

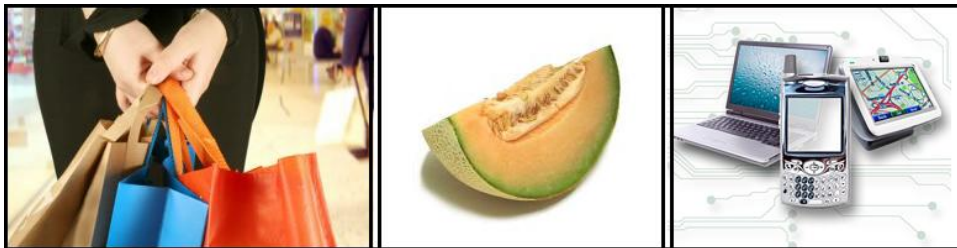


GÖTEBORGS UNIVERSITET HANDELSHÖGSKOLAN

Bachelor Programme in Business
Bachelor Thesis

Impulse buying, reasons why and consumer electronics, Oh My!

An investigation about impulse buying, why it occurs and how it can be beneficial for the consumer electronics industry



Bachelor Thesis

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Acknowledgements

We would like to give our thanks to our advisor Jeanette Hauff for her advice and support during the writing of this thesis.

Furthermore we wish to send thanks to the store manager Richard Bredenberg in Partille who took the time to answer the questions so quickly and gave a valuable input that gave us a wider understanding of the consumer electronics industry and its consumers.

Finally we would like to thank everyone who took time to answer our online survey, which made it possible for us to draw conclusions.

Gothenburg, 2011

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ABSTRACT

Title: Impulse buying, reasons why, consumer electronics – Oh My

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Course: Business Administration, Marketing C-level, spring 2011
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Key words: Impulse buying, sales encouragement, sensory marketing, consumer electronics

Purpose: The purpose of this research is to find reasons why impulse buying occurs, how it can be encouraged and what sort of impulse buying consumer electronics encourages in order to give advice on how to increase impulse buying.

Method: The study is based on an explorative, deductive method where a survey was sent out to explore consumers' attitudes and behaviour. The sample was collected and analysed from 149 respondents of different ages in Sweden.

Result: Impulse buying is defined as an unplanned, on the spot purchase triggered by stimulus. The results from the survey show that the most regular impulse buying items are clothes and food where consumer electronics comes in fifth place. Through interpretation of the survey conclusions are drawn that the most common types of impulse buying in consumer electronics are pure, reminder and planned impulse buying. Stimulus in this business should therefore be implemented by creating a desire through sensory marketing and the possibility to touch the products, by clear and visible information about special offers and tie-ins to help the consumer remember what they need.

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1. INTRODUCTION

In this first chapter there will be an introduction and background to the thesis and the reason for the choice of topic as well as the research questions. This chapter also includes delimitations and disposition of this thesis.

1.1 Background

The increasing amount of spending in today's society has created a new life style that has been integrated and accepted among consumers. Owning items has become an expression of self-identity for a lot of consumers which has helped to increase shopping as a lifestyle (Dittamar et al. 1996). A change in society is also shown in the decreasing amount of free time outside of work. Consumers spend less time planning before shopping but with the attitude of a life-style shopper and an increased income by which consumers are encouraged to buy more, impulse buying is a fact (Williams et al, 1972).

Impulse buying is an interesting topic within the subject consumer behaviour. The study of consumer behaviours has lead to conclusions as to why consumers act as they do when it comes to shopping (Underhill, 2006). Studies and articles have shown that the most common business industries where impulse buying occurs are in clothing stores and in grocery stores (Mattson, Ek, 2006, Newnham, 2003, Vidlund, Svärskrona, 2007). There are a lot of studies made on those industries so it would be interesting to look at another business where there ought to occur impulse purchases.

An increasingly important industry of today is the consumer electronics market. Consumers are more and more dependent on technology and with constant development the products have a short life. According to Stern (1962), a short product life is one of the general features for an impulse buying item which makes the consumer electronics industry interesting to study.

1.1.1 Consumer Electronics



Figure.1 Consumer Electronics store. (Authors design)

Consumer electronics is defined as electronic equipment intended for everyday use such as cameras, television sets, mobile phones etc. (Consumer Electronics Association). The most regular and well-known consumer electronics stores in Sweden are El-Giganten, Expert, ONOFF, Siba, Media Markt and Netonnet (Euromonitor, 2010). It is an interesting area to look at because of its high level of change.

The consumer electronics industry is renewed with products and services of a constant pace to keep up with competitors, attract new consumers and maintain the loyal ones. The market's demand is not yet satisfied. The amount of products introduced makes it possible for the consumers to update their electronics every year if they so wish (Djurberg, S. 2006). Thus, this also gives an indication of that the consumer electronics industry should be an ideal place for impulse buying. Even though many consumer electronic products are expensive and seen as high-involvement products (Kotler, 2005), there can still occur impulse buying in the industry (Rook, 1987).

Because of the bad economy over the last years, there has been a trend where consumers have prioritised consumer electronics, i.e. smart phones and LCD, over other social activities like travels, restaurants etc. While saving money on the social activities, there was still a desire to

be entertained at home which encouraged the continuous spending in the consumer electronics industry. It is predicted that this behaviour will continue even when the economical situation gets back to normal (Edström, 2010).

1.2 Problem Discussion

Impulse buying has become a more regular occurrence in today's society because of how shopping is more blended with regular life (Dittamar et al. 1996).

How does the consumer view impulse buying? Does a common view on impulse buying exist and can companies take a common advantage that does not create problems?

Some research articles and books have focused on the clothing industry or food industry because of the easy tendency to impulse buy within the two (Block, Morowitz, 1999). This thesis is more inclined to look at an industry where there is not much data, in connection with impulse buying; the consumer electronics industry. However, are clothes and food really the two most common industries where the consumers' impulse buys?

Many companies within the consumer electronics industry in Sweden are targets of displeasure from the consumers. Mostly the displeasure stems from products that the consumers have spent a lot of money on, which has malfunctioned (Fairshopping, Konsumentverket). This is a part of the high-involvement factor that makes the consumer create an attitude before purchase (Fill, 2002). The displeasure also includes the attitude and behaviour of the staff in these stores that either is pushy, trying to sell the products, or is just not really helpful despite the well-known saying: "The customer is always right" which the consumer also is aware of (Fairshopping).

Because there are a lot of different trends, assumptions cannot properly be made about what the most sold product in the consumer electronics business is. Does impulse buying occurs in consumer electronic stores and what kind of impulse buying takes place?

1.3 Purpose

The purpose of this study is to find what impulse buying is and which type that is the most common amongst consumers. It is also of interest to find if impulse buying is more common in certain industries. Since a focus will be put on consumer electronics to make it more applied, this study aims to find if the consumer electronics industry is among the ones where consumers' impulse buys the most. What kind of impulse buying occurs and how is it encouraged. Then this thesis wishes to find a way to give advice to consumer electronic stores on how to encourage impulse buying and how they should do it.

1.3.1 Research questions

What is impulse buying, what type of impulse buying occurs the most and in which industries?

Is consumer electronics industry one of the most common industries and what kind of impulse buying occurs and why?

What encourages impulse buying?

1.4 Delimitations

This thesis aims to investigate the consumer behaviour behind impulse buying and find the views on the subject. Focus will be put on the consumer electronics industry, since little data can be found, with connection to the factors "impulse buying" and "consumer electronics". The consumer electronics industry will be limited to the Swedish market since the research aims to talk to consumers and companies within Sweden. Certain psychological aspects that exist in impulse buying will not be included in the research.

1.5 Disposition

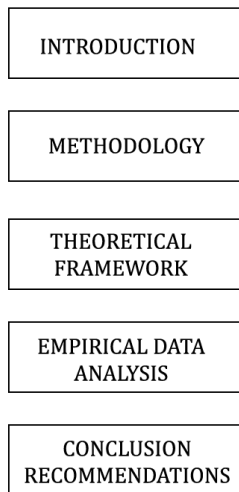


Figure 2 Disposition (Authors' design)

The thesis begins to introduce the methodology on how the data is collected. The theoretical framework will follow afterwards to introduce the topic. Then a presentation of the empirical data gathered through surveys is presented together with the answer from a consumer electronic store's manager that has given his perspective on consumers and sales.

This will then be analysed to see whether the research questions have been answered and there will be a discussion on what the answers imply. Finally, this thesis will end with a conclusion and recommendations for further studies and research.

Summary

This thesis will look upon the phenomenon of impulse buying, what kind of impulse buying that occurs and in which industries. The study will also investigate which the most common sort of impulse buying is within the consumer electronics industry so that appropriate methods can be given to the store managers to encourage impulse buying.

2. METHODOLOGY

With this chapter the intention is to discuss the thesis methodology and research design. The choice will be explained and discussed. Included will also be a description of empirical investigations of both primary and secondary data and motivations to the procedure.

When choosing a method to go about for the research, several decisions need to be made. What kind of empirical data is needed in order to make an analysis? By choosing a correct method the empirical data can be analyzed properly with a critical mind.

2.1 Research Design

In order to make good research, several decisions need to be made when it comes to the method of gathering data to test the theories. The most commonly used ones are: Exploratory, Descriptive and Hypothesis.

In exploratory research the major purpose is to gather as much information as possible from a problem area. This kind of research is intended for further studies in the future which means that the need to be creative in gathering the data is necessary (Patel, 2010).

In making a descriptive research the already existing data can be used to be systematized in form of different models. This kind of investigation is limited to research where just a few aspects of the data are interesting in order to be more detailed (Patel, 2010).

In hypothesis research the research area is filled with a wide range of theories and knowledge and this means that tests can be done in reality. Statements, for example: children work better in a silent environment, are created and then accepted or rejected with the test. It is important to make sure that the gathering of the information is as accurate as possible to not influence the result in the end (Patel, 2010).

2.1.1 Our choice:

The primary and secondary data that has been gathered, has with an exploratory perspective the aim of finding information about impulse buying so that the results together with the theories can be used to give examples of marketing measurements to increase impulse buying. Therefore, information in the subjects of consumer behaviour, impulse buying and in-store marketing has been a big part of the theoretical framework.

2.2 Deductive, Inductive and Abductive thesis

In a deductive study the researcher takes existing theories and facts and applies them to empirical events to see whether the theories are correct (Patel, 2010).

In an inductive study a researcher makes a conclusion out of empirical data that has been gathered through observations and formulates a theory around it (Patel, 2010).

In an abductive study there is a combination of both deduction and induction, a theory is created from empirical data. This theory is then tested on new empirical observations to see whether the first assumption is correct (Hair, Bush, Ortinau, 2006).

2.2.1 Our choice:

This thesis is a deductive study since we have explored already existing theories in the form of Stern and others and applied them to consumers to see whether they are indeed correct.

2.3 Qualitative and Quantitative research

Qualitative

In qualitative research the focus is on explorative designs to gain a new insight and new ideas in order to find new breaking ground to explore (Hair, Bush, Ortinau, 2006).

Quantitative

In quantitative research its focus is on using formalised questions in surveys that are sent out to a large amount of respondents. This is done in order to get a validation of facts that is used in the research (Hair, Bush, Ortinau, 2006).

2.3.1 Our Choice:

The choice for this thesis is quantitative research since the aim has been to find whether the theories about the definitions that have been presented later, are valid, though it is not entirely quantitative but also somewhat qualitative in the sense that the answers expected from the primary data are more of the exploring type to see what sort of attitudes the consumers got.

