidating and synthesizing impulsive buying research, this study helps researchers by offering research topics, study contexts, and methodologies.

Methodology

The current study provides a systematic review of research on impulsive buying behavior in the hospitality and tourism industry by adopting a content analysis method. Content analysis refers to an analytic technique used to synthesize findings from previous research in an attempt to generate implications for future research (Ahn & Back, 2018; Bowen & Sparks, 1998; Oh, Kim, & Shin, 2004). This technique provides an understanding of the current development of an area and unique perspectives for future research.

Studies published in leading hospitality and tourism management and marketing journals were identified to select articles for a systematic review. The present review includes only peer-reviewed journal articles published in English. Conference proceedings and book chapters were excluded since the content of these sources were not peer-reviewed. The referred journals were selected by following previous studies (Phillips & Moutinho, 2014; Sainaghi, Phillips, & Corti, 2013): *Advances in Hospitality and Tourism Research*, *Annals of Tourism Research*, *Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research*, *Cornell Hotel & Administration Quarterly/Cornell Hospitality Quarterly*, *Current Issues in Tourism*, *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, *International Journal of Tourism Research*, *Journal of Destination Marketing & Management*, *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Research*, *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, *Journal of Travel Research*, *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, *Tourism Geographies*, and *Tourism Management*. These journals were selected because they have received the highest ranks and generally adopted to conduct the content analysis in hospitality and tourism research (Phillips & Moutinho, 2014). Authors reviewed articles published until 2018; the year of 2010 was the first time when researchers published the paper on impulsive buying behaviour in hospitality and tourism journals (Yeung & Yee, 2010). Within the specific period, following keywords were selected to pull studies by searching them in abstract, title, and keywords list: “excessive buying”, “excessive purchase”, “impulse buying”, “impulsive buying”, “impulse purchase”, “impulse consumption”, “impulsive consumption”, “unplanned buying”, and “unplanned purchase”. Considering the link between impulse buying and expressive buying (Silvera, Lavack, & Kropp, 2008), “excessive buying” and “excessive purchase” were also used.

Results

A total of 16 articles were obtained for the current study. Each author reviewed the 16 articles to ensure that these studies emphasized impulsive buying. Then, a systematic review of the literature on impulsive buying was conducted to distinguish the methods and topics of the studies (Table 1). Table 1 shows how the 16 articles are distributed among selected journals.

Methodological review

Table 1 summarizes the methods reviewed from the selected articles. In general, 87% ($n = 14$) of the studies adopted an empirical approach, such as survey or experimental design; 13% ($n = 2$) of the studies were conceptual, such as essays or interviews. Among empirical approaches, the survey was the most dominant study design (12 out of 16, 75%). Frequently used descriptive data analysis methods included *t*-test, ANOVA, multiple regression, hierarchical regression, and correlation.

Industry application

Table 2 shows a summary of industry applications where the authors conducted their studies and collected samples. Overall, approximately half of the studies (44%) were conducted within tourism settings. In tourism management literature, authors have tried to find a new phenomenon and understand tourists' behaviors. In order to discover evidence, Cohen, Higham, and Cavaliere (2011) conducted an interview with tourists in Norway and the United Kingdom, and they found significant evidence of negative evaluation toward frequent air travelers due to the social norms of air travel (i.e., climate concern). Several studies have focused on customers' intrinsic motivation, emotions, and individual characteristics. Chang et al. (2014) conducted the post hoc survey and found that the event attendees tend to have more impulsive consumption on dining than transportation due to the experiential hedonic values of dining atmosphere such as art and local culture. Hanks and Mattila (2014) conducted an experimental study and found the effect of pre-purchase mood on feeling guilt after an impulsive consumption of cruise trip varies depending on genders. They did not find any significant difference between the genders in a good mood; however, they found that women in a bad mood tend to feel guiltier than men in a bad mood after the impulsive consumption of trip. Li, Deng, and Moutinho (2015) conducted the survey among Chinese domestic tourists and found that pleasure is the most dominant emotional factor that influences impulsive consumption followed by domination. As technology development, Kah and Lee (2014) analyzed the data collected from automobile travelers and found that travelers who used the navigation during trips are more likely to visit unplanned travel destination due to the new information they obtained by the navigation. While restaurant, airline, and casino industries were explored as the study context of impulsive buying, hotel, resort, and convention industries were relatively understudied.

Table 1
Research on impulsive buying behavior per academic journal 2010–2018.

