

The impact of e-retailer personality and website quality on online impulse buying

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
<p>DOI:10.46223/HCMCOUJS.econ.en.11.2.1400.2021</p> <p>Received: January 12th, 2021</p> <p>Revised: March 24th, 2021</p> <p>Accepted: April 01st, 2021</p> <p><i>Keywords:</i></p> <p>e-retailer personality; online impulse buying; retailing; website quality</p>	<p>The development of information technology and the proliferation of e-commerce make online shopping more and more popular. Recent studies indicate that in the modern world, most shoppers purchased products spontaneously and highlighted the necessity of in-depth understanding of impulse buying as an emerging phenomenon in marketing literature. A large number of studies focus on the factors effective on consumers' impulse buying in brick and mortar retailers but rare research investigate these factors in online environment. There are two key perspectives on the factors effective on impulse buying: a customer's inherent characters and his/her current state of mind. Based on the self-congruity theory and latent state-trait theory, this study considered this concept in two-sided approach: the state of mind incurred in the shopping environment (website quality) and a particular personal characteristics inherent to the individual customer (e-retailer personality). This paper adapted the concept of retail brand/store personality from brick and mortar context to internet marketing by investigating the impact of e-retailer personality on website quality and impulse buying. Data were collected from 563 online shoppers in Vietnam by online survey and analyzed with Structural Equation Model (SEM). The results indicate some practical implications for website design and enhancing impulsive buying.</p>

1. Introduction

The rapid growth of Internet and information technology facilitates consumers to shop online much more easily than before. According to the report released by eConomy SEA 2019 by Google and Temasek (2019), in Vietnam, 39.9 million people make purchases online with an average shopping value of \$202, which jumped up 11.8% compared with the year of 2018. The growth of e-commerce is approximately 81% and the internet penetration rate (68 million users) in total retail sales of consumer goods exceeded 4.2%. This figure creates a big business opportunity for online retailers to expand their business.

With the potential of e-commerce, more and more e-retailers participate and make the market intensely competitive. Several e-retailers attempt to create a distinctive and engaging website and improve their service to meet the ultimate consumers' increasing demands. The previous studies investigated the influence of factors on online buying behaviors.

Besides popular effective factors such as website investment (Schlosser, White, & Lloyd, 2006), website customer orientations (Poddar, Donthu, & Wei, 2009) and website quality

(Akrimi & Khemakhem, 2014; Poddar et al., 2009; Turkyilmaz, Erdema, & Uslua, 2015), e-retailer/website personality is complementary in recent research. Ailawadi and Keller (2004) acknowledged that building a prominent brand personality would help corporates survive in intensely competitive situations since most corporates tried to deliver similar products/services. The e-retailing context, where the mature stage was approached, was highly relevant. The expectations from online shoppers have been higher and higher; and satisfying online shoppers is now more difficult than before. Leen, Ramayah, and Omar (2010) discovered that e-retailers should design their websites to go beyond mere interface development and make an effort on website personality. However, the prior studies mainly approached the e-retailer personality as a uni-dimensional construct and the measurement scale was developed in an offline context. Some studies also proved the positive relationship between e-retailer personality and customer satisfaction (Akrimi & Khemakhem, 2014; Chen & Rodgers, 2006), perceptions of the quality and value of the site (Chen & Rodgers, 2006; Poddar et al., 2009), customer-site relationships and revisit intentions (Chen & Rodgers, 2006), customer trust (Leen et al., 2010), purchase intention (Poddar et al., 2009), e-shopping site involvement and site attitudes (Shobeiri, Mazaheri, & Laroche, 2015) and buying impulsiveness (Akram et al., 2017; Turkyilmaz et al., 2015; Wells, Parboteeah, & Valacich, 2011).

Concerning impulsive buying, Floh and Madlberger (2013) asserted that most shoppers purchased goods spontaneously in modern life and emphasized the necessity of profound knowledge of impulse buying on the internet. Verhagen and Dolen (2011) also reported that approximately 40% of online shopping transactions were regarded as impulse purchases, whereas Wu, Chen, and Chiu (2016) demonstrated that 82% of consumers engaged in impulse buying. In traditional retailing, impulse buying triggered 30 - 50% of all retail sales (Dawson & Kim, 2010). Previous studies also showed that the impulse buying phenomenon was adapted for most kinds of goods, including expensive items (Rook & Fisher, 1995). As a result, retailers concentrate on product displays, store designs, and package designs to attract shoppers' attention and boost their impulse buying.

