

# **Factors Influencing Impulse Buying Behavior among Working Ladies in Selangor, Malaysia**

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## **Abstract**

The objective of this research is to determine the effect of extrinsic cues on impulse buying behavior amongst working ladies. The extrinsic cues are measured based on price, store atmosphere, brand reputation, country of origin and social influence. 400 full-time working ladies aged between 16 to 35 years old, who are selected based on purposive sampling technique, are surveyed at One Utama shopping mall, Selangor. The data collected are then analyzed using SPSS (Statistical Packages for the Social Science). The findings revealed that price ( $\beta = -0.407$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), store atmosphere ( $\beta = 0.359$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) and social influence ( $\beta = -0.331$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) significantly influence impulse buying behavior of working ladies. However, brand reputation ( $\beta = -0.170$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ) and country of origin ( $\beta = -0.106$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ) of the product do not significantly influence impulse buying behavior of working ladies. In conclusion, this research provides useful information and insight to the marketers about the working ladies market segment. Accordingly, marketers should prepare their marketing strategies based on price, store atmosphere and social influence to attract more working ladies.

## **Keywords**

Apparel, Extrinsic Cues, Impulse Buying Behavior, Working Ladies, Selangor

## **INTRODUCTION**

The apparel industry in Malaysia has been growing in a fast pace after the country started an export-oriented industrial transformation in the early 1980s, promulgated in Second Malaysia Plan. (Nick, 2017; Social-economic & Environmental Research Institute, 2007). Being one of the top ten largest export earners in the country, Malaysia apparel industry contributes RM13.9 billion. The latest figure reported that the apparel industry currently employs over 68,000 workers across more than 970 registered garment and textile factories in Malaysia. (Malaysia Investment Development Authority, 2018). From these, it shows that the Malaysia apparel industry has taken a turn to globally competitive in recent decades.

Fashion business is booming these days, however along with this, it also invites a lot of competition. With the large amount of options that consumers are having these days, it is challenging to sustain (Madhavi & Leelavati, 2013). In Malaysia, it is still lacking when compared to globally renowned brands, given Malaysia apparel companies are unable to get one of the leading positions in global market (McGrath, 2016).

Working ladies is the typical group of female consumers who need new clothing always. Most could get away with shopping once or twice a year just to replenish the basics. (Bain, 2017; Silverstein & Sayre, 2009). Ladies are spending extra willingly, just to get clothing which really suits them. Hence, there is a considerable undeveloped potential in the female apparel industry (Silverstein & Sayre, 2009).

Consumers are always the crucial key because within a trading process, they are the source where marketers gain profit from. Therefore, investigating consumer behavior is no doubt a vital issue, for researchers and marketers to understand consumer's thought and behavior especially female consumers, given importance of this market above (Lim & Yazdabifard, 2015). Meanwhile, it was found that impulse purchasing is one of the common trends of lifestyle in the near future (Maymand & Ahmadinejad, 2011) and it is emerging as a highly noticeable behavior (Muruganatham & Bhakat, 2013).

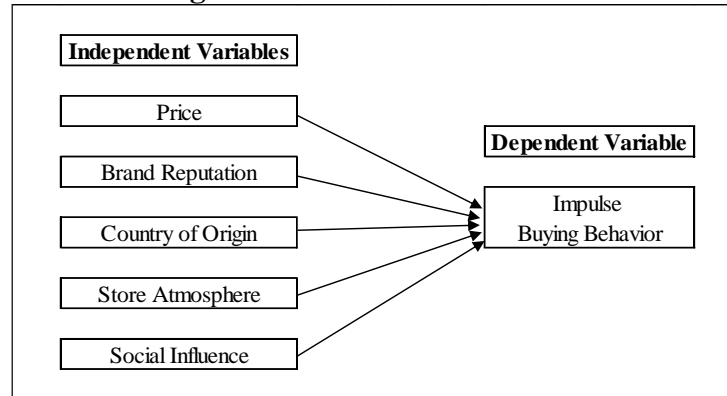
There is a potential down side for consumers in respect of the escalation of excess spending lead to financial ruin and high household debt (Mayuri & Boo, 2015). Over the last five years, upswing of bankruptcy in Malaysia is undeniably a worrying trend according to Insolvency Department's record and the lack of discipline in financial management is the biggest cause of it. The overspending habit is definitely making the situation worse. Consorting with impulse buying behaviour, customers who are unable to manage their impulses may face issues such as overindulgence and mountains of debt (Mendenhall, 2014; Sultan, Joireman & Spratt, 2012;).

