

Consumer Way of Thinking, Speed of Action and Impulsive Consumption: The Intermediary Role of Materialism

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Abstract: In recent years, the increasing number of holiday promotions has affected people's consumption psychology and behavior to a certain extent. This research aims to examine the current situation of people's impulsive consumption under the holiday promotion scenario and its influencing factors, especially the direct and indirect impact of personality characteristics and materialism on impulsive consumption. 311 copies of valid data were collected using the thinking and speed scale, materialism scale and impulsive purchasing behavior scale in the MBTI personality scale. The results show that: (1) consumers' materialism is at the upper-middle level and impulsive consumption is at the upper-middle level; (2) There is a significant negative correlation between the way of thinking (intuitive type) and speed of action (judgment type) and impulse consumption in the personality traits of consumers; the way of thinking and speed of action are significantly negatively related to materialism. Department; There is a significant positive correlation between materialism and impulsive consumption; (3) Materialism plays a partial intermediary role between the dimension of personality characteristic thinking and impulsive consumption behavior, and materialism plays a complete intermediary role between the dimension of action speed and impulsive consumption behavior. This study found that the way of thinking, speed of action, and materialism directly and indirectly affect impulsive consumption, suggesting that people can reduce impulsive consumption by increasing rational evaluation, consumption evaluation analysis and reducing the dispersion of cognitive resources.

Key words: Way of thinking, speed of action, materialism, impulsive consumption

1. Introduction

In today's consumer society, festival promotion activities have become an important means for the retail industry to attract consumers and increase sales volume. Whether it is traditional festivals such as the Spring Festival and Mid-Autumn Festival, or emerging shopping festivals like "Double 11" and "Black Friday", festival promotions have successfully stimulated consumers' purchase desire with their huge discounts and limited-time offers,

prompting a large number of consumers to make unplanned purchase decisions in a short period of time, namely impulsive consumption behavior. The definition of impulsive consumption has been a hot topic among many scholars in the field of consumer behavior over the past few decades. Numerous scholars have conducted extensive research on the definition of impulsive consumption from different perspectives ([Iyer, E. S., 1989](#); [Kollat, D. T., & Willett, R. P., 1967](#); [Stern, H., 1962](#)), but there is still no consensus on the definition. Current research mostly elaborates from four aspects: unplanned purchase, consumer psychology, consumer decision-making, and result orientation ([Park C W, Iyer E S, Smith D C., 1989](#)). From the perspective of unplanned purchase, an early study by DuPont Company in the United States defined impulsive consumption as the purchase behavior that exceeds the plan compared with the actual purchased products after consumers finish shopping. Park et al. believed that unplanned purchase refers to the behavior where consumers have no prior plan when purchasing products ([Park C W, Iyer E S, Smith D C., 1989](#); [Weinberg P, Gottwald W., 1982](#)). Therefore, Cobb & Hoyer argued that impulsive purchase is the behavior of buying unplanned products without purchase goals ([Cobb CJ, Hoyer W D., 1986](#)). From the perspective of consumer psychology, from the emotional and cognitive perspectives, Weinberg and Gottwald believed that impulsive consumption is the result of emotional responses. They measured impulsive consumption from three levels: emotion, cognition, and response, and defined it as an unplanned, hasty behavior without careful consideration ([Rook D W, Hoch S J., 1985](#)).

From the perspective of self-control, Rook and Hoch emphasized that impulsive consumption should include five aspects: sudden purchase desire, a psychological state of temporary loss of control, psychological struggle between whether to restrain or purchase, reduced cognitive evaluation of products, failure to consider purchase consequences, and insufficient time to make utility maximization evaluation ([Rook D W., 1987](#)). From the perspective of consumer decision-making, Rook believed that consumers make decisions quickly when making impulsive purchases, without careful consideration, and without taking into account relevant information and possible alternatives. According to Jones, impulsive consumption behavior is an immediate purchase decision that is not fully evaluated in advance and is accompanied by strong emotions. In summary, impulsive consumption is characterized by short decision-making time and rapid decision-making ([Jones M A, Reynolds K, Weun S, 2003](#)). From the perspective of result orientation, scholars have emphasized the characteristic of impulsive consumption ignoring consequences. Mowen believed that impulsive consumption is an immediate purchase behavior driven by a sudden desire to own a product without considering the consequences ([Jones M A, Reynolds K, Weun S, Mowen J C, Wiener J, Young C., 1990](#)). Sengupta and Zhou believed that the impulsive drive of this behavior is strong and persistent, and sometimes irresistible ([Sengupta J, Zhou R., 2007](#)). This paper adopts Rook's definition, which is relatively comprehensive and has been recognized by most scholars at home and abroad. The definition is as follows: Impulsive consumption is an unplanned, low-cognitive-evaluation, and immediate purchase behavior made by an individual, and this kind of consumption generally starts from some external stimulus and is accompanied by a strong emotional response. Impulsive consumption not only brings considerable benefits to retailers but also reflects consumers' psychological and behavioral characteristics in specific situations. However, despite the increasing influence of festival promotions, the psychological mechanism behind consumers' impulsive consumption behavior during promotions has not been fully studied. From a theoretical perspective, impulsive consumption behavior is affected by various factors, among which consumers' personality traits and values are considered important internal driving forces. MBTI points out that personality traits have a profound impact on individuals' behavior patterns. In today's society, people pay much attention to the MBTI personality test, and this assessment tool has also been applied in a wider range of fields. People generally believe in the accuracy of MBTI's self-assessment. Therefore, using this scale to study the impact of personality traits on impulsive consumption helps consumers understand the relationship between their own

