



# Impact of Personality Trait on Compulsive Buying Behaviour: Mediating Role of Gender

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**Abstract-** Compulsive buying is framed within the larger category of compulsive consumption. Qualitative analysis of data are used to provide a more phenomenological description of compulsive buying. Results indicate 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. Research result indicates that consequences of compulsive buying include extreme levels of debt, anxiety and frustration, the subjective sense of loss of control, and domestic dissension.

## I INTRODUCTION

Consumer psychology is a specialty area that studies how our thoughts, beliefs, feelings, and perceptions influence how people buy and relate to goods and services. One formal definition of the field describes it as “the study of individuals, groups, or organizations and the processes they use to select, secure, use, and dispose of products, services, experiences, or ideas to satisfy needs and the impacts that these processes have on the consumer and society” [1-8]. Professionals in this field look at things like the decision-making process, social persuasion and motivation to help understand why shoppers buy some things but not others. In this overview of the profession, learn more about what consumer psychologists do and where they work [1]. According to the Society for Consumer Psychology, division 23 of the American Psychological Association, consumer psychology employs theoretical psychological approaches to understanding consumers. This field is often

considered a sub-specialty of industrial-organizational psychology and is also known as the psychology of consumer behavior or the psychology of marketing.

Consumer psychologists study a variety of topics including [7]:

- How consumers choose businesses, products and services
- The thought processes and emotions behind consumer decisions
- How environmental variables such as friends, family, media, and culture influence buying decisions
- What motivates people to choose one product over another
- How personal factors and individual difference affect people's buying choices
- What marketers can do to effectively reach out to their target customers

The study of consumer behavior is concerned with all aspects of purchasing behavior from pre-purchase activities through to post-purchase consumption and evaluation activities. It is also concerned with all persons involved, either directly or indirectly, in purchasing decisions and consumption activities including brand-influencers and opinion leaders.

Consumer behavior is the study of how individual customers, groups or organizations select, buy, use, and dispose ideas, goods, and services to satisfy their needs and wants. It refers to the actions of the consumers in the marketplace and the underlying motives for those actions.

Marketers expect that by understanding what causes the consumers to buy particular goods and services,



they will be able to determine which products are needed in the marketplace, which are obsolete, and how best to present the goods to the consumers [6]. The study of consumer behavior assumes that the consumers are actors in the marketplace. The perspective of role theory assumes that consumers play various roles in the marketplace. Starting from the information provider, from the user to the payer and to the disposer, consumers play these roles in the decision process. The roles may also vary in different consumption situations [4].

### WHAT IS COMPULSIVE BUYING?

Compulsive buying is an experienced as an irritable – uncontrolled-unable urge, resulting in excessive and time consuming retail activity that is typically prompted by negative affectivity and result in gross social personal or financial difficulties. Compulsive shopping may be considered as an impulse control disorder, an obsessive compulsive disorder or even a clinical addiction, depending on the clinical source [3].

#### The four stages of compulsive buying

- **Anticipation:** Thoughts and urges start. They may focus on a specific item or the act of shopping itself.
- **Preparation:** Research and decision making take place. A person may look into sales or think about where to go shopping.
- **Shopping:** Shopping happens. This is the so-called, "thrill of the hunt." The person gets excited while doing it.
- **Spending:** Something, or many things, are purchased. The person is sad that the shopping experience is over and may be disappointed about how much they've spent afterwards.

#### Characteristics of compulsive buying behaviour

- Buying things even when one cannot afford them.
- Buying something to make one feel better.
- Just wanting to buy things and not care about it.
- Buying things simply because they are on sale.
- Feeling anxious or nervous on the days not going to shopping.

- Buying something just because it was attractive, basically which is of no use.
- Buying something even though you already have it.
- Buying something without having its need.
- Went on a buying binge and wasn't able to stop.
- Way through which one forgets his problems and relaxes.
- Strong inner urge to go shopping.

#### Reason behind compulsive buying behavior

##### Boredom

Boredom is a mental state which makes people exhausted by her own lifestyle and circumstances. During this boredom the person seeks for a free space where he or she can get relief from his or her situation. And sometimes excessive shopping performs the role of relief technique to come out from the boredom situation.

##### Avoidance

Each and every person faces this avoidance in any part of his life. But when factor of avoidance comes to a very serious point that when a person is being avoided by his or her very close person and it is continuing repeatedly, then the avoidant persons becomes hopeless to get attention and becomes rigid to get free from his situation and he engaged himself or herself in doing such a thing that will help to divert his mind from his personal condition.

