

# The effect of self-esteem, social influence and satisfaction with life on the tendency to impulse buying

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## Abstract

The aim of this study is to evaluate the effect of self-esteem, social influence and satisfaction with life on the tendency to impulse buying. Using the variables of life satisfaction, informational and normative dimensions of social influence and self-liking and self-competence dimensions from self-esteem indicator as independent variables and cognitive and affective dimension of tendency to impulse buying as dependent variable the research model is formed. The present study according to the aim, it is an application and correlation according to research method and using questionnaire and survey method to collect necessary data. The statistical population of this study is the buyers at shopping centers in Tehran. Cluster sampling method was used for choosing the shopping centers. Finally, using random sampling method, 398 samples were collected. Data analysis was performed using statistical methods and non-parametric tests and Spearman and Kendall correlation tests were used to determine the relation and calculate the correlation. The study results of the samples shows that an inverse relationship between life satisfactions and cognitive dimension of tendency to impulse buying is not supported and no relationship between life satisfaction with emotional dimension of tendency to impulse buying is supported, the normative social influence with affective tendency to impulse buying does not show a direct relationship, while the research results show that there is an inverse relationship between information social influences cognitive dimension of tendency to impulse buying. Also inverse relationship between self-liking and self-competence from self-esteem indicator and affective dimension of tendency to impulse buying is not supported, while the lack of relationship between self-esteem and cognitive dimension of tendency impulse buying has been supported. **Keywords:** impulse buying tendency, self-esteem, social influence, satisfaction with life

## 1. Introduction

Attraction process for people to purchase goes back centuries and the time when business concept were considered as basic method and as barter to eliminate the human needs. Whereas, satisfying the individual needs and demands is possible through exchange, identification and research on types of purchase decisions especially in two sub-groups of planned and not-planned has attracted many researchers. Research review literature highlights the concept of impulse buying whose history dates to the late 1950s. In the 1980s, studies related to impulse buying have reached its peak. Today, this study about different aspects of this type of purchase and factors affecting this continues. However, the reported empirical research results yet does not have the required integration and coordination and this issue clears the need to conduct extensive evaluation on numerous aspects of impulse buying and to acquire practical knowledge in this field.

Shopping areas especially purchases are done as entertainment by the people it is attractive to many marketers and researchers (Bellenger and Korgoankar, 1980, 78). Hermancioglu et al. (2009) found that impulse buying is present in most product categories. But, limited empirical research has been conducted on consumer cognitive process or factors affecting on tendency to impulse buying for various products. Therefore, understanding this issue that what decision the consumer takes for purchasing various products and what affects their decisions is necessary. Among these factors we can point out that some psychological variables such as self-esteem, readiness to accept the social influence and also the percept an individual has from personal life satisfaction. In addition, despite of the presence of some researches although indicating uncoordinated and fragmented results, some researchers have acknowledged that the scope of human knowledge needs a theoretical framework to guide empirical research (Harmancioglu et al., 2009, 27). Therefore, this study seeks to answer this question 'Does self-esteem, social influence and life satisfaction has correlation with the impulse buying?'

## 2. Research theoretical framework

Review of research literature about impulse buying shows that between 27% to 62% of all retail purchase, is according to fancy purchase or without plan (Harmancioglu et al., 2009,28).. Impulse buying means decisions to buy suddenly and without any plan (Silvera & et al., 2008, 23; Rook, 1987, 190; Vohs & Faber, 2007, 537). This type of purchase behavior is often along with arousal and pleasure and irresistible desire to buy. If the impulse buying is done in low and middle levels shows entertainment and pursuit the pleasure of purpose. Therefore, cannot predict unpleasant consequences for the individual in such behavior. While if high level of impulse buying behavior presented is an individual such as alcohol consumption leads to self-destructive and noticeable loss (Verplanken et al., 2005, 430). Some researchers in science of psychology know the chronic impulse buying behavior as practical obsessions and sometimes as an escape from the negative emotional state, depression and low self-esteem (Silvera et al., 2008,25). Therefore, not only from the perspective of psychology and behavioral scientists, achieving knowledge in this field for predicting and controlling of human behavior is useful but also researchers and academic marketing are seeking to identify effective factors on this behavior to recognize the customers that with complete awareness buy products with special commercial brands and loyal customers which are accounted as the most important source of competitive advantage of active organizations in today's super-competitive market from customers who purchase without plans and to design and implement more effective marketing programs.

