

**IMPULSIVE PURCHASE EXPERIENCE: CONCEPTUAL
CLARIFICATION AND MEASUREMENT PROBLEMS**

**IMPULSIVE PURCHASE EXPERIENCE: CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION
AND MEASUREMENT PROBLEMS**

**L'EXPERIENCE D'ACHAT IMPULSIF : CLARIFICATION CONCEPTUELLE
ET OPÉRATIONNALISATION DES MESURES**

EL BADAQUI RABIE

Professor and researcher in Marketing

elbadaouirabie@gmail.com

Submission date: 10/01/2020

Acceptation date: 30/04/2020

IMPULSIVE PURCHASE EXPERIENCE: CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION AND MEASUREMENT PROBLEMS

ABSTRACT

The main purpose of this article is to provide basic elements that characterize impulse buying. Despite the importance of researchs on impulsive purchasing behavior, problems of conceptual clarification persist. After a presentation of previous works that were interested in its definition, we will highlight the specific properties of impulse buying that could be able to clarify this concept and make it easier to measure.

Thereby, the purpose of this article is to present all of the approaches that have examined the study of impulsive purchasing behavior. In this sense, particular attention will be paid to the emotional approach which brings more complementarity with other currents. Our orientation towards the emotional flow of consumer behavior will lead us to treat purchasing as an experience. Of course, the point of sale visit is primarily an experience because of the hedonic benefits it provides. Today's retail outlets have become an attraction for the pursuit of hedonic gratification and pleasure. Thus, concepts such as purchasing experience, symbolism, subjectivity and hedonism will be the leitmotifs of this article. The main objective of this work will therefore be : the delineation of the concept of impulsive buying through the presentation of a conceptual framework to highlight the evolution of the study of impulsive buying.

KEY WORDS : Impulse buying, retail, emotions, customer's behavior

RÉSUMÉ

L'objectif de cet article est de proposer quelques éléments fondamentaux qui caractérisent les achats impulsifs. Malgré l'importance des travaux de recherche portant sur le comportement d'achat impulsif, des problèmes de clarification conceptuelle persistent. Après une présentation de l'ensemble des travaux qui se sont penchés sur sa définition, nous attachons à mettre en évidence les propriétés spécifiques de l'achat impulsif susceptibles d'éclaircir ce concept et de permettre une facilité de mesure.

De ce fait, le présent article a pour vocation de présenter l'ensemble des approches qui se sont penchées sur l'étude du comportement d'achat impulsif. Dans ce sens, une attention

IMPULSIVE PURCHASE EXPERIENCE: CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION AND MEASUREMENT PROBLEMS

particulière sera accordée à l'approche affective qui apporte plus de complémentarité avec les autres courants. Notre orientation vers le courant affectif du comportement du consommateur, nous conduira à traiter l'achat comme une expérience. Bien entendu, la visite du point de vente est avant tout une expérience en raison des bénéfices hédoniques qu'elle procure. Les points de vente aujourd'hui sont devenus des lieux d'attraction favorisant la recherche de gratification hédonique et de plaisir. Ainsi, des concepts tels que expérience d'achat, symbolisme, subjectivité et hédonisme seront les leitmotivs de cet article. Le principal objectif de ce travail sera donc : la délimitation du concept d'achat impulsif à travers la présentation d'un cadre conceptuel permettant de mettre en évidence l'évolution de l'étude de l'achat impulsif.

MOTS CLÉS : Achat impulsif, point de vente, émotions, comportement du consommateur

IMPULSIVE PURCHASE EXPERIENCE: CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION AND MEASUREMENT PROBLEMS

INTRODUCTION

The impulsive purchase is a behavior that has been the subject of several marketing research.

The first studies in this field date back to more than seventy years. This interest is justified by the important place that occupies this type of purchase in the distributors' turnover who are constantly implementing various marketing actions to promote its initiation.

However, while this behavior has intrigued researchers for a long time, impulsive purchasing as a research object has been marked by a variety of approaches based on very varied definitions and measurements.

The importance of impulsive purchasing research can be explained by the large number of works that have focused on the definitive aspect of impulsive buying without presenting an unanimous and convincing definition. For example, impulsive buying has long been defined as an unplanned purchase, made in-store as a result of the customer's exposure to an environmental stimulus. This definition, although it makes it easy to operationalize the concept, has a major drawback. Thus, the assimilation of impulsive buying to unplanned buying leads to an undifferentiated consideration of heterogeneous behavior from where the importance of identifying elements of response to the following problem: how can impulsive buying differ from other types of buying? and how can we achieve a better operationalization of the measurement of the building?

