

## ORIGINAL SCIENTIFIC PAPER

# A Comparative Study of Differences in Consumers' Impulse Buying Behaviour, Purchase Satisfaction, and Complaint Behaviour Based on Types of Product Purchased

Chulhwan Choi<sup>1</sup> and Chul-Ho Bum<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Kyung Hee University, Department of Golf Industry, College of Physical Education, Yongin, Korea, <sup>2</sup>Kyung Hee University, Department of Sports Taekwondo, Graduate School of Physical Education, Yongin, Korea

## Abstract

The internet enables consumers not only to buy products anywhere and at any time but also to compare prices and make informed consumption decisions. However, the increased convenience resulting from advancements in technology has simplified consumers' decision-making process, thereby leading to impulse buying behaviour. In the present study, the differences among consumers' impulse buying behaviour, purchase satisfaction, and complaint behaviour were compared based on the types of product purchase decisions (online v. offline). A total of 382 customers who had previously bought sportswear and voluntarily participated in the present study were divided into two groups, based on their preferred type of purchase. The respondents completed a questionnaire survey regarding their impulse buying behaviour, purchase satisfaction, and complaint behaviour. SPSS/AMOS 23.0 version was used to confirm the reliability and credibility of the collected data, and a multivariate analysis of variance was used to compare the participants' questionnaire responses regarding their consumption behaviour, based on their preferred type of purchase. The results showed that although consumers who preferred online purchasing were increasingly likely to exhibit impulse buying behaviour, they did not complain about their purchase dissatisfaction. In comparison, although consumers who preferred offline purchasing were more satisfied with the product they bought, they indulged in private complaint behaviour regarding their purchase dissatisfaction. The study results show that consumers exhibited different behaviours, depending on their preferred type of purchase. The present study results serve as an important reference for understanding evolving consumption trends through a multi-faceted approach.

**Keywords:** *consumer behaviour, impulse buying, purchase satisfaction, complaint behaviour*

## Introduction

The arrangement of five working days per week and shorter statutory working hours has been firmly established for decades. Therefore, a growing number of people are becoming increasingly interested in improving their well-being, enjoying various leisure activities, and improving their quality of life. In particular, leisure sports activities are gaining significant atten-

tion. Kim (2003) stated that participation in leisure sports not only strengthens the physical body but also significantly affects peoples' psychological stability by relieving stress and depression or relaxing their minds. Furthermore, participation in these sports activities serves as a platform for people to network with others who have common interests (Kim, 2003). The growth of the leisure sports market has led to an increase in the purchase



Correspondence:

C.H. Bum

Kyung Hee University, Department of Sports Taekwondo, Graduate School of Physical Education, 1732 Deogyong-daero, Giheung-gu, Yongin-si, Gyeonggi-do 17104, Korea

E-mail: bch2180@khu.ac.kr

of sportswear. According to the Korea Federation of Textile Industries, the sportswear market earned approximately USD 3 billion in 2010; however, the market grew beyond USD 5.4 trillion in 2018 (Maeil Business Newspaper, November 18, 2018).

In the leisure sports market, increasing numbers of consumers want to buy products easily from online shopping malls anywhere and at any time. Hoffman and Novak (1996) defined online shopping malls as a technological system wherein customers purchase items through the internet, instead of buying products from physical stores or shops. An advantage of online shopping is that it allows consumers to compare a wide range of products and prices for easy consumption at any place and time (Bloch & Pigneur, 1995). Due to this advantage, the Korea Information Society Development Institute states that the Korean online shopping market has grown 19.4% on average annually from 2013 to 2018 and predicts that it is expected to exceed USD 837 billion in 2019 and USD 155 billion in 2022 (Munhwa Ilbo, July 4, 2017). This fact is cited as one of the most important reasons that smartphone-based mobile shopping has become a popular choice among people with busy lives.