Over the past few years, shopping malls in have continually increased which leads to a tense competition within retail market (Hor & Ng, 2019). According to Ruxyn (2017), saying this extremely challenging business environment but weak market demand, some businesses are even shutting down or international companies from various industries have pulled out of Malaysia market. This implies the message that marketers are not able to cope with the changing market condition and make use of the marketing techniques well such as customer behavior of impulse buying (Ruxyn, 2017).

There is a lack of research in the Malaysian setting, which analyze on gender specific impulse buying behavior in apparel sector. For this reason, there is a significant research gap in the available literature that requires further investigation. It may produce varied results due to cultural differences, as culture has a substantial impact on the actual results of this study, in other words, the potential customers' buying behavior (Durmaz, 2014). Therefore, Malaysian apparel industry lacks of information about factors that triggers consumers to impulse buying. Therefore, in sense, the lack of study on working women's impulse purchase behaviour in Malaysia leads to the conclusion that this is a topic worth exploring. The indicated study is an attempt to find out significance of each cue among five, on impulse buying. The research intends to add to the sparse literature in this field, largely as a result of Malaysia.

Figure 1 exhibits the research framework which links the influence of price, brand reputation, country of origin, store atmosphere and social influence on the impulse buying behavior.

**Figure 1: Research Framework**



Source: Adapted from Pradhan (2016), Parma & Ahmed (2013)

Accordingly, the hypotheses of the study are as follow:

- H1: There is a significant influence of price on the impulse buying behavior among working ladies.
- H2: There is a significant influence of brand reputation on the impulse buying behavior among working ladies.
- H3: There is a significant influence of country of origin of product on the impulse buying behavior among working ladies.
- H4: There is a significant influence of store atmosphere on the impulse buying behavior among working ladies.
- H5: There is a significant influence of social influence on the impulse buying behavior among working ladies.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Impulse Buying Behaviour

Instead of buying behavior, academia has paid significant attention to impulse buying behavior throughout the last six decades as it has attracted the attention of academicians and practitioners worldwide (Aragoncillo & Orus, 2018). Impulse buying has aroused the interest of researchers and organizations which have tried to understand the psychological underpinnings of this behaviour, as well as impulse temptations, to boost sales (Amos et al., 2014).

Planned buying includes tedious data search with an effective phrase, "decision-making when unplanned buying". This resembles all shopping decisions done without prior planning. Unplanned purchases are known as impulse purchases based on the fast decision-making process. Impulse buying additionally includes encountering an unexpected, solid, and overwhelming desire to purchase (Stern, 1962; Sundtrom et al., 2013). Further added by Pun (2014), impulse buying behaviour is a type of buying behaviour that is sudden, persuasive, and hedonically complicated, in which the speed with which an impulse decision is made prevents careful and thorough examination of alternative information and options.

## **Price**

It refers to a reasonable price that includes various forms of bargains or reductions. The chance to purchase a price-worthy product, with a discount or not, creates a robust positive sense or emotion among customers of needing to grab the chance to purchase a bargain (Sundstrom, et. al, 2013). Pricing is such a key influencing factor in customer purchasing behaviour, marketers must pay close attention to pricing (Pooja et al. 2018).

Price and impulse buying behaviour have a negative association, according to Kacen et al. (2012). Further strengthened by finding from Syahrivar and Ardianto (2016), showing that product price is adversely associated to impulse buying behavior. To put it another way, the smaller the product price, the higher the occurrence of impulse buying behavior (Iqbal, Akhtar & Lodhi, 2014).

## **Brand Reputation**

The relationship between brand and positive affects among customers is perfectly demonstrated by Gurbuz (2008), in which brand name giving high perceived quality which positively influences customer satisfaction and loyalty. This influence of brand reputation towards customers' positive affects is consistent with the studies conducted by Afzal, Khan, Rehman, Ali and Wajahat (2010), and Babic-Hodovic, Mehic, and Arslanagic (2011). Having favorable affects among customers, inclination to impulse buying can be achieved easily as proven by Seinauskiene et al. (2015).

