Impulsive Buying Behaviour: The Role of Feelings When Shopping for Online Fashion

Authors

Assistant professor PhD Malin Sundström
Assistant professor PhD Jenny Balkow
Master student Jonas Florhed
Master student Matilda Tjernström
Master student Pernilla Wadenfors

Paper submission to EAERCD 2013, Valencia, 3-5 July.
Preferable track
New technologies and e-commerce, conference web:

Abstract

This paper presents an in-depth study of young Swedish consumers and their impulsive online buying behaviour for clothing. The aim of the study is to develop the understanding of what factors affect impulse buying of clothing online and what feelings emerge when buying online. The study carried out was exploratory in nature, aiming to develop an understanding of impulse buying behaviour online before, under and after the actual purchase. The empirical data was collected through personal interviews. In the study, a pattern of the consumers recurrent feelings are identified through the impulse buying process; escapism, pleasure, reward, scarcity, security and anticipation. The escapism is particularly occurring since the study revealed that the consumers often carried out impulse purchases when they initially were bored, as opposed to previous studies.

1 University of Borås, Swedish Institute for Innovative Retailing, School of Business and IT,
Allégatan 1, S-501 90 Borås, Sweden. Phone: +46732305934 Mail: malin.sundstrom@hb.se
Impulsive Buying Behaviour: The Role of Feelings When Shopping for Online Fashion

Introduction
Although impulse buying behaviour has intrigued researchers since the mid 20th century, there is no real consensus on the concept. Early contribution by researchers such as Stern (1962) narrowed down the definition from simply unplanned purchasing behaviour to encompass the exposure to stimuli (Piron 1991). In the 1980’s further research by Rook and Hoch (1985) and Rook (1987) explored the concept as a hedonic experience and found a relation landing in a definition that entails all three components of unplanned behaviour, exposure to stimuli and emotions (Piron 1991). This early research on impulse buying is moving towards a new direction, that of online impulse behaviour (Madhavaram and Laverie 2004). While researchers on impulse buying behaviour online incorporates the three dimensions of early research and seems to confirm that impulse buying behaviour is based on a mix of these external and internal factors, easy access and privacy seems to spur the online impulse buying behaviour. As far as the hedonic aspects of this online impulse buying behaviour, research seems to suggest that a good mood is central for acting on impulse online (Chih and Hsi-Jui 2012).

Today's consumer society is characterized by multi-channel consumer behaviour and individuals are exposed to a variety of signals and impulses on daily basis, whether they are in physical or virtual worlds (Sundström 2007). The Nordic countries face growing e-commerce sales, and online sales in Sweden was approximately 3,7 billion Euro in the year 2012. This is an increase by 13 % compared to the year 2011. Statistics from reports on Swedish e-commerce, show seven out of ten Swedish consumers bought goods online (PostNord 2012). As online impulse buying behaviour becomes
more frequent, e-retailers develop strategies to further increase the likelihood of unplanned purchases and websites are designed in order to encourage impulsive actions. Dawson and Kim (2009) suggests that the up-and cross-selling, highly affect the purchasing decisions of consumers and allows individuals to buy more. They also state that clothing sales online is a situation where impulse buying is more likely to occur because the products evoke emotions and desires. As a field of study, online shopping is an interesting field which offers a context in which to study impulsive behaviour, as it provides endless supply, unlimited opening hours, and supports the consumer by endless choices of price and product comparisons (Chih and Hsi-Jui 2012).

According to early research on impulse buying consumers tend to behave more or less impulsive depending on what they are buying (Stern 1962) and clothing is considered as a typical product category for engaging in impulsive buying (Phau and Lo 2004; Han et al. 1991; Williams and Dardis 1972). In today’s highly competitive retail fashion environment the why, how, and when of consumer buying behaviour is a main ingredient in the keys to success and there is a clear need to develop consumer insight.

This paper presents a study of Swedish consumers and their online buying behaviour regarding clothing. The aim of the study is to develop the understanding of what factors affect impulse buying of clothing online. Built on a theoretical framework constructed on three phases: The antecedent phase, The trigger phase, and The act of buying the study explores the feelings of the consumers as they buy online on impulse in each of these phases.