### 1.2. Tendency to impulse buying

Impulse buying means sudden purchase without any prior intention to purchase a particular class of product or purchasing (Kwon and Armstrong, 2002,152 and George and Yaoyuneyong, 2010, 295). Impulse buying is the result of sudden irresistible desire of consumer to buy goods involuntary (Shoham and Brencic, 2003, 128). In other words, tendency to impulse buying is a degree that a person does the purchases without been planned, suddenly and without thinking. There are different psychological motivations for impulse buying, a visual encounter with a product or promotional incentive can provoke the sudden desire to purchase. Tendency to impulse buying is a behavior that affects the different environmental special personality characteristic. According to the principals of psychology people tend to show constant personality characteristics and in different situation behave without contradiction. But impulsive individuals may suffer difficulties or restriction to control their behavior and to conduct impulse buying as repetitive and continuous in several different areas. Tendency to impulse buying introduced as a personal characteristic that may show itself with environmental motivation stimulation impulse buying (Park and Lennon, 2006, 57). Behavior of impulse buying includes purchases without program and suddenly (Silvera et al 2008, 24), which does not always come from the direct visual encouragement and sometimes without reason or incentive people get motivated to buy (Park and Lennon, 2006, 57). Emotional known forces activates guiding the purchase at time and place of purchase. Impulse buying is often accompanied by strong emotional reactions such as irresistible strong propensity or experience pleasure sensation (George and Yaoyuneyong, 2010,294 and Verplanken and Herabadi, 2001, 72). Buyers that plan and buy are recognized more with considering profit marketing, however the buyers without plan are more for enjoyment. In this regard, there are evidence the task of impulse buying is the quieting the unpleasant psychological situation.

Some researchers have stated that sometimes people award themselves, this means that in seeking relief from negative mood and others have stated that sometimes people choose to ignore its own control in order that they think such purchase makes them feel better, therefore, allow themselves to buy without program. Impulse buying is measured in relation to environmental incentives, but studies show that people who have sudden tendency to buy have a series of individual difference (Hausman, 2000, 404) and based on this, some researchers have presented the scale of tendency to impulse buying at two different levels of individual tendency in purchasing without plan. The first level, the cognitive level is associated with lack of planning on purchasing decisions and second level, is the affective level in relation with excitement feeling and irresistible desire to buy. People who have a strong tendency to impulse buying are less independence but are much more pragmatic and show greater objectivism (Silvera & et al., 2008, 24 and Verplanken and Herabadi, 2001, 73). Also, few researchers have suggested that in impulse buying men tend to buy goods which are usable and profitable but women tend to buy symbolic goods and products that enable themselves to be introduced. In other words, related products with the aspect of appearance and emotional means goods related with more aesthetic features attracts the attention of women in impulse buying (Creusen, 2010, 28). Another point to be noticed is that impulse buying focuses on a specific product at a particular moment and temporary (park and Burns, 2005, 136). Impulse buying sometimes because of lack of high-lightened aim occurs exactly just in beginning of shopping experience (peck and Childers, 2006, 766). Therefore, knowledge of environmental incentives and individuals' personality difference in this relation, guide marketers and market science researchers to gain accurate insight and useful practical application in promoting sales level and market share of business is necessary.

### *2.2. Satisfaction with life*

Life satisfaction is defined as an individual cognitive assessment in quality of life. Life satisfaction or perceived quality of life is a broader concept which can sustain wide range of options such as low life satisfaction, normal and average life satisfaction (or practical life satisfaction) and also a lot of life satisfaction. Several research is done on the evaluation of people's life satisfaction and this is because of their decisive role is efficient functioning of individual and social life (Antaramian et al, 2008, 113). Worldwide research done on life satisfaction is a diverse set of variables such as environmental variables (Ash and Huebner, 2001, 322), demographic characteristics such as socio-economic situation (Huebner et al, 2001, 168) and variables related to individual personality characteristics and humor (MA and Huebner, 2008, 178) were examined. Sometimes this concept is confronted in health and its determinant factors, unlike conceptualizing conducted in health as the absence of disease and illness, studies have shown that people who have of mental illness may sometimes show less satisfaction in their life. In some studies, higher level of social activity, improvement in health and education progress is associated with higher level of life satisfaction (Antaramian et al, 2008, 113). Attempt to measure life satisfaction is aligned with positive trends in health and mental health. Mental health is defined as absence of signs of trauma. Some research results show that a person who is not satisfied with his life and thinks this as a result of undesirable and unpleasant conditions, sometimes shows trauma symptoms and sometimes the person is relatively happy with life may have signs of mental illness (Valois et al, 2003, 273). Based on the results of some studies, life satisfaction as positive relation with positive mental features such as optimism and self-esteem and negatively related with depression. Since the impulse buying acts as a means to avoid negative mental status, tendency of the individual in impulse buying can be negatively related to life satisfaction. Also, Satisfaction with life scale (SWLS) which has been cited in numerous international researches has more relation with cognitive aspects impulse buying than the affective aspects (Silvera et al, 2008, 24). Therefore, it can be expected that:

