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An Analysis of the Role of Religion in Impulsive and Obligatory Online Purchasing of Islamic Clothing



Abstract

Religious consumers may have different preferences for online shopping based on their religious motivations, and individual and contextual factors can influence their behavior. Specifically, there is a hypothesis that other individuals affect the decision-making of religious consumers in their social environment; moreover, individual factors, like a tendency toward future-oriented thinking, also play an important role in their online shopping decisions. In this study, the researcher aims to examine the impact of religion on impulsive and obligatory online shopping behavior with regards to the mediating role of individual sensitivity. The research method is descriptive and survey-based, using a questionnaire as the tool, and the statistical population consists of consumers of Islamic clothing in Yazd. Analysis of the hypotheses using structural equation modeling showed that individuals' beliefs significantly impact their tendencies for impulsive online shopping of Islamic textiles, but it does not lead to obligatory purchases. Conversely, external religiosity has a significant role in obligatory purchases, but it cannot generate impulsive online shopping behavior.

Keywords: Religion, Impulse Buying, Compulsive Buying, Islamic Clothing

مقدمه

Today, in Iranian society, one of the important and influential factors for national cohesion is religious belief. One of the most significant concepts that humanity has encountered is the idea of spirituality and religious beliefs. Religiosity is a practical system based on convictions that have been sent by the Creator to guide humans on the path of growth and divine perfection, encompassing beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors that are interconnected and provide a sense of wholeness for individuals (Arian, 1999). The issue of religion and religiosity can be traced back to the very heart of history, with evidence of its existence and role even in the most primitive human communities. This itself is one of the reasons why religion has gained significance in the fields of human thought and research. The resilience of religion is such that it cannot be ignored, dismissed, or driven out of human life by any evidence, excuse, or effort (Rahmati and Badrazadeh Oranj, 2018).

Religiosity in individuals manifests in two forms: internal and external. According to research, one of the factors that can be related to consumption is this internal-external dynamic (Hataminasab and Abolhossini Targhi, 2017). Religion is intertwined with human life and, in its entirety, has a broad scope that is deeply connected to human lifestyle. As a result of this importance, studies on the relationship between religion and consumer behavior even gain a special standing in the realm of electronic shopping (Amirshahi et al., 2011).

In the past, the tendency to shop online and consumption patterns were only limited to meeting basic needs like food and clothing. However, in today's societies, for many adults, online shopping has turned into not just a way to fulfill their needs but also a leisure activity in their free time, a method for managing emotions, or a means of self-expression (Amini Bandoo Qaraei et al., 2022). Impulsive online shopping disrupts the usual decision-making process in a customer's brain and replaces the logical outcomes of the purchase with instant gratification. One cannot ignore the fact that everyone behaves impulsively to some extent. This impulsiveness might be lesser or greater compared to others, but nevertheless, it is a form of disruption (Dadgar and Izadi, 2002).

All of us, whether as ordinary individuals or consumers, engage in impulsive and unplanned behaviors in our daily lives. Analyzing these behaviors after they occur, striving for awareness in sensitive situations, and taking such actions are skills that can be honed through practice, allowing us to reduce our impulsive behaviors each day. Consequently, we can also mitigate the financial losses caused by misguided impulsive purchases (Aboulhasani Hostiayani and Hosseini Moghadam, 2016).

In addition to impulsive online shopping disorders, mandatory online shopping disorders are also rapidly on the rise. Compulsive online shopping is an extreme, culture-dependent behavior where affected individuals are excessively engaged in online shopping (Karimi et al., 2020). For some of these individuals, the inability to control their impulses and cravings for online shopping, along with compulsory and impulsive consumer behaviors, can lead to personal turmoil, social issues, occupational inefficiency, a low quality of life, and financial as well as legal problems. This behavior can manifest both internally and externally, and according to research, it is one of the

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factors that can be related to consumption (Hatami Nasab and Aboulhasani, 2017). Religion is intertwined with human lives and has a broad scope overall, with a profound connection to human lifestyle. Consequently, due to this significance, studies on the relationship between religion and consumer behavior, even in the realm of online shopping, gain particular importance (Amirsadeghi et al., 2011).

