

# Consumers' Impulsive Buying Behavior of Tourism and Travel Products in E-commerce

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## Abstract

**Impulse buying is currently a prevalent trend in online purchasing behavior. Recent studies have demonstrated that impulse buying drives as many sales online as it does in physical retail stores. The tourism industry has embraced this trend, particularly through various e-commerce stores. As with other forms of impulse buying, it is important to explore the factors that motivate the impulse buying of tourism products in the context of e-commerce. Accordingly, the current study investigates the behavior of impulse buying in tourism e-commerce. From the findings, marketing and website quality are seen to have the greatest influence on impulse buying tendencies. Meanwhile, personality and social values appear to have a weak relationship, statistically speaking. However, qualitative analysis reveals that they are still pertinent factors in driving impulse buying behaviors. It appears that their weakened influence is attributable to the increased personalization of marketing, which targets different people based on their different traits. Keywords: Impulsive Buying Behavior, Tourism and Travel Products, E-commerce.**

## Keywords

**Impulsive Buying Behavior, Tourism and Travel Products, E-commerce.**

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1. Online Consumer Impulse Shopping Behavior

The continuing growth of e-commerce activities (Barefoot, et al, 2018) have provoked numerous studies and significant research geared towards developing an understanding of the way in which consumer behaviors in the offline retail market are reflected in their e-commerce buying behaviors (Wells, Parboteeah, & Valacich, 2011). Focus has especially been afforded to impulse buying behaviors. This is important because in the offline, or physical retail scene, impulse shopping accounts for some 30 – 50 percent of total sales (Wells, Parboteeah, & Valacich, 2011). The consensus amongst researchers is that impulse buying is also a prominent shopping feature of the e-commerce scene (Wells, et al, 2011; Rexaei, Ali, Amin, & Jayashree, 2016; Ukram, Hui, Khan, Yan, & Akram, 2018). As with many industries, online shopping is becoming increasingly relevant to the tourism sector and hospitality industry at large. The aspects of tourism that have been, and continue to be impacted most heavily by the growth of information technology are the sectors' products and service delivery (Christobal-Fransi, Daries-Ramon, Marine-Roig, & Martin-Fuentes, 2017). Likewise, online shopping for travel and tourism products has increased substantially over recent years. The most significant area of growth has been in hotel bookings, for which online penetration increased from 24.5 percent to 25.7 percent in 2018 (Christobal-Fransi, Daries-Ramon, Marine-Roig, & Martin-Fuentes, 2017). By 2023, it is anticipated that penetration will reach 30 percent. Vacation rental penetration increased from 8.5 percent to 9.1 percent in 2018. Another statistical source shows that the penetration rate is 11.4 percent (Statista, 2018). Package holidays are not, however,

experiencing rapid growth as indicated by Statista, where the segment was determined to have grown by just 0.1 percent, up from 6 percent in 2017. Internet penetration in this area is expected to reach 6.4 percent by the year 2023 (Statista, 2018). According to Turkyilmaz, Erdem, and Uslu (2015, p.99) "impulse buying occurs when consumers experience a sudden, generally powerful and persistent urge to buy something immediately." Studies have noted that impulse buying relates to both environmental factors and an individual's personality. For instance, it is possible that the shopping urges experienced by two people placed in the same environment will be entirely different just as the products they are attracted to will differ. Additionally, people will not necessarily experience the same shopping urges when placed in different locations. However, impulse buying contributes to a significant percentage of sales, both in the context of online and offline shopping. It is this that makes impulse buying choices an important area of study.

## **1.2. Research Purpose**

The aim of this study is to develop an understanding of impulse buying of travel and tourism products. It seeks to explore the connections that exist between online marketing, social media influence, website design and personality, and impulsive buying behavior amongst online shoppers of tourism and travel-related products. The outcome of this research will have relevance to tourism marketers in developing effective shopping experiences for online buyers, and potential customers. It will also have pertinence to shoppers who wish to understand how different factors influence their buying behavior and how they can avoid the instinct to buy things on impulse.

## **1.3. Research Questions and Objectives**

The objective is to identify the internal and external stimuli that trigger consumer's impulse buying decisions in the online shopping environment. It will also attempt to design a method for measuring the impulse buying behavior of shoppers during their online shopping experiences. This will lead to the creation of a grouping of factors that explain impulsive shopping urges on the basis of their similarities. The study will also open up a new mechanism for exploring impulsive shopping by stimulating further research.

The guiding research questions are:

What is the relationship between personality and impulse shopping?

How does website quality relate to impulsive shopping behavior for tourism products?

Is there a relationship between marketing messages and impulsive buying behavior?

What social values have the strongest relationship with impulse buying of tourism products?

