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INVESTIGATION OF LOW-PRICE GOODS AS DETERMINANTS OF IMPULSE BUYING AMONG FEMALE LECTURERS

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Abstract
The study was carried out in six Universities in the North East Nigeria. The study was a descriptive survey design and involved a population of 218 female lecturers drawn from six Universities in the North East Nigeria. No sample was drawn for the study as the entire population of 218 was surveyed. The instrument for data collection was face validated by three experts, two from the department of vocational teacher education, University of Nigeria Nsukka and one from the department of technology education Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University Bauchi. The instrument was tested for reliability using the Cronbach Alpha formula and obtained a coefficient of 0.82. The research questions were answered using Mean while the Null hypotheses were tested using t. test at 0.05 level of significance. The major findings were that low price goods, constitute to a high extent, determinants of female lecturers' impulse buying. It was therefore recommended, among others, that retailers should utilize the findings of the study to develop better strategies to attract significant share of consumers' impulse purchases. It was also recommended that advertising agents or practitioners should utilize the findings of this study as the focal point in both advertising campaign, and production of advertisement materials. Furthermore, it was recommended that impulse buying should be regarded as a recognized marketing concept and normal buying behaviour widely practiced worldwide.

Keywords: Impulse Buying, Determinants, Low Price Goods, Female Lecturers.

Introduction

Impulse buying is a habit which every consumer often displays in his or her daily buying experiences. Although, consumers often hesitate to be associated with impulse buying attitude, they hardly adhere strictly to their original buying plan which had earlier been articulated prior

to visiting the retail stores, and this reflects impulse buying habit. Geof and Clive (1998) described impulse buying as a buying action undertaken without a careful buying plan previously having been articulated or formed prior to entering the retail stores. Also, Engel and Blackwell, (1982) defined impulse buying as a sudden strong wish or need to buy something without thinking about it carefully. In a similar vein, Njoku (2015) affirmed that impulse buying is a sudden strong wish or need to buy something without planning or thinking about it carefully or comparing such goods with similar or related goods with a view to making a better purchasing choice. Impulse buying also paints a scenario which de-emphasizes the fixed plan of items to be purchased prior to visiting the retail stores on the argument that store environment could provide a better purchase stimulation. Geof and Clive, in Njoku (2015) affirmed this assertion by positing that shopping is much easier with products highly visible and store environment acting as prompt lists, allowing consumers to defer purchase decision making until they are in-store. Also Geof and Clive (1998) noted that consumers' intent to purchase is far from fixed and can continue to be modified right up to the point of purchase. Njoku (2015) supported the idea by stating that consumers need not have a fixed or permanent plan of buying action prior to visiting the retail stores because store environment always provides a better purchasing stimulation on account of the presence of large varieties of highly visible products displayed and competing for attention of consumers who visit the retail stores. Therefore, impulse buying in the context of this research study is a sudden strong wish or need to buy something without careful planning or without adhering strictly to the original buying plan which had earlier been articulated prior to visiting the retail stores. Buying habit involves the planning and articulation of the goods to be purchased before visiting the retail stores. However, the prevalent practices of impulse buying is a buying habit which consumers often display due to the influence of in-store-stimuli. Phillip and Duncan (2008) distinguished four types of impulse buying habit as follows: pure impulse buying, reminder impulse buying, suggestion impulse buying and expected impulse buying. Pure impulse buying is the type of impulse buying which lacks any element of cautious and considered approach to a purchase. Pure impulse buying exposes the consumer or shopper to a feeling of overwhelming force from the product to be purchased and also a feeling of having to buy the product immediately thereby ignoring any negative consequences from the purchase. Reminder impulse buying occurs when a consumer or shopper sees an item and remembers that the stock at home has exhausted or low or recalls an advertisement or other information about the item which triggers up the sudden decision to buy the item. Suggestion impulse buying occurs when the consumer or shopper sees a product for the first time and visualizes the need for it, even though he or she has no previous knowledge of the item. Under suggestion impulse buying consideration, product quality, function and the like are evaluated at the point of purchase. Expected impulse buying occurs when the consumer or shopper enters the retail store with some specific purchases in mind, but with expectation and intension to make other purchases that depend on price specials or coupons offers. Female lecturers could exhibit any of the above-mentioned forms of impulse buying habit based on the extent to which certain features of such goods influence their impulse buying habit. In a more specific term therefore, the researcher intends to examine one feature or characteristics of goods which pre-disposes such goods or make them prone to impulse buying and investigate the extent to which female lecturers perceive these features or characteristics to determine their impulse buying.

