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**THE EFFECT OF HEDONIC MOTIVATIONS, SOCIABILITY AND SHYNESS ON THE  
IMPULSIVE BUYING TENDENCIES OF THE IRISH CONSUMER**

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**COMPETITIVE PAPER**

**MARKETING TRACK**

## **The Effect of Hedonic Motivations, Sociability and Shyness on the Impulsive Buying Tendencies of the Irish Consumer**

### **Abstract**

Previous empirical studies have shown that consumers' hedonic shopping motivations can reliably predict their impulsive buying tendencies (IBT). Impulsivity has been shown to have strong roots in people's personality (Verplanken and Herabadi 2001). This study extended current research to include two other personality constructs - shyness and sociability - that have not been tested against impulsivity in the literature. A questionnaire comprising of subscales of IBT, hedonic shopping motivations, shyness and sociability as developed by Verplanken and Herabadi (2001), Arnold and Reynolds (2003) and Cheek and Buss (1981) respectively was administered to 194 respondents in two prominent Dublin city centre shopping locations.

Using a structural equation modeling technique, the effects of shyness and sociability on consumer's impulsive buying tendency were analyzed. The effects of consumer's hedonic shopping motivations along with their gender were also studied. Although no direct effect was found between either shyness or sociability and IBT, shyness did have a significant effect on hedonic motivations that in turn had a significant effect on IBT. Thus the results did confirm the effect of shyness on consumer's IBT. No relation was found between sociability and IBT. Gender issues had a significant effect in the model. Finally the research corroborated the multifaceted character of impulsivity and the need for further research in the area.

## **Introduction**

Although awareness regarding techniques employed by retailers is well known to consumers, the volume of impulse purchase is large and increasing (Hausman, 2000, Lee and Kacen, 2008). A possible explanation might be that impulse purchase is a multifaceted construct, a thinking that has found wide support in academia (Beatty and Ferrell, 1998, Harmancioglu et al., 2009, Martin and Potts, 2009, Billieux et al., 2008). Early research on impulse buying focused on the significance of the construct and its various categories (Clover, 1950, Stern, 1962, Kollat and Willett, 1967, 1969). More recent literature has shown that impulsivity has strong roots in people's personality (Verplanken and Herabadi, 2001). Thus a significant volume of research, particularly in the last decade or so, has focused on psychological constructs that may affect impulsivity (Franken et al., 2008, Russo et al., 2008, Wittmann and Paulus, 2008).

This article focuses on two personality constructs that have not been tested against impulsivity in the literature before: sociability and shyness. Although Hausman (2000) found in her study that a major motive of people to go shopping is to meet and spend time with other people, it could not be proved quantitatively. It also analyses 'hedonic motivation' as a predictor of impulse buying (Teller et al., 2008) considering there is widespread support that shopping activity satisfies a number of hedonic desires (Rook, 1987, Piron, 1991, Hausman, 2000, Teller et al., 2008) and bearing in mind it's not the sole reason for this type of behavior (Bridges and Florsheim, 2008).

The Irish retail sector has been transformed in the last decade or so with the arrival of well established foreign players and the rise in disposable incomes of the Irish population (CSO 2006). Although the recent economic recession has brought down the level of disposable

income of Irish population, the Irish food retail sector alone was estimated to be around €11.7 Billion in 2008 (Mintel 2008a). On the lifestyle front, research indicates that Irish people give more priority to personal well being and leisure activities such as shopping as compared to work related issues that tend to get lesser priority (Mintel 2008b), giving this study an added relevance in the Irish context.

The article starts with theoretical overview of impulse purchase and three psychological constructs of hedonic motivations, sociability and shyness. This is followed by the research methodology followed in this study: Structural Equation Modelling. Scale development issues, and confirmatory factor analysis findings are then presented. Findings of the research are discussed and finally conclusions and recommendations for future research proffered.

## **Impulse Purchase**

### **Evolution of the concept**

In the 1950s, when the concept had just been recognized, the broad understanding had been that it's a straightforward and one-dimensional construct. Literature of the time equated impulse purchase with unplanned purchasing (Clover, 1950, West, 1951). This narrow definition was perhaps the result of limited research in the area as the concept itself was a new one at the time. Piron (1991) contends that, during that time, the purchase was the focus of the researchers rather than the consumer.

This view evolved to a more thorough understanding a decade later. The literature of the time recognised that being only 'unplanned' is a necessary but not sufficient condition for a purchase to be termed impulsive (Stern, 1962, Kollat and Willett, 1967). Another significant development was the rejection of the previously held belief that since impulse purchase is

predominantly an irrational purchase it cannot be influenced (Stern, 1962). This can be observed in the research done during this period that included how shelf space (Cox, 1964) and consumer demographics (Kollat and Willett, 1967) affect impulse purchase. Efforts were also made during this period to identify and categorise impulse buying into different categories. Stern (1962), in a seminal paper, categorized impulse purchase into four categories: pure, reminder, suggestion and planned impulse buying.

