

WHAT BRINGS YOU PLEASURE?
THE ROLE OF DESIRE WITHIN THE DEVELOPMENT OF COMPULSIVE
PURCHASING

by

Justine M. Rapp

A DISSERTATION

Presented to the Faculty of
The Graduate College at the University of Nebraska
In Partial Fulfillment of Requirements
For the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy
Major: Interdepartmental Area of Business (Marketing)

Under the Supervision of Professor James W. Gentry

Lincoln, Nebraska

November, 2012

UMI Number: 3546812

All rights reserved

INFORMATION TO ALL USERS

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.



UMI 3546812

Published by ProQuest LLC (2012). Copyright in the Dissertation held by the Author.

Microform Edition © ProQuest LLC.

All rights reserved. This work is protected against unauthorized copying under Title 17, United States Code



ProQuest LLC.
789 East Eisenhower Parkway
P.O. Box 1346
Ann Arbor, MI 48106 - 1346

WHAT BRINGS YOU PLEASURE?
THE ROLE OF DESIRE WITHIN THE DEVELOPMENT OF COMPULSIVE
PURCHASING

Justine M. Rapp, Ph.D.

University of Nebraska, 2012

Adviser: James W. Gentry

This paper seeks to put forth two major contributions into marketing scholarship: (1) the role of desire within the development of compulsivity from impulsive consumptions, and (2) an assessment of compulsivity measurement scales. A mixed method design provides for both statistical and qualitative support for both contributions, for a deeper and replicated account of consumer behavior within the marketplace. First, we develop a possible path for the development of compulsivity, explaining impulsivity as an antecedent with consumer shopping desire as the driving factor. With this, we introduce the variable Consumer Shopping Desire as a quantified construct related to Belk et al.'s (2003) conceptualization of consumer desire. Further, analysis is provided in seeking the differences in compulsivity measurement through an analysis of both the Faber and O'Guinn (1992) and Ridgway et al. (2008) compulsivity scales. Qualitative in-depth interviews illustrate leniency within the latter scale, as some individuals deemed compulsive fail to exhibit behaviors characteristic of compulsivity within the literature. We conclude with possible directions for the marketing community addressing the fundamental need in identifying at-risk consumers before they proceed to develop compulsive behaviors within the marketplace.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The dissertation presented within the pages below is not the product of one individual, yet is an aggregate of both the support (emotionally and academically) and knowledge of my advisory committee and family and friends.

First and foremost, I owe the majority of my success to my parents, whose undying love and support has made me the person I am today and whose strength has allowed me to pursue my career thousands of miles away from home.

Secondly, I would like to thank Ron Hill; my mentor, my friend, my continual source of confidence. My career is driven by Ron's kind words and compassion. He is a true role model and the most inspirational academic I know.

Thirdly, my advisor Jim Gentry. Thank you for believing in me and allowing me to pursue topics that I value and cherish. You have stuck by my side through the entire program and fought for me when others may not have understood or supported my vision. Thank you for letting me be me.

To the rest of my committee - Les, Scott, and Paul - thank you for taking this journey with me. Les, thank you for believing in and supporting my passion for public policy (and indoor tanning!). Thank you for seeing the value and importance in the greater things in life and being an ear to listen when my passion became clouded with questions and doubt. Scott, thank you for stepping-in to supervise a dissertation that is not in your wheelhouse! Your insights and support in developing young academics helped shaped this paper into something it would not otherwise have been - and you are truly one of the most genuine people I have met. And Paul, thank you for having an addiction

class. Thank you for sharing the importance of addiction with students in an academic setting and seeing the value in addictions beyond chemical substances.

To my friends. Ivana, Jess, Chad, Tim, Shipra, and Ricardo. Thank you. Thank you for your input, support, suggestions, and most importantly, listening to me complain! Your unwavering support and patience with me has meant the world and I will always be here for you to return the favor. To all my friends outside of Nebraska, thank you for supporting me throughout the years. In this crazy academic world, one just can't stay sane without the support of others who are equally obsessed with this weird world we call research.

Finally, I want to dedicate this dissertation to the memory of my dear friend Garrett Coble, whose passion for life and service has instilled in me a determination to follow my heart and, despite adversity, pursue research in which I believe.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION	
Introduction	1
Importance and Contribution of Research.....	3
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW, RESEARCH QUESTIONS, AND HYPOTHESES	
Impulsive Consumption	7
Compulsive Consumption	12
Desire	15
Research Questions	19
The Compulsive Consumption Development Model	20
Theoretical Addendum	34
CHAPTER 3: METHOD	
Method	38
CHAPTER 4: STUDY 1 – QUANTITATIVE SURVEY DESIGN	
Study 1: Quantitative Design.....	45
Test of Proposed Model	70
CHAPTER 5: STUDY 2 – QUALITATIVE IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS	
Study 2: Qualitative Design	82
Difference in Compulsivity Measurement	85
Compulsive Consumption Development Model	95
CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION	
Discussion	101
Development of Compulsive Consumption	102
Compulsivity Measurement	107
Conclusion	112