Kotler and Armstrong (2004) articulated these features or characteristics and referred to them as determinants of impulse buying. A determinant therefore is an element that identifies the nature

of something or fixes or conditions an outcome. Determinants of impulse buying are those features or characteristics or qualities of goods which induce or stimulate consumers' impulse buying of such goods. These determinants include "low price goods". Specifically, the researcher examines low price goods as, perhaps, a determinant of impulse buying and investigate the extent to which low price goods constitute determinants of impulse buying among female lecturers in Universities in North-East Nigeria. Low price goods are goods whose prices are deliberately reduced by retailers without tampering with the quality. Another dimension of low price goods are those frequently used household consumer goods that are bought immediately and mostly in small amount without meticulous planning and search efforts and they are often categorized under household convenience goods such as salt, pepper, toiletries, provisions, to mention a few (Kotler and Ketler, 2004). Other aspects of low-price goods include those goods whose qualities have deliberately been reduced by retailers and other middlemen in the channel of distribution as an instrument of reduction in their prices, for instance, hard discs for music and other low-quality electronics, handsets, shoes, dresses and many other low quality consumer goods. Whichever form of price reduction associated with low price goods, the ultimate aim is to stimulate or induce impulse buying of such good, using low price as a strategy. Consequently, most of these household consumer goods have relatively low price which attract impulse buying. Secondly, retailers employ various low pricing policies to attract impulse attention and buying among consumers. Retailers also employ advertising message, tradeshows, among others, to inform and sensitize consumers about the low-price goods and these enlightenment campaign elicit tremendous amount of impulse attention and buying among consumers (Iwuofor, 2007). Most household consumer goods are purchased by women.

The role of women in the purchase of consumer and household goods is critical because over seventy five percent of these categories of goods are purchased by women and they also do the cooking and managing other related household affairs (Fatima and Abasa, 2004). Therefore, the burden of proper management of consumer goods' purchases involves the ability to reconcile rational and impulse buying which is fundamentally more pronounced in women. Many women have significantly improved their educational and socio-economic status over the years, and these have empowered them to understand the nutritional contents of food items and how to improve on home management, hygiene, sanitation and Medicare, and the overall purpose is to raise the standard living (Fatima and Abasa, 2004). Pursuant to the above responsibility of raising the standard of family living among others, female lecturers do patronize super markets and related retail outlets or stores where large varieties of merchandise abound and which elicit various types of impulse buying habit based on their perception of such goods. Perception is the process by which an individual selects, organizes and interprets information input to create a meaningful picture of the world around him/her. Perception reflects the opinions expressed by consumers on particular issues in question, for instance, the choice of items of goods to be purchased by female lecturers. Times Higher Education (THE, 2011) defined a lecturer as a person with relevant academic qualifications in specific areas of specialization up to Doctor of Philosophy and who holds academic position in a University or similar Institution and who teaches and engages in research activities as well as leads or oversees research groups. Also, Lee Elliot (2006) described a University as an institution of higher education •and research which grants academic degrees in variety of subjects and provides both undergraduate and postgraduate education.

