

# **STUDYING THE MEDIATING ROLE OF POSITIVE SENSATION IN THE EFFECT OF INDIVIDUAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS ON IMPULSIVE BUYING**

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## **Abstract**

*Impulsive buying has a vital role in profitability of the consuming markets; consequently, identifying facilitating factors affecting these buying has a significant role in increment of competitiveness among these businesses. In order to achieve this, the following research assesses the effect of individual and environmental factors on impulsive buying with due considering for positive sense as the mediating variable. The research is an applied research considering objective and descriptive-survey regarding data aggregation. The population of interest includes buyers who refer to Kourosh Shopping Center in Tehran. For sampling random method has been applied. Data analysis has been performed applying structural equations model through Lisrel 8.5. The results indicate that environmental and individual factors indirectly affect impulsive buying behavior. In addition, positive sense of the buyers plays a significant mediating role in these relationships. Accordingly, some suggestions have been presented for facilitating and improving of impulsive buying.*

*Keywords: Impulse Buying, Individual Factors, Environmental Characteristics, Positive Sense*

## INTRODUCTION

The competition that exists in today market faces higher expansion and variety in comparison with the past and most of the companies endeavor to create growth and improvement by developing competitive strategies (Dehdashti and Mobarhen, 2012). One of the competitive strategies is increasing care to impulsive buying. According to Underhill "in case the consumers would shop only in the time of need, the economy of the market would fail". This statement clarifies the vitality of impulsive buying in consumer markets. Due to increment of these buying at the current malls, university researches in this field have been increased considerably as well (Jones, et al, 2003). This indicates that today impulsive buying has turned into one of the significant aspect of the consumer behavior. Moglonski states that in 1997 this kind of buying was accounted \$ 4.2 billion of customers' buying only in America annually. Abraham (1998) stated that this kind of shopping has constituted 80% of customers' buying with regarding particular commodities.

Matila and Viertz (2008) have described impulsive buying at the malls up to 27 to 62 percent. Hussmann (2000) stated that the shoppers themselves have described 30 to 40 percent of their shopping impulsive. This vast share of impulsive buying encourages the producers to identify factors affecting impulsive buying and attempt to increase their sale and profitability in order to maintain their presence in the competitive environments. This necessity is due to the fact that there is a significant process of decision making in every act of shopping. The stages that the shopper must be passed to decide what kind of products or services to buy is named the process of purchasing decision. This is true about any kind of shopping including impulsive one (Samadi, et al., 2010).

In case the consumers only had shopped in the time of need and based on logic, many products would have been eliminated from the basket of producers and as a result the economy of the market have failed. The mentioned point indicates the significance of the impulsive buying in the consumer markets.

Despite the significance of the impulsive buying , the performed researches about it still does not have sufficient richness and complete understanding of the factors that influencing the development and facilitation of these shopping. As a result, the research mail goal is assessing the effects of environmental and individual factors upon this kind of shopping with due consideration for the mediating role of positive sense. The results of this systematic assessment could assist the expansion of theoretical and practical recognition regarding the impulsive buying.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Theoretical Literature

#### ***Impulsive Buying***

In marketing literature, impulsive buying have been defined as those performed with no planning. However, impulsive buying is more than that; in fact, impulsive buying is experimenting tendency and enthusiasm for buying. This enthusiasm is mostly the intense and seducing one (Najafi, et al., 2007). Before 2003, the definition of impulsive buying was focused on the product as the buying stimulator instead of the buyer. For example, in 1962, Stern created a base for impulsive buying and divided them into 3 kinds of planned, not planned and impulsive. According to this categorization, the planned shopping is the one that in which sufficient information and time exist for searching and making decision (Hussman, 2000). Later, in 1982 the researches concentrated more on behavioral aspects of these kinds of shopping. Among them Pieron (1991), Rouk (1987) and Winberg and Gutward (1982) have agreed upon the fact that impulsive buying is a behavior performed for receiving joy and pleasure. For example, Rook (1987) presented a report of the consumers who felt that the commodity is calling them for being bought. This point emphasizes upon the fact that impulsive buying holds behavioral aspect. Finally, he presented the following definition of Impulsive buying: *Impulsive buying is performed when a sudden, intense and urgent sensation would be created in the buyer for buying something. Impulsive buying is so complicated regarding the joy and pleasure that they create in the buyer and may cause contractive sensations. They are also being performed regardless of their consequences.*