Research in the 1980s and 1990s took this understanding a step further by not only recognizing that impulse purchase is constituted by a myriad of factors but more importantly that different individuals may get affected differently in different conditions (Rook, 1987, Beatty and Ferrell, 1998). Prior to this period the literature was more concerned with defining the concept and categorising it into relevant and meaningful categories (Hausman, 2000). The idea that impulse purchase, in addition to being unplanned, unintentional and immediate, is also hedonically complex was recognized during this period (Piron, 1991, Rook, 1987). A good critique of the previous definitions was given by Piron (1991) who put forward his own understanding of the concept and argued that impulse purchase is one that is unplanned, triggered by a stimulus and decided at the place of purchase.

The current literature has built upon the previous work on the area and offers a much clearer understanding of the concept. Many important developments can be noticed. Previous literature assumed impulsivity to be constant across all product categories (Rook and Fisher, 1995, Beatty and Ferrell, 1998 (a notable exception being Bellenger et al. 1978), a view that has been rejected by the extant literature (Jones et al., 2003). With the changing times, the prominence of e-commerce has increased dramatically, a development that has reflected in impulse buying literature (Strack et al., 2006, Dawson and Kim, 2009). The concept of

impulse purchase as an essentially 'in-store' purchase has become obsolete with consumers buying on impulse over the internet (Strack et al., 2006). Research has shown impulsivity to be positively related to new product launch (Harmancioglu et al. 2009) with culture also playing a significant part (Lee and Kacen, 2008). The price of the product has also witnessed a change in perception from major significance (Stern, 1962) to a realization that impulse purchase is not limited to low priced items only and that expensive items can also be bought on impulse depending upon the budget of the consumer (Hausman, 2000).

The extant literature has recognized the multifaceted nature of impulse purchase (Lee and Kacen 2008, Silvera et al. 2008, Martin and Potts 2009). So whereas on one hand research has been done on the factors that affect impulse purchase such as individuals decision making ability (Franken et al., 2008), social influence and subjective well being (Silvera et al., 2008) and environmental factors (Babin and Attaway, 2000, Peck and Childers, 2006), on the other hand consequences of impulse purchase have also been analysed including post-purchase satisfaction (Lee and Kacen, 2008), unhealthy eating and low self esteem (Verplanken et al., 2005) and consumers mood (Beatty and Ferrell, 1998).

Although factors like price and store layout still constitute important dimensions of impulse buying, current literature has placed more significance on individual traits of the consumer and thus personality of the consumer holds the utmost significance (Harmancioglu et al., 2009). Thus the focus of research has gradually shifted from the product to the consumer. The following section explains impulse purchase in detail.

## **What is Impulse Purchase?**

Impulse purchase, though a simple and straightforward concept at first glance is an intricate and multifaceted construct (Beatty and Ferrell, 1998, Verplanken and Herabadi, 2001, Harmancioglu et al., 2009). One of the most accepted definitions of impulse purchase in academia is from Rook (1987: 191) and it states that impulse purchase happens “when a consumer experiences a sudden, often powerful and persistent urge to buy something immediately”. The author also states that this urge is hedonically complex and involves intense emotions.

Jones et al. (2003) identifies three primary traits of impulse purchase: unintentional, unreflective and immediate. Unintentional refers to a situation where the consumer is not actively looking for the product but buys it in the course of shopping. Two categories need to be considered here: reminder and non-reminder purchasing. Reminder purchase happens when a consumer sees a product and that acts as a trigger for a purchase by reminding the consumer that it needs to be bought as it has been exhausted at home (Stern, 1962). The author considers this to be a type of impulse purchase, a view that has been rejected by recent literature (e.g. Beatty and Ferrell, 1998). These authors specifically state that impulse purchase is a non-reminder purchase. The second trait, unreflective, implies the consumer’s lack of evaluation regarding the product and unwillingness to think about the long term consequences (Rook, 1987) with only short term indulgence in mind (Wittmann and Paulus 2008, Dawson and Kim, 2009). The third trait relates to immediacy of purchase i.e. the time period between the stimulus i.e. seeing the product and consequently buying the product is very little (Lee and Kacen, 2008). Impulse purchase is a fast activity i.e. consumer tends to buy it almost immediately after seeing it without applying much thought (Rook, 1987).



Verplanken and Herabadi (2001) identify two primary aspects of impulse purchase. The first concerns the lack of planning and deliberation. As has been discussed before impulse purchase is primarily an unplanned purchase and involves a lack of evaluation on the part of the buyer (Rook, 1987). Essentially what differentiates an impulse purchase from a planned purchase is the quantity and the quality of the information that is analyzed before a purchase is made and the time that is taken between seeing the product and buying it (Lee and Kacen, 2008). It has been argued that the time taken for an impulse purchase is less compared to other planned purchases because lesser amount of information is processed by the consumer and without any evaluation of long term consequences (Jones et al., 2003, Wittmann and Paulus, 2008, Lee and Kacen, 2008). The second aspect, as discussed by Verplanken and Herabadi (2001), deals with the emotional aspect. Impulse buying elicits strong emotional responses. Consumers have been widely reported to have experienced feelings of excitement, joy, fear and contentment during their shopping process (Kollat and Willett, 1967, Hausman, 2000, Silvera et al., 2008).

