

Influence of Body Image Dissatisfaction on Impulse Buying among Young Adults in Malaysia

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to investigate body image dissatisfaction as one of the factors that affect impulse buying. The main objective of this study is to investigate the influence of body image dissatisfaction on impulse buying among young adults in Malaysia as well as to examine the gender differences in body image dissatisfaction and impulse buying among young adults in Malaysia. The quantitative research design, like simple linear regression and cross-sectional studies, was applied in this study. The reverse scoring of the body image satisfaction questionnaire (BISQ) consisting of 23 items and the impulsive buying scale of 9 items were used to measure self-perception of specific body parts and satisfaction with overall body physical fitness and vitality. In contrast, the impulsive buying scale will measure the respondent's tendency for impulsive buying behaviour. The 29.00 version of IBM SPSS statistics software was adopted to analyze the data and test the hypothesis accordingly. A sample of 407 young adults in Malaysia (50.6% male, 49.4% female) participated in the study. Results revealed that there are significant gender differences in body image dissatisfaction among young adults in Malaysia, and there are significant gender differences in impulse buying among young adults in Malaysia. also, body image dissatisfaction has a significant positive influence on impulse buying among young adults in Malaysia. There are some limitations to this study, such as self-report measures. These findings point to the potential practical and theoretical implications, for example, about reducing impulse buying through improving body image satisfaction by doing awareness related to body positivity.

Keywords: Body Image Dissatisfaction, Impulse Buying, Young Adult, Malaysia

Research Background

Impulse buying behaviour has been the subject of numerous studies, with researchers seeking to understand the factors that influence this behaviour. Impulsive purchases constitute a significant share of sales in the contemporary retail sector (Artem et al., 2022).

In the United States, these unplanned buying decisions contribute to an annual profit of 17.78 billion dollars for retailers, with consumers, on average, spending 5400 dollars each year on such unplanned purchases (Artem et al., 2022). The impact of the COVID-19 crisis has resulted in a notable upswing in impulse shopping. Recent surveys suggest that the average monthly expenditure on impulsive purchases by American consumers has risen by 18% since the onset of the pandemic (Artem et al., 2022). Despite the detrimental influence of COVID-19 on the global economy, experts attribute 20% of spending in the retail sector's sales to impulse purchases (Artem et al., 2022). According to Bank Negara Malaysia (2020), nearly half, or 47%, of young Malaysian individuals are burdened with substantial credit card debts. One of the reasons this happens is because they have no self-control and are thus involved in impulsive buying.

The mentioned statistics highlight the growing significance of impulse buying in the global retail industry. Consequently, it has attracted researchers' interest in the impulse buying phenomenon, exploring various perspectives and utilizing diverse conceptualizations and methodologies. Despite numerous studies on impulse buying, the literature on this subject remains highly fragmented (Artem et al., 2022). Researchers from various disciplines, such as marketing, information systems (Zafar, Qiu, Li, et al., 2021), business and management (Ahmed et al., 2020), and tourism (Li et al., 2021), have delved into the investigation of impulse buying. Yet, there is still a lack of research about the influence of body image dissatisfaction on understanding factors affecting impulse buying behaviour.

Impulse buying is characterized by spontaneous and unplanned purchases, involving swift decision-making with minimal or no consideration of potential consequences (Cai et al., 2021). According to the National Library of Medicine (2021), impulse buying is sudden and unplanned buying behaviour driven by a strong and persistent impulse, after which consumers experience a series of emotional, cognitive, and/or behavioural traits. According to the Cambridge Dictionary, impulse buying is buying something you had not planned to buy because you suddenly want it when you see it. Impulse buying also has benefits, such as improving negative emotions and enhancing self-image (Lucas and Koff, 2017). Unfortunately, uncontrollable impulsive buying behaviour may have detrimental consequences, including negative emotions such as guilt (Li et al., 2015) and a diminished level of subjective well-being (Cai et al., 2021), with subsequent implications for mental health (Rook, 1987). It is observed that impulsive buying can lead young individuals into patterns of excessive consumption (Forney and Park, 2009), resulting in severe debt issues and, in extreme cases, contributing to suicidal behaviour (Yi and Baumgartner, 2018). Therefore, understanding the underlying mechanisms of impulsive buying is crucial, bearing great significance in advocating for correct and rational consumer behaviour.

As per recent statistics (2022), it has been observed that women exhibit a higher inclination toward impulse buying, particularly in the category of clothing. Approximately six out of ten women surveyed in various countries indicated that they primarily engage in impulsive online purchases of clothes or shoes. In contrast, less than 40 percent of male respondents reported engaging in impulse buying in this specific category. In the case of men, electronics emerged as the most common product category for impulse purchases online, with around half of the respondents expressing this behaviour (Marina, 2022). Additionally, prior research has highlighted gender-specific reactions to the opportunity to purchase

material possessions (Liang, 2021). Liang's (2021), findings suggest that men tend to purchase instrumental and leisure items impulsively, projecting independence and activity. In contrast, women tend to opt for symbolic and self-expressive goods, focusing on appearance and emotional aspects of the self. Given the divergent impulse buying behaviours observed between men and women (Liang, 2021), it is plausible that they may also exhibit distinct responses to their body image.