In this sense, this article may be not only interest scientists, but also producers and distributors. By making a better distinction between the impulsive purchasing experience and other types of purchases and its complexity, managers can adjust the design elements, packaging, promotions or atmosphere of the point of sale as a whole, to the desire of the traders in order to encourage the latter to create impulses of purchases and thus to realize impulsive purchases.

There are generally two streams of research that have contributed to the evolution of the impulsive purchasing study. The first, cognitive-based approach, it defines impulsive purchasing as an unplanned purchase, and the measure by the difference between chasing intentions and

IMPULSIVE PURCHASE EXPERIENCE: CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION AND MEASUREMENT PROBLEMS

real purchases. The second stream, which comes in response to the shortcomings of the first approach, which is considered to be reductive, is rather emotional. The peculiarity of this second dimension is that it integrates, in addition to the unplanned character initiated by the first current, the psychological aspect of consumption, in order to better understand the dynamics underlying impulse purchases.

The emotional approach to this research is likely to be adopted, but the unplanned aspect of impulsive procurement is not excluded. The choice of the emotional and experiential approach is justified by the trend of marketing research which sees it as an omnipresent and distinctive dimension of purchasing behavior today.

We will also try to compromise the different definitions proposed, to raise the debate on the different aspects of impulsive buying as a whole, and to propose the permanent characteristics that distinguish impulsive buying on the basis of the review of existing literature.

THE COGNITIVE APPROACH OF IMPULSIVE PURCHASE

The study of consumer behavior has long been dominated by the cognitive paradigm, and models centred on the process of processing information

Indeed, this dominance could be due to the emergence of many theories, developed mainly by Ajzen et Fishbein (1980), and underpinned all cognitive-oriented marketing studies (Derbaix, 1987).

In short, cognitive models in marketing, consider the individual decision-making process as a sequential process that contains many phases of deliberation before proceeding with the actual act of buying.

Thus, an individual contemplating a purchase decision must evaluate the different alternatives available to him, and choose from them, those that meet his previously defined selection criteria. This assumes that the individual is a rational being who plans his choices according to his needs. In reality, however, certain needs do not emerge until after exposure

IMPULSIVE PURCHASE EXPERIENCE: CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION AND MEASUREMENT PROBLEMS

to stimulus. In this case, we are talking about talent needs, which leads us to question the validity of the cognitive model.

As a result, these models reduce individual behavior to a simple conscious cognitive (Derbaix, 1987), and neglect impulse decisions. Impulse purchasing decisions are characterized by a limited and less complex problem-solving process (Engel et al, 1986).

Many features have been assigned to impulsive buying to distinguish it from other types of buying, such as speed of decision, irrationality, unconsciousness, non-planning... two approaches can be distinguished in the study of impulsive purchasing behavior : a so-called operational approach, considers impulsive purchasing to be an unplanned purchase, resulting from the consumer's exposure to a stimulus, and is measured by the difference between the planned purchase and the actual purchase. The second approach defines impulsive purchasing based on the speed of decision and the amount of information required to make a purchase (Leblanc-Maridor, 1989).

1- THE OPERATIONAL APPROACH

As its name suggests, this approach was intended to operationalize the measurement of impulsive purchasing, with the aim of estimating the influence of impulse purchases on total buyer spending.

The first studies in this stream date back more than seventy years (Dupont et al, 1945, Clover, 1950, West, 1951).

Thus, Clover found that some articles are more impulsive than others. The turnover of the shops consists of 48 to 60% impulsive purchase.

Applebaum (1951) will add another element to the definition of impulsive buying. According to him, impulsive purchases are purchases not planned by the customer before entering the store, but which are induced by the customer's exposure to an environmental stimulus. It can influence the trigger for impulsive stimulus (Shaffer, 1960). The fact that these purchases are

IMPULSIVE PURCHASE EXPERIENCE: CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION AND MEASUREMENT PROBLEMS

made under the influence of the stimuli of the store does not mean that they are irrational, that consumers are subject to considerable manipulation.

These definitions show that impulsive buying is limited to the store, is that other decisions made outside of a point of sale, are not part of the impulse purchase.

