

A Synopsis

On

AN ASSESSMENT OF THE PSYCHOLOGICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF
COMPULSIVE AND NON - COMPULSIVE BUYERS OF NATION CAPITAL
REGION (N.C.R.) : A SAMPLE SURVEY

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Buying is a means to obtain products that are of utilitarian nature. Compulsive buying is uncontrolled urges to buy products that often may not be of much utility to the buyer. For some adults, shopping is also a leisure activity, a means of managing emotions or a way to establish and express self-identity. For others, the inability to control buying urges brings significant adverse consequences. Uncontrolled problematic buying behavior has been referred to as uncontrolled buying, compulsive buying, compulsive shopping, addictive buying, excessive buying, and spendaholism.

Definition : Compulsive Buying Disorder

Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD) is a disorder of the mind, distinguished by invasive thoughts (obsessions) that often cause anxiety, by repetitive behavior (compulsions), aimed at reducing anxiety or by a combination of such obsessions and compulsions. The behavior of those who have OCD may appear psychotic to others and they may be categorized as paranoid. Upon recognition of their thoughts and subsequent actions as irrational, OCD sufferers often become distraught. The symptoms of this disorder range from cyclic hand washing and extensive hoarding to fixation with sexual, religious or destructive impulses. Compulsive buying can be classed as one of the symptoms of OCD. It becomes clearer upon understanding the definition of Compulsive buying Disorder. According to O' Guinn and Faber (1989) it is a process of chronic, repetitive purchasing primarily in response to negative feelings and that provides immediate short term sense of fulfillment, but which ultimately causes harm to the individual and/or others. Similarly, Edwards (1992) labeled it a chronic, unusual form of shopping and expenditure, characterized by irrepressible uncontrollable and cyclic urges to buy. Thoughts of shopping are intrusive and accompanied by powerful urges. It also is experienced as a continual and repetitive problem. The Concise Oxford Dictionary explains the disorder to be irresistible, compelling or resulting or acting from compulsion against one's conscious wishes.

The significance of Compulsive Buying Disorder can be further emphasized by stating that its inclusion is being considered in the DSM(the diagnostic manual for psychiatric disorders of the American Psychiatric Association).DSM provides a working model of categories and diagnostic criteria for psychiatric disorders. DSM is constantly evolving and research planning is underway for DSM-V. Changes to DSM-V being considered include the creation of two broad new categories that may influence the conceptualization of compulsive buying. A category related to obsessive-compulsive-related disorders might include disorders such as obsessive compulsive disorder, obsessive compulsive personality disorder, hoarding, body dysmorphic disorder, eating disorders, hypochondriasis, Tourette's syndrome, Sydenham's chorea or pediatric autoimmune neuropsychiatric disorders associated with streptococcal infections, and pathological grooming disorders, such as trichotillomania, skin picking, and nail biting. Compulsive buying was not determined to be a good fit for this category. On the other hand, a parallel category under consideration is behavioral and substance addictions, which might include substance-related disorders and several impulse-control disorders (pathological gambling, pyromania, and kleptomania), as well as others currently in the category of impulse control disorders not otherwise specified (Internet addiction, impulsive-compulsive sexual behavior, and compulsive buying).

Compulsive Buying and its traits

The National Institute on Drug Abuse(U.S.A) has considered behavioral addictions (such as compulsive buying) to be cleaner and more homogeneous models of substance addictions because these conditions may share clinical features and perhaps underlying brain circuitry, and these features and circuitry are not altered by the ingestion of exogenous substances. Similar phases seem to occur for behavioral and substance addictions. Initially, episodes are characterized by increasing physiological and emotional arousal before the act; pleasure, high, or gratification associated with the act; and a decrease in arousal and feelings of guilt and remorse afterward. Tolerance and physiological withdrawal can also develop. Because an impulsive component (pleasure, arousal, or gratification) is involved in initiating the cycle, and a compulsive component

is involved in the persistence of the behavior, these conditions may also be thought of as impulsive-compulsive disorders.

