

**EXTRAVERSION AND OPENNESS TO EXPERIENCE AS  
PREDICTORS OF IMPULSE BUYING BEHAVIOUR AMONG  
UNDERGRADUATES OF NNAMDI AZIKIWE UNIVERSITY, AWKA**

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**ABSTRACT:** The study examined extraversion and openness to experience as predictors of impulse buying behaviour. The participants in this study were 217 undergraduates of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. They comprised of 87 male students (40.1%) and 130 female students (59.9%). The age range was 17 to 33 years, with a mean age of 21.62 and a standard deviation of 2.16. Two instruments were used for the study which included: Big Five Personality Inventory (BFPI) (Goldberg, 1993) and Impulse Buying Behaviour Scale (IBBS) (Rook & Fisher, 1955). Cross sectional survey was used for the study while multiple regression was used for data analysis. Two hypotheses were tested and results showed that extraversion significantly and positively predict impulse buying behaviour ( $\beta = .14$ ,  $t = 2.03$ ,  $p < .05$ ) while openness to experience did not significantly predict impulse buying behaviour among undergraduate students ( $\beta = .06$ ,  $t = .92$ ,  $p > .05$ ). This implies that individuals with high extroversion personality trait are more likely to engage in impulse buying than those with low extroversion personality trait. It was recommended that students with high extroversion trait can use self-reflection and self-control techniques to manage their impulsive buying tendencies. Additionally, further research on the relationship between personality traits and impulse buying behaviour will help expose how other personality traits not covered by this study affects impulse purchasing.

**Keywords:** Extraversion, Openness to Experience, Impulse Buying Behaviour, Undergraduates

## **INTRODUCTION**

Traditionally consumers make a comprehensive list of necessary items they need to purchase before going to the market, store or mall. However, sometimes they end up buying items which they never planned for. Rook (1987) termed this consumer experiences of making impulsive purchase as impulse buying behaviour. Impulse buying is a powerful and persistent urge to buy something immediately. Researchers have defined impulse buying as an unplanned and unintended purchase made rapidly, on the spot, without much reflection, preceded by exposure to a stimulus and a sudden and powerful buying urge (Beatty & Ferrell, 1998; Goel, et al., 2022; Zheng et al., 2019). Stern (1962) described four different types of impulse purchases. First is "Pure Impulse Buying" where the consumer breaks their normal pattern of consumption. Second is "Reminder Impulse Buying," which is when a consumer forgets to add an item to their shopping list, and when they see the item in the store, they remember that they need the item and purchase it. Third is "Suggestion Impulse Buying" where a consumer sees a product they have never seen before, and convince themselves that they need the item even though this is their initial encounter with it. Fourth is "Planned Impulse Buying" which occurs when a

consumer goes into a store with certain items in mind, but is waiting for deals to entice them to make the purchase.

Impulse buying activities are often followed by guilt and regret because the person doing it may feel that they have made an unnecessary purchase (Zhou & Gu, 2015). This is based on the fact that several consumers' purchases are unintended, hasty and initiated spontaneously, with a sense of excitement and pleasurable desire (Abdelsalam, et al., 2020). On the contrary, some researchers also found that impulsive buying may also lead to happiness, pleasure, excitement, and joy (Gardner & Rook, 1988; Khokhar, et al., 2019; Quicanaga, & Ogbere, 2022). Based on these opposing outcomes, impulse buying has become one of the most widely studied subjects worldwide. Hence, impulse buying now attracts great interest to researchers and organisations which have tried to understand the psychological underpinnings of this behaviour, as well as “impulse temptations”, to boost sales (Beatty & Ferrell, 1998, Kacen & Lee, 2002; Amos et al., 2014).

Impulsive buying behaviour does not depend only on a single variable, but rather on a combination of socio, demographic, emotional, sensory, genetic, psychological, social, and cultural factors (Abdelsalam, et al., 2020). A study by Raj and Jacob (2013) reveals that impulse buying behaviour differs with respect to the availability of low-cost products, discounts offered, new and unusual products, advertisements and changing trends in the society. Intrinsic factors such as personality traits, culture, shopping enjoyment tendency, materialism, and impulse buying tendency were also found to have a significant effect on consumers' impulse buying behaviour (Badgaiyan & Verma, 2014; Ugbomhe et al., 2018).

Some researchers suggested that personality traits are a key driver of impulse buying (Fenton-O'Creevy & Furnham, 2019; Olsen et al., 2016), while others like Jamali and Baloch (2019a) and Yoon and Lim (2018) found that there is no significant relationship between personality traits and impulse buying behaviour. Some researchers argue that geographical factors could be the reason why there are differences in the research findings (Jamali & Baloch, 2019b). Internal factors affecting consumer impulse buying behaviour are important to discuss because it directly impacts the consumers (Drossos et al., 2014). Internal factors of impulse buying denote the individual's internal cues and characteristics that make him/her engage in impulse buying (Orji et al., 2017).

