



Consumers' Impulse Buying Behavior on E-Commerce Shopping Platforms: 7C Framework and Emotions

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Abstract

The world of digital marketing has been fast advancing in recent times. Marketers have developed various practices to attract consumers to their products and services. Online shopping applications have introduced different methods to encourage consumer impulse buying. However, past literature has overlooked the 7C framework, despite its introduction during the early stages of e-commerce development. Thus, this study aims to examine the dimensions of digital marketing and the mediating role of emotions on impulse buying behavior in e-commerce shopping platforms. This study used the Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) framework as the underpinning theory for developing the proposed framework. The 7Cs framework, serving as the stimulus (S), includes content, context, commerce, customization, connection, communication, and community. Emotions represent the organism (O), while impulse buying behavior is the response (R). A survey was conducted to collect data from 331 shoppers from two major online platforms in Malaysia. Exploratory Factor Analysis was performed and revealed six dimensions of digital marketing. Furthermore, it was found that emotions partially mediate the relationship of (a) context, (b) connection, and (c) commerce on impulse buying behavior. Emotions fully mediate the relationship between (a) communication and (b) customization on impulse buying behavior.

This study enhances the understanding of the 7C framework, which is underexplored in the context of e-commerce. The 7C framework can be used to assess not only website design but also the design of e-commerce shopping platforms.

Keywords: Impulse Buying Behavior, 7C Framework, Emotions, SOR

Introduction

The digital marketing domain has experienced remarkable evolution, driven by the rapid expansion of online platforms. The year 2021 marked a significant milestone, witnessing a 68% surge in e-commerce activities, thereby broadening the scope of Malaysia's digital market space (Rosario & Raimundo, 2021). A survey conducted by a Malaysian bank revealed a 38% increase in online spending during the first six months of 2016, with the majority of consumers frequently overspending or engaging in impulse buying behavior (Vijaindren, 2017). The widespread use of mobile shopping applications has contributed to consumers' increased desire for impulsive purchases (Chopdar et al., 2022).

Two of the top mobile shopping applications in Malaysia are Shopee and Lazada. Shopee has the highest number of downloads, reaching more than 4.7 million, followed by Lazada, with approximately 2.66 million downloads (Statista, 2024). This rise is further highlighted by specific shopping promotion events, which have been shown to move considerably more transactions through mobile shopping applications (Foster, 2022). Recently, Yean (2022) indicated a shift in Malaysian consumers who are now more likely to buy useful goods than less desirable ones. This shift suggests a change in consumer priorities towards more cautious and well-planned purchases. As a result, e-commerce platforms may need to rely more on special promotions to stimulate sales. In the long run, these strategies might not be advantageous due to the increasing challenges and rivalry in the e-commerce industry. For example, watching content on the TikTok platform increases the likelihood of impulse buying (Chiang, 2023). Therefore, companies that develop and use mobile shopping applications have to create better stimuli to encourage impulse buying. Impulsive buying not only helps increase sales but also enhances customer loyalty and reputation over time (Garaus et al., 2017).

Despite the significance of mobile shopping applications, there is a gap in the literature concerning the examination of consumer impulse buying behavior. Chopdar et al. (2022) indicated that most of the past literature focused on variables in early adoption, such as ease of use and the convenience of ordering. Even though mobile applications are increasingly being used in personal aspects of life, researchers have limited knowledge of the variables that influence regular buyers. Hence, understanding the design of digital marketing should go beyond just utilizing technology. Additionally, early studies on impulse buying extensively examined emotions with media content in offline retail (Lim et al., 2023). Nonetheless, changing consumer buying patterns required a fresh assessment of emotions' role in online

impulse buying behavior (Kimiagari & Malafe, 2021). Thus, this study attempts to fill this gap by utilizing the 7C framework created by Rayport and Jaworski (2001) to assess the digital marketing elements of shopping applications that lead to impulse buying behavior and the mediating role of emotions.

Literature Review

Impulse buying behavior

Kimiagari and Malafe (2021) define impulse buying as a sudden and irresistible urge to purchase something immediately, without following the normal buying process. Consumers who have made an impulsive purchase are likely to do so repeatedly (Lim et al., 2023).

