

# Impulsive Buying Behaviour of Omani Women in Apparel Industry

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## Abstract

Human behaviour is always based on impulses towards buying and purchase decisions, it is much observed, extensively researched but still not fully explained. Impulse buying has been the subject of researchers for more than six decades and the research conducted in many parts of the world has followed the evidence results derived from U.S culture. Tuyet Mai *et al.* (2003), however mentioned that impulsive buying behaviour is a universal phenomenon, which is thought to be influenced by local market conditions, as well as social and cultural forces. Many factors contributed towards impulsive buying behaviours of the purchasers. The objective of this research is to identify, measure and evaluate the relationship and impact of internal and external factors on impulsive buying behaviour of Omani women in the apparel industry. The research is exploratory in nature and a verified research instrument was adapted for factors and items. According to the findings two internal factors self-esteem and social desirability and two external factors, price and TV/Media significantly influences the impulsive buying behaviour of the Omani women in the apparel industry.

**Keywords:** Buying Behaviour, Internal & External Factors, Impulsivity, Self Esteem, and Product Promotion.

**DOI:** 10.7176/EJBM/15-2-03

**Publication date:** January 31<sup>st</sup> 2023

## 1. Introduction

As a human 's basic instinct, it always strives for more and more. In prehistoric times, humans satisfied this urge through power, wars, trade, and social relationships. In the modern era of civilization mankind started living in communities and more patterns of economic and social behaviours were observed for fulfilment of human desires. Now power is symbolised through money and materialism.

People are always attracted towards novel things which can inculcate materialistic values as well as physical needs. To satisfy physical desires various factors contribute to such behaviour affected by various internal and external factors. Females purchasing behaviour has always been different to men's purchasing behaviour. They would usually purchase things that will be affecting them directly, while men purchasing has been observed to be affecting him and others living within his surroundings. The debate, who controls the society, man or woman, is something that is very hard to determine. One of the variables that can help in determining who controls is the purchase decision. Impulse buying has been the subject of researchers for more than six decades and the research conducted in many parts of the world has followed the evidence results derived from U.S culture. Tuyet Mai *et al.* (2003), however mentioned that impulsive buying behaviour is a universal phenomenon, which is thought to be influenced by local market conditions, as well as social and cultural forces.

Rodrigues *et al.* (2021) mentioned in their research the importance of impulse buying in consumer behaviour as it represents between 40 – 80% of all purchases and has been studied since the 1940's. Impulsive behaviour means acting on instinct, and the purpose of this study is to conclude the behavioural impulsivity of women in particular, specifically in the apparel section. Dittmar *et al.* (1995) indicated that women and men distinctly relate to their material possessions. They found that women prefer to buy goods that have more to do with their appearance and emotional aspects of self. According to Joan & Durairaj (1991), females often involve themselves in a more thorough analysis of message content and display a greater sensitivity to the details of information when making judgments. As given on statista (n.d.), the number of users is expected to amount to 2.1m users by 2025 in the apparel segment in Oman.

Today's women are more aware about branding and retailing. With the increasing power of women financially and socially, they are more demanding than ever. Amir *et al.* (2014) mentioned in their study that women tend to have more of a habit to buy impulsively as they are more exposed to stimuli than men are. Pallikkara *et. al* (2020) found in their study that female shoppers make impulse purchases when they visit an apparel store. In this regard, it will be examined how the purchase behaviour of women is affected by impulse stimuli especially in the apparel sector in Oman. There is a dearth of literature in this regard or can say none in the context of Oman. Many other countries have conducted research on this topic, moreover, no substantial research has been found in Oman, especially concerning the impulsive buying behaviour of women in the apparel sector.

Han *et al.* (1991) found in their study that fashion-oriented impulse is stimulated by new fashion styles and brands that leads consumers to impulsive buying. Studying this phenomenon of women impulse buying will

contribute to the understanding of consumer behaviour. Park et al. (2006) mentioned that apparels have symbolic meanings and are purchased impulsively. Further, Tauber (1972) said that the apparel displays in the showroom may lead to impulse buying. Banerjee and Saha (2012) mentioned that the attitude and perception of customers towards impulse buying are largely shaped by the factors of visual merchandising and sensory cues of “sight”. Kwon & Shim (1999) found that women use clothing to enhance their mood and social self-esteem. It is in this context that it will be interesting to know the factors that lead to impulse buying of women in Oman specifically focusing on the apparel industry. Not only will it be a contribution to the knowledge base, but will also help marketers understand the factors that affect the behaviour of female consumers and modulate them accordingly.

