

Gender, Self-construal and Impulse Buying Behavior of Young Thai Consumers

Brigitte Burgess

The University of Southern Mississippi

Gallayanee Yaoyuneyong

The University of Southern Mississippi

SherRhonda Gibbs

The University of Southern Mississippi

Abstract

The study investigated gender differences in self-construal and impulse buying among young Thai consumers. Contrary to expectations, findings indicated that Thai males were more likely to exhibit general impulse buying and mood management tendencies than females. A subsequent analysis of self-construal among the sample revealed that interdependent self-construals were more likely to report general impulse buying tendencies, while independent self-construals reported significantly higher levels of irresistible urge to buy. These results have broad implications for research and may indicate that global economic upheaval and cultural shifts may have caused traditional role shifts in Thai culture. Marketers must consider these environmental changes and strategize accordingly.

Keywords: Human service, Cross-national, Restaurants.

Introduction

Retailers and marketers have long understood that impulse buying influences sales (Clover, 1950). Understanding the nature and extent of the impulse buying-sales relationship has been the subject of many studies and led to the implementation of new consumer marketing strategies by marketers, advertisers and retailers. Much attention has been given to impulse buying in Western cultures but of growing interest is the study of impulse buying in non-Western cultures. A relatively new stream of research investigates impulse buying behavior in collectivist cultures, (e.g., Boonlertvanich, 2009; Davis and Sajtos, 2009; Kongakaradecha and Khemarangsarn 2012) often comparing collectivist cultures to individualist and other collectivist cultures (e.g., Kacen and Lee, 2002; Lee and Kacen, 2008; Ackerman and Chung, 2012). The purpose of this paper is to add to the growing body of impulse buying literature by examining gender differences as they relate to impulse buying in a collectivist culture, namely Thailand.

Thailand is a cross-cultural, democratic monarchy of approximately 68 million people, where the majority speaks a common dialect of Thai. In 2013, the largest percentage of Thailand's population was between 25 and 54 years old (45.6%) with the next largest percentage (19.2%) ranging in age from 0 to 14 (*World Factbook*, 2013). The official religion is Buddhism, practiced by approximately 94% of its citizens followed by Muslim (4.6%) and Christianity (0.7%) (*World Factbook*, 2013).

Self-Construal

Self-construal describes how a person views themselves in relation to others (Singelis, 1994). Interdependent self-construals are more common in collectivist cultures and independent self-construals are more common in individualist cultures (Markus and Kitayama, 1991), however both are present in all cultures, regardless of whether the culture is generally characterized by collectivism or individualism (Zhang and Shrum, 2009; Christopher *et al.*, 2012). According to Singelis (1994), consumers with independent self-construals value autonomy, uniqueness, self-accomplishments, personal goals, and are less strongly influenced by social interaction than consumers with interdependent self-construals. Additionally, independent consumers' shopping behaviors are more likely to be motivated by their own needs, perceived rights and preferences (Markus and Kitayama, 1991).

In contrast, consumers with interdependent self-construals value relationships with others, connectedness to a group, conformity, desire group harmony and are more likely to be motivated by duties imposed by the collective, roles, status, and cultural norms (Singelis, 1994). Because cultural norms so strongly impact self-construal it is natural that self-construal will vary by culture (Christopher *et al.*, 2012).

Zhang and Shrum (2009) found that self-construal was a causal factor in impulsive behavior related to alcohol consumption in the United States, an individualist culture. Interdependent Americans were likely to exhibit decreasingly impulsive tendencies in the presence of peers compared to independent Americans, whose impulsivity increased when peers were present. In this case, the desire for group harmony is thought to cause interdependent Americans to be more responsible. Independent Americans were more impulsive due to a need to exert their autonomy.

Ackerman and Chung (2012) examined self-construal and gender between Australians, South Koreans, Chinese and Americans. They found that self-construal influenced product choice, regardless of whether the culture was generally considered collectivistic or individualistic. Interdependent consumers of all four cultures favored products that bring people together in using them or require several people to use them (e.g., games, karaoke), matching the interdependent need for group harmony and collective mentality. Individualists of all four cultures, on the other hand, favored products that were used alone, which matches their autonomous desires.