The 7C Framework

The 7C framework introduced by Rayport and Jaworski (2001) has outlined the core elements of digital marketing strategy. The 7C consists of context, content, community, customization, communication, connection, and commerce. The 7C framework remains a valuable tool for analyzing e-commerce strategies for online service platforms in past literature (Baker et al., 2018; Kim & Arnett, 2011). Kim and Arnett (2011) have explored the preferences of the 7C framework within portal services among US and Korean. The results identified five significant dimensions: commerce, content, community, communication, and coordination. The study by Baker et al. (2018) used the 7C framework on online marketing and e-commerce in the global luxury industry. Similarly, the study found that the luxury sector did not align with all dimensions of the 7C framework. Therefore, this study poses the following hypothesis:

H1: The dimensions of digital marketing in mobile shopping applications include (a) context, (b) content, (c) community, (d) customization, (e) communication, (f) connection, and (g) commerce.

The Mediating Role of Emotions

In the study of impulse buying behavior, many studies have adopted the Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) model (Table 1). Despite the widespread adoption of the SOR model, studies have taken different approaches to understanding impulse buying. Two major perspectives that have been studied are impulse as a behavior (Cao et al., 2023; Zhu et al., 2023; Rajendran & Wahab, 2022) and as psychological (Sun et al., 2023; Chopdar et al., 2022). In studies focusing on impulse as buying behavior, affective or emotional reactions represent one of the major types of organisms (Kimiagari & Malafe, 2021). However, in the context of mobile shopping applications, the role of emotions as an organism has been ignored. Consumers can fully express their emotions when shopping online (Cachero-Martinez & Vazquez-Casielles, 2021; Garaus et al., 2017). Past studies (Cachero-Martinez & Vazquez-Casielles, 2021; Garaus et al., 2017; Kimiagari & Malafe, 2021) have provided empirical evidence of the mediating role of emotions for impulse buying. Thus, the following hypothesis statement:

H2: Emotions partially mediate the relationship between the dimensions of the 7C framework and impulse buying behavior.

Table 1. Relevant research on impulse buying adopting the SOR model

Citation	User	Stimulus	Organism	Response
Zhu et al. (2023)	AI service	AI-accuracy, AI-currency, AI-reliability, AI-Timeliness, AI-Flexibility	System quality, Information quality	Online impulse buying
Cao et al. (2023)	Luxury fashion outlet	Store marketing, store atmosphere	Emotion	In-store browsing, impulse buying
Sun et al. (2023)	Online group buying	Perceived value, Discrete emotions	Impulsiveness	Urge to buy impulsively
Chopdar et al. (2022)	Mobile shopping applications	Mobility, personalization, product assortment, hedonic motivation, visual appeal	Impulsiveness	Intention to install, user behavior
Kimiagari and Malafe (2021)	Social media platform	Variety of selection, visual appeal, quality of information, navigability, product availability, price attribute, sensory attribute	Utilitarian browsing, hedonic browsing	Online impulsive buying behavior

Framework

Figure 1 illustrates the proposed framework for this study. Underpinning the SOR model, the 7C framework is used as the stimulus, emotions reflect the organism, and impulse buying behavior is the response.

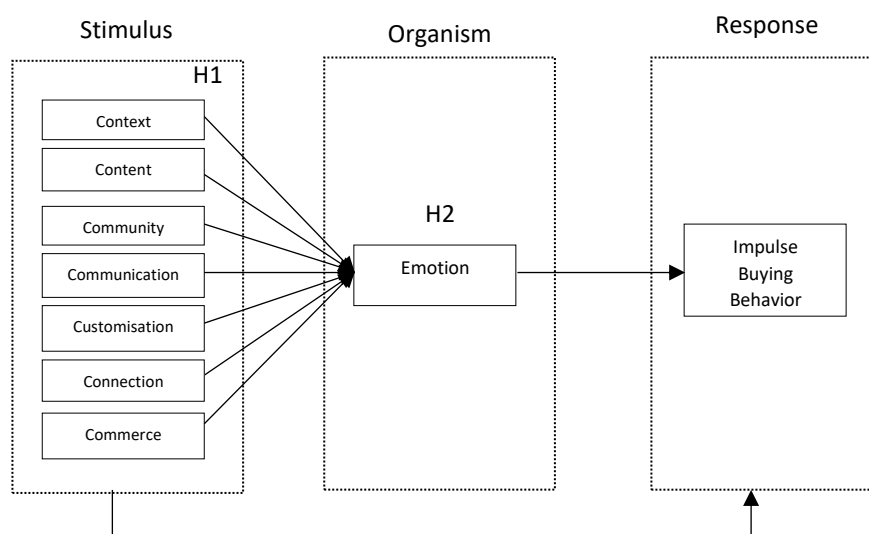


Figure 1. Propose framework

Methodology

An online survey based on convenience sampling was conducted to collect data from shoppers of two major shopping platforms. The link to the questionnaire was shared across various social media platforms within the selected shopping communities. A total of 360 samples were collected, and 29 outliers identified using the z-score were excluded from the data analysis. Therefore, 331 data were used for this study. The profile of the respondents is presented in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Respondents Profile