personality traits and impulsive consumption.

In addition, as an important value, materialism emphasizes pursuing happiness and social status through material wealth, and has been proven to be closely related to impulsive consumption behavior. Regarding the definition of materialism, [Li Hao \(2011\)](#) believed that materialism refers to an individual value that emphasizes the importance of material possession and social prestige, and takes the pursuit and possession of property as the highest standard of life and behavior. Burroughs emphasized the values of materialists towards material acquisition and possession. The most representative view in the academic circle is that of Richins and Dawson, who defined materialism as a personal value that emphasizes the importance of owning material wealth. This value takes the acquisition and possession of wealth as the center of life, the foundation of happiness, and the standard of success ([Richins, M. L., & Dawson, S., 1992](#)). They believed that materialists have three significant characteristics: taking the acquisition of property as the center of life, pursuing happiness through the acquisition of property, and measuring success by the quantity and quality of property owned. However, existing studies mostly focus on exploring the independent impact of personality traits or materialism on impulsive consumption, and few combine the two. To sum up, from the combined perspective of personality traits and materialistic values, this study explores the internal mechanism of consumers' impulsive consumption behavior, aiming to provide new insights and enlightenment for the academic and practical circles.

2. Research Methods

Research Objects

This study adopted the cluster sampling method to select a group of Chinese consumers as subjects, and collected data through questionnaire survey. A total of 420 questionnaires were distributed, 420 were recovered, and 311 were valid, with an effective rate of 74%. Among them, 136 were male and 175 were female; 194 were from urban areas and 117 were from rural areas.

2.2 Research Tools

2.2.1 Personality Trait Scale

MBTI measures people's preferences and differences in personality and behavior through four dimensions, namely energy source (Extraversion E-Introversion I), thinking style (Sensing S-Intuition N), decision-making style (Thinking T-Feeling F), and action speed (Judging J-Perceiving P). This study selected two subscales: the thinking style dimension and the action speed dimension for research.

2.2.2 Impulsive Consumption Scale

The Impulsive Purchase Behavior Scale compiled by Yue Hailong (2005) was used, which includes 12 items. It was scored on a 5-point Likert scale, with scores of 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 corresponding to "strongly disagree", "disagree", "neither agree nor disagree", "agree", and "strongly agree" according to the subjects' degree of agreement with the statements. The Cronbach's α coefficient of the scale was 0.901, and the scale had good construct validity and concurrent validity. In this study, the Cronbach's α coefficient of the scale was 0.878.

2.2.3 Materialism Scale

The Materialism Scale compiled by [Richins and Dawson \(1992\)](#) and revised by Li Jing and Guo Yongyu (2009) was used, which includes 13 items. It was scored on a 5-point Likert scale, with scores of 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 corresponding to "strongly disagree", "disagree", "neither agree nor disagree", "agree", and "strongly agree" according to the subjects' degree of agreement with the statements. The Cronbach's α coefficient of the scale was 0.792, and the scale was significantly correlated with life satisfaction and spending patterns, with good criterion-related validity. In this study, the Cronbach's α coefficient of the scale was 0.760.

