



How impulse buying influences compulsive buying: The central role of consumer anxiety and escapism



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ABSTRACT

The paper highlights key research findings regarding compulsive buying behavior and aims at describing and testing the relationship between compulsive buying and an alternative buying phenomenon, i.e. impulse buying. Two common views of the relationship between compulsive and impulse buying are discussed and combined to form a hybrid conceptualization. Results suggest that impulse buying increases anxiety in consumers that is in turn, linked to compulsive buying. Notably, consumer escapism appears to deter the conversion of anxiety into compulsive buying. Results and managerial implications are discussed.

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“Social problems are dysfunctions of society and—at least potentially—degenerate diseases of the body politic. They are ills. But for the management of institutions and above all, business management, they represent challenges. They are major sources of opportunity.”

(Drucker, 2008, p. 216)

1. Introduction

Expressions such as “shopaholic,” “retail therapy,” and “shop’til you drop” have become commonplace in popular culture. Reality television shows such as *Intervention* and *Hoarders* may help raise social awareness to the negative consequences of compulsive consumption in general and compulsive buying in particular. On the other hand, reality shows like *Extreme Couponing* portray coupon savvy shoppers that accumulate extremely large quantities of groceries for a fraction of the actual cost. Although these customers are essentially saving money on their purchases, they are also purchasing quantities well beyond their needs simply because the items have been discounted, which in itself, may be compulsive. Arguably, mainstream media programs like these promote awareness among consumers about consumption disorders and the harmful consequences therein.

Compulsive consumption is commonly viewed to be an element of the dark side of consumer behavior (Hirschman, 1991). Compulsive consumption is defined as “a response to an uncontrollable drive or desire to obtain, use, or experience a feeling, substance, or activity that leads an individual to repetitively engage in a behavior that will ultimately cause harm to the individual and/or to others” (O’Guinn and Faber, 1989, p. 148). Research suggests that compulsiveness is manifested in binge eating (Faber et al., 1995), hyperactive online and in-store purchasing (Chang et al., 2011; Johnson and Attmann, 2009), gambling (Babalanis, 2002), hoarding (Cherrier and Ponnor, 2010), credit card misuse (Palan et al., 2011), and unrestrained media usage (Yang, 2006). Faber et al. (1987) assert that people who engage in compulsive behaviors commonly do so in order to cope with stress, to escape demands and pressure, or to overcome unpleasant emotions or situations. Compulsive consumption is a behavioral addiction that may be provoked and sustained by negative emotions or events. Research suggests that consumers often resort to compulsive buying out of their need for affection and sense of belonging (O’Guinn and Faber, 1989). Ironically, such addictions often lead to isolation and estrangement from family and friends.

The purpose of this paper is threefold: (1) to highlight key findings in research regarding compulsive buying behavior, (2) to elaborate on the relationship between compulsive buying and an alternative buying phenomenon, i.e. impulse buying, and (3) to present a model of antecedents to compulsive buying based on coping theory and extant research. Investigating the dark side of consumer behavior can be useful in building social awareness and

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generating potential solutions. Insights from negative consumption behavior like compulsive buying may offer alternative viewpoints or new research perspectives for understanding the personal and psychological factors driving consumer behavior. The manuscript investigates whether consumer coping mechanisms such as escapism (fantasizing) impact the conversion of impulse buying into compulsive buying.

1.1. The nature of compulsive buying

The technical term for compulsive buying disorder is *oniomania*, derived from the Greek words *onios* meaning “for sale” and *mania* meaning “insanity.” The root words of the term may imply that compulsive buyers’ crazed addiction may be triggered and moderated by sales promotions. Research suggests that compulsive buyers possess greater knowledge of store prices, gain greater transaction value from price promotions, possess higher price consciousness and sale proneness, have greater on-line shopping tendencies, and exhibit higher credit card abuse than non-compulsive buyers (Kukar-Kinney et al., 2012; Palan et al., 2011; Kukar-Kinney et al., 2009; Park and Burns, 2005; Roberts, 1998; d’Astous, 1990). Neurological research reveals that the brain activity in decision-making regions differs significantly between compulsive and non-compulsive buyers (Raab et al., 2011), which could possibly provide an explanation for why compulsive buyers lose control and fall into addiction. In the United States, the prevalence of compulsive buying behavior among consumers is estimated to be 5.8%, the vast majority of whom, roughly 80%, are female (Koran et al., 2006).

