The Influence of Product and Retailing Features on Consumer Impulse Buying (The Case of Study: Hyperstar)

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Abstract: Impulse purchase behavior as one of the consumer behavioral matters has received the attention of many people particularly managers in today's competitive world. The purpose of this study is to investigate the impact of products and retail features on impulse purchase behavior among the Iranian consumers, particularly the customers of Hyperstar super market. Providing a general concept of this behavior, various features such as hedonic, readiness to use, price, promotion, discount, environmental features and product placement will be addressed in this study. The model presented in this study is adapted and developed according to Kacen, Hesse and Walker model. Random sampling was used in order to collect the samples. The sample size was calculated 384 using the Morgan Table. This was a survey study in which the data was collected using questionnaires. SEM was used for data analysis and model confirmation. The results indicate that hedonic products, ready-to use products and also discounts have positive significant effects on impulse buying while promotional factors, display and environmental features are not accepted.

Key words: Hedonic product, ready to use, price, marketing promotions, display, market environment, marketing discounts

INTRODUCTION

Impulse purchase is one of the aspects of consumer behavior. It is also an important concept in market environment. Increasing consumption and credit purchase possibility have contributed to opportunities for impulse purchases across the world. Impulse purchase has been addressed in studies on consumer behavior from 1950. Impulse purchase is an unplanned, inevitable and complex buying behavior in which the quickness to buy, inhibits consideration of different options (Rook,1987). Studies on supermarkets with broad range of products and customers, suggests that about 50% of purchases are impulse buying which makes them of interest to retailers. It should be noted that countries with economies in transition, have a great potential for growth as emerging markets (Ghaderi Abed and Nazari, 2011).

Impulse buying has become a common phenomenon in everyday life that it has become the focal focus of many studies and theories (Rook and Fischer, 1995). While according to others impulse buying occurs in 27-62% of all purchases (Mihic and Kursan, 2010). Among the whole purchases in US approximately four billion dollars are being spent on impulse buying; this rate involves about 80% of whole sale in certain product categories (Kacen and Lee, 2002).

Most of the researches have studied this behavior in big supermarket and commercial shopping centers, according to the results, consumers are confronted with the problem of lack of time. Mostly they prefer to do their weekly purchase or even monthly purchase by visiting shopping centers and save time. Managers can increase their sales by focusing on this aspect because of the popularity of impulse buying among people.

Impulse purchase has been studied from different perspectives such as phycology, marketing mix impact or demographic factors. Hence, impulse purchase is an interdisciplinary subject. Most studies on this subject focus only on one factor rather than being multi aspect or comparative studies. Some of these factors are controlled by retailers and some of them are out of the system. Identifying these factors is important as they make managers employ necessary tactics not only in policies associated with marketing mix but also in understanding the consumer behavior. Also reviewing macroeconomic plans in Iran, suggests a move towards the free market economy. Despite the importance of impulse purchase behavior, it has been overlooked by researchers in Iran.

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Purpose of the study: This study focuses on the impact of the products and retail features on impulse purchase as well as surveying demographic factors. Also, researcher investigates the extent of impact of each of these factors which then indicates the consumers habits and consumption pattern. The results of this study addresses the producers and managing directors of supermarkets. Previous studies focused on a single component instead of considering the components all together. Moreover, the range of products was limited. However since this research is conducted in a super market, it includes a broader range of products. Therefore the purpose of this study is to examine the impulse buying behavior and identify factors affecting that among Iranian consumers.

Literature review: Studies on impulse purchase, suggest different concepts for this behavior. Rook (1987), defines impulse purchase as an unplanned buying, once consumers receive positive impression from an exciter or are exposed to that. He argues that impulse buying behavior is based on an instant stimulus which is accompanied with pleasure and excitement all the time. Stern (1962) also defines impulse purchase as an immediate unplanned fun shopping. Rook (1987) also claims impulse buying occurs when consumer feels a sudden, strong, continuous desire for an immediate purchase which might provoke an emotional conflict. Piron defined the impulsive buying as non-planned buying and the result of exposing the stimuli. The five important elements for distinguishing the impulsive buying from non-impulsive one are refereed as follow: the impulsive willingness, lack of mental balance, an experience of a mental conflict, decrease of cognitive evaluation and consumption without attention to its consequences.

