



ORIGINAL RESEARCH PAPER

Psychology

SENSATION SEEKING AND COMPULSIVE BUYING AMONG YOUNG ADULTS

KEY WORDS:Sensation Seeking, Compulsive Buying, Thrill and adventure seeking, Experience seeking, Boredom Susceptibility, Disinhibition.

Manthra B

Student, M.Sc. Clinical Psychology, Kristu Jayanti College, Bangalore

Dr Arjun Sekhar

Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology, Kristu Jayanti College, Bangalore

ABSTRACT

The aim of the study was to find the relationship between sensation seeking and compulsive buying. And also, to find the gender difference that exist among the variables. A descriptive study was carried out and the data was drawn from an online survey of 200 young adults (122 female and 78 male) between the age 18-25. Sensation Seeking Scale -V (Zuckerman, 1978) and Edwards Compulsive Buying Scale -Revised version (Maraz et al, 2015) were utilized to gather the data. Correlation was employed to find the relationship between sensation seeking and compulsive buying. Mann-Whitney U test was used to find the difference in gender among variables. The findings indicated that there was no significant relationship between sensation seeking (Thrill and adventure seeking, Experience seeking, Boredom susceptibility and Disinhibition) and compulsive buying and there is significant difference in gender that exist among the variables.

INTRODUCTION

Sensation seeking is defined as “a trait defined by the seeking of varied, novel, complex, and intense sensations and experiences, and the willingness to take physical, social, legal, and financial risks for the sake of such experience” (Zuckerman, 1994). It is an individual's tendency to pursue novel, highly stimulating activities and experiences. Marvin Zuckerman originally developed the concept of sensation seeking, according to him sensation seeking is based on individual differences in optimal level of sensation caused by biological nervous system differences.

Sensation seeking is considered within the discipline of marketing as a concept related to the exploratory tendencies of the consumers. These tendencies are normally structured into three categories: behaviors motivated by curiosity, the search for variety and the assumption of risk. People with high levels of optimum stimulation carried out exploratory behavior to a greater extent than those with low levels of stimulation. This therefore suggests that the optimum level of stimulation is the determinant factor of behaviors for the consumer with a strongly exploratory character. (Steenkamp & Baumgartner, 1992) Consumers seek variety as a break from routine and that it is a process which varies in intensity according to the exploratory tendency of each individual. This variety seeking continues until the consumers reach the level of sensation or enjoyment in the process that suits their own characteristics. Most research deals with the optimum levels of stimulation in relation to exploratory behavior, but it is also necessary to consider the concept of the real level of stimulation.

Studies have shown that sensation seeking tends to peak in adolescence and early adulthood, and then gradually declines with age (Zuckerman, Eysenck, & Eysenck, 1978; Arnett, 1992). Gender is another demographic factor that has been linked to differences in sensation seeking. Research has consistently found that males tend to score higher on measures of sensation seeking than females (Zuckerman, 1994; Cross et al., 2011).

Shopping is a common behaviour in modern society. People shop to buy their needs or relax and reward themselves. However, shopping can become harmful and destructive behaviour to one's life when it becomes extreme and unmanageable, which is termed as compulsive buying. Compulsive buying is defined as frequent preoccupation with buying or impulses to buy that are experienced as irresistible, intrusive and senseless. This buying behaviour causes marked distress, interferences with social functioning and marriages and often results in financial problems.

Compulsive buyers feel elated after making a purchase. Compulsive buying is often a failed attempt to cope with emotions that cannot be tolerated. Compulsive buyers easily get themselves and their family into debt (Xu et al., 2022). It is characterized by an obsession with shopping and buying behaviour. It urges the behaviour regarding shopping and spending which lead to adverse consequences. It is a chronic disorder where the Onset occurs within the late teens or early twenties.

There is growing evidence to suggest that sensation seeking may be a contributing factor to compulsive buying behavior. A study conducted by Trotzke et al. (2019) found that individuals with high levels of sensation seeking were more likely to engage in compulsive buying behavior, even after controlling for other factors such as anxiety and depression. Similarly, a study by Roberts et al. (2018) found that individuals with higher levels of sensation seeking were more likely to engage in impulsive buying behavior, which is a key component of compulsive buying.