H1: Life satisfaction is negatively related to cognitive dimension of impulse buying tendency.

H2: Life satisfaction is unrelated to the affective dimension of impulse buying tendency.

### *3.2. Social influence*

Social pressure can influence people to some extent that violates the law. The rate at which consumer attitude are influenced by social pressure depends on their ability or willingness of effectiveness of these pressures. The ability or willingness to be identified the consumer need or officially recognized by other

important people by consumption or use of products or commercial brands. Tendency to follow the expectations of others is defined through buying decisions and tendency to learn about products by observing others or seeking information from others (Ang et al, 2001, 22). Social influence is a degree in which the consumer believes the others belief or in other words the effect on the behavior of individual consumers (Yong, 2010, 264). Bearden et al. (1989) has defined social influence as the activity or willingness of consumer to get affected by social pressures or Susceptibility to Interpersonal Interaction (CSII). Social influence is related to behaviors such as escape from negative emotions (Ang et al, 2001, 223).

According to research literature, two dimensions capability or willingness of consumer effectiveness from social pressure are informational and normative dimensions (Phau and Teah, 2009, 17). Information element related to consumer trends in seeking information about purchasing potential is through observation, contact with other people or purchase decision by expert views (Silvera et al., 2008, 25). This factor has importance when the consumer has less information about the product (Pau and Teah, 2009, 17). Adaption is the normative element, so that people desire to purchase for determining identity or verifying it by others define this dimensions. In other words, purchasing to impress others will appear in the normative social influence (Silvera et al., 2008, 25). In some study it has been shown that social influence has a direct effect on behavioral intention (Yang, 2010, 264).

H3: The normative dimension of social influence is positively related to the affective dimension of impulse buying tendency.

H4: The informational dimension of social influence is negatively related to the cognitive dimension of impulse buying tendency.

#### 4.2. *Self-esteem*

Self-esteem means that how much people respect themselves, how much they sense of being pride of and how much valuable. Self-esteem as one's reputation with oneself has been considered (Prendergast et al, 2009, 321). Self-esteem is important because of reason that individual feeling for itself can be effective on its action and behavior. People, who have high self-esteem and confidence find friends faster have more control over their behavior and enjoy life. People who have high self-esteem demand greater things, more stable in their beliefs and with difficulties get convinced. Obviously, people who have low self-esteem do not trust to their decision making and their choices (including purchase decisions) as a result likely to complain less (Bennett, 1997, 159-160). Some studies have concluded that adolescents with higher self-esteem than their same age that have lower self-esteem against TV advertisements show more hesitation, because these people have confidence in their beliefs. Therefore there is less probability to get diverted towards television advertisement (Prendergast et al, 2009, 321-322).

In previous studies, self-esteem is defined as the individual judgment in self-value and as well as unidimensional construct. Recent research has challenged the traditional concept of self-esteem and shown two related factors but distinct within self-esteem structure. Perhaps the best is the explanation for the two-dimensional nature of self-esteem is the theoretical differentiation between self-esteem resulting positive attention from social environment and self-esteem resulting from the evaluation ability of a person by himself/herself. These descriptions suggest that in two-dimensional self-esteem these two separate resources of self-esteem can be indicated (Silvera et al, 2008, 25). Tafarodi and Swann in 2001 have introduced the two-dimension self-liking and self-competence scale to measure self-esteem as Self-liking and competence scale (SLCS). They have defined self-liking as individual valuable experience in the field self-cognitive as acceptable social entity and also self-competence knows individual valuable experience in this field that recognizes itself as social influence factor, a factor which is able to achieve desired results (Tafarodi and Swann, 2001, 662). Other studies have shown that these two dimensions of self-esteem have a different relationship than other psychological structures (Silvera et al, 2008, 26).

H5: Self-liking dimension of self-esteem is negatively related to affective dimension of impulse buying tendency.