Self-construal has been used effectively to study many non-Western cultures however, to date, no self-construal studies using Singelis' (1994) measure examined Thai culture solely, and only three studies comparing self-construal between Thai and other cultures were found (e.g., Dejitjhirat, 2004; Neff, Pisitsungkagarn, and Hsieh, 2008; Christopher *et al.*, 2010). Findings from these comparative studies indicated

that Thai were significantly more interdependent than Americans, but differences in the findings between studies are also present.

While Dejithirat (2004) and Christopher *et al.* (2010) reported that Americans were significantly more independent than Thai, Neff, Pisitsungkagarn, and Hsieh (2008) found no significant difference between independent Thai and Americans. As a result of this finding, Neff, Pisitsungkagarn, and Hsieh (2008) caution researchers against comparing different cultures without considering that self-construal may vary in meaning between cultures because of the particular cultural norms to which people are connected within each culture. This suggests that in addition to cross-cultural research, studying the self-construals of individuals within a culture will make understanding cross-cultural comparisons more accurate.

Gender Differences in Self-Construal

Cross and Madson (1997) proposed that, in addition to culture, self-construal serves as a lens for understanding gender differences in social behavior, motivation, emotion, and cognition. Although a few studies do not support gender difference in the application of self-construal (e.g., Gorski and Young, 2002), generally, studies of self-construal indicate that men typically have an independent self-construal and women typically have an interdependent self-construal (e.g., Cross, Bacon, and Morris, 2000; Guimond *et al.*, 2006).

Gender significantly influences societal roles (Findlay, 1990). As members of a Buddhist, collectivist, and an agricultural culture, Thai women have the major role in nurturing the family, especially children and elderly family members, while males are the main household breadwinners and do most of the work outside the home (Keyes, 1987). Thai males are expected to represent the family in public and make decisions on behalf of the family, which are qualities consistent with independent self-construals. Women are expected to follow the lead of the husband and connect family members to one another, which is characteristic of the interdependent self-construal.

Researchers argue that in non-Western societies, individuals are likely to construct a self that is more interdependent and relational when compared to individualistic societies (Triandis, 1989; Markus and Kitayama, 1991). Cross cultural researchers also suggest that life experiences may result in men placing emphasis on independent self-construals whereas women's life experience place emphasis on interdependent self-construals (Markus and Oyserman, 1989; Maccoby, 1990). Cross and Madson's (1997) found that gender differences in self-esteem and behaviors resulted in divergent self-construals. Similarly, these divergences are plausible among males and females, irrespective to age, culture, and among the populace of individualistic or collectivistic societies. Based on the review of the literature, it is expected that Thai are generally likely to have interdependent self-construals due to their collectivist culture. Literature also suggests that interdependent and independent self-construals are common in all cultures. As found in prior gender studies, it is expected that Thai females will be more likely to exhibit interdependent self-construals when compared to Thai males. Given prior results from the literature and that no specific studies have investigated the phenomenon among young Thai consumers, the following hypothesis was constructed.

H1: Young Thai males are more likely to have an independent self-construal while young Thai females are more likely to have an interdependent self-construal.

Impulse Buying

Early impulse buying research was designed to define the concept with many, sometimes widely varying results (e.g., Clover, 1950; Rook, 1987). Piron (1991) conducted an extensive review of literature to determine the nature and variety of proposed definitions. The conclusion was that impulse buying is unplanned, caused or impacted by exposure to stimuli and results in an emotional reaction thereafter. This indicates that impulse buying is a complex process requiring much research for a full understanding of this consumer trait.

As impulse buying research progressed, the focus moved from defining and towards identifying antecedents, consequences and mediating factors. Findings from these streams of research are widely reported in the literature, and include factors such as lack of cognitive reasoning, emotional impulses, (Piron, 1991; Coley and Burgess, 2003), demographics such as gender (Coley and Burgess, 2003, Yaoyuneyong and George, 2010), and more recently, culture (Boolertvanich, 2009; Davis and Sajtos, 2009; Kongakaredecha and Khemarangsarn, 2012).