2.3 Questionnaire Implementation and Data Processing

The specific implementation process of this study was divided into five stages: the first stage was collecting,

reading, and sorting out literature; the second stage was selecting and revising questionnaires; the third stage was recruiting subjects and collecting questionnaires; the fourth stage was processing data and analyzing results; the fifth stage was drawing conclusions and conducting discussions. The main statistical methods used in this study included descriptive statistical analysis, independent-samples t-test, analysis of variance, correlation analysis, multiple regression analysis, and mediating effect analysis, with statistical software including SPSS and Process.

3. Results

Correlation between Variables

Correlation analysis between variables (see Table 1) showed that thinking style was significantly negatively correlated with materialism, and action speed was also significantly negatively correlated with materialism. Thinking style was significantly negatively correlated with impulsive consumption, and action speed was negatively correlated with impulsive consumption. Materialism was significantly positively correlated with impulsive consumption.

Table 1 Correlation between variables

	1	2	3	4
thinking style	1			
action speed	0.031	1		
materialism	-0.190**	-0.199**	1	
Impulsive consumption	-0.218**	-0.144*	0.545**	1
Mean value (M)	1.608	1.527	47.240	32.490
Standard deviation (SD)	0.489	0.501	8.111	10.635

Note: **Significant correlation at the 0.001 level, *Significant correlation at the 0.05 level

The Mediating Role of Materialism between Personality Traits and Impulsive Consumption

To explore the mechanism of the impact of personality traits on impulsive consumption, materialism was further introduced as a mediating variable into the structural equation model. The Model 4 in the SPSS macro program Process was used to test the mediating effect, and the Bootstrap method provided by Hayes was used to verify and analyze the mediating role of materialism between personality traits and impulsive consumption.

The path coefficients of the three variables (thinking style dimension of MBTI, materialism, and impulsive consumption) are shown in Figure 1. The bootstrap 95% confidence interval of the mediating effect of the thinking style dimension of MBTI on impulsive consumption and materialism did not include 0, indicating that the thinking style dimension of MBTI not only has a direct effect on impulsive consumption but also has a mediating effect through materialism. Further mediating effect test (see Table 1) showed that the direct effect (-2.5873) and mediating effect (-2.1601) accounted for 54.4993% and 45.5007% of the total effect (-4.74749) respectively.

The path coefficients of the three variables (action speed dimension of MBTI, materialism, and impulsive consumption) are shown in Figure 2. The bootstrap 95% confidence interval of the mediating effect of the action speed dimension of MBTI on impulsive consumption and materialism included 0, indicating that the action speed dimension of MBTI has no direct effect on impulsive consumption but has a full mediating effect through materialism. Further mediating effect analysis (see Table 2) showed that the direct effect (-0.7940) and mediating effect (-2.2721) accounted for 25.8952% and 74.1211% of the total effect (-3.0662) respectively.

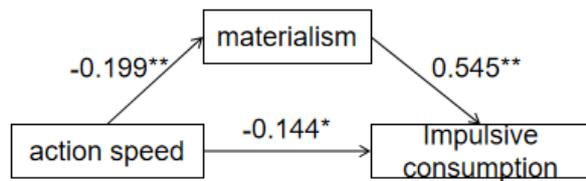


Figure 1

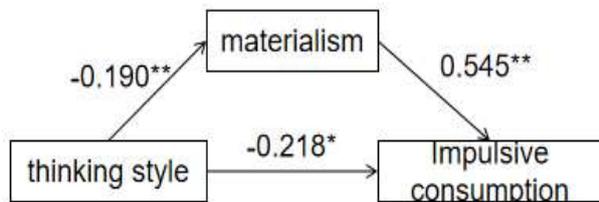


Figure 2

Table 1 Analysis of the Mediating Effect of Materialism on Impulsive Consumption in Terms of Thinking Patterns

	<i>Effect value</i>	<i>se</i>	<i>LLCI</i>	<i>ULCI</i>	<i>Effect size</i>
<i>Total effect</i>	-4.7474	1.2073	-7.1230	-2.3718	
<i>Direct effect</i>	-2.5873	1.0482	-4.6499	-0.5247	54.4993%
<i>Mediation effect</i>	-2.1601	0.6544	-3.4806	-0.8702	45.5007%

Table 2 Analysis of the Mediating Role of Materialism in the Relationship Between Action Speed and Impulsive Consumption

	<i>Effect value</i>	<i>se</i>	<i>LLCI</i>	<i>ULCI</i>	<i>Effect size</i>
<i>Total effect</i>	-3.0662	1.1973	-5.4220	-0.7103	
<i>Direct effect</i>	-0.7940	1.0360	-2.8326	1.2446	25.8952%
<i>Mediation effect</i>	-2.2721	0.6499	-3.5714	-1.0001	74.1211%