Rook and Fisher (1995) also defined the impulsive buying as a uni-dimensional structure which shows the buyers' willingness to think and act based on the recognizable and specific methods. Specially, the impulsive buying is defined as the buyers' willingness to buy spontaneously, thoughtlessly, impulsively and dynamically. Youn and Faber (2000) noted that the impulsive buying may be influenced by the internal or behavioral manners experienced by the buyer or environmental stimuli. Lack of control, stressful and attractive reaction is general characteristic factors that can lead to willingness to buy impulsively. Belk (1975) also referred to the influence of the environmental features on the impulsive buying in his study.

Physical surrounding: These features include the geographical and official features, decor, sound, light, air condition, buyers' visual features or any kind of the visual changes in the appearance of the stores or goods which lead the buyers to intend to buy something.

Social surrounding: It makes situational study deeper. Among all these relations, it can refer to the characteristic presentation and interpersonal relations and roles.

Temporal perspective: Time is also one of the situational aspects which includes different units of time from day to season and can be measured by considering the past or future events; that is, time for the last buying, the remaining time for the next due or payment, the acted temporal limitation.

Task definition: It refers to the time when there is an intention or prerequisite to choose, buy or take information of a specific general buying. For this reason, this shows the expected role of the buyers and users. For example, the situation in which a person intends to buy a gif for his or her friend's wedding ceremony is different from the one in which a person intends to buy the goods for his/her personal use.

Antecedent state: This shapes the last group of features and it ranges from the impulsive manners (anxiety, enjoyment, animosity and emotion) and impulsive situation (richness, tiredness, sickness) to the individual moral characteristics. Moreover, Stern referred to 4 kinds of definitions for the impulsive buying in his study.

Pure buying: The impulsive and non-preplanned willingness together with the specific feeling towards buying the goods. Such a state can disarrange the usual buying plan.

Reminder buying: Those buyers who observe the products or its advertisement and remember that this would be in their buying list.

Suggestive buying: The buyer does not have any previous experience of the products but if they saw it, the feel their need to buy it.

Planned buying: The buyer buys the goods since that they are on sale or make the buyer to intend to buy it (Stern, 1962).

Based on the model presented by Mehrabian and Russsel, the situation can influence behaviors through emotional reactions. Therefore, a set of conditions made by an emotional reaction (emotion, knowledge and feeling) can result in the behavioral response. In addition,

all emotional responses are shown by combining 3 aspects of enjoyment, excitement and control. Enjoyment is an emotional state which is beyond the willingness, likeness, positive strength or avoiding closeness since this kind of reaction is made by the stimulated excitement features. Excitement is defined as an oriented activity and a basis to measure the amount of awareness in organization. Finally, control also shows the extent to which a person is influenced or controlled by the surrounding. The more a person is influenced by the surrounding, the more she/ he will be obedient and submissive

The previous studies showed that the planned buying behavior can result in exact decision making but the impulsive behavior can result in mistake in decision making or increase the possibility of occurring negative consequences. This negative evaluation of the impulsive buying behavior can be resulted from the psychological studies which knew the impulsive buying behavior a means to signify juvenile, uncontrolled, illogical, dangerous and useless behaviour (Abdolvand *et al.*, 2011).

However, some of the studies on the impulsive buying showed that the buyer did not know this kind of behavior as a mistake and they consider this as a useful even. Especially, in the study by Rook and Fischer (1995), on the normative aspect of impulsive buying, a few respondents (about 20%) stated that they felt bad when they did impulsive buying but many respondents (about 41%) stated that in fact they felt good when they did impulsive buying. This phenomenon can be explained by this fact that the buyers buy a good for various uneconomic reasons such as happiness, enjoyment, fantasy, the social and emotional enjoyment. Some of the buyers considered buying as a kind of retail therapy a way to release from the daily work stress and only enjoyment. This supports a kind of happiness resulted from the enjoyment of buying impulsively (Hausman, 2000). Maymand and Ahmadinejad (2011) tried to investigate the role of the environmental stimuli and situational factors on the impulsive buying. The sample population in this study included the citizens of area 5 in Tehran and the respondents were 329. The results of their study showed that the promotion and advertisement can gratefully influence the buyers' willingness for the impulsive buying and also the situation and environment of the store can influence the impulsive buying as well. In another study by Abdolvand *et al.* (2011) on Niyavaran book city in Tehran are considered as a sample population, they tried to investigate a model which is a combination of environmental factors, individual mental manners and individual characteristics. The individual