Duarte et al. (2013) claim that product brand an important stimulus in impulse buying due to the brands' message. This demonstrates customers severely depend on brands to assess product data such as worth and authenticity in order to safeguard them. Customers' brand preferences will be influenced by the message provided. It eventually heightens the favourable impacts that customers experience, leading to a rise in impulse purchases (Husnain & Akhar, 2016).

## **Country of Origin**

Country of origin has a more robust effect in product quality assessment as supported by Wall, Leiffield and Heslop (1991). As a result, customers' opinions of items are influenced by their country of origin (Sirgy et. al, 1991). Samli (1995) recapitulates the phenomenon that, country of origin of the product may affect consumer's perception or assessment on it, which eventually bring an impact to consumer's buying behavior.

Yeh, Chen and Sher (2010) research study conducted in Taiwan, shows that higher country image evaluations will result in greater consumption of imported foods. However, in the aspect of impulse buying, there is a recent study conducted by Yeboah and Owusu-Prempeh (2017) indicates that association between impulse buying behavior and products' country of origin is weak.

## **Store Atmosphere**

Looking at the fact that the product is no longer the only aspect impacting a customer's purchasing decision (Tan & Yazdanifard, 2015; Pooja et. al., 2018). Akram, Peng, Khan,

Hashim and Rasheed (2016) stated that the environment of the store has a greater impact on purchasing decisions than the product itself.

Some more recent studies have shown that variables in the sale environment, including as sounds, views, and odours, are important and can trigger impulsive purchases (Graa et al., 2014). Similarly, store atmosphere is a shopping state established by central factors such as store display, shop cleanliness, store density music, and others, to encourage impulse purchases (Ramankutty, Babu & Venugopal, 2014).

### **Social Influence**

Social influence is not only limited from reference group of family and peers pressure; it also comes from people around consumers' social environment. As per explained by Angel et. al. (1968), social influence refers to other people's influences have an impact on consumer purchase behaviour. Consumers are often influenced by their social environment including their friends, reference groups, family members and so on (Pooja, 2018).

Recommendation shared by a consumer is also a stimulation that makes you want to buy the thing right away without thinking about it (Aragoncillo & Orus, 2018). By listening to comments from people around, it may lead to customers' purchase without much consideration. There are previous researches reveals that recommendations and the most powerful influence on consumer behaviour is information from other consumers as stated in study of Xiang, Zheng, Lee and Zhao (2016). Consumers can do sharing, to give an impact other experience or suggestions, that encourages impulse buying.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Research Design**

To ensure the satisfactory fulfilment of study's objectives to resolve the research problems in this study, the quantitative method is demonstrated in showcasing the connection among each self-sufficient variable (brand reputation, country of origin, price, social influence and store atmosphere) and reliant variable (impulse buying behavior). Quantitative approach, with self-administered questionnaire is applied in this study. Survey form are distributed to get working ladies' respective opinions pertaining to the topic. Face-to-face questionnaire was the only method. This study employed a cross sectional analysis where causal relationship between factors and working ladies' impulse buying at a single point of time is examined.

### **Sampling**

In this study, targeted population is working ladies who are employed between ages of 16 and 35 years, including full-time employed and self-employed. According to Bellenger et al. (1978) study, shoppers under 35 years were more prone to impulse buying compared to those over 35 years old, further supported by Geetha & Bharadhwaj (2016). This research was carried out in One Utama Shopping Mall which is the state of Selangor largest mall (Yiing, 2018). This mall intercept design is consistent with previous researches (Akram et al., 2016, Pooja, 2018).

Under non-probability sampling techniques, purposive sampling is chosen for the study. This is suitable because questionnaire is distributed if respondent is able to meet the three

criteria set, which are female, employed and within the age range of 16 to 35. Sample size of 400 was targeted. To get the appropriate sample size, 384 is considered adequate in this study, referring to Krejcie & Morgan (1970).

**Reliability**

Cronbach's Alpha test is chosen as the technique for examining the variables' association in this study in terms of price, brand reputation, store atmosphere, country of origin, social influence and impulse buying behavior. The value of 0.6 is used as a cutoff value for the Cronbach's alpha reliability analysis. According to (Bademci, 2014) values greater than 0.60 represent strong associations between variables, hence, they are acceptable. As shown in Table 1, it was found that all Cronbach's alpha values for all constructs exceeded a value of 0.60.