Impulsive and compulsive buying have certain different characteristics. Impulsive buyers undergo an acute loss of impulse control while they are shopping, whereas compulsive buyers suffer from a chronic loss of impulse control that develops into a repetitive pattern marked by much more dire consequences than that experienced by the impulsive shopper. Thus we can say that compulsive buying is a much more serious phenomenon than impulsive buying. This type of shopping and buying is not the same as occasional impulse buying, which many people engage in. Compulsive buying leads to serious psychological, financial and family problems including depression, overwhelming debt and the breakup of relationships. Impulsive consumers are not as extreme in their behavior as compulsive consumers, and they merely qualify as being materialistic. In other words, impulsive buying is a behavior pattern that happens to ordinary consumers. The difference lies in the degree of the loss of impulse control and impulsiveness could lead to compulsive buying. In sum it can be said that both impulsive and compulsive buying can be traced to the same cardinal psychological traits.

Compulsive shoppers are driven by the desire to shop and spend. This desire continues to mount which ultimately forces the buyer to spend so as to relieve pressure. One of the reasons for the compulsive buyer to engage in shopping is that these individuals want to run away from the pains, hardships, tensions, anxiety and fears they have in their lives. A few shop to treat their boredom and/or feeling of emptiness. For some it is a quest for status, power, beauty or success. Some love to shop because they want to feel valued in the eyes of sales persons, and to others in the shopping vicinity. Also they feel very happy when they get a warm and preferential treatment from the persons attending to them in the shops. Consumers who act like this will always be shopping to reduce psychological tension and often do not seek the possession of goods, compulsive buying is a continuity behavior that has potentially severe consequences for the individual affected.

Customers can be classified in different categories. Self-gratifying consumers, as a first group, try to alleviate depression by spending money. The shopping process is motivated not by the utility of consumption but by the buying process itself. Secondly, those people living in a congested urban environment often seek the opportunity to walk in shopping centers and malls with appealing aesthetics and ambience. Members of the third category, sensory-stimulation-seekers enjoy the physical sensation of handling merchandise, the pleasant background music and the scents. These consumers enjoy negotiating, and finally, the motive of pleasure of bargaining is recognized. (Klein, Thelen & Antretetter, 1999).

In order to attain emotional satisfaction a consumer may get entrapped in the vicious circle of compulsive buying which rightly describes the effects of equating personal happiness, with purchasing material possessions and consumption in excess of ones need. People who have compulsive buying disorder are often struck with an irresistible, intrusive and often senseless impulse to buy. It is common for sufferers to go on frequent shopping binges and to accumulate large quantities of unnecessary, unwanted items. Sufferers often rack up thousands of dollars in debt and lie to their loved ones about their purchases. The consequences can be bankruptcy, divorce, embezzlement and even suicide attempts.

Psychological characteristics of consumers and buying pattern

People who "shop 'till they drop" and run their credit cards up to the limit often have a shopping addiction. They live under the motion that if they shop they will feel better. Compulsive shopping and spending generally makes a person feel worse. It is quite similar to other addictive behaviors and has some of the same characteristics as problem drinking (alcoholism), gambling and overeating addictions. Compulsive shopping or spending can be a seasonal balm for the depression, anxiety and loneliness. It also can occur when a person feels depressed, lonely and angry. It generally makes these feelings worse because of the increased financial debt the person has obtained from compulsive shopping.

There are biological, psychological and sociological factors that can contribute to the development of compulsive buying. Compulsive buyers often score high on depression, anxiety and low on self esteem.

The 16 Personality Factors theory which measures the various psychological traits of an individual is another significant variable under the category of psychological characteristics. It was developed from the work of Dr. Raymond Cattell and his factor analysis in the year 1946. He stated 16 different scales to measure various personality traits of an individual. These factors are further grouped together into 5 global factors namely self control, anxiety, extraversion, independence and tough-mindedness. Other contributing psychological characteristic in compulsive buying could be self esteem.

The dynamic Indian market and compulsive buying

The Indian retail market has around 12 million outlets and has the largest retail outlet density in the world. Indian retail has bright prospects, propelled by the fast lifestyle changes taking place in the Indian household. Last decade, India's middle and high-income population has grown at a rapid pace of over 10% per annum, even as the large low-income base has shrunk. Customers are demanding better store ambience and are looking for solution providers and external guarantors of quality and usability. The Indian consumer is increasingly focusing on value, convenience, variety and a better shopping experience.