In Nigeria, female lecturers posses relevant academic qualifications ranging from primary school to the University level. UNESCO (2004) listed academic qualifications to include First School Leaving Certificate (FSLC) at the Primary School level, Senior Secondary School Certificate (SSCE/NECO) at the Secondary School level, First Degree Certificate obtained at the University level and Masters and Ph.D obtained at Postgraduate level. These qualifications enable or equip these female lecturers to teach at the University level as Assistant Lecturers, Lecturers II, Lecturers I, Senior Lecturers, Readers and Professors. With regard to the condition of service, the National Universities Commission (NUC, 2011) stipulates three (3) years interval for promotion of academic staff from one level to another, subject to fulfillment of other requirements which include research and publications. The salary range from Assistant lecturer to Professor always reflects the order of seniority such that the difference in salary of assistant lecturer and professor, among others, is enormous in addition to academic and related allowances per annum. The condition of service prepared by NUC ought to be for both Federal and State owned Universities. However, various State owned Universities tend to operate according to the whims and caprices of respective State Authorities and often pay far less than what obtains at Federal Universities and sometimes engage in arbitrary deduction of salaries. The prevalence of underpayment and lack of uniformity in salaries of various state owned Universities and labour disputes arising therein cannot be over emphasized. The extent to which the salary disparities between State and Federal owned Universities influence the purchasing attitude of lecturers, particularly impulse buying need to be compared, so also the influence of salary differential across various ranks of lecturers: In addition to the above issues of salary disparities and differential, the influence of marital status of female lecturers needs to be understood vis-a-vis their perception of impulse buying. Tindall (2004) noted that the young and unmarried female consumers purchase more of fashion outfits, entertainment and telecom gadgets, fast food and cosmetics as well a engage in travels. Tindall also observed that the working-class category of unmarried consumers, including female lecturers, usually have a lot of discretionary income which pre-dispose them to a lot of unplanned and impulse buying unlike their married counterpart who arc more cautious due to numerous family commitments and responsibilities.

The extent to which observed differences in purchasing pattern of married and unmarried female lecturers influence their perception of impulse buying need to be compared. Also, female lecturers are chosen for this research study based on their education and training which enable them to examine critically and consciously every steps taken, more especially when making purchases with the limited financial resources, unlike their less educated counterparts who are likely to engage in impulse buying without being much conscious of their actions. More so, female lecturers in Universities in the North-East Nigeria are chosen because preliminary investigation by the researcher revealed that impulse buying has become rampant among female consumers and female lecturers of higher institutions in the North East of Nigeria. Many supermarket and other retail stores owners in various parts of the North East-Nigeria reported incidence of impulse buying among female consumers, including female lecturers around their area. Most often, female lecturers do this probably because they do not normally come out at will on account of cultural and religious beliefs. Their movements are often restricted by their husbands. Consequently, anytime they are out, they probably seize the opportunity to buy whatever they can lay hands on with little or no planning and this situation promotes impulse buying.

Statement of the Problem

Consumers most often impulsively succumb to the attractions of large varieties of low price and small sizes goods attractively displayed in large retail and other related stores outlets as well as conventional open markets. The above scenario often times leads consumers to spend the limited financial resources on goods that may not be useful or not budgeted for (Rook, 1987). Most often, unguided expenses through impulse buying have negatively affected the savings of consumers as well as leads to business collapses because of inability to plan for savings and financial capital to invest or sustain existing businesses. According to a preliminary study conducted by the researcher, rampant cases of consumers buying expired drugs and other fake and dangerous household items on account of their low prices abound and these purchases are highly injurious to the health and socio-economic wellbeing of consumers. On account of restriction of their movements by their husbands due to cultural and religious beliefs, most female lecturers in North-Eastern Nigerian Universities perhaps engage in impulse buying of consumer goods that attract their sudden attention and interest whenever they are opportuned to be in retail stores and this scenario leads to waste of limited financial resources and consequent economic and social problems.

Different categories of consumers, including female lecturers are attracted to impulse buying, it is not yet known exactly how these categories of consumers perceive impulse buying and determinants of impulse buying and whether consumers can as well engage in impulse buying conscientiously. Moreso, the high prevalence of impulse buying and consumers' hesitation to associate with impulse buying habit is not only a serious contradiction, but also stigmatizes impulse buying. Based on the foregoing issues and concerns and coupled with female lecturers' academic profile, this research study intends to determine female lecturers' perception of the determinants of impulse buying in Universities in the North East of Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

The major purpose of the study was to examine female lecturers' perception of low price goods as determinants of their impulse buying. Specifically, the study sought the extent to which:

1. Low price goods constitute a determinant of impulse buying among female lecturers in the Universities in North-East-Nigeria.