METHODOLOGY

A correlational research design was used with an aim to assess the relationship between Sensation Seeking and Compulsive Buying. Additionally, the gender difference was studied for the variables. The data is not normally distributed. To analyze the data, Descriptive statistics, Spearman correlation and Mann-Whitney U test were used.

Hypotheses

- H01 There is no significant relationship between sensation seeking and compulsive buying among young adults
- H02 There is no significant gender difference for sensation seeking among young adults
- H03 There is no significant gender difference for compulsive buying among young adults.

Sampling

The sample of the present study was collected via a convenient sampling technique. The sample constituted a total 200 out of which 78 were males and 122 were females. Participants' age group ranged from 18 to 25. The data from the participant was collected via online survey, google forms. The participants were provided with informed consent form before participating in the study

**Tools Used For The Study
Sensation Seeking Scale-V**

Sensation seeking scale-V was developed by Zuckerman in 1978. The scale comprises 40 items with 2 choices. It consists of 4 - Thrill and adventure Seeking (TAS), Experience Seeking

(ES), Boredom Susceptibility (BS), Disinhibition (DIS). Each subscale had 10 items. Reliability of the scale found to be 0.86 and validity is found to be 0.8.

Edwards Compulsive Buying Scale- Revised Version (ECBS-R)

Compulsive Buying scale developed by Maraz et al in 2015 was used to measure the degree of the respondents' feelings, emotions and behaviors associated with Compulsive buying using seven items on a 5-point rating scale- Strongly agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, Strongly Disagree. The reliability of the scale is found to be 0.87.

RESULTS

Table 1: Correlation Between Sensation Seeking And Compulsive Buying Among Young Adults

Variable	N	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6
1.CB	200	43.1	11.1	-	0.123	0.092	0.107	0.098	0.127
2. SS	200	17.4	4.44		-	.612*	.638*	.681*	.479*
3.TAS	200	4.33	1.62			-	.240*	.207*	.196*
4.ES	200	31.1	1.54				-	.294*	.087*
5.Dis	200	4.94	1.74					-	.002*
6.BS	200	3.58	1.37						-
(*p<0.05)									

Table 1 indicates that correlation between Sensation Seeking and Compulsive Buying. The dimensions of sensation seeking- Thrill and Adventure seeking (TAS), Experience Seeking (ES), Disinhibition (Dis), Boredom Susceptibility (BS) were also taken into consideration. The corresponding r values of compulsive buying are found to be 0.123, 0.092, 0.107, 0.098 and 0.127 for Sensation Seeking, Thrill and adventure seeking, experience seeking, disinhibition and boredom susceptibility respectively and with corresponding p>0.05 which indicates that there is no relationship between the variables. Therefore, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between Sensation Seeking and Compulsive Buying is accepted.

Table 2: Difference In Sensation Seeking And Compulsive Buying Based On Gender

Variable	Male		Female		u	p
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Sensation Seeking	18.15	2.85	16.26	5.98	3716.01	.009*
Compulsive Buying	45.46	9.19	39.43	12.79	3342.5	.001**
(*p<0.05)(**p<0.01)						

Table 2 showing Mann-Whitney test conducted to compare the differences in gender in Sensation Seeking and Compulsive Buying among young adults. The results showed the value (u= 3716.01, 3342.5, p<0.05) which revealed that there was significant difference in the scores of Sensations Seeking and Compulsive Buying based on gender. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. With the mean value, Males are high in sensation seeking than females.

DISCUSSION

The present study aims in understanding the relationship between sensation seeking and compulsive buying and also to study whether there exists any significant difference in the scores of sensation seeking and compulsive buying based on gender. The results showed that there is no significant relationship between sensation seeking and compulsive buying and also with dimensions of sensation seeking. This result can be supported by previous studies (Roberts & Jones, 2005; Dittmar, Long & Bond, 2007) showed that there is no relationship between sensation seeking and compulsive buying, these studies suggested that people high in sensation seeking may more likely to make impulsive purchase but

doesn't develop compulsive buying behaviour and indicated that compulsive buying was related to low self-esteem and desire for social status. Another study conducted by Rose & Dhandayudham (2014) found that compulsive buying was related to materialistic value and low self-esteem.