Body image dissatisfaction is characterized by individuals harbouring negative perceptions of their physical appearance, leading to potential adverse influences on emotional well-being, including the generation of negative emotions (Lucas and Koff, 2017) and the risk of depression (Fung et al., 2010). Other than that, body image dissatisfaction can be described as a negative stance towards one's own body, arising from the perceived misalignment between the actual body image (incorporating perceptions, thoughts, and emotions regarding one's tangible physical appearance) (Cash, 1990) and the ideal body image (internally held standards regarding one's physical appearance). A previous study showed that girls generally showed greater body image dissatisfaction and uneasiness with their external appearance compared to their male counterparts (Fischetti, 2020). Hence, this current study aimed to explore gender differences concerning the dissatisfaction experienced by young adults in Malaysia regarding their body image during a universally acknowledged critical phase of personal development.

According to self-regulation theory, individuals are motivated by two distinct factors to modify their behaviours, thoughts, and emotions in alignment with their internal standards. These motivations include the drive to achieve positive outcomes and the desire to prevent negative consequences (Cai, 2021). Cai suggests that impulse buying may serve a self-regulation function, providing individuals with necessary identity symbols (enhancing motivation) or mitigating low self-esteem (preventing motivation). Numerous studies have consistently indicated that the motive of enhancing one's appearance is a central element in impulse buying behaviour (Cai, 2021). It is suggested that impulse buying may serve as a self-regulation mechanism, meeting the need for identity symbols (enhancing motivation) or addressing low self-esteem (preventing motivation). Numerous studies have highlighted the significance of appearance-enhancing motives as a central element in impulse buying (Cai, 2021). To uphold and improve self-attraction and self-image, individuals tend to buy products related to enhancing their appearance, such as fashionable clothing and beauty products. Additionally, research has indicated that dissatisfaction with body image can lead to the generation of negative emotions. Consequently, individuals may engage in impulse buying to alleviate the distress caused by the unfavourable evaluation of their body image (Lucas and Koff, 2017). Therefore, current research will investigate the influence of body image dissatisfaction on impulse buying among young adults in Malaysia.

Purpose of the Study

This study will focus on investigating three objectives. The first one is to examine the gender differences in body image dissatisfaction among young adults in Malaysia. Secondly, it will examine the gender differences in impulse buying among young adults in Malaysia, and lastly, it will investigate the influence of body image dissatisfaction on impulse buying among young adults in Malaysia. The significance of this study is that it will help in both knowledge and practical contribution. For example, this study can narrow the gap in the research on body

image dissatisfaction and impulse buying and help future studies, especially from a Malaysian perspective. This is because most of the past studies are from international sources and only explain, in general, the established association between body image dissatisfaction and impulse buying. Next, this research may also help raise community awareness about body positivity and control their buying behaviour. Lastly, it will create a better understanding of consumers' impulse buying behaviour to help marketers in terms of future marketing strategies.

Literature Review

Gender Differences in Body Image Dissatisfaction

The first international study by Fischetti et al (2019), studies gender differences in body image dissatisfaction, specifically examining the impact of physical education and sports. The study aimed to understand how adolescents' perceptions of body dissatisfaction and uneasiness varied, focusing on the role of physical education in fostering positive mental representations of corporeality. Surprisingly, the findings indicated no noteworthy difference between untrained and trained males concerning the Body Uneasiness Test (BUT) and Contour Drawing Rating Scale (CDRS). Trained adolescents exhibited improved body size perception and reduced body uneasiness. Additionally, girls demonstrated greater dissatisfaction and uneasiness with their external appearance than their male counterparts.

The next international study is an extension of a comprehensive examination of eating disorders, with a specific emphasis on males. This study investigates how body image, sociocultural attitudes, appearance anxiety, and depression contribute to disordered eating behaviours among college students (Turel et al., 2018). The findings indicate the main gender differences, body image dissatisfaction, social appearance anxiety, and depression emerged as significant predictors of eating disorder risk in females, while these factors did not exhibit the same predictive influence in males.

Moreover, Femke et al (2018), conducted a study to investigate the relationship between body image, sexual satisfaction and relationship quality in romantic couples the findings indicate that individuals with a more positive body image tend to perceive higher quality in romantic relationships, primarily due to increased sexual satisfaction. Other than that, there were no gender differences found, suggesting that the correlation between body image, sexual satisfaction, and perceived relationship quality is equally strongly associated with both women and men. Additionally, the study did not reveal any connections between an individual's body image, their level of sexual satisfaction, and their partner's perceived relationship quality. These results suggest that interventions concentrating on fostering a positive body image may contribute to the development of a more gratifying sexual life and a heightened perception of relationship quality.