The increase in variety, quality, and availability of products, as well as an increase in spending power has resulted in consumers increasingly using supermarkets for their personal shopping. Indian lifestyles are changing, with the emergence of more educated women entering the workforce, and with more two-income households with higher disposable incomes. With increase in disposable income the Indians have taken to using plastic money more often at retail stores as well as for travel. The retail sector has also become organized where it used to be mostly street vending. This shift in retail, as well as, in branded cards in India has made it easier for them to use the plastic over money. There is also the fact that consumers are able to get rewards and discounts from the credit

card companies. However, When it comes to longevity, few royals can top America's King Consumer. For more than four decades, the shopaholic nation has shown an insatiable desire to spend until its credit cards melted. And throughout this era, consumer spending had, well, consumed a greater and greater share of its total economy. In spite of various economic setbacks in the past half century the spending of the Americans have been constantly on the rise. Indeed, it often seems that it has defined itself by its ability to buy super sized everything, from McMansions to tricked-out SUVs to 60-inch flat-screen televisions—all enabled by decades of cheap credit, and consequently leading to the recent economic fall down.

In India, ICICI Bank, which has more promotions in the pipeline, now claims to add up to 100,000 new customers every month while Citibank adds 80,000-90,000 and State Bank of India adds 70,000-75,000 cards per month. The other forms of credit market like automotive loans, housing loans, personal loans, education loans are all expanding. Consumerism or consumerist philosophy is buy now and pay later. It is under this scenario that a study on the difference in the characteristics of compulsive and non compulsive buyers seems topical and significant.

2.0 REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In order to understand the effects of consumption on society and the well being of others, negative consumption behavior must be studied. Cole and Sherrell (1995) consider Compulsive Buying as a negative behavioral trait. Similarly, Lejoyeux et al.,(1999) describe compulsive buying as a repetitive, impulsive and excessive buying that may often lead to personal and family distress. Compulsive buying disorder (CBD) was first described clinically, in the early 20th century by Kraepelin,1915 and Bleuler,1930(as cited in Black, 2007). Bleuler described CBD as an example of a reactive impulse or impulsive insanity, which he grouped alongside kleptomania and pyromania.

While not included in DSM-IV, CBD was included in DSM-III-R as an example of an "Impulse control disorder not otherwise specified". Research criteria have been developed that emphasize its cognitive and behavioral aspects. Some writers have criticized attempts to categorize CBD as an illness, which they see as part of a trend to medicalize behavioral problems. Yet, this approach ignores the reality of CBD, and both trivializes and stigmatizes attempts to understand or treat the disorder.

Difference between Impulsive and Compulsive Buying

Impulsive Buying and its traits have been explained by various authors. Madavaram and Laverie (2004) explain Impulse buying as a consequence of buyer's instant reaction to external stimuli that is often hedonically charged. Impulse buying episode signifies a change in purchaser's intention to purchase that particular product before and after the exposure to stimuli. The stimuli is not just limited to the product and change in purchaser's intention does not include a reminder item that is simply out of stock at home. This definition takes into account that brand switching and purchasing substitute products could sometimes be impulse purchases. Explaining the factors related to impulse buying, Youn and Faber (2000) found three general personality factors, lack of control, stress reaction and absorption. The lack of control dimension explains that in a general situation tendency of impulsive behavior may influence buying. Similarly, the association with stress reaction suggests that impulse buying may serve a mood regulating function

for some people. Finally, susceptibility to the environmental stimuli can contribute to their impulsive behavior, thus, explaining the absorption personality factor.

There is a considerable difference between reminder impulse buying (in which a shopper retains the need for an essential item on seeing it in the shop), and pure impulse buying (a novelty or escape purchase which breaks the normal buying pattern). Consumer behaviorists have tended to regard any unplanned purchase as impulse buying (Dittmar, Beattie & Friese, 1996). Compulsive buying, however, is typically more about the desire to buy than about the actual item bought (O' Guinn & Faber, 1989).

Vohs and Faber (2007) have explained the differences between impulsive and compulsive buying. Firstly, impulse buying is a behavior that is engaged in by a large percentage of the population at relatively infrequent intervals, compulsive buying however, affects only a small percentage of the population that experiences these urges frequently. Secondly and more importantly, the consequences of compulsive buying are significantly more severe than that of impulse buying and lastly, while self regulatory failure has been linked to both impulse buying and compulsive buying, they involve different types of failure. Compulsive buying is seen to have more serious consequences and often it leads to a chronic and complete breakdown of the self regulatory process. This occurs because of the conflicting goals – the need to maintain emotional stability overwhelms efforts to maintain purchasing and economic goals.