The late 1980s and early 1990s witnessed an influx of literature on compulsive consumption behavior in general and compulsive buying in particular. Consumer research began by recognizing and defining the phenomenon. Faber and O’Guinn (1988) asserted that it would be a positive early step to develop a diagnostic test in order to identify compulsive consumers. Valence et al. (1988) soon answered this call with the development of a compulsive buying scale framed on consumer anxiety. Faber and O’Guinn (1992) responded with a descriptive seven-item measure that better captures extreme cases of compulsive buying behavior. Over the next two decades, consumer researchers conducted numerous empirical studies using these two compulsive buying scales, including several on psychiatric patients with compulsive habits (Chang et al., 2011; Cole and Sherrell, 1995; Johnson and Attmann, 2009; Lejoyeux et al., 1997; Palan et al., 2011; Cherrier and Ponnor, 2010; Roberts, 1998; Tett et al., 2013). In the marketing discipline, the ‘dark side’ of consumer behavior has become an issue of growing importance with numerous studies examining compulsive buying and its outcomes. That said, relatively less is known about how consumer impulses drive compulsiveness (Ozer and Gultekin, 2015).

1.2. Impulse vs. compulsive buying

Impulse and compulsive buying are two nonstandard buying behaviors that are frequently discussed in tandem. However, compulsive buying is not synonymous and should not be confused with impulse buying. It is important to make a clear distinction between addictive, uncontrollable buying (compulsive) and spontaneous, unplanned buying impulses. Rook (1987) asserts:

“Impulse buying occurs when a consumer experiences a sudden, often powerful and persistent urge to buy something immediately. The impulse to buy is hedonically complex and may stimulate emotional conflict. Also, impulse buying is prone to occur with diminished regard for its consequences” (p. 191).

More concisely, impulsive buying describes the tendency to make unplanned and unreflective purchases (Jones et al., 2003). Impulse buying is a much more wide spread phenomenon than compulsive buying, with many consumers exhibiting this type of behavior at some point in purchase encounters.

There are two conceptual views that are often employed to explain the relationship or differences between compulsive and impulsive buying. The first of these perspectives contends that consumers are positioned along a continuum of ‘urgency to buy’, and those in the upper extreme are compulsive buyers (d’Astous, 1990). Thus, impulse buyers and compulsive buyers lie on different ends of a spectrum, where compulsive buying represents an extreme urge to buy. This ‘urge to buy continuum’ conceptualization raises some interesting questions. In particular, could repeated impulses and unplanned purchases be an early sign, or trigger for compulsive buying behavior?

An alternative conceptualization focuses on the underlying emotional factors that contribute to compulsive behaviors (Faber and Christenson, 1996). Positive affect refers to the entire spectrum of pleasurable feelings or emotions such as happiness, enjoyment, excitement, enthusiasm, energy, and satisfaction. Negative affect, on the other hand, includes the whole range of unpleasant mood emotions such as depression, anger, nervousness, stressfulness, anxiety, and fear (Watson et al., 1988).

Trait activation theory describes the interaction between a person’s traits and/or enduring affective states and the corresponding situation (Tett et al., 2013). Trait manifestation occurs upon stimulation from situational triggers that, in turn, influence a person’s behavior. Flight et al. (2012) argue that the role of consumers’ sense of affect in compulsive and impulsive buying is a primary differentiator between the two buying behaviors. Their research suggests that positive affect is associated with the tendency to buy impulsively, while negative affect is associated with inherently compulsive buying tendencies (Flight et al., 2012). However, research findings on these issues in marketing and psychology literature have been largely inconsistent. For example, research has also linked impulse buying to consumers’ negative affect (Silvera et al., 2008; Verplanken et al., 2005). Perhaps a hybrid conceptualization of the two buying behaviors, discussed next, would serve to better explain the mixed findings in the literature.