Being a common concept in consumer behavior marketing, buying impulsiveness has been strongly confirmed in traditional retailing but still disputed in e-commerce. The existing research analyzed the factors effective on online impulse buying from two key perspectives: the state of mind incurred in the shopping environment (website quality) (Rook, 1987) and particular personal characteristic inherent to the individual customer (Wells et al., 2011). Especially, various environmental cues (Parboteeah, Valacich, & Wells, 2009); website quality (Akram et al., 2017; Turkyilmaz et al., 2015; Wells et al., 2011) have been observed as consumer's state of mind to influence on impulse buying. Alternatively, human characteristics (inherent impulsiveness) were investigated in the effect of online buying (Zhang, Prybutok, & Koh, 2006). Consequently, some scholars argued that these studies using only this dichotomy of trait versus state might result in an oversimplified, one-sided view of the behavior (Akram et al., 2017; Turkyilmaz et al., 2015). Further to this research trend to generalize marketing literature, both views (state and trait) have also been taken into consideration. Website quality was assumed to be a state (external factor) while e-retailer personality was deemed a trait (internal factor). Therefore, this study contributed to this stream of research by investigating the impact of each dimension in the multi-dimensional construct of an e-retailer's personality and website quality on impulse buying.

The research results may bring some practical implications for managers in raising their awareness of e-retailers' personalities compared with competitors and defining target segments and positioning strategies to enhance the competitive advantages for their sites. Providing solutions to

these issues would help to boost impulse buying online. The remainder of the research is followed by a literature review, proposed model, research method, data analysis results and discussion, theoretical and practical implications, and future research recommendations.

2. Literature review and research model

2.1. Foundational theories

2.1.1. Self-congruity theory

The human self is constructed with four dimensions: actual self, ideal self, social self, and social-ideal self (Johar & Sirgy, 1991). The theory indicates that greater congruity between an individual's actual and ideal self and the characteristics that describe the brand creates a greater preference for that brand.

2.1.2. Latent state-trait theory

According to this theory, human behavior depends on individuals' characteristics, environmental conditions (states), and the interaction between these two factors. In this regard, impulse buying behavior is a dependent variable, and e-retailer personality and website quality are independent variables.

2.2. E-retailer personality

The general definition of brand personality in brick-and-mortar context has been agreed in scholar community in marketing literature, defined by Aaker (1997, p. 347) as *"a set of human characteristics associated with a brand."* After that, various studies made efforts to extend the construct of brand personality to retailing market. Zentes, Dirk, and Hanna (2008, p. 167) defined that: *"A retail brand was referred as a group of the retailers' outlets which carry a unique name, symbol, logo or combination thereof"* whereas Ailawadi and Keller (2004, p. 332) stated that: *"A retail brand identifies the goods and services of a retailer and differentiates them from those of competitors."* Actually, the concept of store (retail brand) personality was firstly identified by Martineau (1958, p. 47) defined as *"the way in which store is defined in the shopper's mind partly by its functional qualities and partly an aura of psychological attributes."* However, four dimensions of store personality in Martineau's seminal research, including symbols and colors, layout and architecture, sales personnel, and advertising, were actually similar to those of the current store image concept. Thus, D'Astous and Levesque (2003, pp. 456-457) differentiated store personality from store image when they stated that: *"Whereas store image is mental representation that encompasses all dimensions that are associated with a store (value for money, product selection, quality of service, ect.), store personality is restricted to those mental dimensions that correspond to human traits."* For example, product quality plays an important role of forming overall store image but it is definitely not a personality trait. D'Astous and Levesque (2003, p. 457) defined that: *"store personality is the mental representation of a store on dimensions that typically capture an individual's personality."* Recently, in department store context in India, Das, Datta, and Guin (2012, p. 98) argued that: *"store personality was a consumer's perception of the human personality traits attributed to a store"*.

In an online context, Park, Choi, and Kim (2005, p. 7) for the first time defined the concept of e-brand personality as the *"brand personality of an online product or service, usually represented by a website."* Chen and Rodgers (2006, pp. 49-50) asserted that the creation of website personality was sourced from not only on direct and indirect contacts (similar to the case of human and brand personalities) but also the design of the site's interfaces. Thus, e-retailer personality was defined as *"the set of traits encompassing human characteristics and information technology features associated with an e-retailer."* Accordingly, Poddar et al. (2009,

p. 442) also defined e-retailer personality as *“the mental representation of a web store on dimensions that are similar to and reflect the dimensions of human personality.”*

A retail brand/store personality is a multi-dimensional construct with different dimensions in various research contexts (D'Astous & Levesque, 2003; Willems, Swinner, Janssens, & Brengman, 2011). As usual, product brand personality was mentioned into all positive dimensions whereas a retail brand/store personality was referred to some negative ones as well, for instance, the unpleasantness (D'Astous & Levesque, 2003), informality, ruthlessness (Davies, Chun, Silva, & Roper, 2004), deceitfulness (Ambroise & Florence, 2010) and chaos (Willems et al., 2011). The current research approached the e-retailer personality and then the measurement scale developed by Chen and Rodgers (2006) was applied, including five dimensions: intelligent, fun, candid, organized, and sincere. Among these five e-retailer personality dimensions, three dimensions were deemed to be related to the Big Five human and brand personality. Particularly, Sincere is the same as Agreeableness (human personality) and Sincerity (brand personality) when capturing the idea of warmth and acceptance. The fun dimension, which conveys the notion of sociability, energy and activity, is similar to Extroversion (human) and Excitement (brand). Intelligent is correlated to Conscientiousness (human) and Competence (brand) since it encapsulates responsibility, dependability and security. The two remaining dimensions (Candid and organized) are different from the “Big Five” and refers to perceived ease of use, one of the fundamental determinants of Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) by Davis (1989).