mental manners are investigated based on the model presented by Russell and Mehrabian and based on that the positive feeling made by the environment of malls causes the impulsive buying. In contrast, feeling can influence the impulsive buying in a way around. This study showed that the individual features such as innovation and extroversion do not have any influence on the impulsive b buying. In the study by Karbasivar and Yarahmadi (2011), they studied the influential factors on the buyers' impulsive buying behavior. The model used in this study was derived from Churchil and Peter's model. The result of the study showed that there was a positively meaningful relation between the impulsive buying behavior of clothes, credit cards, monetary discounts, free goods and vitrines of malls.

The research model: Kacen, Hesse and walker model was selected as the base model for this research. The present study focuses on the environmental and product features in this model. Impulse buying is usually a function of situation factors (market environment, product) rather than features (Kacen and Lee, 2002). Consumer features affect the impulse purchase as well; however the present study focuses on factors controlled by the sellers. The variables include hedonic product, ready to use products, price (gauge features of the product) and factors such as discounts, products display and environmental factors. Promotional factors will also be surveyed in this model. This study will develop the hypothesis stated by Kacen and colleagues and provide a detailed review of each variable. Previous studies have merely focused on the impact of sales on impulse purchase whereas the present study addresses the impact of marketing promotions and product display on impulse purchase in order to achieve more comprehensive results about them.

Research hypothesis
The main hypothesis:
H_1: Product features has a positive and significant effect on impulse buying behavior
H_2: Retail features has a positive and significant effect on impulse buying behavior

The secondary hypothesis: Hedonic product: Buying products based on their affection and emotional appeal rather than their utility. Marketing researchers have identified different impacts of various products on consumer behavior. They have also developed various ways to classify the products. Hedonic products: have subjective and intangible features which lead to a pleasure response in the consumer. Hedonic consumption seeks for fun, leisure, fancy, excitation, emotional

motivation and pleasure (Hirschman and Halbrook, 1982). Hedonic products are purchased and consumed to satisfy emotional pleasure, consumer demands or symbolic needs that are associated with their feelings towards others and others' feelings towards them (Ryu *et al.*, 2006).

- H_1a: fun products have a positive and significant effect on impulse buying behavior
- Ready to use products: These products meet instant pleasure of the impulse buyer
- H_1b: ready to use products have a positive and significant effect on impulse buying behavior

Price: Dittmar studies suggest that consumer impulse purchase includes a broad range of expensive and low-priced products. Although, McGoldric studies (1982) argues that price is not the main factor in impulse purchase. However, Cob and Hoyer found that 9 percent of the impulse buyers are influenced by the price. Following the utility maximization, low priced products are preferred over high priced products (if equal in other factors); (Kacen and Lee, 2012).

- H_1c: Price has a positive and significant effect on impulse buying behavior

Promotional factors: Youn and Faber (2000) studies found that people with more impulse purchase behavior are more interested in promotional gifts such as free gifts, product model and free samples. Mihic and Kursan (2010) also found that promotional activities can have a significant impact on impulse behavior:

- H_2a: marketing promotions has a positive and significant effect on impulse buying behavior

Marketing discounts: According to Kacen and Lee (2002), sales and discounts are effective both in attracting people and in encouraging them for impulse purchases. Studies have shown that most of the impulse purchases have been influenced by advertisements and sales announcements. Generally people have low inner control against discounted products and therefore are more likely to do impulse purchases (Moniri, 2011).