1.3. Hybrid conceptualization

Valence et al. (1988) suggest that three forces combine to form the basis for the process of engaging in an act of compulsive buying: strong emotional activation, high cognitive control, and high reactivity. Furthermore, these authors state that “the difference between compulsive buying and impulse buying is somehow the whole cognitive process which leads a person to associate a prompt readjustment of his affective disequilibrium to the buying act, and this, through his or her cognitive associations” (p. 420). Essentially, the level of self-control for compulsive buyers is very low to nonexistent, while the level of self-control for impulse buyers is relatively higher. Hoch and Loewenstein (1991) provide an excellent conceptualization of consumer self-control and explain it as a conflict between two opposing psychological forces, i.e. desire and willpower. Desire is defined as initiating hedonic forces that drive our buying impulses, while willpower is the various strategies used to overcome desire.

The two conceptual views, i.e. “the urge to buy continuum” and “the affective states,” can be combined with Hoch and Loewenstein’s model of consumer self-control to explain the fundamental differences between impulse buying and compulsive buying. The typical impulse buyer makes occasional spontaneous, unplanned purchases that are driven by positive affect. **If the impulse buyer**

repeatedly exhibits this type of behavior, he/she shows signs of loss of self-control, i.e. increase in desire and decrease of willpower. Positive affect which drives impulse buyers' purchases diminishes and is steadily overtaken by negative emotions, feelings and mood. Ultimately, the impulse buyer who loses all cognitive control develops an uncontrollable buying addiction that is primarily driven by negative affect and can then be classified as a compulsive buyer.

In a clinical study, Lejoyeux et al. (1995) report that compulsive buying behavior is found frequently among depressed individuals and correlates with high levels of impulsivity and other impulse control or dependence disorders. The proposed hybrid conceptualization of impulse and compulsive buying illustrated in Fig. 1 provides a robust assessment of the relationships in question and serves to better explain these results than exclusively from an affective state or from an urge to buy continuum perspective.

1.4. Theoretical background

Research suggests that compulsive consumers share a tendency to fantasize, higher depression rates, materialistic orientations, and higher levels of anxiety and obsession compared to other consumers (d'Astous, 1990; Faber and O'Guinn, 1992; Müller et al., 2011). Compulsive buyers may employ obsessive buying behaviors to cope with and alleviate their undesirable, negative mood states (Faber and Christenson, 1996; Müller et al., 2012). Before engaging in compulsive buying, respondents reported feelings of high negative affect and low positive affect. However, negative affect decreased significantly following a compulsive buying event.

Coping theory suggests that individuals continuously adjust cognitive and behavioral efforts in order to manage internal/external demands that are perceived as exceeding their personal resources (Lazarus and Folkman, 1984). In other words, reactive behaviors are actively employed by individuals to rectify or deal with stressful situations. Theorists contend that coping should not be evaluated based on whether or not the coping strategy used was successful in mitigating the problem, but rather is based on the inherent reasoning behind enforcing the strategy (i.e., managing demands). Therefore, problem resolution is not a determining factor in the assessment of whether or not a certain behavior can be considered a coping strategy since consumers may evaluate the outcome of a situation as satisfactory as long as perceived stress was managed to the best of his/her ability.

Stemming from coping theory, Faber (2004) theorizes that compulsive buying behavior serves as a form of escape from negative affect states. Specifically, escape theory posits that self-awareness of a problem may be so painful that consumers partake in immediate, specific and self-destructive tasks like compulsive buying or binge eating as a means of escape (Yi, 2012). Compulsive buyers employ cognitive narrowing by focusing their attention solely on the buying task, thus temporarily blocking out their anxieties. Due to their narrow attention during a buying episode, compulsive buyers fail to consider the long-term, negative consequences of their actions. Instead, they experience short-term improvements in mood which reinforces their behaviors and drives recurring acts of compulsion (O'Guinn and Faber, 1989). The following discussion consists of proposed antecedents to compulsive buying behavior derived from extant research and coping/escape theory.