These questions will be important in developing a comprehensive understanding of impulsive shopping in relation to tourism and travel-related online buying experiences.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1. Tourism and Travel Products**

Purchase decisions in tourism and travel products are influenced by four key variables: image, attitude, perceived risk and cognitive dissonance (Sofique, 2007). In this context, 'products' may include the destination country, hotel, resorts, carriers and packaged trips, amongst other things. Their images and perceptions may have both an emotional and connotative meaning to consumers. Typical images include adventure, luxury, happiness and beating boredom. However, images such as these are not always grounded in factual knowledge or real experiences (Sofique, 2007). Marketing, therefore, plays a key role in shaping the image of tourism products. Consumers of tourism products also base their purchasing decisions on their attitude towards the products. As they search for information about the products in which they

are interested, they develop a particular attitude towards the product's attributes. These emotions are based on information gathered from different sources. Advertising offers an effective source of information about tourism products. Likewise, information received via word-of-mouth and social groups also plays a significant role in shaping a consumer's attitude (Sofique, 2007). Sofique (2007) further found that perceived risk is a key determinant in the consumer's decision-making process, as they seek to minimize disutility by reducing risk. In this context, the consumer will accentuate and judge a product's undesirable qualities. Despite this, clever marketing has the capacity to mitigate some of the perceived risks by framing the marketing message in a particular way. Marketing scarcity message is a new component of tourism marketing. Scarcity message seeks to promote buying by creating an awareness of the possibility that purchasing opportunities are limited. Scarcity raises the psychological pressure on consumers, thus encouraging them to buy products as they believe them to be scarce. Scarcity can be framed in two ways: limited time or limited quantity. Limiting quantity works by simply restricting the quantity of a product that can be bought by consumers. Limited time, meanwhile, limits the period of time within which a product can be purchased (Chung, Song, & Koo, 2015). According to Chung, Song, and Koo (2015), tourism products, by their nature, have limited production. As a result, there is a limitation on product variety as well as quantity. Sensitivity due to limited quantity is an inevitable element of tourism products. Chung, et al (2015) also note that they must be sold before a designated time; for instance, a travel package to attend a seasonal event is limited because it can only accommodate a specific number of people and only occurs at a specific time of year. By promoting tourism products in terms of their scarcity, marketers are able to arouse emotional reactions in customers and increase impulse buying behaviors. The tendency for impulse buying due to scarcity is further understood through the lens of cognition, emotion and behavior. With cognition, the consumer regards the perceived pleasure or enjoyment of the product, the price and the scarcity of choice. These factors elicit emotions that encourage a consumer to buy. When these emotions are heightened, the impulsive buying decision occurs. In this sense, the full consumer rationality that is anticipated by economic models does not apply to impulsive buyers (Chung, et al, 2015). Motivations for tourism and travel consumer behaviors vary on the basis of individual tourists. However, Laesser and Dolnicar (2012) argue that the impulsive buying of tourism products is largely driven by hedonic values. Achievement of higher income is a key driver of such hedonic impulse purchase decisions. These hedonic needs include emotional and social gratification, fantasy and fun, or pleasure seeking. Lifestyle activities are also a great predictor of impulse buying of tourism products. Laesser and Dolnicar (2012) suggested that most impulse travel and tourism product purchases can be placed into specific categories. The first of these categories encompasses short trips made by consumers to familiar destinations. In this category, individuals rely on internal or commercial information sources. Based leisure pursuit impulse buying is motivated by individualistic needs, such as adventure, sports and so forth. Alternatively, purchases can be categorized based on the degree of discretion in time planning. This sits in contrast to the general understanding of impulse shopping in the retail sector, which is typically associated with young, well-educated, individuals with high incomes. Rather, impulsiveness is based on the availability of time for leisure travel, individual needs, lifestyle and income (Laesser & Dolnicar, 2012)

## **2.2. Impulse Shopping Behavior**

Impulse buying is differentiated from compulsive buying in the sense that impulse buying is driven by external stimuli, whilst compulsive buying behavior is largely driven by internal factors (Bighiu, Monalica, & Roman, 2015). This distinction is important because compulsive shoppers are deemed to be unable to resist the shopping impulse. To a degree then, it is reasonable to view compulsive buying as a disorder. Individuals with this type of disorder continuously seek the positive feelings they derive from shopping, but which disappear