Although online shopping provides clear advantages from the consumer's perspective, it is highly likely to lead consumers to indulge in impulse buying behaviour while casually browsing the internet (Parboteeah, Valacich, & Wells, 2009). Shon and Yoon (2012) noted that more impulse purchases were made online than offline, and fashion products accounted for the highest percentage of products purchased on impulse. Solomon (1996) argued that these impulsive buyers are those who do not plan their shopping and tend to buy things based on their uncontrollable impulses. Studies have reported that these impulsive buyers experience positive or negative emotions after making purchase decisions (Rook & Hoch, 1985). Because consumers experience these emotions after making purchase decisions, their willingness to buy a product may be affected. An in-depth study is required for this topic.

Impulse buying behaviour occurs spontaneously when a consumer has weak control over themselves (Rook, 1987) and refers to an unplanned purchase behaviour caused by exposure to an unspecified stimulus (Piron, 1991). Lee (2005) provided the following explanation about the unique characteristics of impulse buying: Consumers who frequently exhibit impulse buying behavioural patterns voluntarily react to an external or internal stimulus, although they did not plan to shop. Moreover, this behaviour is accompanied by a strong desire that is difficult to control and stems from the consumer's lack of cognitive behaviour. This behaviour is governed by pleasure instead of reasonable thinking. A common factor among these consumers is that, for a short moment, they experience an enormous internal conflict due to their unplanned or unexpected behaviour. Studies have reported that women were more likely to exhibit impulse buying behaviour in comparison to men (Rook & Hoch, 1985). This behaviour is also commonly noted among younger people or people with higher income (Bellenger, Robertson, & Hirshman, 1978). Although some studies have reported that consumers experience negative emotions after indulging in impulse buying behaviour (Rook, 1987), several other studies have suggested that consumers feel satisfied instead (Park, 2017). Therefore, empirical studies analysing whether consumers experience satisfaction after indulging in impulse buying behaviour would be useful.

Although customer satisfaction does not have a conclusive

definition, it is regarded as a type of pleasure that consumers perceive about a product or service (Hellier, Geursen, Carr, & Rickard, 2003). Kotler and Keller (2006) argued that the compatibility, or incompatibility, between consumers' pre-purchase expectations and post-purchase emotions leads to consumers experiencing either joy or disappointment, which results in practical satisfaction. Consumers' cognitive or emotional evaluations regarding a product or service may directly or indirectly affect their satisfaction (Mano & Oliver, 1983). Consumer dissatisfaction is an unfavourable emotion that stems from consumers' unmet expectations (Smith & Bolton, 2002). Because consumer dissatisfaction can lead to various types of complaint behaviours, customer satisfaction is considered crucial from the perspectives of producers or sellers (Mowen, 1990).

Customer complaint behaviour refers to any action that includes consumers providing negative feedback to third parties while they are feeling dissatisfied with the product or service that they purchased or sending negative feedback to producers or sellers (Lee, 2009). Day (1980) categorized complaint behaviour into two types: private and public. Private complaint behaviour refers to consumers expressing negative emotions about the product or service with which they experienced dissatisfaction to others, including their family and friends. Public complaint behaviour refers to consumers requesting compensation or refunds or filing a complaint or lawsuit with an official institution (Choi, Lee, Oh, & Suh 2004). Park and Moon (1990) reported that young people primarily engage in compliant behaviour, which is increasingly common among groups with a higher-than-average level of education or income. Therefore, because customer satisfaction or complaint behaviour intention can significantly affect a firm's profitability or image, the effect of impulse buying on these variables should be analysed.

Therefore, the present study analyses the differences among impulsive buying behaviour, purchase satisfaction, and complaint behaviour among consumers buying sportswear, based on their preferred type of purchase (online vs offline).

## Methods

### *Participants and data collection*

The target population was limited to adults aged 20 years or older, who had previously purchased sportswear on impulse. Data were collected from April to May 2019 (2 months) from three sports centres located in Seoul. The respondents, who voluntarily participated in the questionnaire survey, were informed about its purpose before they completed the survey. They were first requested to fill out their demographic information in the questionnaire and were then prompted to respond to the question about their preferred type of purchase, which was set as an important independent variable in the present study ("What type of purchase do you usually prefer while buying sportswear?"). The respondents were asked to select either online or offline purchasing as their preferred type of purchase. Those who had experienced both types of purchases were asked to select their preferred type of purchase.

