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UNIVERSITY OF FINANCE – MARKETING**

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**THE IMPACT OF IN-STORE FACTORS AND
SHOPPING COMPANIONS ON IMPULSE BUYING
BEHAVIOR: THE MEDIATING ROLE OF POSITIVE
EMOTIONS AND URGE TO BUY**

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1. Research problems

From a theoretical perspective, impulse buying behavior has received considerable attention from researchers due to its prevalence and its important role in the retail industry (Bandyopadhyay et al., 2021). However, a review of studies on impulse buying behavior in the context of offline shopping indicates that there are still inconsistencies in previous research findings as well as several important theoretical gaps. First, respect is considered a core element in East Asian communication culture and a fundamental human need (De Cremer, 2002; Liu et al., 2016); however, this factor has not been adequately examined in relation to impulse buying behavior. Second, in-store events are recognized as stimuli that can strongly evoke consumers' emotions (Armbrrecht, 2021), yet they have rarely been considered as an independent variable in research models of impulse buying behavior. Third, previous findings regarding the effects of store environmental factors, such as music and employee characteristics, remain inconsistent (Mohan et al., 2013; Parsad et al., 2017; Trivedi et al., 2022). Fourth, the number of studies examining social factors remains limited and has primarily focused on their direct effects (Luo, 2004; Luo, 2005). To date, no empirical study has examined the moderating role of different types of shopping companions (family versus friends) in the relationship between psychological antecedents – such as positive emotions and the urge to buy – and impulse buying behavior. Moreover, previous studies have largely relied on participants' imagined scenarios rather than actual shopping interactions (Luo, 2004; Luo, 2005). This approach may reduce the accuracy of research findings, as imagination may not fully capture real-life interactions, social pressure, or the influence of nonverbal cues.

From a practical perspective, Vietnam's retail industry has been developing rapidly and attracting numerous domestic and foreign investors (Mai et al., 2023), thereby intensifying market competition. This increasing competition compels retailers to continuously seek solutions to enhance revenue and strengthen their competitive advantage, among which stimulating customers' impulse buying behavior is considered one of the key strategies. In addition, although e-commerce has grown rapidly, Vietnamese consumers still prefer in-store shopping because they wish to examine product quality and directly select products (PwC, 2023). At the same time, the shift from traditional markets to modern retail formats such as hypermarkets has become increasingly evident, contributing to the rapid growth in the number of hypermarkets in Vietnam (General Statistics Office, 2025). Modern retail outlets not only provide convenience and a wide variety of products but also create engaging shopping environments, thereby encouraging customers' impulse buying behavior (Amos et al., 2014; Atulkar & Kesari, 2018). Previous studies indicate that a large proportion of purchase decisions are made at the point of sale, with the percentage reaching up to 82% (POPAI, 2014). Along with consumers' tendency toward spontaneous purchasing, this makes impulse buying account for a considerable share of retail sales revenue (Redine et al., 2023). Therefore, to capitalize on this trend, retailers have implemented various strategies to stimulate customers' impulse buying behavior at the point of sale (Streicher et al., 2021).

Based on the issues discussed above, this study is conducted to clarify the effects of in-store factors and shopping companions on customers' impulse buying behavior. Specifically, the study focuses on examining the roles of music, salespersons (by incorporating the characteristic of respect in addition to the two commonly examined characteristics – friendliness and helpfulness), in-store events, and sales promotion, as well as the role of

shopping companions in relation to impulse buying behavior in hypermarkets.

1.2. Objectives and research questions

1.2.1. Objectives

The overall objective of this study is to evaluate the effects of point-of-purchase factors, including employee characteristics (friendliness, helpfulness, and respectfulness), music, sales promotions, and in-store events, on customers' impulse buying behavior when purchasing fast-moving consumer goods and low-value durable consumer products at hypermarkets in Ho Chi Minh City, through the mediating roles of positive emotions and purchase urge. At the same time, the study examines the direct effect of shopping companions on impulse buying behavior, as well as the moderating role of shopping companions in the relationships between positive emotions and impulse buying behavior, and between purchase urge and impulse buying behavior. The specific objectives of the study are as follows:

(1) To examine the of point-of-purchase factors, including employee characteristics (friendliness, helpfulness, and respectfulness), music, sales promotion, and in-store events on customers' positive emotions.

(2) To examine the effects of sales promotion, in-store events, and positive emotions on customers' urge to buy.

(3) To examine the mediating roles of positive emotions and urge to buy in transforming in-store stimuli into impulse buying behavior.