**Methodology**

Previous research on impulse buying behaviour has primarily relied on surveys (c.f. Sun and Wo 2011; Chih and Hsi-Jui 2012; George and Yaoyuneyong 2010). This type of
research has as mentioned above resulted in some foundational theories about the relationship between impulsive behaviour and cognitive dissonance (George and Yaoyuneyong 2010) and about to what degree different factors affect the impulse buying behaviour (Sun and Wu 2011; Stern, 1962). Sun and Wu (2011) seems to assume that online buying is a planned behaviour made in a positive state of mind (i.e. when in a good mood) that results in an unplanned purchase and do not really explore the emotions attached. There are studies, based on observations and interviews (c.f. Rook 1987) which indicate that emotions have a strong connection to impulsive buying behaviour which open up for studies that aim to understand how consumers feel and rationalize their impulsive behaviour to supplement the surveys.

The purpose of this study was exploratory in nature, aiming to develop an understanding of the Swedish consumer’s impulse buying behaviour before, under and after the actual purchase. The empirical data was collected through personal interviews with consumers on their online purchase behaviour.

The empirical data in this study consists of 23 interviews, 11 men and 12 women. The interviews were mainly performed one on one, and the interviews carried out were evenly distributed among three of the authors being master students taking a course in consumer behaviour. The respondents were selected based on age (20-30), a segment which is well acquainted with online shopping and highly exposed to online advertising incentives. Along with this convenience sample there was also a process of self elimination in the sampling process. Each individual that was approached were asked whether they had recently made an impulse purchase online from a fashion website, and if not the interview was stopped. If yes, the interview proceeded and became part of the empirical data in this study. Based on previous research, the study focuses on
fashion purchases since previous research has shown this be a good context for studying impulse buying behaviour (Phau and Lo 2004, Williams and Dardis 1972).

The interviews were performed in a semi-structured way. First the respondents were asked to describe an impulse purchase scenario, from beginning to end, that they themselves had experienced. Earlier research have found purchasing scenario interviews to be effective in order to develop a deeper analysis from consumer buying stories based on a relatively small amount of respondents (c.f. Thompson 1996). To complement these descriptions of scenarios, supplementary questions were added to gain a more complex understanding of the purchasing situation. The aim was to allow the respondent to explore his / her own ideas and thoughts about the impulse buying situation and feelings regarding the purchase. Thus it was important for the interviewers to ask neutral questions as not to influence the respondents.

All interviews were transcribed carefully including both questions and answers. When emotions were displayed (such as laughter) this was noted with brackets. The analysis was made in unison by all three interviewers, and in two phases. During the first phase, all transcribed material was carefully read through and analysed individually by the authors. The second phase consisted in a second reading and a discussion around what each of the authors had found – this time with the purpose of finding examples of the themes while at the same time keeping an open mind.

**Theoretical framework**

IB has had a longstanding negative association, but the modern view of IB contrast that picture by arguing that consumers do not view individual purchases as “wrong and retrospectively” (Crawford and Melewar 2003). There is no clear definition of IB, however, most definitions share the common belief that impulse purchases are
unplanned in nature (George and Yaoyuneyong 2009). IB is an action undertaken without a previously recognized problem or and without buying intention having been formed before entering the store. It includes cognitive aspects such as lack of planning and deliberation, and affective aspects such as feelings of pleasure, excitement, compulsion, lack of control, and the probable regret (Verplanken and Herabadi 2001). As early as 1967, researchers believed that IB behaviours only could be understood by reference to the environment in which they occurred and in relation to the role of environmental stimuli and emotional factors (Kollat and Willett 1967). In this study we argue that the environment is crucial regarding the understanding of impulsive online shopping. The theoretical framework is build on the assumption that IB is unplanned in nature, and that IB as a process built is on three phases: the antecedent phase, the trigger phase and the act of buying. The first phase regards traits, socio cultural factors, beliefs and values. The second phase regards environmental stimuli and interactions between firm- and individual level variables. The third phase regards the framework of decision process theories.

The antecedent phase

The antecedent phase helps to determine those factors underlying the tendency to buy impulsively (Youn and Faber 2000). Based on previous research this phase focus on personality trait theory. In that sense it means that individuals can be characterized in terms of relatively enduring patterns of thoughts, feelings, and action (Oliver et al. 2008). Studies made on the phenomenon of IB reports that personality traits can explain why some individuals engage more than others in IB behaviour. According to Xiao and Nicholson (2012), personality traits consistent to IB are: Hedonic (impulsive, extravagant, easily tempted, enjoy spending), Careless, Cognitive aspects (low personal
need for structure, a lack of conscientiousness), Affective aspects (irresistible urge to buy, neurotic, depressed or optimistic, liveliness, risk talking), Lack of perseverance (deliberate, lack of control, absorption), and Lack of premeditation (disregard of the future). Consumers scoring high on this final trait are prone to impulse purchases across product categories (Jones et al. 2003).