Among the 550 distributed questionnaire surveys, 411 responses (approximately 74.7% response rate) were collected. Among the 411 collected responses, 29 responses with incomplete or inappropriate responses were excluded. These 29 excluded surveys either did not contain responses to more than half the questions, or they provided the same answer to all of the questions. A total of 382 questionnaire responses were used in the present study to compare the consumption behaviour

of consumers who purchased sportswear online or offline. The respondents were divided into two groups: online purchasing group (Group 1, n=207, 54.18%) and offline purchasing group

(Group 2, n=175, 45.81%). Table 1 provides the demographic information of the respondents and includes their preferred type of purchase.

**Table 1.** Descriptive Statistics

		Online consumer (Group 1)	Offline consumer (Group 2)
Gender	Male	112 (54.1%)	95 (54.3%)
	Female	95 (45.9%)	80 (45.7%)
Age	20s	66 (31.9%)	20 (11.4%)
	30s	56 (27.1%)	33 (18.9%)
	40s	48 (23.2%)	49 (28.0%)
	50s	31 (15.0%)	40 (22.9%)
	Over 60s	6 (2.9%)	33 (18.9%)
Favourite Sport	Baseball	30 (14.5%)	15 (8.6%)
	Basketball	37 (17.9%)	32 (18.3%)
	Golf	51 (24.6%)	45 (25.7%)
	Running	38 (18.4%)	33 (18.9%)
	Gym	28 (13.5%)	35 (20.0%)
	Yoga	11 (5.3%)	3 (1.7%)
	Hiking	12 (5.8%)	12 (6.9%)
Total		207 (54.18%)	175 (45.81%)

*Measures*

A single factor (3 items) that was used by Kim (2014) to analyse the effect of impulse buying on consumer behaviour was revised and adapted as the impulse buying factor in the present study. A single factor (3 items) that was used in previous studies to examine consumers' purchase satisfaction after impulse buying (Kang, Jing, & Park, 2014) was applied as the purchase satisfaction factor in the present study, without any revision. A scale that was used in previous studies regarding consumer behaviour (Lee, 2017) was revised and adapted as the complaint behaviour factor in the present study. Ten items under three sub-factors (inaction and private and public complaint behaviours) were adapted from the previous study, and one item listed under public complaint behaviour was removed in the present study. Each factor was based on a Likert scale, ranging from "strongly disagree (1 point)" to "strongly agree (5 points)". Table 2 lists the items included in the questionnaire.

*Data Analysis*

SPSS/AMOS 23.0 version was used to process all data in the present study. Descriptive statistics were used to identify demographic information, including the respondents' preferred sports. Cronbach's alpha coefficient was used to test the reliability of the data. The comparative fit index (CFI), the Turker-Lewis index (TLI), and the root mean square error of

approximation (RMSEA), which are designed to demonstrate validity, were applied to conduct a confirmatory factor analysis. Finally, a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was conducted to analyse the differences in consumers' impulse buying behaviour, purchase satisfaction, and complaint behaviour, based on consumers' type of sportswear purchase.

**Results**

*Scale Validity and Reliability*

The results of the confirmatory factor analysis showed that all the values of the parameter estimate (greater than ±1.96) exceeded the baseline. The goodness of fit test showed CMIN=115.177, DF=109, P=.324, CMIN/DF=1.057, CFI=.998, TLI=.997, and RMSEA=.012. The result is satisfactory when CFI and TLI are greater than .900 and when RMSEA is less than .800, respectively. Therefore, the validity of the scale was ensured based on all the baselines.

In addition, the reliability of the scale was tested based on Cronbach's alpha coefficients and after applying the baseline (greater than .70): (a) impulse buying (α=.899), (b) purchase satisfaction (α=.818), and (c) complaint behaviour (inaction, α=.832; private complaint behaviour, α=.830; and public complaint behaviour, α=.801). Therefore, all numbers exceeded the baselines, thereby ensuring the reliability of the scale. Additional information is provided in Table 2.