1.4.1. Impulse buying

Consumer researchers have long considered impulse buying a distinct aspect of American consumers' lifestyles and shopping habits (Rook, 1987). As described earlier, impulses occur spontaneously and without cognition driving consumers to purchase in ways that conflict with self-interests. Inductive reasoning suggests that compulsive buying is likely the outcome of a progression and succession of impulsive buying behaviors. In support, Faber (2004) argues that compulsive buying behavior should be classified as a type of impulse control disorder.

Consumer impulses may be triggered by a variety of factors. For instance, changes in consumer mood or situational aspects of the store environment have been shown to influence impulse purchasing (Ozer and Gultekin, 2015). Other research suggests that impulse purchasing may be triggered by the sudden availability of time and/or money (Beatty and Ferrell, 1998). At any rate, consumer impulses are very difficult to control once provoked. Research suggests that consumers often experience feelings of regret and guilt after impulse purchases (Gardner and Rook, 1998). In a similar vein, we argue that losing control in purchase situations elicits negative emotions and apprehension in consumers. Formally:

H1. Impulse buying relates positively to consumer anxiety.

A review of literature indicates that depression may be an antecedent of compulsive buying since the phenomenon is recurrent among depressed patients. Moreover, successful treatment of depression alone has been demonstrated to reduce the occurrence of compulsive buying behaviors (Lejoyeux et al., 1995). Clinical studies indicate that women diagnosed with binge eating disorders have much higher tendencies to buy compulsively than other women of similar weight (Faber et al., 1995). Valence et al. (1988) emphasize that consumer anxiety is central to compulsive buying and may exist simultaneously as a cause and effect of such behaviors. Whereas impulse buying is generally sporadic, compulsive buying is a recurring loss of self-control in purchase encounters. Given prior research, we predict that this addiction increases as a result of consumer anxiety:

H2. Consumer anxiety relates positively to compulsive buying.

1.4.2. Consumer escapism

Escapism allows compulsive buyers to temporarily elude negative emotions through fantasies or vivid imaginations of personal success and social acceptance while engaging in the behavior. Consumers that fantasize alternative outcomes to stressful events may feel relief by distancing themselves from reality. However, when individuals "escape" stressful encounters to avoid anxiety, they are essentially losing touch with reality and may be more susceptible to compulsive behaviors. Also, as people who "escape" may be in a more positive mood or frame of mind because they are moving away from their anxieties, they may also be more likely to ritualize their escape through compulsive buying. Meta-analytic evidence suggests that positive mood is positively related to compulsive consumption in adults (Cardi et al., 2015). Similarly, we predict that impulsive consumers will seek temporary relief from anxieties through fantasizing, even though the end result of such fantasies or escapism may yet lead to increased compulsive buying. Given that a high ability to fantasize is a shared characteristic among compulsive buyers (O'Guinn and Faber, 1989), we

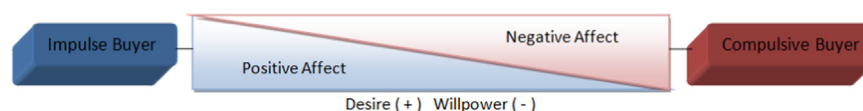


Fig. 1. Hybrid perspective – impulse buying vs. compulsive buying.

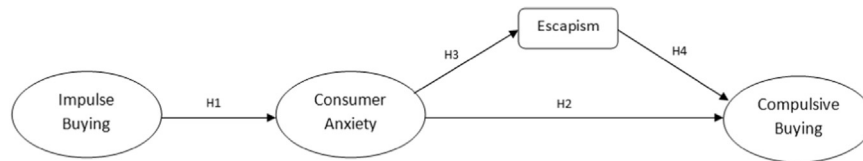


Fig. 2. Proposed model of compulsive buying.

also predict that escapism will be positively related to compulsive buying.