following the actual purchase, often to be replaced with depression or guilt (Bighiu, Monalica, & Roman, 2015). Impulse buying, by comparison, is a different and typically less problematic behavior because the impulse to shop comes from external cues or stimuli. Contrary to Bighiu, Monalica, & Roman's (2015) view that impulsive and compulsive buying behaviors are distinctly different concepts, Seinauskiene, Mascinskiene and Jucaityte (2015) believed the two to be inseparable subjects. Seinauskiene, et al (2015) commented that both impulsive and compulsive buying are driven by similar factors: identity and materialism. Nevertheless, there is scope for differentiation, insofar as impulsive shopping is seen by them as a milder version of compulsive shopping. In this sense, Seinauskiene, et al (2015) noted that impulse buying occurs at an initial stage and progresses to compulsive shopping at the extreme end of the spectrum (Seinauskiene, et al, 2015). This study treats both impulsive buying and compulsive buying as a unified concept of impulse shopping, with differences noted as arising from the strength or intensity of the buying behavior. Impulse buying, according to Chomvilailuk and Butcher (2014, p129), is shopping behavior that derives from an individual's exposure to external stimuli "by which customer may have new created needs and/or be reminded for temporarily forgotten needs." Impulse shopping relates to instances where the customer does not have a specific shopping plan before the shopping event occurs. That is to say that the customer has not planned to seek out a specific item prior to making any purchases. Despite this, impulse purchases may be likely, even when a pre-determined shopping list is present. This happens when the customer deviates from the list to shop for a product that is not on the list of items before entering a store (Chomvilailuk and Butcher (2014).

### **2.3. Personality and Impulse shopping**

A number of studies have explored the influence of personality on the process of buying. Prominent work by Mathai and Haridas (2014), for example, investigated the impact of personality on impulse buying behavior amongst retail customers; identifying a significant relationship between personality and impulse buying behavior. Using the big five personality traits: extroversion, agreeableness, emotional stability, openness to experience, and conscientiousness, they were able to research the relationship between buying experience, promotional factors, and the store environment. Based on a sample of 70 people, the study found that the influence of the store environment (or situation) had a stronger influence on the extroversion trait than anything else. Promotional factors, including the shopping experience, also had a significant impact on impulse buying behaviors for extroversion. Additionally, the researchers observed that the extroversion personality trait made a bigger difference than the other personality traits. Therefore, those with an extroverted personality were deemed to be more likely to engage in impulse shopping than those with other personality types (Mathais & Haridas, 2014). Another study by Shahjehan, Qureshi, Zed, and Saifullah (2012) measured the relationship between impulsive buying and personality traits, using the big five personality traits and a sample of 640 individuals, ranging in age from 20 to 70 years. Whilst the majority of the participants held a masters' degree, the second most abundant group held a bachelors' degree. This study determined a strong correlation between all five personality traits and impulse buying behaviors. Neuroticism was found to have the greatest positive correlation with impulsive and compulsive buying. The implication of this is that persons who experience anxiety, sadness, moodiness, emotional stability, and irritability are more likely to be impulse shoppers. People who demonstrated openness also showed a strong tendency towards impulse buying behavior, though less so towards compulsive buying (Shahjehan, Qureshi, Zeb, Saifullar, (2012). Another recent study by Shehzadi, Ahmad-ur-Rehman, Cheema, and Ahkam (2016) explored the link between personality and impulsive shopping. Rather than studying impulsive behavior, this study investigated compulsive behavior as a predictor of both compulsive and impulsive behavior, based on a sample of 200 respondents, most of whom had either a bachelors' or masters' degree. In their correlation analysis, they found the strongest correlation

between neuroticism and impulsive buying behavior. However, when extended to compulsive behavior, only agreeableness, neuroticism, and openness had a positive correlation with both compulsive and impulsive shopping behaviors, at 0.213, 0.257 and 0.260 respectively. These were found to be the only three personality traits that demonstrated a strong correlation with impulsive and compulsive shopping behaviors. However, the relationship was strong in both compulsive and impulsive shopping for the neuroticism personality (Shehzadi, et al, 2016). These personality traits have all been exhaustively studied within the context of offline shopping; predominantly in retail stores. It is highly likely, therefore, that the influence of personality is also existent in online shopping experiences. In a 2015 study, Turkyilmaz, Erdem, and Uslu found that extraversion, agreeableness and openness to change had a positive relationship with impulsive shopping behaviors during the online shopping experience. Conversely, they determined that conscientiousness and neuroticism had a negative correlation. These findings are important in shaping the direction of the current study, which seeks to better understand online impulsive shopping behavior in relation to tourism and travel products.