2.3. Website quality

The prior studies recommended several websites attributes that may create its quality. Website quality is the perceived overall quality of a website according to the customer's viewpoint (Poddar et al., 2009). Ranganathan and Ganapathy (2002) stated that design, privacy, information content, and website security were four dimensions of website quality whereas Wolfinbarger and Gilly (2003) only highlighted two dimensions: design and content which may enhance website quality to attract more online shoppers. Loiacono, Watson, and Goodhue (2007) suggested four distinct features of website quality which were generally used in several studies, including usefulness, ease of use, entertainment, and complementary relationship. Recently, Wells et al. (2011) generalized from different sources and recommended that website quality consisted of three main dimensions: Security, navigability, and visual appeal. Even though the above research considered website quality as a multi-dimensional construct, this paper approaches it as overall quality in uni-dimensional construct following Yoo and Donthu (2001) research.

2.4. Impulse buying

Most previous studies on impulse buying have focused on the traditional shopping environment (Jeffrey & Hodge, 2007). Actually, the studies on impulse buying were mentioned from the 1950s. Most of these studies during this duration considered impulse buying as “unplanned” purchases. However, Rook (1987, p. 191) pointed out that impulse buying implied a narrower and more specific range of phenomena than unplanned purchasing did. He stated that: *“impulse buying occurs when consumers experience sudden, generally powerful and persistent urge to buy something immediately.”* According to Sharma, Sivakumaran, and Marshall (2010, p. 4): *“Impulse buying is a sudden, hedonically complex purchase behavior in which the rapidity of the impulse purchase precludes any thoughtful, deliberate consideration of alternative or future implications.”* Consistent with the stated definitions above, Beatty and Ferrell (1998) have provided a more extensive definition stating that impulse buying is considered to be a sudden and immediate purchase with no pre-shopping intentions either to buy the specific product

category or to fulfill a particular buying task. Impulse purchasing accounts for roughly 40% of online expenditures (Verhagen & Dolen, 2011); as a result, exploration of this phenomenon and its detailed drivers is essential.

2.5. Research model and hypothesis development

2.5.1. E-retailer personality and quality

Poddar et al. (2009) argued that consumers determined their perception of website quality only after considering the site's personality. In other words, perceived quality is the function of the way a website look likes and a website with positive personality dimensions would appear to be high-quality site and vice versa. Thus, the first hypothesis is proposed as follows:

Hypothesis 1: The Intelligent (a), Fun (b), Sincere (c), Organized (d) and Candid (e) of e-retailer personality have a positive impact on website quality

2.5.2. E-retailer personality and impulse buying

According to the self-congruity theory as well as the latent trait-state theory, previous research has asserted that individual characteristics of human personality positively or negatively influence impulse buying. Materialism is one of the most important traits effective on impulsiveness (Richins & Dawson, 1992). Impulsiveness is another trait in online impulse buying (Liu, Li, & Hu, 2013; Wells et al., 2011; Zhang et al., 2006). Turkyilmaz et al. (2015) used a more comprehensive Big Five model to demonstrate the significant relationship between personality traits and buying impulsiveness.

E-retailer personality refers to the mental representation of e-retailer dimensions that are similar to and reflect those of human personality (Poddar et al., 2009). Therefore, the argument leads us to formulate the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 2: The Intelligent (a), Fun (b), Sincere (c), Organized (d) and Candid (e) of e-retailer personality have a positive impact on impulse buying

2.5.3. Website quality and impulse buying

The positive relationship between website quality and impulse buying has been determined through various existing research. Firstly, Childers, Carr, Peck, and Carsoni (2001) proved “web atmospherics” in the online scenarios to trigger impulse buying. This term refers to website design features like graphics, frameworks, layout, navigational structure, search engine configuration, text color and fonts, hypertext links, “one-click” purchase button or quick payment, and media dimensions. Wolfinbarger and Gilly (2003) also revealed that a well-designed interface increased the probability of customers’ impulse buying. Afterward, some recent studies added more features for website quality and verified similar relations. Wells et al. (2011) confirmed that the website’s features such as transaction safety, visual appeal, and navigation directly affected impulse purchases. The research result from Turkyilmaz et al. (2015) also revealed that three out of four dimensions of website quality (ease of use, usefulness, and entertainment) had a positive relationship with impulse buying Akram et al. (2017) also demonstrated that the overall quality based on four dimensions was positively related to impulse buying. The third hypothesis is then suggested as follows:

Hypothesis 3: The website quality has a positive impact on impulse buying

Based on the above research hypothesis and arguments, this study proposes the research model as follows (Figure 1):

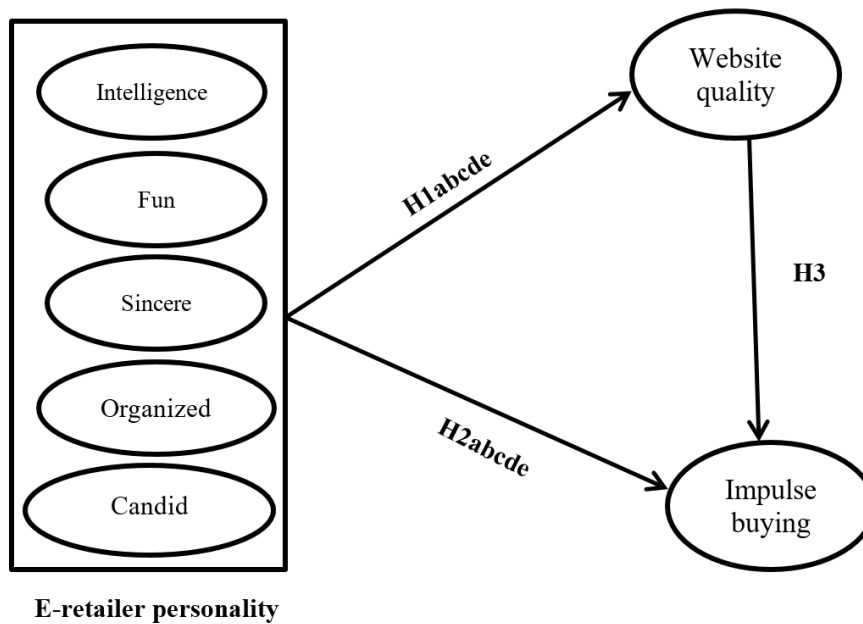


Figure 1. Proposed research model

3. Research methodology

3.1. Sampling and data collection

The paper used the mixed research methodology starting with the qualitative to explore and adjust indicators for measurement scales and investigating the hypotheses with the quantitative research. The qualitative research used a focus group with $n = 11$ (participants included 04 students, 03 office staffs and 04 managers; their ages from 20 to 42; their gender of 05 males and 06 females; their online shopping experience of 01 year minimum). The quantitative research applied the survey of consumers who usually shop online by convenient sampling from three sources: (i) the direct survey from the classes, shopping centers, cinemas; (ii) sending emails to existing data of Lazada, Tiki, Shopee customers; and (iii) sharing the link google form on social media. A sample size of 700 respondents was targeted and a total of 608 questionnaires were completed, with a return rate of 86.9%. Invalid and uncompleted questionnaires were rejected, resulting in 563 valid answer sheets. Respondents were instructed to think about the e-retailer from which they had most recently purchased and evaluated that e-retailer in mind. To better help respondents recall the past shopping experience, the e-retailers' name and the recent time of the purchase were asked at the beginning of the questionnaire. Such method allowed obtaining the actual online purchase experiences.

The research sample was balanced with the gender (female: 48.5% and male: 51.5%). The age group of 18 - 25 years old accounted for the most with 44.4%, the next was 26 - 35 and 36 - 45 years old with 21.3% and 19.5 % accordingly. This implied that the youth liked to purchase products online. Almost 85% of respondents had a monthly income below VND 15 million and their educational level mainly was college and university degree holders (53.2%). Respondents' online purchases included the following: (1) food & drink (24%); (2) mommy & baby (20%); (3) home living & lifestyle (17%); (4) fashion apparel (14%); (5) electronics (11%); (6) travel (7%); (7) online music (4%); and (8) others (3%).

3.2. Measurement scales

The personality of the e-retailer's website was measured as a multi-dimensional construct developed by Chen and Rodgers (2006), including five dimensions: Intelligent, fun, organized,

candid, and sincere. The scale of Intelligent has 08 items (from IN01 to IN08); Fun has 06 items (FU01 to FU06); Organized has 04 items (OR01 to OR04), and both Candid and Sincere have 02 items and is added one more new item from the focus group. Website quality has reduced 08 items inherited from Loiacono et al. (2007) and Turkeyilmaz et al. (2015), and impulse buying has 05 items from the research of Rook and Fisher (1995); Wells et al. (2011) (See more details in the appendix). Items were measured by seven-point Likert scales with anchors of “not at all descriptive of this website” and “completely descriptive of this website.”