H3. Consumer anxiety relates positively to consumer escapism.

H4. Escapism relates positively to compulsive buying.

As Fig. 2 suggests, impulse buying is predicted to have a direct, positive effect on consumer anxiety. Greater tendencies to impulse buy are predicted to have indirect, positive effects on compulsive buying. These indirect effects are conceived to occur via the escape of consumer anxiety.

2. Methodology

A Qualtrics survey was created using established scales from extant marketing and psychology research. The survey link was emailed to undergraduate students at Louisiana Tech University. The majority of the student body is primarily from Louisiana and other southern states including Texas, Arkansas, and Mississippi. Professors offered students extra credit for survey completion. A total of 158 total responses were obtained. Fifteen respondent cases were deleted for 10% or more missing data. The final sample ($N=143$) consisted of 47% female respondents and 53% male respondents. The vast majority of respondents, about 92%, were between the ages of 18–25.

Compulsive buying behavior was measured using Faber and O'Guinn's (1992) seven-item screener for compulsive buying. Impulse buying was assessed using the Rook and Fisher (1995) nine-item scale of buying impulsiveness. Consumer anxiety was evaluated using Zung's (1971) self-rating anxiety scale. Escapism was measured using the three-item O'Guinn and Faber (1989) scale. All measures used five-point Likert-type scales and demonstrated adequate levels of reliability (see Table 2).

A two-step analytical approach (Anderson and Gerbing, 1988) was conducted. An overall measurement model was developed to examine the constructs of interest using confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). Structural equation modeling (SEM) was employed to test the hypothesized relationships in AMOS 20.

3. Results

3.1. Measurement model

Latent measurement structure was tested using CFA. Variables that had low loadings and high standardized residuals were dropped. Scale items that loaded onto separate factors were also dropped. This was a common phenomenon for the reverse-coded items in the scales of buying impulsiveness and anxiety. The final model contains 12 measured items (seen in Table 1) with a resulting chi-square fit statistic of 71.6 ($p\text{-value}=0.015$) and 48 degrees of freedom. The model comparative fit index (CFI) is 0.969, the root mean squared error of approximation (RMSEA) is 0.059, and the parsimony normed fit index (PNFI) is 0.665. RMSEA values less than 0.08 with a CFI of 0.95 or higher given the CFA sample size ($N < 250$) and number of variables ($12 < m < 30$) demonstrate goodness-of-fit (Hair et al., 2010). Hence, the measurement model exhibits reasonable goodness-of-fit (Table 2).

Discriminant validity was assessed by ensuring that the average variance extracted (AVE) for each of the measured constructs is greater than the shared variance between constructs. All measured constructs are unidimensional and display good construct reliabilities and variance-extracted estimates (see Table 3). Thus, the overall measurement model is considered a decent representation of the theoretical constructs and is deemed appropriate for testing the proposed structural model Table 4.

3.2. Structural model

The resulting chi-square fit statistic from testing the structural model is 82.2 ($p=0.003$) with 50 degrees of freedom. The model CFI is 0.958, the RMSEA is 0.067, and the PNFI is 0.683. The chi-square difference between the measurement model and structural model is insignificant ($\Delta\chi^2=10.6$, $df=2$), which suggests moderate structural fit to the specified theory (Hair et al., 2010).

In support of H1, the influence of impulse buying on consumer anxiety is found to be significant ($\gamma=0.228$, $p\text{-value}=0.018$). In support of H2 and H3, consumer anxiety exhibits a significant,

Table 1
Scale item loadings.