(4) To examine the moderating role of shopping companions (friends and family) in the relationship between positive emotions, urge to buy, and customers' impulse buying behavior.

(5) To propose managerial implications for retailers and consumer goods manufacturers to enhance the effectiveness of in-store activities, thereby increasing customers' impulse buying behavior.

1.2.2. Research questions

(1) How do employee characteristics (including friendliness, helpfulness, and respect), music, sales promotion, and in-store events affect customers' positive emotions?

(2) How do sales promotion, in-store events, and positive emotions influence customers' urge to buy?

(3) Do positive emotions and the urge to buy play a mediating role in the relationship between in-store stimuli and impulse buying behavior?

(4) Does the presence of shopping companions moderate the relationship between positive emotions, urge to buy, and impulse buying behavior?

(5) What managerial implications can be derived from the research findings to enhance customers' impulse buying behavior for consumer products in hypermarkets?

1.3. Research object and scope

Research object: The study focuses on factors related to employees (including friendliness, helpfulness, and respect), music, sales promotion, in-store events, positive emotions, urge to buy, and shopping companions, in order to examine their influence on customers' impulse buying behavior at hypermarkets in Ho Chi Minh City (in the period prior to July 1, 2025). Regarding product scope, the study targets commonly consumed products, including two main groups: (1) fast-moving consumer goods; and (2) durable consumer goods, fashion items, cosmetics, and low-value accessories. In this research, the concept of low value is specifically defined as products with a retail price of below VND 1,000,000.

Survey respondents: The survey respondents of this study are customers who have engaged in impulse buying of fast-moving consumer goods and low-value durable consumer products at hypermarkets in Ho Chi Minh City. Data were collected from both male and female customers during April 2025 through a direct survey using paper-based questionnaires conducted at hypermarket retail locations in Ho Chi Minh City.

Research scope: The study is conducted at hypermarket retail locations in Ho Chi Minh City. The overall research period spans from 2024 to 2025.

1.4. Research method

This study primarily employs a quantitative research method to test the relationships proposed in the research model. In addition, a qualitative research method is used to refine and ensure the appropriateness of the measurement scales when translated into Vietnamese. The study applies a convenience sampling method. The collected data are analyzed using SmartPLS 4 software with the PLS-SEM technique.

1.5. Research significance

1.5.1. Theoretical significance

The scientific significance of this study is developed based on the need to refine existing knowledge, particularly addressing the limitations and inconsistencies that remain in research on impulse buying behavior.

First, the study contributes to affirming the importance of the respect factor within the context of Eastern culture. Investigating this research gap is essential because respect represents a fundamental need related to self-esteem and social recognition. If this factor is not incorporated into the research model, the psychological mechanisms underlying the behavior of Vietnamese customers – who are often sensitive to how they are treated – cannot be fully explained. Therefore, this study makes a pioneering

contribution by introducing respect as an important in-store variable in the research model of impulse buying behavior.

Second, the study repositions the role of in-store events as a direct stimulus. Although businesses allocate substantial budgets to organizing events, the academic literature has largely regarded them merely as a contextual or supporting element rather than a variable that directly influences emotions and behavior. This theoretical gap limits our understanding of the mechanism through which a specific event can be translated into impulse purchasing behavior. This study therefore provides important insights by demonstrating that in-store events function as a powerful stimulus (S) within the Stimulus – Organism – Response (SOR) framework, triggering positive emotions and encouraging impulse buying behavior.

Third, this study contributes to clarifying theoretical inconsistencies regarding the impact of music. The empirical evidence obtained will help address whether the influence of music is dependent on store context or cultural background, thereby contributing to the refinement and standardization of theories related to impulse buying behavior.

Fourth, the study offers significant theoretical contributions by addressing methodological limitations – shifting from imagined scenarios to real interactions – and by clarifying the moderating mechanism of shopping companions. This empirical verification is essential to demonstrate that social pressure does not affect consumers uniformly but rather varies across situations. As a result, the findings help refine and further develop theories concerning social influence within research models of impulse buying behavior.

1.5.2. Practical significance

In addition to its scientific contributions, this study also provides practical implications that help businesses address specific managerial and marketing issues.

First, the study provides guidance for improving human resource training approaches in retail businesses by emphasizing the importance of employee respect toward customers. This orientation can enhance the quality of service encounters and customer experience in hypermarket retail settings, thereby increasing customers' impulse buying behavior.