- H_2b: products display has a positive and significant effect on impulse buying behavior

Product display: Placing the products around the counter or at the end of the aisle increases the probability of impulse purchase up to 3% compared with in the middle of the aisle. Another important component associated with this variable is the storefront. Storefront plays an important role in attracting people and persuading them into an impulse purchase. Storefronts can influence people in terms of the following factors. Some researchers believe that customers are likely to immediately buy the products that are visible to them (Yarahmadi, 2011).

- H_2c: envirometal features has a positive and significant effect on impulse buying behavior

The store environment: The store atmosphere and the physical dimensions of the retail environment influence the consumers' mood and their buying behavior. Generally the more appealing is the environment, the more positive will be the impact and the more time consumers will spend in the store. The more consumers spend time in the store, the more they are inclined to impulse buying (Beatty and Ferrell,1998).

- H_2d: discounts has a positive and significant effect on impulse buying behavior

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This is an applied research based on purpose as it seeks to resolve practical and actual problems based on a specific theory. Also considering the objectives, it was conducted using the survey approach. Questionnaire was used for this research as it is the main tool of the survey approach and also due to the time and place scope of this study. Data analysis was performed using structural equations modelling and path analysis and random sampling was carried out for this study.

Sample size was estimated according to Morgan table. It was estimated 384 for a population of >100.000 due to unlimited number of visitors to Hyperstar super market. The questionnaire was composed of 36 questions and designed according to Likert scale.

Total 30 initial questionnaires were distributed as a pretest. Confidence coefficient was estimated above 0.7 for all the variables using SPSS and cronbach alpha method. The reliability of the questionnaire was estimated 91.6 using cronbach alpha. Also Interviews and discussions with professors and advisors were used to further ensure the validity of assessment tool (face validity).

Data analysis: The data are analyzed using SPSS and Lisrel 8.53 in this section in order to test the hypothesis.

Table 1: Table of variables, operational definitions, factor loading and items significance value

Features	Operational definitions	Index	Factor loading	Values significance
Price	The impact of price	P1	0.97	14.58
	Price level	P2	0.78	9.97
Hedonic product	being new	Pc1	0.44	4.73
	Enjoying the product	Pc2	0.72	8.48
	Curiosity	Pc3	0.75	9.07
	Experience	Pc4	0.66	7.55
	Adventure	Pc5	0.79	9.64
	Excitement	Pc6	0.70	8.19
Ready to use products	Ready to use products	Conv1	0.57	5.96
	Drawn to the products	Conv2	0.61	6.52
	Full products	Conv3	0.73	8.01
	Easy to use products	Con4	0.75	8.28
	Products with transparent packaging	Conv5	0.34	3.39
Marketing promotions	Importance of sales	Pro1	0.69	7.54
	Sample	Pro2	0.74	8.28
	Possibility to exchange or return the product	Pro3	0.39	3.89
	Free test possibility	Pro4	0.39	3.97
	Environmental advertisements	Pro5	0.27	2.68
Discounts	Visiting due to discounts	Dic1	0.75	7.06
	Role of the discount	Dic2	0.63	6.75
	Better perception	Dic3	0.85	8.50
Product display	noticing the storefronts	Conf1	0.22	2.18
	Impressive display	Conf2	0.79	8.27
	Stimulating display	Conf3	0.74	7.63
	Efficiency	Conf4	0.44	4.48
Environmental factors	Lighting	Env1	0.77	7.85
	Coloring	Env2	0.69	7.43
	Music	Env3	0.50	5.30
	Pleasant scent	Env4	0.59	5.58
Impulse purchase	Unplanned purchase	Y1	0.57	5.75
	Interest as the criterion	Y2	0.53	5.30
	Lack of concern	Y3	0.43	4.24
	Lack of remorse	Y4	0.43	3.72
	Interest as a stimulus	Y5	0.43	4.21
	No need to provide a shopping list	Y6	0.50	4.34
	on impulse purchase	Y7	0.81	7.57

Descriptive statistics: Approximately 58% of the questionnaires were filled by women and the remaining 41% were filled by men. In terms of marital status, about 51% of the respondents were singles and 49% were married. In terms of age group, 20-30 years was the largest group by forming 55% of the respondents. The 30-40 years old, above 50 years old and 40-50 years old groups, respectively answered 28, 8 and 7% of the questions. Moreover, 53% of the respondents had a bachelor's degree, 25% had a master's degree, 18% had a diploma and 4% had a doctoral degree. Most of the respondents had clerical jobs that formed 70% of the respondents, 15% were self-employed, 8% were housewives and 7% were students.