Typically, impulse buyers are more likely to be women (Coley and Burgess, 2003; Kongakaredecha and Khemarangsarn, 2012), make these purchases for hedonic reasons or to manage their mood (Rook, 1987; Coley and Burgess, 2003), are driven by emotional rather than rational decision-making (Piron, 1991; Coley and Burgess, 2003), and are unable to resist the urge to make impulse purchases (Piron, 1991; Burgess and Coley, 2003).

Gender Differences in Impulse Buying

Mai *et al.* (2003) observed that interdependence and independence are of high importance in studying cultural aspects of impulse buying. These authors conducted an exploratory study of impulse buying by urban consumers in Vietnam, finding that independent shoppers were more likely to have higher impulse buying tendencies in general and engage in impulse buying more frequently than their interdependent counterparts. Additionally they found that younger consumers were more likely to buy impulsively, while men had a higher impulse buying tendency than women. This suggests that gender may be salient for young Thai consumers impulse buying behaviors.

Boolertvanich (2009) examined Thai consumers' decision-making styles in relation to digital camera purchases. Impulse buying consciousness was a significant factor in the decision making process, however gender was not an indicator of impulse buying tendencies. In contrast, Kongakaredecha and Khemarangsarn (2012) investigated determining factors of Thai impulse buying: demographics, emotion, social needs (collectivism versus individualism), and product promotion. Thai women were more likely to be impulse buyers, buy without considering the consequences, and act upon an irresistible urge to buy than Thai men, supporting past research on American impulse buyers (e.g., Coley and Burgess, 2003). Interestingly, the authors found no difference in impulse buying between Thai consumers considering themselves to be

individualistic or collectivistic. Thus, complying with social norms had no direct impact on impulse buying.

Davis and Sajtos (2009) researched Thai consumer's impulsive behavior related to Mobile-commerce services. These authors hypothesized that the availability of Mobile-commerce would make consumers' with a general impulse buying tendency more vulnerable to impulse buying. Findings showed that when Thai consumers were less cognitively engaged impulse buying increased. Further these authors indicated that impulse buying in their sample was unreflective, unintended, and immediate (Davis and Sajtos, 2009).

Cultural differences impact impulsive behaviors (Mai *et al.*, 2003, Boolertvanich, 2009; Davis and Sajtos, 2009; Kongadaredecha and Khemarangsang, 2012) and young consumers are more likely to exhibit impulsive purchasing behavior than older consumers (Mai *et al.*, 2003). Among collectivist cultures, literature examining gender differences in impulse buying is inconclusive. However, more studies insinuate that females exhibit greater impulse buying behaviors than males. In a study confirmed by Kongakaredecha's and Khemarangsang's (2012) findings, Herabadi's *et al.* (2009) study of Indonesian consumers found that females generally rated themselves higher on buying impulsiveness. Impulse buying literature pertaining solely to Thailand is limited, and also presents conflicting findings regarding gender. Further, young Thai have been the subject of little impulse buying related research suggesting the necessity for additional study on this topic. Based on the available research and prior findings from the literature, it is reasonable to expect young males and females to exhibit differences in impulse buying. Given these facts, and the collectivist characteristics of Thai culture and prescribed gender roles, the following hypothesis is presented:

H2: Young Thai females will exhibit impulse buying tendencies to a greater extent than young Thai males.

Impulse Buying and Self-Construal

Past research suggests that self-construal impacts consumer buying behavior (Lee and Kacen, 2008; Zhang & Shrum, 2009; Ackerman and Chung, 2012; Shrum and Zhang, 2013). Kongsompong, Green, and Patterson (2009) investigated four cultures (American, Australian, Thai, and Singaporean) and found that purchase decisions in collectivist societies were highly influenced by social connections. Although impulse buying was not the subject of that study, it seems that desire for group harmony and conformity would lead to more rational decision-making.