Characteristic		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	159	48.0
	Female	172	52.0
Age	Below 20 years old	79	23.9
	21 – 30 years old	168	50.8
	31 – 40 years old	52	15.7
	41 – 50 years old	24	7.3
	Above 50 years old	8	2.4
Income	Less than RM3,000	97	29.3
	RM3,000 to RM5,000	83	25.1
	RM5,000 to RM10,000	65	19.6
	RM10,000 to RM20,000	50	15.1
	RM20,000 and above	36	10.9
Frequency	Everyday	71	21.5
	More than once per week	78	23.6
	Once per week	107	32.3
	Monthly basis	46	13.9
	Rarely	29	8.8
Shopping applications	Lazada	105	31.7
	Shopee	226	68.3

Results

The data were processed using two software, SPSS and SmartPLS. Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was performed to identify the dimensions of the 7Cs framework for the digital marketing of mobile applications. The results eliminate one dimension: communication. All items loading more than the minimum threshold value of 0.50 suggested by Hair et al. (2019) were retained. The results of EFA are presented in Table 3 below. EFA resulted in an eight-component solution that explained 70.03% of the total variance. Thus, reject H1. Consequently, this study reveals the critical role played by context, content, communication, customization, connection, and commerce in the digital marketing effectiveness of mobile shopping applications.

Table 3. Factor Loading

Item	Statement	Loading	Commonalities
<i>Context (Yang, 2016)</i>			
1	The page layout of the application is organized.	0.87	0.89
2	The page layout of the application is functional.	0.67	0.60
3	The visual theme of the application is attractive.	0.72	0.77
4	The application has made it easy for users to move from one point to another.	0.62	0.63
6	The graphics used in the application are attractive.	0.61	0.77
<i>Content (van der Merwe & Bekker, 2003)</i>			
1	The information of product/service in the application is available.	0.68	0.65
2	The price information of the product in the application is clearly presented.	0.72	0.63
3	The application has an adequate breadth of product range	0.72	0.70
4	The application has an adequate amount of advertising of own products	0.76	0.70
5	The application has an adequate amount of advertising by other companies	0.84	0.81
6	Full seller information is available in the application.	0.56	0.69
7	Terms and conditions are easily accessed in the application.	0.59	0.62
8	Contact information of the seller is available.	0.75	0.61
9	The content in the application is updated	0.80	0.75
10	The content in this application is relevant	0.80	0.74
11	The content in this application is concise	0.79	0.82
12	The application has a high perceived quality of product	0.82	0.79
13	The quality of advertisement in the application is high.	0.83	0.78
<i>Communication (Jiang et al., 2010)</i>			
1	The application is effective in gathering visitor's feedback.	-0.51	0.68
2	The application makes me feel like it wants to listen to its visitors.	-0.50	0.53
3	The application encourages visitors to offer feedback.	-0.63	0.79
<i>Customization (Hayes et al., 2021)</i>			
1	The application can provide me with personalized deals tailored to my activity context.	0.65	0.75
2	The application can provide me with more relevant promotional information tailored to my preferences or personal interests.	0.50	0.61
3	The application can provide me with the kind of deals that I might like.	0.77	0.81
4	The application makes purchase recommendations that match my needs.	0.66	0.63
5	I think that the application enables me to order products that are tailor-made for me.	0.81	0.71
7	The application makes me feel that I am a unique customer.	0.83	0.78
8	I believe that this application is customized to my needs.	0.80	0.78
<i>Connection (Cuddihy & Spyridakis, 2012)</i>			
1	The links provided in the application are relevant.	0.67	0.70
2	The application has clear navigation links.	0.70	0.76
3	The application has easy navigation links.	0.71	0.66
4	The application has well-organized links.	0.81	0.85
5	I am not confused after clicking links in the application.	0.65	0.71
6	I enjoy the links in the application.	0.86	0.86
7	I received familiar information from the links in the application.	0.86	0.85
8	I received useful information from the links in the application.	0.79	0.78
<i>Commerce (Yilmaz, 2022)</i>			
1	The application supports a variety of payment methods.	0.72	0.41
2	The payment method of the application is secure.	0.55	0.73