In addition to impulsive online shopping disorder, compulsory online shopping disorder is also rapidly growing. Compulsive online shopping is an extreme, culturally dependent behavior in which affected individuals become excessively engaged in online shopping (Karimi et al., 2020). For some of these individuals, the inability to control their desire and eagerness for online shopping, along with compulsory and impulsive consumption behaviors, leads to personal and social disturbances, job inefficiency, low quality of life, and also financial and legal problems (Andreeva et al., 2020). Therefore, this study examines the impact of religion on impulsive and compulsive online shopping behavior to determine whether religion really influences the impulsive and compulsive online shopping disorders of consumers.

Theoretical Foundations of Research

A) Consumer Online Shopping Behavior

Consumer behavior is the processes and social relationships that are displayed by individuals, groups, and organizations when obtaining, using, and experiencing products, services, and other resources (Fahmi, 2017). In other words, it's about studying the processes individuals, groups, or organizations, or in a broader sense, consumers, engage in when they pay attention, show interest, choose, purchase, maintain, discard, or use goods, services, beliefs, or experiences, and the reactions they display to satisfy their needs or wants (Guo et al., 2020).

Human nature is one of those truths that is unpredictable. People display different behaviors under similar circumstances. In the apparel industry, when a consumer intends to purchase a product online, their decision-making process includes two parts: choosing between different brands and making a choice among behavioral variables. In fact, their decision-making process is a goal-oriented and problem-solving process (Ismael and Ploeger, 2020). Based on reflecting these personal behaviors, marketers can also predict individuals' future behaviors (Ezati et al., 2017).

B) The Impact of Religion on Consumer Behavior

Religious consumers may have different electronic shopping preferences based on their religious motivations. Research has shown that individual and contextual factors influence the behavior of religious consumers. Specifically, there is a hypothesis that third parties affect the consumption decisions of religious individuals in their social environment. Additionally, individual factors (of a forward-looking nature) also play an important role in the electronic shopping decisions of religious consumers (Lashkari and Mehrparsa, 2014). Therefore, religious consumers may depend on their religious motivations and align with their desires when making purchasing decisions.

Religiosity (also referred to as religious commitment) is the degree to which an individual believes in and adheres to specific religious values and ideals (Sakti and Imanullah, 2018). Religiosity shapes a person's value framework and significantly influences their attitudes and behaviors. This is because religiosity affects consumer behavior through interpersonal trust in an online context (Sadeghi et al., 2019). The existing literature examines how religiosity influences various structures such as perceived risk (Sonobar et al., 2014), materialism (Fischer et al., 2016), consumer decision-making styles (Iranmanesh et al., 2019), ethical behavior (Kotnowski et al., 2016), environmental concerns (Guo et al., 2020), and consumption patterns (Aydinoglu and Krishna, 2011). Since these studies have not considered religiosity from a motivational perspective, it is possible for individuals to cognitively commit to certain beliefs and principles of a religion without actually considering or adhering to its teachings and principles. As a result, the behaviors and consumption patterns of these religious individuals may not align with their commitment to a religion (Karimi et al., 2020). From a motivational perspective, religiosity can be distinguished into two aspects: intrinsic and extrinsic. Intrinsically, religious individuals live their lives fully in accordance with their religious beliefs. They use their religion as a source of pride to enhance their social acceptance (Izati et al., 2017). They also strive to align their daily lives with their religion. In contrast, non-religious individuals selectively adopt religious teachings and participate in religious pursuits to fulfill personal needs or social goals (Araya et al., 2018). Religiosity, spirituality, and religion impact attitudes, perspectives, decisions, and ultimately consumer behavior (Iranmanesh et al., 2019). Numerous studies have confirmed the influence of religiosity on electronic buying intentions (including: Amirshahi et al., 2011; Sakti and Imanullah, 2018).

Religious tendencies play a significant role in countries like Iran, where Islamic thoughts and inclinations are dominant. Any products introduced in this market that contradict the religious beliefs of the people might risk losing credibility as well as customer loyalty (Karimi et al., 2017). Researchers have noted that religiosity is a highly personal matter and its impact on consumer behavior depends on an individual's level of religious commitment. In predominantly Muslim countries (like Iran, Saudi Arabia, Malaysia, etc.), the level of religious

commitment among people is high. Therefore, there's a likelihood of observing the influence of religion on consumers' online shopping behavior (Kotonouski et al., 2016).