For the last international research led by Davis et al (2019), the focus was on examining the role of body image in predicting life satisfaction and flourishing among men and women. The study aimed to evaluate whether body dissatisfaction and appreciation could be significant predictors of life satisfaction and flourishing, beyond the influences of age, BMI, and personality factors. The online survey gathered responses from 112 male and 336 female adults, encompassing assessments of life satisfaction, flourishing, body dissatisfaction, body appreciation, and personality. Results showed that women exhibited

higher levels of body dissatisfaction, Neuroticism, Extraversion, and Conscientiousness compared to men. However, there were no gender differences in body appreciation or various well-being measures.

For local research, Azmira et al (2018), conducted research to identify body image dissatisfaction and its associated factors among primary school students. This study involved 776 primary school students. Around 60.1% of students experienced dissatisfaction with their body image, and this was significantly ($p < 0.001$) linked to gender and Body Mass Index (BMI). When accounting for other variables, females were 2.07 times more likely to have body image dissatisfaction than their male counterparts. Additionally, overweight/obese students had a 4.06 times higher likelihood of experiencing body image dissatisfaction compared to students with a normal BMI when adjusted for other factors.

For the last local research, according to Ying Ling Lee et al (2020), the researcher aimed to investigate gender differences in body image and its connection to Body Mass Index (BMI) and dietary habits among university students. One hundred students from the university were enrolled in the study. Body image was evaluated using the body shape questionnaire and figure rating scale, while dietary intake was assessed through meal practices and a 3-day dietary recall. The statistical analysis was conducted using SPSS. The findings revealed that Approximately 80% of females expressed a desire to be thinner, contrasting with 28% of males who wished to be heavier. The study revealed a high prevalence of body image dissatisfaction, reaching 89%. Those dissatisfied with their body image displayed notably elevated body image concerns, indicated by a mean score of 82.24, compared to the satisfied group, with a mean score of 59.64. A positive correlation was also observed between BMI and body shape questionnaire score ($r = 0.306$; $p = 0.002$). The body image dissatisfied group exhibited a significantly higher mean BMI ($22.07 \pm 3.53 \text{ kg/m}^2$) than the satisfied group ($20.97 \pm 1.27 \text{ kg/m}^2$). Notably, females experiencing body image dissatisfaction displayed a lower tendency to snack, while those content with their body image exhibited a higher frequency of snacking between meals. This suggests discernible gender differences in energy and nutrient intake patterns.

In summary, based on the previous studies above, we can conclude that gender differences in body image dissatisfaction have provided mixed findings. Some studies say that there are no gender differences in body image dissatisfaction, and some say there are gender differences in body image dissatisfaction depending on their factor, sample and variable in research. Besides, there is still a lack of research about body image dissatisfaction from a local point of view. Thus, in this present study, the researcher will explore gender differences in body image dissatisfaction among young adults in Malaysia in detail.

H1: There are significant differences in body image dissatisfaction based on gender among young adults in Malaysia.

Gender Differences in Impulse Buying

A study was conducted in Mexico to examine the impact of impulse buying tendency on online impulse buying behaviour, considering normative evaluation and the urge to buy impulsively on the Internet as mediating factors. Additionally, the researchers explored

whether gender and generation influenced the proposed model. The findings revealed no significant differences between genders (men and women) in terms of influencing the impulse buying tendency model, offering a contrasting perspective. However, two noteworthy distinctions were observed between centennials and millennials: one related to the urge to buy impulsively on the internet (UBII) and online impulse buying behaviour (OIBB), and the other associated with impulse buying tendency (IBT) and OIBB.

Another international study (Erkan & Gamze, 2019) explores whether the impact of gender identity on consumers' impulse buying behaviour varies with biological sex acting as a moderator variable. The result shows that feminine gender identity positively affects impulse buying behaviour. Meanwhile, for the biological sex analysis, The findings suggest that, from the perspective of females, both feminine and masculine gender identities did not significantly impact impulse buying behaviour. Conversely, according to males, it was observed that feminine gender identity exerted an influence on impulse buying behaviour. In contrast, masculine gender identity did not significantly influence impulse buying behaviour.

Paramitha et al (2022), investigate the influence of hedonic shopping and utilitarian values on impulse buying in the marketplace and also determine the role of gender in moderating this influence. From the study, a total of 150 respondents participated in this study, and it reveals that gender does not play a significant moderating role in the influence of utilitarian value on impulse buying, suggesting that there is no gender difference in impulse buying behaviour between men and women.

Next, a study of gender differences in cognitive and affective impulse buying was conducted by Amanda et al (2023), the purpose of this study was to examine gender differences in affective and cognitive processes related to impulse buying behaviour, as well as to identify variations in impulsive purchases across different product categories. A total of 277 students were included in the sample. Analysis of variance tests revealed significant differences between males and females regarding affective process components (such as the irresistible urge to buy, positive buying emotion, and mood management) and cognitive process components (including cognitive deliberation and unplanned buying). Moreover, significant differences were also found between men and women in the frequency of impulsive purchases across various product categories, such as shirts/sweaters, pants/skirts, coats, underwear/lingerie, accessories, shoes, electronics, hardware, computer software, music CDs or DVDs, sports memorabilia, health/beauty products, and magazines/books for pleasure reading.