Scale items	Factor loadings (λ)	Item-total correlation (α)	Mean	SD
<i>Compulsive Buying</i>				
1. Bought things even though I could not afford them	0.75	0.68	2.18	1.17
2. Wrote a check when I knew I did not have enough money in the bank to cover it	0.89	0.77	1.45	1.03
3. Felt anxious or nervous on days I did not go shopping	0.79	0.70	1.52	1.02
<i>Escapism</i>				
1. I daydream a lot	0.75	0.63	3.43	1.25
2. When I go to the movies I find it easy to lose myself in the film	0.73	0.64	3.40	1.11
3. I often think of what might have been	0.73	0.58	3.62	1.14
<i>Impulse Buying</i>				
1. "Just do it" describes the way I buy things	0.78	0.70	2.48	1.08
2. I often buy things without thinking	0.90	0.76	2.37	1.10
3. "I see it, I buy it" describes me	0.70	0.64	2.08	1.00
<i>Consumer Anxiety</i>				
1. I feel afraid for no reason at all	0.82	0.76	1.77	1.07
2. I get upset easily or feel panicky	0.84	0.77	2.23	1.12
3. I feel like I'm falling apart and going to pieces	0.86	0.78	2.01	1.12

Table 2
Correlations matrix (Φ).

	Impulse buying	Consumer anxiety	Escapism	Compulsive buying
Impulse buying	1.00			
Consumer anxiety	0.20	1.00		
Escapism	0.29	0.31	1.00	
Compulsive buying	0.18	0.36	−0.30	1.00

Table 3
Variable measures.

Scale Name	Source	# of items (used)	AVE	Cronbach's α
Compulsive buying screener	Faber and O'Guinn (1992)	7 (3)	0.659	0.852
Fantasizing	O'Guinn and Faber (1989)	3 (3)	0.543	0.781
Buying impulsiveness	Rook and Fisher (1995)	9 (3)	0.635	0.838
Zung Self-Rating Anxiety (SAS)	Zung (1971)	20 (3)	0.710	0.880

Table 4
Model summary.

	Measurement model	Structural model
χ^2	71.6	82.2
df	48	50
p-value	0.015	0.003
RMSEA	0.059	0.067
CFI	0.969	0.958
PNFI	0.665	0.683

positive effect on compulsive buying ($\beta=0.506$, $p<0.001$) and consumer escapism ($\beta=0.323$, $p=0.002$). Contrary to H4, consumer escapism demonstrates a significant, negative effect on compulsive buying ($\beta=-0.469$, $p<0.001$). A summary of structural path coefficient estimates is provided in Fig. 3.

4. Discussion

The indirect, positive relationship between impulse buying and compulsive buying has important implications. Impulse buying may not be as harmless as commonly believed. In fact, it may be in the best interest of consumers to view increasing occurrences of impulse buying as a signal for loss of self-control and falling into shopping addiction. In retrospect, consumers who succumb to buying urges may learn to rationalize their indulgence. For instance, an unplanned purchase may be justified as a 'gift' or 'reward for hard work'. Results suggest that consumer anxiety plays a key role in the relationship between impulsive and compulsive

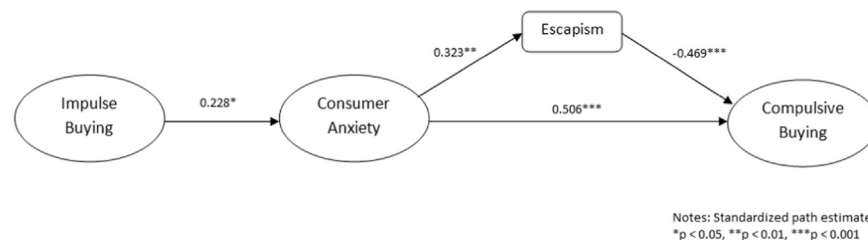
buying; moreover, it may be that cognitive factors such as rationalization influence this association (Chatzidakis et al., 2009).