#### ***Environmental Factors***

In 2003, Poustrel concluded in his research that beautifying the environment would lead to persuasion of the customers who look for experimenting fun and entertainment while shopping. Today, environments are attractive and provide various entertainments such as music, theatre and visual fun for the customers. As a result, the environment of the mall would be designed in such a way that the customer would be able to experiment a pleasant time in it (Abdolvand et al., 2011). Donvan et al. (1994) perceived that pleasant environments would encourage the customers to stay for a longer time at the shopping center and shop without planning. As a result, they introduce the environment of the mall as stimulation for Impulsive buying . In addition to this, the shoppers' plans for shopping changes according to the environmental circumstances of the mall from time to time. Environmental characteristics could increase Impulsive buying by highlighting some of the characteristics of a commodity. Bloch and Richnez (1983) and Houston and Rutzchied (1987) concluded that environmental circumstances can

attract the buyers' attention and persuade them for shopping. Spectacular characteristics of the mall as music, lights and decoration could affect customer's decision for buying or not buying a commodity. Even under specific circumstances the possibility for touching a commodity may lead to increment of buying it.

### ***Individual Characteristics***

After that the researchers have concentrated on psychological and inner processes of the individuals while shopping, the personality and emotional aspect of Impulsive buying were highlighted. Weinberg and Gutward (1982) described Impulsive buying as a multi-aspect behavior. They recognize impulsive hopping a result of individual characteristics. In order to predict this behavior, the mutual effect of the environment and individual characteristics should be assessed. Individual characteristics such as (customer involvement with the commodity, extraversion, lack of control, modernism, the motivation of enjoying shopping) could affect Impulsive buying (Kacen and Lee, 2002). In 1998, Beatty and Ferral concluded that circumstantial variables such as (having time and money) and individual characteristics variables such as (enjoying shopping, tendency for Impulsive buying) would be affected by positive/ negative stimulations, searching and motivation for shopping and these variables would specify the time and place of the shopping. They also perceived that: 1) people tend to impulsive buying when they have time and money; 2) impulsive buying would happen when people extremely tend to do so; 3) in case a positive stimulation would exist, people would be persuaded more for impulsive buying; 4) people would do Impulsive buying when they would have enough motivation and tendency to do so.

### ***Positive Sensation***

Perceived sensation a significant factor in the buyer's decision making for purchase. Mostly sensation is divided in to two contractive sorts and being assessed (like positive and negative) (Watson and Telgan, 1985) some of the studies indicate increment of the spirit and energy in the buyers after purchasing (Roock, 1987; Ditmar, Beiti and Frice, 1996; Bayley and Nankaro, 1998) positive sensation in the buyers could emerge by effective decoration, buyer's previous state of mind and facing environmental stimulations. Sensations are the stimulations of the impulsive buying (Beatty and Ferral, 1998; Rook and Gardener, 1993) customers who have positive sensation while purchasing tend to use simpler processes for decision making in purchasing. In comparison with negative sensation, customers who have positive sensation while shopping, perform more Impulsive buying due to ignoring consequences and rewarding themselves (Rook and Gardener, 1993).While shopping, sensation could affect the value of

purchase and created satisfaction like the quality of the commodity (Babin and Babin, 2001). Beity and Ferral perceived that positive sensation in the buyers is directly related with their motivation for shopping. This result was advocating previous research that stated that those customers who perform Impulsive buying are more emotional. Due to the fact that customers who perform more Impulsive buying show more positive sensation, spend more time at the malls (Donovan and Rossiter, 1982) Consequently, it could be deducted that positive sensation in the customer could be applied for predicting Impulsive buying as a significant factor.