The factors that affect and trigger impulsive purchase can be broadly divided into two major categories: internal and external factors (Dawson and Kim, 2009). External factors refer to those stimuli that are placed by retailers to induce customers into buying more (Lee and Kacen, 2008, Dawson and Kim, 2009). In addition to tangible features such as lighting, store layout and promotional signage (Verplanken and Herabadi, 2001, Peck and Childers, 2006) they include up- and cross-selling techniques employed by the retailer (Levy and Weitz, 2007).

In addition to the external factors, internal factors also significantly affect a consumer's impulsive buying tendency (Beatty and Ferrell, 1998, Verplanken and Herabadi, 2001,

Harmancioglu et al., 2009). These factors revolve around the personality traits of the consumer thus the primary focus is not the external environment but rather the individual (Verplanken et al., 2005, Dawson and Kim, 2009). Rook and Fisher (1995) contend that a person's normative evaluation has a significant effect on his impulsive buying behaviour. An individual's educational experience has also been found to have a bearing on his impulsive buying tendency (Wood, 1998). Furthermore Verplanken and Herabadi (2001) suggest that consumers buy impulsively to relieve stress. The idea here is that not all consumers behave identically to the external stimuli due to the difference in their impulsive buying tendencies (Rook and Fisher, 1995, Beatty and Ferrell, 1998, Jones et al., 2003, Dawson and Kim, 2009). Impulsive Buying Tendencies can be understood as the likelihood of a particular consumer buying a product immediately, unintentionally and without any thought applied (Jones et al., 2003). The next section discusses the psychological aspect of impulse buying behaviour.

### **Impulse Purchase: A Psychological Perspective**

Rook (1987) contends that impulse purchase represents a psychologically distinct type of behaviour. Impulsive buying has been shown to have strong roots in people's personality (Verplanken and Herabadi, 2001). The idea that impulsive buying tendency differs with every individual is now well accepted in academia (Rook, 1987, Verplanken and Herabadi, 2001, Harmancioglu et al., 2009). The essential traits of impulse purchase such as being unplanned, unintentional and immediate have been shown to be rooted in peoples' personalities. Franken et al. (2008) have empirically shown that impulsivity is associated with impaired decision making thus contributing to unintentional and unplanned purchases. Furthermore as far as the issue of immediacy of purchase is concerned, it has been shown that impulsive individuals

overestimate the duration of the time period between seeing the product and buying it that contributes to them buying it impulsively.

Impulse purchasing has long been associated with various negative attributes such as immaturity, weak will power and foolishness (Rook and Fisher, 1995, Hausman, 2000). Wittmann and Paulus (2008) contend that impulsive people have a tendency to overestimate the value of time and thus they tend to buy things quicker as compared to non-impulsive consumers. There is widespread support in the literature of the opinion that impulsive individuals tend to make decisions that although provide some short term rewards but often lead to long term negative consequences (Billieux et al. 2008, Franken et al. 2008, Martin and Potts, 2009). Rook (1987) contends that impulse purchase brings a situation of conflict between control and indulgence. If a consumer buys impulsively it's regarded as a victory of indulgence over control and taken as a sign of human weakness. This view is corroborated by Strack et al. (2006) who contend that impulsive buying may prove to be in total opposition to consumer's evaluative judgments that may ultimately bring a feeling of regret. Consumers also tend to suppress impulsive desires to not lose esteem in others eyes (Rook, 1987). This has recently been empirically tested by Harmancioglu et al. (2009) who contends that esteem has an effect on peoples impulsive buying. In extreme cases impulsive buying can convert to compulsive buying that is an uncontrolled and excessive shopping act ultimately resulting in personal and family suffering (Billieux et al., 2008, Franken et al. 2008).

Rook and Fisher (1995) contend that due to such normative evaluations of impulsivity, consumers tend to not buy impulsively so that they are not associated with the negative traits of impulsive buying. But as Hausman (2000) argues, this argument does not provide an explanation for the increased occurrence of impulsive buying. Despite the negative

connotations of impulse purchase, the trend seems to be increasing rather than slowing down (Lee and Kacen, 2008). To better understand this phenomenon it would be worthwhile to look into psychological constructs that may affect impulsivity. The following section would discuss the three psychological constructs of hedonic motivation, sociability and shyness to examine their effect on people's impulsive buying habits.