Inferential statistics: structural equation modeling: Structural Equations Modelling (SEM) consists of two generations LISREL and PLS. LISREL which is known as the first generation of Structural Equations (SEM), is used in case the sample size is large, variables are normal and the measurement model (the relationship between latent and observed variables) is more important than the structural model (the relationship between latent variables) for the researcher.

Based on the significanc values derived from the initial measurment model, factor loading values for all the questions are greater than 1.96. Therefore all the questions are accurate enough to measure the latent variables. The results of the factor loading and significance value of each item are provided in Table 1.

The effect of retail and product features on impulse buying has been tested by using Lisrel and assuming the indices of retail and product features are reflective. The model is in a good condition in terms of fit indices as chi-square ratio is 1.73 on the freedom degree which is less than the permissible value 3. Also RMSEA value is 0.078 which is less than the permissible value 0.08. According to the figures below the results for the two main hypothesis is confirmed. The Significance values are 3.31 and 2.7 (Fig. 1-5).

The model is in a good condition in terms of fit indices as chi-square ratio is 1.60 on the freedom degree which is less than the permissible value 3. Also, RMSEA value is 0.051 which is less than the permissible value 0.08. All the parameters of the model have been signified.
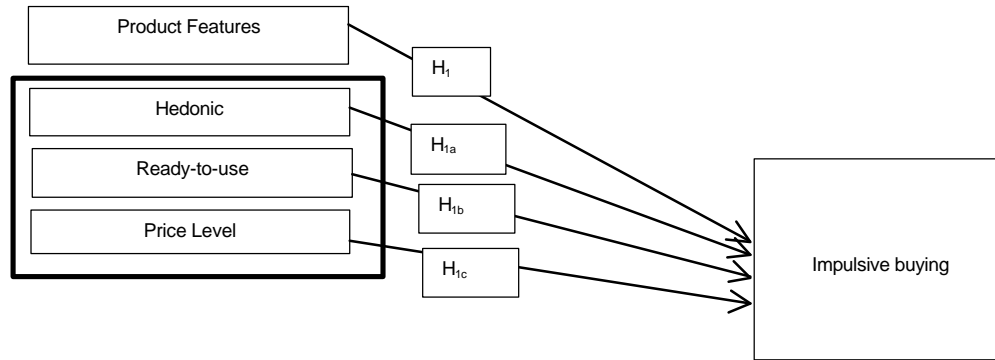
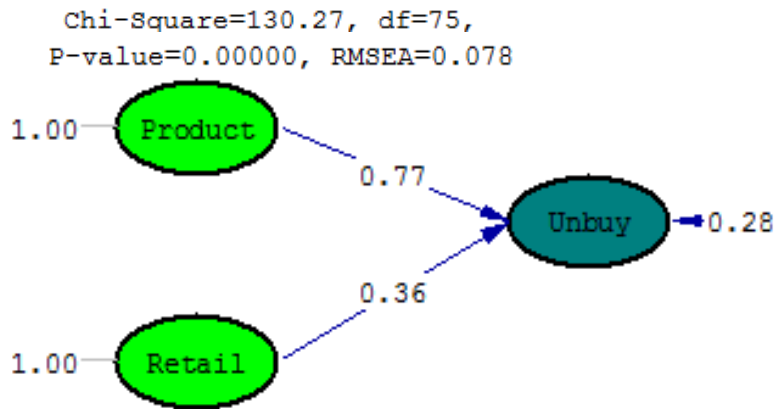Fig. 1: Proposed model impulse buying (Kacen and Lee, 2002)