The empirical data has been gathered through surveys with formalised questions that have been sent out to a large amount of respondents. But it cannot be called quantitative all the way since it is not the large amount of respondents that is usually qualified for it.

2.4 Primary and secondary data

2.4.1 Primary Data

Information needed for this research was to understand the consumers and how they think when it comes to impulse buying and attitudes towards the subject. It is important to understand the consumers to reach their perceptions (Kotler et al, 2005). With this survey the intention will be to see what attitudes and self-image the consumers have, and what they act upon.

2.4.1.2 Survey Collection

The survey was developed after the information that was needed and wanted to investigate the research questions.

The choice of surveys was the wish to have as many answers as possible in order to make connections to and draw conclusions from the already existing information about impulse buying to confirm it.

Placing the ordinary questions like sex, age and income last was a decision made to make the consumers more focused on answering the questions if they did not have to go through the trouble of answering the simple questions first. It seems like an easy way to finish the survey (Survey from the Central Bureau of Statistics in Sweden, SCB).

A pilot study with the surveys was tried out on ten random consumers to get their opinion and get them to be honest about whether the questions were understandable in their eyes. The ten respondents found different things that could be clarified which the researchers did in order to make it easier for the respondents. The survey was then launched to as many people as possible through e-mail and Facebook. The Internet was the choice of distribution channel to get a bigger variety of consumers to answer, also to reach as many respondents as possible in the short time frame. It also left an easier way to put together the data collected and to interpret it.

The random spread is something that this research could not entirely control since the surveys were sent out to friends and family, who were asked to pass the survey onwards. The frequency of answers was still a great response thanks to the social network that helped spread the survey further.

2.4.1.3 Demographic Variables

The demographic variables have been to focus on consumers living in Sweden. The focus has also been to get a mixed variety of consumers since the assumption is that most people perform some kind of impulse buying in their life. One assumption that has been made as well is that there are more women than men that are inclined to impulse buy (Visanji, 2007).

2.4.1.4 Question form

There was information needed in order to truly understand and get an impression of how consumer electronics stores and their staff behind the counter work to encourage consumers to buy. A question form was therefore sent out to several consumer electronics stores in Gothenburg to get the opinion of many. Unfortunately, there was only one response since many consumer electronics stores have a policy of not answering questions or have a lack of time. The questions were shaped after the information that was needed about their ways to attract consumers but in a way that would not make the store reluctant to answer.

2.4.2 Secondary data

When gathering the secondary data the focus has been on not only gathering data about impulse buying itself but also on consumer behaviour and the stimulus that will influence the behaviour of the consumer. The data about consumer behaviour was not only found in economic journals but also in psychological journals as well together with social journals. Newspaper articles have also been part of the investigation and a good foundation of the theoretical framework and to raise the research question.

2.5 Criticism

2.5.1 Primary & Secondary Data

The primary data is the information that is gathered throughout the research so that conclusions can be drawn to answer the research question.

When it comes to demographic spread, it could have been more controlled and randomly spread by getting help from the National registration and SCB (the Central Bureau of Statistics in Sweden) but this was not possible because of time, authority and money.

It is not the kind of random variable that would have been wanted for this survey and the spread of respondents nor is it the high amount of quantity that would have been preferable.

It would also have been possible with more time to have encouraged more respondents to answer in order to have collected a higher number of answers. It would also have been possible to have made a follow-up to see if all the questions were properly understood.

When it comes to the question form it could have been distributed to more consumer electronics stores in the city of Gothenburg. The contact that was made directly to the electronic retailer stores could have been made with the head office to avoid that the respondents did not respond, which we later found out, due to that it is a policy in most electronic stores not to answer questions from students. That was something that clearly put a half to the research. That setback resulted in the fact that data on how consumer electronics stores work on encouraging consumers to buy was not complete enough. It made it hard to make a comparison between electronic stores or see whether a pattern could be found.

The secondary data was gathered by searching for information in various books, newspapers and academic journals of different kinds in order to gain a perspective. It is possible that some of that data could have been skewed in opinions or empirical data.

2.5.2 Validity

Knowing what is being investigated is being in line with what has been said to be investigated and what actually is being investigated (Patel, Davidson, 2010). Validity is the extent to which the conclusions drawn from the experiments are true (Hair, Bush, Ortinau, 2006).

The survey was designed with both open questions, to allow the respondents to write down their own answers, as well as multiple choice questions. This led to that the respondents were free to answer whatever, which resulted in answers not entirely in consistence to the aim of the question. The open question design also resulted in that the answers had to be interpreted by the authors which might result in low validity. However, with knowledge of the subject, the interpretations have resulted in meaningful answers and therefore high validity.

Since it was a limited amount of time, the number of respondents answering the survey was unsatisfying since several more could have made it more explicit in information. Therefore the results from the survey have a slightly low validity. The respondents to the consumer

electronics questions were thus even of a smaller number, which gave a skewed result to the empirical data. There were less than half of all of the respondents to give answers about experience with the consumer electronics industry in Sweden. Some answers were too few to draw conclusions in a likeable way, which made it impossible to properly interpret the data.

The question form is not of very high validity since there could be some knowledge lost in the reluctance to be completely honest from the electronic' stores point of view. The question form resulted in just one answer which raises the question of validity to this study. The results cannot be generalised to the whole business but the answer gives an example and an insight from the consumer electronics industry's point of view. Therefore the answer is of importance the study.

The validity of the secondary data is classified as high since it has been focused on consumer behaviour and the processes around it. The authors are well known and accepted researchers and authors. It has been in line with the research of this thesis.

2.5.3 Reliability

Mark Twain said, "Everybody lies, every day; every hour; awake; asleep; in his dreams; in his joy; in his mourning." (Henig, 2006)

How reliable is a research project then? The research is reliable and good when the result is close to the true answers. There is always a random fault in the respondents' answers which of course differs from the true answer (Patel, Davidson, 2010).

There is a certain sensitivity involved in certain subjects for example impulse buying. This means that some respondents may have found the subject of impulse buying connected to some negative emotions and would therefore have trouble expressing their true answers to the survey questions. This could cause some doubt in reliability. However, the factor of anonymity by answering the survey on the Internet encourages the respondent to speak more freely which should point to the conclusion that the answers are reliable.

The fact that the respondents' answers were interpreted by the authors is something that can be questioned regarding reliability. Because though the authors might have gained knowledge in this thesis, it could still be some fault in regards to how the authors' interpreted correctly or not.

The question form could possibly have a low reliability because of reluctance from the consumer electronics stores to be completely honest with their answers on how they act to encourage the consumers to buy because there is still a shame in taking advantage of consumers' weakness. One of the consumer electronics stores that were asked to answer confessed that they could not answer the questions since it is still looked upon with shame at the presumption that stores take advantage of consumers' weaknesses to get them to shop.

The reliability of the secondary data is good since it has been gathered from scientifically articles and books where the academic authors are trustworthy and considered reliable. It is assumed that the authors have controlled all the facts in their research (Ejvegård, 2009). The scientifically articles are mainly gathered from approved article databases. Newspapers are sometimes difficult to rely on since there are many opinions involved. The reliability of the secondary data is in most cases high according to what can be read into the methods in the academic journals and scripts chosen in this research.

Summary

In summary, this research has been based on using a descriptive method and a quantitative method to make sure of getting most of the information gathered. With the descriptive perspective the intention is to answer the question about what impulse buying is. With the quantitative perspective, the purpose is to find general answers as to why and what sort of impulse buying that occurs.

The research got the information needed, but hopefully there can be more extended research on the same subject with more money and time to get a wider and broader sense of information.

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In this theoretical framework we work through the academic design on impulse buying, the consumer behaviour and the stimuli encouraging impulse buying. We conclude with an explanation of post-purchase behaviour and its connection with impulse buying.

3.1 What is impulse buying?

The central theme of the theories in this thesis will have a focus on impulse buying behaviour and the processes surrounding it, among some of them, consumer behaviour and stimuli to buy.

Impulse buying has been defined by several researchers through history though there has been a different focus on the definition throughout time. The earlier researchers focused more on when the purchase decision was made and the purchase itself, instead of the consumer. This more descriptive definition of impulse buying is given by Clover (1950), Applebaum (1951), Kollat and Willet (1969) and Engel and Blackwell (1982). They define a situation of impulse buying as when there has been no conscious or previous intention to buy before entering the store. The purchase that emerges is unplanned and has not been on the consumer's shopping list.

Stern (1962) provides to the research by subdividing impulse purchase into four categories. They are based on the above mentioned definitions where the purchase is unplanned.

- ***Pure Impulsive Buying:*** (defined as classic impulsive buying), is a purchase that breaks the normal planned shopping pattern. This category is strongly connected to emotions and the impulsiveness is very high. It occurs because of a want to escape or because the product is a novelty. The consumer is not looking for the product at all but feels a strong emotional want. Low price is a common trigger to this category.

- ***Suggestion Impulsive Buying:*** (defined as a suggestion impulsive buying), because when seeing a new product for the first time; a need develops in the shopper that can only be satisfied by buying it. This purchase can turn out to be a rational or functional purchase decision but the purchase is not planned because the consumer has no previous knowledge about the product. That is why visualization in the store is the key factor for the purchase.

- ***Reminder Impulsive Buying:*** (defined as reminder impulsive buying), is when a product suddenly reminds the consumer that they need it because they are out of it back home. There already exists an unconscious need for the product which implies that the consumer has previous knowledge about the product. The reminder impulse can also remind them about a particular advertisement or information previously noticed by the consumer, which now makes the consumer take the opportunity of purchasing. The difference between reminder impulse buying and suggestion impulse buying is that the product is known to the consumer in the first but not in the latter situation.

- ***Planned Impulsive Buying:*** (defined as planned impulsive buying), because when entering a shop the consumer has in mind to buy something or some sort of good but the choice of what kind of product, brand, size or price etc. has not been determined. Instead special offers and other stimuli such as salespersons, influence the decisions inside the shop. The actual decision is made at the point of sale. This makes it different from planned purchase when a more specific kind of product is in mind e.g. a blouse instead of clothes.

The difference between planned impulse buying and reminder impulse buying is that planned impulse buying is in some way considered before entering the store instead of being an unconscious need that suddenly comes to mind.

Stern's identification research reoccurs in future research papers when the definitions are more focused on the physiological background to why impulse buying occurs. Goldenson (1984), Rook (1987), Gardner and Rook (1993) and Bayley and Nancarrow (1998) define impulse buying as a sudden, strong, immediate, complex and irresistible urge to buy. The

decision is sudden and no conscious deliberation is done in the decision-making process behind it.

Piron (1991) who has studied the previous definitions of impulse buying has summarized three main criteria to the impulse buying definition;

1. The purchase should be unplanned i.e. there is no buying intention prior to the entrance of the consumer into the store.
2. Stimulus is what triggers impulse buying whether it is reminder, environmental manipulations (Engel et al 1968, Lindstrom, 2009) or the buyers' own thoughts (Hirschman, 1985).
3. The purchase decision is made on-the-spot i.e. an impulse purchase is spontaneous, sudden and occurs at the point of sale. This means that the purchase is made immediately after the buying decision.

There seems to occur a conflict between Stern's planned impulsive buying and Piron's unplanned and on-the-spot criteria because the two criteria rule out that the purchase is planned in advance. However, even if there is some sort of plan before entering the store in the planned impulse buying, this plan is very general and comprehensive as mentioned above and is therefore approved to be a defined impulse buying type.