H6: self-competence dimension of self-esteem is negatively related to affective dimension of impulse buying tendency.

H7: Self-liking dimension of self-esteem is unrelated to the cognitive dimension of impulse buying tendency.

H8: Self-competent dimension of self-esteem is unrelated to the cognitive dimension of impulse buying tendency.

### 3. Research theoretical model

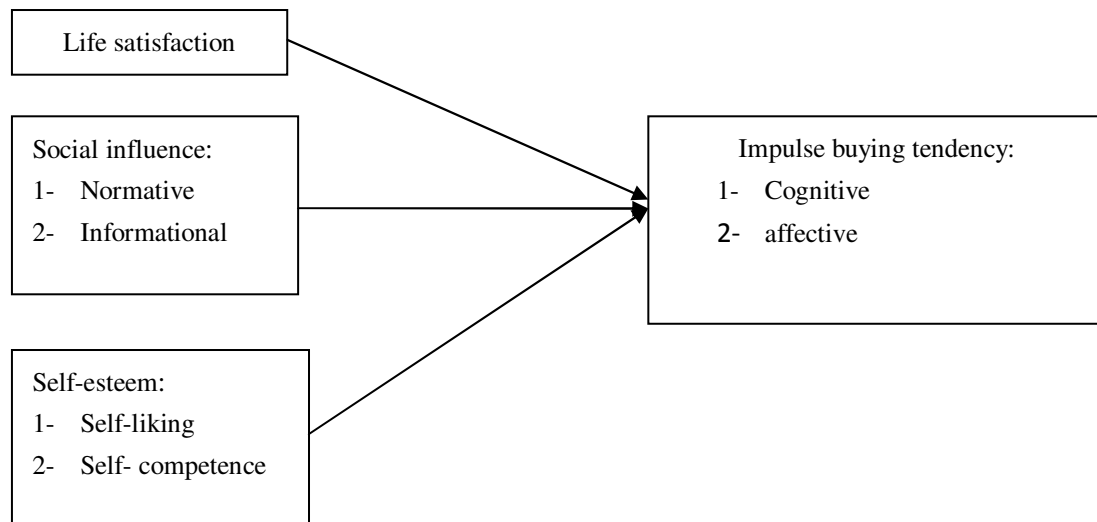


Figure 1: theoretical model.

### 4. Research methodology

The present research method is applicable because the expected results can be considered to promote insight about the consumer behavior and methods of productivity from the buyer's characteristic in sales to them in any business and also to provide consumer knowledge for accurate analyzing the reasons for their behavior in purchasing goods and services. The study of correlation is the relationship between two or more variables are studied. Therefore, the present research methodology is a correlation study.

#### 1.4. Data collection tool and its reliability and validity

In this study, the research questionnaire is a standard questionnaire used in international researches and after translating it to evaluate its validity has been distributed among a group of experts and then evaluated using Lawshe content validity ratio (CVR) method. Content validity also referred as logical validity implies that whether method or data collection tool is the representative of the same content that should be measured. In the present study, 15 evaluators were used to assess the content validity, the minimum acceptable number of CVR with this number of evaluator is 0.49 based on Lawshe table. After analyzing the expert's responses the final questionnaire was prepared and approved. In the present study to assess the questionnaire reliability, the Cronbach's alpha coefficient of reliability in internal consistency method 0.83 is obtained. With respect to, the required minimum coefficient of reliability in the research questionnaire is 0.7 hence it can be concluded that the questionnaire used in this study has high reliability, also for each of the variables in Cronbach's alpha is calculated which is given in table below.

Table 1: Cronbach's alpha coefficient and measure's references.

Variable	Measure's references	Cronbach's alpha
Tendency to impulse buying(cognitive dimension)	Verplanken & Herabadi(2001)	0.74
Tendency to impulse buying (affective dimension)	Verplanken & Herabadi(2001)	0.75
Life satisfaction	Diener et al.(1985)	0.72
Social influence (informational)	Kropp et al.(2005)	0.86
Social influence (Normative)	Kropp et al.(2005)	0.79
Self-esteem (Self-liking)	Tafarodi & Swann (2001)	0.78
Self-esteem (self- competence)	Tafarodi & Swann (2001)	0.7
Total questionnaire survey		0.83

#### 2.4. Participants

Literature review suggests that most of the studies on the impulse buying are done on a person who was at the shopping centers doing their shopping while conducting the research, then in the present study; buyers of shopping centers in Tehran have been selected as statistical population.