## 2. Literature Review

Buying behaviour of consumers that is not planned or all of a sudden or a spontaneous one is what is described as Impulse Buying. Rook (1987), describes ‘impulsive purchasing happens or takes place when a consumer experiences an abrupt, mostly strong and persistent urge to buy immediately. The impulse to purchase is hedonically complex and may stimulate emotional conflict. Also, impulsive purchasing is likely to happen with lack of regard for its consequences’. Many authors have elaborated impulse buying as an immediate, spontaneous, unintentional or without any assessment of the product, unreflective buying due to physical proximity and emotional intimacy to the desired product, resulting in personal gratification (Kim 2003, Sneath et al. 2009, Karbasivar & Yarahmadi 2011, Li 2015, Burton et al. 2018, Meena 2018). This tendency to buy impulsively can be explained by the immediate fulfilment it provides to the buyer (Pradhan et al., 2018).

Another important thing to note is that the impulse purchases also arise from sensory experiences like store atmosphere, product layout, etc. (Pradhan 2016, Pradhan et al. 2018). Aragoncillo and Orús (2018) reveal that 40.0% of consumers spend more money than planned, in physical stores compared to 25.0% in online purchases. Research by Kim (2003) found that impulse buyers frequently do not set out with a particular reason for visiting a particular store or purchasing a particular item. The behaviour occurs after experiencing an urge to buy, and these behaviours are influenced by internal and external factors. Therefore, both internal and/or external factors play an imperative role in the impulse buying since the buyer is not looking for a certain product nor have a pre plan to any purchases.

### 2.1- Internal Factors

Internal Factors are the individual’s personality dimensions and characteristics which influence them to participate in the behaviour of impulse buying. Components like these involve a consumer’s traits, which decide the degree of their impulse buying affinity. Internal cues such as emotion states the consumer’s normative assessment of impulse buying engagement and demographic factors. An individual’s emotional state, mood and self-feeling may also affect the buying behaviour.

Halvadia et al. (2005) found in their study that the decision making elements regarding buying behaviour of working women can be distributed into several categories: habitual buying, awareness of fashion, perfectionist, quality consciousness, brand consciousness, confused by over choice, impulse buying, store loyalty, recreational, variety seeking and shopping enjoyment. Experiments conducted by Menon (2006) show impulsive people have higher reward sensitivity and drive that are part of their chronically accessible selves. The results that were obtained in this experiment indicate that there is a noteworthy link between impulsiveness and looking for pleasure, both at a general level and in particular domains.

Personality traits also have an important role in impulse buying. Impulsive buyers have low levels of self-esteem, high levels of anxiety, depression and negative mood and a strong tendency to develop obsessive compulsive disorders (Rodrigues et al., 2021). Self-esteem has been defined as a good opinion of one’s own character and abilities. In previous literature, a link between purchasing behaviour and self-esteem has been worked upon. According to Tuyet Mai et al. (2003), the product being purchased has no direct effect on the individual. It is the buying process that creates reward, resulting in an immediate increase of self-esteem and relief from anxiety that may have increased if the impulse to buy had not been met.

Housman (2000) found that the efforts to satisfy esteem-needs drive consumers to make impulse purchases that provide satisfaction for such needs. Research also shows that low self-esteem is generally linked with increased vulnerability to be affected by others. The need to maintain self-esteem has been connected with materialism, with purchase of esteem-enhancing product categories such as those that augment physical appearance and with the extent of fulfilment a group of people have with their material belongings. It is believed that one reason that impulse buying occurs is because it might be helping in relieving the negative psychological states which result from low self-esteem.