**Table 1: Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Analysis**

| Constructs              | Cronbach's Alpha | Items |
|-------------------------|------------------|-------|
| Price                   | 0.647            | 5     |
| Brand Reputation        | 0.613            | 5     |
| Country of Origin       | 0.774            | 5     |
| Store Atmosphere        | 0.692            | 4     |
| Social Influence        | 0.651            | 3     |
| Impulse Buying Behavior | 0.676            | 9     |

**Normality**

Normality analysis and Skewness & Kurtosis test were conducted to test whether the input data was normally distributed. According to Abrams (2007) values of skewness and kurtosis which were recorded between +3 and -3 presented the connotation that the data were not normally distributed. Their values were within the range of +3 and -3, thus, normality assumption is met as shown in Table 2.

**Table 2: Summary of Normality Analysis**

| Constructs              | Items | Skewness | Kurtosis |
|-------------------------|-------|----------|----------|
| Price                   | P1    | -.564    | .016     |
|                         | P2    | -.801    | -.130    |
|                         | P3    | -.483    | -.825    |
|                         | P4    | -.462    | -.609    |
|                         | P5    | .160     | -.807    |
| Brand Reputation        | BR1   | .233     | -.232    |
|                         | BR2   | .487     | -1.484   |
|                         | BR3   | -.023    | -.094    |
|                         | BR4   | -.232    | -1.374   |
|                         | BR5   | .358     | .116     |
| Store Atmosphere        | SA1   | -1.580   | .527     |
|                         | SA2   | -1.328   | -.257    |
|                         | SA3   | -.793    | 2.283    |
|                         | SA4   | -.858    | 1.904    |
| Country of Origin       | CO1   | .096     | -.206    |
|                         | CO2   | .838     | -.942    |
|                         | CO3   | .897     | -.699    |
|                         | CO4   | .516     | .830     |
|                         | CO5   | .961     | -.424    |
| Social Influence        | SI1   | .529     | -.929    |
|                         | SI2   | -.792    | -.978    |
|                         | SI3   | -.747    | -.234    |
| Impulse Buying Behavior | IBB1  | -.240    | -.427    |
|                         | IBB2  | .709     | -.207    |
|                         | IBB3  | 1.484    | 1.992    |
|                         | IBB4  | 1.279    | 1.569    |
|                         | IBB5  | .891     | .389     |

| Constructs | Items | Skewness | Kurtosis |
|------------|-------|----------|----------|
|            | IBB6  | -.170    | -.715    |
|            | IBB7  | -.070    | -1.081   |
|            | IBB8  | -.321    | -.308    |
|            | IBB9  | -.409    | .483     |

### Multicollinearity

Pearson correlation analysis is commonly used to determine whether two variables have a relationship (Hauke & Kossowski, 2011). If the value is less than 0.90, it is said to be free from multicollinearity problem. It was found that the overall coefficient value was lesser than 0.90, As a result, it can be concluded that a problem of multicollinearity did not exist in the present study.

**Table 3: Summary of Correlation**

|            |                     | Correlations |       |       |       |         |         |
|------------|---------------------|--------------|-------|-------|-------|---------|---------|
|            |                     | P            | SA    | BR    | CO    | SI      | IBB     |
| <b>P</b>   | Pearson Correlation | 1.000        | .306  | -.044 | -.196 | -.202   | .500**  |
|            | Sig. (2-tailed)     |              | .100  | .816  | .300  | .284    | .005    |
|            | N                   | 400          | 400   | 400   | 400   | 400     | 400     |
| <b>SA</b>  | Pearson Correlation | .306         | 1.000 | -.242 | .140  | -.170   | .370*   |
|            | Sig. (2-tailed)     | .100         |       | .198  | .460  | .370    | .044    |
|            | N                   | 400          | 400   | 400   | 400   | 400     | 400     |
| <b>BR</b>  | Pearson Correlation | -.044        | -.242 | 1.000 | .195  | -.048   | -.256   |
|            | Sig. (2-tailed)     | .816         | .198  |       | .301  | .802    | .172    |
|            | N                   | 400          | 400   | 400   | 400   | 400     | 400     |
| <b>CO</b>  | Pearson Correlation | -.196        | .140  | .195  | 1.000 | -.007   | -.262   |
|            | Sig. (2-tailed)     | .300         | .460  | .301  |       | .969    | .162    |
|            | N                   | 400          | 400   | 400   | 400   | 400     | 400     |
| <b>SI</b>  | Pearson Correlation | -.202        | -.170 | -.048 | -.007 | 1.000   | -.479** |
|            | Sig. (2-tailed)     | .284         | .370  | .802  | .969  |         | .007    |
|            | N                   | 400          | 400   | 400   | 400   | 400     | 400     |
| <b>IBB</b> | Pearson Correlation | .500**       | .370* | -.256 | -.262 | -.479** | 1.000   |
|            | Sig. (2-tailed)     | .005         | .044  | .172  | .162  | .007    |         |
|            | N                   | 400          | 400   | 400   | 400   | 400     | 400     |

