

Investigating the effect of hedonic value and utilitarian value on impulse buying

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Abstract

The present study aimed to investigate the moderating role of gender in the effect of hedonic value and utilitarian value on impulse purchase among customers of the Persian Gulf Cultural Tourism Commercial Complex. This study is applicable in terms of purpose, and descriptive-survey in terms of method. The statistical population of this study is the customers of the Persian Gulf Cultural Tourism Commercial Complex, whose number was unknown. Accordingly, based on the Cochran formula, the sample size was 384 people, selected and determined by the accessible method. A questionnaire adapted from the research of Paramitha et al., (2022) with 36 items was used to collect data. Also, in order to analyze the data in this study, the structural equation modeling technique and other statistical tests using SPSS and Smart PLS software were utilized. The results of the study showed that hedonic value did not have a significant effect on the impulse purchase of customers of the Persian Gulf Cultural Tourism Commercial Complex. But utilitarian value had a significant effect on the impulse purchase of these customers. Also, gender has a moderating role in the effect of hedonic value and utilitarian value on the impulse purchase of customers of the Persian Gulf Cultural Tourism Commercial Complex.

Keywords:

hedonic value,
shopping
experience,
utilitarian value,
impulse purchase

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Introduction

In recent years, attention to the consumer shopping experience as one of the key factors in analyzing customer behavior has increased. Shopping experience is a multidimensional concept formed from the interaction between the cognitive and emotional aspects of decision-making and can ultimately lead to behaviors such as impulse purchase. Accordingly, consumer perceptual values, which include two main dimensions, namely hedonic (emotional) and utilitarian (functional) values, play an important role in shaping purchase decisions. Hedonic values, which are more emotional, are associated with elements such as fun, excitement, and satisfaction, while utilitarian values are evaluated based on logic, efficiency, performance, and usefulness of the product (Kim & Eastin, 2011). Various studies have shown that these values can stimulate impulse buying behavior, especially when the customer is faced with a product without prior planning (Paramitha et al., 2022).

On the other hand, one of the less studied aspects in the research literature is the role of gender as a moderating variable in the relationship between purchase values and impulse buying behavior. Contradictory results in previous studies have increased the importance of studying this topic. For example, some studies have stated that men are more inclined to buy based on utilitarian values, while women pay more attention to hedonic values. However, some findings also indicate that there is no significant gender difference in impulse buying behavior and that the differences are more related to the type of product chosen. On the other hand, consumers who buy impulsively may make purchases due to both momentary excitement (hedonistic value) and recognition of the benefits of the product (utilitarian value). This is important because impulse buying behavior is based on both momentary emotions and can be rooted in the customer's rational evaluation (Yi & Jai, 2020). Overall, research evidence suggests that impulse buying behavior is not only influenced by perceptual values (hedonistic and utilitarian), but also that gender can play a moderating role in this relationship. Given the conflicting results of previous studies and the lack of comprehensive studies in this field, it seems necessary to conduct research that examines the interaction of these factors, especially in specific contexts such as commercial-cultural markets such as the Persian Gulf Complex.

Therefore, this study seeks to answer the question: what is the effect of hedonic and utilitarian values on impulse buying and what role does the moderating variable of gender play in this relationship?

Theoretical Basis

Utilitarian Value

Utilitarian value refers to the consumer's evaluation of the functional characteristics of a product. This value includes instrumental, functional, and cognitive benefits that cover basic individual needs such as the need for security. Utilitarian value is usually associated with tangible features of products and focuses on meeting functional and economic needs (Widagdo & Roz, 2021).

Hedonistic Value

Hedonistic value emphasizes fun, recreational, and emotional experiences during shopping. This value includes the emotional and psychological aspects of shopping, and customers who buy based on this value seek to enjoy without prior planning. In fact, hedonistic value refers to the amount of pleasure, happiness, and joy that the consumer expects from the purchase (Widagdo & Roz, 2021).

Impulse Purchase

Impulse purchase is an unplanned behavior in which emotion prevails over rationality (Paramitha et al., 2022). This behavior occurs when the consumer experiences a strong and sudden desire to buy a product immediately. Impulse buying is usually accompanied by disregard for the consequences of the purchase.

Research Background

Daneshvar Hamidi et al., (2024) in a study on customers of the Shahrvand chain stores in Tehran showed that experienced pleasure, arousal, social and physical factors affect impulse buying. Cunha et al., (2024) in their study found that the values of pleasure, emotion and religiosity have a positive relationship, and the values of health and knowledge have a negative relationship with impulse buying. Hajalian et al., (2023) in a meta-analysis study identified 13 factors affecting online, compulsive and impulse purchases.

Research Methodology

The present study is applicable in terms of purpose, and descriptive-survey in terms of method. The statistical population of this study is the customers of the Persian Gulf Cultural and Tourism Commercial Complex, whose number was unknown. Accordingly, the sample size, based on the Cochran formula, was 384 people selected and determined by the available method. A questionnaire was used to collect data. Also, in order to analyze the data in this study, the structural equation modeling technique and other statistical tests were used. To confirm the validity, face validity was used; and to confirm the reliability, the Cronbach's alpha coefficient criterion was used.

Findings

In this study, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was used to examine the normality of the data, which showed that the distribution of data related to the research variables was not normal. Also, in order to examine the research hypotheses using the structural model, it was determined:

- Gender as a moderating variable plays a significant role in the relationship between hedonic value and impulse buying.
- Gender also showed a significant moderating effect in the relationship between utilitarian value and impulse buying.
- Hedonic value did not have a significant effect on impulse buying.
- Utilitarian value has a significant effect on impulse buying.

Discussion and Conclusion

This study examined the moderating role of gender in the relationship between hedonic and utilitarian values with impulse buying in the Persian Gulf complex. The findings of this study were consistent with the research of Khademi et al., (2023), Hasanpour et al., (2021), (Paramitha et al., (2022), Birjandi et al., (2019), Laili (2023), Astuti et al., (2022), and Rajan (2020). In the following, and based on the findings of the study, the following suggestions are presented:

- Market segmentation based on gender and designing differentiated strategies.
- Using targeted advertising to enhance perceived values.
- Applying smart pricing methods.
- Improving the shopping experience through functional product display.