Attempts have been made by investigators and researchers to classify customers on the basis of their shopping pattern. According to Edwards (1993), the classification can be along a compulsive buying continuum ranging across the categories namely, normal, recreational, borderline, compulsive and addicted spenders in order of increasing magnitude of compulsiveness in buying behavior. The normal (non - compulsive) consumer is believed to shop and spend mainly out of necessity, the recreational buyer occasionally uses shopping and spending to relieve stress or to celebrate, and the compulsive and addicted spenders mostly buy in order to relieve anxiety, with the addicted spender being someone whose extreme buying behavior has created extreme

dysfunctions in their daily lives, like any other addiction might do. Someone whose spending pattern lies between recreational and compulsive could be categorized as a borderline compulsive buyer who stands a favorable chance of falling in the addictive category in the course of time.

Marketers raise the issue of ethics in marketing practice. Are marketers taking advantage of vulnerable consumer populations by designing practices or techniques that accrue benefits for the company at the expense of exploiting vulnerable populations? At the same time, social policy makers need to be aware of the possibility of such marketing programs and design policies that save these populations from exploitation. It is clear from the above review that several marketing practices carry the risk of inducing or fostering compulsive buying (Gupta, 2013).

Compulsive buying manifestations are viewed as possibly having an addiction component or a general compulsion component or both. It is reasoned that if buying has an addiction component, then compulsive buying tendencies should be strongly linked to some general addictive propensity(Workman & Paper,2010).

Psychological characteristics

Understanding the individual person and his personality traits in his or her role as a consumer should be a key issue in the study of consumer behavior(Baumgartner,2002).

Describing the traits of compulsive buying CBD is associated with significant psychiatric comorbidity, particularly mood and anxiety disorders, substance use disorders, eating disorders, and other disorders of impulse control. The majority of persons with CBD appear to meet criteria for an Axis II disorder, although there is no special "shopping" personality. Compulsive shopping tends to run in families, and these families are filled with mood and substance use disorders (Black, 2007).

Kwak, Zinkhan and Roushanzamir (2004) in their study of Compulsive comorbidity and its psychological antecedents concluded that personality traits (i.e. obsessive thoughts, risk-taking tendencies) are significantly related to compulsive consumption.

Mowen and Spears (1999) implemented a hierarchical perspective to investigate the root cause of compulsive buying among college students in US Universities. Their hierarchical approach model was confirmed in which cardinal Psychological traits (Five Factor Model of personality) predict central trait (Need for arousal and materialism), which in turn predicts surface traits (Compulsive buying).

Researchers have shown that most compulsive buyers fulfill the urge of buying by purchasing apparel related products. Since most compulsive buyers buy apparel and apparel related products therefore there is a strong affinity and attachment of compulsive buyers with these products. It has also been observed that compulsive buyers have strong involvement with the products. It has also been noted that females had high levels of involvement with apparel-products(Jalees,2007)

Lejoyeux, Tassain, Solomon, Ades (1997) in their study found that patients with compulsive buying disorder also suffer from mood disorder in 50% to 100% of the cases studied, and antidepressants often help to decrease the frequency and the severity of uncontrolled buying.

In a study undertaken by O'Guinn and Faber(1989) it was found that people who buy compulsively are more likely to demonstrate compulsivity as a personality trait, have lower self-esteem, and are more prone to fantasy than more normal consumers. Their primary motivation appears to be the psychological benefits derived from the buying process itself rather than from the possession of purchased objects. Consequences of compulsive buying include extreme levels of debt, anxiety and frustration, the subjective sense of loss of control, and domestic dissension.

Sarbo and Edwards (1996) presented a theoretical framework that positions compulsive buying behavior as a function of various psychological processes and personality traits. They analyzed data from actual consumers to examine the nature of consumer heterogeneity in compulsive buying behavior. This empirical analysis distinguished Compulsive buyers into 2 clusters on the basis of different psychological and personality traits which are the drivers of compulsive buying.