Research evidence shows that consumers sometimes buy products to construct a personal image, to express his or her personality and to consolidate their image in the society (Parsad et al, 2019). Evidence from the previous research also shows that impulse buying tendency is an individual trait, rooted deeply in basic personality (Herabadi, 2003). Nowadays, the Big Five Model (BFM) established by McCrae and Costa (1997) is considered as a benchmark for a theory of personality traits (Leong et al., 2017). BFM entails five dimensions namely Openness to experience, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness, and Neuroticism. Although personality trait is a key determinant of consumer decision-making, Parsad et al, (2019) observed their role, especially extraversion, neuroticism, and conscientiousness, in impulse buying is not conclusive. However, this study is going to consider extraversion and openness to experience and how they impact impulsive buying.

Extraversion is a broad personality trait which exists on a continuum of attitudes and behaviours (Goldberg, 1993). Extroverts are relatively outgoing, gregarious, sociable, and openly expressive. It is one of the dimensions of the Big Five personality trait and

is characterized by an orientation of one's interests and energies toward the outer world of people and things rather than the inner world of subjective experience. Extroverted persons have "an energetic approach to the social and material world and include traits such as sociability, activity, assertiveness, and positive emotionality" (Udo-Imeh, 2015). Saran et al., (2016), observed that individuals who are social, talkative, assertive, and ambitious, exhibit positive emotions for product categories like fashion apparel. Empirical studies by Udo-Imeh (2015), Orji et al., (2017), Mathai and Haridas (2014) and Parsad et al., (2019) revealed that extroverts are more susceptible to engage in impulse buying. One reason for this is that extroverts may be more likely to seek out novel and exciting experiences, including shopping. Since extroverts are more outgoing, they will make more impulse purchases compared to others. They tend to be more impulsive and reward-seeking (Parsad et al., 2019), which can lead to impulsive buying behaviour. They may be more likely to enjoy the thrill of the hunt for a good deal and be more impulsive in their purchase decisions (Orji et al., 2017).

Goldberg (1993) defined openness to experience as "the breadth, depth, originality, and complexity of an individual's mental and experiential life". Openness to experience refers to a personality trait characterized by imagination, creativity, and a willingness to try new things (Shahjehan & Qureshi, 2019). According to Amayah (2011), individuals who score low in this trait, are considered to be quite conservative, having a limited mental level and behaviourally conventional. They are quite reserved and do not share their emotions too. Whereas people who score high in this trait produce new ideas and love entertaining people. They are always ready to experience new things and are quite adventurous (Goldberg, 1993). Empirical studies by Abdelsalam et al. 2020, Orji et al., 2017 and Shahjehan and Qureshi (2019) revealed that openness to experience influences decision to engage in impulse buying. It is expected that open-minded people tend to adopt or try out new products. While openness to experience may increase a person's curiosity and interest in novel products, it may also lead them to consider the long-term consequences of their actions and make more deliberate purchasing decisions.

This research is expected to critically evaluate and analyse the impact of these two dimensions of Big Five Personality Traits (extraversion and openness to experience) on impulsive buying behaviour. The result of this study is expected to throw more light on the potential risks, the opportunities for marketers and the factors influencing the increase in impulse buying behaviour.

### **Theoretical Framework**

In this research work, the social learning theory developed by psychologist Bandura (1971) was deployed as the theoretical framework. The theory suggests that behaviour is learned through observation, imitation, and reinforcement. This means that individuals learn to behave in certain ways based on the behaviours they observe in others, as well as the consequences of those behaviours. If the observed behaviour is rewarded or reinforced, the individual is more likely to engage in that behaviour themselves.

In relation to the present variables of the study, the social learning theory connects extraversion and openness to experience and their involvement with impulse buying behaviour through social learning and imitation of peers, parents and significant others (Badgaiyan & Verma, 2014). Therefore, extraversion, openness to experience and impulse buying behaviour are enshrined in the social learning theory.

## Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated and tested:

- i. Extraversion will significantly predict impulse buying among Nnamdi Azikiwe University undergraduates.
- ii. Openness to experience will significantly predict impulse buying among Nnamdi Azikiwe University undergraduates.

## METHOD

### Participants

A total of two hundred and seventeen students of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka participated in the study. The participants comprised of 87 male students (40.1%) and 130 female students (59.9%). The age range of the participants is 17 and 33 years of age, with a mean age of 21.62 and a standard deviation of 2.16. The participants were selected from the Faculties of Engineering, Management Sciences, Physical Sciences and Social Sciences at various levels (100 to 500 levels). The participants were selected using the simple random sampling technique that is yes and no case. The students who picked yes were the ones who participated in the study.

