Chapter 11
The Effect of Incidental Advertising Exposure on Online Impulse Buying

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this chapter is to explore the influence of the incidental exposition located in the peripheral zone of vision and perceived “without consciousness” in online impulse buying. The authors demonstrate that the advertised brands appearing in the peripheral zone of vision are perceived “without consciousness,” and the participant does not remember being exposed to this ad recently. They test if this exposure has an effect on the purchase of the advertised brand. This chapter also studies the effect of individual self-control on impulse buying and explores the post-purchase reaction to its occurrence. An incidental exposition of a brand was adopted amongst 247 participants. The results show the incidental exposition to a brand facilitates the impulse buying of this brand.

INTRODUCTION

Impulse buying is a salient aspect of the consumer lifestyle. Retailers remark about the importance of this phenomenon and have attempted via promotions, product packaging, and store layout to develop impulsive consumers (Dholakia, 2000). Through the years, impulse buying has been facilitated by technological innovations such as credit cards, telemarketing, and television sales channels (Rook, 1987). The availability of purchases via the Internet has contributed to an increase in the online purchase and especially impulse buying on the Internet. The buying opportunities on the Internet have expanded by increasing the accessibility to the product and services and facilities to make purchases. Additionally, the Internet usually eliminates the constraints of time and space in comparison to the context of traditional trade (Eroglu et al, 2001). Therefore, buyers on the Internet may be more impulsive in nature than traditional buyers (Donthu & Garcia, 1999).

With the increase in impulse purchases, we find that advertiser expenditures also continue to rise. The effects of advertising on the occurrence of a purchase have been shown in several studies.
However, little research has explored the reception and influence of advertising by the receptors, including those in the peripheral visual field of the receiver, but to which the receivers did not allocate attention. Researchers, interested in receiving and influence of persuasive communication, have mainly studied situations in which the receivers focus their attention on messages (Derbaix & Gregory, 2004; Meyers-Levy & Malaviya, 1999). However, given the multiplicity of media using the advertisements, situations in which participants do not allocate attention to the ad are much more frequent than those in which they focus attention.

The objective of this research is to demonstrate using a rigorous method that messages of commercial brands which appear in the peripheral visual area, and which are not determined visually or perceived with attention in a context where the receivers are unable to “recognize” the brands which were listed in the ads, cause a positive effect on judgments, purchase intent, and actual purchase of the advertised brand. For this purpose, we use an experimental method that shows the presence of positive effects of advertising messages seen “without conscience” on the selection and formation of preferences towards brands advertised.

After stating the theoretical background and a presenting a synthesis of previous research on this issue, we specify the objectives and hypothesis of our research and explain the methodology employed. We then present the results, discussions and conclusions by investigating some new prospects for future research. Finally, we assess the limitations of the study.

**Conceptual Work**

**Impulse Buying**

Rook (1987) defined impulse buying as an unplanned purchase occurring when the consumer experiences positive feelings upon exposure to a stimulus. Rook stated impulse buying takes place when the consumer feels an irresistible urge to buy something immediately. This impulse is complex in the direction of a hedonic level and can give rise to emotional conflicts. In addition, it often occurs without considering the consequences. Rook added that this purchase can be considered as a decision process resulting from an emotional impulse. This impulse is an irresistible desire to buy something immediately (Rook, 1987).

Piron (1991) proposes a comprehensive definition of impulse buying which is considered as unplanned purchases resulting from exposure to a stimulus and decided “on the spur of the moment”. After purchase, the consumer feels an emotional cognitive response. According to Giraud (2002), impulse buying is defined as a sudden and sometimes irresistible desire to have a product at any time. The impulse purchase is an unplanned purchase occurring after exposure to a stimulus. This stimulation causes an immediate purchase and it causes a reaction post-purchase. The impulse purchase is initiated by a desire to buy, eat, drink, etc. As a result of the impulse, the consumer cannot control or resist to the desire and the impulse is considered unreasonable and regrettable because the consumer does not want the feeling of being manipulated by marketers or sellers.

Therefore, impulse buying has a number of characteristics. First, it is an unplanned purchase because the consumer decides to purchase the product on the spur of the moment, not in response to an intention purchase made before the purchase itself (Piron, 1991). The second characteristic is the exposure to a stimulus which can be considered as the catalyst which creates the consumer impulse. The stimulus can be clothing, jewelry, perfumes, etc. The atmosphere of the store, which is considered an important factor in the occurrence of an impulse purchase, allows the marketer to place the product in an attractive manner to provoke an impulsive purchase (Dholakia, 2000). The third characteristic is the immediate nature of the behavior. The consumer decides to purchase on the spur of the moment without assessing the future consequences of the purchase.