##### Depression

Depression is also mental state; a person can be depressed on various way. Depressed person also try to engage themselves in spending time in shopping to be distracted as much as possible for his situation.

##### Loneliness / Desire for Connection

This kind of factor enables people to get mix in a crowded situation so that they can reduce their loneliness and fulfill their desire to be connected with the people. To reduce this problem person tries to mix him or herself in various social events, gatherings. Shopping is situation where the person will get the chance to get mix in crowded situation.

##### Low Self-Esteem / Insecurity

People who suffers with low self esteem and insecurity, tries to be enlightened on another eyes by showing off that they are totally opposite character than actually what they are and that is why they do



such things that will hide his low self esteem or insecurity i.e. excessive shopping.

#### **Peer Pressure**

Being in groups a person should have to do same as rest of others to maintain his or her status or to casually mix with their mentality.

#### **Past Poverty / Deprivation**

People who have suffered from a deprivation in past, and in present if the person is having well economical condition. The persons get addicted to shopping to fulfill his or her desires by buying a plenty of things which she/ he had not in the past due to poverty.

#### **Symptom Substitution**

Often when a person overcomes one type of compulsive behavior, they replace it with another, especially when they have not addressed the underlying reasons. Many women with eating disorders “graduate” to compulsive shopping.<sup>5</sup>

Personality refers to individual differences in characteristic patterns of thinking, feeling and behaving. The study of personality focuses on two broad areas: One understands individual differences in particular personality characteristics, such as sociability or irritability. In psychology, trait theory (also called dispositional theory) is an approach to the study of human personality. Trait theorists are primarily interested in the measurement of traits, which can be defined as habitual patterns of behavior, thought, and emotion. Five major traits underlie personality, such as introversion/extroversion, openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness and neuroticism. There are many ways to measure personality, but psychologists have mostly given up on trying to divide humanity neatly into types. Traits are the features of an individual or tendency of an individual in a particular manner. Traits help in defining the behavior of consumers. According to the Trait theorists, an individual's personality make-up stems out of the traits that he possesses, and the identification of traits is important.<sup>2</sup>

#### **OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH**

- 1) To explore the nature of compulsive buyers related to specific personality trait.
- 2) To evaluate whether or not compulsive buying attitude is gender specific.

#### **HYPOTHESIS**

**H1-** There is a significant relationship between compulsive buying behaviour and personality traits of an adult.

**H2-** No significant difference occurs between male and female personality trait related to compulsive buying.

#### **SAMPLING TECHNIQUE**

In the present study purposive sampling is used to collect the data where researchers choose a selected case that is especially informative to fulfill the objectives of the study.

**Sampling criteria:** Total numbers of 80 adult women are selected based on following criteria.

#### **Inclusion Criteria**

- Age : 20-40 (young adult)
- Sex : Both male and female
- Educational Qualification : Min H.S.
- Socio economic status: Upper middle class
- Income range 10000-50000

#### **II. TOOL USED**

**Information blank:** It is a self made tool of researcher for getting personal information of the sample. It consists of name, age, religion, mother tongue, educational qualification, monthly income, major illness (physical/mental), personal hobbies.

**NEOPI:** Revised NEOPI Personality Inventory (NEOPI-R) is a personality inventory, is published in 1990 and keyed the Big-5 personality traits. It is a revised version of Costa and Mc Crae (1978) Neo Personality Inventory. The NEOPI-R consists of 240 items. The test was developed by Paul Costa and Robert Mc. Crae for use with adult men and women. NEOPI-R has been updated over the years, with last updated in 2010. NEOPI-3 is the latest revision of the NEOPI-R. The NEOPI-R assess the Big 5 personality traits: extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism, and openness to experience. In the most recent publication, there are two forms for the NEO, self report (form S) and observer report (form R) versions, both answered in



a 5 point scale Likert scale. The whole test should need 30- 40 minutes to be administered. Costa and Mc. Crae reported that an individual should not be evaluated if more than 40 items are missing. They also said that, if more items are responded as agree and strongly agreed then the results should interpreted with caution.

**The Bergen Shopping addiction Scale:** It consists of 28 statements. The participants is asked to rate how strongly each and behavior in the last 12 months. Each items is rated on 5 point continuum of agreement, completely disagree, disagree, neither disagree nor agree, completely agree. Group of 4 items are targeted toward each of 7 addiction criteria's (Salience, mood modification, conflict, tolerance, withdrawal, relapse and problems). The shopping addiction scale was developed by Andreassen *et. al.*, (2015).