4. Research results

4.1. Testing the scales of constructs by EFA and Cronbach Alpha

Firstly, the Cronbach alpha reliability was tested and an item of web quality (WQ01) was deleted since the total-item correlation was below 0.30. The results asserted that the Cronbach alpha of seven constructs was higher than 0.70 (the lowest was 0.893 and the highest was 0.989), total-item correlations were above 0.30. Thus, the reliability of constructs was obtained (Nunnally, 1978). The research results from exploratory factor analysis after eliminating three items with loading factors below 0.5 or the difference between two loading factors less than 0.3, including IN05, IN08, and FU02 indicated that KMO index was 0.890 (above 0.50). Barlett testing was statistically significant at the level of less than 0.05 to meet the requirement for EFA analysis. EFA result revealed that all the scales of constructs met the requirement the number of factors extracted (07 factors were extracted as per the proposed research model), the cumulative extracted variance equaled to 77.694 % (above 50%), eigenvalues were 11.152, 3.818, 3.605, 2.438, 1.835, 1.432 and 1.361 (more than 01). The loading factors were very high (the highest was CA01 = 0.894 and the lowest was FU01 = 0.625) (see Table 1). Therefore, six constructs in the research model with 33 items were extracted to meet the requirement of convergent validity and discriminant validity (Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2010).

Table 1

EFA and Cronbach Alpha results

No	Items	Constructs						
		1 Intelligent	2 Fun	3 Organized	4 Candid	5 Sincere	6 Website quality	7 Impulse buying
1	IN02	.826						
2	IN03	.807						
3	IN01	.773						
4	IN07	.772						
5	IN04	.753						
6	IN06	.710						
7	FU05		.859					
8	FU06		.850					
9	FU03		.827					
10	FU04		.635					

No	Items	Constructs						
		1 Intelligent	2 Fun	3 Organized	4 Candid	5 Sincere	6 Website quality	7 Impulse buying
11	FU01		.625					
12	OR02			.845				
13	OR01			.822				
14	OR03			.816				
15	OR04			.795				
16	CA01				.894			
17	CA03				.891			
18	CA02				.889			
19	SI03					.886		
20	SI02					.884		
21	SI01					.879		
22	WQ02						.860	
23	WQ08						.818	
24	WQ07						.801	
25	WQ04						.794	
26	WQ06						.764	
27	WQ05						.738	
28	WQ03						.720	
29	IB02							.851
30	IB03							.844
31	IB04							.747
32	IB05							.736
33	IB01							.725
Cronbach Alpha		.893	.908	.948	.941	.989	.912	.899

Source: Results from data analysis

4.2. CFA analysis for the full measurement model

Seven first-order constructs, including Intelligent, Fun, Organized, Candid, Sincere, Website Quality, and Impulse Buying were evaluated in full measurement model by Confirmed Factor Analysis (CFA) with 231 degrees of freedom.

Unidimensionality: To improve the good fit for the model, some items with high modification index were deleted one by one (IN01, IN03, FUN03, FU05, OR04, WQ02, WQ03, IB03 and IB05). The unidimensionality was then satisfied and CFA results proved the good fit model with: Chi-square $\chi^2/df = 900.277$; $d/f = 231$; $p\text{-value} = 0.000$; $CMIN/df = 3.897$ (within 02 to 05); $GFI = 0.887$; $TLI = 0.944$; $CFI = 0.934$ (above 0.9); $RMSEA = 0.072$ (below 0.08).

Convergent validity was acceptable when both loading factors (standardized estimate) and AVE were greater than 0.50 (Hair et al., 2010). The analysis results showed that all the loading factors were higher than 0.50 (Lowest: WQ = 0.65 and highest: SI03 = 0.99) and significant the level of 0.50. Therefore, all constructs obtained convergent validity (see Figure 2).

Composite reliability and average variance extracted: Applying the formula calculating composite reliability ρ_c (Jöreskog, 1971, p. 111) and variance extracted ρ_{vc} (Fornell & Larcker, 1981)¹, the results were shown in Table 2. Seven constructs met the requirement of Composite Reliability (CR) greater than 0.7 and variance extracted (AVE) greater than 0.5 (50%) (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988; Hair et al., 2010).

Discriminant validity: The model has discriminant validity when the correlation between two constructs is less than 01 ($r < 1$) or both AVEs of two constructs are higher than the square correlation between two constructs (Steenkamp & Van Trijp, 1991). Table 2 indicated that all root square AVEs were higher than the square correlation, the discriminant validity was established.