Another factor that can lead to impulsive buying is anxiety. As defined by the dictionary, it is uneasiness or distress of the mind which is caused by fear or danger of misfortune. When experiencing anxiety, a person tends to deviate from his normal self and the behavioural patterns tend to be different (Davenport et al. 2012). Another factor that has been studied in this context is social desirability (Kacen & Lee 2002, Faiza et al. 2014). It refers

to how desirable one is in the society. If a person is socially desirable, she will have to keep up with her surrounding social expectations. Kacen & Lee (2002) did mention in their study that social desirability can affect the behaviour- the more socially desirable person tends to purchase in a manner to keep up with the social image.

On the contrary, a study by Tirmizi et. al (2009) in Pakistan found an inverse relation between fashion involvement and behavioural and attitudinal aspects of buying impulsively. Social desirability and somatic anxiety were inversely related to compulsive buying. These discoveries show that excessive behaviours are not essentially related. The excessive behaviours observed seem to perform as outlets for anxiety via the behaviour reinforcing characteristics for example attention, pleasure, praise, etcetera. This may enhance self-esteem as a consequence. There are discoveries that show numerous risk factors that could be utilised as warning signals that a particular behaviour may become an addiction (Davenport et al., 2012). Overall we see there are mixed results across the studies and there is a need to see the impact of internal factors on impulsive buying behaviour. Based on this discussion, the following hypothesis was framed for this study.

Much research has been done to see the influence of demographic characteristics on impulsive buying behaviour. Ekeng et al. (2012) mentioned that the demographic characteristics do have a significant influence on impulse buying. They found that impulse buying is more common among female shoppers due to their attraction to fancy products. Similarly, they found that age is inversely related to impulsive buying behaviour as youngsters have no responsibility of raising families and therefore don't worry about their expenses or the way they spend their money compared to older people. Also, higher income makes people extravagant in spending and may influence them to buy products unplanned. As higher education gives a higher position and status in society, the educated class is likely to shop impulsively.

Vyas (2015) found that different demographic variables like gender, age group, professional involvement and educational status influence the response in packaging which is part of promotion and leads to impulse buying.

Thus, the objective of this study is to identify those key factors that influence consumers in making impulsive purchase decisions and examine the association between those influencing factors and impulsive buying behaviour with regard to women in the apparel sector.

***H01. Internal factors have significant influence on impulsive buying behaviour of women in terms of impulsivity, self-esteem, anxiety and social desirability in the apparel sector in Oman.***

## **2.2- External Factors**

External Factors refer to the marketing cues that the marketer places and controls to entice the customers into purchasing the products. Such cues are promotional incentive discounts, sales, and the marketing mix product, price, place and promotion. Lots of studies have been conducted in different parts of the world to see what external factors trigger the impulsive buying behaviour. These studies found that external factors like availability of cash, store environment, mood of consumer, price, store layout, visual merchandising, availability of time, product promotion, store environment and TV/Media do trigger the impulsive buying behaviour (Kim 2003, Vishnu & Raheem 2013, V. 2014, Vyas 2015, Pradhan 2016, Pallikkara et. al 2020).

Saraswat et al. (2012) found in India that promotional offers do lead to impulsive buying due to economic reasons. Thus, the role of advertising gimmicks does lead to impulsive buying. A study in Oman by Abdelgadir & Al Farsi (2020) found that the Omani women are more influenced by TV advertising compared to other social media. The mind is divided into two parts; the conscious and the subconscious. Media targets one's subconscious mind, which is not in one's control, and is responsible for putting an individual in a direction, without him/her being aware of it, for making any decision (Park & Lenon, 2006). Marketing and branding, done today specifically target the subconscious mind. TV ads, billboards, social media etc., all make an impact on your subconscious mind without you being aware of it. This research tries to find a connection between the impulsive buying behaviour of women, specifically in the apparel industry, and TV/Media.

Azim (2013) stressed upon the store environment leading to impulse buying. A good atmosphere in the retail store can increase the impulse buying behaviour of consumers. Another study by Cho et al. (2014) found in-store browsing and positive mood of consumers to be strong predictors of impulse buying behaviour. If they are in a good mood they will spend more time in the outlets thus increasing the impulsive buying behaviour. In addition to this, studies done by Thakor & Prajapati (2012), Verma & Verma (2012), Vishnu & Raheem (2013), Vishnu (2014), found that there is a difference between both the genders regarding the impulsive buying behaviour. Females were found to be more impulsive than their male counterparts and therefore a need to understand the impulsive buying behaviour of women in this study.

