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Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences 222 (2016) 177 - 185

ASLI QoL2015, Annual Serial Landmark International Conferences on Quality of Life ASEAN-Turkey ASLI QoL2015

AicQoL2015Jakarta, Indonesia. AMER International Conference on Quality of Life The Akmani Hotel, Jakarta, Indonesia, 25-27 April 2015 "Quality of Life in the Built & Natural Environment 3"

## Think Again Before You Buy: The relationship between selfregulation and impulsive buying behaviors among Jakarta young adults

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#### **Abstract**

Impulsive buying behavior is a phenomenon that usually occurs among groups of individuals who have just started to earn income in metropolitan cities such as Jakarta. Young adults are on a stage in their lives where they experience a transition from being financially dependent to fully financially independent individuals. This stage is also marked by the establishment of certain goals that are usually related to monetary issues. Thus, self-regulation is needed to control urges for impulsive buying of unnecessary goods. The result of the study indicates that a negative correlation exists between self-regulation and impulsive buying behavior (r = -.267, p < 0.01).

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Peer-review under responsibility of AMER (Association of Malaysian Environment-Behaviour Researchers) and cE-Bs (Centre for Environment- Behaviour Studies, Faculty of Architecture, Planning & Surveying, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Malaysia.

Keywords: Self-regulation; impulsive buying behavior; young adults; monetary issues

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#### 1. Introduction

Impulsive buying behavior is one of the trending topics amongst consumer researchers that they are currently striving to answer, starting with the causes, driving forces and the triggers of impulsive buying behavior. Such need is being reinforced with the era that we are living now. In the 21st century, shopping has been identified as a form of leisure activity among urban populations, with the same attitude existing in Jakarta as well. This phenomenon can be seen in the daily lives of young adults as young adults living in metropolitan cities have a constant need of reaching some level of social standards as a mean of fulfilling social needs, with popular acts such as chilling at a café and spending time at the mall with their peers (Enrico, Aron & Oktavia, 2014). Such behaviours are also encouraged due to the advantageous locations of shopping centres around Jakarta with locations of various universities in Jakarta that allow easy access to shopping malls such as Central Park, Mall of Taman Anggrek, Citra Land, Gandaria City and Grand Indonesia. At this point, young adults become the main focus as they are at the stage of their lives where they have earned or are starting to earn disposable income. Allowing them the freedom of purchasing as their hearts desire. However, their newfound freedom could be problematic as young adults have been identified as the demographic that are more prone to exhibit impulsive buying behavior in a retail environment (Virvilaite & Saladiene, 2012).

Upon looking at theories of Developmental Psychology, young adults are at the stage of their life lives that marked the attainment of independence that individuals usually get by holding a more or less permanent full-time job which occurs after an individual has finished school, college, graduate or professional schools (Santrock, 2011). During this period of development, individuals experience a transition from being financially dependent on their parents to be fully financially independent, giving them full control of their income. Young adulthood is also marked by the establishment of certain life goals and achievements with controls over oneself becoming a necessity in order to attain these goals and achievements. According to Erikson, early adults are at a stage of undergoing an ego crisis known as intimacy vs. isolation, which is the stage during which individuals search for their significant others and start to think about future plans of forming a family. In Indonesian societies, it is common for young adults to have establish goals that are relating to wedding, accommodations, children's education, and many others pointing at the direction of building a secure family life.

With the plans and goals that are established, these young adults would need to possess control over themselves and be able to self-regulate themselves in accord with their financial needs. However, there will always be a conflict between "necessities in the present" and "necessities in the future" that hinders an individual's ability to save up. Individuals are always driven by the urge to purchase goods that they have seen while window shopping or through a friend's recommendations and suggestions. The conflict between these two urges requires an individual to engage in self-regulation (Vohs & Baumeister, 2011).

#### 1.1. Variables

There are 4 different components that has been identified by Baumstein et al (2007) which make up self-regulation: (1) Standards of desirable behavior, (2) Motivation to meet standards, (3) Monitoring of situations and thoughts that precede breaking standards, (4) Willpower or internal strength to control urges. Each of these components serve as a factor that influence the progression of self-regulation indicating that the absence of one of these components can lead to an increase of impulsive and thoughtless behaviors. However, this study seek to establish a relationship between self-regulation and impulsive buying rather than find out whether the components of self-regulation serve as a factor to increases impulsive behaviors.

#### 1.2. Research objective

As mentioned above, self-regulation becomes an issue in young adults who have started earning money or maintaining stable jobs. Without proper self-regulation, young adults can spend a load amount of money on unnecessary items. However, literature on impulsive buying in Indonesia, especially in Jakarta, have not been widely covered. This study aims to give a demographic description of impulsive buying in young adults that are domiciled in Jakarta.

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