#### **2.4. Website Quality and Mediating Factors**

Owing to the ubiquity of online shopping today, both impulsive and compulsive shopping behaviors are observed on the internet as much as they are observed in offline stores. In their 2015 study, Bighiu et al found that the majority of impulsive internet buyers were women. Their study also noted that impulse buying was more likely to be seen in individuals who had subscriptions to mailing lists. Of all the participants who took part in this study, 18 percent were classified as impulsive buyers and 38 percent as compulsive buyers. It is therefore important to consider which factors drive compulsive internet behavior aside from personality. One of the major drivers of impulse buying on the internet is the quality of the website being navigated. Pabalkar (2014) measured impulsive buying behaviors in relation to the quality of various websites. Quality in this study was measured in terms of the attractiveness of the website's content, the use of high-quality well-designed graphics, the ease of navigation and the appeal of the commercials. The mean for these variables was found to be insignificantly different. All three variables are important predictors of impulsive shopping behaviors (Pabalkar, 2014). Another factor that may influence impulsive shopping behavior in the context of online shopping is the proximity bias. According to Verplanken and Sato (2011), the proximity of objects in relation to the person influences their judgment of the particular objects. In this sense, things that are close are judged to be more attractive, important, or bigger than those that are further away. The internet may be seen as a tool for making objects that are potentially far away, appear closer, and therefore more important to the consumer.

#### **2.5. Marketing and Pricing**

Prices have a strong influence on impulsive shopping behavior (Liu, Liu, Yuan, & Zhang, 2016). In their analysis, Liu, et al (2016) determined that discounts have a negative effect sales volumes. The implication here is that higher discount levels lead to lower sales volumes. In a real sense, this means that that the higher the knockdown price, the lower the volume of sales will be. This is due to the fact that the difference between the market price and the discounted price is negligible, therefore the realized gains for consumers are low. Stating a higher market price and a lower knockdown price gives the impression of a sizeable discount; leading to the likelihood of high sales (Liu, et al, 2016). This signifies an increase in impulse buying, occasioned by the perceived discount. Advertising plays a key role in driving the sales of different products. According to Abayi and Khoshtinat (2016), online advertising can have a positive impact on an individual's perceived level of trust in the advertised product. It has also been proven that advertising has a strong influence on the anticipated enjoyment of the shopping experience. Advertising creates enjoyment by influencing the arousal levels of the shopper. The more an advertisement is able to create emotional arousal, the more likely it is to

cause an individual to follow through with a purchase (Abayi & Khoshtinat, 2016). Liu, et al (2016) found that effective advertising has a positive effect on the sales of airline tickets. In their study, advertising was coupled with time pressure and discounts to create arousal. A product that creates a sense of urgency heightens the time pressure. Higher discount levels also create a sense of urgency, as people rush to take advantage of temporarily low prices. These factors, especially in conjunction with each other, will create arousal in consumers and most likely to lead to impulse purchase decisions.

## 2.6. Research Questions

Based on the literature reviewed, a number of areas of weakness, and gaps in the existing research have been identified. It is therefore necessary to formulate some relevant research questions to further the existing knowledge of tourism and travel impulse shopping:

What is the relationship between personality and impulse shopping?

How does website quality relate to impulsive shopping behavior for tourism products?

Is there a relationship between marketing messages and impulsive buying behavior?

What social values have the strongest relationship with impulse buying of tourism products?

## 2.7. Conceptual Framework

In the conceptual model of the study, the independent variables are website quality, marketing, social values, and personality. The dependent variable in the model is impulse buying behavior. It is hypothesized that the four variables have a direct relationship with a buyer's impulse buying behavior. Website quality includes factors such as ease of navigation, quality of the content, and the graphical design of the website. Personality is also expected to show a relationship with impulse buying. It is further assumed that there are some personalities that are more predisposed to impulsive buying behaviors than others. Additionally, because people live in societies, it is expected that that social values will be reflected in their buying choices. This is to mean that social values are likely to have a significant relationship with impulse buying behaviors. Marketing is also seen an important factor that leads to impulse shopping. Marketing factors as a variable are expected to create anticipation of happiness from purchase and hence create an emotional arousal that makes people more likely to buy on impulse.

## 3. Research Design and Methodology

### 3.1. Research Philosophy

A constructivist view of consumer actions is adopted in this study. This approach was selected due to the fact that the study seeks to develop an understanding of the way in which shoppers view the world when they shop online. Hence, aligning with the work of Aberg and Kurdieh (2013), this study will strives to reconstruct the worldview of impulsive shoppers in order to gain a deeper understanding of their motivations. It approaches this task in two ways. Firstly, it gathers quantitative data on the impulsive shopping behaviors of a sample of shoppers. It is anticipated that quantitative data will facilitate the identification of social trends. Secondly, the study will gather qualitative data from a sample of shoppers. This will help in defining the social context in which the qualitative data is observed, and explain the reason why we are observing the trends.