Additionally, the global study centred on customers' impulse buying behaviour at night markets, conducted by Liang (2021), involved 1053 participants across various international night markets in Taiwan. The findings demonstrated that variables such as insight ability, customer information, response and feedback, and enthusiasm directly and significantly positively influenced the attitude toward impulse buying. Additionally, specific statistically significant differences emerged in the path relationships between male and female customers during the multi-group comparisons conducted in partial least squares analysis.

Lastly, the local study conducted by Harun et al. (2018) sought to investigate the internal and external factors influencing the impulse buying behaviour of Malaysian credit card owners, with a specific emphasis on gender distinctions. The primary objectives included scrutinizing the impact of these factors on impulse buying and exploring whether gender played a moderating role in these influences. A total of 203 credit card owners participated in the study, providing data through the distribution of questionnaires. The results indicated that only promotional approaches, window displays, and consumer bad mood significantly influenced impulse buying behaviour. Surprisingly, there was no moderating influence of gender, and no noteworthy differences were observed between male and female consumers concerning impulse buying behaviour.

In summary, we can conclude that most of the international research found that there is a gender difference between males and females in terms of impulse buying. Thus, in this present study, the researcher will explore in depth the topic of gender differences in impulse buying among young adults in Malaysia since there are only a few research on this topic that have a specific age group.

H2: There are significant differences in impulse buying based on gender among young adults in Malaysia

The Influence of Body Image Dissatisfaction on Impulse Buying

In the initial international research titled "Body Image Dissatisfaction and Impulse Buying: A Moderated Mediation Model" by Cai et al (2021), the aim was to explore the mediating roles of self-acceptance and self-esteem in the relationship between body image dissatisfaction and impulse buying. The study also investigated the moderating influence of gender on these connections. 374 college and graduate students participated in the research, and the findings revealed a positive correlation between body image dissatisfaction and impulse buying.

In a previous international study examining the interplay between body image, impulse buying, and the mediating influence of negative affect, conducted by Margery Lucas in 2017, the results indicated that negative affect played a mediating role between various body image variables and the tendency for affective impulse buying (IBT-Aff). Regression analyses demonstrated a positive correlation for appearance orientation, weighted discrepancy, and upward physical appearance comparison with negative affect. In contrast, appearance evaluation showed a negative influence. Furthermore, negative influences on impulse buying were observed, irrespective of the specific body image measure. The study employed the bootstrapping method to estimate the indirect influences of each variable on impulse buying through their impact on negative influence, with 5000 resamples to calculate the 95% bias-corrected confidence intervals (CI).

Lastly, for the last international research about body image's influence on the behaviour of beauty products, impulse purchases on the student's psychology Al Azhar University of Indonesia. According to Faisal Rachmat (2022), the purpose of the study was to understand the impact of body image factors on impulsive behaviour among adolescent girls in the final stage of teenage development. The results, derived from the coefficient of determination, revealed that perceptual aspects accounted for 13.3%, and behavioural

aspects contributed to 30% of impulsive purchases. Perceptual aspects significantly influenced impulsive purchases with a regression coefficient of -0.272 and a significance value of 0.029 ($p < 0.05$). This signifies a meaningful impact of perceptual aspects on impulsive buying behaviour. Similarly, behavioural aspects demonstrated a significant influence, with a regression coefficient of -0.504 and a significance value of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$), indicating a notable influence on impulsive purchases. The negative regression coefficient suggests a negative correlation between perceptual and behavioural aspects and impulsive buying behaviour. In conclusion, the research found a significant negative influence of body image on impulsive buying behaviour among Psychology students at the University of Al Azhar Indonesia. The influence of body image accounted for 40.4% of impulsive purchase behaviour, suggesting that students with a negative body image tend to engage in impulsive purchases due to their negative perception of their bodies.

In conclusion, past studies show that there is a positive correlation between body image dissatisfaction and impulse buying. However, this study will provide recent data on Malaysia since there are only a few and not the latest data regarding this study.

H3: Body image dissatisfaction has a positive significant influence on impulse buying among young adults in Malaysia.

Methodology

Research Design

In this study, the research approach that was used was quantitative design through the questionnaire, and the research design for this study was cross-sectional since the research collects data from many different individuals and is only conducted at a single point in time.

Population and Sampling Techniques

The population for this study is young adults in Malaysia who are in the range between 18 and 26 years old (NIH, 2015). For the sample in this study, the research used the table by Krejcie and Morgan in 1070 to determine the sample size. According to the Department of Statistics Malaysia Official Portal, the current statistics show that 30.5% or 9.9 million of the total Malaysian population are between the ages of 15 and 30 years old. However, the target age for this study is 18 to 26 years old because they are considered young adults, according to NIH (2015). Based on the table, the minimum sample size is 384 respondents for one million population. Since this study examined gender differences, the number of male and female respondents should be equal or slightly less. Thus, in this study, the total respondent was 407, with males (206) and females (201).