Piron also adds another dimension to impulse buying. The focus is on the consumer and his/her accompanying emotions. Piron enlightens about the fact that impulse buying can be with or without the emotions, such as guilt, happiness, desire and so on and still can be defined as impulse buying with the above mentioned criteria. Piron concludes that the purchase can be either an experiential impulse or a non-experiential impulse (Piron, F. 1991). Throughout this research the focus will be on experiential impulse because the emotions are of importance in Stern's four definitions of impulse buying.

The research has moved forward along with changes in income and attitude towards purchase and materialism (Williams et al, 1972). Evans et al (2006) therefore added a category to Stern's four categories, namely; Impulse purchase as an action of freedom.

- ***Impulse purchase as an action of freedom:*** Purchases are made because the buyer is able to, e.g. because of a monetary freedom. The purchase is often made to show that the buyer has control over his or her life (Evans et al, 2006).

Further on, the focus will be on these five categories; pure impulse, suggestion impulse, reminder impulse, planned impulse and impulse buying as an act of freedom, when dwelling deeper into the field of consumer behaviour and the consumer's tendency to act on impulse in stores.

3.2 How impulse buying occurs

3.2.1 Decision making process

The decision making process explains the consumer's behaviour concerning a purchase, i.e. the phases surrounding the actual purchase, either it is an impulse or a normal one. There exists a lot of models describing the decision making process but one common model consists of the factors:

1. Need recognition
2. Information search
3. Evaluation of alternatives
4. Buying decision
5. Post-purchase behaviour

(Kotler et al, 2005)

First the consumer recognises a need which is a difference between the consumer's desired state and actual state. The knowledge or consciousness about this unbalance can be triggered by internal stimuli, such as hunger and emotions, or external stimuli, such as sense marketing or in-store marketing (Kotler et al, 2005). Thereafter, a search for information about the products begins. The information can be gathered from personal- (family, friends), commercial- (advertising, salespersons, and packages), and public- (media) or experiential- (trying, examining) sources which can result in several interesting alternatives that need to be evaluated. The products' features are compared against each other and are given different

attributes to be matched with the consumer's own needs and beliefs about future utility and functionality. The consumers' attitudes towards risk, both financial and social, will also influence the decision. For example a more thorough search for data and information will occur with a high-involvement product (Fill, 2002).

After the evaluation of alternatives, the consumer makes the buying decision which is based on not only the consumer's assessment but also on others' attitudes. If the purchase is realized the consumer will be in a state of post-purchase behaviour, either satisfied or unsatisfied depending on whether the product met the consumer's expectations or not (Kotler et al, 2005). In accordance to the learning process, it is important to make the customer feel satisfied since these positive associations to a previous purchase will make the consumer return to the store when a need for a similar product occurs. People learn when they act which will lead to a repeated behaviour of reoccurring satisfaction and choice of store and brand (Kotler et al, 2005; Söderlund, 1997).

The above-mentioned stages could vary in range depending on the importance of the purchase, price, time, consumer's routines and previous knowledge etc. For example, the "information search" and "evaluation of alternatives" are time-consuming and because impulse buying is defined to be sudden and on-the-spot, they have a smaller part in the decision making process behind impulse buying. However, with that said, the stages still have an important part in the buying decision process. Another differentiation in the model above is if the product is new to the consumer. The model will then include the stages awareness and adoption of the product, which is needed to get the consumer to accept the product. In this situation information plays a major part to create knowledge so that the adopting process takes place (Kotler et al, 2005).

The consumers' response to external stimuli varies from person to person because of their individual perception shaped by cultural, social, personal and psychological factors. That is why it is important to find the general perception in the consumer group on which the company then can focus (Kotler et al, 2005, Blythe, 1997).

Presented above the reasons for why an impulse buy occurs has been described. Therefore the following text will focus on how to use this knowledge in real life, with selling techniques.

3.3 How to encourage impulse buying

In literature, advice has been given on how a salesperson can encourage consumers to make more purchases. In accordance with why impulse buying occurs, there are certain techniques on how to encourage impulse buying and some are presented below.

As mentioned before; external stimuli may increase the consumers' unconscious needs. It is the company's main task to do this by different marketing techniques. In general, the product assortment should be appealing to the consumer, there should be sufficient information about the product's features and the environment should be comfortable in order to make it easy for the consumer to make the purchase decision (Schmidt Thurow & Sköld Nilsson, 2008).

3.3.1 The product

Stern has identified some general product features for an impulse buying item that can also be used to make the product more appealing to impulse buy.

- Low price; because it makes the risk of being unsatisfied with the purchase seem less possible because of the small loss in money. Also, a low price can generate the positive feeling that a bargain has been made (Kotler, 2005).
- Short product life; because there will soon be a need to buy a new similar product.
- Small size, light weight and ease of storage; because the products are easy to transport and fit at home.

Underhill (2006) also describes the importance of the package in what the products are wrapped in. The consumers need to know what they are paying for so the packaging should be made so that the consumers can see what is inside. If the packages do not give a sufficient description of the product, the company can provide this by letting the consumer feel and touch the product, for example a computer or telephone, in order to make it easier for the consumer to make the buying decision. (Underhill, 2006).

As mentioned in the background the time to spend in stores has decreased. That is why the floor layout, where to find things and easy accessibility is of greater importance (Bennet, 2010). This is also why the following theories explain in-store display strategies.

3.3.2 In-store display

In the decision making process the first stage is to trigger a need for a product which includes making the consumers notice the product. McGodrick (2002) explains a way to do so, namely by exposing the products in aisles. This will make the consumer slow down and thereby notice the product.

Literature has brought up different types of exposure strategies, for example:

- Special exposure; the product is placed somewhere out of the ordinary, for example in an open space, in pyramids or piles with different shapes and colours to give the products attention. This sort of exposure attracts attention by making the product “pop-out” Nordfält (2007).
- Endcap: the product is placed on a gable and can therefore be seen by everyone walking down the aisle (Nordfält, 2007). Endcap’s aim is to get a sig-sagging between the shelves which will make more products potentially visible to consumers (Ekberg and Lohmander 2004).
- Throw exposure: products are placed in disorder, for example thrown down in a box to create the feeling that the products are low-priced (Ekberg, Lohmander, 2004).
- Prominent store display: increases the likelihood for the consumer to be able to see the item when the impulse purchase was not previously planned. (Stern 1962) The products can be placed close to the counter, entrance or the main aisles in the store. Abratt and Goodey (1990) point out that most consumers find it easier to choose a product that is at the same level as their eyes because the eyes naturally focus on the same level.
- Tie-ins: by placing related products close to each other this will increase sales (Schmidt Thurow and Sköld Nilsson 2008). This is what Piron (1991) refers to, saying that Berkman and Gilson call them tie-ins. They describe that the items are placed depending on the usage of the products, for example batteries together with machines that are in need of batteries or headsets close to Ipods.

Though Ekberg and Lohmander (2004) emphasize that it is important not to have too many special exposures because then the consumers might feel as if they are more like obstacles, so companies should keep it clean and simple but creative to attract the consumer.

As touched upon before, consumers use more than just sight when they buy, so to encourage the need, companies can also use something called sensory marketing.

3.3.3 Sensory Marketing

BART: Cookies. *sniffs*

MARGE: Stop that sniffing. It's not for you. They're making the house next door smell like cookies so people will subconsciously wanna buy it.

BART: Oh come on! What kind of big fat moron would fall for th....

HOMER: *sniffs* COOKIES! So. Delicious. Must buy house!

- The Simpsons - The Bob Next Door

Sensory marketing is a concept that stimulates the consumers' senses to help them make a purchase. Smells, touch, sight, hearing and taste is all big parts of this encouragement that helps the consumer make decisions. This is something that has become more common for stores to use (Lindstrom, 2009, Underhill, 2006).

Samsung electronics stores in New York have taken sense marketing to heart as they pump out the smell of honey melon, a signature that takes the consumer into a relaxing state where they do not get worked up over the high prices in the store (Lindstrom, 2009). In fact, no matter what store a consumer walks into there will be some kind of smell that encourages them to buy (Lindstrom, 2009).

How about the sense touch? When walking into an electronics store, a consumer expects certain things about the technology that they intend to buy. For example, most consumers assume that the smaller and lighter the products are the more technical and complicated they are. Consumers also expect certain things to feel a certain way for them to be of good quality. For example, according to the consumer's mind a remote control should be heavy; otherwise if it is light, there is something wrong with it (Lindstrom, 2009).

Touching the products also encourages consumers to follow through with the purchase. Almost every unplanned purchase is a result of listening, smelling or touching something in a store. This is true because displays work better than marketing, so to encourage the consumers to take the last step towards the product and buy it, demonstrations like they have in food stores, or prototypes where the consumers can touch the products are effective (Underhill, 2006).

What do stores do to encourage the sense sight? Marketers discovered that colourful ads held the consumers' attention for two seconds instead of one, which the black and white ads held. This can be of advantage in the stores that can create displays with colours that attracts the consumers attention and curiosity (Lindstrom, 2009).

Sound branding is something that has been around since the 1950's where among others Kellogg's have made sure to ensure that their product cornflakes has a certain crunch sound to it so their consumers would hear the difference between their products and others. Today, the most common sounds are jingles that are made to stick in consumers' minds (Lindstrom, 2009). A common jingle that always seems to get stuck on consumers' minds is McDonald's different ones, the most common one is; "I'm loving it." (McDonalds).

Sounds can also be used to niche a store. Lindstrom mentions that some clothes shops use Latino or Jazz music to hide subliminal messages to encourage buying and discourage shoplifting and this has proven to be successful. This indicates that the consumers' mood and state of mind can be influenced to the store's advantage. It is something that can also be used in other areas (Lindstrom, 2009).

A term known as mirror neurons was created in Italy by Giacomo Rizzolatti who found out that witnessing someone else do something, for example eating an ice-cream could result in the same reaction and feelings as doing it yourself. The brain reacts within a consumer as if they are doing the action themselves. So if someone comes out of a store with for example, an Iphone, a desire to have an Iphone is created in the mind of the consumer. It is not only the desire for the product, but a desire to be just like the other person. A consumer can walk into a consumer electronics store and watch an advertisement with a person holding a cool phone with bright colours and cool applications. The advertisement presents the person as fresh, cool and with awesome clothes. Soon the consumer thinks about how fresh, cool and awesome

they would be by buying the phone. The consumer has in that instant bought themselves an image together with the phone which the mirror neurons created (Lindstrom, 2009).

3.3.4 Salesperson

After the need recognition state, i.e. the company has successfully got the consumer to notice the product; they now have to convince the consumer that the product is what he/she is looking for. The consumer will be in the state of information gathering and will wish to find out more about the product. At this point an influence from a salesperson can be crucial. According to Schmidt Thow and Sköld Nilsson (2008) international researchers have come to the conclusion that the contact between the consumer and a salesperson does increase sales. However, a too eager salesperson can scare away the consumers because generally the consumers wish to look around in peace and then ask for help when they need it (Evans et al, 2008). The salesperson should be close by the consumer to be prepared to help. The goal for the interaction between the consumer and salesperson is to convince the consumer that the purchase is the right decision.

There are different techniques that the salesperson can use and Laurelli (2003) mentions several:

- Social evidence: The salesperson refers to previous consumers and their satisfaction with the product. This makes the consumer more secure about his/her buying decision and triggers the feeling of belonging with the former satisfied consumers.
- Scarcity attraction: The salesperson points out that the offer and amount of products are limited. This forces the consumer to make a quick decision about whether or not to accomplish the purchase.

