

## THE EFFECT OF PERSONALITY ON IMPULSIVE AND COMPULSIVE BUYING BEHAVIOUR

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### **ABSTRACT**

This paper examines the effect of personality on impulsive and compulsive buying behavior. For this study, out of total population of 289 teachers of 14 schools in Koralaipattu Divisional Secretariat Division 150 teachers were selected (52%) using stratified random sampling method. The influences of personality traits which were extraversion (such as, sociable, talkative, and assertive), (b) agreeableness (such as, good-natured, cooperative, and trusting), (c) conscientiousness (such as, responsible, dependable, persistent, and achievement oriented), (d) emotional stability (viewed from the negative pole; tense, insecure, and nervous), and (e) openness to experience (such as, imaginative, artistically sensitive, and intellectual) on impulsive and compulsive behaviours of consumers were examined. The analysis presents that there are relationships among these variables.

### **Keywords**

Impulsive buying behavior, Compulsive buying behavior, Personality traits

### **INTRODUCTION**

Impulsive and compulsive buying are considered some of the most persistent and idiosyncratic phenomenon in consumer lifestyle. This distinctive nature of impulsive and compulsive buying has increased the attention from consumer researcher and theorists in these phenomenon (Rook, 1987; Rook and Fisher, 1995). Historically, research on impulsive and compulsive buying behaviors have been focused on; its definitional elements distinguishing and differentiating them from other form of buying behaviors (Cobb and Hoyer, 1986; Piron, 1991; Rook, 1987). Moreover, theorists have traditionally focused on providing theoretical frameworks for examining impulsive and compulsive buying (Rook and Fisher, 1995). Lately, many studies have been conducted to develop and validate scales to measure the tendency of consumers to display impulsive and compulsive buying behaviors. There is still a lot of work that needs to be done to identify and examine the factors that affect impulsive and compulsive buying.

This study focuses on the personality traits of the consumers and its influences on the impulsive and compulsive buying behavior. The big 5 personality traits are the broad domains those were used to describe the human personality. The five factor model –openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness and neuroticism are tested and the influences of these personality traits on impulsive and compulsive buying behaviour is analyzed.

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **Compulsive Buying**

Research on the phenomenon of compulsive buying was presented into the consumer behavior literature by Faber et al. (1987) and other works have extended those first findings (Faber and O'Guinn, 1987; O'Guinn and Faber, 1989; Valence et al., 1988; Astous and Tremblay, 1989). This abnormal form of consumer behavior is characterized by chronic buying episodes of a somewhat stereotyped fashion in which the consumer feels unable to stop or significantly moderate the behavior. Although compulsive buying may produce some short-term positive feelings for the individual, it ultimately is disruptive to normal life functioning and produces significant negative consequences (O'Guinn and Faber, 1988).

Compulsive behavior is defined as “repetitive and seemingly purposeful” acts that are “performed according to certain rules or in a stereo traits fashion” (American Psychiatric Association, 1985: 234). In marketing, manifestations of compulsive behavior include purchasing behaviors that cannot be controlled, are excessive, time consuming, and/or patterned in nature. Although compulsive buying can be associated with emotional attachment to objects, it is more likely that the pleasure derived from the act of buying is the primary motivation (O’Guinn and Faber, 1989). It is distinct from impulsive behaviors because compulsive buying involves an “inability to control the urge” (Faber et al., 1995: 297) and “leads to extreme negative circumstances” (Ridgway et al., 2006: 131).

### **Impulsive Buying**

Impulsivity is a personality trait defined as a tendency towards acting without forethought, making quick cognitive decisions, and failing to appreciate the circumstances beyond the here and now (Barratt, 1993). It is one of those dimensions of individual differences that are frequently associated with the biological bases of personality; a state involving non-specific physiological activation and the non-directional component of alertness (Anderson and Revelle, 1994).

Impulsive buying has been described as making unplanned and sudden purchases, which are initiated on the spot, and are accompanied by a powerful urge and feelings of pleasure and excitement (Rook, 1987). In response to this definitional problem, researchers began to focus on identifying the internal psychological states underlying consumers’ impulse buying episodes (Rook, 1987; Rook and Gardner, 1993; Rook and Hoch, 1985). Impulse buying was redefined as occurring “when a consumer experiences a sudden, often powerful and persistent urge to buying something immediately.

### **Personality traits**

A well-accepted personality structure consisting of five factors has recently emerged in the personality literature (Barrick and Mount, 1991; Digman, 1990). Goldberg (1990) gives a comprehensive discussion of these factors. This five-factor taxonomy, commonly referred to as the Big Five, has been found in a number of investigations with different theoretical frameworks.

The Big Five factors (and prototypical characteristics for each factor) are: (a) extraversion (such as, sociable, talkative, and assertive), (b) agreeableness (such as, good-natured, cooperative, and trusting), (c) conscientiousness (such as, responsible, dependable, persistent, and achievement oriented), (d) emotional stability (viewed from the negative pole; tense, insecure, and nervous), and (e) openness to experience (such as, imaginative, artistically sensitive, and intellectual). The Big-Five model offers an integrative framework for personality psychology (Costa and McCrae, 1995; Goldberg, 1993; McCrae and John, 1992). It focuses on a core set of behavioral traits -extraversion, neuroticism, agreeableness, conscientiousness, and openness to experience - and its proponents argue that people can be understood by knowing how much they display each of these five traits in their lives.

Therefore, the objectives of this study are to examine the degree of different personality traits, the relationship between the personality traits and impulsive and compulsive buying behavior and to find the level of influence of personality traits on impulsive and compulsive buying behavior.

### **METHODOLOGY**

This is a cross sectional study. The total population of the study was 289 teachers of 14 schools in Koralaipattu Divisional Secretariat Division. Out of these school teachers, only 150 (52%) are selected as sample by using stratified random sampling method.

Primary data were collected through administering close ended questionnaire. The SPSS software is used for the analysis and evaluation using Univariate and Bivariate techniques.

## FINDINGS

The data were analyzed using mean, correlation, and regression analysis. The results shows that there is a strong positive relationship between the personality traits and impulsive buying behavior and positive relationship between personality traits and compulsive buying behavior.

Depending on the personality traits the consumers can be segmented and targeted to market the products.

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