Procedure

Data were gathered using a questionnaire, specifically distributed through a Google Form. The distribution process involved sharing the Google Form links with participants utilizing convenient sampling methods. Convenience sampling, a non-probability technique, was employed, and samples were chosen based on their convenient availability to the researcher. In this approach, researchers search for samples that are easily accessible, without the requirement of representing the entire population. Although it would be ideal to test a sample that accurately reflects the population, which in this study comprises young

adults, the researchers chose convenience sampling due to its commonality, speed, cost-influence effectiveness, and ease of sample availability.

Research Instrument

The respondents' demographic information was collected using self-made instruments. Open-ended questions like gender, age, race, socio-economic, source of pocket money, and place they shop the most were answered by the respondents.

Body image Dissatisfaction

In this research, the Body Image Satisfaction Questionnaire (BISQ) developed by Rodrigues et al. (2021) will be subjected to reverse scoring. Respondents were instructed to assess their satisfaction by choosing a number corresponding to their feelings about different aspects of their bodies. The 23 items covered facial features (examples, teeth, hair, eyes, nose), body parts (examples, glutes, arms, chest), and overall appearance (examples, physical fitness, height, vitality, body shape). Using a five-point Likert scale, participants rated their satisfaction level with each body part, ranging from 1 ("I don't like and would like to be different") to 5 ("I consider myself favoured").

Impulse buying

For measuring the impulse buying behaviour among young adults, in this study, the researchers used an instrument developed by Rook and Fisher in 1995, which is the Impulsive Buying Scale (IBB). This instrument consists of nine items that will measure the tendency of participants in impulse buying. These will be scaled using a five-point Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

Data Analysis

All statistical analyses were conducted by using SPSS 29.00. Both descriptive and inferential analysis were used to analyse the gender differences in each variable and the influence of body image dissatisfaction on impulse buying among young adults in Malaysia. Before statistical tests were performed, the researcher did data screening, for example, finding missing values, recording, removing outliers, and performing normality tests. In this study, a total of 407 respondents were analysed and found to be valid. The normal distribution was determined by examining the kurtosis and skewness values. Cronbach's alpha was used to determine the reliability of the item analysis. The gender differences in body image dissatisfaction and impulse buying were evaluated using an independent sample t-test. Other than that, a significant level of Levene's test will also be computed to determine whether the t-test value will be taken from equal variance assumed if the p-value Levene's test is greater than 0.05 or the value of the t-test will be taken from equal variance not assumed if the p-value of Levene's test less than 0.05. the finding from Levene's test is to test the homogeneity variance between males and females where if the finding shows a p-value greater than 0.05, it indicates that there is no difference between the variance of males and females, which means that the sample comes from a population with the same variance. The data was evaluated at a 95% confidence interval and $p < 0.05$ significant level.

Finally, the impact of body image dissatisfaction on impulse buying among young adults in Malaysia underwent assessment through simple linear regression. The statistical significance of the hypothesis results was interpreted by examining various statistical values.

The regression coefficient (B), indicating the extent of change in the dependent variable by the independent variable, was considered. Additionally, the p-value represents the probability of rejecting the hypothesis when it is true, with a significance level set at 0.05. A smaller p-value (< 0.05) indicated a significant relationship. The t-value, indicating the statistical significance of the regression coefficient, was assessed, with a larger t-value providing stronger evidence for the coefficient as a predictor. The r^2 value, representing the proportion of variation in one variable accounted for by another, was evaluated, with interpretations by Ng Joo (2013) suggesting weak, moderate, and significant relations for values of 0.25, 0.50, and 0.75, respectively. Furthermore, the F-statistic, reflecting the ratio of explained to unexplained variation, was considered, with a higher F-statistic suggesting that the independent variables explained more of the variation in the dependent variable.

Research Findings

Demographic Profiling of the Respondents

By referring to Table 1, the respondent's demography is observed, and there is only a slight difference in several respondents based on gender, where male (50.6%) $n=206$ and female (4.9%) $n=201$. Most respondents among young adults are between ages 23 and 22 years old, with (36.1%) $n=147$ and (25.6%) $n=104$. The least number of respondents are from age 19 years old with (2.5%) $n=10$. Most of the respondents are Malays (83.5%) $n=340$ while the rest are Chinese (9.3%) $n=38$, Indian (5.9%) $n=24$, and others (5%) $n=5$.

In terms of socio-economic, many of the respondents are from B40 ($<RM4,850$) with (72%) $n=293$, followed by M40 with (22.1%) $n=90$ and T20 with (5.9%) $n=24$. Most of the respondents get the money by working with (40%) $n=163$, followed by getting money from parents with (37.8%) $n=154$. Based on the results, the respondents usually do the shopping the most via online shopping took (60.7%) $n=247$ of the total sample.