Note: p< 0.01\*\*, p<0.05\*.

P = Price; SA = Store Atmosphere; BR = Brand Reputation; CO = Country of Origin; SI = Social Influence; IBB = Impulse Buying Behavior.

### Multiple Linear Regression

There are five independent variables associating to one dependent variable, multiple linear regression was chosen to examine the entire model. If the significance level of an independent variable is less than 0.05, it is presumed that the independent variable is having a significant linear connection towards dependent variable.

## RESULTS

The objective of conducting multiple linear regression was to test on the statistical significance or relationship between variables, nature or direction of relationship and strength of correlation. To analyze the whole model of the research, particularly the relationship between five explanatory variables and a response variable, multiple linear regression is chosen as the statistical technique. Independent and dependent variables are found to be correlated significantly whenever the p-value is less than 0.05. (Hair et al., 2003).

Table 4 shows the beta coefficients and p-values derived from the multiple linear regression test. As shown in the table, results reported that the independent variables of price ( $\beta = -0.407$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), store atmosphere ( $\beta = 0.359$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) and social influence ( $\beta = 0.331$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) are contributing significantly in describing a dependent variable. On the contrary, the independent variables of brand reputation ( $\beta = -0.170$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ) and country of origin ( $\beta = -0.106$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ) it was found that predictive variables that were dependent on impulse buying behavior were not significantly influenced by these values.

**Table 4: Summary of Regression Coefficients**

| Model |            | Coefficients <sup>a</sup>   |            |                           |        |      |
|-------|------------|-----------------------------|------------|---------------------------|--------|------|
|       |            | Unstandardized Coefficients |            | Standardized Coefficients | t      | Sig. |
|       |            | B                           | Std. Error | Beta                      |        |      |
| 1     | (Constant) | 33.135                      | 4.637      |                           | 7.147  | .000 |
|       | P          | -.629                       | .197       | -.407                     | -3.187 | .004 |
|       | BR         | .111                        | .084       | -.170                     | -1.319 | .200 |
|       | CO         | -.094                       | .115       | -.106                     | -.817  | .422 |
|       | SA         | .302                        | .111       | .359                      | 2.713  | .012 |
|       | SI         | .304                        | .123       | .331                      | 2.480  | .021 |

a. Dependent Variable: IBB

Note: P = Price; SA = Store Atmosphere; BR = Brand Reputation; CO = Country of Origin; SI = Social Influence; IBB = Impulse Buying Behavior.

## DISCUSSION

Based on this result, H1, H4 and H5 were supported. It shows that price, store atmosphere and social significantly influencing impulse buying behaviour. Among the three independent variables, price produced the largest contribution in clarifying the dependent variable of impulse buying behavior.

The result was coherent with the previous studies, proven that price is significantly correlated to impulse buying behavior. This actively demonstrates that price can effectively stimulate or encourage customers' impulse buying behavior (Karbasivar & Yarahmadi, 2011; Sundstrom et al, 2013; Iqbal, Akhtar & Lodhi, 2014).

Result indicates that store atmosphere positively and significantly influence impulse buying behavior. The result is consistent with previous literature identifying store atmosphere is a strong facilitator for impulse buying behavior, by evoking consumers' emotions and ultimately affects their impulse buying behavior (Akram et al., 2016; Cho et al, 2014; Lee & Johnson, 2010; Sivakumara & Sharma, 2015).