The antecedent phase also focuses on socio-cultural factors as they are believed to have a close connection to traits. Dittmar and Bond (2010) found that a person with a tendency towards IB believes that the acquisition of material goods is a central goal in life, a prime indicator of success and a key to happiness and positive identity. Other studies made on the phenomenon of IB reports that important socio-cultural factors are: Materialistic value, Self-identity and Self-image, Power distance behaviour, Social interaction, Normative social influences, and Presence of shopping companions (Xiao and Nicholson 2012). Consumers that are less likely to shop on impulse are those that are concerned with normative beliefs and consider IB as something bad (Rook and Fisher 1995). Thus though IB is not planned in nature, research seems to indicate that there are certain individual characteristics that might affect the tendency to purchase on impulse.

The trigger phase
According to Stimulus-Object-Response Models, individuals need a stimuli in order to act (Arora 1982), and there is a close connection between impulse feelings to impulse actions (Bettman 1979), although an impulse feeling not inevitable has to lead to action. However, if there are some consumers that are more likely to buy on impulse, it might also be reasonable to assume that these individuals are more sensitive to stimuli, and that the trigger phase is of outmost importance. But stimulus could also be of internal nature such as memories which in turn trigger action. A person who are more prone to
IB are more likely to experience spontaneous buying stimuli, and their shopping lists are, according to Rook and Fisher (1995), more open and receptive to sudden, unexpected buying ideas. The trigger phase is a situation when environmental (or internal) stimuli and emotional factors becomes an overwhelming motivator that leads to action. Environmental stimulus are classical marketing tools and range from store type and atmospherics, product presentation and product type, price, space, advertisement, sale promotion, service equipment, cross-selling, and personal service. Lately the stimuli impact from other customers and friends is also evident. We also know that site atmospherics together with involvement and responsiveness are important triggers for IB (Eroglu, Machleit and Davis 2003). The major conclusions from the work is that online store atmosphere does indeed make a difference and that increased quality of the atmosphere increases the level of pleasure felt by the shopper. Atmospherics in an online shopping context perhaps is the most conclusive trigger to understand IB which leads to a purchase.

Studies made by Childers, Carr, Peck and Carson (2001) conclude that hedonic motivations are central aspects in environmental stimuli of the Internet shopping environment. Another study made by Mathwick, Malhotra and Rigdon (2001) also adds experiential value to the list of environmental stimuli online. Thus there is a need to understand the hedonic aspects of the Web medium and what role it has in shaping IB.

**The act of buying**

The act of buying is a meta-construct that consolidates process-level variables and is built on decision process theories and how individuals convert inputs into outputs in a specific process (Xiao and Nicholson 2012). The classical buying process is built on the assumption that the rational individual undergoes five steps: problem recognition,
information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase and post-purchase. When it comes to IB there is a belief the individual do not act according to the process. Instead he/she acts from impulse, or at least, narrows the attention processes (Dholakia 2000; Rook 1987; Rook and Fisher 1995; Youn and Faber 2000). According to Kaufman-Scarborough and Cohen (2004) frequent impulse buying is a result of a combination of information processing problems and low capacity for cognitive self-assessment of product attributes (Weinberg and Gottwald 1982). The act of buying when the individual feels a sudden and irresistible urge to make a purchase is not an ordinary decision process. Instead, the decision is controlled by emotions and automatic action. Research regarding the point-of-purchase has shown that there may be some typical reasons for engaging in IB: a wish to accelerate a wanted situation, the purchase of a product for future needs, and compensation or reward (Crawford and Melewar 2003). During the act of buying convenience is believed to be an important factor in terms of converting a potential customer to an actual customer (Sundström 2007). In an online shopping context, convenience often is expressed in terms of: access convenience, search convenience, possession convenience, transaction convenience, time convenience, and place convenience.

**Case study – Empirical data and analysis**

The allotment of time that the respondents report for searching for clothing on the Internet varies greatly, ranging from 2 to 3 hours per month to 2 to 3 hours per day. The respondents in the study declare that they spend about 100 to 200 Euros on average per month on the total purchases of clothing. They indicate that the proportion of impulse buying is probably larger than they are actually aware of, and that the majority of purchases are made impulsively. The buying situations used as empirical data are purchases of clothing and shoes. All of the respondents in the study have carried out
their impulsive online purchase in their home environment, on the couch, in front of the TV in the evenings. The purchases are in all cases carried out via a laptop.