Table 1
Demographic Profiling of the Respondents

Factor	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	206	50.6
	Female	201	49.4
Age	18	13	3.2
	19	10	2.5
	20	19	4.7
	21	28	6.9
	22	104	25.6
	23	147	36.1
	24	37	9.1
	25	32	7.9
Race	26	17	4.2
	Malay	340	83.5
	Chinese	38	9.3
	Indian	24	5.9
Socio-economic	Others	5	1.2
	B40 (<RM4,850)	293	72.0
	M40(RM4,851-10,970)	90	22.1
Get pocket money from	T20 (>RM10,971)	24	5.9
	Parents	154	37.8
	Working	163	40.0
	Part Time Job	67	16.5
Do shopping the most via	Others	23	5.7
	Online Shopping	247	60.7
	Physical	145	35.6

Factor	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	206	50.6
	Female	201	49.4
Age	18	13	3.2
	19	10	2.5
	20	19	4.7
	21	28	6.9
	22	104	25.6
	23	147	36.1
	24	37	9.1
	25	32	7.9
Race	26	17	4.2
	Malay	340	83.5
	Chinese	38	9.3
	Indian	24	5.9
	Others	5	1.2
	Others	15	3.7

Gender Differences in Body Image Dissatisfaction among Young Adults in Malaysia

Based on Table 2, the results are obtained from equal variance assumed since Levene's test shows that the significant value is more than 0.05, which means the researcher met the assumption of homogeneity of variance. In other words, equal variances are assumed. The t-test analysis shows that there is a significant difference in body image dissatisfaction among young adults in Malaysia with a p-value less than 0.05 with a mean score between males (Mean=2.2976) and females (Mean=2.6422) with $t(407)=-4.241$, and $p=0.001$. Therefore, the alternative hypothesis 1 is accepted.

Table 2

T-test between Body Image Dissatisfaction and Gender

Gender	Mean Differences	t-value	Sig.
Male	2.2976	-4.241	0.001
Female	2.6422		

Gender Differences in Impulse Buying among Young Adults in Malaysia

Based on Table 4.4.1.2, the results are obtained from equal variance, which is not assumed since Levene's test shows that the significant value is less than 0.05, which means the researcher did not meet the assumption of homogeneity of variance. In other words, equal variances are not assumed. Based on the result, it shows that there is a significant difference in impulse buying among young adults in Malaysia with a p-value less than 0.05 with a mean score between males (Mean=2.7589) and females (Mean=3.2836) with $t(407)=-6.784$, and $p=0.001$. Therefore, the alternative hypothesis 2 is accepted.

Table 2

T-test between Impulse Buying and Gender

Gender	Mean	t-value	Sig.
Male	2.7589	-6.784	0.001
Female	3.2836		

Correlation between Body Image Dissatisfaction and Impulse Buying

Before regression analysis, the researcher performed correlation analysis first to test the significant relationship between the independent and dependent variables. The researcher used Pearson correlation in SPSS to see the magnitude and strength of the relationship and interpret the result below.

The result in Table 3 shows a positive, significant and negligible correlation between body image dissatisfaction and impulse buying ($r= 0.237$, $p<0.05$). According to the results, high body image dissatisfaction will increase in impulse buying behaviour.

Table 3

Correlation value for Body Image Dissatisfaction and Impulse Buying

		IV	DV
Body Image Dissatisfaction	Pearson Correlation	1	0.237*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		<0.001
	N	407	407
Impulse Buying	Pearson Correlation	0.237*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<0.001	
	N	407	407

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

The Influence of Body Image Dissatisfaction on Impulse Buying among Young Adults in Malaysia

According to Table 4, body image dissatisfaction contributes to the prediction of impulse buying, meaning that in a 1-unit standard deviation of body image dissatisfaction, it will increase by 0.237 (beta) in impulse buying. Body image dissatisfaction also explains 5.6% of the variance (R-square) in impulse buying, while 94.4% of the variance comes from another factor. Therefore, body image dissatisfaction positively predicts impulse buying with $F(1)=24.164$, $P\text{-value}=0.001$. Thus, the null hypothesis 3 is rejected.

Table 4

Regression Analysis of Body Image Dissatisfaction on Impulse Buying

		Beta	df	f-value	p-value
Body Image Dissatisfaction		0.237	1	24.164	<0.001

*significant at $p<0.05$

** $p<0.001$

R-square value 0.056

Discussions

Gender Differences in Body Image Dissatisfaction among Young Adults in Malaysia

This study aimed to examine the gender differences in body image dissatisfaction among young adults in Malaysia. The alternative hypothesis 1 of this research states that there are significant differences in body image dissatisfaction based on gender among young adults in Malaysia. The findings in this study, which were discovered in the previous chapter, confirm that there are gender differences in body image dissatisfaction among young adults in Malaysia. Furthermore, the result shows that female young adults in Malaysia reported

having greater dissatisfaction with their body image than males. All this is even more evident if we compare the mean score between males (Mean=2.298) and females (Mean=2.642).