Ekberg and Lohmander (2004) also give advice on a few techniques

- Giving the consumer a picture of using the product in order to help them get an image of how it is to own the product can make their life better.
- Let the consumer use the product at home for a week, which makes it almost impossible to say no after the week is done, because he/she has gotten used to having the product in their life.

- Be clear and make sure that the consumers understand the information that is given to them by asking them. This is also a way to get inside the consumers' minds to know what their doubts may be.
- Offer alternatives so the consumers feel like they have made the decision themselves.
- Finding the sensitive spot and offering solutions to what the consumer might feel could become a problem in the future (Ekberg, Lohmander, 2004).

The most important thing is to create a positive relationship with the consumer and be aware that the consumers see more than the sales persons realise. In fact, the consumers see the staff before they hear them which hint that it is important how the sales persons look as well as how they act with other persons. If the staffs have fun together and laughs often, the consumers will notice and feel happy as well (Ekberg, Lohmander, 2004).

3.3.5 Advertising

- Mass distribution; because the product is easy to find and often exposed to the consumer.
- Mass advertising; because it exposes the product and gives the consumer information and knowledge about the product which can trigger a reminder or even be a planned impulse (Stern 1962).

3.4 Survey Questions

The survey questions were asked on a basis of what was needed to know in order to draw conclusions. The first questions about how the consumers define impulse buying were asked to get an initial picture of the consumers' knowledge and attitude towards impulse buying. Thereafter, to get a starting point to draw assumptions from, the three following questions about what, when and why the respondents impulse buy were asked. Those questions also indicate how aware the consumers are about their actions.

Questions to figure out what kind of different impulse buying the respondents make were asked to later be divided into Stern's and Evan's definitions. For example the following

questions about how often they buy products over 100 SEK because the old ones are untrendy and if they had bought something that they saw the first time, was asked to draw conclusions about if it was common to impulse buy as an act of freedom or if they ever had done an suggestion impulse purchase.

Further on in the survey the respondents were encouraged to think about an impulse purchase made recently for a cost over 50 SEK. These guidelines were to help the respondents give a clear example to later enable that conclusions could be drawn about the other types of impulse buying, namely pure, reminder and planned impulse buying.

Because of the fact that impulse buying strongly can be connected to emotions, the questions about feelings were asked to see if the impulse purchase changed the state of emotions. Questions were also asked to understand what lead to the buying decision and what it was affecting the consumer to follow through with the purchase. The answers from these questions would result in conclusions about preferable measurements to encourage impulse buying. A big interest was also to get some knowledge on where the respondents did most of their impulse buying to draw a conclusion as to in which business impulse buying mostly occurs.

To see more explicitly on the consumer electronics business questions were specifically asked about such purchases. The question about why the product was bought had the aim to see if there was a previous need or emotion resulting in the choice of product category. In contrary to the question if there was something special that affected the choice of the purchased product (over other similar), which had the purpose to see if there were a special product attribute, promotion or something else connected to specifically that product, which resulted in the purchase. So even if the questions seem similar they have somewhat different purposes.

Finally general questions about sex, age, income, household situation and shopping pattern were asked. They were important to get a profile of the consumers and to see if differences occur between the sexes and the generations.

3.4.1 Criticism of the survey results

The choice of questions for the survey was meant to be open questions so that the respondents could give an honest answer in order to find out whether there was a certain type of impulse buying among them. There were a lot of questions designed this way to not affect the respondents' answers which later on turned out to be a bad choice. The respondents did not understand the purpose and essence of the questions and therefore the responses did not give the research the answers that were wished for. Some conclusions could therefore not be drawn. Instead, questions of the multiple choice design should have been more frequent.

In question two, "What do you impulse buy the most? For example; clothes, food, music or accessories." The examples given can have affected the answers but because it is also shown in earlier studies that clothes and food are the two most common industries for impulse buying, the results may not have been any different even if examples had not been given.

Summary

In order to get knowledge about impulse buying and consumer behaviour, several articles and books were read. This gave a history of the theory around impulse buying and how it has evolved both academically and in the markets. Then research was done on how impulse buying occurs which is closely connected to how it is encouraged since it pushes the occurring into happening. Finally, some facts about post-purchase and customer satisfaction gave an insight into how consumers might feel after an impulse purchase and how customer satisfaction could be encouraged.

4. EMPIRICAL DATA AND ANALYSIS

With this chapter the data and results will be presented from the surveys and the expert interview. Then an analysis will be made on the results in connection with the theoretical framework and the research questions.

4.1 Survey Results

4.1.1 Participants

The survey has been answered by 149 respondents, whereby 110 persons (74%) were women and 39 persons (26%) were men. The share is quite uneven, something which needs to be taken under consideration when analysing the data. I.e. the women's behaviour and attitudes will be over-represented when analysing the whole group of respondents.

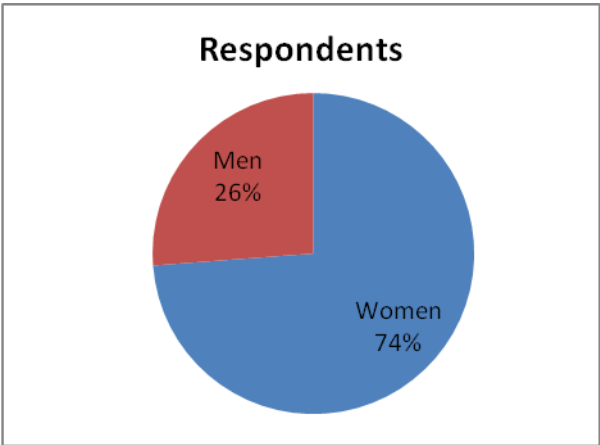


Diagram 1

The ages of the respondents had a spread from 1930 to 1991 as shown in diagram 2.

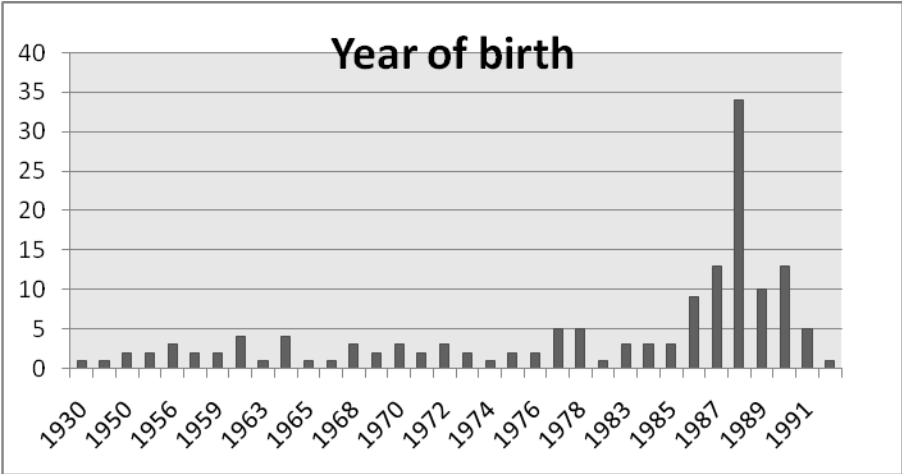


Diagram 2

A majority of the respondents are born in the eighties, principally in 1988. This uneven distribution of the respondents results in the fact that conclusions between age-groups would be misleading. Because of the small number of respondents born for example in 1930, it is impossible to draw any conclusions about behaviour in most of the single age-groups. Therefore, the research has merged the respondents into two age-groups, namely the ones born earlier than 1980 (<1980) and the ones born later or at the year of 1980 (≥1980) (Diagram 3).

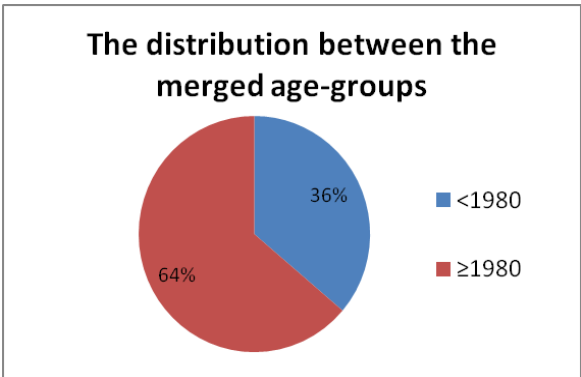


Diagram 3

4.1.2 Impulse Buying – the definition

The respondents began by defining impulse buying with their own words. These answers have then been interpreted by the researchers into Stern’s (1962), Evan’s (2006) and Piron’s (1991) definitions of impulse buying. Because of this interpretation some translation subjectivity has occurred.

The results show that most of the respondents define impulse buying as an unplanned purchase. All the respondents did not mention criteria in their definitions, which could lead to a conclusion that, for example, the respondents define impulse buying as an act of freedom (Diagram 4).

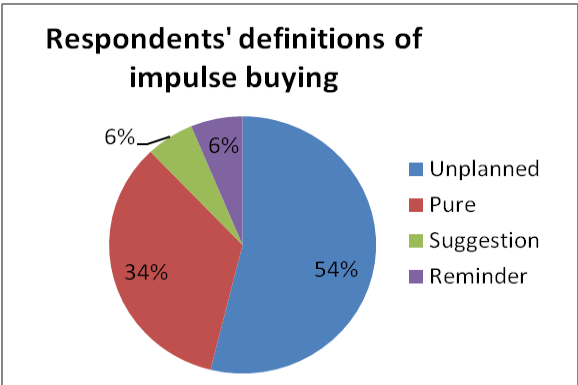


Diagram 4

On the other hand, many of the respondents added emotions and feelings into their definitions which lead to the possibility of drawing the conclusion that they not only define impulse buying as an unplanned purchase.

The most common feeling associated with the definition of impulse buying is “Desire”, a strong emotion that wakens the need. Other common feelings are “Unnecessary” and “Spontaneous” (Diagram 5). This indicates that the respondents define impulse buying as the definition that Stern (1962) describes as pure impulse buying. A few definitions stuck and were described by the

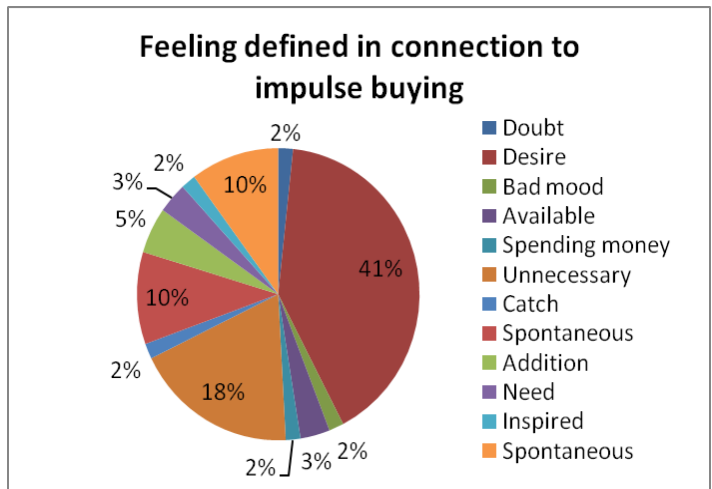


Diagram 5

respondents as “A purchase not planned at all. Something you see in a store that makes you go: *I really need to buy this, and then you buy*” “Something unplanned, often unnecessary”

4.1.3 Impulse buying – What we buy

The next question that was asked to the respondents was what they impulse buy the most. The results showed that clothes and food were the main product categories but it is somewhat different when subdividing men’s and women’s answers.