## **Psychological Constructs affecting Impulsive Purchasing**

### **Hedonic Motivation**

The meaning of shopping value has seen a significant shift with changing times. The traditional view had been that value basically means a quality product or service at a competitive price (May, 1989). This understanding had been predominantly product based (Miranda, 2009). This perspective, although still true, does not cater to present situation where a lot of factors other than the product hold huge significance (Diep and Sweeney, 2008, Allard et al., 2009). Consumers are increasingly seeking value not only from the product but from the shopping process itself (May, 1989, Teller et al., 2008). The literature is replete with numerous accounts of consumers buying a product, driven not by necessity or the value of the product at that price but due to completely different factors such as amusement, variety and surprise (Hirschman and Holbrook, 1982, Hausman, 2000, Arnold and Reynolds, 2003, Verplanken and Herabadi, 2001). These factors can be collectively termed hedonic motivations and the consumption of products either as a result of or to fulfil these motivations is termed hedonic consumption (Arnold and Reynolds, 2003, Teller et al., 2008). Hirschman and Holbrook (1982) contend that hedonic consumption is related to the multisensory, fantasy and emotive aspects of one's experience with products. Multisensory refers to consumers getting experience via multiple sensory means such as taste, sight, sound and smell (Hirschman and Holbrook, 1982, Jones et al., 2006). Emotions have also been

shown to have an important role in human decision making (Franken et al., 2008). Products elicit feelings such as joy, happiness and fright ultimately affecting their purchase decisions (Hirschman and Holbrook, 1982).

Although products have traditionally been predominantly seen in terms of their tangible attributes rather than their emotive aspects (Hirschman and Holbrook, 1982), the roots of hedonic value as a motive in customer shopping can be found as early as 1950s. The idea that products are not confined to the limits of what they could do but rather more importantly what meaning they signify for consumers was first discussed during this period (e.g. Levy, 1959). The 1980s took this perspective to new heights when it was firmly established that consumers actively seek a hedonic component in their shopping activity (Hirschman and Holbrook, 1982, May, 1989). The last decade has seen research blossoming in this area with scales having been devised to efficiently measure consumer's hedonic motivation levels (Arnold and Reynolds, 2003). Also with the basic concepts having been well defined in the area, researchers have recently looked at how hedonic aspect influences internet shopping behaviour (Bridges and Florsheim, 2008) and the consumer's perception of the retailer (Teller et al. 2008). It has also been argued that hedonic motivations vary across different product categories (Miranda, 2009).

Shoppers can be broadly divided into two broad categories, based on their preferences of what they seek from their shopping process, namely utilitarian and hedonic shoppers (Jones et al. 2006, Teller et al. 2008, Bridges and Florsheim 2008). Utilitarian shopping value is more rational and non-emotional in nature and is obtained when a product or a service is acquired efficiently. On the other hand hedonic value is more emotive and product-independent and concerns itself with the experience of getting that product (Holbrook and

Hirschman 1982, Babin et al. 1994, Arnold and Reynolds 2003, Jones et al. 2006, Teller et al. 2008). So whereas a utilitarian shopper, or a 'Homo Economicus' (Teller et al. 2008: 286), would try and get a good quality product at the least possible price a hedonic shopper, or a 'Homo Luden' (Teller et al. 2008: 286), is more likely to purchase that product from a store that has a pleasant atmosphere and offers other avenues of entertainment (Babin and Attaway 2000, Diep and Sweeney 2008,).

Although both utilitarian and hedonic shopping values hold significance as far as the satisfaction of the consumer is concerned, recent literature has given more significance to hedonic aspect of the shopping process (Jones et al., 2006, Peck and Childers 2006, Allard et al. 2009). Babin and Attaway (2000) contend that the store atmosphere, such as layout, lighting and use of colours can have a significant influence over the consumers shopping behaviour and can help develop long lasting relationship with the consumer. Peck and Childers (2006) have analysed the affect of touch on impulse buying and contend that it has a positive effect on it. Jones et al. (2006) have shown in their study that hedonic value had a greater influence over the satisfaction of consumers in terms of loyalty and re-patronage intentions. Perhaps this is the reason that even long after the introduction of internet shopping, that is fast, efficient and cheaper, shopping malls still account for the majority of shopping done by consumers (Arnold and Reynolds, 2003). Furthermore discount retailers whose business model is to offer lower prices with minimum regard to hedonic aspects have also started to focus on them due to their perceived significance (Carpenter and Moore, 2009) especially in the case of lower income consumers who have been shown to value hedonic aspect more than the utilitarian one (Allard et al. 2009).

## **Types of Hedonic Motivations**

Although the significance of hedonic motivations has been known for at least two decades now, there is a dearth of research work investigating the various hedonic motivations that modern consumers seek (Arnold and Reynolds, 2003). The authors based on their empirical data divide hedonic motivations into six broad categories: adventure shopping, social shopping, gratification shopping, idea shopping, role shopping and value shopping. Adventure shopping refers to shopping done primarily to seek stimulation and adventure. Many of today's shopping malls function also as entertainment centres with inbuilt theme and adventure parks primarily to lure consumers into their premises (Allard et al., 2009).