**Table 2.** Results of Confirmatory Factor Analysis and Reliability Analysis

Factor	Questions	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.
Impulse Purchase (α=.899)				
	I have purchased sportswear that I had no prior plans of purchasing after watching an advertisement indicating that there was not much time left to buy it.	1.000		
	I have purchased sportswear on impulse after watching an advertisement indicating that there were a limited number of stocks available.	.852	.057	14.955***
	I had not considered buying sportswear, but I have purchased it on impulse.	1.069	.058	18.300***
	When I purchase sportswear, I often do so on impulse.	.718	.045	16.049***
	I have bought the latest, popular sportswear without any prior plans to purchase it because it looked attractive.	1.223	.061	20.042***

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Factor	Questions	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.
Purchase Satisfaction ( $\alpha=.818$ )				
	I am positive with the things that I impulsively buy.	1.000		
	I am satisfied with the things that I impulsively buy.	.705	.060	11.766***
	I am pleased with the things that I impulsively buy.	1.314	.090	14.656***
Complaint Behaviour				
Inaction ( $\alpha=.832$ )				
	I did not complain about a dissatisfactory product.	1.000		
	I did not make a complaint.	.733	.056	13.094***
	I just moved on.	.791	.053	14.992***
Private Complaint Behaviour ( $\alpha=.830$ )				
	I discussed my dissatisfaction with the product among my family or friends.	1.000		
	I informed my family or friends about the dissatisfactory aspects of the product.	.658	.054	12.275***
	I informed my family and friends that they should not purchase the product.	.784	.049	15.868***
Public Complaint Behaviour ( $\alpha=.801$ )				
	I officially requested a refund.	1.000		
	I visited the relevant institution and requested them to resolve my complaint.	.747	.066	11.363***
	I took legal action, such as legal counselling, to receive compensation.	.903	.070	12.813***

*Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA)*

MANOVA was conducted to analyse the differences in consumers' impulse buying behaviour, purchase satisfaction, and complaint behaviour factors, based on their preferred type of purchase. The homogeneity of covariance was tested (Box's  $M=17.079$ ,  $F=1.122$ ,  $p>.05$ ), thus confirming statistically significant differences between the two groups (Wilks'  $\lambda=$

$\lambda=0.784$ ,  $F=20.679$ ,  $p<.05$ ). As shown in Table 3, statistically significant differences between the two groups were observed among impulse buying, purchase satisfaction, inaction, and private complaint behaviour (under complaint behaviour), whereas no statistically significant difference was noted in public complaint behaviour, which is yet another sub-factor categorized under complaint behaviour.

**Table 3.** Results of Multivariate Analysis of Variance

Dependent Variables	df	F	p	$\eta^2$
Impulse Purchase	1	6.929	.009*	.018
Purchase Satisfaction	1	76.008	.000*	.167
Complaint Behaviours				
Inaction	1	5.065	.025*	.013
Private Complaint Behaviour	1	16.408	.000*	.041
Public Complaint Behaviour	1	3.037	.082	.008

Legend: \* $p<.05$

In addition, Table 4 shows the average of the dependent variables between the groups identified from the questionnaire used in the present study.

**Table 4.** Mean Scores of Dependent Variables by Groups

	Impulse Purchase	Purchase Satisfaction	Inaction	Private Complaint Behaviour	Public Complaint Behaviour
Group 1	2.586	2.412	2.683	2.478	2.523
Group 2	2.327	3.191	2.469	2.895	2.358

Legend: Statistically significant higher mean scores between groups in bold.

**Discussion**

The present study analysed consumers' behaviour regarding purchasing, which has become increasingly simplified and convenient due to the use of the internet and smartphones. The growing use of online purchasing provides many benefits to consumers and leads to changes in people's consumption patterns by causing consumption phenomena, such as impulsive buying (Limayem, Khalifa, & Frini, 2000). Therefore, comparing online and offline purchases aids in understanding of the newly changed consumption environment. Although impulse buying leads to negative consequences, it can also

garner some positive responses (Solomon, 1996). Therefore, conducting a comparative analysis in the present study can provide a meaningful interpretation of the psychology of consumers' purchase patterns.

The results of the comparative analysis on consumers' impulse buying behaviour, purchase satisfaction, and complaint behaviour, based on their preferred type of purchase (online vs offline) showed that the consumer group which preferred online purchasing had higher scores for impulse buying and inaction (under complaint behaviour). These results can be interpreted to reflect the characteristics of online purchasing.