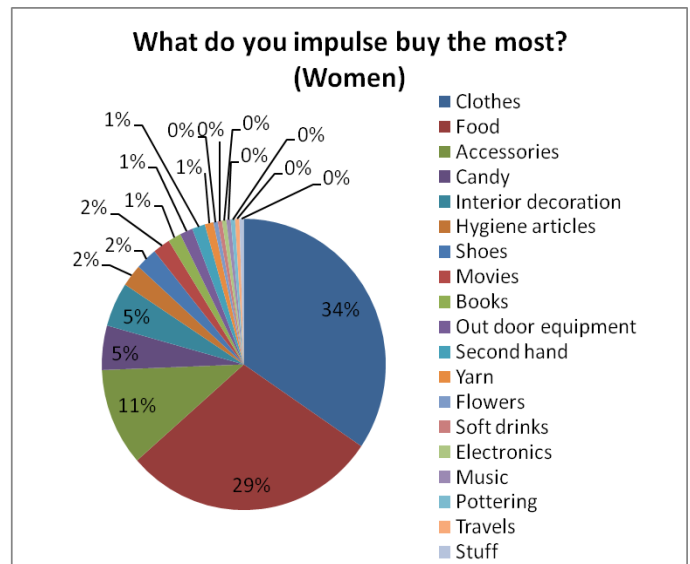
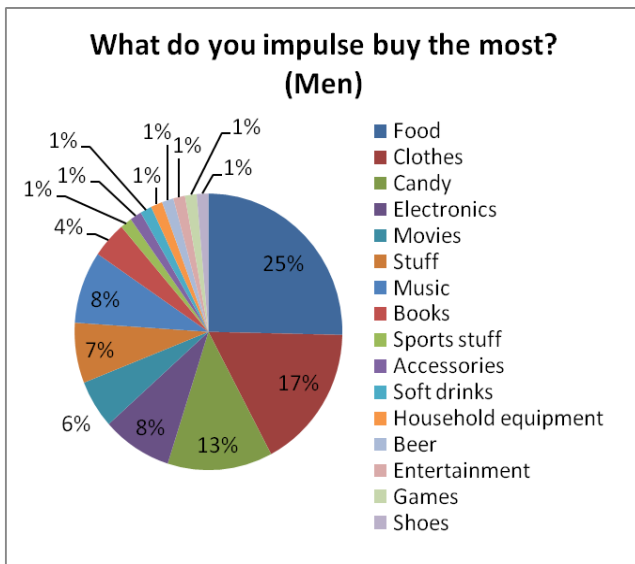


Diagram 6

Diagram 7

Men prioritise food over clothes while women do the opposite. Electronics, candy and movie were also on the top list of what the men impulse buys the most, while the women’s priorities were accessories, candy and decorations (Diagram 6 & 7).

To give an indication of whether there is a difference between the generations' behaviour regarding what sort of products they impulse buy the most, the following diagrams (Diagram 8 & 9) show the same answers as above but divided into the two age-groups.

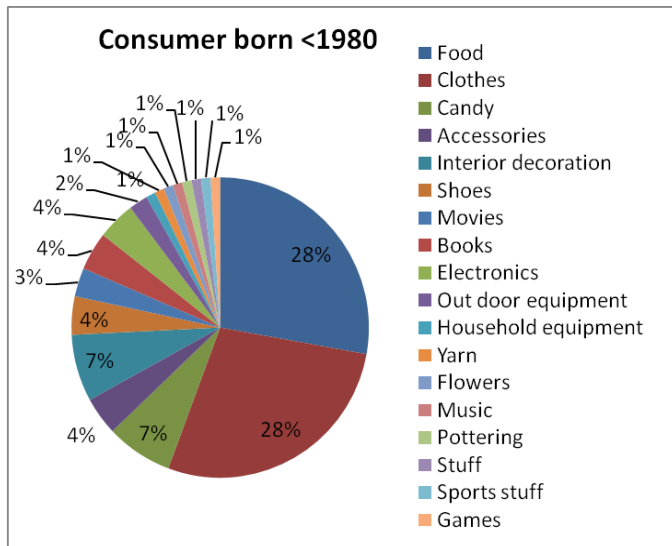


Diagram 8

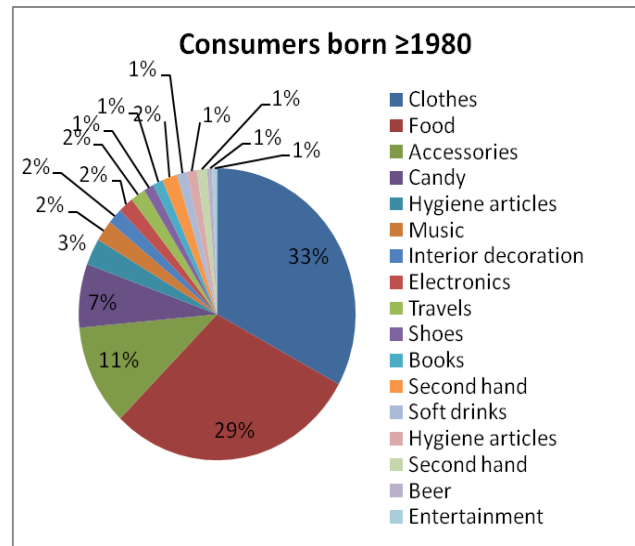


Diagram 9

The consumers born prior to 1980 impulse buy mostly food and clothes, while the respondents born in the 1980's and 1990's impulse buy slightly more clothes than food. Next in line consumers born prior to 1980 prefer candy before accessories while the respondents born 1980 and after prefer accessories before candy. This shows a difference between generations and their attitudes about shopping. However, the results may also depend on other factors, such as family affairs or life-stage.

4.1.4 Impulse buying – When we buy

To know more about the consumers and their buying behaviour the question about; when the respondents impulse buy, was asked. The respondents could choose several alternatives and the colours in diagram 10 indicate different categories of alternatives.

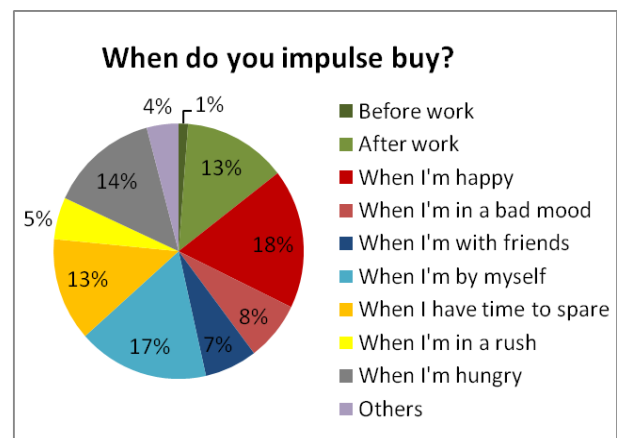


Diagram 10

These answers result in an impulse buying profile. The general respondent impulse buys after work, often when he/she is happy and by his-/herself and when there is time to spare. There is often a feeling of being hungry.

4.1.5 Type of impulse buying

The following diagrams and results have had the aim of finding out in which sort of product type, what sort of impulse buying occurs, according to Stern’s (1962), Evan’s (2006) and Piron’s (1991) definitions. The results are based, not on which product the consumer stated to impulse buy the most, but on an optional product over 100 SEK that the respondent has impulse bought recently. This is because the respondents were encouraged to think about the product on the following questions to make it easier for the respondent to answer.

4.1.5.1 Suggestion

When seeing a new product for the first time a need develops in the shopper that can only be satisfied by buying it (Stern, 1962).

This diagram (diagram 11) confirms that Stern’s definition of suggestion impulse buying has occurred to most of these respondents which gives an indication that the lure of a new product can encourage impulse buying.

In connection to the answer above, the question why the respondents had done the

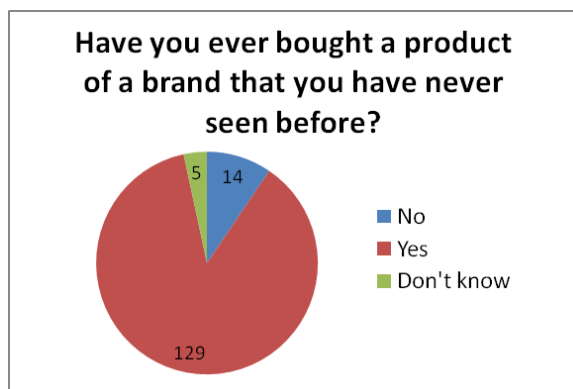


Diagram 11

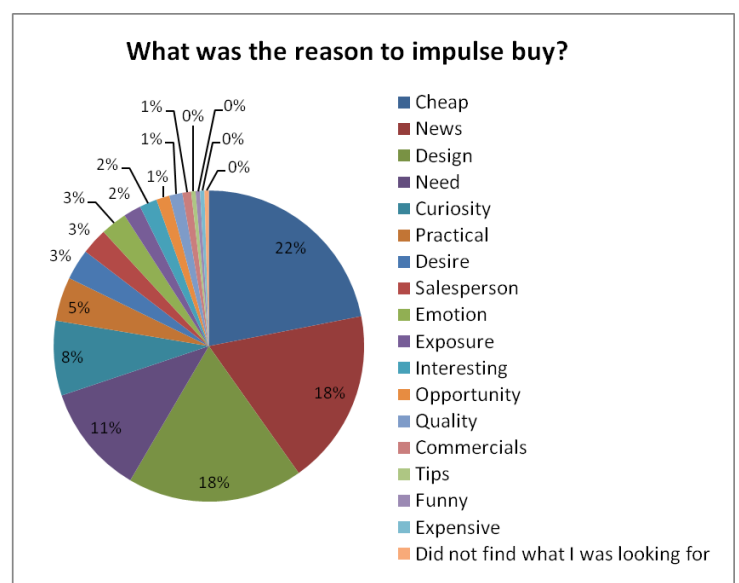


Diagram 12

suggestion impulse buying was asked. The results are shown in diagram 12.

Indications from the answers show that the four main reasons for suggestion impulse buying are that the product was cheap, new to the respondents, had an appealing design or that they felt that there was a need for it. Conclusions can be drawn that factors like a cheap and good looking product will lure consumers to buy on impulse even if the product is new to the consumer. The fact that it is a new product can even be an encouraging factor to the purchase.

4.1.5.2 Planned

When entering a shop the consumer has in mind buying something or some sort of good but the choice of what kind of product, brand, size or price etc. has not been determined but is decided in the shop (Stern, 1962).

Diagram 13 shows an indication that when it comes to clothes, shoes, decorations, electronics, candy, accessories and newspapers, a need existed before the purchase. This indicates that it could have been planned impulse buying.

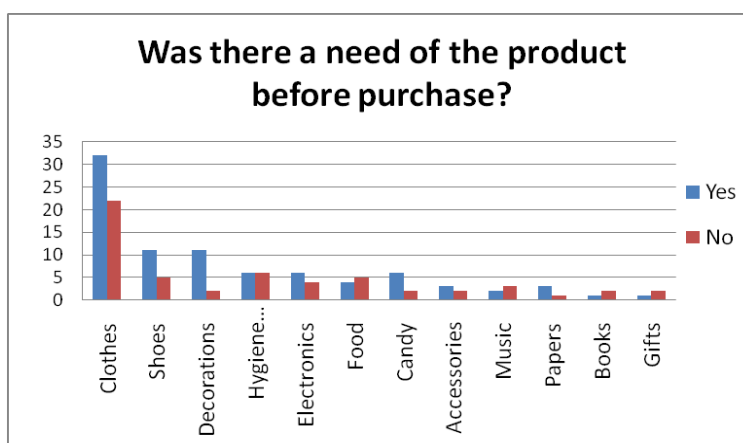


Diagram 13

Those who answered yes in the former diagram (diagram 13) together with the following diagram (diagram 14) indicate that their purchase was within Stern's definition of planned impulse buying.