### 3.2. Research Strategy

For an empirical data collection strategy to fulfill its goals, it must be closely aligned with the study's objectives. The objectives of this study are to understand the nature of the relationship between impulsive shopping behaviors in tourism-related e-commerce sites and shoppers' personality traits and social values; as well as the influence of marketing and website quality. Against that backdrop, it was determined that surveys would be the best method for developing

an understanding of the frequency of impulse shopping and the way in which personality traits, social values, website quality and marketing correlate with impulsive shopping behaviors. Observational methods will also be employed as a means of addressing the qualitative aspects of the study. Observational methods are applicable to both the quantitative and qualitative aspects of research (Aberg & Kudieh, 2013). However, to draw definitive conclusions, deductive methods will also be used. The study will try to make inferences from the observed patterns in respondent narratives and the observations from data (Aberg and Kurdieh, 2013).

### **3.3. Research Method**

From the literature reviewed, it was ascertained that there is a strong link between the stimulus - internal or external - acting on an organism and the response it yields. Based on this finding, the Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) model was selected as the basis of the current study. This model will be used to investigate how personality, website quality, marketing and social values in the e-commerce scene invoke emotional responses in consumers and resultantly influence the urge or impulse to buy a tourism or travel product online. The SOR model of impulse buying, as discussed by Huang (2016), shows that the actions of individuals are provoked by a stimulus that is external to the organism. In response to the stimulus, internal processes are initiated in preparation for the final response. However, there are intervening factors or processes – cognitive, perceptual, emotional and physiological – all of which are internal processes that occur within the organism (Huang, 2016). In the current study, the stimuli are categorized as reactive and affective; or situational and marketing stimuli respective. These have a significant impact on the internal processes within the individual shopper and influence the final decision to buy on impulse. The study also considers symbolic interactionism to be a relevant approach to the adopted interpretivist model. Symbolic interactionism concerns the actions of human agents. According to Oliver (2012), it explores the way in which subjective roles and the feelings that humans apply to different things or circumstances influence their actions. This is consistent with social capital theory. Social capital refers to the resource in a social unit which derives from the relationship between an individual and society, as well as within society (Huang, 2016). Social capital provides individuals and societies with resources and emotional support. This is critical in examining the role of social values in shaping compulsive shopping behaviors in tourism e-commerce sites.

### **3.4. Data Collection**

A sample of twenty students was selected using a mix of stratified and convenience sampling methods. Participants were asked to complete a questionnaire that included measures of frequency of impulsive shopping behavior relative to tourism or travel, personality, marketing, website quality and social values. Additionally, the researcher asked open ended questions to identify themes in the lives of the respondents as a mechanism for gaining a deeper understanding of the social contexts of their actions.

#### **3.4.1. Participant Selection**

Stratified sampling was used in the study. The research selected 20 people using convenience sampling at a convenience store. The inclusion criteria was that an individual had to have made at least one online purchase related to tourism or travel products in the last five year years. Participants who did not meet the criteria were dropped from the study. This method of sampling was favored because it offered an equal probability of being selected to participate to the entire population of people who had a made a purchase online, with regards to tourism and travel products (Sedgwick, 2013). Convenience in the sampling arises from the fact that once an individual who fit the criteria was identified, there was no further randomization in the sample.

### 3.4.2. Instruments

A survey and interview were used in the study. Participants who agreed to take part were issued with a survey questionnaire to complete in their own time, and mail back to the researcher within a week. A summary of the survey instrument with the survey items is shown on the appendix table 8. The first section of the survey informed the participants of the purpose of the study and sought their consent to engage. Participants were informed that their information would not be disclosed and that the results would be coded and stripped of any personally identifiable information. The second section of the survey sought to understand impulsive shopping behaviors in the sample population. The first question required the respondents to state the number of times they had purchased a travel or tourism product online over the last five years. The second item then asked the respondents to indicate whether all their purchases were planned in advance or were made on the spot, based on the information available to the individual at the moment of purchase. Participants were also required to indicate the number of times such shopping behavior occurred in the past five years. The third section related to marketing influence. Participants were asked to indicate whether they had been exposed to marketing or promotional messaging relating to travel or tourism prior to making the impulse purchase. They were further asked to illustrate the type of messaging to which they were exposed. These items were included to measure the influence of marketing on impulsive shopping and explore any themes present in the marketing and promotional messaging that customers experienced. In the fourth section, participants were queried on their website experiences, as they were asked to rate the quality of the website they had visited in terms of its ease of navigation, graphics and the ease of reading, in addition to the organization of the content. Respondents were also required to describe the information contained within the website and the types of marketing or promotional messages that were displayed. This included prices, discounts, featured products or services and information regarding things such as tourist destinations, airline and hotel reviews. The subsequent section (five) of the survey, explored themes of social values. Customers were asked to give descriptions of their ideal lifestyle, the things that they value in life and their views on travel and tourism in general. It also required participants to describe the views of their friends and family with regard to tourism and travel products. The intention of this line of questioning was to create an image of an individual's and society's values in relation to tourism products and the way in which they view impulse shopping. In the final section, participants were asked to describe their personality within the confines of the big five personality traits. The five traits were outlined in the survey, along with a request for them to assign themselves to one of the categories. In this section, the aim was to develop an understanding of the individual's self-reported personality trait, based on their understanding of the big five traits: openness, conscientiousness, extroversion, agreeableness, and Neuroticism - abbreviated as OCEAN.