Cai and Shannon (2012) asserted that Chinese and Thai consumers place more value on self-transcendence and conservation, two values that guide utilitarian-oriented shopping behavior. Given Thailand's collectivist orientation, these same values might be expected. However, Thai view life in a more relaxed way than Chinese and shop for enjoyment and fun (Cai and Shannon, 2012), therefore they may be more susceptible to impulse buying.

Because interdependent self-construals, tend to rely less on inner feeling to form their buying decision than independent self-construals, Markus and Kitayama (1991)

suggested that interdependent shoppers are less likely to act on inner impulsive tendencies compared to independent shoppers. Mai *et al.* (2003) concluded that, as a result of economic transformation, Vietnamese consumers show both collectivism and individualism characteristics. Additionally, there is increasing individualism among Vietnamese consumers that may affect impulse buying behavior. Asian collectivist consumers tend to be less engaged in impulse-buying than their Western, more individualistic counterparts (Kacen and Lee, 2002; Sun *et al.*, 2004).

In contrast to other Asian collectivist cultures, Thai place more emphasis on lifestyle enjoyment and leisure. Consequently, young Thai may situate along a continuum with respect to their interdependent and independent self-construals. Scholars argue that individuals identifying with independent self-construals are more likely to buy impulsively whereas individuals reporting interdependent self-construals are less likely to participate in impulse buying due to group influence and self-regulation on purchasing decisions (Zhang and Shrum, 2009; Shrum and Zhang, 2013). If this holds true, it is assumed that young Thai consumers identifying with interdependent self-construals will be less likely to make impulse purchases, while young Thai consumers reporting independent self-construals may be more likely to engage in impulse purchases. This discussion prefaces the third hypothesis.

H3: Thai with interdependent self-construals will be less likely to buy impulsively than Thai with independent self-construals.

Methodology

Instrument

The survey instrument consisted of two multi-item scales and demographic questions. To date no widely accepted scale has been produced and tested to measure impulse buying in Thai consumers. Instead, scales measuring impulse buying vary from study to study, suggesting that the operationalization of impulse buying in Thai culture is still in the early stages. The impulse buying scale used in this study was originally compiled from a variety of sources and used successfully by Coley and Burgess (2003). This scale was chosen because it included items measuring different aspects of impulse buying suggested in the literature.

The impulse buying scale consisted of 17 items (Coley and Burgess, 2003) representing components of impulse buying: general impulsive buying tendencies, unplanned purchasing, emotional purchasing, rational thinking, and irresistible urge to buy. Responses were made on a 4-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 4 = strongly agree). Cai and Shannon (2012) recommend eliminating neutral response choices to avoid courtesy bias, common in collectivist cultures. Since this scale had not been tested previously in a collectivist culture, the decision was made to follow this recommendation.

The self-construal scale was designed by Singelis (1994) and consisted of 24 questions; half measuring interdependent tendencies and half measuring independent tendencies. This scale was selected because it was identified as the most widely used measure of this type (Neff, Pisitsungkagarn, and Hsieh, 2008; Christopher *et al.*, 2012). In addition to the impulse buying and self-construal scale, two demographic

questions, age and gender, were asked. Preparation of the survey materials included translation from English to Thai by bilingual researchers and a back-translation from Thai to English by different researchers. Discrepancies were addressed and the final version of the questionnaire was administered to a group of bilingual respondents for face validity.

Data Collection

Similar to Ting and de Run (2012), a purposive sampling technique was used. This technique is recommended for collecting data from a specific subset of the population where random sampling is unlikely to produce participants with the knowledge necessary to answer the research question (Lachance *et al.*, 2003; Tongco, 2007). In this study, data were collected from Thai schools, one from each of three distinct geographic locations: (a) the city of Bangkok, in the central region, (b) the Nakhon Ratchasima province, in the northeastern region, and (c) the city of Hat Yai, in the southern region. These areas reflected the diversity within Thai population. In addition, these areas were chosen because they represent extremely large and developed shopping areas as well as distinctively diverse subcultures. This technique is warranted in this study because of the limited research on this age group and an increasing of their purchasing power (Luo, 2005; Lin and Chen, 2012).