Planned impulse buying seems to be common within product categories such as shoes, candy and accessories. With

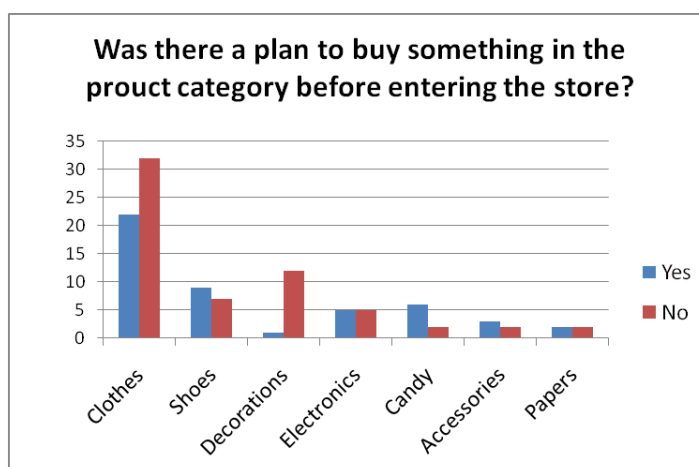


Diagram 14

clothes, on the other hand, the respondents often seem to feel that they were in need of them but more rarely they had planned to purchase clothes prior to entering the store. This indicates that buying clothes is more impulsive. The same applies to decorations. It is hard to say with electronics and newspapers because a larger number of answers and a larger difference between them needs to exist.

4.1.5.3 Pure impulse

The consumer is not looking for the product at all but feels a strong emotional want (Stern, 1962).

This diagram (diagram 15) shows that most of the respondents, in all product categories, that have graded the feeling of impulsiveness as 7, the highest number in the grading scale, are in the product category of food. The second highest level of impulse occurs in the product category of books, while the third high level is in newspapers.

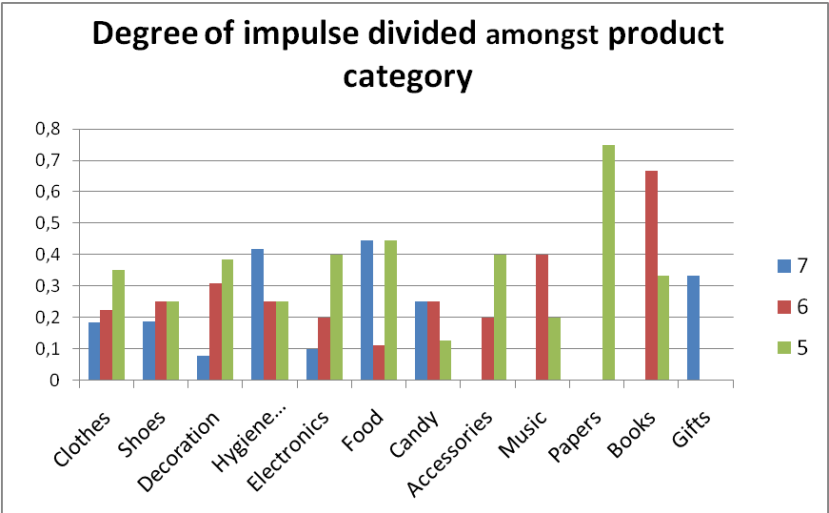


Diagram 15

However, as shown, all the levels are not represented in all product categories. The results are based on the number of respondents who have bought in the mentioned product categories and because fewer respondents have bought books and papers than for example clothes, the result are not totally comprehensive.

4.1.5.4 Reminder

Reminder impulse buying is when a product suddenly reminds the consumer that they need it because it is empty or low on back home (Stern, 1962).

As shown in diagram 13 clothes, shoes, decorations, electronics, candy, accessories and papers are the product categories where the respondents feel there was a need of the product. This can indicate that the purchase is a reminder impulse.

The intention with the question about; what the reason for the purchase was, is to see what had triggered the buying decision inside the store. The results are shown in diagram 16.

Many respondents have also implied that a previous need was the reason for the purchase along with design and price. However, because this attendant question was an open question, the answers did not result in the fact that a conclusion can be drawn about a reminder impulse have occurred. It would have been needed to give the respondents multiple choice questions with the option that they saw something in the store that reminded them that they were out of stock of the product at home.

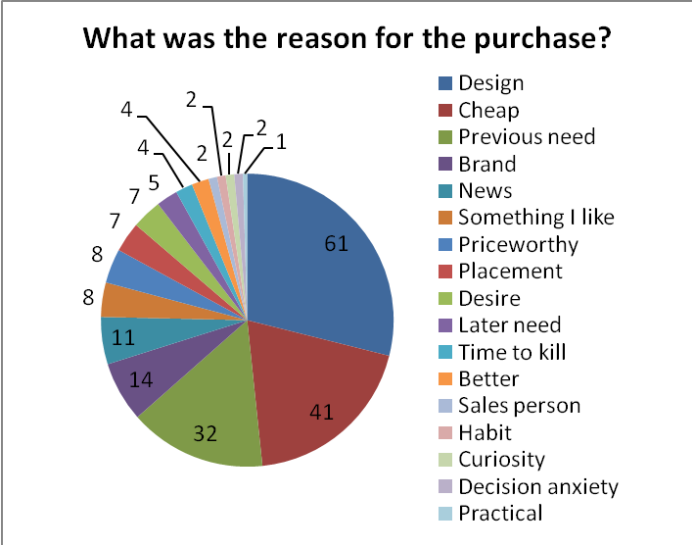


Diagram 16

4.1.5.5 Impulse buying as an act of freedom

Purchases are made because the buyer is able to, e.g. because of a monetary freedom. The purchase is often made to show that the buyer has control over his or her life (Evans, 2006).

The next diagram (diagram 17) shows how many times a year the respondents buy new products because the old ones are untrendy. The answers are put in relation to the monthly income to see whether there is a connection between the two.

In the survey there was also an alternative to have an income over 45 000 SEK but because the alternative had very few respondents, it could not easily be compared to the others and is therefore not shown in the chart below.

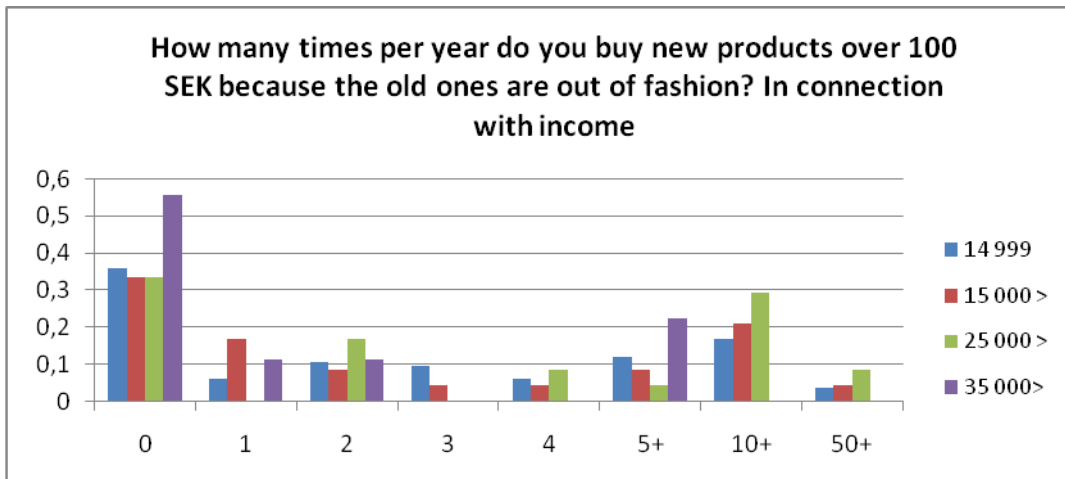


Diagram 17

The diagram indicates that most of the respondents never buy new products because the old ones are out of fashion. This result can, though, have been influenced by the formulation of the question i.e. the word “out of fashion”, since many of the respondents answered that they buy things that they need and not because the old ones are out of fashion. Also, the question could be difficult to understand and answer because of the open question design. However, there is an indication that when having a higher income, there is a tendency to buy new products more often to exchange the old ones.

In the following diagram (diagram 18) the same information about how often a new product is bought because the old one is out of fashion, is compared to the product categories that the respondents have stated to be their most common impulse buying product. This is to see if there is a tendency of this sort of impulse buying in a special product category.

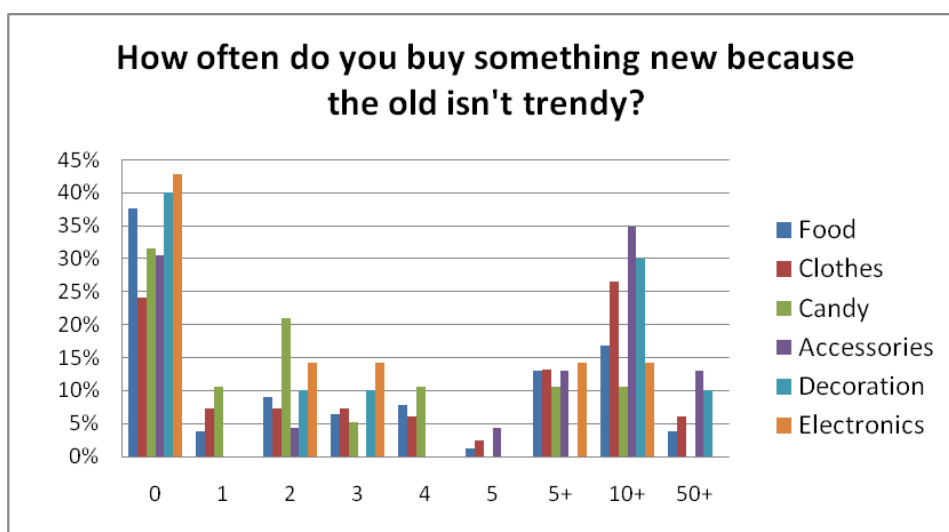


Diagram 18

The diagram indicates that accessories and decorations are the products mostly updated for something new and trendy since they are exchanged up to over 10 to 50 times over a year. Because of the high number of times these products are upgraded this indicates that accessories and decorations are a way that the respondents express control of their life by exchanging.

4.1.6 Electronics

The following diagrams show the respondents behaviour when it comes to impulse buying in the electronic product category. This is only the answers of the respondents who answer yes to the question if they had ever bought a consumer electronic product on impulse.

This diagram (diagram 19) shows the number of respondents that have shopped in the consumer electronics store. Of the respondents 19 were women and 24 were men, in total 43 persons of the 149 respondents in total.

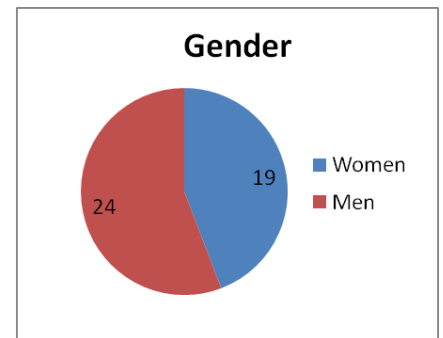


Diagram 19

The attendant question was to see what products that are most bought on impulse in the consumer electronic product category (Diagram 20).