Therefore, impulsive purchases are measured by the difference between pre-store purchases and post-outlet purchases. Later, Stern (1962) refined the definition of impulsive procurement from an operational perspective. His contribution is a response to studies that reduced impulsive purchasing to unplanned purchases. Stern points out that impulsive buying is influenced by a variety of factors such as economy, personality, time, location, and even cultural factors. These factors vary not only among buyers contemplating buying the same item, but for the same individual who wishes to purchase a product in different situations. The result is a typology of impulse purchases. Four broad categories of impulse procurement can be identified :

- Pure impulse purchase: this is the easiest type to distinguish from impulse purchases. It's about buying a new product, or it's an escape purchase that breaks a normal buying pattern.
- Impulsive recall purchase : occurs when the customer sees an item and remembers that the stock is out or remembers a previous experience.
- Buy impulsive suggestion: Occurs when the customer sees the item for the first time and realizes his need. It differs from other purchases in that the customer does not have prior knowledge of the product.
- Anticipated impulse purchase: this type of purchase, which seems abnormal, can occur when the customer enters the store without specifying his needs, in the hope of making effective purchases in case of sales and promotions.

Stern identifies nine factors that could trigger impulse purchases: low price, marginal need, mass distribution, self-service, advertising, display, short life of the product, small size or light weight of the product and ease of storage.

IMPULSIVE PURCHASE EXPERIENCE: CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION AND MEASUREMENT PROBLEMS

To continue, we can quote the work of Kollat and Willet (1967-69) which propose different types of planning before the customer has exposed to a stimulus of the store:

1. Product and brand: before entering the store, the buyer knows the product and the brand to buy.
2. Product only: before entering the store, the buyer knows the product the needs, but has not yet decided about the brand to choose.
3. Product class: before entering the store, the purchaser knows only the category of products that he intends to buy, for example, someone who wants to buy meat, but does not yet know what to choose, a steak or a hamburger.
4. Recognized need: before entering a store, the purchaser acknowledges that there is a need, but has not yet decided on the product category, product or brand he intends to buy.
5. Unrecognized need: before going to a store, the buyer does not recognize his need before he is exposed to a stimulus, that is the latent need. It is the lowest level that corresponds to the impulsive purchase according to Kollat and Willet (1967).

All works so far has been described as being characterized by the facility of measuring the phenomenon studied. The impulsive purchase is measured by the difference between the planned purchases before going to the store and effective purchases made after leaving the store.

The objective underlying this approach is, of course, the extent to which impulsive purchases are important compared to other purchases (Leblanc-Maridor; 1989). However, the definition proposed by the operational current proponents incorporates a variety of heterogeneous behaviors. It is true that any impulsive purchase is an unplanned purchase (Piron; 1991), but the reverse is not automatically true: All unplanned purchases are not impulsive purchases.

In defining impulsive buying as an unplanned purchase, only one aspect of impulsive buying is considered (Leblanc-Maridor; 1989), which explains the high rates of procurement reported by studies subscribing to his definition (Giraud; 2002). Thus, a customer who goes into a store,

IMPULSIVE PURCHASE EXPERIENCE: CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION AND MEASUREMENT PROBLEMS

with the intention of buying what he needs for a picnic, and finally decides after long deliberations, has not actually made an impulsive purchase, but an unplanned purchase. On the other hand, a person who sees an advertisement of a given brand, does not linger to visit the point of sale, after feeling a strange internal intensity, is not among the impulsive buyers according to the operational definition. In addition, this reductive concept of buying removes the consumer from his focus, and focuses on the product as a source of impulse buying. It overlooks the fact that almost all products can be purchased impulsively (Rook, 1987). Or in reality, impulsive buying can extend far beyond low-cost products such as magazines, cookies....a television, refrigerator, furniture and a family trip, all of which are products that can be bought impulsively. This is facilitated by the ease of payment methods such as credit cards. Similarly, it is not the product but the consumer who makes impulsive purchases. It is this simplistic view that d'Antoni and Shenson (1973) reproached in their study (Leblanc-Maridor, 1989) and which will be the founders of behavioral approach.

2- THE BEHAVIOR APPROACH

This consumer-centred approach is intended to address the shortcomings of the previous approach, proposing a new definition: impulsive purchase is a purchase for which the information obtained and the time actually used to make the decision are significantly less than the normal time used to make such a decision.