### Experiential Background

The aim of current research is presenting a model that shows the effects of individual, environmental and faddishness on Impulsive buying. Some of the most significant and relevant researches that have been performed regarding this subject have been assessed. Table 1 represents a summary of the assessments performed regarding the effects of environmental and individual characteristics on Impulsive buying.

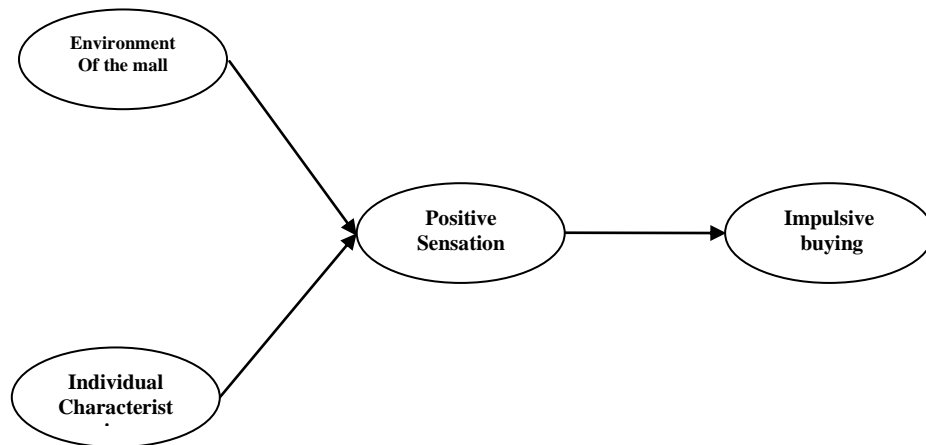
Table 1: Studied Individual and Environmental Characteristics as the Background of Impulsive Buying

Researcher (time of the research)	Environmental characteristics	Researcher (time of the research)	Individual characteristics
Winberg and Gutwald (1982) and Gardener and Roucks (1988) Beiti, Ferral and Park (1998), Kim and Forney (2006)	Mental status	Verplanken and Her Abadi(2001) (2004)	Extraversion modernism
Yune and Faber (2000) Jue and Vung (2003) Matila and Viretz (2001) Matila and Viretz (2008)	The environment of the mall Commodity stimuli Commercial stimuli Stimuli of the mall Environmental and social environments	Kassen and Lee (2002) Troisi, Christopher and Mark (2006)	Individualism materialism
Koun and Armstrong (2002) Park, Kim and Forney (2006)	Sudden involvement of the shoppers with sport commodity and fashion	Rouk and Ficher (1995) Omar and Kent (2001) and Peck and Childerz (2006) Jang, Perry Boutok and Sterten (2007) Michael, Christi, Senon, Sharon, (2003)	Behavioral tendency Tendency for Impulsive buying Inner norm Identity of the Impulsive buying
Belenger, Robertson, Hirschman (1978) Shmdasani and Rouck (1989) Ditmar, Beiti and Frice (1996) My, Jung, Latz and Loub (2003)	Categorization of the commodities, clothes, shoes and stationary	Hussman (2000)	Consumptions for pleasure

## Conceptual Model

Based on this, in the current research, environmental characteristics of the mall were considered as stimuli effective on the buyers' behavior. Based on the previous literature the conceptual model of the research has been codified as image 2 and the assumptions of the research were presented as the following:

Figure 1: Conceptual Model of the Research



Considering mentioned issues and conceptual model of research about the hypothesized relations among stimulators of impulsive buyer, the hypotheses developed in this study are as follow:

1. Environment of the mall affects positively stimulating positive sensation.
2. Individual characteristics affect positively stimulating positive sensation.
3. Positive Sensation affects positively impulsive buying behavior.
4. Environmental factors affects positively impulsive buying behavior through positive sensation.
5. Individual characteristics affects positively impulsive buying behavior through positive sensation.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### The Research Typology

The current research is an applied research; as its results could be used for solving the problems of the organizations. In addition it is descriptive-survey research in terms of identity and method; as it endeavors to acquire the required data of the existing status of the population of the interest using questionnaire. It is sectional in terms of time and quantitative in terms of the type of the data.