The finding that consumer anxiety positively influences compulsive buying behavior (H2) reinforces theory that situational triggers (i.e. stress or negative affect) evoke behavioral responses from individuals (i.e. compulsive buying) (Flight et al., 2012). Understanding that consumer anxiety exacerbates compulsive buying is important to realize from the buyer's perspective as well. If stress leads consumers to buy compulsively, then managing stress should be a priority for compulsive buyers. In line with coping theory, results suggest that consumer anxiety increases the tendency for escapism (H3). That is, stressed consumers are concerned with alleviating their anxieties and view coping mechanisms as a means to an end. While engaging in escapism may not be the best alternative for managing anxiety, it may become a desirable technique if the consumer finds it to be successful.

Perhaps the most noteworthy result is that consumer escapism buffers the conversion of anxiety into compulsive buying. Whereas some consumers resort to destructive behaviors such as compulsive buying to alleviate stress, others imagine their anxieties away through fantasizing and engage in less compulsive buying as a result. Essentially, these consumers cope with negative emotions and apprehension through their imagination and avoid the trap of addictive buying (see coping theory). While the negative relationship between escapism and compulsive buying was unexpected (i.e., the opposite effect was hypothesized in H4: *Escapism relates positively to compulsive buying*), there may be a plausible rationale. Research suggests that both positive and negative moods increase compulsive behavior. Moreover, extreme differences in mood states (both positive and negative) are a characteristic of compulsive consumers more so than their counterparts (Faber and Christenson, 1996). Thus, it appears that impulsive consumers who experience anxiety (i.e. negative mood) are able to stabilize their mood to a more moderate level by engaging in escapism and as a result, engage in less compulsive buying.

4.1. Limitations

The research presented has several limitations. First, the study relies on data obtained from a sample of college students. This convenience sample of students is not typical of a standard sample of consumers. Nevertheless, college students are consumers that may succumb to shopping addiction. Second, the resulting data from survey responses are cross-sectional and, consequently, cannot provide evidence of temporal sequence. Experimentation would provide more substantial data to investigate causal relationships in the structural model of compulsive buying. Third, the employed scale used to capture escapism (O'Guinn and Faber, 1989) is not context specific to shopping which may have influenced the relationship between escapism and compulsive buying. Individual responses may have been different by adapting scale items to more appropriately fit this research. For example, "I daydream a lot" could have read "I daydream a lot when I go shopping". Instead of "when I go to the movies I find it easy to lose

**Fig. 3.** Structural model.

myself”, a more fitting variable would state “when I go shopping I find it easy to lose myself”.

Fourth, Zung's (1971) self-rating anxiety scale is used to measure anxiety. Affect and emotion scales typically consist of one-word items, e.g. I-PANAS-SF (Thompson, 2007). Anxiety items from I-PANAS-SF consist of *afraid*, *upset*, *nervous*, *ashamed*, and *hostile*. Two of the items employed from Zung's anxiety scale each contained one of these anxiety items, i.e. “I feel afraid for no reason at all” and “I get upset easily or feel panicky.” The remaining anxiety scale item, “I feel like I'm falling apart and going to pieces”, is comparable to another one-word item, *nervous*.

5. Concluding remarks

In our society, people struggle daily with a multitude of physical and behavioral addictions including alcoholism, substance abuse, gambling, and other compulsive disorders. Marketing research should place a stronger emphasis on the ills of overconsumption and compulsive buying providing potential remedies for consumers. Thus far, progress in compulsive buying research has led to the identification of numerous antecedents and outcomes of compulsive buying. However, behavioral remedies for compulsive buying are lacking significantly. Research should focus on practical ways to enhance consumer resistance to buying impulses. For instance, this research indicates that consumers who are inclined to buy compulsively should abstain from tempting buying situations (i.e. visiting e-commerce sites or store locations without a clear need), especially when feeling down or stressed. Compulsive buying behaviors can generate serious emotional, financial, and interpersonal difficulties for consumers. Consumer addictions may be profitable to organizations in the short term; however, such behaviors tend to be erratic and difficult to sustain. By offering healthy alternatives and specific strategies to help remedy shopping addiction, research may improve the quality of life for compulsive buyers and their families.

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