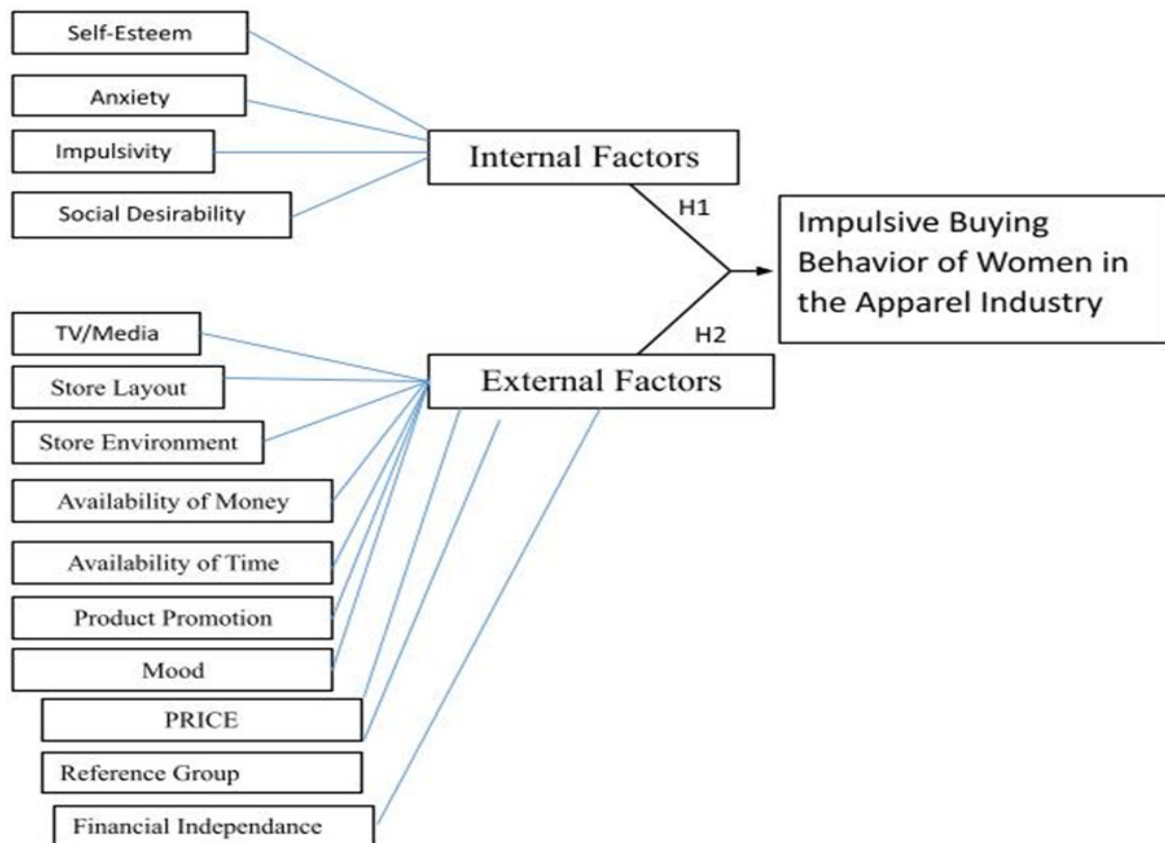
***H02. External factors have significant influence on impulse buying behaviour of women in terms of TV/Media, store layout, store environment, availability of money, availability of time, product promotion, mood, financial independence, price, and reference group in the apparel sector in Oman.***

### 3. Research Methodology

The objective of the study is to identify and investigate the different factors which affect the impulsive buying behaviour of Omani women in general and of the apparel industry in particular. The specific objective of this study is, to further examine the strength, direction and magnitude of identified factors on the impulsive buying behaviour of women in the Omani society. This descriptive study is quantitative and predictive in nature.

The primary data was collected through survey questionnaires, administered to Omani females aged between 18 and 50. This study on impulsive buying behaviour of Omani women which predicts the relationship and empirically measures the impact of the variables.