The preliminary data in a research suggested that compulsive buyers suffer from unusually high level of depression and anxiety and experience high rates of comorbid mood and anxiety disorders. Clinical compulsive buyers were also more likely to suffer from comorbid substance abuse, eating disorders, and other impulse control disorders. If compulsive buying is associated with these disorders, it deserves clinical and research attention, not only for its direct effects but also for the suffering and impairment brought by these comorbid conditions (Koran et al., 2006).

Compulsive buyers have also been found to have low self esteem. Of course low self esteem in clinical population always presents a classic cause and effect question. Compulsive buying is no different. It seems most likely that the best model of compulsive buying would be recursive with respect to self esteem. Compulsive buying has potentially severe consequences for the individual affected, others around him or her and society at large. Depression, anxiety, and low self esteem affect the compulsive buyer and his or her personal relationships. Compulsive buying in the U.S. has contributed to a record number of personal bankruptcy filings and credit card debt (Roberts & Jones, 2001).

Consumers' degree of involvement in products or issues is to only be held as a major mediating variable of consumer behavior. Involvement is an unobservable state of motivation, arousal or interest. It is evoked by a particular stimulus or situation (Kapeferer & Laurent, 1985).

A study to analyze the causes and the effects of browsing revealed that it is both a form of leisure activity and a form of external search behavior. Browsing can provide a consumer with a way to spend a dull afternoon and in addition it can add to the individual's store of information concerning new product developments, brand differences, or sale prices. Furthermore, the search aspect of browsing may be pleasurable in and of itself. The browser can fulfill his/her inquisitive motives and add to feelings of self-esteem through the acquisition of product-specific or marketplace expertise (Bloch & Richins, 1983).

Researchers have demonstrated that apparel related items such as shoes, accessories and cosmetics are commonly used as symbols in the process of self completion because apparel items possess a high communicative value. Compulsive buyers tend to have a low self esteem and self perceived social status and strong association with buying. Compulsive buyers appear to have a stronger perception about the relationship between social status and purchases as compared to non-compulsive buyers (Jalees, 2007).

The consumer often has to choose a specific product or brand from a set of alternatives available in the market. In the process of evaluation and selection, the consumer may adopt a set of criteria such as economy, quality, durability, and taste, and the product that most closely matches the set of criteria is purchased. When products become standardized, it becomes increasingly difficult to differentiate them on any real, tangible attributes. In such cases, consumers may select alternatives randomly, revealing no consistency in purchase pattern. To create specific preference for products and brands, marketers incorporate non-physical and intangible product attributes and communicate these to the market. The consumer, therefore, learns to evaluate a product not only in terms of its physical characteristics but also with respect to its non physical attributes (Dholakia, 1978).

A student's use of credit cards strengthened the relationship between his or her attitude towards money, self-esteem and compulsive buying (Roberts & Jones, 2001).

Eroglu, Machleit and Davis (2003) tested a model that proposed that the atmospheric cues of the online store influence shoppers' emotional and cognitive states, which then affect their shopping outcomes. The results support the model propositions and show a significant effect of site atmospherics on shopper attitudes, satisfaction, and various approach/avoidance behaviors as a result of the emotions experienced during the shopping episode.

A consumer who is satisfied with a certain brand is likely to be loyal to that brand. Brand satisfaction leads to attitudinal brand loyalty. Recent studies have demonstrated that attitudinal brand loyalty lead to affective reactions and often most sporadic future purchases which insinuate compulsive buying intention. Therefore, drawing from this reasoning higher levels of brand satisfaction can be expected to lead to increased future compulsive buying intention (Chinomona, 2013)

The careful analysis of the literature indicates that compulsive buying is an increasing and over powering phenomenon globally. In the case of India there is ample scope for more in depth study because not much work has been done on this topic here, as the disorder is still evolving in the country along with the changing lifestyle of the people. Most of the studies referred to; highlight compulsive buying in a product specific or age specific context, particularly focusing on the younger generation or college students.

A comparative analysis of the psychological characteristics of compulsive and non compulsive buyers will give a new dimension to the study. In the present study, an attempt is made to investigate the difference between the psychological traits of compulsive and non compulsive buyers and also the impact of demographic characteristics like gender and age on the buying behavior of an individual.