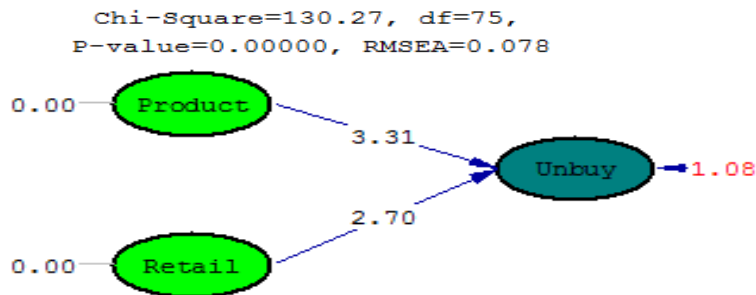Fig. 2: The effect of retail and product features on impulse buying

Fig. 3: The significance values of effect of product and retail features on impulse buying

- H_1a: hedonic products have a positive and significant effect on impulse buying behavior. Accepted and effect = 0.34
- H_1b: ready to use products have a significant and positive effect on impulse buying behavior. Accepted and effect= 0.35
- H_1c: price (low price) has a poitive and signicant effect on impulse buying behavior. Rejected
- H_2a: marketing promotions has a positive and significant effect on impulse buying behavior. Rejected

- H_2b: product display has a positive and significant effect on impulse buying behavior. Rejected
- H_2c: enviromental features have a positive and significant effect on impulse buying behavior. Rejected
- H_2d: discounts has a positive and significant effect on impulse buying behavior. Accepted and effect = 0.40

According to the results of the model only three variables including hedonic, ready to use and discounts
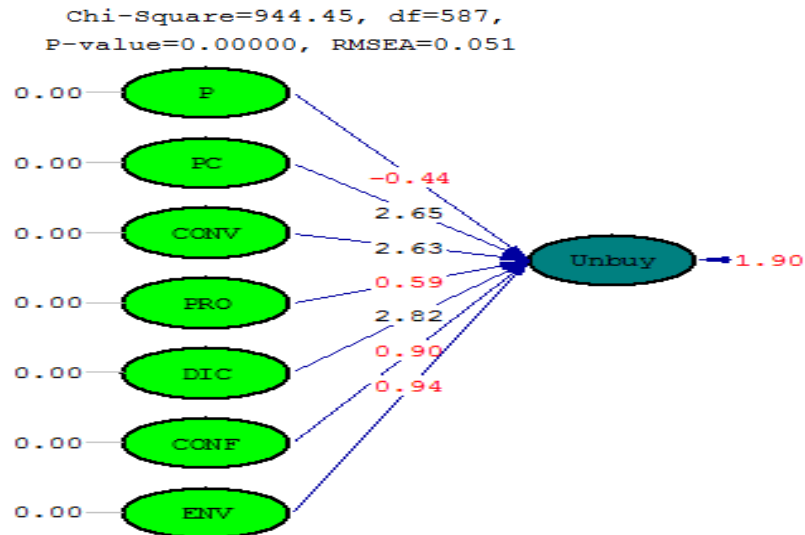
Fig. 4: The effect of individual features of Product and retail s on impulse buying behavior
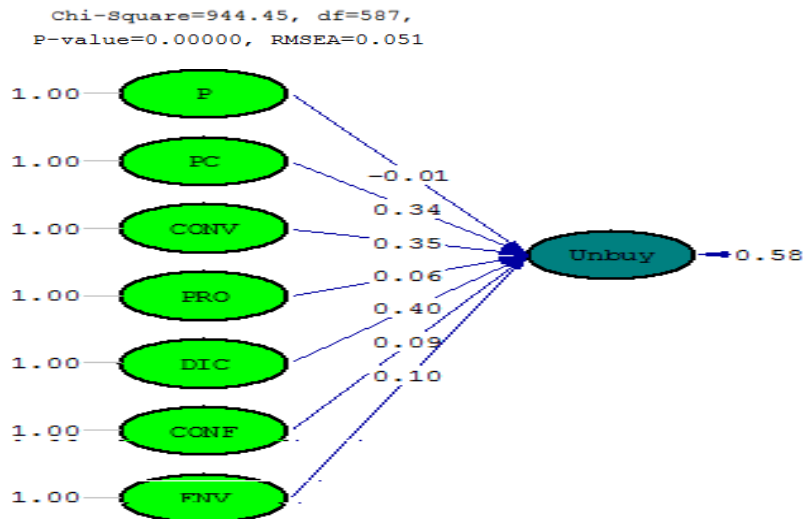