Table 2

CR, AVE statistics and Correlation matrix (Fornell-Larcker, 1981)

Constructs	CR	AVE	INT	FUN	ORG	CAN	SIN	WSQ	IMB
Intelligent	0.843	0.578	(0.760)						
Fun	0.808	0.684	0.572	(0.827)					
Organized	0.838	0.632	0.298	0.532	(0.794)				
Candid	0.942	0.729	0.388	0.229	0.349	(0.854)			
Sincere	0.909	0.746	0.348	0.559	0.525	0.371	(0.864)		
Website quality	0.880	0.772	0.386	0.326	0.316	0.325	0.261	(0.879)	
Impulse buying	0.878	0.707	0.333	0.606	0.677	0.094	0.392	0.377	(0.841)

Note: The brackets () scores diagonal are the square root of AVEs of the individual constructs. Non-diagonal values are cross construct squared correlations

Source: The result from data analysis

¹ $\rho_c = \frac{(\sum_{i=1}^p \lambda_i)^2}{(\sum_{i=1}^p \lambda_i)^2 + \sum_{i=1}^p (1 - \lambda_i^2)}$ & $\rho_{vc} = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^p \lambda_i^2}{\sum_{i=1}^p \lambda_i^2 + \sum_{i=1}^p (1 - \lambda_i^2)}$

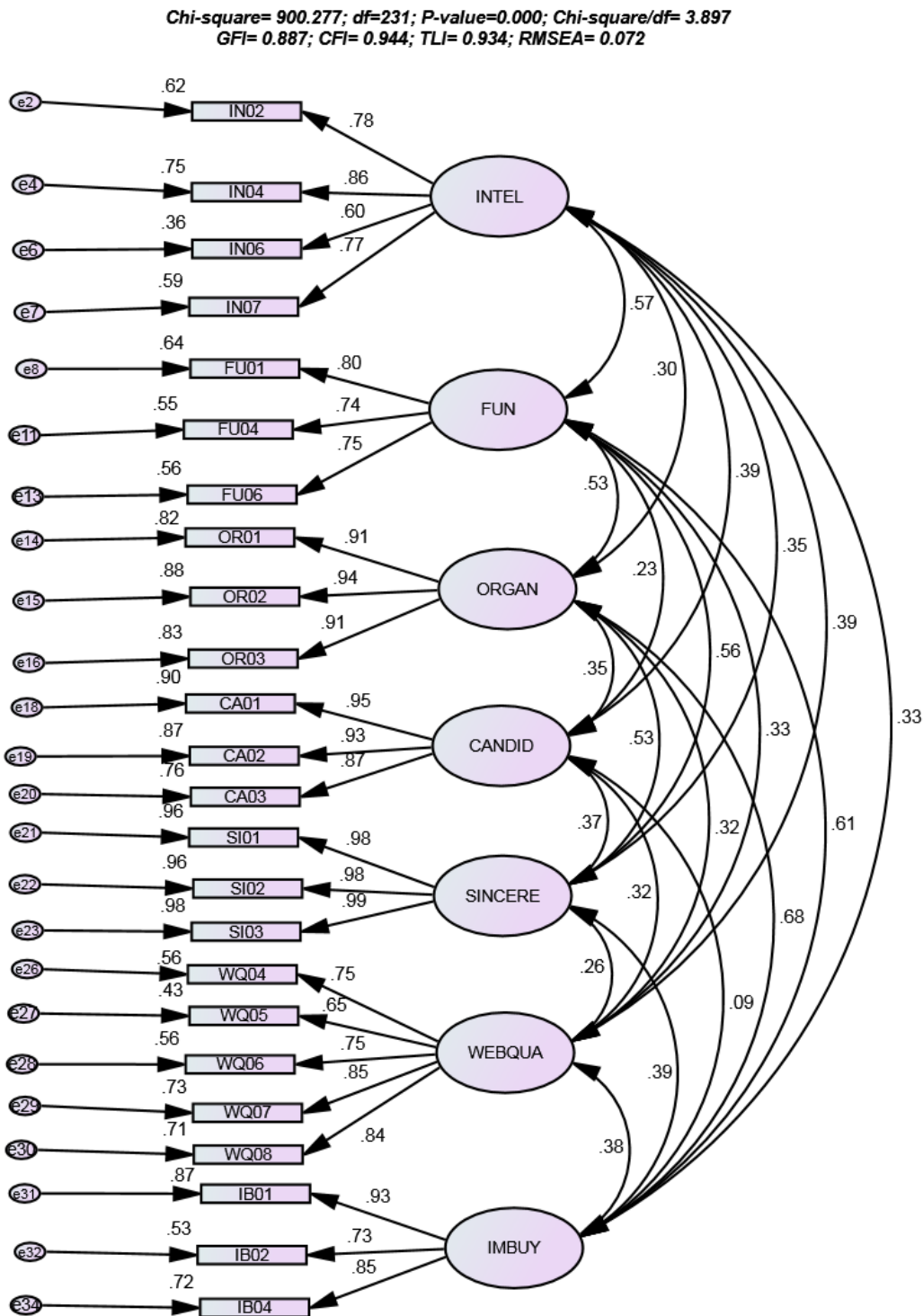


Figure 2. CFA result for full measurement model (Standardized estimate)

4.3. Hypotheses testing by SEM

The paper used a Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) technique to test eleven proposed hypotheses. The SEM results showed that the model achieved a good fit: Chi-square = 900,277; df = 231; p-value = 0.000; CMIN/df = 3.897; GFI = 0.887; TLI = 0.934; CFI = 0.944; RMSEA = 0.072 (see Figure 3). Estimated results in Table 3 indicated that seven out of eleven hypotheses were statistically significant and supported with p-value < 0.05.