D'Antoni and Shenson reject the fact that the place of sale is a discriminating criterion in defining impulse purchases. They supported their comments with the example of the advertisement cited above. They will also extend to the idea that impulsive purchasing can affect all products and distribution channels without distinction.

The main contribution of these two authors stems from their concern about how the decision was made. However, the proposed definition is not without limits.

The term quantity of information required is a very personal and variable element from one individual to another (Leblanc-Maridor, 1989). The same amount of information used to make a decision could be considered an impulsive purchase for one person and not an impulsive

IMPULSIVE PURCHASE EXPERIENCE: CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION AND MEASUREMENT PROBLEMS

purchase for another person. In addition, the notion of normal time is also variable from one individual to another, and from one product category to another. It is obvious that some products do not require the same process of deliberation, the latter may depend on price, purchasing task, income...

This definition makes the measurement of normal time almost impossible (Giraud, 2002) and appears unsatisfactory although it is closer to reality (Leblanc-Maridor, 1989).

Despite their shortcomings, it must be acknowledged that both approaches provide clarity in the study of impulsive purchasing behavior, by highlighting certain constructive elements, and must be complemented by another more emotional vision focusing on the psychological reactions of the consumer.

PURCHASE IMPULSIF UNDER ASSIGNEMENT ANGLE

In response to the cognitive vision of impulsive purchasing, a new affective approach will emerge under the impulse of the emotional paradigm initiated by Hirschman and Holbrook (1982). Weiberg and Gottwald (1982) were the first to draft the integration of the emotional component into the study of impulsive buying. They define it according to three key components:

- a. The emotional component: which means a strong emotional activation
- b. The cognitive component: which means little intellectual control over purchasing decision.
- c. The conative component: triggered by an environmental stimulus.

It was probably the work of Rook and Hoch (1985) and Rook (1987) that changed the approach of researchers to the study of impulsive buying (Piron, 1991).

1. WORKS BY ROOK AND HOCH (1985)

These authors focus on the psychological and emotional reactions of the consumer, which are not yet integrated by the cognitive current. For example, Rook and Hoch (1985) identify five

IMPULSIVE PURCHASE EXPERIENCE: CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION AND MEASUREMENT PROBLEMS

key elements to distinguish impulsive versus non-impulsive purchasing behavior. These elements are:

- 1- A sudden and irresistible desire to buy: impulsive purchasing occurs when an individual has a strong and intense desire, linked to a rapid change in his psychological condition due to exposure of the individual to an external stimulus of the environment.
- 2- Being in a state of psychological imbalance: so, in a given situation, an individual may feel temporarily out of control. The temptation to succumb to its purchasing impulses remains the only alternative to attenuating its impulses in the absence of a power that allows to refuse or delay a reward.
- 3- Psychological conflict: this means that an individual is pulled in two directions in front of impulse products. It compares the benefits of immediate enjoyment with the long-term consequences of its decision. Freud describes this as a struggle between two opposing forces: the pleasure and the reality of the principles (the thing and the superego). However, it should be noted that impulses to purchase do not necessarily lead to psychological conflict. An illustrative example is when immediate consumption does not preclude the ability to consume in the future (dining in a luxury restaurant or paying rent).
- 4- Reduced cognitive assessment of product characteristics: according to Rook and Hoch (1985), impulsive buying is the antithesis of the classical models of rational economic man who is seeking to maximize utility. In other words, impulsive purchasing behavior under the influence of emotional mechanisms reduces the capacity of deliberation and cognitive control and speeds up the decision making. Of course, this does not mean that impulsive purchases are irrational purchases. Researchers have shown that there are a number of purchases that are satisfying.
- 5- Consumption without tomorrow: some impulsive purchases are made with a diminished eye for long-term consequences. This refers to the pathological nature of impulsive consumption. Thus, the consumption of certain products is at first a perfectly normal behavior, but leads to feelings of guilt after the impulse has been satisfied (drinking alcohol seems at first glance a source of pleasure for an individual, but

IMPULSIVE PURCHASE EXPERIENCE: CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION AND MEASUREMENT PROBLEMS

creates a feeling of guilt after he realizes that he is in a bad state). For some people, immediate consumption offers satisfaction with the impulse felt that is impossible to think with the next day. Similarly, some people say that they have become aware of the consequences of their actions, but continue to adopt them under the impulse of a force greater than their ability to control themselves (it was the devil who led me to do so).