The most impulse bought products are electronic accessories, headphones and Ipods. In accessories there are products like batteries, camera optics or chords. Headphones may also be included in the category of accessories but because there were seven respondents out of 46 calculated answers, i.e. 15%, they were put in a separate category.

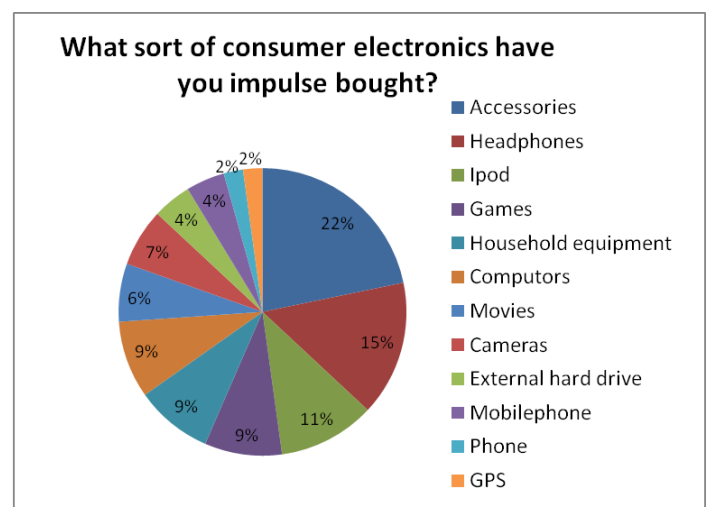


Diagram 20

It is also interesting for know why the respondents impulse buy consumer electronics. The given reasons are shown in diagram 21.

The most common motive to the impulse purchase was that there was a need of the product or that an emotion of desire arose. Because the respondents have answered that they have done impulse buying and also defined it as an unplanned purchase, these answers indicate that consumer electronics are often impulse bought because of a reminder

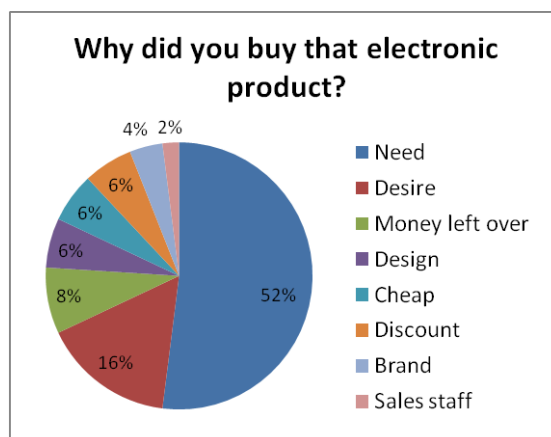


Diagram 21

(previous need) or pure (desire) impulse.

It is also interesting to know why the product is chosen in front of other products in the same category. In diagram 22 the respondents' answers are presented. The factors that influenced the impulse purchase of the special product over other similar products is that it had a good price or an appealing design. This

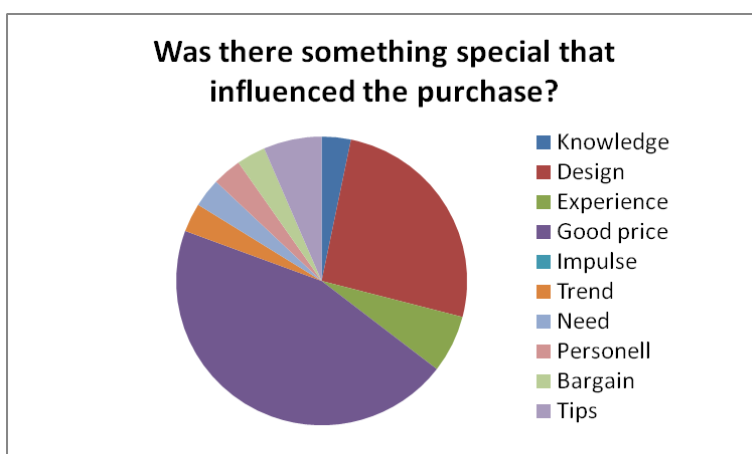


Diagram 22

indicates that the price is important for the respondents but also the execution of the product. This question was an open answer question to let the respondents give their view of the purchase but this has, as in similar question design before, lead to unfocused answers as well as translation subjectivity.

For this thesis, there has been a focus on the consumer electronics businesses to see how it works with the impulse buying. A question form was handed to Richard Bredenberg, store manager on Expert in Partille, Sweden and further, a summary of his answers.

He believes that no matter what kind of store, there is always a plan for selling so that it can run as smoothly as possible while serving consumers. So therefore it is important to give the right exposure to products that sell themselves by putting them in plain sight for the

consumers. Different commercials and campaigns contribute to get the consumer inside the store and to have a skilled and alert staff helps as well of course.

The most sold products in consumer electronics stores are mobile phones, smart phones and accessories. There is a constant update of new phones, which explains the fact that this is also the category where consumers are most inclined to catch onto new trends and change their phones as many times as up to two times a year. The products that stand the longest, i.e. not sold as often, are white goods products that can survive for many years.

With today's development the regular kind of accessories to phones are the most common product that consumers impulse buy. This is because there can be found a lot of different variations of accessories to smart phones.

Impulse buying can occur any day and it is not really dependent on whether a certain sale or campaign exists. During Christmas sale the purchases cannot really be classified as impulsive because the consumers come with intent of buying something. While on the other hand in May, the consumers can come into the store and see something cool that they must have and just buy it.

The store always tries to help a consumer with a problem. If it is not possible the store always tries to find an explanation to give to the consumer with advice on what to do depending on the product that they have brought back. Then the store makes sure that the consumers get the best possible help. If the product is broken, it is of course exchanged for a new one. The most common cause of consumer dissatisfaction is when their products are broken and do not work. There is really never something that the consumers are more dissatisfied with.

4.4 Analysis

In form of a survey and an interview together with academic journals and books, information has been gathered to make an analysis.

4.4.1 Techniques to encourage Pure, Suggestion, Act of freedom, Reminder and Planned impulse buying

4.4.1.2 Pure impulse

Pure impulse occurs when the normal shopping pattern is broken because of a strong emotion of desire towards a product that one did not plan to buy. Low price is a common trigger to this category.

To encourage this type of impulse buying the products have to be noticed and create a desire. The design and packaging need to be noticeable and eye catching and can favourably have a prominent store display to get the attention (Stern, 1962, Nordfält, 2007). For example the products can be placed close to the counter or the entrance or in the main aisles.

Information about special offers should be clearly visible and Laurelli's (2003) Scarcity attraction, i.e. limited offers, is beneficially used on these purchases.

To stir the feeling of desire it is suggested that the consumers should be given the possibility to touch the product. This will encourage the consumer's feeling of desire even more because an image of owning the product, i.e. the desired state, gets more vivid to the consumer. The image can also be given to the consumers by a skilled salesperson that helps the consumer to see the image (Ekberg, Lohmander, 2004). Other sense marketing such as sound and smell can also arouse emotions and encourage consumers to a pure impulse purchase (Lindstrom, 2009).

4.4.1.3 Suggestion impulse

Suggestion impulse occurs when consumers impulse buy a product that they have just seen for the first time but need to buy because of a feeling of desire. That is why visualization in the store is the key factor for suggestion impulse purchases.

Including the above mentioned techniques to stir desire, it is even more important with different in-store exposures. Those that can be used to encourage suggestion impulse buying are:

- Prominent store display (Stern 1962).
- End cap (Nordfält, 2007).
- Special exposure (Nordfält 2007).

These exposures will help the consumers notice the product, which is a crucial thing when the purchase concerns a new product (Kotler et al, 2005). Apart from noticing the new product, information is also needed. It should be clear and easy to find so sales-persons can definitely be of great importance. The salesperson should give information about the product and also suggest on usage or clear any doubts that the consumer might have (Ekberg, Lohmander, 2004). With sound the store may not only spread information about the new products, but as mentioned above, it can also affect the emotions which can affect the desire to impulse buy.

Other techniques to trigger suggestion impulse buying is to offer the consumer to use the product at home for a trial period (Ekberg, Lohmander, 2004) or at least let the consumer touch and explore the product to get to know the products features (Underhill, 2006).

4.4.1.4 Act of freedom

Purchases made because of an act of freedom impulse are made because the consumer wants to show that he/she has control over his or her life (Evans et al., 2006).

To trigger this sort of impulse buying where the consumers' image is important the company can try to use mirror neurons, i.e. desires aroused in the consumer because of seeing someone appealing having or using the product (Lindstrom, 2009). The consumers that impulse buy on an act of freedom should also be affected if the salesperson uses social evidence (Laurelli, 2003) explained above, or paint a picture of the consumer's usage of the product.

4.4.1.5 Reminder impulse

Reminder impulse buying is when the consumer has an unconscious need for a product but does not have that product in mind when entering the store. The difference between reminder

impulse buying and suggestion impulse buying is that the product is known to the consumer in the first definition while in the second it is not (Stern, 1962).

Reminder impulse is triggered by reminders throughout the store. It can be in-store exposures such as

- End caps, so that the product is seen and then reminded (Nordfält, 2007).
- Tie-ins; where products with similarities or the same usage are put together. This will for example remind the consumers to buy markers to the recordable DVDs (Piron, 1962; Schmidt Thurow, Sköld Nilsson, 2008).

If the product has a short life the product will sooner or later run out of stock, which opens up for reminder impulse buying because the consumer will always have an unconscious need for the product. Most likely these products are things like food or electronic things like batteries. The product should also be small-sized so that the consumer can fill up his/her stock with many products (Stern, 1962).

Advertising can also help the consumers remember, for example, if the pictures ask the consumers if they have remembered to buy their product or if the advertise simply visualises the product that the consumer need (Stern, 1962).

Sensory marketing where the sound is stimulating can also be used, e.g. by playing jingles. They will probably stick in the consumers' mind and then, when they hear it, they remember that they need the product (Lindstrom, 2006).

4.4.1.6 Planned impulse

Planned impulse is when the consumer has decided in what sort of product category the purchase should be made. However, the product and brand are not determined but is a decision that is made on the spot. Special offers and other stimuli trigger this sort of impulse buying (Stern, 1962).

Therefore, the staff is an effective method to use to encourage planned impulse buying because they can give the consumers information about the different products. The salesperson can also give alternatives to the consumer, which will make him/her think that the

decision has been his/hers (Ekberg, Lohmander 2004). The staff can also use scarcity attraction mentioned above to make the consumer make the decision quickly (Laurelli 2003).

In this case of planned impulse buying advertisement is important because it can trigger the knowledge about the product category before entering the store. Special offers and low price make the consumer decide what product within the product category to buy. Therefore, clear signs and information about offers are important for planned impulse buying as well. Also, with a throw exposure (Ekberg, Lohmander 2004) the products will give the impression of being cheap and can therefore be useful. Another way of exposing the products is by letting the consumers touch them. This will help them to make the final decision about which product to choose.

4.4.2 What sort of impulse buying is the most common one?

There are more women than men that have responded, but it still indicates that men impulse buy less than the women do. It can also mean that the men that were asked to fill in the form were a bit skewed in their opinion since one comment from one male respondent indicated that he felt like the survey was not for him since he was not the kind of person that impulse bought anything.