Second, the study contributes to optimizing the effectiveness of experiential marketing activities at the point of sale. Businesses may consider allocating greater resources to in-store events, as these activities can stimulate potential sales rather than merely serving as supportive communication tools for brand image.

Third, the study offers practical evidence for determining the direction of music's impact in hypermarket environments, enabling businesses to evaluate whether music truly acts as a positive stimulus. Clarifying this issue can help reduce the risk of ineffective investment or unintended negative effects caused by inappropriate music design in retail spaces.

Finally, the study assists businesses in personalizing sales strategies according to shopping companion groups. By examining the role of shopping companions, the research is expected to provide retailers with a basis for adjusting messages, timing, and the implementation of in-store activities, thereby amplifying positive emotions and the urge to buy that lead to customers' impulse buying behavior.

1.6. Structure of research content

In addition to the Introduction and Conclusion, the content of the thesis includes 05 chapters. Chapter 1. Research introduction. Chapter 2. Theoretical bacground and research model. Chapter 3. Research design. Chapter 4. Research results and discussion. Chapter 5. Conclusion and managerial implications

CHAPTER 2. THEORETICAL BACGROUND AND RESEARCH MODEL

2.1. Literature review

To review studies related to impulse buying behavior in the context of traditional (offline) retail, the author conducted a systematic literature review using two databases: Web of Science (WOS) and Scopus, with keywords such as impulse buying, impulsive buying, impulse purchase, impulse purchasing, and impulse shopping. The initial search results yielded 967 articles from Scopus and 714 articles from WOS. After removing duplicate studies and excluding studies conducted in the contexts of online shopping, e-commerce, and COVID-19, as well as screening based on journal quality, a total of 78 articles were selected for in-depth analysis. Additionally, eight relevant domestic studies on the effects of point-of-purchase factors on impulse buying behavior in physical stores were also analyzed

The review results indicate that external antecedents influencing impulse buying behavior at traditional retail points of sale can be categorized into three main groups:

(1) *Store environment*: This includes factors such as lighting, employees, music, color, and product displays, which are important aspects frequently examined in impulse buying research. Many studies have

confirmed the stimulating role of environmental factors in influencing impulse buying behavior (Badgaiyan & Verma, 2015; Cao et al., 2024). These factors may directly increase impulse buying behavior (Trivedi et al., 2022) or indirectly influence it through positive emotions and/or the urge to buy (Cao et al., 2024; Kholis et al., 2023).

(2) *Marketing mix*: Such as sales promotion, advertising, and pricing. These factors are commonly used in point-of-sale marketing campaigns to influence customers' emotions and urge to buy, thereby increasing impulse buying behavior (Bandyopadhyay et al., 2021; Parmar et al., 2020; Singh et al., 2024).

(3) *Interaction and social influence*: In the context of impulse buying research, several studies have begun to clarify the role of interactional and social factors in shaping impulse buying behavior (Chen et al., 2021; Luo, 2004; Thuermer et al., 2020).

2.2. Research Gaps

The literature review indicates that although impulse buying behavior in traditional retail channels has been widely studied, significant research gaps remain when the topic is examined through the Stimulus–Organism–Response (SOR) framework and Social Facilitation Theory. The specific research gaps addressed in this dissertation are as follows: *First*, although respect from employees has been discussed in studies on service interaction and customer satisfaction, research on impulse buying behavior has not yet clearly examined the role of this factor. *Second*, in studies of impulse buying behavior, in-store events have mainly been treated as a contextual element rather than being analyzed as a direct antecedent in research models. *Third*, the role of music and the two characteristics of employee helpfulness and friendliness at the point of sale in relation to impulse buying behavior remains unclear, as previous studies have reported

inconsistent findings. *Fourth*, although previous research has considered the influence of shopping companions on impulse buying behavior, empirical evidence regarding the moderating role of this factor in the relationship between psychological antecedents (such as positive emotions and urge to buy) and impulse buying behavior remains limited.

Based on these research gaps, this dissertation aims to address them by developing and testing a research model grounded in the SOR framework combined with Social Facilitation Theory, thereby clarifying the influence of in-store factors on customers' impulse buying behavior.

2.3. Research Concepts

To clarify the theoretical foundation of the study, this dissertation presents the core concepts related to the proposed research model, including the following:

Impulse buying behavior is a common and important consumer behavior that plays a significant role in business strategies of many firms. Since the 1950s, this behavior has been studied as a form of unplanned yet appealing consumption (Ahn & Kwon, 2022). Impulse buying behavior is defined as a purchase that occurs suddenly and is driven by a strong urge, significantly influenced by emotions, in which the decision-making process takes place rapidly and without careful deliberation or intentional comparison among alternative options (Badgaiyan et al., 2015).