According to the information present in the urban database in Tehran about 120 shopping centers were identified. But because of the shortcomings such as goods being same and low number of stores in some shopping centers, they were eliminated from the statistical population. With respect to the map of Tehran and their population density and texture and division of municipal regions, Tehran is divided into five regions. The north, west, east, central and south regions, among these shopping centers ten shopping centers are determined using mixed or cluster sampling method. This method is used when the population structure is formed by various attributes and features that the distinctive characteristics cannot be easily determined in this case we are dealing with various structure. The population structure has different parameters and this characteristic is divided and distributed widely among the population. Usually to ease the sampling the main population is divided into regions, categories, groups or clusters such as dividing city map to postal zones. In this structure the features of categories or clusters are the same but the cluster profile is different. Method and sampling of buyers in these shopping centers is a simple random sampling. To determine the sample size of buyers because of uncertain size of the population the Cochran formula is used and to ensure an effective response rate 400 questionnaires were distributed and finally 398 questionnaires were evaluated.

Table 2: describes the demographic characteristics.

		%
Gender	Male	50.2
	Female	49.8
Marital status	Singe	55.5
	Married	44.5
Age	Less than 25	39.6
	26-35	34.3
	36-45	9.8
	46-50	12

	51 years above	4.4
Educational level	Diploma	30.4
	Bachelor degree	58
	Master degree	10.1
	PhD	1.5
Income	Less than 300\$	44.2
	301-500	23.1
	501-700	13.1
	701-900	8
	More than 901	11.6

Data analysis obtained by the responses of research questionnaire shows that male and female almost are equal. Among the respondents most of the people are single. According to age distribution majority are under 25 years of age. Also, majority of people are graduate, According to income level majority of the respondents are less than 300\$.

## 5. Results

In the present study evaluating the normal distribution of variables was done using Kolmogorov-Sprinov test and then to analysis the data with respect to absence of normal variables statistical method and non-parametric tests has been used and to determine the relationship and calculate the correlation variables, Spearman and Kendall correlation test were used. Results of analysis of research hypotheses are described as follows:

Kendall and Spearman correlation test result found that there is no correlation between life satisfaction and cognitive dimension tendency to impulse buying ( $r: 0.029$  and  $p: 0.56$ ), therefore it can be concluded that H1 is rejected, there is no significant correlation between life satisfaction and affective dimension tendency to impulse buying ( $r: 0.068$  and  $p: 0.177$ ) too, therefore it can be concluded that second hypothesis is supported.

The result found that there is no significant correlation between normative social influence and affective dimension tendency to impulse buying ( $r: 0.043$  and  $p: 0.389$ ), therefore it can be concluded that third hypothesis is rejected and result found that there is a negative correlation between information dimension of social influence with cognitive dimension tendency to impulse buying ( $r: -0.243$  and  $p: 0.000$ ), therefore it can be concluded that H4 is supported.

Kendall and Spearman correlation test result found that there is no correlation between self-liking of self-esteem and affective dimension tendency to impulse buying ( $r: 0.036$  and  $p: 0.470$ ), therefore it can be concluded that H5 is rejected, and that there is no correlation between self-competence dimension from self-esteem indicator and affective tendency to impulse buying ( $r: 0.066$  and  $p: 0.189$ ), therefore it can be concluded that sixth hypothesis is rejected.

There is no significant correlation between self-liking dimension from self-esteem indicator and cognitive dimension tendency impulse buying ( $r: -0.050$  and  $p: 0.178$ ), therefore it can be concluded that H7 is supported, and Kendall and Spearman correlation test result found that there is no significant correlation between Self-competence dimension from self-esteem indicator and cognitive dimension tendency to impulse buying ( $r: -0.041$  and  $p: 0.418$ ), therefore it can be concluded that this hypothesis is supported.

## 6. Conclusion

In the present study, the relationship between variables, life satisfaction, social influence with cognitive and affective dimensions of tendency to impulse buying were studied and necessary data for hypotheses test is

collected from the questionnaires of buyers in shopping centers in Tehran. Results from the data analysis show that members of sample under study according to life satisfaction scored higher than average and according to the acceptance of social influence in information dimension scored 3.6 and in normative dimension scored 2.6, This means that the influence of members of the population through achieving necessary data for better decision making from members of sample view point have been approved whereas in terms of affective and sensation has shown little interest. On the other hand, self-esteem among individuals under study from self-liking dimension has achieved higher score than average which shows the status of desirable member in this area and in the dimension of self-competence achieving 3 points has shown average status. Overall, it can be expressed that rate of self-esteem samples evaluated has an acceptable level. Variables dependent under study has been evaluated as the tendency to impulse buying in cognitive dimension has 2.2 points and in affective dimension has 3 points; this means that samples under study did not show the tendency to impulse buying.