#### 3.1- Conceptual Framework



According to the conceptual framework of this study both internal and external factors are taken into account to measure the impact of these factors on the impulsive buying behaviour of Women in Oman. The factors were identified after detailed review of the literature (Gray & Mcnaughton 2000, Sharma et al. 2005, Tirmizi et al. 2009, Davenport et al. 2012, Pradhan 2016).

Non-random (convenience) sampling has been used to collect the data. The sample size for this study was 200. Tabachnick & Fidell (2001) proposed a formula for computing the sample size required for a multivariate analysis, where  $N \geq 50 + 8m$  where (m) is the number of predictor variables. In this study, the number of independent variables were fourteen, thus the sample size is 161.

Before administering the questionnaire, its face validity and content validity was determined. Face validity was determined by administering the questionnaires to female consumers and changes were done accordingly. For the content validity of the instrument, academicians and professionals were shown the questionnaire to thoroughly review and give suggestions according to which statements deemed unfit or erroneous were either modified or discarded.

Before the final administration of the questionnaire, a pilot study was conducted among the targeted audience and the stakeholders. For this, ten questionnaires were circulated among academicians, professionals and the consumers. Their inputs were then used to revise the questionnaire.

#### 3.2- Reliability Statistics

To investigate the reliability of the developed instrument, Smart PLS software was used to calculate Cronbach's Alpha for the variables of the study, Nunnally (1978) stated that Cronbach's Alpha coefficient has to be larger

than 0.7 so as to be reliable. We can see from Table no. 1, that 13 out of 15 variables have a Cronbach Alpha value of more than 0.7 and two variables are at 0.6, which is also acceptable according to the later study of Nunnally and Bernstein (1994) Alpha Cronbach values range from 0.6 - 0.8 are considered moderate but acceptable, therefore the research instrument is reliable.

Table No 1. *Reliability of the Instrument*

Constructs	Number of items	Cronbach's alpha
Impulsive Buying Behaviour	6	0.77
Self-Esteem	6	0.868
Anxiety	6	0.778
Impulsivity	8	0.774
Social Desirability	6	0.799
TV/Media	7	0.815
Financial Independence	2	0.6
Mood of Consumer	2	0.727
Price	2	0.7
Store Layout	3	0.8
Product Promotion	5	0.82
Store Environment	2	0.6
Reference Group	3	0.7
Availability of Money	2	0.7
Availability of Time	1	0.9