Emotions are defined as a combined psychological and physiological state that arises from the interaction between cognition (thoughts and evaluations) and behavior (responses and actions) (Kao et al., 2015). Among them, positive emotions refer to mental states that are beneficial to individuals' psychological well-being. These emotional states include feelings such as joy, happiness, and excitement (Bandyopadhyay et al., 2021). Positive emotions often result from experiences or events that

individuals perceive as satisfying and can generate feelings of pleasure and happiness in everyday life.

Employees at the point of sale are individuals who work directly at retail outlets to assist or advise customers during the shopping process (Wynn, 2015). Liu et al. (2016) identify three important attributes of employees in their interactions with customers: (1) *Employee friendliness*, which reflects a warm attitude and approachability, including cheerfulness and the ability to make customers feel welcomed (Liu et al., 2016); (2) *Employee helpfulness*, referring to the extent to which employees provide assistance and demonstrate their willingness to serve customers (Boninsegni et al., 2020); and (3) *Respect*, defined as the process through which employees express, through words and behaviors, that customers are valued and worthy of appreciation, thereby helping customers feel respected and enhancing their sense of self-worth in their interactions with employees (Liu et al., 2016).

In-store events are defined as structured environments controlled by retailers in which temporary and easily recognizable activities are organized at the point of sale to create memorable experiences for participating customers (Leischnig et al., 2011). These events are often considered a form of experiential marketing strategy – sometimes incorporating educational elements – used by retailers to attract customer attention and increase customer engagement (Sit & Birch, 2014).

Urge to buy refers to a strong desire experienced by customers when they encounter a stimulus in the shopping environment, such as a specific product, design, or brand (Badgaiyan & Verma, 2015). It is a state of desire triggered when individuals interact with an object in a shopping environment. This feeling clearly precedes the actual purchasing action and is typically spontaneous and sudden. The urge arises naturally, abruptly, and distinctly before impulse buying behavior occurs (Mohan et al., 2013).

Shopping companions refer to individuals who accompany customers during their shopping journey, typically friends or family members (Hart & Dale, 2014). In this study, shopping companions are categorized into two groups: family members and friends. Family members are defined as individuals connected through marriage, blood relations, or adoption, among whom there exist emotional bonds as well as mutual rights and obligations (Law on Marriage and Family, 2014).

Hypermarkets represent a modern retail format that combines the product assortments of department stores and grocery supermarkets within a diverse product range (Hassan et al., 2013). A distinctive feature of this format is the operational philosophy of “all under one roof,” based on a self-service mechanism, the application of discounted pricing, and the provision of free parking for customers. In terms of scale, hypermarkets typically have a large retail space, ranging from approximately 2,500 m² to more than 8,000 m² (Liao et al., 2008).

2.4. Research hypotheses and research model

Based on the Stimulus – Organism – Response (SOR) framework, Social Facilitation Theory, and prior empirical studies, and in order to address the identified research gaps, this dissertation proposes the following research hypotheses:

H1, H2, H3: Employee friendliness, employee helpfulness, employee respect have positive effects on customers’ positive emotions.

H4: In-store music has a positive effect on customers’ positive emotions.

H5, H6: Sales promotions have positive effects on customers’ positive emotions and urge to buy.

H7, H8: In-store events have positive effects on customers’ positive emotions and urge to buy.

H9, H10: Positive emotions have positive effects on customers' urge to buy and impulse buying behavior.

H11: Urge to buy has a positive effect on impulse buying behavior.

H12: There is a difference in impulse buying behavior depending on the type of shopping companion. Specifically, impulse buying behavior is higher when customers shop with friends than when they shop with family members.

H13: The type of shopping companion moderates the relationship between positive emotions and impulse buying behavior. Specifically, the effect of positive emotions on impulse buying behavior is stronger among customers accompanied by friends than among those accompanied by family members.

H14: The type of shopping companion moderates the relationship between urge to buy and impulse buying behavior. Specifically, the effect of purchase urge on impulse buying behavior is stronger among customers accompanied by friends than among those accompanied by family members

H15.1a, b, c: Positive emotions mediate the relationships between employee friendliness, helpfulness, and respect and customers' impulse buying behavior.