Participating schools were awarded \$75 (approximately 2,423.09 THB) for school supplies in exchange for their participation. School administrators delivered the consent letters to parents via the children and then administered the questionnaires to children of consenting parents. Completed surveys and parental consent forms were returned to the researchers for analysis.

Results and Discussion

The multi-dimensional scale for impulse buying was reduced using principal component analysis with Varimax rotation, limited to factors with eigenvalues of one or greater. Items loading at less than .35 were eliminated, as well as items with similar loadings on two or more factors. Reliability tests were conducted for each factor to determine consistency and to assess whether elimination of one or more items would improve the factor's reliability.

This process resulted in five factors and the elimination of three items. The factors accounted for 53.80% of the total variance (Table 1). Factor 1, labeled *General Impulse Buying*, consisted of five items comprised of a mixture of cognitive and affective impulse buying. Factor 2 consisted of two items and was labeled *Mood Management*. Factor 3, labeled *Irresistible Urge to Buy*, included items relating to excitement of impulse buying and tendency to decide what to buy while at the store. The two remaining factors produced relatively low reliability scores and were eliminated from hypotheses testing (Table 1).

Table 1: Scale Reduction and Reliability for Impulse Buying

Measurement item	Factor loading	% Variance Explained	Alpha
General impulse buying		14.620	.709
When I go shopping, I buy things that I had not intended to purchase.	0.623		
I tend to spend money as soon as I earn it.	0.504		
I sometimes find myself in a state of tension as I buy things that I know I cannot afford.	0.383		
When you think about your buying behavior in general, do you consider yourself to be an impulse buyer?	0.747		
Would people who know you consider you to be an impulse buyer?	0.793		
Mood management		10.159	.673
Buying is a way of reducing stress in my daily life.	0.811		
Sometimes I buy something in order to make myself feel better.	0.808		
Irresistible urge to buy		12.044	.605
I always buy if I really like it.	0.722		
When I shop I tend to decide what I want to buy while I am looking around in a store.	0.688		
I feel a sense of thrill when I am buying something new.	0.702		
<i>Factors eliminated from further analysis</i>			
Factor 4		8.532	.511
I make a list when I go shopping and buy only what is on the list.	0.804		
I rarely ever buy impulsively.	0.748		
Factor 5		8.444	.416
Sometimes I regret buying new things.	0.791		
I experience mixed feelings of pleasure and guilt from buying something on impulse.	0.715		

The self-construal scale was used to categorize respondents as interdependent or independent. Respondents whose individual means were higher than the sample mean for these items ($M = 3.7441$) were labeled *Independent*, and those with individual means lower than the sample mean were labeled *Interdependent*.

Sample

Participants consisted of 519 male and female Thai students aged 12 to 18. The majority were female (86.31%) between the ages of 16 and 17 years old (76.87%).

Interdependent were primarily female, and independent respondents were largely male (85.96% and 86.62 respectively). This supports findings of several researchers (e.g., Cross, Bacon, and Morris, 2000; Guimond *et al.*, 2006) who found women to be more interdependent than men (Table 2).

Table 2: Gender of Respondents by Age and Self-construal

Age	Gender								
	Interdependent			Independent			Sample		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
12	0 (0)	4.90 (10)	4.26 (10)	0 (0)	2.44 (6)	2.11 (6)	0 (0)	3.57 (16)	3.08 (16)
13	0 (0)	2.48 (5)	2.13 (5)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	1.12 (5)	0.96 (5)
14	0 (0)	1.00 (2)	0.85 (2)	0 (0)	1.63 (4)	1.41 (4)	0 (0)	1.34 (6)	1.16 (6)
15	6.0 (2)	7.92 (16)	7.66 (18)	7.89 (3)	9.76 (24)	9.51 (27)	7.04 (5)	8.93 (40)	8.67 (45)
16	42.42 (14)	45.05 (91)	44.68 (105)	36.84 (14)	40.24 (99)	39.79 (113)	39.44 (28)	42.41 (190)	42.00 (218)
17	42.42 (14)	31.19 (63)	32.77 (77)	26.32 (10)	38.21 (94)	36.62 (104)	33.80 (24)	35.04 (157)	34.87 (181)
18	9.09 (3)	7.43 (15)	7.66 (18)	28.95 (11)	7.72 (19)	10.56 (30)	19.72 (14)	7.59 (34)	9.25 (48)
Total	100 (33)	100 (202)	100 (235)	100 (39)	100 (246)	100 (284)	100 (71)	100 (448)	100 (519)