LIST OF MULTIMEDIA OBJECTS

Figures

Figure 2.1: Stages of the Compulsive Consumption Development Model	21
Figure 2.2: Model and Hypotheses	21
Figure 4.1: Confirmatory Factor Analysis Full Desire Model, Iteration #1	54
Figure 4.2: Modified Confirmatory Factor Analysis, Iteration #1.....	56
Figure 4.3: Confirmation Factor Analysis Full Desire Model, Iteration #2	64
Figure 4.5: Modified Confirmatory Factor Analysis, Iteration #2	75
Figure 4.6: Test of Adjusted Model.....	77
Figure 4.7: Addition of Consumer Spending Self-Control into Model	78
Figure 4.8: Addition of Life Events into Model	80
Figure 6.1: Continuum of Compulsivity Measurement	111

Tables

Table 2.1: Distinction Between Impulsive and Compulsive Consumers	11
Table 3.1: Stages of Data Collection	40
Table 4.1: Consumer Shopping Desire Scale Factor Analysis, Iteration #1	48
Table 4.2: Consumer Shopping Desire Scale Refinement, Iteration #1	49
Table 4.3: Consumer Shopping Desire Scale Iteration #1	51
Table 4.4: Demographics of Survey Development Respondent, Iteration #1	52
Table 4.5: Standardized Residual Covariance Table, Iteration #1.....	55
Table 4.6: Consumer Shopping Desire Scale Factor Analysis, Iteration #2	57
Table 4.7: Consumer Shopping Desire Scale Factor Analysis #2, Iteration #2	60
Table 4.8: Two Factors from Consumer Shopping Desire Scale Refinement	61
Table 4.9: Demographics of Survey Development Respondent, Iteration #2	63
Table 4.10: Standardized Regression Weights for Full Desire Construct, Iteration #2 ...	65
Table 4.11: Standardized Regression Weights for Final Scale	65
Table 4.12: Consumer Shopping Desire Scale Validity Test	66
Table 4.13: Scales Used in Model Testing	71
Table 4.14: Test for Multicollinearity in Model	72
Table 4.15: Correlation Summary Table	74
Table 4.16: Life Event and Percentages by Group	79
Table 5.1: Interview Questions Used in Study 2	83
Table 5.2: In-Depth Interview Participants	84
Table 6.1: Compulsivity Scales	109
Table 6.2: DSM-IV Substance Dependence Assessment Adapted to Compulsive Shopping	112

CHAPTER 1: AN INTRODUCTION

“Addiction is a process of buying into false and empty promises: the promise of relief, the promise of emotional security, the false sense of fulfillment, and the false sense of intimacy with the world...Finding emotional fulfillment through an object or event is an illusion.”

– Craig Nakken

Both impulsive and compulsive consumption are pervasive issues affecting consumers and their overall well-being. The impulsive consumption literature spans several academic disciplines, including psychology, sociology, and economics (Ainslie 1975; Davis and Havighurst 1946; Strotz 1956, respectively). Assessment of impulsive behaviors reached the consumer behavior literature through the evaluation of shopping behaviors and consumption impulses and is most generically defined as a “sudden and spontaneous desire” to purchase and/or consume a product (Rook and Hoch 1985, 23). Compulsive consumption, on the other hand, is defined as a repeated act that is both focused on the experience of consuming within the shopping environment and brings detriment to the consumer (Schlosser et al. 1994).

Despite extensive research on both impulsive and compulsive consumption, there is an apparent gap in the literature connecting the two constructs. Each phenomenon is studied in the extant literature as an independent force dictating consumer actions; however, no link has been established between the two. The absence of such investigation is surprising, as literature in the area has pointed to the potentially destructive nature of impulsive consumption behaviors (see Hirschmann 1992). With the additional acknowledgment that discount shopping risks addictive attachments (D’Innocenzio 2012), the connection to compulsive consumption seem all too clear. The development and recognition of such a relationship would provide for a richer

understanding of compulsivity development, leading more significantly to insights on prevention or intervention. While it is not the ultimate goal to prevent individuals from participating in consumptive behaviors, we aim to decipher the intricacies of risky behavior in hopes of curtailing potentially extreme and harmful shopping behaviors.

Accordingly, this paper intends to investigate a possible causal link between impulsive and compulsive buying behavior. Beginning with a theoretical examination of both consumption behaviors, I will establish the differences and similarities between the two concepts. Next, I will present and discuss a developmental model to illustrate a consumer's possible transition progressing from impulsive to compulsive purchasing, with a focus on a consumer's shopping desire. As such, the Compulsive Consumption Development Model intends to reveal a stage-wise sequence through which a consumer progresses towards compulsive consumption mediated by increases in desire within the shopping experience.

A mixed methods design is utilized herein to grasp a holistic understanding of the behavioral changes at play within this transition. After theoretical model development and hypothesis construction, the model is tested both quantitatively and qualitatively. A sample of 305 undergraduate students is used to assess statistical relationships between hypothesized pathways, while 28 concurrent qualitative interviews seek to understand the personal developmental experience of compulsivity and the validity of current measurement scales. Findings and insights uncovered through this mixed method approach are then subsequently followed by an adjusted large-scale quantitative study of 587 consumers to both confirm and replicate previous findings. Implications to the marketing and addiction domain are subsequently discussed.