It follows from the above that the desire to buy is so strong and powerful that the attempt to resist or evaluate the product to delay its purchase remains difficult or impossible in some cases.

These characteristics set out by Rook and Hoch (1985) will be borrowed by other authors in order to refine the definition of impulsive buying (Rook, 1987) and to highlight the difference between impulsive buying, unplanned buying on the basis of emotional reactions (Piron, 1993).

For example, Rook (1987) includes three elements of the five emotional reactions cited by Rook and Hoch (1987) to define impulsive buying. According to him, « *an impulsive purchase occurs when the consumer suddenly feels a urge, often powerful and persistent, to buy something immediately. Impulse buying is complex from a hedonistic point of view and can lead to psychological conflict. He often intervenes with a diminished eye for the consequences* ». Through this definition, Rook (1987) focuses on desire and its ability to trigger impulses that push the individual to purchase, so that this emotional pressure will be attenuated only by purchasing the product that is the object of desire.

The adoption of such approach predicts that it is the force of emotions associated with the prospect of product acquisition that drives the individual towards the realization of an impulsive purchase, not the product as the proponents of the cognitive current suggest. In other words, the definition of impulsive buying needs to be sought in the cognitive and emotional aspects of the individual, while the product plays only an instrumental role (Giraud, 2002) to the extent that it activates emotional reactions.

IMPULSIVE PURCHASE EXPERIENCE: CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION AND MEASUREMENT PROBLEMS

It should be noted that many complaints have been made to marketing professionals as they increase the intensity of consumer desires and create feelings of frustration related to the non-consumption of the product. For example, for a simple lunch that meets a basic physiological need, advertisers can suggest several desires up to a lunch in a luxury restaurant, which may correspond to a need for esteem or fulfillment and therefore leads to a powerful motivation of consumption and intense frustration in case of non-consumption.

2. DEEPENING THE AFFECTIVE VISION

While the definitions proposed by Rook and Hoch (1985) and Rook (1987) present a step forward in the study of impulsive buying, as they justify the need to integrate the psychological dimension, they fail to refine the definition of impulsive buying and still have limitations in two essential respects:

On the one hand, impulsive purchasing can be achieved without the person being in a state of psychological imbalance or without temporarily losing reason (Piron, 1991). There are many cases where the consumer who sees shopping as a moment of relaxation, lets himself wander around the store, examining several products and looking for more exciting hedonic experiences, what Tauber (1972) calls impulsive shopping. Doing so, the individual feels sudden impulses without experiencing a psychological conflict, and without neglecting the long-term consequences of the act of purchase. Some impulsive purchases give the individual pride in doing a good business, or pride in possessing the property in question.

On the other hand, the fact that impulsive purchases are inevitably accompanied by intense emotions, presents a definitive insufficiency of the building. Indeed, planned purchases, unplanned purchases and impulsive purchases can all be accompanied by such reactions Piron (1991).

Similarly, Piron (1991) distinguishes between experiential and non-experiential impulsive purchases. Only the first can be accompanied by emotional experiences.

Otherwise, Piron (1993) in a study on clothing purchases attempts to distinguish between impulsive purchases, unplanned purchases and planned purchases based on emotional

IMPULSIVE PURCHASE EXPERIENCE: CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION AND MEASUREMENT PROBLEMS

reactions. The results of his study provide a response to the ambivalence induced by the various questions mentioned above. In addition to the sudden desire, the feeling of helplessness, and the attribution of responsibility for the decision to other factors (it was the devil who pushed me), he shows that impulsive purchases are characterized by a higher emotional intensity than unforeseen purchases and compared to planned purchases. Of course, Piron (1993) shows that the frequency of experimental impulsive buyers is greater than that of non-experimental impulsive buyers. This comforts the orientation of Rook and Hoch (1985) and Rook (1987), based essentially on the experiential approach.

If the Rook definition (1987) received some criticism, it is because it did not specify the possibility of impulsive purchases without experiencing particular emotions (immediate purchase of a product related to an utility motive). Nevertheless, it will influence most of the work on the topic, and will include the emotional component their research.

Thus, Leblanc-Maridor (1989) defined impulsive purchase as a purchase for which the decision-making process is significantly different from the theoretical process expected for this type of asset or situation of purchase. It is also a purchase whose possession satisfies the psychological expectations of the individual.