This shows that this study is aligned with some of past studies. This is because there are inconsistent past studies regarding gender differences in body image dissatisfaction, neither in international nor local studies. However, this study revealed that there are gender differences in body image dissatisfaction among young adults in Malaysia. The findings from this study align with previous research (Fischetti et al., 2019) that resulted in gender differences regarding the degree of body dissatisfaction and uneasiness among adolescents who play sports. In fact, in that study, females had greater dissatisfaction and uneasiness than males, which is aligned with the present study. Next, this study also agrees with previous researchers (Quittkat et al., 2019), who found there are significant gender differences in body area satisfaction, suggesting that women were significantly more dissatisfied with their bodies than men.

Next, this result was also influenced by the age range of the respondents that was set by the present researcher, which is young adults between 18 and 26 years old. According to a past study by Barnett et al. (2020), the study aims to investigate the relationship between body image satisfaction and loneliness among young adults and older adults. The study found that young adults had lower body image satisfaction levels than older adults (Barnett et al., 2020).

Finally, the outcomes of the current study are consistent with the concepts and theories discussed in Chapter 2, particularly those related to gender roles and sociocultural influences. Traditional gender roles associate femininity with beauty and the aspiration for an appealing appearance, while masculinity is linked to power, control, and physical prowess, with the male body seen as a tool for influence action in the external environment. The societal emphasis on women's physical attractiveness places a higher value on their appearance, influencing them to assess their social worth based on their looks and perpetuating cultural objectification through ongoing societal scrutiny. Within this gendered social context, women tend to develop a self-critical orientation toward their physical appearance, leading to specific comparison tendencies associated with negative body esteem. Women are more inclined than men to partake in upward social comparisons, perceiving other same-sex individuals as more attractive and possessing superior physical qualities (Neagu, 2015).

Thus, alternative hypothesis 1 is accepted, which is that there are significant gender differences in body image dissatisfaction among young adults in Malaysia, supported by the findings in the present study, past research, sociocultural theory and gender roles.

Gender Differences in Impulse Buying among Young Adults in Malaysia

The second objective of this study is to examine the gender differences in impulse buying among young adults in Malaysia. Alternative hypothesis 2 of this research proposed that there are significant differences in impulse buying based on gender among young adults in Malaysia. According to the result of this study, the researcher met the objective set in the study, where the finding revealed there are differences in impulse buying among male and female young adults in Malaysia. Interestingly, results from this present study also reveal that

female young adults in Malaysia are higher than males in impulse buying. This can be proven by comparing the mean score of males (Mean=2.759) and females (Mean=3.284).

Despite the inconsistencies of past findings regarding gender differences in impulse buying, this study revealed that there was a significant difference in impulse buying between male and female young adults in Malaysia. This finding is consistent with research done by Amanda et al. (2023), where the study shows that there are significant differences found between men and women in the frequency with which the product categories, such as accessories, electronics, health/beauty, etc., products were purchased on impulse. Other than that, findings from a recent study were also supported by research done by Liang in 2021. The finding revealed significant differences in the relationship between male and female consumers on impulse buying at night markets.

Moreover, the results were also influenced by the age range, which is the young adult according to Bonnie et al. (2015) state that young adults ages 18 to 26 years old are traditionally expected to become financially independent, and this statement is supported by the respondent's source of money where in this study 40% of the respondent gets the money from working. This explained that they had financial capabilities and buying power since they had money to impulsively buy whatever they wanted.

Thus, alternative hypothesis 2, which is that there are significant gender differences in impulse buying among young adults in Malaysia, is accepted. This result is supported by the findings in the present study and past study as well.

The Influence of Body Image Dissatisfaction on Impulse Buying among Young Adults in Malaysia

The last objective of this study is to investigate the influence of body image dissatisfaction on impulse buying among young adults in Malaysia. Alternative hypothesis 3 in this study proposed that body image dissatisfaction positively influences impulse buying among young adults in Malaysia. According to the result stated in the previous chapter, body image dissatisfaction has a positively significant influence on impulse buying among young adults in Malaysia, with 1 unit of standard deviation of body image dissatisfaction increase by 0.237 beta in impulse buying. The result shows that body image dissatisfaction also explains 5.6% of the variance (R-square) in impulse buying, while 94.4% comes from other factors. This result is aligned with the past research by Cai et al. (2021), which found that body image dissatisfaction was positively associated with impulse buying, and self-esteem played a mediating role between body image dissatisfaction and impulsive buying.

According to sociocultural theory by Lev Vygotsky (1917), socialising agents such as parents, friends, teachers, caregivers, and society at large influence shaping body satisfaction and appearance self-concepts. This theory also suggests that the sociocultural environment strongly influences what individuals perceive as the ideal body image. Based on this theory explains that the respondents from this study face sociocultural pressures by portraying images of how they look, which in turn leads the individuals to feel disappointed about the appearance of their physical bodies and causes them to have body image dissatisfaction.