H15.2, 15.3, 15.4: Positive emotions mediate the relationships between in-store music, sales promotion, in-store events, and customers' impulse buying behavior.

H16a, b: Urge to buy mediates the relationships between sales promotion and in-store events and customers' impulse buying behavior.

Based on the theoretical review and the research hypotheses presented above, the proposed research model is illustrated as follows:

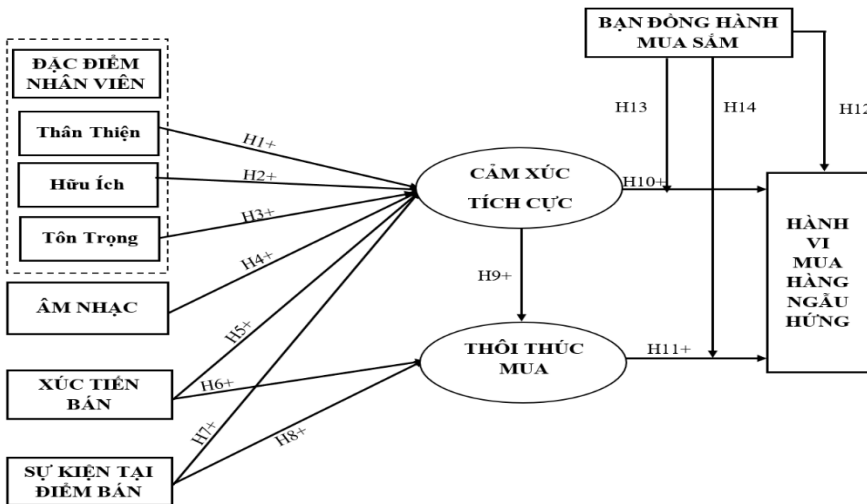


Figure 2.1. Proposed research model

CHAPTER 3. RESEARCH DESIGN

3.1. Research Process

This study primarily adopts a quantitative research approach, with the research process consisting of two main stages: preliminary research and main research.

Preliminary research was conducted in two phases:

The first phase involved a literature review to identify the research problem, research objectives, research questions, and the proposed research model.

The second phase focused on developing measurement scales for the constructs in the research model. The scales were adapted from previous studies. After being translated into Vietnamese, the scales were refined through qualitative research and a pilot quantitative survey with a sample

size of 103 to assess reliability and validity before being used in the main study.

Main research was carried out in two phases:

Phase 1 – Survey data collection: The main survey was conducted with a sample size of 750 respondents using a non-probability sampling method with convenience sampling technique. After removing invalid responses, 532 valid questionnaires remained. The collected data were then checked for completeness and validity and subsequently coded for analysis.

Phase 2 – Data processing and analysis: First, the data were analyzed using descriptive statistics to provide an overview of the sample data. Next, the measurement model and structural model were evaluated using SmartPLS 4 with the PLS-SEM technique, followed by a discussion of the research results and the development of managerial implications.

3.2. Sample determination

Sample size determination: The sample size of the study was determined based on recommendations from previous research. According to Hair et al. (2017), for a model with a maximum of seven arrows pointing to a single construct, the minimum sample size required to conduct PLS-SEM is 137 observations. In addition, the results calculated using the a priori sample size calculator developed by Soper (2024) indicate that the minimum required sample size is 264. Therefore, the study distributed 750 questionnaires and obtained 532 valid responses, which satisfies the requirements for data analysis

Sampling method: The study employed a non-probability sampling method using the convenience sampling technique due to the difficulty in identifying the population of consumers at hypermarket points of sale who engage in impulse buying behavior. Participants were approached immediately after completing their shopping. The questionnaire consisted of

four sections and included screening questions to exclude ineligible respondents, such as individuals under 18 years old, those who did not engage in impulse buying behavior, or those who did not have a shopping companion.

Data collection procedure: Data were collected directly at hypermarkets located in Ho Chi Minh City with the assistance of eight trained research assistants who were instructed on the survey procedure. These assistants approached consumers after they had completed their shopping and conducted screening questions to determine participant eligibility. The questionnaire was printed in paper format to create a sense of security for respondents, increase their willingness to cooperate, and minimize potential risks related to technology or internet connectivity.

Data analysis method: The study employed SmartPLS 4 and the PLS-SEM method to test the proposed research model. This method is appropriate for models with multiple latent variables and complex relationships, and it allows researchers to explore and examine the relationships among variables (Hair et al., 2022; Hair et al., 2019). The analysis procedure included the evaluation of the measurement model, the structural model, and the moderating effects. Before conducting these analyses, the study also controlled for common method bias using the Full Collinearity VIF test proposed by Kock and Lynn (2012) and further developed by Kock (2015).