In addition, he proposes a number of elements that he believes characterize impulsive buying. The impulsive purchase is an unplanned purchase, made quickly and without comparison. On the other hand, this definition, while emphasizing the existence of a psychological dimension, does not clearly spell out the role that the emotional dimension of impulsive buying can play in discriminating between impulsive buying and unplanned buying.

According to Bensa (1994), impulsive buying is:

- Made after exposure to stimulus
- Realized as a result of emotional responses defined from an experiential perspective
- Done without deliberation
- Made at a point of sale
- Influenced by the mood of the individual

IMPULSIVE PURCHASE EXPERIENCE: CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION AND MEASUREMENT PROBLEMS

- Applicable to all products

This definition, which incorporates a number of elements proposed by the earlier definitions, is considered to be persuasive in a nuance, namely the element without deliberation. In other words, the reduction of cognitive effort in impulsive decisions does not mean the absence of deliberation.

For Beatty and Ferrell (1998): « an impulsive purchase is a sudden and immediate purchase without prior intentions to purchase the product or perform a specific purchasing task. Behavior occurs after the consumer feels the urgency of buying and this behavior tends to be spontaneous and without much *thought*. »

According to Sermet (1999), impulsive purchasing comprises a set of components. It is a purchase:

- Unplanned in the direction of unthought
- Preceded by a sudden, powerful and urgent desire
- Decided without deliberation
- Neither repetitive nor excessive

Otherwise, Giraud (2002) attempts to synthesize all components of impulsive purchasing by grouping them into five dimensions: a cognitive dimension, an affective dimension, a conative dimension, lack of control and lack of planning.

Cognitive component: impulsive buying is a purchase made without much thought and with a low level of deliberation. This confirms that impulsive purchases are not free of cognitive deliberation, contrary to impulsive act theory.

For example, an individual may engage in any analysis of the consequences of his purchase, fearing that he would make dissonant impulsive purchases. He may try strategies of resistance to temptation, but the delay of gratification in not yielding to his impulse is frustrating. This inability to push back the momentum that led to the rapid transition to the act of purchase. As a result, the speed of the decision prevents the individual from engaging in a thorough

IMPULSIVE PURCHASE EXPERIENCE: CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION AND MEASUREMENT PROBLEMS

deliberation process, which reduces cognitive effort. As such, impulsive buying is considered a quick and unparalleled purchase (Leblanc-Maridor, 1989).

Affective component: from this perspective, impulsive buying is seen as a answer to an emotion. Emotion can be seen as the driving force behind the transition to impulsive action. Thus, the irresistible need, the strang emotional reactions are all elements reflecting the emotional state experienced by an individual with whom the possibility of postponing gratification remains impossible.

Conative component: an impulsive purchase is a sudden and immediate purchase (Beatty and Ferrell, 1998), made quickly (Leblanc-Maridor, 1989); This is an immediate decision (Piron, 1998). In addition, Piron (1993) differentiates the impulsive purchase from the unplanned purchase by the length of time between visual contact and the purchase decision. In other words, the purchase is considered impulsive if the decision is made in less than five seconds. Otherwise, the purchase is considered unplanned. However, this distinction of impulsive buying as a decided purchase on the spot, although it is the hallmark of a number of impulsive purchases, is questioned. Of course, an impulsive purchase does not always result from immediate action. It may be that an individual feels a strong impulse, tries to resist and control himself, may leave the store and return, since the feeling of frustration remains so strong that the possibility of not succumbing to temptation is difficult.

Lack of control: it is a component that has been included in the definition used. It is a purchase made with a low level of control (Weinberd and Gottwald, 1982); an irresistible desire (Rook, 1987); an urgent purchase (Beatty and Ferrel, 1998). This dimension is linked to the difficulty of repelling gratifications. In other words, the force of emotion that amplifies the urgency of buying, weakening resistance to temptation. However, it should be noted that the lack of control is not a permanent feature of all impulsive purchases. One example is the case of unstoppable purchases. Thus, some individuals have a level of control that allows them to repulse rewards, but given free rein to their emotions when they do not find any element that contradicts their long-term interests. This type of purchase is called by Dickman (1990) as a functional impulsive purchase, as it is a source of satisfaction.