4. Discussion

Personality Traits and Materialism

This study shows that there is a correlation between the dimensions of personality traits and materialism. The thinking style dimension is significantly negatively correlated with materialism. Individuals with a thinking personality make decisions based on objective analysis and tend to avoid irrational consumption; while materialistic behaviors are often driven by immediate emotions. Thinking individuals attach more importance to internal growth goals such as knowledge and creativity, are good at delayed gratification, and prefer to invest in the future rather than immediate consumption (Xiong Suhong, 2009). Thinking individuals gain self-efficacy through logical analysis and problem-solving, while materialists rely on material possession to fill emotional emptiness, and the conflict between the two may lead to a negative correlation. The rational decision-making model of thinking individuals may be more inclined to long-term planning rather than immediate consumption satisfaction. Thinking individuals are more likely to evaluate the practicality and long-term value of products before consumption, reducing impulsive purchases.

The action speed dimension is significantly negatively correlated with materialism. Studies have shown that materialism is positively correlated with inattention and impulsive behavior, while high action speed requires high self-regulation ability to maintain efficiency. Individuals with high action speed usually have stronger social

activity, and their interpersonal relationships are based on cooperation and shared experiences; while materialists are more likely to regard social interaction as a means of obtaining resources, leading to utilitarian relationships. For example, materialism is related to low empathy and high social comparison tendency, while individuals with fast action speed rely more on efficient collaboration ([Li Qian, 2021](#)). Some individuals with low action speed may compensate for the frustration caused by insufficient efficiency through material consumption ([Lu Yi, 2023](#)).

Materialism and Impulsive Consumption

This study shows that there is a significant positive correlation between materialism and impulsive consumption. The possible reason is that materialists regard consumption as a tool for identity expression. By owning status-symbolizing commodities such as luxury goods, they try to fill the lack of self-identity or improve their social image. Generally, people think that materialists believe that "accumulating material wealth is the only way to achieve happiness", and this belief directly drives irrational purchases. Studies have shown that materialists generally lack the ability of delayed gratification and tend to ignore long-term financial consequences, which also leads to high materialists being more likely to engage in impulsive consumption ([Xie Xiaodong, Yu Chengfu, Zhang Wei, 2017](#)).

Personality Traits and Impulsive Consumption

The thinking style dimension is significantly negatively correlated with impulsive consumption. Sensing consumers rely on specific sensory inputs and prefer to make judgments based on real experience, detailed data, and known facts. When making purchase decisions, they tend to compare verifiable information such as price, practicality, and existing usage feedback. Intuitive consumers are good at constructing a global framework through abstract association, and when making decisions, they pay more attention to the symbolic meaning, potential possibilities, or future value of commodities. Existing studies believe that one of the core characteristics of impulsive consumption is the immediate behavioral response after emotional arousal. Due to their greater reliance on internal intuition rather than external facts, N-type individuals have a higher coupling degree between their emotional system and cognitive system. For example, a promotion activity may trigger N-type individuals' intuitive association with "scarcity", thereby causing "fear of missing out" ([Huang Linyan, Li Hong, Xu Jihong, 2013](#)).

The action speed dimension is significantly negatively correlated with impulsive consumption. Psychological studies have pointed out that impulsive consumption is closely related to executive functions (such as inhibitory control). Individuals with fast action speed in MBTI (such as J-type) may have stronger goal-oriented control ability and can suppress immediate desires, while individuals with slow action speed (such as P-type) may have difficulty resisting temptations due to the dispersion of cognitive resources. Fast decision-makers (J-type) complete purchases quickly based on rational analysis, reducing the chance of being interfered by irrelevant information. Slow decision-makers (P-type) are exposed to more marketing stimuli (such as limited-time discounts) during the information collection process, increasing the probability of impulsive purchases. ###

The Mediating Role of Materialism between Personality Traits and Impulsive Consumption

This study found that materialism plays a mediating role between personality traits and impulsive consumption behavior. Specifically, materialism plays a partial mediating role in the impact of the energy source dimension on impulsive purchase behavior; materialism plays a partial mediating role in the impact of the thinking style dimension on impulsive purchase behavior; materialism plays a full mediating role in the impact of the action speed dimension on impulsive consumption. From the above analysis, it can be seen that on the one hand, consumers with a thinking personality will conduct more rational analysis and are less likely to define the value of life in material terms; on the other hand, they have sufficient consumption evaluation and analysis, and are more able to avoid irrational consumption. On the one hand, consumers with low action speed may compensate

for the frustration caused by insufficient efficiency through material things; on the other hand, they may have difficulty resisting temptations due to the dispersion of cognitive resources, so they are more likely to engage in impulsive consumption.