### 3.4.3. Qualitative Data

The researcher included provision for additional narratives regarding purchase behaviors. In each section, the participants were asked to elaborate on their experiences. For instance, in the second section, participants were asked to describe their impulse purchase. This required them to offer an account of the experience in the same way they would if they were discussing the situation with the researcher in person during a face-to-face interview. When interrogating marketing, participants were prompted to describe an example of a marketing or promotional message that they had received prior to their impulse purchase. As regards website quality, participants were asked to outline the way in which they had navigated to the website. This was incorporated to determine whether it was via an online marketing campaign online or through social media interactions. Further to this, they were asked to elaborate on the factors within the website that drove them to make the impulse purchase. In describing values, participants were invited to elaborate on their values and lifestyle choices. This required them to describe the

values that drive their purchase decisions, how they view impulse buying and how they perceive tourism and travel products in general. They were also asked to discuss the same with regards to their friends and family. In addition to the self-reported personality, participants were asked to explain why they assigned themselves the particular personality trait they did. Here participants were to describe the various personal sub-traits that can be classified within the personality traits.

### **3.5. Statistical Methods and Data Analysis**

IMB SPSS was used to analyze the data. During the process of data interrogation, a correlation analysis was performed to establish whether there were relationships between impulsive behavior (the dependent variable) and the independent variables of marketing, social values, website quality and personality. This data was tabulated and presented in the following chapter. As a mixed methods study, the qualitative data was analyzed using the grounded theory approach (Center for Innovation in Research and Teaching, n.d). According to the Center for Innovation in Research and Teaching (n.d), grounded theory, as an approach to qualitative data analysis, "attempts to develop causal explanations of a phenomenon from one of more cases being studied. In the context of this study, the findings from the quantitative analysis form the groundwork for grounded theory. The researcher developed themes that explain the observed trends in the qualitative data. In this sense, the understanding of impulse shopping behavior in relation to tourism and travel products can be progressed from statistical trends to real life contexts. This will held to deepen the meaning and understanding of the phenomena.

### **3.6. Research Model**

The research begins with identification of research problem. This was followed by exploration of literature to identify the research gap that will be filled by the current study. The first stage is identification of research topic. The second stage involved two steps; one being review of existing literature. The other one being identification of research gaps and formulation of research questions that will guide the research. In the third stage, participants were selected. Selection of participants was random and also a convenient method. This is to mean that the researcher picked people at random and then checked whether they met the inclusion criteria. Still on stage three, after participant selection, the next step was data collection. Stage four was only data collection. The researcher gathered data through surveys that were mailed, filled, and sent back to the researcher. Data collection also included entering the data into a system for data analysis in stage four. Stage five, the last stage was presentation of findings from the research process.

## **4. Presentation of Findings**

### **4.1. Impulse buying and Marketing**

A regression analysis was conducted on the obtained data. Regression analysis was preferred in this case because it has the capacity to reveal the extent to which the variables explain the independent variable and the nature of the relationship between the two variables. In the analysis, it was observed that there is a positive correlation between the frequency of marketing and the likelihood of impulse buying.

### **4.2. Impulse Buying and Website Quality**

In the survey, website quality was rated as high, poor or medium. The majority of the participants reported that the website quality was high. Only 15 percent of the participants observed that the website quality was low.

### **4.3. Impulse Buying and Values**

Personal values were also analyzed as a possible contributing factor in occurrences of impulse buying behaviors. In this case, participants were required to rate whether their personal values, as well as those of society, influenced their impulse buying behaviors.

### **4.4. Impulse Buying and Personality**

The study also investigated the influence of personality on impulse buying behaviors. Data was aggregated to create a composite indicator for personality.

### **4.5. Quantitative Data Analysis**

Analysis of the quantitative data revealed that two variables are significant in explaining impulse buying behavior amongst those who purchase tourism and travel products. These are marketing and website quality. Personality and values, by comparison, appear to have an insignificant relationship with impulse buying of tourism products. Accordingly, it is important to explore the qualitative data to attempt to identify further explanations for the quantitative findings.