In research hypotheses testing an inverse relationship between information dimension of social influence and cognitive dimension of tendency to impulse buying is supported. The best reason for lesser tendency to impulse buying is to accept more people into the population through consumer trend in search of data about potential purchase through observation or contact with other people or purchasing decision by experts' views. Consumers who are actively seeking information on their purchases and accept the social influence have lesser tendency to impulse buying. This less tendency is expressed in the cognitive dimension of impulse buying, because it has a relationship with lack of planning in purchasing decisions. In other words, as much the consumer accept the social influence through seeking necessary information for better purchasing decisions will work more accurately about planning for different purchases.

Direct relationship is not supported between normative dimension of social influence which shows person behavior following the confirmation by others or impress others and the affective dimension of tendency to impulse buying in the present research data analysis and indicates that given the characteristics of the sample evaluated that in the normative social influence achieved scores lower than the average the expectation of researcher is that as much the person seeking to approve from society people through affective and sensational is more tended to impulse buying. Sample evaluated in this study has not achieved high score in emotional dimension of tendency to impulse buying.

The researcher has expected that if people's life satisfaction were at a desirable level, the cognitive dimension of impulse buying would control better by the person and shows lower behavior of impulse buying which has not met the expectation with the hypothesis rejection based on inverse relationship between life satisfaction and cognitive dimension of tendency to impulse buying; whereas the lack of relationship between person life satisfaction and affective dimension of impulse buying is supported. As described above it can be expressed that with regard to respondents above average score in variable of life satisfaction and average score lower in the tendency to impulse buying, perhaps conducting completed research on demographic variables such as income and educational levels which can be effective on the two variables there is a possibility to achieve reliable results. In analyzing the data resulting from the study were identified that more than half of the sample members had Bachelor's degree and limited number had higher degree and also relatively half of the individuals had low income which could affect the existing relations. Sometimes lack of access to insufficient income has been as barrier to purchase particularly in buying fancy things.

The lack of relationship between self-esteem dimensions and cognitive dimension tendency to impulse buying has been supported. On the other hand, there is no difference in person tendency with high or low self-esteem in impulse buying through cognitive dimension and cannot justify self-esteem in any dimensions of cognitive dimension of tendency to impulse buying. Inverse relationship is not approved with affective dimension of impulse buying. The scores achieved in self-esteem variable which shows average and higher average and persons average score on affective dimension it can be expressed that attention on the age distribution of the sample which shows the most frequency among young people under 25 years of age and low income which comprises the main part of the sample indicates the control of emotions at the time of purchase due to lack of access to necessary financial resource besides the tendency to the higher self-esteem tools.



## 7. Managerial implication and suggestions

With regard to rejection of hypotheses of the study in the field of inverse relationship between life satisfaction and cognitive dimension of tendency to impulse buying and inverse relationship between social-information influence dimension and cognitive dimension of tendency to impulse buying and inverse relationship of self-esteem dimension and affective dimension of impulse buying, can be said that the research conducted to evaluate the moderating effects of demographic variables on assumed relationship are required. Among people with educational level and low income has less expected certainty to the tendency to impulse buying, while if among variables related to lifestyle and social classes and specially researches that be done about the doctors and lawyers and or even persons belonging to a particular age group and relationship expressed in the present study to be tested again more accurate insight can be gained. It has been researched less on the lifestyle and social class in the research literature in the field to impulse buying, whereas two of the most important variables determining self-esteem are the life satisfaction and social influence acceptance in the above indicators. In other words, evaluating the tendency to purchase in a particular class of goods such as luxury goods and fast moving consumer goods (FMCG) and comparing different classes of goods in this relationship between consumers and different characteristics such as life satisfaction and self-esteem can be a better foundation for the tendency to impulse buying. Research which evaluates the relationship moderating demographic characteristics such as gender age and marital status in impulse buying and psychological variables is of effective help in explaining these features. Sometimes significant differences can be seen between women and men in the psychological characteristics and purchase tendency. These differences are also seen between single and married persons with regard to deep effect of marriage and family on different direction of person's life.

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