### Instruments

Two instruments were used to collect data for the present study and the instruments include:

The Big five personality inventory was developed by Goldberg (1993). It is a 44-item scale that measures an individual on a big five personality traits. The scale has five dimensions extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism and openness. However, for this study, only two dimensions (Extraversion and Openness) were used. Extraversion measures the orientation of one's interests and energies toward the outer world of people and things rather than the inner world of subjective experience. Extraversion has 8 items; 5 items are scored directly while 3 are scored in a reverse order. It has an index reliability of 0.83. Openness measures the breadth, depth, originality, and complexity of an individual's mental and experiential life. Openness has 10 items; 8 items are scored directly while 2 are scored in a reverse order. It has an index reliability of 0.81. All the items used a four-point Likert response ranging from strongly agree (1) to strongly disagree (5). The scale has been used previously to measure Nigerian samples (Kwentoh et al., 2020).

Impulse buying behaviour scale (IBBS short form) was developed by Rook and Fisher (1995). The scale measures the individual tendency of engaging in spontaneous purchase. It consists of nine items that is measured by five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly agrees (5) to strongly disagree (1). The participants can respond about the extent to which they agree with each of the statements on the scale. The higher the score, the higher is the impulse buying level. It has a test-retest reliability of 0.79 and Cronbach alpha of 0.88. The scale has been used previously to measure Nigerian samples (Ezeanya et al., 2022).

## Procedure

The researcher administered copies of the questionnaire to undergraduate students in the faculties of engineering, management sciences, physical sciences and social sciences. The measures were administered using scripts and a manual of procedures to ensure standardization of the data collection process. The researcher with the help of two trained research assistants used a direct delivery method to administer the questionnaire to the students. The questionnaire was collected immediately after completion. For research instrument administration, appropriate research ethical guidelines were followed. In this regard, the researcher engaged with employees to obtain their consent to participate in the study. All the information accessed from the participants was treated with maximum confidentiality. They were also informed that the findings of the study would be published in a journal. The questionnaires given out to each participant were monitored and obtained immediately after the participants had attended to them. The data collection spanned two-week period. Questionnaires that were inadequately filled out were discarded while correctly filled 217 questionnaires were retained for data analysis.

## Design and Statistics

The design for this study was cross-sectional survey design. Cross-sectional survey design is an appropriate research design for the present study because it enables the researcher to collect data at a single point in time and also allow for an investigation of the relationships between the variables of interest (Wang & Cheng, 2020). The statistic used for this research is multiple linear regression. It is the most appropriate statistic because the research explored the association of several independent factors with one dependent variable (Aldrich, 2005).

## RESULTS

Based on the analysis, the following findings were made.

**Table 1: Regression coefficients of extraversion and openness to experience as predictors of impulse buying behaviour**

Variable	Beta	SE	$\beta$	t	p
Extraversion	.25	.13	.14	2.03	.04
Openness to Experience	.11	.12	.06	.92	.36

*Dependent Variable: Impulse Buying Behaviour – Note:  $R^2 = .024$ ,  $F = (2, 216) = 2.63$ ,  $p < .05$*

The Table above shows extraversion and openness to experience as predictors of impulse buying behaviour among undergraduate students of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. The findings revealed that extraversion significantly and positively predicted impulse buying behaviour among undergraduate students of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka ( $\beta = .14$ ,  $t = 2.03$ ,  $p < .05$ ). Contrarily, openness to experience did not significantly (but positively) predict impulse buying behaviour among undergraduate students of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka ( $\beta = .06$ ,  $t = .92$ ,  $p > .05$ ). The  $R^2$  value of .03 revealed that the predictor variables explained only 3% variance in the outcome variable with  $F(2, 216) = 2.63$ ,  $p < .05$ .



## DISCUSSION

This study examined extraversion and openness to experience as predictors of impulse buying behaviour among Nnamdi Azikiwe University undergraduates, Awka. The first finding showed that extraversion significantly predicted impulse buying behaviour among undergraduates. The finding of this study collaborates with the findings of earlier researchers like Udo-Imeh (2015) who reported that there is a significant relationship between extraversion and impulse buying behaviour. Parsad et al. (2019) also found that extraversion is positively related to impulse buying behaviour. The study by Mathai and Haridas (2014) also found that there is a relationship between extraversion and impulse buying behaviour.

The second finding showed that openness to experience did not significantly predict impulse buying behaviour among undergraduates. This finding is consistent with the finding of Shahjehan and Qureshi (2019) who reported that openness to experience did not significantly impact on Impulse buying behaviour. On the other hand, the finding is not in line with Orji et al. (2017) who reported that there is a significant impact of personality factors on consumer buying behaviour of textile materials in Southern Eastern Nigeria.