The results identified the difference in Sensation Seeking and Compulsive Buying based gender revealed that there is significant difference in gender. In both variables females got high scores. A study (Dittmar, Long & Bond, 2007) found that those men scored higher on sensation seeking and women reported more compulsive buying behavior. The study also found that the relationship between sensation seeking and compulsive buying behavior was stronger for women than for men. The researchers suggested that this may be due to women being more likely to use shopping as a coping mechanism for negative emotions. The researchers suggested that this may be due to women being more likely to use shopping as a coping mechanism for negative emotions. A study suggested that this difference gender in compulsive buying is due to may be due to societal pressures for women to conform to certain beauty standards and consumer culture. The results of this study contradict previous study results on gender difference in sensation seeking. Previous studies had found that men were scored high in sensation seeking than women. This difference may be due to socialization and cultural factors that encourage risk-taking and adventurous behavior in males.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the results of the hypotheses testing and the dimensions correlation between the variables, the conclusions of this study revealed that there was found to have a no significant relationship between Sensation Seeking and Compulsive Buying.

There was a significant gender difference in Sensation Seeking and Compulsive Buying. It was found that male had high score in Sensation Seeking.

REFERENCES

- Arnett, J. J. (1994). Sensation seeking: A new conceptualization and a new scale. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 16(2), 289–296. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0191-8869\(94\)90165-1](https://doi.org/10.1016/0191-8869(94)90165-1)
- Cross, C. P., Cyrenne, D. L., & Brown, G. R. (2013). Sex differences in sensation-seeking: A meta-analysis. *Scientific Reports*, 3, 2486. <https://doi.org/10.1038/srep02486>.
- Dittmar, H., Long, K., & Bond, R. (2007). When a better self a Button Click Away: Associations Between Materialistic Values, Emotional and Identity-Related Buying Motives, and Compulsive Buying Tendency Online. *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology*, 26(3), 334–361.
- Liu, Y., Bi, C., Unger, A., & Papastamatelou, J. (2022a). Self control as a mediator of age on students' compulsive buying. *PsyCh Journal*, 11(2), 259–262. <https://doi.org/10.1002/pchj.523>
- Maraz, A., Eisinger, A., Hende, B., Urbán, R., Paksi, B., Kun, B., Kökönyei, G., Griffiths, M. D., & Demetrovics, Z. (2015). Measuring compulsive buying behaviour: Psychometric validity of three different scales and prevalence in the general population and in shopping centres. *Psychiatry Research-neuroimaging*, 225(3), 326–334.
- Roberts, J. M., & Jones, E. (2001). Money Attitudes, Credit Card Use, and Compulsive Buying among American College Students. *Journal of Consumer Affairs*, 35(2), 213–240. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1745-6606.2001.tb00111.x>
- Rose, S. R., & Dhandayudham, A. (2014). Towards an understanding of Internet-based problem shopping behaviour: The concept of online shopping addiction and its proposed predictors. *Journal of Behavioral Addictions*, 3(2), 83–89. <https://doi.org/10.1556/jba.3.2014.003>
- Steenkamp, J. E. M., & Baumgartner, H. (1992). The role of optimum stimulation level in exploratory consumer behavior. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 19(3) (December), 434–448. <https://doi.org/10.1086/209313>
- Trotzke, P., Starcke, K., Müller, A., & Brand, M. (2015). Pathological buying online as a specific form of internet addiction: A model-based experimental investigation. *PLOS ONE*, 10(10), article e0140296. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0140296>
- Xu, C., Unger, A., Bi, C., Papastamatelou, J., & Raab, G. (2022). The influence of Internet shopping and use of credit cards on gender differences in compulsive buying. *Journal of Internet and Digital Economics*, 2(1), 27–45. <https://doi.org/10.1108/jide-11-2021-0017>
- Zuckerman, M. (1994). Behavioral Expressions and Biosocial Bases of Sensation Seeking.
- Zuckerman, M., Eysenck, S. B., & Eysenck, H. J. (1978). Sensation seeking in England and America: Cross-cultural, age, and sex comparisons. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 46(1), 139–149. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-006x.46.1.139>