IMPULSIVE PURCHASE EXPERIENCE: CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION AND MEASUREMENT PROBLEMS

Non-planning: impulsive buying is an unplanned purchase (Leblanc-Maridor, 1989), an unplanned purchase (Piron, 1991), a sudden envy (Rook, 1987). There is almost unanimous agreement on the definitions already mentioned on this component. In other words, most definitions suggest that no planning is required for an impulsive purchase to take place. However, Giraud (2002) will conclude from some qualitative studies by Thompson and al (1990) and Hausman (2000) that impulsive purchasing can be planned and impulse is the distinguishing element of pulse purchases. It will even adopt this criterion in its study of impulsive procurement, and will not adopt the non-planning criterion in contrast to previous studies. However, procurement planning can lead the individual to engage in deeper and more analytical cognitive processes, affecting the strength of his emotions. Surprise is an indispensable factor in preserving the intensity of emotions.

SUMMARY OF THE MAIN DIMENSIONS OF THE BUILDING OF THE IMPULSIVE PURCHASE

From all the elements mentioned above, we can offer some distinguishing features of pulse purchases:

Unplanned purchase:

This criterion received the approval of majority of researchs on the subject with the exception of Biraud (2002). In order to reconcile these different approaches, we recognize that impulsive procurement planning is not absolute. A minimum of deliberation should not lose its unplanned character. Of course, non-planning purchases can be extended to a higher level in the scale presented by Kollat and Willet (1969), such as recognition of need, planning of the class of the product, but can not in any way reach the level of the planning of the brand and the product. Absolute planning buying makes this behavior lose the intensity of emotions felt.

Due to intense impulses:

Thus, an individual with a stimulus, has a sudden and powerful desire to acquire or consume a product. This intensity of desire, which is assimilated to the force of emotion, will only be attenuated if the individual passes to the act of purchases or causes the purchase to be

IMPULSIVE PURCHASE EXPERIENCE: CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION AND MEASUREMENT PROBLEMS

delayed over time. This move to the act of purchase is often characterized by a low level of deliberation due to a rapid decision. In the case of non-purchase, the individual may experience frustration with the idea of not succumbing to the temptation. However, impulsive buying is not exclusive to individuals who have difficulty controlling themselves. There are a significant number of individuals who have a high capacity for self-control, yet engage in impulse purchases. To account for the degree of impulsivity in purchasing, we suggest the use of the Jeon scale (1990). Thus, impulsive purchase is a purchase that has held at least a score of three on this scale. Below this level, the purchase is considered as normal (Sermet, 1999).

Accompanied by positive emotions:

Emotion is at the heart of the impulsive purchasing experience. The impulsive purchase, like other behaviors within the point of sale, appears to be influenced by the emotional states experienced by an individual. Thus, emotional states act in different ways on the individual's perception, his memorization, his evaluation of objects and his decision to purchase. Of course, an individual with positive elements of the product or point of sale. This positive assessment promotes the development of hedonic advantages from the purchasing experience at the expense of utilitarian advantages that require more complex evaluation process. Similarly, positive emotional states could invite the bargain to replicate in the present, some of the purchasing experiences pleasantly experienced in the past. This is likely to give rise to an ardent desire on the part of the individual to move immediately to the act of purchase. The scale of Mehrabian and Russell (1974) or the SAM scale « smileys faces » used today to report individual's level of pleasure and awakening from these assessments of a few characters, can allow easy measurement of the individual's emotional states.

IMPULSIVE PURCHASE EXPERIENCE: CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION AND MEASUREMENT PROBLEMS

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this article is to highlight a definitive review of the impulsive purchasing experience. It is a synthesis of all the work that attempted to define impulsive buying.

This phenomenon, which is a consumer psychology, is supported by psychological and motivational theories and has long been worrying marketing researchers.

Convinced of the growing importance of this product at the point of sale, our objective was to present the specific features of impulsive buying that distinguish it from other types of purchase. Thus, characteristics such as lack of control or lack of cognitive effort were discarded in order to make the study of the phenomenon more operational.

In fact, we have presented a conceptual framework that can help researchers better to define the construct and succeed in the empirical approach. In this sense, the two currents marking the definition of the concept while ensuring complementarity between the different approaches. As a result of this process, impulsive buying was defined as an unplanned purchase, made following consumer exposure to stimulus and accompanied by intense positive emotions. However, the requirement for the presence of positive emotions does not preclude the existence of impulsive non-experiential purchases. In other words, the inclusion of emotions in the definition of impulsive buying is justified by the choice of this research to study this behavior in an experimental and hedonic framework.