Social influence is revealed to have influence on impulse buying behaviour. It could be influence from consumers' social environment including their friends, reference groups, family members (Pooja, 2018). The result is consistent with prior reviews where recommendation shared by other consumers will trigger impulse buying behavior (Aragoncillo & Orus, 2018; Xiang, Zheng, Lee & Zhao, 2016) and social influence in terms of peer presence able to further elevate the influence on impulse buying behavior (Ju & Ahn, 2016).

However, based on the result, H2 and H3 were not supported which means that brand reputation and country of origin did not have significant influence on impulse buying behaviour.



The rejection of H2 is aligned with studies from Gutierrez (2004), which there is no significant relation between brand reputation and impulse buying behaviour as customers who compare brands are more likely to conduct planned purchase. Rajput, Kesharwani & Khanna (2012) and Ranjitham (2016) has proven that brand name is not significant when it comes to purchasing decision.

In prior studies, product country of origin has great impact to consumers' assessment on the product, which eventually affects the buying behaviour (Lee et al., 2010; Tigli, Pirtini & Erdem, 2010). But the result showed that country of origin has no influence to impulse buying behaviour. It is aligned with studies from Yeboah and Owusu-Prempeh (2017), stated that association between impulse buying behavior and product origin is weak.

## **CONCLUSION**

### **Conclusion**

The research findings revealed that price, store atmosphere, and social influence have significant influence towards the impulse buying behavior among working ladies. However, brand reputation and country of origin of product has no significant influence towards impulse buying behavior among working ladies. Overall, this research study has provided insights to Malaysian apparel marketers, retailers, and advertisers by allowing them to better understand how these five factors impact working ladies' impulse buying behaviour and plan for marketing strategies accordingly.

### **Implication**

The findings of this study contribute to the theoretical and practical implication of working ladies' impulse buying behavior. Theoretically, the research findings may increase the current knowledge of various factors that could influence impulse buying behavior. Additionally, this research focuses on the impulse buying behaviour of working ladies which is less studied previously. Therefore, this study extends the present understanding about impulse buying behavior by confirming the positive influence of price, store atmosphere, and social influence on impulse buying behavior within the context of working ladies.

Practically, the study was able to provide insight for the Malaysian apparel industry in determining the relationship of extrinsic cues which were price, brand reputation, country of origin of product, store atmosphere and social influence and the impulse buying behavior among working ladies. Concerning the significant influence of the variables, it leads to more sales turnover and benefits the marketers, retailers and advertisers. This is able to help Malaysia's apparel industry in planning and applying suitable marketing strategies to enhance their industry performance by understanding their customers' needs through utilization of the influencers.

### **Study Limitation**

Firstly, the result may be biased when survey questionnaires were used as a data collection method especially when those are close-ended questions. There is a high possibility that respondents are unable to express their opinions more detail or simply fill up without thinking in depth about the questions although the questions are simple and easy to answer. Moreover, this study was restricted from covering a wider area because of limited time and financial

constraints. Therefore, the sample size of the present study may not be large enough to represent the whole population of working ladies in Malaysia. Furthermore, availability of research information regarding to this study is a constraint. Most of the published journal articles and past studies conducted in foreign countries whereby there is lack of research on working ladies impulse buying in non-western societies.

### **Recommendation for Future Study**

This study was conducted to explore the consumers' needs and provide useful information to marketers, retailers and advertisers. It is recommended to cover a wider geographical area for future research. If financial resource is not much of a concern, it is encouraged to have the survey to be conducted in East Malaysia as well. The research can cover Malaysia in her entirety so that better findings can be developed. Future researchers may extend the study to other industries or other target populations too.

Furthermore, other independent variables can still be added for future research such as customers' personal characteristics, customer service and so on to improve the model fit. It is encouraged to include different research models in the research so that the relationship can be viewed from various perspectives. By broadening the study area, the results would have covered other contemporary perspectives resulting in the broadening of knowledge regarding impulse buying behavior although it might become more complicated.

Lastly, to overcome biased result from data collection via survey questionnaire, it is suggested to have interview sessions to capture respondents' thoughts and opinions. This enables respondents to express their actual thinking and opinion easily, open-ended questions can be included during the conduct of interview as well.

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