Today, religious groups and activists widely use boycott strategies to penalize targeted countries. For instance, the United States' policies in the Middle East and Afghanistan have prompted many Muslim countries to urge consumers to refrain from purchasing their products and services (Ismail and Ploeger, 2020). However, research has shown that the impact of religious tendencies depends on the degree and intensity of the consumers' religious inclinations (Fahmi, 2017; Huang et al., 2015). Boycotting certain brands in Muslim countries clearly reflects their religious sensitivity when it comes to choosing Western brand names (Lashkari and Mehrparsa, 2014). Thus, biases and religious tendencies act as significant factors affecting Iranian consumers' behavior, causing them to react against purchasing electronic products that are considered illicit or contrary to their religious values (Rahmati and Badarzadeh Orange, 2018).

Methodology

This study examines four variables in relation to the topic and objectives. These variables are: impulsive online purchasing, mandatory online purchasing, intrinsic religiosity, and extrinsic religiosity; among which, intrinsic religiosity and extrinsic religiosity act as independent variables while impulsive online purchasing and mandatory online purchasing function as dependent variables. The geographical scope of the research includes Islamic clothing stores in Yazd city, and the statistical population consists of consumers of Islamic clothing aged between 20 to 50 years. Due to research limitations (time, accessibility, and cost), it was not feasible to collect data from all members of the statistical population, resulting in a sample of 170 consumers whose opinions were used as the necessary data for the study. The tool used was a researcher-made questionnaire consisting of 24 questions, based on a Likert scale. It is noteworthy that questions 16 and 22 were included as control questions to assess the precision of the sample's responses, and they did not play a role in the statistical analyses. To investigate the validity and reliability of the research tool, two methods were employed: content analysis (expert opinion) and construct analysis (statistical tests). Construct reliability was examined through calculating the internal consistency coefficient, convergent validity was evaluated using the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) test and factor loading, and discriminant validity was assessed using the cross-loading test.

Data collection in this research was conducted using a field method, and the testing of the research model was carried out through structural equation modeling with the help of SmartPLS software.

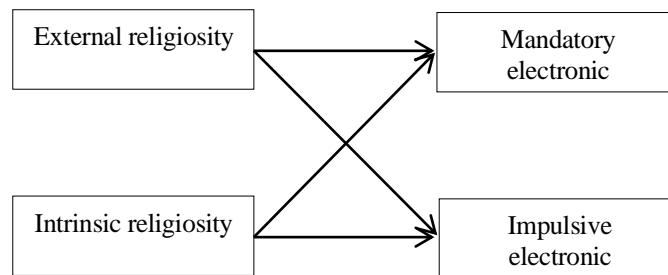


Figure 1. Conceptual model of the research

Research findings

The results of the reliability analysis through Cronbach's alpha tests, composite reliability, and rho showed that the values of all three tests exceeded the standard of 0.7, indicating that the measurement model has acceptable reliability. Furthermore, the AVE value being higher than 0.5 suggests adequate convergent validity (Table 1).

Table 1. Reliability tests and average variance extracted

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	rho	AVE
Mandatory Online Shopping	0.774	0.872	0.941	0.697
Impulsive Online Shopping	0.831	0.888	0.779	0.665
External Religiosity	0.865	0.904	0.85	0.655
Intrinsic Religiosity	0.847	0.898	0.869	0.687

The results of the factor loading analysis for the questions related to their variables are shown in Table 2. As observed, the t-statistic value for all questions is above the standard of 1.96 (and the P-value is less than 0.05). Therefore, all factor loadings are within the significant range, and convergent validity is confirmed through this route as well.

Table 2. Factor loading test for questions

Variable	Question	Factor Loading	t-statistic	Variable	Question	Factor Loading	t-statistic
Mandatory Online Shopping	1	0.91	32.69	External Religiosity	13	0.788	15.03
	2	0.872	22		14	0.77	16.14
	3	0.707	10.78		15	0.694	13.75
Impulsive Online Shopping	4	0.663	8.83	Intrinsic Religiosity	17	0.79	18.55
	5	0.704	8.72		18	0.691	11.69
	6	0.84	18.63		19	0.878	32.09
	7	0.787	13.48		20	0.853	27.23
	8	0.642	7.38		21	0.708	11.27
	9	0.811	16.34		23	0.481	11
External Religiosity	10	0.652	11.28	24	0.532	5.52	
	11	0.787	14.02				
	12	0.828	21.61				

As shown in Table 3, the validity assessment through the cross-loading test indicates that all questions in their respective variables have higher factor loadings compared to other variables, and the discriminant validity of the research variables is confirmed.