The findings of this study can be theoretically explained through social learning theory, which posits that individuals learn by observing the behaviour, attitudes, and outcomes of others. In the academic environment, students are constantly interacting with one another, exposing themselves to new behaviours and ways of thinking. Through this social learning process, students can influence each other's personalities, potentially leading to the adoption of impulse buying behaviour.

Moreover, impulse buying has gained significant prominence in today's society, as many consumer purchases are unplanned, hasty, and driven by spontaneous excitement and desire (Abdelsalam et al., 2020). Consumers often buy products not only for their utilitarian value but also to construct a personal image, express their personality, and solidify their social standing (Orji et al., 2017). Thus, impulse buying can be seen as a reflection or manifestation of one's personality traits. The level of extraversion and openness to experience can play a crucial role in determining an individual's propensity for impulse buying. One's interactions and associations with family, friends, acquaintances, and even strangers greatly influence their buying decisions. Additionally, an individual's thirst for new knowledge and experiences motivates them to explore and try out new things, both planned and unplanned, thereby making them more susceptible to impulse buying behaviour. Extraverted and open individuals, by nature, are more open to learning new behaviours from their environment and are more likely to reproduce these learned behaviours when they perceive them to be favourable. This learned behaviour can significantly influence their buying decisions.

### Implications of the Study

The implications of this research can be significant for both theoretical understanding and practical applications. The findings revealed the following implications:

The theoretical implication is that it can enhance our understanding of how individual differences, specifically extraversion and openness to experience, influence consumer decision-making. It sheds light on the psychological processes underlying impulsive buying tendencies and provides insights into the mechanisms through which personality traits interact

with consumer behaviour. Businesses can benefit from the findings by tailoring their marketing strategies to different personality profiles. By recognizing the influence of extraversion and openness to experience on impulse buying behaviour, marketers can develop targeted campaigns that resonate with consumers high in these traits. This can involve creating engaging and exciting experiences, emphasizing novelty and uniqueness, and facilitating social interactions around the brand.

Recognizing the role of personality traits in impulse buying can inform the design of retail environments and online platforms. Businesses can create shopping experiences that cater to the preferences of extroverted and open individuals, incorporating interactive elements, social proof, and opportunities for exploration and discovery. This can enhance engagement and encourage impulse purchases. It can also serve as a form of consumer education because recognizing the influence of personality traits on impulse buying can help raise awareness among consumers about their own tendencies and promote financial literacy. Educational initiatives can focus on helping individuals understand the psychological factors that drive impulsive purchases and encourage responsible spending habits.

### **Recommendations of the Study**

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations can be proffered:

Marketers should consider tailoring their marketing efforts to different personality profiles. By understanding the influence of extraversion and openness to experience on impulse buying behaviour, marketers can develop targeted campaigns that resonate with consumers high in these traits. This can involve creating engaging and exciting experiences, emphasizing novelty and uniqueness, and facilitating social interactions around the brand.

Retailers can optimize their physical store layouts to cater to the preferences of extroverted and open individuals. Creating interactive displays, incorporating social proof elements, and providing opportunities for exploration and discovery can increase engagement and encourage impulse buying behaviour. Additionally, incorporating elements of novelty and uniqueness in the store ambience can appeal to individuals high in openness to experience.

Individuals high in extraversion and openness to experience can benefit from self-reflection and self-control techniques to manage their impulsive buying tendencies. Encouraging consumers to reflect on their motivations, set spending limits, and practice delayed gratification can help them make more informed and mindful purchase decisions.

### **Limitations of the Study**

The generalization of the findings is limited because taking sample from one institution and region may not be representative of the larger population of undergraduate students, both within and across different cultural and geographical contexts. Secondly, the study focuses on extraversion, and openness to experience which are individual dispositional variables. Adding other factors such as product-related factors or characteristics, situational factors like time and money, or demographic factors like age and culture would have made the study richer.

### Suggestions for Further Studies

Based on findings from the present study, the following suggestions were made by the researcher:

Replicating this study in other settings, with different and larger demographics is needed in order to further investigate variable relationships and impact on the study variables.

Future research studies also should examine other variables, such as age, cultural background, mood, product price, and store environment in predicting impulse buying behaviour among undergraduates.

### Conclusion

Conclusively, impulse buying behaviour is influenced by one's personality traits, the social environment and the desire for new experiences. The level of extraversion and openness to experience determines the extent to which individuals engage in impulse buying. Understanding the interplay between personality traits, social learning, and impulse buying can provide valuable insights for marketers and consumers alike.

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