Research Question

The research question below was raised to guide the study:

1. To what extent do low price goods constitute a determinant of impulse buying among female lecturers in Universities in North-East-Nigeria.

Hypothesis

The null hypothesis below was tested at 0.05 level of significance.

$H0_1$: There is no significant difference between the mean responses of female lecturers in the state and federal owned Universities on the extent to which low price goods constitute a determinant of impulse buying in the Universities in North East-Nigeria.

Delimitation

The Study is delimited to the investigation of female lecturers' perception of low price goods as determinants of their impulse buying in Universities in North East-Nigeria. It covered the issues relating to the extent to which low price goods constitute determinants of impulse buying. It also covered the issues pertaining to whether female lecturers in state and federal Universities perceive the above determinants in similar manner or not. No attempt will be made to cover other issues not contextually related to the ones enumerated above.

Methodology

This is a descriptive survey study carried out in six Universities located in the North East geopolitical zone of Nigeria. The population for the study consisted of 317 female lecturers in the six Universities. This population was made up of 73 female lecturers from the University of Maiduguri, 52 female lecturers from the Federal University of Technology Yola, 53 female lectures from Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University Bauchi, 48 female lecturers from Gombe state University, 47 female lecturers from Ademawa State University and 44 female lecturers from Yobe State University. The entire population was studied because the population was manageable. The researcher structured questionnaire with one section and total of 13 items was used for data collections. The instrument was faced and content validated by three specialists in Business education, two of the specialists are from the department of Vocational teacher education, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, while the other specialist is from the School of Science and Technology Education, Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University, Bauchi. The reliability index was determined at 0.82 coefficient using the Cronbach Alpha. The mean score and standard deviation were used to answer the research question, while the hypothesis was tested using the t-test statistic at 0.05 level of significance (Nworgu, 2008).

Research Questions 1

To what extent do low price goods constitute a determinant of impulse buying by female lecturers in Universities in North East-Nigeria?

Table 1 presents response to Research question one shown below:

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Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation on the Extent to which low price goods constitute a determinant of impulse buying

S/N	Items	(X)	(SD)	Remark
1	Low price goods such as toiletries displayed in retail stores determine impulse buying.	3.68	0.86	HE
2	Low price goods whose quantities are not tempered with determine impulse buying.	3.58	0.85	HE
3	Low price goods are purchased on impulse due to scarcity of money.	3.75	0.89	HE
4	Low price goods are purchased on impulse due to higher income.	4.09	0.74	HE
5	Sudden price reduction through sales promotion campaign attracts impulse buying.	3.71	0.84	HE
6	Offer of cash discount by retailers attracts impulse buying.	3.67	0.88	HE
7	Offer of quantity discount by retailers attracts impulse buying.	4.19	0.69	HE
8	Emphasis on price reduction through advertising campaign attracts impulse buying.	3.68	0.87	HE
9	Higher quality goods with reasonably low price attracts impulse buying.	3.68	0.87	HE
10	Offer of free goods to customers is an incentive to necessitate impulse buying.	3.59	0.84	HE
11	Offer of free samples to prospective customers induces impulse buying.	3.76	0.89	HE
12	Offer of coupons or certificate that entitles the buyer a saving on purchases attracts impulse buying.	3.78	0.83	HE
13	Sales of goods on credit without attracting interest stimulate impulse buying.	3.67	0.88	HE
	Grand mean	**3.75**	**0.84**	
	HE = High Extent			

The data presented in Table 1 showed a grand mean score of 3.75 implying that low price goods constitute to a high extent a determinant of female lecturers' impulse buying. The standard deviation of 0.84 implied that most respondents had similar opinion or view that low price goods constitute to a high extent a determinant of their impulse purchases.

Null Hypothesis 1

There is no significant difference between the mean responses of female lecturers in the State and Federal owned Universities on the extent to which low price goods constitute a determinant

of their impulse buying in Universities in North East-Nigeria. Data on the above hypothesis were presented on table 2.