### III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1: mean, stander- deviation of compulsive buying behaviour according to demographic profile (gender)

SAMPL E CATEG ORY	PERC ENTA GE %	MEAN	STAN DARD DEVI A TION	T
FEMAL E (60)	58%	19.38	5.70	2.85*
MALE (60)	42%	17.10	6.66	

\*Insignificant at 0.05 level

The present study did not show any significant difference in compulsive buying according to gender, meaning either a male or a female has a possibility of experiencing this behaviour. Thus there is no significant differences occur between male and female adult related to their buying attitude. But

female show more proneness related to compulsive buying behaviour. Typically it is known that women are more afflicted to shopping. But, the new study says, of the 2,513 adults surveyed, 6 percent of women and 5.5 percent of men are said to be compulsive buyers. The widespread opinion that most compulsive buyers are women may be wrong.

Table 2: personality profile of the respondent according to the big-five inventory (mean and sd value)

VARIABLE	MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION
OPENNESS	3.28	0.42
CONSCIENTIO USNESS	3.20	0.54
EXTROVERSIO N	3.15	0.44
AGREEABLEN ESS	3.60	0.52
NEUROTICISM	2.80	0.53

Table 3: Bi-variate correlation of the personality trait and compulsive buying behaviour

VARIABLE	r VALUE	t-VALUE
OPENNESS	+ 0.52	3.40*
CONSCIENTIOU SNESS	- 0.15	2.03**
EXTRAVERSION	- 0.18	2.44**
AGREEABLENE SS	+ 0.35	3.02*
NEUROTICISM	+ 0.32	3.19*

\* SIGNIFICANT AT 0.01 LEVEL (P less than chosen level of significance)



**\*\* INSIGNIFICANT AT 0.01 LEVEL (P more than chosen level of significance)**

Results and comparative analysis shown above declare that among the big five personality traits, compulsivity in buying were significantly correlated with openness to experience which means that individuals characterized by this trait is original, imaginative and has broad interests and intellectually curious and want to experience new. A significant p-value was obtained from openness trait and compulsive buying behaviour. Compulsive buying behaviour was significantly correlated with agreeableness which mean that individuals having high scores on this traits are trustworthy, sympathetic and has a motive to maintain positive relation with others. Compulsivity in buying were also significantly correlated with neuroticism (emotional instability) which means that individual who experiences emotional instability, constant mood swings, depression, sadness or upset and anger (those are just to name a few) are more likely to display compulsive buying behaviour. They want to become socially acceptable, so that these buyers purchase without prior planning and in excessive quantity to reduce stress. Conscientiousness has insignificant relation with compulsive buying because these sorts of buyers plan their spending carefully. Conscientious personality trait has negative relationship with compulsive buying because more a person becomes responsible, there is less chance of his compulsive buying.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

Compulsive buying is an uncontrollable desire to shop. It results in spending large amounts of time and money on shopping. It is the urge to shop in response to negative emotions. The study has identified a positive correlation between the big five personality trait of openness, agreeableness and neuroticism to the buying behavior of an adult. There is no significant differences occur between male and female adult related to their buying attitude. But female show more proneness related to compulsive buying behavior. Thus one can conclude that social forces that shape personality may also subsequently shape compulsive buying behavior and it is present within everyone in varying levels, without

necessarily reaching clinical levels. People should be reminded on self-monitoring strategies that can reduce compulsive buying behaviour before it becomes a clinical disorder.

#### LIMITATIONS

- Some socio-demographic variable such as age, income level was not considered for methodological interpretation.
- Cross-cultural design of the study may also allow for causal inference among variables.
- Convenience-sampling method is used so that the required data was not taken somewhere from actual customer.
- Some of the sector or industry may also be considered for investigation other than apparel brands.

#### CONTRIBUTION

- ❖ The study contributes in consumer behaviour literature and help in understanding the nature of personality traits with resulting buying behaviour.
- ❖ This investigation is also useful for institutions, policy makers and consumers.
- ❖ Public policy officials and consumer welfare societies can be benefited from this study in order to develop guidelines for marketers and retailers, so that they can align their marketing strategies also with some ethical standard.
- ❖ Suitable social marketing intervention such as counselling and guidance can be formulated in order to tackle increasing ratio of consumer debts because of compulsive buying behaviour.

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