Social shopping, as the name suggests, refers to the process where shopping is done along with friends and family members. The primary motive here is to socialize with people rather than buying product. Consumers use shopping as an opportunity to mingle with other people and thus the process rather than the product becomes more significant (Diep and Sweeney, 2008). Gratification shopping is done mainly to satisfy and indulge oneself by engaging in shopping activity. Consumers have described shopping as a stress reliever (Hausman, 2000). In the wake of fierce competition retailers are increasingly focussing on both utilitarian and hedonic aspects of their stores giving a never before shopping experience to consumers (Carpenter and Moore, 2009). The fourth category is idea shopping that is primarily done to keep up with latest fashion trends and technological innovations (Arnold and Reynolds, 2003). Role shopping is done by a consumer primarily for others i.e. when a consumer gets fulfilment by shopping for his or her relatives or friends. Value shopping is perhaps the most familiar and common kind of shopping and refers to shopping that is done to get the best deal in the market in terms of bargains and special offers. There is a sense of accomplishment that

is obtained by looking for deals and by purchasing a product at a discounted value (Arnold and Reynolds, 2003).

Hasuman (2000) in her study on various motivations of consumers in buying impulsively, found that in addition to the primary motive of satisfying hedonic aspirations there were some other needs that consumers tried to fulfil via the process of shopping. The need to interact and socialise with people figured prominently in her findings. Thus the construct of sociability is been discussed next.

### **Sociability**

Sociability is the propensity of an individual to be in the company of people rather than being alone (Cheek and Buss, 1981). It has also been conceptualized as the degree of verbal participation in a peer group conversation (Gifford and Gallagher, 1985). Sociability has two aspects namely quantity and quality (Plomin, 1976). Quantity aspect concerns with the amount of social interactions without regard to the quality or the meaningfulness of the interaction concerned. It has been measured with items such as 'I prefer parties with lots of people' and 'I have more friends than most people' (Plomin, 1976: 25). On the other hand quality aspect is more concerned with the intensity of the social interactions rather than their number. Plomin (1976: 25) measures it with items such as 'It's important for me to feel very close to people I like' and 'People I like best express a lot of affection'.

The need to interact with people has been shown to lead to impulse buying (Hausman, 2000). Consumers have been shown to unintentionally purchase products on impulse with their main objective being to interact and socialise with people. Whereas sociability is the desire to be in the company of people, shyness can be understood as a tendency of an individual to be alone rather than with other people due to a feeling of anxiousness in the company of others



(Schmidt, 1999). Following this explanation, at least at a definitional level, it seems that shyness is opposite to the construct of sociability (Cheek and Buss, 1981).

### **Shyness**

Shyness has been defined as ‘discomfort and inhibition in the presence of others’ (Jones et al., 1986: 629). It can be understood as the uneasiness and discomfort one feels in other people’s company (Cheek and Buss, 1981) and is primarily due to the interpersonal nature of the moment rather than due to feelings of danger and threat that may arise due to others presence but are not strictly interpersonal (Jones et al., 1986). Shyness has been described as an excessive preoccupation with one’s feeling and thoughts varying between feelings of being uncomfortable to being completely reserved (Saunders and Chester, 2008). A shy individual does not act or behave in a normal way due to the feelings of anxiety that he or she feels when among a group of people (Schmidt, 1999). Thus although the desire to create a positive impression in others eyes is there, the required confidence is lacking (Saunders and Chester, 2008). This causes the uneasiness that a shy person feels in the company of others (Saunders and Chester, 2008, Schmidt, 1999).

Jones et al. (1986) argue that shyness is a personal trait that happens predominantly due to the personality of the person rather than as a response to a particular situation that is more temporary in nature. So, in response to a situation, a shy person is likely to be more reticent and quiet compared to a non-shy person (Jones et al., 1986). Shyness has been categorized on the basis of the time period associated with it (Jones et al., 1986). Some people experience shyness in short terms depending on the situation. Some others may experience on a more permanent basis to the point that it becomes a part of their personality (Jones et al., 1986).

## **Effects of Shyness**

Considering the nature of shyness, it's no surprise that shyness has quite a lot of negative connotations that have been widely discussed in academia (Goldberg and Schmidt, 2001, Pozzulo et al., 2007, Miller et al., 2008, Saunders and Chester, 2008). By its definition, a shy individual tends to avoid interacting with people and going to large gatherings. This, in turn, adversely affects his chances of meeting new people, some of whom may be prospective good friends (Saunders and Chester, 2008). Furthermore the authors suggest that shy individuals have a propensity to hold themselves responsible for failures that might have been triggered by some entirely different factor. It has also been shown that shyness has a negative effect on the information processing ability of an individual due to its adverse affect on the mental performance (Goldberg and Schmidt, 2001, Pozzulo et al., 2007, Saunders and Chester, 2008). There have been studies done specifically to estimate the affects of shyness on human behaviour. (Miller et al., 2008) contend that there is a definite relation between eating disorder and shyness. Shyness also tends to negatively affect eyewitness memory and increase susceptibility to misinformation (Pozzulo et al., 2007).

Interestingly some positive effects of shyness have also been discussed in academia. Zimbardo (cited in Saunders and Chester 2008) contends that due to the fact that shy individuals tend to talk less they may come forward as a refined personality. Furthermore it may also give an opportunity to the individual to sit back and observe rather than talk unnecessarily. Although shyness can sometimes be beneficial for the individual concerned it can be safely argued that it happens only when the level of shyness is moderate rather than extreme. Furthermore as can be construed from extant literature, shyness predominantly has a negative affect rather than any positive ramifications.