### The Population of Interest

The population of interest consists of shoppers who refer to Kourosh Shopping center in Tehran. Sampling was performed randomly using Cochran's Test with 5% error equal with 384 people. In the current research stratified sampling has been applied. However, to be more assured, 400 questionnaires were distributed.

### Data Collection Tools

In the current research, survey has been applied as the data collection method and standardized questionnaires has been data collection tools. The used questionnaire has a 20 question in total and Likert Five Level Scale has been used in it. Variables, questions related to them and the main source of the questions have been presented in table 2.

Table 2: Variables, Number of Questions and Resources

Variables	The number of questions	Source
Impulsive buying	3	Stern, 1962
Environment of the mall	5	Wakefield and Baker, 1998
Positive sensation	4	Beatty and Ferrell, 1998
Individual characteristics	8	Hendriks et al, 1999

In order to assess reliability of the questionnaire, the pre-test was taken from 30 people of the population of the interest and using Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha, the result is presented in table 3. These results confirm high reliability of the questionnaire.

Table 3: The Reliability of the Questions

Row	Variables	Reliability
1	Impulsive buying	0.79
2	Environment of the mall	0.72
3	Positive sensation	0.75
4	Individual characteristics	0.81

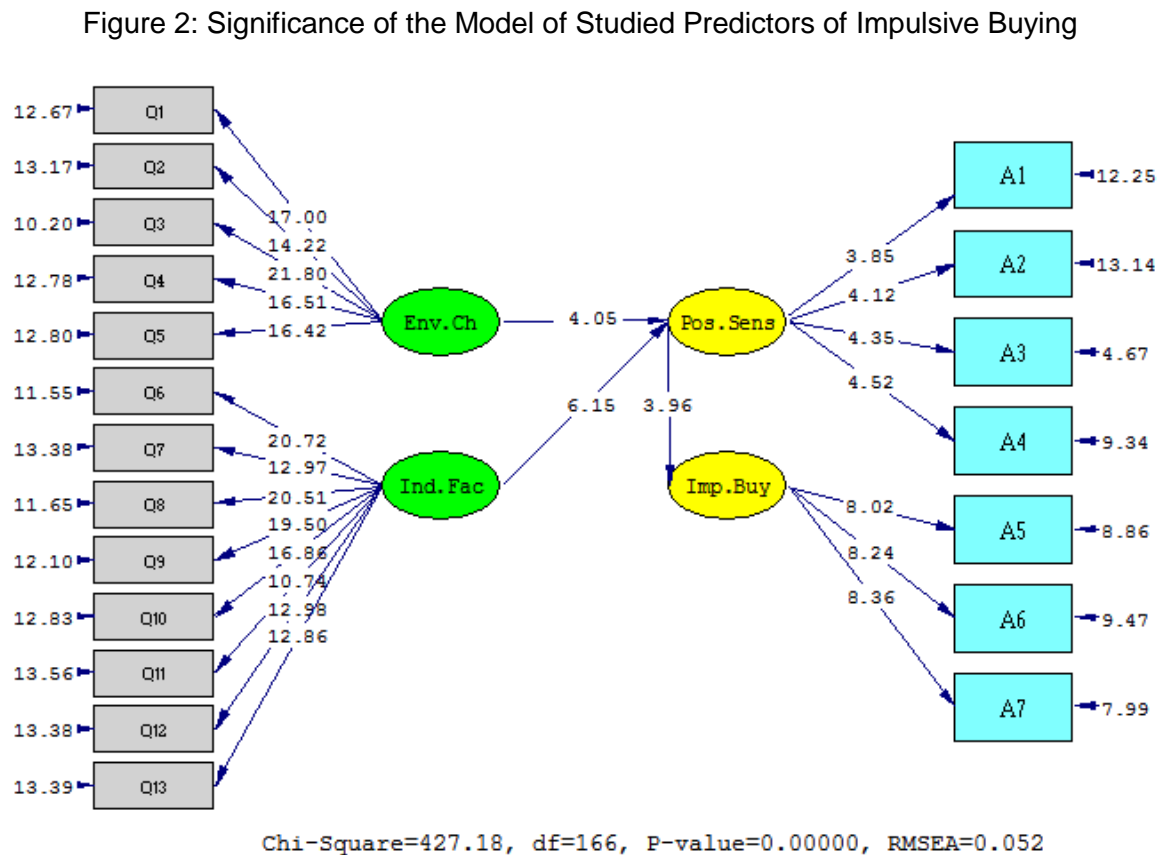
### Data Analysis Approach

In order to analyze the collected data from samples and examine the relation among the concepts being studied in following research and their dimensions of confirmatory factor analysis and assess the assumptions of the research, structural equations modeling have been applied.

Structural equations modeling have been utilized in order to analyze the data. In the mentioned model, we want to identify whether the relations among the hidden adjectives that have been extracted based on the theory would be confirmed considering the aggregated data of the sample or not (Kalantari, 2009). There are 20 apparent and 4 latent variables in this model. In order to assess significance of the predicted relations in the assumptions significant model and in order to assess the amount of effectiveness of this effect standard model has been applied.

### RESEARCH FINDINGS

In order to investigate the relationship expressed in the hypotheses, first significance of each predicted relationship will be studied using significance model and then using standard model, quality and extend of impact of each relationship will be evaluated. Figure 2 shows the significance of predicted relationships in the model.



Based on the indexes of following table we can judge about fitness of the model of studied predictors of impulsive buying.

