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The effects of internal and external factors on South African consumers' impulse intention to visit pop-up stores

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Keywords: pop-up, impulse intention, innovativeness, store design

More and more consumers nowadays seek unforgettable experiences when going shopping. Going shopping is no longer just about products, but consumers are concerned about capturing the experiences that they long for (Kim *et al.*, 2007). Pop-up retail forms part of the experience economy and is seen as an enhancer of the shopping experience (Niehm *et al.*, 2010, pp.12). Pop-up retail appeared in South Africa in 2008 (Cooke 2008), somewhat behind the international retail curve and is still considered an innovation. Because of the temporary nature and unique setting of pop-up stores consumers are forced to make quick decisions to participate in the experience. Visiting them while they last may be acts of coincidence when made aware of it. This paper investigates the internal and external factors affecting South African consumers' impulse intention towards visiting pop-up stores. The innovative nature of pop-up retail was supported by the Diffusion of Innovation Theory (Rogers, 1995) and Impulse Behavior Theory (Kim, 2003). This study measured the relationships between internal factors (e.g. positive mood or emotional state, hedonic desires, consumer innovativeness), external factors (e.g. exterior store design) and consumers' impulse intention to visit a pop-up store.

**Method:** An exploratory survey design was followed. Reliable scales from Niehm *et al.*, (2007), Kim (2003) and Moore & Benbasat (1991) were adapted together with additional self-developed scale items. All the constructs being investigated were measured using a seven-point Likert scale. An expert panel evaluated images to ensure it characterize pop-up retail. The instrument was pre-tested to ensure clarity and understandability. Data were collected from a convenient sample of students attending two universities in Pretoria, South Africa. A paper questionnaire was administered during classes and a PowerPoint presentation explaining pop-up retail with images of pop-up stores was shown. A total of 523 completed questionnaires were analyzed.

**Results:** A CFA was performed with the use of EQS 6 software. The results indicated that the CFA models fit the data adequately since the residuals were sufficiently small, the fit indices were greater than the recommended 0.9 and the values of the root mean square error (RMSEA)

were within the recommended range (a lower confidence limit of less than 0.05). Reliability was confirmed with Chronbach's *alpha's* larger than 0.8. Pearson correlation coefficient (PCC) was run to test the hypothesized relationships among the variable and values ranged between 0.46 and 0.53 indicating a positive correlation between the independent variables and impulse intention to visit a pop-up store. All the correlations were significant at the 1% level ( $p\text{-value} < 0.0001$ ) and supported the hypotheses. Multiple regression indicated that consumer innovativeness consumer innovativeness ( $b=0.17, p=0.0001$ ) and exterior store design ( $b=0.20, p=0.0002$ ) were statistically significant at the  $p \leq 0.0001$  level and are more predictive for impulse intention to visit a pop-up store. Positive mood or emotional state and hedonic desires had no significant positive impact for predicting variations in impulse intention to visit a pop-up store.

**Conclusion:** The results showed that consumer innovativeness and exterior store design are predictive of consumers' impulse intentions to visit pop-up stores. This is an indication that in order to attract consumers to pop-up stores retailers need to focus on aspects that satisfy the need for new and unusual shopping experiences through emphasis on attractive visual designs and novel venues. This group of consumers is constantly seeking new products, ideas, experiences and information and would engage in impulse behavior aiming to satisfy these needs. Close attention should be paid to the overall environment of the store (location, venue and placement) as it plays a significant role in consumers' choice to visit pop-up stores. The venue should be unique and the location and placement conveniently but unexpected and surprising. Although the impact of mood or emotional state and hedonic desires was moderate, it can have the ability to change (lift) negative moods and provide pleasurable experiences. Pop-up retailers can ensure that they provide a shopping environment that will result in enjoyment by combining the shopping experience with entertainment. They should stress the non-economic rewards of pop-up retail and make shopping fun by making use of things like music, interactivity, unique scenery and styling tips and advice.

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