#### **4.5.1. Marketing**

The survey required participants to outline the frequency and forms of marketing messages to which they had been exposed in the past. One of the most prominent themes noted in tourism and travel marketing messages was that of pleasurable experiences. According to the participants, the majority of messages promoted positive qualities such as happiness, relaxation and luxury. The messages also typically packaged tourism products as exotic experiences that could only be accessed at the specific locations being advertised. The connotation here being that for an individual to enjoy this type of experience, they have visit the exact location. An additional theme that was identified was that of discounted prices. Most participants emphasized that the messages they had encountered promised irresistible discounts, which may have prompted them to make a purchase. This was especially common amongst packaged products. Buyers were able to access sizeable discounts by signing up for a product that included prearranged travel, accommodation and pre-planned visits. A variation on the theme of packaged products was group discounts. Some participants noted that they were enticed by the significant discounts they could attain by signing up for a group product. Individuals, particularly those with families, were keen to purchase group products because they afforded them the opportunity to travel with their family at costs that were lower than the cumulative price of paying separate fares.

#### **4.5.2. Website Quality**

Website quality was found to have a significant influence on impulse shopping. However, in reality, this element often seems to merge with marketing. This is because most participants who had navigated to tourism e-commerce sites were redirected there from online adverts or links contained within different, external websites. In these scenarios, marketing was the first qualifier to impulse shopping for tourism and travel products. Nevertheless, within the websites, the quality of the website itself was a great predictor of the buyers' impulse shopping tendencies. Insofar as quality is concerned, participants regarded websites that were easy to navigate as being of good quality. Amongst other things, ease of navigation includes the layout of the website, with quality denoting that it is easy to locate specific products or information. The easier the navigation, the more likely participants were to rate the website as high quality. Another pertinent factor was that a website with relatively greater ease of navigation required participants to spend less time browsing products. By investing less time, they were likely to make a quick purchase, rather than thinking through the decision. The website's content was also regarded as an important characteristic in predicting impulse buying. Content in this case refers to the information contained within the website. One participant, for instance, noted that

they found a rather compelling infomercial about a particular holiday. This coincided with the participant being on leave from work, resulting in them deciding that “the trip was going to be a nice way to spend my time. I did not have children to look after so I figured, why not just take a vacation?” Therefore, websites that had high quality content were more likely to induce visitors to make an impulse purchase than those with low quality content.

#### **4.5.3. Values**

Based on the outcome of the qualitative analysis, it appears that the influence of values is mixed. At one end of the spectrum, values do indeed drive impulse purchases, whilst at the other end, they do not appear to have much influence. Some participants noted that they been in contact with friends and relatives who had travelled to tourism sites for a vacation, reporting back great experiences. It was their belief that vacations are a great way to enjoy life and engage in different experiences. Such participants believed that tourism products were an essential part of their unexperienced life. For participants such as these, positive marketing messages and prices were likely to influence them to make impulse purchases. For other participants, values had nothing to do with their decision to make impulse purchase, with most reporting that at the time they made their purchases, they did not consider any values to be a guiding factor. Rather, they felt emotionally compelled to make the purchase. For them, the greatest motivation was the anticipation of the experience that they would get from taking the trip. Values only did not become a pertinent factor until later. For participants who reported that values had no considerable effect on their purchase, the same values also affected them after the purchase had been made. Most participants reported that they felt bad about the purchase once they had completed the transaction. This was principally because they felt that they could have secured a better deal had they thought over their choices more keenly before making the impulse purchase.

#### **4.5.4. Personality**

Whilst neither the purchase decision nor personality were found to have a significant relationship with impulse purchases in the quantitative data analysis, qualitative data revealed contradictory results. The majority of participants who reported that they had made an impulse purchase previously noted that they had extroverted or agreeable personality types. This suggests that some personality types may be more predisposed to impulse buying than others. The quantitative data seems to show that the relationship is insignificant because impulse shopping cuts across the different personality types.

## **5. Conclusions, Interpretations, and Recommendations**

### **5.1. Discussion of Findings**

#### **5.1.1. Marketing and Website Quality**

The study’s results indicate that marketing has a significant influence on impulse buying. This influence can be understood using the stimulus-organism-response (SOR) approach. The SOR approach examines consumer behavior by observing the way in which different stimuli affect an organism and the responses that are elicited from such stimuli (Jacoby, 2002). In this analysis, marketing is regarded as an important stimulus. Marketing, as a stimulus, yields a set of affective and cognitive reactions in the buyers (Parboteeah, Taylor, & Barber, 2016). In their study, Parboteeah, Taylor, and Barber (2016) found that both high and low task-relevant cues positively influenced the customer’s perceived enjoyment and usefulness of the product they were buying. The current study finds that marketing is an important factor in influencing impulsive behavior. The marketing process begins well before the consumer visits the e-commerce site. According to the participants of this study, marketing messages depict the product as tangible, with the capacity to enhance an individual’s happiness through consumption. As a pleasurable feeling, happiness elicits positive emotions in the buyers. The e-