Fig. 5: The significance values of effect of individual features of product and retail on impulse buying

Table 2: Path analysis model

Features	Weight	Path coefficient	Indirect effect = weight multiplied by path coefficient
Price	0.675	0.34	0.2295
Hedonic product	0.652		0.22168
Ready to use	0.764		0.25976
Marketing promotions	0.796	0.22	0.17512
Discount	0.787		0.17314
Product display	0.461		0.10142
Environmental factors	0.652		0.14344

positive and significant effects on impulse buying behavior. Discounts with 0.40 degree of effect has most effect which means one improved unit in discounts = 0.40 improved units in impulse buying behavior. Ready to use and hedonic, respectively most impacts on this behaviour.

Comparison of variables regarding demographics: The comparison of variables are done by conducting the equality of two means test and analysis of variance (ANOVA) test. For instance the table of results for independent sample t-test of Table 3 shows the test for

Table 3: Independent sample t-test for gender

Variables	Gender	Number	Mean	Sig. value	The result of comparison
Price	Male	158	3.0816	>0.05	Equal
	female	222	3.3043		
Hedonic product	Male	158	3.4728	>0.05	Equal
	female	222	3.6232		
Readiness to use	Male	158	3.1878	>0.05	Equal
	female	222	3.3420		
Promotions	Male	158	3.5796	>0.05	Equal
	female	222	3.6087		
Discounts	Male	158	3.1905	<0.05	The mean for males' is smaller than females'
	female	222	3.5870		
Product display	Male	158	3.1480	<0.05	The mean for males' is smaller than females'
	female	222	3.6522		
Environment factors	Male	158	3.4745	<0.05	The mean for males' is smaller than females'
	female	222	3.7536		
Impulse purchase	Male	158	2.8688	>0.05	Equal
	female	222	2.9648		

the variables of discount, product display and environment features are different between male and female.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results show that among 7 hypothesis, 3 hypothesis are accepted and 4 hypothesis are rejected. The first hypothesis which is associated with the impact of hedonic product on impulse purchase is accepted. Hedonic products have a positive significant impact on impulse buying with a confidence level of 95%. Also Kacen and Lee (2002), Chavosh studies have confirmed the effect of hedonic product on impulse purchase.

Considering the findings from indirect effects of product features on impulse buying, this factor is the third variable with the most effect on impulse purchase. Hyper star CEOs can contribute to more advertisements by giving away free samples and therefore providing customers with real experience of the products. They can also provide an environment in which customers become familiar with the products features and specifications.

Also since indices for measuring the variables can be controlled through sensory marketing, it can be used to persuade people into buying these products.

The second hypothesis which is related to the impact of ready to use products was also accepted. This is not in line with Kacen and Lee (2002) studies. However considering the results relating the impact of products features on impulse purchase, this variable is the first factor with the greatest effect on impulse purchase. Given that much of the population was working women, this feature of products appeared to be more appealing to them due to the lack of time.

Designing packages with product visibility, helps consumers communicate faster with the product and therefore increases the purchase probability. The CEOs of

Hyper star market can develop Kiosks in the market in order to provide instructions on products. The third hypothesis addressing the impact of price on impulse purchase was rejected.

YouserfiFard (2013)'s studies approved the impact of price on impulse purchase while Ghaderi Abed and Nazari (2011) rejected this hypothesis. Unlike in previous studies, the impact of marketing promotions was not addressed in this study. This could be due to the fact that promotions do not apply to the products in Iran, hence overlooked by people. Also hypothesis 5 and 6 relating the impact of product display and environmental features on impulse purchase were rejected. Considering that the average scores of these variables were approximately 3, it can be concluded that although these features are included in Hyperstar super market, they are not considered by people. Hypothesis 7 refers to the impact of discounts on impulse purchase.

CONCLUSION

It is suggested that discounts are announced through bulletins and loud speakers throughout the environment in order to attract the customers.

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