3.3. Measurement scales

The measurement scales used in this study were adapted from previously published studies in reputable English-language academic journals. The scale development process involved translation and back-translation to ensure semantic equivalence with the original scales. The translated scales were then refined through in-depth interviews with five

experts and focus group discussions with nine customers to ensure linguistic clarity and contextual appropriateness.

The study employed ten variables, in which the shopping companion variable was measured using a nominal scale. The remaining quantitative variables were adopted from previous studies, including employee friendliness and respect (Liu et al., 2016), employee helpfulness (Boninsegni et al., 2020), in-store music (Mohan et al., 2013), sales promotions (Lo & Qu, 2015), in-store events (Bauer & Johnson, 2024; Leischnig et al., 2011), positive emotions and urge to buy (Bandyopadhyay et al., 2021), and impulse buying behavior (Badgaiyan & Verma, 2015). All quantitative variables were measured using a five-point Likert scale.

3.4. Qualitative research results

The study conducted in-depth interviews with five experts to evaluate the appropriateness of the measurement scales in terms of construct content, clarity of wording, and semantic equivalence between the Vietnamese translation and the original scales. The results indicated that the experts generally considered the system of measurement scales to be appropriate and comprehensive; however, several adjustments were suggested to enhance clarity and better reflect the survey context at hypermarkets in Ho Chi Minh City. Specifically, some statements were revised in terms of wording in the scales measuring positive emotions, urge to buy, and employee characteristics. In addition, two items in the employee respect scale were removed because they were not suitable for the retail context. Regarding the in-store event variable, the experts agreed to measure it as a second-order construct consisting of three components: creativity, alignment with communication objectives, and compatibility with brand image.

The study also conducted a focus group discussion with nine customers to evaluate the clarity and suitability of the questionnaire for the target respondents. The results indicated that the survey items were generally easy to understand and appropriate. Nevertheless, several adjustments were made to improve clarity and better reflect the supermarket context. Specifically, statements related to employees were supplemented with the phrase “at this supermarket” to clearly specify the evaluation target. Some wording was also revised to better reflect the situations in which employees provide assistance in the retail environment. In addition, the terms “store” or “point of sale” were consistently replaced with “supermarket”, and several items related to in-store events and impulse buying behavior were reworded to clarify the context of this shopping occasion at the supermarket.

CHAPTER 4. RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Sample characteristics

The results show that female respondents accounted for 60% and male respondents for 40%, with the higher proportion of females considered consistent with the research context of impulse buying behavior in retail environments (Cai et al., 2021). Regarding age, the 18 – 29 age group accounted for the largest proportion (40%), followed by the 30 – 44 age group (38.3%), indicating that most participants belonged to the young and middle-aged working population. In terms of education, 48% of respondents had completed vocational training, college, or university education. With respect to occupation, office employees accounted for the highest proportion (29%), followed by managers (21.3%), students (20.6%), self-employed individuals (18%), and homemakers (11.1%). Regarding income, the 10 to under 20 million VND income group represented the largest proportion

(40.2%), reflecting a moderately middle-income level among consumers in the research sample.

4.2. Assessment of the measurement model

The research model includes reflective latent variables and one second-order construct with a reflective – formative (R–F) structure. The evaluation results for the reflective constructs show that most indicators achieved the required outer loading values. After removing the observed variable EF3 to improve the average variance extracted (AVE), all measurement scales demonstrated reliability and convergent validity, with composite reliability (CR) greater than 0.7 and AVE greater than 0.5. The HTMT values were mostly below 0.85 and all below 0.90, indicating that the measurement scales satisfied discriminant validity (Hair et al., 2022).

For the second-order construct of in-store events, the study applied the two-stage approach. The first-order dimensions (event creativity, alignment with communication objectives, and compatibility with brand image) all achieved reliability and convergent validity, with outer loadings ranging from 0.669 to 0.899, CR values from 0.755 to 0.798, and AVE values from 0.622 to 0.712. In addition, discriminant validity was confirmed with HTMT values below 0.85.

At the second-order formative level, the redundancy analysis results showed a path coefficient of 0.955 ($R^2 = 0.913$), confirming convergent validity. All VIF values were below 3, indicating the absence of multicollinearity. The bootstrapping results also revealed that all outer weights were statistically significant ($p < 0.001$) and that all outer loadings exceeded 0.5. Overall, the measurement model demonstrates satisfactory reliability and validity, allowing the study to proceed with the evaluation of the structural model.