### **Shyness and Sociability**

Literally speaking shyness and sociability seem to be oppositely related with each other since shyness is the anxiety and uneasiness one feels in others company and sociability is the propensity of an individual to be with others. But contrary to this thinking, it has been empirically shown that these two are distinct personality traits (Cheek and Buss, 1981, Schmidt, 1999). Whereas Cheek and Buss (1981) did a factor analysis of the two variables and found a weak correlation between shyness and sociability. Schmidt (1999) differentiated the two constructs via frontal brain electrical activity. Thus although at a definitional level both constructs seem to be related, at an empirical level shyness is more than just low sociability (Bruch et al., 1989).

### **Research Methodology**

SEM was utilised given its superiority in analysing simultaneous relationships between multiple dependent constructs. Adopting Anderson and Gerbing's (1988) two stage method involved firstly assessing the measurement model for each construct and then considering the structural paths between the latent constructs. The LISREL program was used to analyse the results with the method of extraction being set as maximum likelihood. The results of the testing were assessed against generally accepted criteria (Hu and Bentler, 1999; Hooper et al., 2008).

The data was collected in August 2008 over a period of three days in Dublin City Centre using a street-intercept method. Two different locations in busy shopping areas were used. 204 responses were achieved with 10 unusable giving a final sample of 194. Missing data was handled using the EM algorithm, and the data was transformed by PRELIS to be used in LISREL. The sample was split equally between males and females. While a random

sampling method was used, the researchers were aware that males and females have been shown to have different levels of impulse.

## **Objectives**

The aim of the research was to investigate if the shyness and sociability of the respondents had a direct effect on their impulse shopping behaviour. These two constructs have not been tested with impulse behaviour before using an SEM methodology. As a sub-objective, the influence of the hedonic shopping motivations of the respondents and their gender was modelled.

## **Scale Development**

### *Impulsive Buying Tendency*

Impulse buying tendencies of the consumers were measured using the 20-item IBTS-Impulse buying tendency scale (Verplanken and Herabadi, 2001). According to the authors, impulse buying tendency of consumers consists of primarily two components namely cognitive and affective impulsivity. Consequently the IBTS has two sub scales, each with ten items that measure cognitive and affective impulsivity of consumers. Cognitive facet refers to lack of evaluation and planning on part of the consumer and consists of items such as “if I buy something, I usually do that spontaneously” and “I often buy things without thinking”. Affective component refers to emotions of excitement, lack of independence and control. It is more emotive in nature and has items such as “I sometimes cannot suppress the feeling of wanting to buy something”. The IBTS has good internal reliability (Coefficient alpha of: complete 20-item scale: 0.87 with individual subscale-cognitive: 0.82, affective: 0.80 as per Verplanken and Herabadi (2001)) and has been used in many studies (Silvera et al., 2008, Dawson and Kim, 2009).

### *Hedonic Motivations*

Hedonic motivations of consumers were measured using the 18-item Hedonic Motivations scale (Arnold and Reynolds, 2003). As has been discussed before the authors have categorised hedonic motivations into six categories namely adventure, gratification, role, value, social and idea shopping. Based on this, the scale developed by the authors consists of six factors each with three items. Adventure shopping refers to stimulation during shopping and has items such as “To me shopping is an adventure”. Gratification shopping measures the satisfaction a consumer achieves during the shopping process and consists of items such as “To me shopping is a way to relieve stress”. Role shopping is done primarily for others and has items such as “I enjoy shopping for my friends and family”. Value shopping is done to get products at bargain prices and is measured with items like “I enjoy hunting for bargains when I shop”. Fifth factor is social shopping that measures the motivation of consumers to shop with friends and family. It has items including “I enjoy socializing with others when I shop”. Last factor is idea shopping and measures the motivation of consumers to keep up with current fashion trends. It is measured by items such as “I go shopping to see what new products are available”. This scale has good internal reliability (Coefficient alpha of 0.87 as per Arnold and Reynolds 2003) and has been used in many studies (Kim and Forsythe, 2007, Nguyen et al., 2007).

### *Shyness and Sociability*

Shyness and sociability were measured using the scale put forward by Cheek and Buss (1981). This scale has two sub scales that measure shyness and sociability individually.

Shyness is measured using the 9-item shyness scale. The scale assesses shyness with items like “I feel inhibited in social situations” and “I feel tense when I’m with people I don’t know well”. The scale has good internal reliability (Coefficient alpha of 0.79 – Cheek and Buss (1981)). Sociability was measured using the 5-item sociability scale and it consists of items like “I like to be with people” and “I prefer working with people rather than alone”. The scale has acceptable internal reliability (Coefficient alpha of 0.70 – Cheek and Buss (1981)). Both these scales have been used extensively (Bruch et al., 1989, Schmidt, 1999, Goldberg and Schmidt, 2001, Miller et al., 2008).