This research will help to become aware of the best predictors of compulsive buying in the psychological perspective and study its impact on the society and the life of the people living in N.C.R.

3.0 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The post globalized economy offers the consumers with countless brands in the product market. The credit market is equally poised to co-exist to the increasing demand, as consumers are on a shopping spree. The economy is growing at an average rate of 7% every year. The employment opportunities are on the rise leading to increasing disposable income.

According to the National Council of Applied Economic Research, India, the Indian middle class has increased on the back of the economic boom, growing by some 10 to 12 percent per year, and estimates its size to reach 300 million people. As an outcome of consumerism, the money that could have been spent on social capital like education, nutrition is spent on dubious items that give no social return. There is an endless quest to purchase newer products and the life is focused on the imaginary world of the unattainable. As a consequence of spending to exhibit wealth, now major life events like weddings and births are transformed into consumer events. The increasing buying frequency is leading families to a path of huge debts traps.

In the post-modern consumerist economies, the Maslow's hierarchy of needs is circumvented at a faster pace. The product life cycle is shorter and buying urges are intensifying amongst consumers in India, due to personal, socio cultural and the emerging trends in the market place and its offerings. As a result of the impact of globalization and the forces of post-modern consumerism, the hierarchy of needs of individual is moving unnaturally, not exactly in the same order as Maslow predicted in the continuum (natural). The marketers of the present steer in a lot of mesmerizing effect, particularly using the "persuasive advertisements." The availability of easy and plenty of credit product offerings to the consumer aggravates the situation. In the changed economic and lifestyle scenario worldwide, there is easier access to malls, there is a glut of product availability in the market, and shopping has become a symbol of status as contrary to previous times when there was a stigma attached to it and it was considered as an indication of moral or spiritual decay. Compulsive shoppers certainly encounter

temptations daily. Easy and quick credit availability further makes the activity more frequent.

For an individual, buying beyond one's need/ability is a leading indicator to a path of high personal debt. There is a growing importance for the non-financial credibility of the potential borrowers, over and above his/her financial credibility. This argument falls in line with sustainable borrowing and spending as the urges of consumerism are growing stronger, faster and getting deep rooted in our value and belief systems.

The rapid growth in numbers of internet users in India provides a bright prospect for E Marketers. With an impressive increase in the rate of growth in personal computer penetration India is supposed to be one of the leading nations in Asia where E-Commerce can be developed. This rapid growth in the number of internet users has prompted a belief in many business circles that the web represents a huge marketing opportunity. The future of E commerce seems to be very bright in India and consequently its influence on compulsive buying seems to be very significant in the coming years. With the elimination of constraints of time and space which were often experienced by customers in a traditional shopping environment, in the last decade, rapid developments in information technology has substantially changed the landscape of consumer behavior. The availability of 24 hour retailing through the Internet has brought about an increase in online retailing and undoubtedly, an increase in impulse buying. With the internet, consumers' buying opportunities have expanded through an increased accessibility to products and services and the increased ease to make purchases.

The above discussion signifies the gravity of the rising problem of compulsive buying in India and not much study has been done in this area in India especially because this disorder is still in its establishing stage here contrary to the west where the people have been engulfed in it for a long time now.

The present study attempts to assess the psychological characteristics of compulsive and non compulsive buyers in NCR.

4.0 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- 1) To study the psychological characteristics of compulsive and non-compulsive buyers.
- 2) To compare and analyze the psychological characteristics of compulsive and non-compulsive buyers.

5.0 HYPOTHESES

5.1. Association between extraversion and compulsive and non-compulsive buying behavior

H1₀: There is no significant difference in the extraversion level of compulsive and non-compulsive buyer

H1₁: There is a significant difference in the extraversion level of compulsive and non-compulsive buyer

5.2. Association between anxiety and compulsive and non-compulsive buying behavior

H2₀: There is no significant difference in the anxiety level of compulsive and non-compulsive buyer

H2₁: There is a significant difference in the anxiety level of compulsive and non-compulsive buyer

5.3. Association between tough-mindedness and compulsive and non-compulsive buying behavior

H3₀: There is no significant difference in the tough mindedness level of compulsive and non-compulsive buyer

H3₁: There is a significant difference in the tough mindedness level of compulsive and non-compulsive buyer