Next, according to Hawkins Stern's impulse buying theory (1962) proposed insights into the circumstances under which consumers are likely to engage in impulse buying behaviour. There are four types of impulse buying, according to Hawkins (1962). Pure impulse buying is buying purely on the basis of impulse, like buying items that are not routine items on their shopping list. Next is reminder impulse buying, which is making impulse purchases when reminded of a need but having no intention to buy it. The third one is suggested impulse buying, which makes impulse purchases based on a suggestion that usually occurs when the customer sees products for the first time and develops an impulse to buy them. Lastly is planned impulse buying. This kind of impulse buying occurs when the customers know they want to buy a product but are unsure about the specifics (Agarwal, 2019). This theory explains that respondents in this study buy with external forces that can engage and motivate them to buy more than they planned.

To sum up, impulse buying can help people deal with their negative feelings and social pressure regarding their body image dissatisfaction in improving their self-image while buying things impulsively to improve their looks. Hence, the alternative hypothesis 3 is accepted.

Implication

Theoretical Implication

First and foremost, this research will contribute to the existing literature for academicians to gain into the influence of body image dissatisfaction on impulse buying among young adults in Malaysia. In this case, the findings show that body image dissatisfaction has a significant influence on impulse buying. Also, this research confirms the theory that explains both body image dissatisfaction and impulse buying, where it helps contribute to the understanding of impulsive buying behaviour of the customer and explores the role of body image dissatisfaction factor, which is identified as one of the important factors of impulse buying.

Moreover, this study also discovers that demographic factors like age, gender, shopping platform, and source of money impact impulse buying. This provides an understanding for future academics to study further the other factors that lead to impulse buying. Last but not least, the results will enable researchers to apply a theoretical framework to some specific product categories based on body parts. Thus, understanding these variables can be used as a theoretical base to integrate recent findings on impulse buying of young adults in Malaysia and motivate academicians and researchers to work more on it.

Practical Implication

In this study, from the result, we can see that both males and females have a problem with their body satisfaction that we should be worried about because it might affect their mental health and self-esteem. So, this study holds significant practical relevance in investigating the relationship between body image dissatisfaction and impulse buying. By digging into the impact of body image dissatisfaction on impulsive buying among young adults and its underlying mechanisms, this study contributes to fostering an objective and accurate self-evaluation of appearance and body. Such insights are instrumental in steering the public toward curbing impulsive buying tendencies and cultivating rational consumer behaviour. Additionally, the findings may offer guidance on mitigating the adverse psychological and life consequences associated with impulsive buying, ultimately enhancing mental well-being,

living standards, and overall life satisfaction and subjective happiness. For example, public awareness of body positivity where institutes or the government sector can increase public awareness regarding body positivity by promoting body acceptance and challenging traditional beauty standards while also sparking important conversations about the relationship between body image, impulse buying, and mental health in order to reduce body image dissatisfaction among Malaysian.

Next is this study reflecting new retailing and buying trends and help the marketer to establish an action plan on marketing strategies where in the present study identifies the influence of body image dissatisfaction, and platform shopping on impulse buying that could essentially support the existing research literature. Findings from the present study show that body image dissatisfaction affects 5.6% of impulse buying and more than half of the respondents are young adults in Malaysia who use online platforms to shop. This study also advances the understanding of gender differences in impulse buying behaviour among young adults in Malaysia. Therefore, marketers should strategize their product and service marketing approaches by taking into account the influence of gender roles in various purchasing scenarios.

Limitations and Recommendations

Despite meticulous research efforts, it is essential to acknowledge inherent limitations that future studies could address. This study specifically targets young adults in Malaysia, and as such, its findings may not be universally applicable to other regions or countries due to variations in purchasing behaviour and financial capacity. Additionally, the research framework focuses solely on the variable of body image dissatisfaction as a catalyst for impulse buying. Future studies should consider incorporating additional variables such as interpersonal influence, consumer involvement, and consumption patterns to gain a more comprehensive understanding. This broader approach could provide richer insights into the phenomenon under investigation.

Furthermore, this study has limitations associated with the use of self-report measures. While common method bias is not readily apparent, there could be potential social approval influences. Respondents may be inclined to concentrate on and modify their body image, leading to less honest responses aligning with prevailing ideals like thin is beautiful or muscular is beautiful. To address this issue, future research endeavours may explore collecting data from multiple sources to enhance the reliability and validity of the findings.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this research concludes as all the objectives have been addressed and discussed. In summary, this study found that there are gender differences in body image dissatisfaction and impulse buying among young adults in Malaysia. There is a positive correlation between body image dissatisfaction and impulse buying. Last but not least, there are positive significant influences of body image dissatisfaction on impulse buying among young adults in Malaysia.

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