3	The application has clear security policies.	0.79	0.78
4	The payment method of the application is private.	0.62	0.70
5	The application has clear privacy policies.	0.60	0.76
6	The application offers free return.	0.63	0.72
7	The application allows customers to ask for a refund.	0.88	0.76
8	The delivery quality is good.	0.87	0.80
9	The delivery time is fast.	0.67	0.82
<i>Emotion (Papas et al., 2017)</i>			
1	I feel joy when using the application.	0.74	0.73
2	I feel content when using the application.	0.83	0.74
3	I feel pleased when using the application.	0.75	0.75
4	I feel pride when using the application.	0.81	0.72
5	I have high interest when using the application.	0.74	0.76
6	I feel excited when using the application.	0.83	0.80
7	I feel satisfied when using the application.	0.85	0.77
<i>Impulse Buying Behavior (Yulianto et al., 2021)</i>			
5	Sales or discounts will attract me to buy more items.	0.63	0.67
6	I find myself buying more than what I intended to when I shop on the application.	0.66	0.70
7	I make quick purchases on the application when I see a limited-time offer.	0.85	0.83
8	I tend to buy items on the application that I see in the recommendation section.	0.71	0.68

The EFA results yield five dimensions, which are subsequently employed in further analysis. Table 4 presents the results of VIF, constructs reliability, convergent validities, and average variance extracted (AVE), discriminant validity values, and variance inflation factors (VIFs). The values are all the minimal threshold suggested by past literature.

Table 4. The descriptive statistics, Construct Reliability, Validity, and VIF Values

	Mean	SD	CR	AVE	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	VIF
1	3.25	0.32	0.92	0.59	0.77								1.15
2	3.82	0.34	0.86	0.67	-0.15	0.82							1.36
3	3.10	0.49	0.94	0.67	0.29	0.04	0.82						1.35
4	3.91	0.46	0.94	0.58	0.18	-0.31	0.35	0.76					1.38
5	4.62	0.38	0.87	0.58	0.19	-0.15	0.25	-0.05	0.76				1.63
6	2.72	0.46	0.85	0.59	0.22	-0.24	0.33	0.25	-0.01	0.77			1.20
7	4.32	0.50	0.94	0.70	0.39	0.01	0.05	-0.08	0.38	0.29	0.84		1.37
8	4.35	0.42	0.93	0.77	-0.09	0.17	-0.34	-0.29	-0.33	-0.20	-0.31	0.88	1.12

Note: 1=Commerce, 2=Communication, 3=Connection, 4=Content, 5=Context, 6= Customization, 7=Emotions, and 8=Impulse buying behavior. The bold figures indicate the square root of the AVE.

The bootstrapping procedure with 5000 sub-samples was used to examine the hypotheses of this study. Table 5 shows the model of PLS-SEM proposed in this study. The empirical evidence supports the effects of the 7C framework and emotions on impulse buying behavior, accounting for 32.5% of the variance as indicated by the adjusted R-squared. The direct effect of (a) context, (b) content, (c) connection, and (d) commerce on impulse buying behavior is significant. However, the direct effect of communication and customization on impulse buying behavior is insignificant. The results showed that emotions significantly mediate the relationship between (a) context, (b) communication, (c) customization, (d) connection, and (e) commerce on impulse buying behavior. Thus, supports H2.

Table 5. Results for direct effects and indirect effects

Path	B	SD	t-value	p-value	Support
Context -> Emotion	0.41	0.04	9.84	0.001	Yes
Content -> Emotion	-0.06	0.09	0.72	0.48	No
Communication -> Emotion	0.20	0.06	3.50	0.001	Yes
Customization -> Emotion	0.37	0.05	6.85	0.001	Yes
Connection -> Emotion	-0.27	0.07	3.82	0.001	Yes
Commerce -> Emotion	0.35	0.04	9.07	0.001	Yes
Context -> Impulse	-0.16	0.06	2.49	0.01	Yes
Content -> Impulse	-0.23	0.07	3.11	0.001	Yes
Communication -> Impulse	0.13	0.07	1.83	0.07	No
Customization -> Impulse	0.03	0.04	0.77	0.44	No
Connection -> Impulse	-0.29	0.05	5.32	0.001	Yes
Commerce -> Impulse	0.21	0.04	4.92	0.001	Yes
Emotion -> Impulse	-0.34	0.05	7.22	0.001	Yes
Context -> Emotion -> Impulse	-0.14	0.03	5.40	0.001	Yes
Content -> Emotion -> Impulse	0.02	0.03	0.72	0.47	No
Communication -> Emotion -> Impulse	-0.07	0.02	3.46	0.001	Yes
Customization -> Emotion -> Impulse	-0.13	0.03	4.98	0.001	Yes
Connection -> Emotion -> Impulse	0.09	0.03	3.45	0.001	Yes
Commerce -> Emotion -> Impulse	-0.12	0.02	5.79	0.001	Yes

