ABSTRACT

Impulse buying plays an essential role in consumer buying behavior as nearly ninety percent of consumers at least occasionally engage in impulse buying. Moreover, it accounts for a massive volume of products sold across categories and prices. Therefore, it clearly creates selling opportunities, and subsequently is a crucial source of revenue and profit. Thailand is the biggest color cosmetics market in Southeast Asian countries, and Thai consumers are now more image-conscious and willing to invest in beauty products. Currently, mass color cosmetics are mostly available through self-selection stores where customers purchase inexpensive or mid-priced cosmetics items in a self-service environment, which encourages customer to engage in impulse buying.

Despite significant interest among marketing academicians and practitioners, most previous impulse buying-related studies primarily focused only on its antecedents; few addressed its consequences, and a great deal of them were conducted in western countries, especially in low-involvement shopping environments. Hence, this study aims to identify the in-store marketing stimuli of impulse buying behavior, as well as its potential consequences, in terms of cognitive dissonance, the level of satisfaction, and the post-purchase behavioral intentions of mass color cosmetics at self-selection stores in Bangkok.

This study utilized a two-stage process, where Stage one involved qualitative research by conducting 21 in-depth interviews with mass color cosmetics consumers to gain insights into their impulse buying behavior. Stage two involved quantitative research by conducting a person-administered survey with 900 female low-to-middle income consumers who were 18 to 45 years old, and purchased mass color cosmetics at self-selection stores in Bangkok within the last thirty days. In total, 780 respondents remained, which represented 87 percent of the response rate.

The data analysis of structural equation modeling (SEM) indicated that music, the salesperson and the acceptance of a credit card significantly and respectively influenced impulse buying. Even though impulse buying did not have an impact on cognitive dissonance, it had a positive direct impact on the level of satisfaction, which
further positively influenced the post-purchase behavioral intention to repurchase, cross-buy and spread positive word-of-mouth. Moreover, product performance positively influenced the level of satisfaction. In addition, cognitive dissonance was positively influenced by post-purchase information and attractive alternatives, while it was negatively influenced by purchase involvement and product performance.

Regarding its potential theoretical implications, this study provided a fuller theoretical understanding of the mechanisms of impulse buying by incorporating both influential factors and potential consequences. Furthermore, it illustrated the relative importance of in-store marketing stimuli, and the findings were thus of pragmatic value for marketing practitioners as a reference in planning resource allocation as well as providing guidelines in developing compelling marketing strategies that create impulsive selling opportunities. Moreover, this study revealed that the level of satisfaction could be reduced by cognitive dissonance, and thus suggested that companies should actively participate in customer dissonance reduction processes by utilizing after-sale communication campaigns to help customers maintain their positive attitude towards the product. Lastly, it was revealed how impulse buying influenced the level of satisfaction, which further motivated positive post-purchase behavioral intentions.