IMPULSIVE PURCHASE EXPERIENCE: CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION AND MEASUREMENT PROBLEMS

BIBLIOGRAPHIE

Applebaum W. (1951), "Studying Customer Behavior in Retail Stores", *Journal of Marketing*, 16, 2, p 172-178.

Beatty S. et Ferrell E. (1998), « Impulse buying: modelling its precursors », *Journal of Retailing*, 74, 2, p. 169-191.

Clover V.T (1950), "Relative Importance of Impulse-Buying in Retail Stores", *Journal of Marketing*, 15, 1, p 66-70.

Derbaix Christian (1987), "Le comportement de l'acheteur : voies d'études pour les années à venir", *Recherche et Applications en Marketing*, 2, 2, p 81-92.

Engel J.F, Blackwell R.D. et Miniard P.W. (1986), *Consumer Behavior*, 5ème édition, CBS College Publishing, New York

Giraud M. (1999), "L'achat impulsif : Un état de l'art ", *Actes du Congrès International de L'AFM*, p 839-861.

Giraud M. (2002), "L'expérience d'achat impulsif : un essai de modélisation, Une application aux achats impulsifs dans la grande distribution", Thèse pour l'obtention du Doctorat en Sciences de Gestion, Université de Toulouse I.

Havlena W.F et Holbrook M.B (1986), "The Varieties of Consumption Experience: Comparing Two Typologies of Emotion in Consumer Behavior", *Journal of Consumer Research*, 13, 3, p 394-404

Hirschman E.C et Holbrook M.B., "Hedonic Consumption: Emerging Concepts, Methods and Propositions", *Journal of Marketing*, 46, 3, p 92-101.

Holbrook M.B. (1986), Aims, Concepts and Methods for the Representation of Individual Differences in Esthetic Responses to Design Features, *Journal of Consumer Research*, 13, 3, 337-347.

Kollat D. T. et Willet R. P., (1969), "Is impulse purchasing really a useful concept for marketing decision?", *Journal of Marketing*, 33, Janvier, p. 79-83.

Kollat D.T et Willett R.P (1967) "Customer Impulse Purchasing Behavior", *Journal of Marketing Research*, 4, 1, p 21-31.

Leblanc-Maridor F. (1989), "L'achat impulsif-Doctrine ou réalité", *Revue Française du Marketing*, 3, 123, p 51-70.

Mehrabian A. et Russell J.A. (1974), A Verbal Measure of Information Rate for Studies in Environmental Psychology, *Environment and Behavior*, 6, 2, 233-252.

IMPULSIVE PURCHASE EXPERIENCE: CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION AND MEASUREMENT PROBLEMS

Piron F. (1991), "Une définition de l'achat impulsif", *Actes du 7ème Congrès International de L'AFM*, p 110-122.

Piron F. (1993), « A comparaison of emotional reactions experienced by planned, unplanned and impulse purchasers », *Advances in Consumer Research*, 20, p. 341-344.

Pollay R.W. (1968), "Customer Impulse Purchasing Behavior: A Reexamination", *Journal of Marketing Research*, 5, 3, p 323-325.

Rook D. (1987), "The buying impulse", *Journal of Consumer Research*, 14, p. 189-199.

Rook D. et Fisher R. (1995), "Normative influence on impulsive buying behavior", *Journal of Consumer Research*, 22, p. 305-313.

Rook D. et Hoch S. (1985), "Consuming impulse", *Advances in Consumer Research*, 12, p. 23-27.

Russell J.A. et Mehrabian A. (1976), Environmental Variables in Consumer Research, *Journal of Consumer Research*, 3, 62-63.

Sermet V. (1999), "Définition et mesure de l'achat impulsif : une revue critique de littérature", *Actes du Congrès International de L'AFM*, p 793-808.

Shaffer J.D. (1960), "The Influence of "Impulse Buying" or In-the-Store Decisions on Consumers' Food Purchases", *Journal of Farm Economics*, 42, 2, p 317-324.

Stern H. (1962), « The significance of impulse buying today », *Journal of Marketing*, 26, p. 59-62.

Weinberg P. et Gottwald W. (1982), « Impulsive consumer buying as a result of emotions », *Journal of Business Research*, 10, p. 43-57.

West J. (1951), "Results of Two Years of Study into Impulse Buying", *Journal of Marketing*, 15, 3, p 362-363.

Youn S.H. (2000), *The dimensional structure of consumer buying impulsivity: measurement and validation*, Ph.D Dissertation, University of Minnesota.