**Respondents and the antecedent phase**

The individuals in the study are generally driven by emotional reasons rather than logical and rational, when shopping online for fashion. The emotional reasons manifests itself in a strong ”must have”-craving rather than a practical need for a specific product. One respondent describes this feeling as: “I see something I want, and just need to have it.” The strong and sudden desire can be related to individuals' attitudes regarding acquisition of material goods described by several respondents in the study. One of the respondents described this fact as: “I really wanted this (garment) in my wardrobe”. The case indicates the strong relationship between hedonic values and emotional satisfaction. One respondent describes this fact as: “New clothes and nice things make me happy”. A central aspect of the empirical data is that the respondents consider themselves to be keen on their appearance. It is partly because they want to look good for their own sake, and partly because the individual is affected by, and wants to fit in to social structures. This fact was clearly described by one respondent in the study as: “You want to feel stylish while you work out. Actually, you pretty much just need one pair of trainers. But since everyone else in the gym have several pairs in different colours, and match different outfits from time to time, I guess it inspires me to want several pairs of shoes too”.

Another strong personality trait that has emerged among the interviewed respondents is to be easily influenced by their surroundings. It has also emerged that individuals are influenced by societal norms and trends when purchasing online fashion. The consumers in this study are inspired and influenced by close circles of friends as much as public characters such as celebrities and trendsetters, which are described as: “I
may look at what celebrities are wearing, and I get inspired by fashion magazines”.

Desire of group affiliation is also a central personality trait in this study. The empirical data indicates that the choices of clothing also are connected to who they are and which social group they belong to, or want to belong to. It is exemplified by one respondent: “You don’t ride a longboard in a shirt. You want to have a street style”. We interpret that the respondent’s choice of clothes symbolizes the urge to fit into a social norm, which in this case is associated with having a cool attitude.

A clear pattern that is shown in the study is that respondents are more likely to execute impulse purchases of online fashion when they are bored. According to the study, the feeling of being bored occurs when the individual is at home in the evening, often sitting in the couch, in front of the TV. In lack of other activities they look to the computer for inspiration and stimulation to reduce the negative mood. By visiting different online stores and window-shop the individual can temporarily escape the boring moment. The moment of browsing around various web sites can be seen as a hunt for joy or finding a good deal. As the study's respondents are keen on material things the behaviour contributes to stimulation of positive emotions. Regardless of the mood the respondents experience satisfaction and excitement for the moment. The hunt for joy can end up in an impulse purchase or just be a source for inspiration and instant satisfaction. One of the respondents point out that merely filling a shopping basket without completing the purchase can give satisfaction and stimulation.

**Respondents and the trigger phase**

The respondents, given the personality traits that have been identified, are generally susceptible to different types of messages or factors that encourage rapid and spontaneous buying decisions. Throughout the interviews in the study, it appears again and again in the empirical material that the price variable has a significant influence on
impulse purchases. Different types of deals and discounts aimed at consumers give them a sense of wanting to seize the opportunity to make a bargain. One respondent describes the feeling as: “It was not like I was going to buy something, but since it was so cheap I seized the moment.” However, a good price does not necessarily mean a discounted price. It is thus in the eye of the beholder if the price is considered to be good. The opportunity to buy a price worthy product discounted or not, results in a strong positive feeling for the respondent.

The individuals' current state of mind, whether positive or negative, contributes to the increase of impulse buying behaviour according to the study. A positive state of mind can branch from a good performance, salary pay or a sudden happiness as one respondent describes as: “I just got a good salary and felt that I wanted to buy something, I was worth it.”. Such a state of mind can motivate the consumer to treat themselves with something extra. A negative state of mind, however, is an important trigger as it makes the consumer wanting to escape the boredom and to achieve happiness through a shopping activity, described by one respondent as: “I think I'm worth a little bit extra right now. I have allowed myself a lot recently because I've had a difficult time. So, I do some shopping to feel a bit happier”.

Another triggering factor to execute an impulse purchase steams from a planned initial purchase. Respondents are in those cases visiting a certain online store in search of a predetermined product. Several examples in the study show that the consumer, in connection with the original purchase, also buys unplanned items on impulse. In several study cases, respondents mentioned that marketing activities such as cross-and up-selling influence them to purchase more than initially planned. Such activities could be that the online store provides suggestions of products that might suit the consumer and/or be a supplement to the original product. One respondent in the study described such a
scenario as: “On the website when I found my shoes, it popped up: you might like this too ... I clicked there, browsed around there for a bit. It ended up with me buying three pairs of shoes and two shirts - on pure impulse!”