Journal	Method (sample size)	Topic	No. of articles	%
Advances in Hospitality and Tourism Research Su and Lu (2018)	Survey (n = 477)	The effect of ambiance and reference group on impulse buying behavior.	1	6%
Annals of Tourism Research Cohen et al. (2011)	Qualitative: Interview (n = 30)	Air traveler's excessive consumption.	2	13%
Young, Higham, and Reis (2014)	Essay	Frequent flyer's excessive consumption.		
Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research Li et al. (2015)	Survey (n = 323)	The effect of experience activities on impulse buying behavior.	2	13%
Hyun et al. (2016)	Survey (n = 379)	The effect of menu browsing time and trust on impulsive menu ordering.		
Current Issues in Tourism Chang et al. (2014)	Survey (n = 83)	The effect of situational and experiential products on traveler's impulsive consumption.	1	6%
International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management Chung et al. (2017)	Survey (n = 500)	The effect of impulsiveness of social commerce on impulsive buying behavior.	1	6%
International Journal of Hospitality Management Yeung and Yee (2010)	Survey (n = 250)	The effect of marketing mix strategy on the impulse purchase intention.	2	13%
Prentice and Wong (2016)	Survey (n = 530)	Mediating role of impulsive gambling between service perceptions and brand related outcomes.		
Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research Miao (2011)	Experimental (n = 278)	The effect of impulse buying stimuli on affective ambivalence.	1	6%
Journal of Travel Research Hanks and Mattila (2014)	Mixed method (n = 384)	The effect of gender and prepurchase mood on impulsive purchase.	1	6%
Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing Chih et al. (2012)	Survey (n = 364)	The effect of impulsive buying tendency, positive affect, and normative evaluations on impulsive buying behavior.	3	19%
Kah and Lee (2014)	Survey (n = 312)	The effect of navigation services on unplanned travel behaviors.		
Sohn and Lee (2017)	Survey (n = 343)	The effect of emotions on cognitive and affective impulse buying behavior.		
Tourism Geographies Hwang and Fesenmaier (2011)	Survey (n = 551)	The effect of trip plan on unplanned travel behavior.	1	6%
Tourism Management Lin and Chen (2013)	Survey (n = 600)	The moderating effects of time pressure and impulse buying tendency on passengers' shopping behavior	1	6%
Total			16	100%

Table 2
Research on impulsive buying behavior by industry application (n = 16).

Target industry	No. of articles	%
Airlines	3	19%
Casino/gaming	1	6%
Festival/event	2	13%
Hotel/lodging	0	0%
Resort/convention/conference	0	0%
Restaurant/foodservice	3	19%
Tourism destinations/organizations	7	44%

Study locations

The current study also summarized empirical studies (n = 14) according to geographical factors where the studies were conducted because the country of study is important in understanding individual behaviors due to the different cultural aspects (Ahn & Back, 2018). Table 3 shows that 62% (n = 9) of the studies were conducted in Asia, and 21% (n = 5) were conducted in the USA.

Table 3
Quantitative research on impulsive buying behavior by countries ($n = 14$).

Countries	Study setting	Articles
Asia ($n = 9$)		
China	Tourism	Li et al. (2015)
China	Festival	Yeung and Yee (2010)
Macao	Casino	Prentice and Wong (2016)
South Korea	Tourism	Kah and Lee (2014)
South Korea	Duty-free shopping	Sohn and Lee (2017)
South Korea	Restaurant commerce	Chung et al. (2017)
Taiwan	Online travel website	Chih et al. (2012)
Taiwan	Airline	Lin and Chen (2013)
Taiwan	Restaurant	Su and Lu (2018)
Western ($n = 5$)		
USA	Tourism	Hanks and Mattila (2014)
USA	Restaurant	Hyun et al. (2016)
USA	Festival	Chang et al. (2014)
USA	Tourism	Hwang and Fesenmaier (2011)
USA	Festival	Miao (2011)

Antecedents of impulsive buying

The systematic review indicated that the majority of empirical studies were conducted to investigate the antecedents of impulsive buying behavior (e.g., marketing activities, service experiences, environmental and social factors, and individual characteristics). For instance, [Yeung and Yee \(2010\)](#) studied the effect of marketing mix strategy (e.g., packaging, product, price, and promotion) on impulsive purchase intention. They found that distinct packaging has the utmost positive effect on impulsive consumption followed by healthy product, special price offer, and free samples in the flower market. [Su and Lu \(2018\)](#) studied the effect of the dining environment (design, social, and ambient factors) on impulsive buying behavior in a restaurant setting. Also they found three major factors that influence impulsive consumption such as reference group, social factors, and extraversion personality. [Li et al. \(2015\)](#) suggested that experiences (e.g., participation, learning, and entertainment) and emotions (e.g., pleasure and domination) indirectly affect impulsive buying behavior through impulsive buying intention in the tourism setting. Specifically, among experiential factors, customer participation has the highest effect on impulsive buying behavior followed by customer learning and customer entertainment. Among emotional factors, pleasure has the best effect on impulsive buying behavior followed by domination while arousal does not have any significant effect on impulsive buying behavior.