5. Conclusions and Implications

Conclusions

In recent years, the increasing number of holiday promotions has affected people's consumption psychology and behavior to a certain extent. This research aims to examine the current situation of people's impulsive consumption under the holiday promotion scenario and its influencing factors, especially the direct and indirect impact of personality characteristics and materialism on impulsive consumption. 311 copies of valid data were collected using the thinking and speed scale, materialism scale and impulsive purchasing behavior scale in the MBTI personality scale. The results show that: (1) consumers' materialism is at the upper-middle level and impulsive consumption is at the upper-middle level; (2) There is a significant negative correlation between the way of thinking (intuitive type) and speed of action (judgment type) and impulse consumption in the personality traits of consumers; the way of thinking and speed of action are significantly negatively related to materialism. Department; There is a significant positive correlation between materialism and impulsive consumption; (3) Materialism plays a partial intermediary role between the dimension of personality characteristic thinking and impulsive consumption behavior, and materialism plays a complete intermediary role between the dimension of action speed and impulsive consumption behavior. This study found that the way of thinking, speed of action, and materialism directly and indirectly affect impulsive consumption, suggesting that people can reduce impulsive consumption by increasing rational evaluation, consumption evaluation analysis and reducing the dispersion of cognitive resources.

Implications

This study explores the impact of consumers' personality traits on impulsive consumption under festival promotion scenarios, and introduces materialism as a mediating variable to reveal its mechanism of action. Based on the research results, this paper puts forward the following implications: For enterprises, enterprises should formulate differentiated marketing strategies according to consumers' different personality traits. For example, for consumers with high extraversion and emotional type, they can use festival atmosphere and emotional marketing to stimulate their impulsive consumption desire; for consumers with high materialism, they can highlight the symbolic value and social attributes of products to meet their material pursuit and social identity needs. At the same time, enterprises should pay attention to creating a festival atmosphere and use promotional means such as limited-time discounts and limited-quantity purchases to stimulate consumers' impulsive consumption behavior. Meanwhile, they should pay attention to consumers' emotional experience, provide high-quality pre-sales and after-sales services, and improve consumers' satisfaction and loyalty. However, while pursuing economic benefits, enterprises should also actively fulfill their social responsibilities and guide consumers to consume rationally. For example, they can help consumers make more informed purchase decisions and establish a good brand image by promoting the concept of rational consumption and providing product trials. For consumers, consumers should understand their own personality traits and consumption habits, maintain rationality during festival promotions, and avoid blind following and impulsive consumption; they should establish a correct consumption concept, rationally view material consumption, avoid excessive pursuit of material enjoyment and comparison consumption, and focus on spiritual satisfaction and improvement; they should formulate reasonable consumption plans according to their own economic conditions and actual needs, avoid over-consumption and advance consumption, and develop good consumption habits; they should realize that money and material cannot fully represent their own value, and that power, status, and money are not

omnipotent. For government departments, they should strengthen the supervision of festival promotion activities, crack down on illegal acts such as false publicity and price fraud, and safeguard market order and consumers' rights and interests; they should actively advocate the concept of rational consumption, guide consumers to establish a correct consumption concept, and create a good social consumption atmosphere; they should continuously improve the social security system, reduce residents' life pressure, and create a good social environment for consumers' rational consumption.

Innovations and Limitations

This project explores the mechanism of the impact of personality traits on impulsive consumption from an empirical perspective. However, due to the interference and influence of various factors, this project still has defects and deficiencies. Most of the scales in this project are compiled by foreign scholars. Although they have been adapted by domestic scholars, there are still defects such as inconsistency with national conditions or gaps with the original subject group. The sample size of this study is relatively small, and the research results may be inconsistent with large-scale surveys. Therefore, it is advisable to expand the sample size to further verify the conclusions. There are many invalid questionnaires in this study. Although the reliability and validity of the questionnaires are good, there may be cases of careless filling. In the future, subjects can be carefully selected. The focus of this project is on the role of consumers' MBTI personality traits and materialism on impulsive consumption, without considering other influencing factors of impulsive consumption. Therefore, it is possible to introduce other mediating variables or moderating variables, such as consumption concept and time pressure, to observe whether the impact will change after introducing other variables.

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