4.3. Assessment of the structural model

The evaluation of the structural model includes examining multicollinearity, testing the research hypotheses, assessing the explanatory power of the model, and evaluating its predictive capability. The results indicate that all inner VIF values range from 1.288 to 2.85, which are below the threshold of 3 recommended by Joseph F. Hair Jr. et al. (2022), suggesting that there is no significant multicollinearity among the constructs in the model.

The hypothesis testing results show that most hypotheses are supported, except for those related to employee friendliness and employee helpfulness, which are rejected (H1 and H2). In addition, the type of shopping companion has a direct effect on impulse buying behavior (H12); however, the observed direction of the effect is contrary to the initial expectation, as consumers shopping with family exhibit a higher level of impulse buying compared to those shopping with friends.

The mediation analysis results indicate that positive emotions play a mediating role in the relationship between several in-store stimuli – such as sales promotions, music, in-store events, and employee respect – and impulse buying behavior. However, the mediating role of positive emotions is not supported for employee friendliness and employee helpfulness (H15.1a and H15.1b). In addition, urge to buy also demonstrates a statistically significant mediating role in the relationships between sales promotions, in-store events, positive emotions, and impulse buying behavior.

Regarding the role of the shopping companion, the analysis results indicate that the shopping companion moderates the relationship between positive emotions and impulsive buying behavior, with the effect being stronger when consumers shop with their family members. However, the

shopping companion does not moderate the relationship between the urge to buy and impulsive buying behavior.

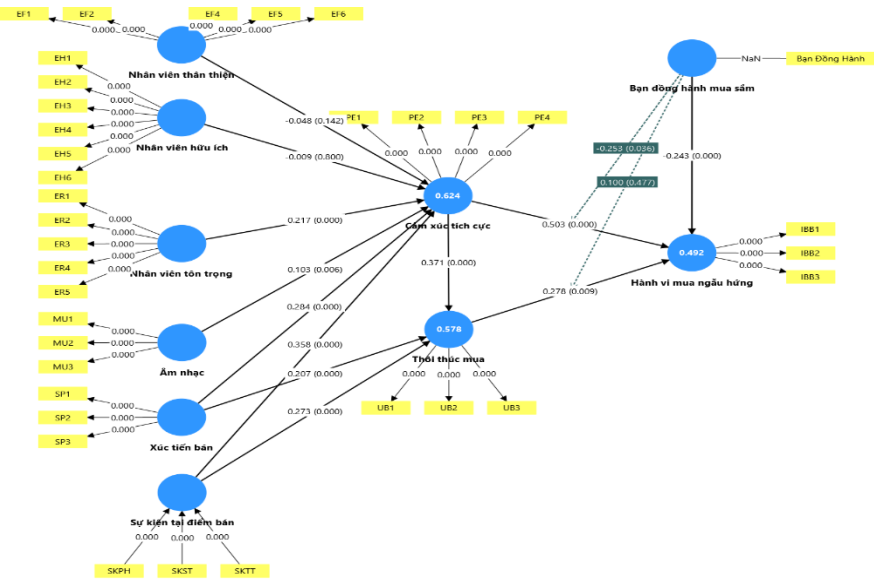


Figure 4.1. Results of the mediation effect analysis

CHAPTER 5. CONCLUSION AND MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

5.1. Conclusion

This study was conducted to explore the in-store factors influencing customers' impulse buying behavior in the context of hypermarkets in Ho Chi Minh City. Based on the Stimulus – Organism – Response Model and the Social Facilitation Theory, the research examines the effects of in-store stimuli – including music, sales promotions, in-store events, and employee characteristics (friendliness, helpfulness, and respect) – on positive emotions and urge to buy, which subsequently lead to impulse buying behavior. In

addition, the study investigates the direct impact of shopping companions on impulse buying behavior as well as the moderating role of shopping companions in the relationships between positive emotions, urge to buy, and impulse buying behavior, thereby clarifying the role of social influence in the process of impulse purchasing.

The results of data analysis using the PLS-SEM method indicate that the research model demonstrates satisfactory explanatory and predictive power for impulse buying behavior in the hypermarket environment. Among the 22 proposed hypotheses, 15 were fully supported, 2 were statistically significant but in the opposite direction to that expected, and 5 were rejected. Therefore, in essence, the theoretical model still shows a good level of compatibility with the empirical data in the Vietnamese market context.