Hypothesis Testing

Because the data were non-normal, Kruskal-Wallis tests were used. Hypothesis 1 was constructed to evaluate the differences among gender in regard to self-construal (*Interdependence* and *Independence*). Results indicated no significant median change for gender in self-construal tendencies ($p = .841$, $X^2 = 0.40$). This finding differs Cross and Madson (1997) and Cross, Bacon, and Morris (2000) who found that women are more likely to exhibit an interdependent self-construal. Guimond *et al.* (2006) examined gender related self-construal differences and found women to exhibit higher interdependence than men. Guimond *et al.* (2006) also found evidence that stereotypical roles were a mediating factor of gender's impact on self-construal.

A possible explanation that gender differences were not significant in the current study is that Thai women's roles have been altered because of economic changes due to globalization and the economic crisis in 1997. A number of both single and married women now work outside the household in order to provide for the family and that number continues to increase (De Jong, 2000). With this in mind, new Thai generations may perceive the roles of males and females differently having grown up seeing both parents work outside the home and seeing siblings pursue higher education and employment.

The second hypothesis was constructed to investigate gender differences within the three impulse buying components. Kruskal-Wallis test results were significant for two of the three tests. The distribution of gender across the *General Impulse Buying* ($p = .029$, $X^2 = 4.795$) and *Mood Management* ($p = .054$, $X^2 = 3.727$) components differed significantly, however the test for gender and *Irresistible Urge to Buy* did not yield significant results ($p = .137$, $X^2 = 2.207$). By examining mean rank scores it appears that males are more likely to have *General Impulse Buying* tendencies (mean rank: 312.62 (males) vs. 269.23 (females)) as well as *Mood Management* impulse buying tendencies (mean rank: 312.76 (male) vs. 274.92 (female)).

The current findings differ from Boonlertvanich (2009), who found no gender differences related to impulse buying tendencies in Thai shoppers' propensity to purchase digital cameras. Current finding also differ from Kongakadecha and Khemarangsarn (2012) who reported that Thai women purchased impulsively to a greater extent than their male counterparts in terms of "seeing something I want and buying it" and "buying spontaneity," which are similar to *irresistible urge to buy* and "buying now and thinking about it later," which is similar to elements of the *general impulse buying* tendency.

Interesting differences between the current findings and those of Coley and Burgess (2003) were also noted. Women in their study were more likely to experience an *irresistible urge to buy* than men, opposite of the current study. This finding was attributed in part to the higher total number of shopping experiences for women compared to men, but Thai women's total shopping experiences outnumber Thai men bringing this attribution to question (Findlay, 1990). Additionally, Coley and Burgess (2003) found that women were more likely to impulse buy as a means of *mood management*, another opposite finding of the current study. Both studies utilized student samples, but Coley's and Burgess' were slightly older. There is some research suggesting that impulse buying tendencies of Asians diminish with age; however this difference is not apparent in Caucasians (Kacen and Lee, 2002).

Mai *et al.* (2003) produced results that are supported by the current findings. These authors found that men exhibited greater impulse buying tendencies in general than women in Vietnam. A partial explanation for these differences is that women shopped more than men, and as a result, their role was to manage and budget the household spending. This added responsibility was directly linked to women's public image, and may lead them to more carefully consider the welfare of their family in their purchase behavior. Men's image was not linked to their public image, allowing them to act on their impulses with greater frequency.