Table 2: Summary of T-test statistics of responses from female lecturers in the State and Federal owned Universities on the extent to which low price goods attracted their impulse buying.

S/N	Group	X	SD	N	DF	S.E	T-cal	T-critical	Level sig.	Rmks
1	Female lecturers in state Universities	4.33	0.475	88						
					216	0.383	1.21	1.96	0.05	NSD
2	Female lecturers in federal Universities	3.23	0.77	130						

Key: NSD no significant difference

Data in table 2 showed the calculated t-value of 1.21 at 216 degree of freedom which was less than the table value or critical value of 1.96 at 0.05 level of significance. The null hypothesis of no significance in the mean scores of female lecturers from the state and federal owned Universities was upheld. This means that female lecturers in state and federal owned Universities express similar perception that low price goods to a high extent attract their impulse buying.

Discussion of the Findings

Low price Goods as a Determinant of Impulse Buying

The findings revealed that most low-price goods were to a high extent perceived as determinant of impulse buying. Some of these low-price goods include, among others, toiletries and provisions. This finding is in consonance with Kotler (2003), who noted that companies should set low prices for their goods in order to achieve the objectives of higher turnover rates of sales because low price goods encouraged increased patronage by customers especially impulse purchases. Goef and Clive (1998) also noted that low price goods with their attendant availability and display in almost all retail stores and outlets. tremendously attract impulse buying among consumers of such goods. The hypothesis also revealed no significant difference between the mean responses of female lecturers in the state and federal Universities on the extent to which low price goods constitute a determinant of their impulse buying. This finding was also in line with Kotler and Keller (2004) where they noted that low price goods strategy was meant to stimulate impulse buying among consumers irrespective of social status or income level.

Conclusion

Impulse buying is a habit which every consumer often displays in his or her daily buying experiences. Although, consumers often hesitate to be associated with impulse buying attitude, they hardly adhere strictly to their original buying plan. Impulse buying also de-emphasizes the fixed plan of items to be purchased prior to visiting the retail stores on the argument that store environment provides a better purchase stimulation. Consequently, consumers' intent to purchase is far from fixed and can continue to be modified right up to the point of purchase, and this reflects impulse buying. Specifically, the researcher examined low price goods as, perhaps, a determinant of impulse buying and investigates the extent to which low price goods constitute determinants of impulse buying among female lecturers in Universities in North East-Nigeria. The research investigation revealed that low price goods to a large extent, constitute determinants of impulse buying. Also, the standard deviation and null hypothesis scores revealed similar opinion among female lecturers. Consequently, scholars, teachers and students of marketing education should take the concept of impulse buying more seriously as a major marketing concept instead of approaching the concept with unseriousness or stigmatizing the concept, as impulse buying is a recognized buying habit.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made by the researcher in line with the findings:

1. Strategies such as engaging in sales promotion and display of large varieties of low-price goods in front and shelves to attract impulse attention and buying should be carried out with re-doubled efforts.

2. Advertising practitioners should make the features of goods exposed in this study as determinants of impulse buying a focal point for advertising campaign and production of advertisement materials, for instance, low price goods.

3. Teaching and learning of impulse buying and determinants of impulse buying should further be enriched and expanded as part of curriculum for marketing students.

4. Impulse buying should be regarded as a marketing concept and normal buying behaviour widely practiced worldwide.

5. Consumers should be sensitized on effective selection and utilization of low-price mechanism, in making wise purchase decision.

6. Consumers should also see the need for flexibility in purchase decision through impulse buying, particularly on event of unforeseen situation at the point of purchase because the exercise of flexibility in purchasing through impulse buying is mostly to the advantage of consumers since rigidity could sometimes be counter-productive.

7. The findings of this research should place consumers in better position to reconcile rational and impulse buying to their own purchasing advantages, rather than stigmatizing impulse buying.

8. The contradictions inherent in consumers hesitation to be associated with impulse buying habit and prevalent practices of impulse buying among consumers are resolved.

9. Greater awareness of inherent merits and demerits of impulse buying is created among consumers such that consumers engage in impulse buying in situations that is beneficial to them.

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