The findings indicate that most in-store factors positively influence positive emotions and urge to buy, thereby promoting impulse buying behavior. Among these factors, in-store events are identified as the strongest stimulus affecting positive emotions. These results highlight the importance of in-store stimuli in traditional (offline) retail environments. However, the study does not find statistically significant relationships between employee friendliness and employee helpfulness and impulse buying behavior through customers' positive emotions. In addition, the results show that positive emotions and urge to buy play key mediating roles in the relationship between in-store stimuli and impulse buying behavior. This suggests that impulse buying behavior is largely driven by the emotional states experienced by customers during the shopping process, thereby clarifying the psychological mechanism underlying impulse buying behavior in retail environments.

Notably, the study identifies the moderating role of shopping companions in the relationship between positive emotions and impulse buying behavior. When customers shop with family members, this

relationship becomes stronger than when they shop with friends. This finding highlights the role of social influence in impulse buying behavior, suggesting that the presence of family members may amplify emotional experiences and increase the likelihood of impulse purchases. The result also reflects the cultural characteristics of Vietnamese consumers, who tend to place strong value on family bonding in consumption activities.

Overall, the findings not only reinforce the theoretical foundation of impulse buying behavior but also provide valuable empirical evidence for retailers and businesses, helping them better understand the mechanisms through which in-store factors influence customer behavior. The study contributes to expanding the understanding of the stimulus – organism – response mechanism in the hypermarket retail context, while also providing a basis for designing more effective shopping environments.

5.2. Research Contributions

This study provides several important contributions to the field of consumer behavior, particularly in the context of hypermarket retailing. First, the study extends the Stimulus – Organism – Response Model by incorporating and empirically validating the role of new in-store stimuli, notably in-store events and employee respect. The findings show that these factors can influence impulse buying behavior through positive emotions and urge to buy. Second, the research integrates Social Facilitation Theory into the SOR framework, thereby clarifying the moderating role of shopping companions in the relationship between positive emotions and impulse buying behavior. The results indicate that the effect of positive emotions on impulse buying behavior is stronger when customers shop with family members compared to when they shop with friends, highlighting the importance of social context in consumer behavior. In addition, the study provides further empirical evidence on the role of music in evoking positive

emotions and indirectly stimulating impulse buying behavior, thereby helping to clarify previously inconsistent findings in the literature.

5.3. Managerial implications

The research findings indicate that customers' impulse buying behavior in hypermarkets is significantly influenced by point-of-sale stimuli through two mediating psychological mechanisms: positive emotions and the urge to buy, while also being moderated by shopping companions. Accordingly, several managerial implications can be drawn: First, retailers should pay close attention to the effective design and implementation of in-store stimuli, particularly in-store events, sales promotional programs, background music, and employees' respectful behavior, in order to create a positive shopping experience and stimulate customers' impulse buying behavior. In addition, firms should consider managing customers' positive emotions as an important objective in designing the shopping experience. This can be achieved by harmoniously integrating point-of-sale marketing activities, the shopping environment, and the quality of interactions between customers and employees. Moreover, activating and amplifying the urge to buy through cues such as limited-time offers, special purchasing opportunities, or experiential activities at the point of sale can encourage customers to make quick purchasing decisions. Finally, retailers should pay attention to the social context of shopping, particularly the role of shopping companions. When customers shop with their families, the impact of positive emotions on impulse buying becomes stronger. Therefore, hypermarkets should design spaces, programs, and activities suitable for family shoppers as well as groups of friends in order to enhance the effectiveness of purchase stimulation.

5.4. Limitations and Future Research Directions

This study still has several limitations. First, the data were collected from hypermarkets in Ho Chi Minh City; therefore, the findings primarily reflect the characteristics of consumers in this area and may not be fully generalizable to the entire Vietnamese market. Second, the study focuses only on the retail context of hypermarkets, whereas impulse buying behavior may differ across other offline retail formats such as shopping malls, convenience stores, or specialty stores. Third, the research model only considers several in-store factors, including in-store events, sales promotion, background music, and employees' attitudes, while other environmental factors such as crowding level, lighting, product displays, or in-store advertising may also influence impulse buying behavior. Finally, the study does not examine the moderating role of individual factors such as impulse buying tendency or the use of mobile phones during the shopping process.

These limitations suggest that future research could expand the scope of investigation to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the effects of point-of-sale factors on customers' impulse buying behavior across offline retail channels in Vietnam.

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