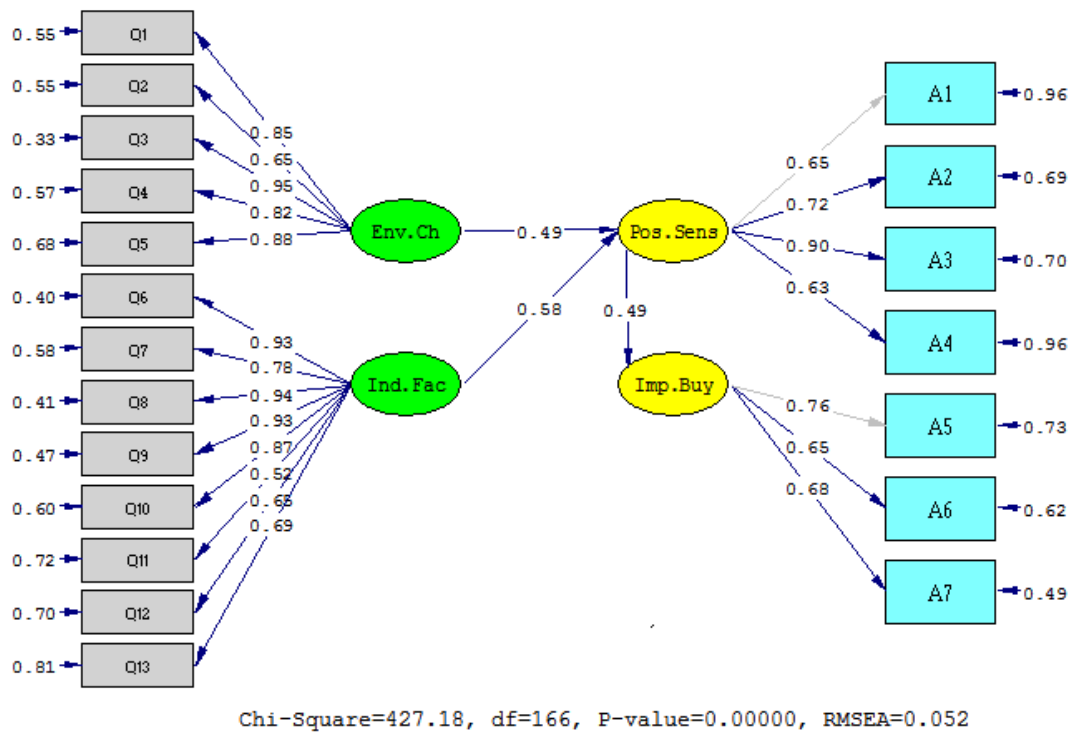


Table 4: Fitness Indexes of the Model of Studied Predictors of Impulsive Buying

Indexes	Allowed value	Result	Assessment
Ration of chi square to degree of freedom	$\chi^2/df < 3$	2.57	Good fitness
P-value	p-value < .05	0.000	Good fitness
RMSEA	.05 < RMSEA < .08	0.252	Good fitness

Fitness indexes show the appropriateness model of measuring variables because the ratio of chi square to degree of freedom equals 2.57 and is less than 3, RMSEA (.052) is approximately more than .005 and p-value (0.0000) is less than .05. Based on this model, the impact of predicted relationships in all hypotheses are significant because their amount for the hypotheses are 4.05, 6.15 and 3.69 respectively and all are greater than 1.96. Using the standard model also we can study the impact of relationships in this model whose significance have been approved.

Figure 3: Studied Predictors of Impulsive Buying in Standard State



In the standard status, the model indicates that the effect of the assessed factors on Impulsive buying is confirmable. As a result, based on the results acquired from significant and standard models, the results of assumptions assessments of the research could be summarized in the table 5.

Table 5: Results Acquired from Assessing the Assumptions

Assumptions	Route	Standard Ratio	Significance Numbers	Result
1	The effect of the environment of the mall on positive sensation	0.49	5.38	Confirmed
2	The effect of individual characteristics on positive sensation	0.58	6.15	Confirmed
3	The effect of positive sensation on impulsive buying	0.49	3.96	Confirmed
4	The mediator role of positive feeling in the effect of environmental factors on impulsive buying	$R^2 = 0.05$	4.05 and 3.96	Confirmed
5	The mediator role of positive feeling in the effect of individual characteristics on impulsive buying	$R^2 = 0.08$	6.15 and 3.96	confirmed

Figure 3 represents the structural equation model related to the assumptions of the research in the state of standard estimation. As it is clear, the acquired standard ratio for the relation between the environment of the mall and positive sensation equals 0.49 which indicates significant correlation between these two variables. The acquired ( $R^2$ ) equals 0.24 which indicates that the environment of the mall determines 24% of the alterations of the positive sensation. The acquired ratio for the relation between positive sensation and impulsive buying is positive and equals 0.49 which indicates positive and significant relation between these two variables. The acquired ( $R^2$ ) equals 0.24 which indicates that positive sensation determines 24% of the alternations of impulsive buying. As a result, considering the mediator role of positive sensation, the indirect effect of environmental factors on impulsive buying is equal to 0.05. Similarly, the indirect relationship between individual characteristics with impulsive buying with considering the mediating role of positive sensations could be explained whose results has been presented in table 4.