commerce websites were also found to be structured in such a ways as to offer the best possible customer experience. This is achieved by making it easy to access various products and information. Many websites also provided an interactive experience, which increased customer engagement with the products. For example, some participants noted that they were able to view virtual tours of the locations that they intended to visit. This mechanism increased their perceived enjoyment of the products that they eventually bought. As indicated in the qualitative analysis, websites that are easy to navigate are able to elicit positive emotions amongst users. Customers rated high quality websites as those where navigating to the target product was easy and non-time consuming. This echoes the findings of Lin and Lo (2016) who determined that websites that are easily navigable make it possible for visitors to employ minimum mental effort when locating important information or products in the online store. This reduced effort creates the impression of an increased sense of control (Lin & Lo, 2016). Contrarily, a website that is difficult to navigate will tend to lead to mental frustration, which in turn will reduce the likelihood of completing a purchase. The same behavior was observed in the current study. Websites that were easy to navigate were likely to lead to impulsive purchases. Wu, Hsu, and Lee (2015) also noted in their study that a website that is pleasing in terms of graphics and content also increases the urge to buy. In the current study, participants responded that they made impulse purchases through websites that had better visual displays and contained pleasant information. These factors fulfilled the customers' needs and lead to emotional arousal. For instance, customers who were able to access virtual tours of different places often made impulse purchases via those websites.

### 5.1.2. Personality and Values

Whilst an individual's personality may be embedded deep within them, it is observed in their everyday reactions to situations and events. Therefore, personality is likely to affect how people react to marketing messages. However, in this study, it appears that no specific personality type or trait was more prone to impulse buying than any other. One factor that could explain this phenomenon is personalization of marketing (Oliver, 2013). Marketers are now able to segment customers and target them with specific advertisements that are tailored to their needs. As a result, the apparent differences that were observed in past studies may not be relevant today. These differences may also have disappeared as a result of the contributions of information technology to relationship marketing. Companies now have access to more customer information, including shopping preferences, lifestyle choices, income ranges, educational backgrounds and host of personal information than ever before. This knowledge is frequently used to personalize customer experiences and marketing messages in order to increase customer purchases and enhance customer retention (Basyuk, Prymak, & Pohuda, 2018). Customers are now likely to receive personalized promotional messages via email (amongst other channels) that outline products and services in which they may be interested, based on their past behavior. This form of targeting is personalized and therefore eliminates any biases that may arise as a result of personality differences. Whilst values are acquired and acted upon within social settings, this study found that there is no significant relationship between values and impulsive buying behaviors. One possible reason for this is the diminished social influence on the e-commerce site (Chuang, Tian, & Lin, 2015). For instance, Chuang, Tian, and Lin (2015) discovered that compared to traditional stores, e-commerce sites are private. During traditional shopping experiences, the presence of friends or relatives could discourage impulse shopping behaviors (Chuang, Tian, & Lin, 2015). This explains why social values were found to have no significant influence on impulse buying behavior in the current study.

## 5.2. Limitations

One of the challenges of the current study was the population of the participants, as the study used a limited sample size in order to draw both qualitative and quantitative data from each

participant. Another limitation to the current study is the nature of the collected data. An additional limitation to the study was conducted using self-reported participant data.

### 5.3. Interpretation and Recommendations

Despite limitations, the study has important implications for tourism marketers, particularly insofar as it finds that social values and personality have an insignificant influence on impulse marketing. The fact that there is no strong correlation between personality or values and impulse buying behavior does not mean that they are not important. What may be inferred here is that this may be attributable to an increase in the personalization of marketing and customer relationship management initiatives. As firms move towards greater personalization, customers get what they want and therefore it is hard to differentiate between impulse and normal buying. Firms are now able to monitor and analyze customer data in ways that allow them to form a reasonably reliable profile of the customer. Such a customer is targeted with service and product information that makes it seem like a need. In that sense the customer feels that they are actually making a normal purchase decision based on rational thinking. What is apparent is the fact that marketing and website quality are the external stimuli with the greatest potential to influence impulse shopping behavior. Accordingly, tourism and travel companies wishing to benefit from increased online sales should focus on personalizing marketing messages in order to target different personalities. Additionally, it is important for tourism e-commerce sites to have an appealing aesthetic, contain relevant information and be easy to navigate. Finally, their targeted messages should direct customers to products of interest, useful information and also check-out pages in order to minimize mental frustration and avoid abandoned purchases.

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