The third hypothesis investigated whether self-construal differed by impulse buying tendencies. The Kruskal-Wallis tests revealed significant results for two of the three impulse buying components. The distribution of self-construal (*Interdependent* or *Independent*) differed for respondents in the *General Impulse Buying* component ($p = .009$, $X^2 = 6.906$) as well as *Irresistible Urge to Buy* ($p = .001$, $X^2 = 11.435$). No significant difference was found in median scores for self-construal across *Mood Management* ($p = .769$, $X^2 = .086$). The mean ranks suggest that respondents with *Interdependent* self-construals may be more likely to exhibit *General Impulse Buying* tendencies (mean rank: 295.08 (*Interdependent*) vs. 259.57 (*Independent*)) and respondents exhibiting an *Irresistible Urge to Buy* may be more likely to have independent self-construals (mean rank: 301.89 (*Independent*) vs. 256.64 (*Interdependent*)).

The results of this study differ from Markus and Kitayama (1991) and Mai *et al.* (2003), who found that independent self-construals exhibited greater impulse buying tendencies than interdependent self-construals. In addition, Kongakaredecha and Khemarangsarn (2012) found no difference in impulse buying tendencies between independent and interdependent self-construal. In one study, interdependent individuals were found to suppress their impulse buying tendencies, especially in the presence of peers (Shavitt, Lee and Torelli, 2008). A possible explanation for the inconsistencies in findings may be attributable to global economic upheavals and cultural shifts that are causing role changes among Thai men and women. Interdependents may functionally operate within the boundaries of their self-construal, but may intermittently display impulse buying behavior more consistent with their gender, rather than their self-construal. Thai' shop for enjoyment and fun, characteristics of recreational shoppers (Cai and Shannon, 2012). If cognitive reasoning and shopping with purpose reduce Thai impulse buying (Davis and Sanjos, 2009), recreational shopping should lead to increased impulse buying.

Furthermore, respondent's age may contribute to the results of this study. The main responsibility of young Thai males and females in this study was educational pursuits, and relying on parents' for financial support. With that in mind, young Thai generations who have interdependent self-construals may not suppress their impulse buying tendency. This may be further impacted due to exposure to Western media and the Internet.

For *Irresistible Urge to Buy*, the results of this study coincide with Kacen and Lee (2002) who found that independent shoppers tended to exhibit more impulse buying traits and behavior. In addition, Davis and Sajtos (2009) found that when Thai consumers' shopping behavior was unreflective and unintended, an irresistible urge to buy emerged in Thai consumers.

Implications for Business Marketing Practice

There appears to be a potential shift from findings in previous studies evidenced in Thai shoppers' impulse buying behavior, especially for young consumers. Although no significant differences were found between young males and females in terms of self-construal, findings indicated that gender differences in impulse buying tendencies was present. If self-construal is chosen as a marketing strategy, non-gender based tactics are advised, at least until further examination of Thai self-construal is

undertaken. A suggestion would be to examine gender differences along with age differences to determine the impact of changing gender roles on self-construal.

Young, interdependent Thai were more likely to exhibit *general impulse buying* tendencies, while young, independent Thai were more likely to have an *irresistible urge to buy*. No differences were found related to *mood management*. Generally speaking, marketing strategies for impulse buying can be tailored to gender however; more research is needed to determine the nature of gender differences. Gender roles previously used as the basis for developing marketing strategies may need to be revisited. Coley and Burgess (2003) found that male impulse shoppers were more likely to purchase functional items, while female impulse shoppers were more likely to purchase emotional items. This information could assist marketers in a more strategically focused approach to triggering impulse buying tendencies in male and female Thai. Developing promotional campaigns that incorporate interdependent and independent components can attract both types of impulse buyers, but for different reasons.

To determine whether these findings are generalizable to other Thai, further investigation is warranted. Because gender and self-construal differences in regard to impulse buying for the current sample differed from previous studies there are likely other factors contributing to this result. Cultural shifts may indicate that other factors are of growing importance, such as product promotion, low cognitive involvement/recreational shopping, level of disposable income, age and reference group. Additionally, more research on gender differences needs to be conducted.

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