Individual characteristics have been identified as a direct antecedent of impulsive buying behavior. [Chih, Wu, and Li \(2012\)](#) examined the effect of individual's internal factors (i.e., hedonic consumption needs, impulsive buying tendency, positive affect, and normative evaluations) on impulsive online consumption. [Chung, Song, and Lee \(2017\)](#) also suggested that hedonic shopping value mediates the relationship between impulsiveness and impulsive buying behavior while they do not find any significant mediating role of utility shopping value between two variables. [Hwang and Fesenmaier \(2011\)](#) determined that travelers' individual characteristics (e.g., multi-destination travel tendency, level of spontaneous trip decision making, etc.) have a significant direct effect on unplanned attraction visits based on intention-behavior discrepancy and prospect theories. Moreover, moderating variables (e.g., scarcity, serendipity, hedonism, and personal trait) were proposed ([Chung et al., 2017](#); [Hyun, Han, & Kim, 2016](#); [Su & Lu, 2018](#)).

Consequences of impulsive buying behavior

Although most studies investigated the antecedents of impulsive buying behavior ([Su & Lu, 2018](#); [Yeung & Yee, 2010](#)), only a few focused on the outcomes of impulsive buying behavior. [Miao \(2011\)](#) applied affective-cognitive model to the link between individuals' affective experiences in impulsive consumption and customers' decision making. They found that individuals feel guilty as the dominant reaction when they have unfavorable evaluation toward impulsive consumption; however, individuals feel pleasure as the dominant reaction when they have a favorable evaluation of impulsive consumption. [Prentice and Wong \(2016\)](#) examined the effect of impulsive behavior among casino customers. Results showed that impulsive behavior has a significant positive influence on brand-related outcomes and loyalty, such as brand attachment, positive word of mouth (WOM), revisit intention, and willingness to pay more. Previous literature also investigated impulsive buying behavior in diverse aspects such as context ([Hanks & Mattila, 2014](#)) and choice of commercial activities at airports ([Lin & Chen, 2013](#)). [Table 4](#) describes the indirect antecedents, direct antecedents, and consequences of impulsive buying behavior.

Conclusions and suggestion for further research

Although service experience with hospitality and tourism brands serves as an antecedent of customers' planned behavior, customers' purchase is also influenced by unplanned behavior. As expected, the authors identified few tourism and hospitality studies on impulsive purchase. However, by evaluating the concept of impulsive purchase in previous tourism and hospitality studies, the authors successfully obtained clear insights into the conditions that lead to customers' impulsive buying behavior.

Table 4
Antecedents and consequences of impulsive buying behavior.

Indirect antecedents	Direct antecedents	Consequences
Experiences	Marketing mix	Hedonic value
Emotions	Attributions	Brand attachment
Individual characteristics	Environmental factors	Positive word-of-mouth
	Social factors	Revisit intention
	Individual's perception	Willingness to pay more
	Individual's attitude	Choice of commercial activities

1. Customers' personal characteristics (e.g., materialism and proclivities) can influence impulse buying. Various personal factors might affect consumers' buying impulses. For instance, customers who emphasize social value may make impulsive buying decisions more easily than customers with a high level of functional value. In line with [Sweeney and Soutar \(2001\)](#), various types of customer value can be tested in future studies to investigate their impact on impulsive buying behavior.
2. Various service environments may motivate customers' unplanned purchase differently. For instance, customers may respond differently toward promotional activities in hotel, cruises, casinos, or amusement parks because each service has a different level of fun and enjoyment ([Chih et al., 2012](#)). Thus, future studies can establish the relationship between service-related attributes and impulsive buying behavior in various tourism and hospitality settings.
3. Visiting purpose can be related to the level of impulsive buying because the customer decision-making process varies depending on the type of customers ([Chang et al., 2014](#)). To demonstrate, customers who visit restaurants with a business purpose are less likely to place an unplanned order than customers with a non-business purpose. Researchers can study visiting purpose as a moderator of impulsive purchase.
4. In psychology studies, researchers have suggested an association between impulsive buying and well-being ([Silvera et al., 2008](#)). This relationship implies an association between impulsive buying tendency and life dissatisfaction. Customers with a high level of impulsive trait tendencies have a low level of basic psychological need satisfaction. Thus, researchers can examine the link between customers' impulsiveness, hospitality and tourism experiences, needs satisfaction, and well-being.
5. The recent development of the tourism and hospitality industry induced competition among service providers. Technology influences the availability and accessibility of services, which play an important role in shaping customers' impulsive buying behavior ([Kah & Lee, 2014](#)). Increasing access to tourism and hospitality services by using wireless technology may result in customers' impulsive buying decision. Thus, understanding the relationship between technology and impulsive purchase is important for tourism and hospitality companies to generate additional sales.

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