5.4. Association between independence and compulsive and non-compulsive buying behavior

H4₀: There is no significant difference in the independence level of compulsive and non-compulsive buyer

H4₁: There is a significant difference in independence level of compulsive and non-compulsive buyer

5.5. Association between self-control and compulsive and non-compulsive buying behavior

H5₀: There is no significant difference in the self-control level of compulsive and non-compulsive buyer

H5₁: There is a significant difference in the self-control level of compulsive and non-compulsive buyer

6.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

6.1 Sample

500 men and women from colleges and different organizations will participate in the study. They will be selected from NCR belonging within the age group of 20 – 60 years. Appropriate standardized psychological test will identify from amongst them a quota sample of 500 compulsive and non – compulsive buyers (250 in each category). Appropriate standardized psychological tests will be administered on them to assess the psychological characteristics of compulsive and non- compulsive buyers.

6.2 Research Design

The independent variables for the study will be 5 global factors (extraversion, anxiety, tough mindedness, independence and self-control) the dependent variable will be compulsive buying and non- compulsive buying. T test and factor analysis will be conducted to identify the best predictor of compulsive buying.

6.3 Tools to be used

- 1) Compulsive Buying Scale (CBS) (Faber & O'Guinn,1992)will be used to distinguish 100 compulsive buyers from 500 respondents.
- 2) 16 PF (Cattell.,Cattell &Cattell,1994) will be used to identify the personality characteristics of compulsive and non- compulsive buyers.

7.0 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

In the past few decades compulsive buying has moved from anonymity to a frequently mentioned topic in many of our leading institutions ranging from the various forms of media to the courts. In its evolution it has gone from a sarcastic topic of humor(usually at the expense of women) in comic strips and talk shows to serious discussion on television, in newspapers and magazines, to serving as a mitigating circumstance in criminal trials, to as a research topic at universities. In fact, compulsive buying is now commonly recognized and addressed by psychiatrists globally and has become an issue of serious concern.

The recognition of compulsive buying disorder goes back to the early twentieth century under the term oniomania or buying mania given by kraepelin,1915 (as cited in O'Guinn & Faber, 2005).Despite the early recognition and diagnosis of a severe buying problem, there was virtually no further mention of compulsive buying until the mid 1980's when the formation of self help groups began to gain media attention. A couple of years later articles on compulsive buying began to appear in the academic literature in psychology. Since that time there has been a better understanding of this problem, its complexities, varying contributory causes, the severity of its effects and the size of the problem. But there is still much left to be understood. The present investigation is unique in its approach in studying the comparison of the psychological characteristics of compulsive and non compulsive buyers in NCR. The few studies that have taken place in India before this have primarily focused on variables like Big 5, materialism & demographics. This research will cater to a much broader spectrum of research as it will attempt to report on the current knowledge of compulsive buying and address key facets of its social circumstance and construction specifically in the metropolitan region of NCR. With the widespread use of internet for shopping, on-line buying could become a significant social problem as e-commerce spreads. The compulsive buying tendencies of adolescent consumers coupled with their affinity for the Internet, cause special concern. Beyond inefficiency in markets, there will be social costs from reduced productivity, personal bankruptcies, disrupted families and ruined lives.

This research will help in improving our limited understanding, and examine various determinants that may make individuals more vulnerable to compulsive buying. It can be particularly helpful to the young adults of the country who have the strongest possibility of coming under the spell of this disorder, especially with the surroundings and lifestyle becoming more and more westernized. This can be beneficial for the society and social developments. Consumer compulsive buying is an important area of inquiry in consumer behavior research. The importance of studying compulsive buying, stems, in part, from its nature as a negative aspect of consumer behavior. Specifically, exploring negative consumption phenomena could provide modified or new perspectives for the study of positive consumption behaviors. Moreover, research on negative facets of consumption is useful because it can potentially contribute to society's wellbeing, an important criterion for usefulness of any research.

To conclude we can say that compulsive buying is an understudied, but growing, dysfunctional consumer behavior with harmful psychological and financial consequences. Clinical perspectives treat it as a psychiatric disorder. The present research aims to improve understanding of compulsive buying and consequently help us to deal with it in a better way and avert it from overpowering the life of the coming generations of modern India.

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