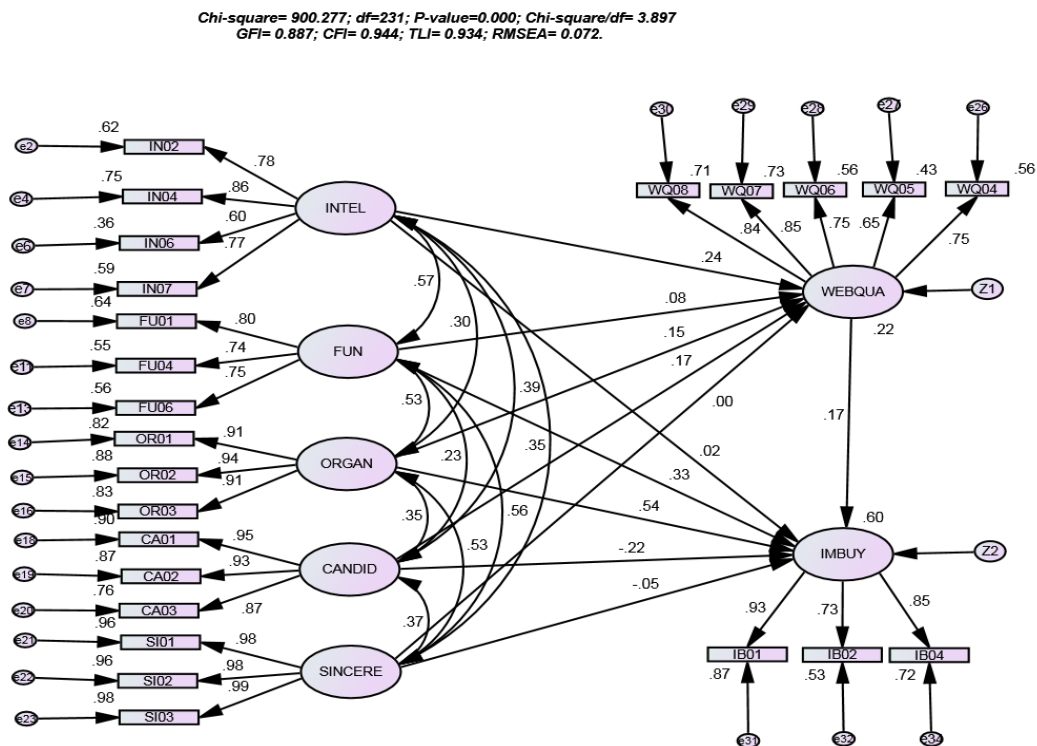


Figure 3. SEM analysis result (standardized)

Table 3

Results of hypotheses testing

Relationships	Est.	S. E	CR	P	Hypotheses
Website quality ← Intelligent	.182	.049	3.737	***	H1a: Supported
Website quality ← Fun	.080	.079	1.014	.311	H1b: rejected
Website quality ← Organized	.092	.035	2.659	.008	H1c: Supported
Website quality ← Candid	.142	.043	3.274	.001	H1d: Supported
Website quality ← Sincere	-.003	.041	-.065	.948	H1e: rejected
Impulse buying ← Intelligent	.021	.059	.357	.721	H2a: rejected
Impulse buying ← Fun	.529	.099	5.355	***	H2b: Supported
Impulse buying ← Organized	.521	.045	11.623	***	H2c: Supported
Impulse buying ← Candid	-.288	.053	-5.415	***	H2d: Supported
Impulse buying ← Sincere	-.055	.049	-1.106	.269	H2e: rejected
Impulse buying ← Website quality	.272	.060	4.491	***	H3: Supported

Source: The result from data analysis

Furthermore, this research also conducted the durability and reliability of standardized estimates in the research model by bootstrapping with the repeated sample $N = 5,000$. The results stated that although there was bias but not so high and acceptable (from -0.003 to 0.005), and the CR less than 1.96. Thus, it could be concluded that the estimates were reliable.