The respondents stated that they frequently use social media such as Facebook, Instagram and blogs as common sources of inspiration: “I saw this jacket on Instagram that someone had bought. I really liked it and just had to look it up. So I went on Zara's website and found more stuff”. Frequent use of social media works as a triggering factor for impulse purchases according to the study.

When finding the right product, the consumer is filled with a sudden happiness and excitement, which motivates the individual to continue the search of new products, to repeat the “kick of pleasure”. One respondent describes such a feeling as: “... and then I found something I wanted. You get kind of excited! It is hard to explain but you get glad when you find something you like”.

Even in the trigger phase the desire to possess material things is central as motivation. Some of the respondents expressed that they often want to purchase new clothing as a result of the combination of the prevailing mood and marketing activities. In the study, respondents mentioned marketing activities such as television commercials, advertising, and direct marketing as triggering factors: “I saw an advertisement on TV about a website where they sell cheap perfumes and went to check it out.”

**Respondents and the act of buying**

The act of buying refers to when the individual feels a sudden and irresistible urge to make a purchase, given the triggers and feeling in the previous phases. Given that the impulse purchase is linked to sudden desires and strong feelings the consumer buying process for impulse purchases tends to be shorter than purchases of more planned
character. Nor information retrieval nor evaluations of alternatives exist in the same way. The sudden happiness and excitement when finding an appealing product are so strong that the emotions replace the common sense according to respondents in the study. One respondent describes such a feeling as: “I just had to have it immediately. So I just bought it instantly instead of waiting until the next day”.

Despite the fact that emotions control the buying process, the study’s consumers show some form of rationalization of their purchases. The consumer actively seeks to rationalize their "must have"- cravings through the buying process to resemble a real need, and thus reduce any cognitive dissonance both before and after the purchase. The rationalization is carried out by the consumers who are actively looking for situations and scenarios where an impulsively selected product might be needed. One common rationalization is that the product is put in a specific future context. For example, that a specific garment is suitable for a specific festive occasion: “I can wear this on New Year’s Eve since I have no new dress to wear”. The garment can also be visually matched with the consumer's existing wardrobe. The rationalization process also includes a reward system where individuals for different reasons convince themselves “to be worthy of” a product.

It has also been shown that the consumers in the study, in some cases, justify their impulse buying behaviour with the price as the determining factor. A good price, limited in time, can also affect ones buying decision which is described by a respondent as: “And I thought: It's on sale, so I should just go for it! So I bought three pairs of shoes”. The offer itself or the feeling of making a bargain can be decisive in the decision to make purchases of impulsive nature. One further aspect that emerged in the study is that some respondents see the point of purchase as a rationalization in itself.
This means that the consumer seizes the opportunity to consume more products when an order is placed anyway.

There are also more specific factors which is essential for the impulse buying decision for the respondents in the study. Free shipping and free returns are such examples. It is clearly illustrated by a respondent in the study stating that the order would never had been executed if it wasn’t for the free shipping and the free return. The delivery time is also highlighted as important by the respondents. Partly, it may be the desire to get the product delivered quickly and partly because the product may be intended for a specific occasion. The consumers in the study points out that the sense of security for the retailer plays a major role, both in terms of delivery and secure payment options. It is important that the retailer is trustworthy and keeps its’ promises. A strong sense of security for a given retailer increases the probability of impulse purchases, according to the study, which is described by one respondent as: “This site uses UPS and it feels good because I recognize it”.

According to the study, online consumption tends to be less reality rooted than consumption in a physical store. An online impulse purchase can easily be de-dramatized by the consumer, since it is not as economically substantial, as pointed out by one respondent: “You do not think about the price in the same way online as when shopping in a physical store. When shopping online, the prices that would have seemed expensive in a physical store all of a sudden feels a bit cheaper”.

**Final discussion: IB behaviour and feelings**

The respondents in this study indicate that consumer personality seems to be an important factor for impulse shopping behaviour, and one of the most prominent personality traits is to easily give in to sudden cravings. Consumers seek immediate reward, combined with the sense of material happiness. The respondents in the study do
not see impulse buying as something negative, but as a way to achieve rapid stimulation in a bored state of mind. That is a finding in contrast to Chih and Hsi-Jui (2012) who suggest that a good mood is central for acting on impulse online. In our study the respondents escape the bored moment by hunting happiness and pursuing kicks of pleasure.