A slight skewness was also found in age among the respondents, in that there were more respondents from the 1980s than there were from the rest of the generations. This gave an indication that the respondents from the 1980s are more inclined to impulse buy than the rest that were born during earlier and later years. The older consumers were still inclined to impulse buy but showed a tendency to be a bit more cautious.

The products that the respondents were most inclined to impulse buy were clothes and food which confirms the previous academic research. It shows that the clothing industry is the number one area that has a tendency to encourage impulse buying to the consumers. The food industry comes next which is not very surprising since they encourage impulse buying with smells and take advantage of the feeling of hunger to influence the decisions in the store (Lindstrom, 2009, Underhill, 2006).

The data showed that after work, the respondents go shopping as a means to relax. This supports the theory that less planning occurs before shopping. With time to spare it is not far-fetched to draw a conclusion that today's consumer wish to be entertained by shopping (Williams et al, 1972).

So this survey showed that women are more inclined to impulse buy than men and consumers born prior to 1980 have a stronger inclination to impulse buy and update their belongings than people older than them. The area in which most impulse purchases were made was in the clothing industry.

4.4.3 The electronic business and impulse buying.

Not that many respondents answered that they had impulse bought anything in the consumer electronics business within the last year, which made the data a bit skewed to draw conclusions. In the sample that was made 28.8 % answered that they had done impulse buying in an electronic store.

According to the survey question on why the respondents had bought the electronic product that they had mentioned; their answers were that there was a previous need and desire. This gives an indication toward the traits of reminder impulse buying and pure impulse buying that seem to be most common among the respondents.

On the other hand, the expert interview indicates that the most common impulse buying was something that occurred mostly during Christmas sales, the planned impulse buying, since consumers have a tendency to come to the store with a plan to buy something but they are not really sure of exactly what to buy. The other mentioned common impulse purchase takes place during a normal day, for example during spring where a consumer walks by and sees something that he/she desires and feels the need to buy, i.e. more towards the pure impulse.

Both the survey and the expert interview confirm that pure impulse buying is the most common sort of impulse buying in the consumer electronics store. Diagram 24 showed two traits that influenced the purchase made by the respondents. "Good price" and "the design of

the product” which gives confirmation of the theory about how desire leads to pure impulse buying (Stern, 1962).

The difference between reminder and planned impulse buying is that the first one simply reminds the consumers that they have to buy something that they need, the other one is when the consumers have a plan to buy something but is not quite sure of what. So a consumer can enter the store to look around and is reminded that the batteries are out of stock back home. But consumers can also enter a store with the intention of buying something, but without having decided yet what they are intending to buy.

If stores find information on these impulse buying traits and know how to properly take advantage of them in a way that would not dissatisfy their consumers it would be considered a positive advantage.

To remind the consumers in the store the company can use ads or announcements to ask the consumers if they have remembered to buy a certain product.

Since many of the respondents answered that the major thing influencing their impulse buying, was their sense of mood, conclusions can be drawn that they act upon pure impulse because pure impulse is defined as being triggered by strong emotional wants.

According to the theoretical framework, the main focus should be on having a skilled staff ready to give the consumers good service by reading them correctly and encouraging them to impulse buy but without acting too pushy to make the consumers feel cornered and dissatisfied with the treatment.

Consumer electronics is an area that has been said to be offering high-involvement products that would make the consumers create attitudes before the purchases are made. This is something that should be in one’s awareness when taking care of a consumer that is considering a high-involvement product (Ekberg and Lohmander, 2004).

5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A conclusion of the research finding will be presented together with recommendations for further research.

5.1 Conclusion

This research aimed to look at impulse buying and the industry of consumer electronics to give advice on how the consumer electronics stores can encourage the consumers to impulse buy.

5.1.1 What is impulse buying, what type of impulse buying occurs the most and in which industries?

Impulse buying is something unplanned, made on the spot and triggered by stimulus that breaks a normal purchase pattern. It could be a change in emotion that occurs when seeing something that the consumer desires.

Impulse buying can be divided into different categories provided by Stern and Evans, which are confirmed by the survey respondents. There is an indication that the respondents carry out all the different impulse buying types but in different situations and product categories. For example the survey shows that pure impulse buying is most common in the food, books and paper category but planned impulse buying occurs mostly for shoes, sweets and accessories.

The most common industries where impulse buying occurs are in the clothing and food industries. The research shows that there is a slight difference between men and women but without doubt, in those two industries, impulse buying occur the most.

5.1.2 Is consumer electronics one of the most common industries and what kind of impulse buying occurs and why?

Consumer electronics is in 7th place in the respondents' answers about what product they impulse buy the most, which hints that consumer electronics is something where impulse buying does occur but that there is a need of measures and knowledge to increase impulse buying in the area.

The most common sort of impulse buying in consumer electronics was confirmed in both the survey and the interview. Pure impulse buying is the most common one followed by reminder impulse buying and planned impulse buying.

In accordance to the theory that impulse buying begins with a need, many respondents state that this was what triggered their actions to make an impulse purchase. A need for the product also indicates that the purchase is of a planned or reminder impulse buying type.

Many consumers have answered that they sometimes enter a store with the intention of buying, but with no previous plan on which product to buy. This is an indication that reinforces proof of the existence of planned impulse buying.

This means that for the consumer electronics industry, these three impulse buying types are to be focused on when encouraging impulse buying in the consumer electronics stores. However, the stores have to adapt the methods and focus to their consumers and their store to make it truly advantageous.

5.1.3 What encourages impulse buying?

Impulse buying usually occurs because of both external and internal stimulus. The external stimulus is what both stores and product manufacturers can use to their advantage to encourage impulse buying. Products can be made in bright colours and in comfortable functions that would gain the consumers' attention. How the products are made is not something that the stores can control, which means that the focus should be put on the layout of the stores and the knowledge about their consumers instead. This can be made through

sales, exposure and how well the staff knows how to handle the consumers. The most important thing is to adapt to the consumer and look for solutions adjusted for their consumers in order to encourage a purchase. This means that the staff should have extensive knowledge about the products sold in the store, to be able to emphasize the advantages to the consumer in a way that makes it preferable to the consumers.

5.2 Recommendations for further research

Our recommendations for further research are to look deeper into the consumer electronics business to help the stores with more explicit techniques to encourage impulse buying through sense marketing and different kinds of stimulus. This will help the industry to become more advanced in their sales and reaching out to the consumers.

It would be recommended to research more about what consumer electronics stores actually do to encourage impulse buying so that a comparison could be made, and thereafter, more techniques could be developed. To do this, more time and a greater research should be available. To do a deeper research about the consumers' behaviour, a survey reaching out to more respondents, focus groups and interviews can be carried through.

An interesting point was that the survey seemed to confirm that the clothing and food industries were indeed the major areas where most of the impulse buying occurred and that the respondents were happy after the purchase. Can this positive attitude of impulse buying be transferred into others industries?

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APPENDICES:

Appendix. 1. Survey questions in Swedish:

Enkät om Impulsköp

Vad är impulsköp för dig?

Vad impulsköper du mest?

(Produkter som t.ex.: Kläder, Mat, Musik, Accessoarer) Skriv 2 svarsalternativ

När impulsköper du?

Innan jobbet

Efter jobbet

När jag är glad

När jag är på dåligt humör

När jag är med kompisar

När jag är själv

När jag har gott om tid

När jag har ont om tid

När jag är hungrig

Other

Vad uppmuntrar dina impulsköp?

Att det är billigt

Att det är en nyhet

Exponering

Påverkan av personal

Trend

Sinnesstämning

Placering

Doft

Other

Hur ofta köper du nya produkter över 100kr för att de gamla är otrendiga?

T.ex. i genomsnitt hur många gånger per år

Har du handlat en vara av ett märke som du såg för första gången i affären? Vad fick dig att köpa den?

I följande frågor, tänk på ett impulsköp över 50 kr som du köpt nyligen. Vad var det för produkt?

Vilken känsla hade du innan impulsköpet?

Skriv 1 känsla

Hur hög impulsivitet skulle du påstå att ditt impulsköp hade?

Skala mellan 1-7

Vilken känsla fick du när impulsköpet var gjort?

Skriv 1 svarsalternativ

Fanns det ett behov av impulsköpet du gjorde?

Ja

Nej

Hade du tänkt att köpa inom den produktkategorin innan du gick in butiken?

Ja

Nej

Vad var det som fick dig att köpa produkten?

Var du nöjd efter köpet?

Ja

Nej

Om INTE, hur kommer det sig? Om DU VAR NÖJD, vad var du extra nöjd med?

Om du var missnöjd, vad gjorde du då?

Var inte missnöjd

Returnerade

Sålde den vidare

Lade undan den (för att slippa se den)

Talade om för vänner och bekanta att jag gjort ett dåligt köp

Gav bort den

Other

Har du köpt det senaste året impulsköpt någon produkt i en elektronikaffär?

Ja

Nej

ELEKTRONIK:

Har du gjort ett impulsköp i en elektronik affär? Vad köpte du då?

Varför köpte du den produkten?

Kände du att det var något speciellt som påverkade ditt val av just produkten du köpte (framför andra liknande)?

Var du nöjd efter köp?

Ja

Nej

Om inte, hur kommer det sig? Och om du var nöjd, vad var du extra nöjd med?

ÖVRIGT:

Kön?

Kvinna

Man

Vilket år är du född?

T.ex. 1985

Hur många bor i ditt hushåll?

1

2-3

4-6

6+

Inkomst per månad?

Mindre än 14 999

Mellan 15 000 och 24 999

Mellan 25 000 och 34 999

Mellan 35 000 och 44 999

Mer än 45 000

Hur ofta handlar du för hushållet?

Handlar varje dag

Veckohandlar

Månadshandlar

Handlar på Internet

Deltar inte i livsmedelsinköp

TACK FÖR ATT DU TOG DIG TID ATT FYLLA I ENKÄTEN!

Din medverkan är värdefull

Appendix 2. Expert questions in Swedish

Expert frågor:

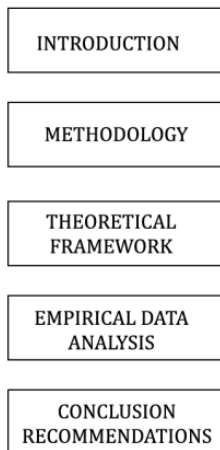
1. Hur gör ni som butik för att uppmuntra köp? [Displays, testa produkterna, extrapris, experter dvs. personal, annonser och kampanjer, in house kampanjer mm.]
2. Vilken sorts produkter säljer ni mest av? Vilken produkt har kortast livslängd? Är det hög ”omsättning” på produkterna? D.v.s. kommer det ofta nya modeller och uppdateringar på elektronikprodukterna? Tror ni att många försöker hänga med i uppdateringarna?
3. När sker det vanligast impuls köp i butiken? [Vanlig dag + Rea dagar/Jul/löning/sommar] När sker det minst?
4. Vilken är den vanligaste produkten som sker på impuls köp? Varför?
5. Hur hanterar ni missnöje från kunder som kommer tillbaka med sina produkter? Vad är den vanligaste grunden för missnöje?
6. Finns det någon produkt som är vanligare att kunden är missnöjd med?
7. Ser ni att det finns ett samband mellan att personalen och andra sätt att uppmuntra till köp, påverkar kundernas relation/känsla med företaget och produkten efter köpet? Vad gör ni för att kunden skall vara nöjd efter köpet?

Appendix. 3 Figures used in the thesis:

Figure 1. Consumer electronics (Authors' design)



Figure 2. Disposition (Authors' design)



Picture Front page (Authors' design)