Note. $R^2=32.5\%$

Discussion

The results of the present research suggest a number of significant associations between impulse buying tendency and some aspects of the 7C model as moderated through feelings. Analysis of the findings showed that context, content, connection, and commerce had a direct impact on impulse buying behavior thus supporting the hypothesis that the four dimensions are instrumental in shaping consumer impulsivity. Peculiarly, communication and customization did not affect impulse buying, and therefore these factors do not appear to have a strong effect on impulsive behaviors. Yet, emotions were identified to moderate context, communication, customization, connection, and commerce on impulse buying, it was confirmed that engaged emotions overlay impulse buying, where they boost or hinder impulsive buying in a digital context of shopping. The use of emotions as a mediator underlines the notion that in consuming behaviors the need to design appealing digital experiences is crucial to make a last call.

These results are consistent with previous literature, which has underlined the importance of emotions in the antecedents of impulse buying, especially in Internet and mobile shopping environments. For example, past studies (Kimiagari & Malafe, 2021; Cachero-Martinez & Vazquez-Casielles, 2021) have also highlighted the effects of emotions in a consumer's decision-making on his/her purchase decision, as supported by this present study. The disapproval of the content's influence on emotions and impulse buying could be explained by Yean's (2022) shift towards the relevant rational purchase when consumers would rather rely on the practicality of products. Based on research findings that identified emotions as a mediator on various dimensions, e-commerce platforms are required not only to emphasize

the rational factors of context and content but also emotions to appeal to customers' impulse buying disposition to guarantee improved compliance and increased after-sale traffic and sales results for an online store amid growing competition.

Conclusion

This study aimed to examine the dimensions of digital marketing by adopting the 7C frameworks and the mediating role of emotions among regular buyers. This study enriches the body of knowledge on mobile shopping applications by leveraging the 7C framework proposed by Rayport and Jaworski (2001), which has been neglected in the design of digital marketing strategies. The findings align with Baker et al. (2018), and Kim and Arnett (2011) that not all dimensions of the 7Cs are significant for digital marketing strategies in the specific context of this study. The six dimensions verified as significant were context, content, communication, customization, connection, and commerce. Although both Shopee and Lazada have built a community for their customers, regular customers might undervalue the community as a digital marketing strategy. Four dimensions (context, content connection, and commerce) had a direct effect on impulse buying behavior, but communication and customization were insignificant. A possible explanation is that customization can evoke customers' emotions rather than directly influence impulse buying behavior. Similarly, consumers who receive information require time to process it; the communication process is not indirectly capable of influencing impulse buying behavior.

Past studies on impulse buying behavior using mobile shopping applications focused on consumer skills. This study aligns with the findings of Cachero-Martinez and Vazquez-Casielles (2021) and Garaus et al. (2017). Emotions were found to partially mediate the effect of context, connection, and commerce on impulse buying behavior. Additionally, emotions fully mediate the effect of communication and customization on impulse buying behavior. This study further clarifies the mediation role of emotions in the impulse buying behavior of regular buyers. Consumers may become more emotional and later act spontaneously to make decisions about what to buy when a company creates a powerful digital marketing stimulus.

This study offers important implications for companies in developing their mobile shopping applications. The six dimensions of digital marketing - context, content, communication, customization, connection, and commerce - should be emphasized in their digital marketing strategies. Beyond concentrating on traditional marketing mix (4Ps) strategies, adopting these six dimensions of digital marketing can help companies enhance consumer impulse buying behavior. Although certain dimensions may not directly influence impulse buying behavior, the effect can be amplified through the mediating role of emotions.

This study has several limitations. First, the study sample was selected through convenience sampling. Therefore, the results cannot be generalized to all mobile shopping applications. Second, as a quantitative study, only a limited number of variables were selected based on a review of past literature, which may not fully apply to mobile shopping

applications. For future research, qualitative studies should be performed to explore new variables that influence regular consumer impulse buying behavior when using mobile shopping applications that are not novel to them.

Conflict of interest

The authors declare no potential conflict of interest regarding the publication of this work. In addition, the ethical issues including plagiarism, informed consent, misconduct, data fabrication and, or falsification, double publication and, or submission, and redundancy have been completely witnessed by the authors.

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