The study also indicates the importance of triggers when carrying out an impulse purchase. One prominent trigger is that consumers feel that the product is good value for money. Consumers are easily attracted by discount offers and the opportunity to make a bargain. Inspiration from friends, primarily through pictures in social media, affects the consumer's impulsive buying tendency. Additional triggers that affect the buying decision positively are free shipping and free returns, and that the specific retailer feels reliable for the consumer. However, the most important factor throughout the process of impulse purchases seems to be the impact of feelings.

**Feelings**

Throughout the study, it is clearly shown that impulse buying of online fashion is driven by emotional factors. The emotions affect the impulse buying behaviour in different ways throughout the three phases mentioned. In the study, a pattern of the consumers' recurrent feelings are identified through the impulse buying process; escapism, pleasure, reward, scarcity, security and anticipation.

The escapism is particularly occurring since the study revealed that the consumers often carried out impulse purchases when they initially indicated that they were bored, as opposed to previous studies mentioned above where respondents indicated that they only browsed when happy (c.f. Piron 1991). The impulse purchase is thus a way for the consumer in this study to escape the reality and find a way to quickly reach a greater satisfaction. In combination with the joy that the respondents feel
owning material things, the constant search for new products could be a form of escapism. The feeling of being bored is replaced by positive emotions such as pleasure and excitement through the purchasing process. The positive feeling after the purchase increase the probability for making impulse purchases since the feelings in many ways replace rational thinking. The respondents also indicated that just filling the shopping basket, without really following through on the purchase, sometimes gave the same feeling of happiness. Then again, when the shopping basket is filled the purchase is but one click away.

Impulsive consumption is in the study strongly linked with the feeling of wanting to reward oneself. This feeling is based on the prevailing state of mind, either positive or negative. A negative state of mind as a starting point of the process allows impulse purchase to act as a “medicine” for feeling better. By allowing oneself something material the state of mind can turn to the better. The impulse purchase can also act as a reward for the study’s consumers after a successful performance or a positive happening in everyday life. The purchase itself is a symbolic act to reward oneself.

A purchasing process which begins with a time-limited and/or discounted offer can create a sense that the consumer risks to lose a great deal if he or she does not act in time. Thus it can be seen as a form of stress associated with the desire for the product because of the offers’ scarcity.

For the impulse purchase to be completed, a sense of security towards the retailer is vital according to the study's respondents. To achieve such a sense it requires that the retailer fulfil the agreed terms and that the consumer feels confident about the retailer. The confidence may arise from earlier good shopping experiences from the specific retailer, but also from that the retailers’ secure payment options and delivery
terms. When the impulse purchase is completed the consumers in the study describe themselves as happy, satisfied and excited. The impulse purchase is strongly connected to the consumers’ anticipation.

**Reflections**

There is still much to learn about online impulse buying behaviour. This study elevates that it is not only when in a good mood that respondents buy online and are thus subjected to online impulse behaviour. The young consumers are more prone to use their mobiles, computers and other gadgets to get online in order to escape boredom and when they do – the impulse purchase is only a click away. The respondents in this study show no regret, but tend to rationalise their purchase as products that are useful for them although on a second glance they would probably admit that they did not need three pair of shoes. In effect the normatively negative aspects that previously might have been associated with impulse buying behaviour are not evident here.

One aspect might still be subject to negative normative feelings. Most of the respondents in the study stated that they spend 2-3 hours per month on online shopping. Considering that the same respondents describe their browsing as an everyday event this estimate of the time might be questioned. Once they get started it is easy to lose track of time. Thus for future research, it may be interesting to apply this study in a longitudinal perspective. In this way, one could identify how much time that is actually devoted to online retailer browsing. It can also capture unknown buying patterns that consumers themselves are not aware of.

A study of longitudinal nature could contribute to positive effects, both for the individual and for society. If the individual realize that the purchase mainly is implemented by emotional reasons rather than logical, the individual stand a chance to change the behaviour. If consumers base their purchasing decisions on actual needs
rather than just desire, it can be assumed that the total consumption level of an individual decreases in the longer term. For the individual a greater control over their own purchases may lead to fewer unnecessary purchases as a result. For society, a reduced level of consumption could result in a positive impact on the environment in terms of sustainability.
References


IDG.se (2010). Facebook, iPhone och framtidens handel [In English “Facebook, iPhone and the future of retailing”] 2010-08-13 Available:


Sundström, M. (2007). In Swedish: De säger att nätbutik är bekvämt. [English - They say the online store is convenient.] PhD Diss. Gothenburg University, BAS