#### 4. Data Analysis

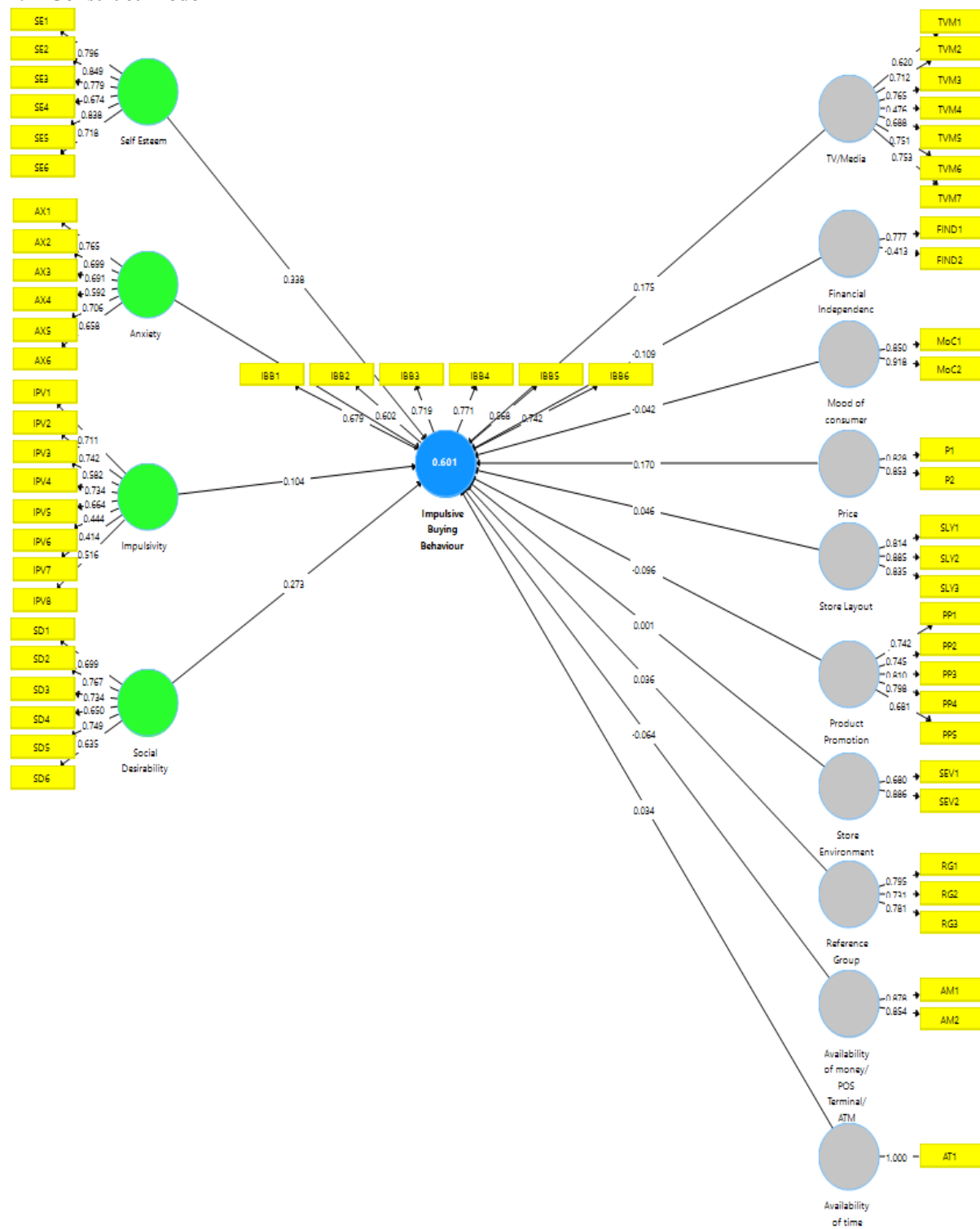
##### 4.1- Demographic Data

Table No 2.

Demographics	Years	% of respondents
Age	18-25 years	63.35%
	26-30 years	13.04%
	31-40 years	13.04%
	41-50 years	10.56%
Education	High School	8.07%
	Diploma/Undergraduate	65.84%
	Graduate	16.77%
	Post Graduate	9.32%
Profession	Business	7.45%
	Job Holder	31.06%
	Student	57.14%
	Homemaker	4.35%
Marital Status	Married	28.5%
	Unmarried	71.4%
Income/Pocket Money per month	Less than 100 OMR	37%
	100-500 OMR	21%
	500-1000 OMR	19%
	Above 1000 OMR	22%

According to the demographic data, 63.35% of the respondents fall under the age category of 18-25 years and 13% are from the 26-30 years of age category. It reflects that mostly research respondents belong to the young population of Omani females. For the education level, mostly respondents are at undergraduate level and most of them are students followed by job holders. Most of the females were unmarried and almost 60% of them have a reasonable financial position having 500 - 1000 OMR per month at their disposal.

### 4.2- Construct Model



We can see from the construct model the R-squared value of 0.601, Adjusted R-Squared 0.586 refers that variation of the dependent variable explained by the model is 60%. The path coefficient values in the structural model are positive, except financial independence (-0.109), product promotion (-0.096), mood of customer (-0.042) and availability of money (-0.06). These four variables are negative and fall in the category of external factors.

#### 4.3- Estimation of Path Coefficients

Latent Variables/ Calculation	T Statistics ( O/STDEV )	P Values
AX to IBB	0.434	0.665
AM to IBB	0.756	0.451
AT to IBB	0.459	0.647
FINd to IBB	0.836	0.404
IPV to IBB	1.408	0.161
MOC to IBB	0.533	0.595
Price to IBB	2.119	0.036
PP to IBB	0.876	0.382
RG to IBB	0.48	0.632
SE to IBB	4.138	0.0001
SD to IBB	3.458	0.0007
SEV to IBB	0.012	0.99
SLY to IBB	0.448	0.655
TVM to IBB	1.996	0.048

As shown in the table the result predicted that the price, self-esteem, social desirability and TV/Media significantly and positively influences the impulsive buying behaviour. Results partially supported our hypothesis as two variables are from internal factors and two variables from external factors. Also, the internal factor variables self-esteem ( $p=0.0001$ ) and social desirability ( $p=0.0007$ ) have the greatest impact on impulsive buying behaviour.