## **Findings**

### **Scale Validation**

The 20 item IBTS scale, the 18 item Hedonic Shopping scale, the 9 item Shyness scale and the 5 item Sociability scale were amalgamated and a principal components analysis with varimax rotation was undertaken to check for discriminant validity. The four scales emerged as expected, however there were some significant cross-loadings between the IBTS and the hedonic Shopping scales. This was to be expected given the research on impulse and hedonic shopping, the high degree of correlation expected. Interestingly the results of Bruch et al (1989) showing a difference between shyness and sociability was borne out by the results.

The IBTS scale was further factor analysed using SPSS to investigate the factorial structure. The IBTS scale is made up of two sub-scales: one concerning cognitive issues and one concerning affective issues. Item 14 relating to (‘falling in love at first sight with products’) had a low communality (below 0.4) (Fabrigar et al., 1999) and thus was removed from further analysis. This is not that surprising given that in the research of Verplanken and Herabadi (2001), the loadings was the lowest at 0.25. The expected two factor structure did not emerge.

A single factor was found using PCA with varimax rotation and also principal axis factoring with promax rotation ( $kappa = 4$ ). This was not as expected given the literature (Verplanken & Herabadi, 2001) suggest the existence of a cognitive and an affective sub-scale. However since the two sub-scales are highly correlated in the literature (Hausman, 2000), a confirmatory factor analysis was then undertaken to test the hypothesis that there were two clear sub-constructs.

The CFA was carried out using LISREL 8.8. Item 14 was dropped from the analysis for low loadings onto the construct. The fit of the hypothesised two factor model was superior to the one factor model (Chi Squared = 548.46,  $df = 152$ , RMSEA = 0.116 versus Chi Squared = 322.85,  $df = 151$ , RMSEA = 0.077).

The Hedonic shopping scale was factor analysed in SPSS to investigate its factorial structure. According to Arnold and Reynolds (2003), there are six sub-factors of hedonic shopping motivations. The PCA with varimax, and principal axis with promax found one factor best described the data. This was an issue as their original paper noted that there were multiple sub-factors. A CFA on the data was carried out. Each of the sub-scales was analysed with one other as there were only three observed items per sub-construct. While the individual sub-constructs showed acceptable measurement properties, the measurement model using all six showed evidence of Heywood cases with the correlations between the latent constructs emerging as greater than 1. As a solution to this problem, it was decided to attempt to average the individual items per sub-scale. Cronbach alphas were calculated for each sub-scale and these ranged from 0.833 to 0.895 which is acceptable (Tabachnick and Fidell, 1996). The six new items were used in a CFA and the measurement model with six sub-factors showed good fit (Chi Squared = 15.04,  $df = 9$ , RMSEA = 0.059).

The 9 item shyness scale was tested next. PCA with varimax rotation showed a single factor which was as expected. A CFA showed an acceptable level of fit (Chi Squared = 55.94, df= 27, RMSEA = 0.075). The 5 item Sociability scale was the final scale to be tested. PCA with varimax rotation showed a single factor as expected. The level of fit in the CFA was poor (Chi Squared = 21.93, df= 5, RMSEA = 0.132). Modelling the sociability scale with the shyness scale showed a very good level of fit however (Chi Squared = 128.74, df= 76, RMSEA = 0.050) and the hypothesised structure was retained.

### **Modelling**

In modelling the effects of sociability and shyness on impulse buying tendencies (IBT) coupled with hedonic shopping, there were a number of distinct options available. One option was to model shyness and sociability as having a direct relationship with IBT. Note that since the CFA had found two sub-factors of IBT, cognitive and affective, these will be modelled separately. In the initial model hedonic shopping value was also posited as a direct effect. An alternative model was to model shyness and sociability as being partially mediated by hedonic shopping. Each model will be dealt with in turn.

The direct model, as shown in Figure 1 below only had two paths significant (those between hedonic motivations and Cognitive and Affective IBT) as modelled by darker lines in the Figure. This was to be expected given the literature (e.g. Rook 1987, Beatty and Ferrell 1998, Peck and Childers 2006) but it was disappointing not to have a direct effect between Shyness and Sociability and either cognitive or affective IBT (given Hausman (2000) found a link between IBT and sociability in a qualitative setting). These paths were not found to be



significant in the model. The level of fit in the model was good (Chi Squared = 1311.43, df= 693, RMSEA = 0.068).