5. Result discussion and managerial implications

The first research result indicated that three of the dimensions of e-retailer's personality had a significant impact on website quality, including intelligent, organized, candid (H1a, H1c, H1d are supported). Poddar et al. (2009) also showed similar results but utilized the different e-retailer personality scales inherited from D'Astous and Levesque (2003). The rejected H1b was surprising but reasonable in practice since the shoppers' perception on website quality was not based on the items such as colorful, flashy, and so on. Secondly, the H2b, H2c, H2d was supported, implying that Fun, Organized, Candid significantly influenced impulse buying. This result enhanced the statement from previous studies of Liu et al. (2013), Turkeyilmaz et al. (2015), Wells et al. (2011), Zhang et al. (2006) with a new perspective to consider e-retailer personality as a multi-dimensional construct. Besides, two e-retailer personality "Intelligent" and "Sincere" were found not significantly related to impulsive buying because an intelligent shopper will plan carefully and thoughtfully before purchasing something, and he/she will not be affected by other external factors to buy impulsively. A sincere person with item authentic and down-to-earth just want to buy what he/she really feels necessary. Lastly, the supported H3 reconfirmed the positive relationship between website quality and impulse buying, which complied with Wells et al. (2011), Turkeyilmaz et al. (2015), and Akram et al. (2017). The research results contribute a theoretical implication on the research model of the relationships among e-retailer personality, website quality, and impulse buying in an emerging market in Asia.

Based on the research findings, some managerial implications are suggested for marketing managers as follows:

One of the recent branding trends is to attribute human personality to product/retailer brands. This research result revealed that e-retailer website personality had an impact on both website quality and impulse buying. As a result, the retail management should determine their personality in the segmentation, targeting, and positioning process to be distinct from their competitors. Online customers will find themselves when surfing on websites with a similar personality. An integrated marketing and communication plan should be adjusted accordingly to direct the expected character for websites such as proficient, sophisticated, effective, systematic (Intelligent), engaging, exciting, or vital (Fun), and so on. Besides, the website design should also be reconstructed to be suitable with its personality.

Since website quality is an important determinant of online impulse buying. Therefore, e-retailers should concentrate on enhancing the website quality by designing friendly user-interface, product categories with attractive and detailed information, flexible and traceable navigational structure along with highly productive search engine, adding more visual appeal, emotional appeal and innovative features, and minimizing response time and the various gate of payment with high security.

To sum up, e-retailers should pay much attention to improving website quality as well as enhancing website personality in order to level up the buying impulsiveness of online shoppers.

Limitations and future research directions

The research sampling executed by the convenience method made the representative for total population limited. Future research should overcome this limitation by quota sampling. A wide variety of products was applied in this research; a specific product category should be studied separately to see any difference on the purpose of recommending more accurate managerial implications. Lastly, the website quality in this study was approached as a uni-dimensional construct. The future research should take into consideration its four dimensions: Ease of use, usefulness, entertainment, and complimentary relationship (Loiacono et al., 2007).

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APPENDIX A

Primary measurement scale

Item code	Measurement scale	Reference
e-retailer brand/website personality		
Intelligent		
IN01	Searchable	Chen and Rodgers (2006)
IN02	Satisfying	
IN03	Comprehensive	
IN04	Knowledgeable	
IN05	Easy	
IN06	competent	
IN07	Fast	
IN08	Concise	
Fun		
FU01	Colourful	Chen and Rodgers (2006)
FU02	Attractive	
FU03	Flashy	
FU04	Action Packed	
FU05	Interactive	
FU06	Dynamic	
Organized		
OR01	Irritating >>> <i>Calm</i>	Chen and Rodgers (2006)
OR02	Discouraging >>> <i>Encouraging</i>	
OR03	Intensive >>> <i>well-organized</i>	
OR04	Cluttered >>> <i>Considerable</i>	
Candid		
CA01	Orderly	Chen and Rodgers (2006)
CA02	Straightforward	
CA03	Authentic (<i>New item from focus group</i>)	
Sincere		
SI01	Sincerely	Chen and Rodgers (2006)
SI02	Down-to-earth	
SI03	Friendly (<i>new item from focus group</i>)	

Website quality		
WQ01	This website is convenient to use	Yoo and Donthu (2001); Loiacono et al. (2007); Turkyilmaz et al. (2015).
WQ02	It is easy to search for information	
WQ03	This site is colourful	
WQ04	This site is creative	
WQ05	This site shows good picture of the product	
WQ06	It is easy to access the results	
WQ07	The site has quick process	
WQ08	This site ensures me of security	
Impulsive buying behavior		
IB01	I often buy things spontaneously	Rook and Fisher (1995); Wells et al. (2011); Akram et al. (2017).
IB02	"Just do it" describes the way I buy things	
IB03	I often buy things without thinking	
IB04	“I see it, I buy it" describes me	
IB05	"Buy now, think about it later" describes me	

Source: Results from the qualitative research