Table 3. Cross-loading test

Question	Mandatory Online Shopping	Impulsive Online Shopping	External Religiosity	Intrinsic Religiosity
1	0.91	0.484	0.523	0.353
2	0.872	0.487	0.311	0.372
3	0.707	0.454	0.469	0.459
4	0.663	0.663	0.464	0.347
5	0.345	0.704	0.512	0.353
6	0.415	0.84	0.538	0.308
7	0.362	0.787	0.477	0.368
8	0.252	0.642	0.467	0.344
9	0.449	0.811	0.403	0.426
10	0.511	0.482	0.652	0.506
11	0.506	0.526	0.787	0.5
12	0.441	0.327	0.828	0.513
13	0.52	0.358	0.788	0.376
14	0.375	0.412	0.77	0.384

15	0.498	0.429	0.694	0.431
17	0.302	0.337	0.375	0.79
18	0.329	0.305	0.492	0.691
19	0.381	0.389	0.355	0.878
20	0.474	0.472	0.406	0.853
21	0.54	0.481	0.369	0.708
23	0.335	0.422	0.33	0.481
24	0.483	0.435	0.431	0.532

To evaluate the proposed conceptual model and the existing relationships within it, the results of the structural equation modeling test in SmartPLS show that out of the 4 intended relationships, 2 are supported with a t-statistic exceeding 1.96, while two are rejected with a value lower than 1.96 (Table 4).

Table 4. Structural model test

Relationship	Path Coefficient	t-statistic	Result
Intrinsic Religiosity > Impulsive Online Shopping	0.782	7.55	Accepted
Intrinsic Religiosity > Mandatory Online Shopping	0.241	1.48	Rejected
External Religiosity > Impulsive Online Shopping	0.012-	0.099	Rejected
External Religiosity > Mandatory Online Shopping	0.326	1.98	Accepted

Additionally, the RMS value of 0.086 (below the threshold of 0.12) and the SRMR value of 0.056 (below 0.08) indicate a good fit and acceptable predictive power of the research model. In other words, the results of this model can be generalized to similar communities.

CONCLUSION

Religious consumers may have different preferences for electronic shopping based on their religious motivations. Research has shown that there are individual and contextual factors influencing the behavior of religious consumers. In a society like Iran, where religion plays a significant role in collective life, the importance of religion in shaping, sustaining, and developing consumer behaviors can be clearly seen. Meanwhile, multiple global evidences across various religions indicate that religion's influence on individuals exists in all social contexts. The primary task of the sociology of religion is to strive to understand the advancement of religion in the contemporary world; as we enter the third millennium, we are faced with the development and progress of religion. In light of this monumental shift in human history, the renewed flourishing of religion and the deep impact of religion in modern societies today signify the shortcomings of modern rationality. Thus, modern individuals and communities are more in need of religion than ever before, and the necessity to examine the impact of religion on all human behaviors in today's societies is evident. On the other hand, the prevalence of impulsive and mandatory purchases in modern societies has increased, often misaligned with individuals' financial resources. The importance of investigating this issue is notable as individuals frequently find the motivation for such purchases to gain acceptance in specific social groups, acting only when they are unable to control their desires. We want to explore whether religion can inhibit such behaviors or not.

Additionally, reviewing studies conducted on electronic shopping behaviors and religiosity shows that the impact of religiosity on these variables has not been specifically examined, and their relationship with each other is not defined. Given the importance of this relationship and the determining role of religion in our country, we decided to analyze the relationship between these variables in detail in this research.

Based on the results obtained from analyzing the research data, it has been identified that inherent religiosity is not a factor for mandatory purchases in the Islamic clothing industry because, according to the confirmation of inherent religiosity and impulsive electronic shopping, this matter is based on the beliefs and faith of consumers. On the other hand, external religiosity, due to its social nature, leads to an impulse to make mandatory electronic purchases, which has also been confirmed in statistical tests. Therefore, it is recommended that in order to promote and encourage modesty and hijab in society, we should first enhance personal beliefs and the foundational beliefs of

individuals to increase their tendencies for impulsive shopping. Since, according to the very high path coefficient values obtained, this factor has a significant role in the electronic shopping behaviors of these individuals.

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