## CONCLUSIONS

The general model of the relations among the variable in structural equation model were compatible with the stated assumptions; all of the 5 assessed relations have been significant. Based on the acquired results, the assessed factors have significant effect on impulsive buying . These findings are compatible with the results of the previous performed researches, the test of the assumption 1 was compared with those of Matilda and Viertz (2008), Lee (2008) and Abdolvand and colleagues (2011) each of which confirmed the relation between the environment of the mall and customers' Impulsive buying in one way or another; Winberg and

Gutwalg (2013) have confirmed the effect of individual excitements on Impulsive buying as well; however, in Nazari and Ghaderi Abed's research, this factor has not been confirmed due to the customers' perceptions. Eventually, the results of the assumption 2 are compatible with those of Pou and Lou (2004) and Abdolvand and colleagues (2011) that have confirmed the effect of individual characteristics on Impulsive buying. However; on the other hand, in a similar research performed by Hussman (2000), the effect of individual characteristics on Impulsive buying has not been confirmed; as a result, it could be deducted that this part of the findings of the research is different from the results of the previous ones. This difference may be due to the significance and effect of various individual factors in impulsive buying of various products. Cultural, social and economic differences could be effective regarding this field as well. Finally, what distinguishes the current research is simultaneous assessment of the effects of individual and environmental factors on impulsive buying and also the role of environmental factors in creating positive emotions in the customer that has a facilitating role in impulsive buying.

## DISCUSSION

This research assessed the mediator role of positive sensation and the effects of individual and environmental factors on stimulating customers' Impulsive buying at Kourosh Shopping Center. The findings of this research indicate that positive sensation directly increases Impulsive buying. The results also indicated that environmental and individual factors could be effective in reinforcing positive sensation in people. Considering the acquired results and the existing literature in the field of Impulsive buying, the significance role of the environment of the mall in simplifying Impulsive buying and creating positive sensation in people while shopping was confirmed. These results indicate that the sellers could increase their sales considering customers' mental status, environment of the mall and their individual characteristics. The shopper, who spends a lot of time at a mall due to its pleasant environment, would spend a lot of money for shopping in that mall. Even those who enter the mall with an unpleasant state of mind, get pleasant while facing a nice and peaceful environment and would tend to spend more time there. Furthermore, considering the fact that customers' positive sensation is an inner emotion, it could directly affect their Impulsive buying while being present at the mall as it could stimulate shopping motivation. Based on the acquired results of this study, following proposals could be presented for simplification and increment of Impulsive buying:

- Considering the effect of the customers' positive sensation on Impulsive buying it is essential for the managers and sellers at the malls to make the environment of it so pleasant and attractive that it would create a positive emotion in the customer for shopping.

- Considering the positive effect of the individual factors in simplifying Impulsive buying it is proposed that the sellers persuade potential customers for more Impulsive buying .
- Considering the positive and significant effect of the customers' individual characteristics on Impulsive buying and the fact that these characteristics are inner psychological ones and vary in different cultures it is proposed that the malls increase their potential by increasing the variety of the products for fulfilling customers' various demands and tastes and would simplify Impulsive buying by doing so.
- Generally, it could be proposed that marketing managers are able to affect customers' positive feelings directly by making the environment of the mall attractive; however, considering individual characteristics, stimulating customers in Impulsive buying requires further study. As a result, marketers could make the environment of the mall so appealing compatible with the customers' mental and individual characteristics that an effective positive sensation would be created in their Impulsive buying .

## LIMITATIONS

There might be unwanted factors in any research that make limitations to the research; hence, some of the unwanted variables are not under researcher`s control. These factors must be determined and the researcher must show his knowledge about the influence of these factors on the research results. In the present study, there were some limitations such as:

- 1) To study the variables the survey (questionnaire tools) has been used; while it was better to use observation and/or interview for some factors. The questionnaire is a tool by which the understandings and attitude of any person is investigated; whereas, the reality might be different with respondent`s answers.
- 2) There are two issues must be considered regarding the nature and generalization of the research: firstly, there might be some practical behaviors like other survey researches that are mostly dependent on environmental conditions. Furthermore, mediating variables might affect the supposed relations among variables that are considered in this study.
- 3) Some other important limitations to this research include: reluctancy of some of the respondents to answer the questionnaires, not enough carefulness of some of the respondents in answering the questions, the possibility of bias in answering the questions by some of the respondents.

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