One of the advantages of online purchasing is that it allows anyone to use the internet to buy items anywhere and at any time (Bloch & Pigneur, 1995). However, this may also become a disadvantage of online purchasing because although consumers can easily buy products by using the internet or smartphones, their impulse purchase decision occurs without giving them a chance to check the item physically. These results are consistent with that of a previous study wherein consumers' inclination toward impulse buying was more noticeable in online purchasing (Shon & Yoon, 2012). There is a possibility of consumers mistaking low-quality products for high quality ones instead and buying them on impulse.

Moreover, consumers are easily exposed to product advertisements while purchasing products online through digital devices, which stimulates their purchase desire and impulse buying. These advertising effects were noted to have stimulated online buyers' impulse buying behaviour in the present study. Online purchasing exposes consumers to many advertisements, thus triggering impulse buying behaviour, without allowing consumers to check products physically. In addition, the disadvantage of online impulse buying is increasingly noticeable in inaction (under complaint behaviour), a factor wherein the online purchasing group in the present study had higher scores. This result suggests that consumers did not complain even though they were dissatisfied with the product, thus transforming an advantage of online purchasing into a disadvantage. Because face-to-face interaction with consumers is impossible in online purchasing, the scope for expressing complaint behaviour may also be limited. Hankyoreh (2017) argued that completely removing interaction to ensure convenience can cause a crisis of the manufacturing and service sectors in the technological industry.

In contrast to the aforementioned results, the offline purchasing group received higher scores for purchase satisfaction and private complaint behaviour (under complaint behaviour). These results have significant implications on the recent situation in which online purchasing has become increasingly popular among customers. Purchase satisfaction is recognized as the most important factor in studies analysing consumer behaviour because the concept of satisfaction has a positive effect on other factors in consumers' decision-making process (Mano & Oliver, 1983). Consumers who are satisfied with a product not only provide a favourable evaluation regarding the price of the product but also have an increased tendency to buy the product again (Choi, Greenwell, & Lee, 2018). Therefore, the results of the present study show that the offline purchasing group indicated a higher average score for satisfaction. This result suggests that offline purchasing is a smart consumption behaviour, compared with the conven-

nience of online purchasing.

Furthermore, the offline purchasing group indicated a higher average score for private complaint behaviour (under complaint behaviour), which would be affected by the aforementioned results of inaction. Many consumers in the online purchasing group showed inaction and did not complain about products they deemed dissatisfactory. Therefore, the offline purchasing group would receive a higher score in private complaint behaviour. However, the offline purchasing group was not as impulsive as the online purchasing group and showed discreet consumption patterns with a higher level of purchase satisfaction, which suggests that these consumers are increasingly likely to be active in complaint behaviour.

The present study compared impulse buying behaviour, purchase satisfaction, and complaint behaviour between the online and offline purchasing groups to examine the development of online purchasing in recent years. The study results confirmed the advantages and disadvantages of both online and offline purchasing. In addition, consumers showed varying consumption behaviours, depending on their preferred type of purchase (online vs offline), which serves as an important reference for future studies that aim to establish a marketing strategy based on consumer behaviour.

#### Limitations

In recent years, online purchasing has become increasingly popular among consumers, and most consumers engage in both online and offline purchases. During the data collection process, the respondents selected their preferred type of purchase and were fully informed about the aim of the present study. Therefore, the respondents completed the questionnaire based on their personal experiences regarding their selected type of purchase. However, because an individual's intricate decision-making process is unintentionally affected by his or her past experiences, it may raise questions regarding the objectivity of the recorded responses. Therefore, in the future, researchers can conduct a qualitative study to gather more subjective opinions.

In addition, many other factors can influence a consumer's purchase patterns. Numerous studies have reported that factors, such as the product price or type of purchase, may significantly affect consumer decision-making. The same consumer may show different consumption behaviour if the product price is lower or higher than those used in the present study. For instance, even if a consumer was dissatisfied with a product after buying it on impulse, they were unlikely to indicate complaint behaviour if the product price was low. Therefore, future studies regarding consumer behaviour should consider more varied factors.

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#### Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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