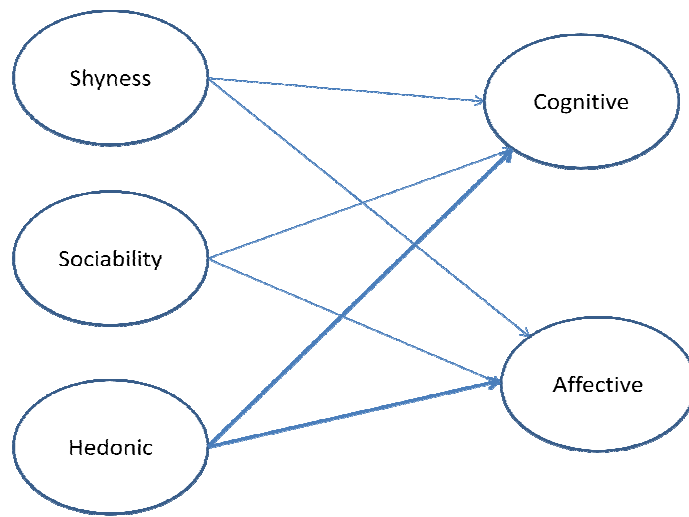


Figure 1: Direct Effects

Separate models were then estimated for the male and female sub-samples given that Teller et al. (2008) found that females have higher levels of impulsivity than males. While the results for the male sample echoed the results for the aggregated data set (with marginally worse fit), the results for the female sub-sample showed a significant negative ( $\beta = -0.14$ ) effect from shyness to cognitive IBT. This is interesting as it shows that for this group that cognitive IBT is affected by the level of shyness. The coefficient is in the correct direction as well, as we would expect higher levels of shyness to be commensurate with lower levels of IBT.

The second model to be tested was that which included Hedonic shopping as a partial mediator for sociability and shyness as per Figure 2. This is reasoned in that shyness and sociability may affect the level and extent of hedonic shopping and in this way affect the IBT of the consumer. The fit for the model was very good with a RMSEA of 0.068. Interestingly as posited, there was a direct effect from Shyness to Hedonic Shopping though none existed

between sociability and any other construct. As per the initial model the links between hedonic shopping and both forms of IBT held.

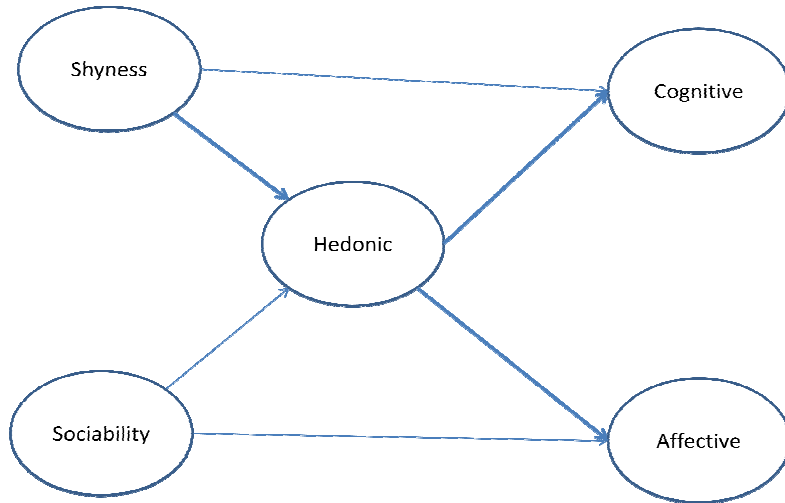


Figure 2: Partially Mediated Model

The results were interesting and showed that shyness had a significant direct effect on hedonic shopping ( $\beta = 0.21$ ). In the male sub-sample, the relationship disappeared with a similar level of fit. However in the female sample, there was a significant direct effect between Shyness and Cognitive IBT reflecting the results of the initial model. This was a negative ( $\beta = 0.14$ ) effect as posited.

### Conclusions & Research Directions

In conclusion this research had important insights. The IBT scales, with one minor issue, behaved as expected thus validating the work of Verplanken and Herabadi (2001) in another culture and setting. The shyness scale worked well, however the sociability scale did not perform as expected and the CFA results were less than desirable given the prominence of the construct (Cheek and Buss, 1981). The Arnold and Reynolds (2003) hedonic shopping types did not work as expected either at the full CFA level as reported in this paper however the

summated scales of the sub-constructs did show an acceptable level of fit, thus validating the conceptualisation of the construct but maybe not the individual items.

The role of shyness, posited in this research as having a significant effect on impulse purchase, is validated. While the results are mixed in general, strong support exists for the construct to be included when conducting research with mixed gender or female only samples. The link between hedonic shopping and impulse purchase (Rook 1987, Beatty and Ferrell 1998, Peck and Childers, 2006) was strongly validated in this study with consistently strong relationships with both forms of impulse purchase: cognitive and affective. Gender issues as noted by Teller et al. (2008) played a significant effect in the model. Future research will consider a multi-group design to test for difference of construct means.

Future research could investigate the relation between impulsivity and the psychological variables examined in this study qualitatively. There is evidence of correlation between impulsivity and sociability in a qualitative setting (Hausman 2000). While a partially mediated model was tested in this research, a fully mediated model could also have interesting results. Impulsivity is a complex area and the affective dimension may have a large part to play. It is perhaps surprising that this research did not find any linkages between sociability and impulse even mediated through hedonic shopping. This is particularly problematic consider the poor fit of the CFA of the established sociability scale. The results may be an artefact of the method, street intercept on a rainy Dublin summer, but also may be indicative that consumers are being savvier about their shopping habits in perhaps straitened circumstances and that cognitive processing of decisions is taking precedence over the more affective considerations.

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