#### 5. Discussion and Analysis

The purpose of this research was to explore and measure the relationship of impulsive buying behaviour of Omani women in the apparel industry. After an extensive literature review, different categories of internal and external factors were identified and their impact on the impulsive buying behaviour of Omani women was measured. The most important factors that affect the impulsive buying behaviour of women are price, social desirability, self-esteem and TV/Media.

Although other variables also show a relationship with the impulsive behaviour but are insignificant. Moreover, few external factors such as financial independence, mood of consumer, product promotion, and availability of money has a negative impact on the buying behaviour of Omani women.

The majority of the survey respondents were from the age groups of 18-25 years and undergraduate students. This study emphasises more on the people who are studying in colleges and universities and therefore, it is safe to say that this study highlights the effect of price, social desirability, self-esteem and impact of TV/Media on the impulsive buying behaviour of young Omani women. These factors signify the impact on young minds as well as peer and social influences. Social desirability does affect the purchase behaviour of a person who is more active socially and will tend to buy to keep up with the image that the person has created for herself.

Self Esteem in the commercial concept view is connected with materialism according to (Ahmad et.al., 2019). Global feeling of self-worth can also be another description of self-esteem of any individual which consists of his own confidentiality and capabilities towards morality and other ethical values. The study reveals that self-esteem significantly and positively influences the impulsive buying behaviour of Omani women. Hence, considering unplanned shopping, this can result in negative effects and on the other hand, having high levels of self-esteem lessens the buying intentions of customers. TV/Media also significantly and positively influences the impulsive buying behaviour of Omani women. This is influenced by the fact that TV is the most prominent and active mass media market that reaches the prospective buyer with the impact of audio and visual effects of products like apparel of women.

##### 5.1- Contribution

This research focuses on the impulsive buying behaviour of the women regarding apparel. This will help future researchers as a steppingstone to carry out research on a greater scale and consider other different variables that can influence the impulsive buying behaviour. Although several research have been conducted abroad, there is a dearth of literature in this regard in Oman. This research might prove to be very beneficial to future researchers, marketers, and students alike.

##### 5.2- Implications

This research can help the marketing managers working in the apparel industry to design their campaign and help their company grow focusing on the factors that have an impact on buying behaviour. Companies can know

how much resources should be allocated in different dimensions to obtain an increased customer response and capitalise the different aspects highlighted in this research. The conceptual framework of this research can be used for further research in related areas and can see the impact of these variables on the impulsive buying behaviour of men. This study focused on the apparel sector and further studies can measure the purchasing patterns of females in other product categories and other sectors. It was also released from the study that internal factors such as self-esteem and social desirability has an impact on the women buying behaviour. Income and educational level are also contributing factors to impulsive buying. The company should take into consideration these internal factors of communities to be a leader in the market.

### 5.3- Limitations

This research was limited to females from the urban population of Oman. Other limitations faced while conducting this research were time, resources and the non-serious attitude of some respondents as observed during the research survey.

### 6. Conclusion

The purpose of the study was to identify the factor that affects the impulsive buying behaviour of Omani women in the apparel industry. Omani women are the target respondents in this study whose behaviour appears to be different from other countries. This study can be of vital importance to apparel production companies and other businesses because this can provide them with information and feedback of customers' attitudes towards acquisition of products. Moreover, the study findings can help improve the local marketers and manufacturers' awareness of customers' demand for such products. According to the research findings, four factor price, self-esteem, social desirability, and TV-Media are significantly affecting the impulsive buying behaviour of the female customers in Oman.

### 7. Recommendations

Based on this research marketers can have a better understanding as to increase their profits by targeting the social desirability aspect of women, through effective TV/Media promotional campaigns. Focus on these factors that are of great influence to customers buying attitudes. Moreover, keeping in view of the research findings the businesses of the apparel industry should build their marketing strategy and business models around above-mentioned factors for attracting female buyer by offering discount prices, better advertisement campaigns, brand positioning and furthermore, the aggressive promotional campaigns through electronic, social as well as print media.

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