IMPORTANCE AND CONTRIBUTION OF RESEARCH

Addiction has always been a part of my life. I grew up with an uncle who was a full blown alcoholic since age 18 and, as time went on, progressively dove deeper into the world of substance abuse. I experienced the pain and hardship of drug abuse from an early age, as my family was unable to rescue his children from the abuse, and as my grandmother slowly lost her most meaningful jewelry to theft in order for him to pay for the high cost of drug addiction. My uncle, and our family, hit rock bottom one August during a family vacation in Florida; my uncle miscalculated the amount of heroin needed to survive the week and fell into the despair of the darkest withdrawal. Witnessing my uncle in such a horrid state and having to watch my family put him on a plane to go to rehab is one of my most vivid memories. Now, my uncle is gripping onto life. He is homeless somewhere in Florida, with a failing liver and severe emphysema, continually in and out of prison. Worst of all, my cousins have nothing.

As I sit here at 26 years old in a PhD program, my heart breaks for them. How is it that I can be so fortunate, with such wonderful parents and such a thriving support system, yet those so close to me were given such pain? It is from this experience that I have vowed to commit my life's work to making a difference for those struggling; to give back and help those who have had no choice. Although this dissertation is set within the context of compulsive shopping behaviors, the lessons and contributions herein spread far into the vast realm of addictive behaviors.

The most significant contributions of this research are to (1) better understand the addictive process as developed from impulsive behaviors, (2) conceptualize and develop a measurement system for the role of desire within the addictive process, and (3) gain a

clear understanding of the differences and/or similarities present within the two primary means of compulsivity measurement. To start with the first objective, there is great debate within the addiction literature as to what addiction really is. Theories of addiction abound. From the biological model focusing on aspects of genetics and predispositions (Kalivas 2003) to the psychological model focusing on one's personal relationships and learned behaviors (see Stanton et al. 1978), addiction scholars are continually on the hunt to find exactly how addiction begins and, thus, how it can be stopped. The conceptualization herein, proposes an additional model citing impulsivity as a driver of compulsive behaviors. While it is recognized that this theory is not attributable to every case of addiction, strong support for the proposed model is showcased within this dissertation. Such findings meaningfully contribute to the addiction domain, as the development and recognition of behavioral addictions have gained significant attention in recent years.

Secondly, the conceptualization and measurement of desire within the addiction domain is a poorly understood and substantially under-researched construct. While significant research on craving does exist within the literature, the drivers of such cravings are minimally discussed. Although it is understood that desires lead to craving (Rosenberg 2009; Sayette et al. 2000), desire is never formally conceptualized in this context. Most quantitative assessments of craving are based on self-report data (Sayette et al. 2000), simply asking study participants, "How much do you desire X?". What does desire really mean? Do people experience desire in the same way, or in the same relative amounts? How can we, as researchers, really understand what craving is if we fail to understand what's driving it? There fails to exist any formalized measurement procedures

surrounding the understanding of consumer craving and desire within the marketplace; rather, it is assumed that consumers have an implicit understanding of their personal desire and can attest to felt experiences.

Accordingly, it is the second function of this dissertation to conceptualize desire as a driver within the marketplace, as well as within the addiction process. This gap within the literature is one that must be addressed as desires and craving alike are known drivers of consumptive behaviors. Through a deeper and clearer understanding of consumer desires, scholars will more easily be able to understand the processes related to developing consumer wants and needs. The analysis of desire herein takes an iterative approach over many studies. As will be seen, desire is first observed from a two-pronged perspective – object-focused and experienced-focused – and is constructed as a composite variable that exists at different parts of the shopping experience. As addiction is occasionally classified as ‘excessive desire’ (Keane 2004), we investigate desire to more deeply understand both the shopping experience and the learned process of addictive behaviors.

Third, multiple measures of compulsivity persist within the marketing domain. While a scale developed in 1992 by Faber and O’Guinn has garnered greater attention in scholarly work, a more recent scale by Ridgway et al. (2008) purports a more accurate conceptualization and measurement of the construct. As such, an additional goal of this dissertation work is to provide a qualitative assessment of both scales in a further effort to identify the most accurate means of compulsivity measurement. These findings will help provide the marketing community with a qualitative understanding of the individuals identified through both measurement models with the ultimate goal of matching

qualitative inquiry with both extant conceptualization and scale development procedures of compulsive buying behavior. We aim to assess the potential differences between scale strength (e.g., validity and consistency) and accurate identification (i.e., cut-off point of compulsivity identification).

Such findings aid both the marketing domain, as well as the social sciences.

Understanding desire as a key component of one's behavior provides for a more accurate account of consumers' inherent motivations allowing both scholars and practitioners to be more capable of assessing how consumers respond to marketplace factors (e.g., servicescape design, sales promotions and placement). Armed with such knowledge, detection of dangerous (or potentially dangerous) behaviors will provide for better protection of individuals in the beginning or on the verge of behavioral addiction.

Protecting individuals from the destructive consequences of addiction is one of the most timely and significant goals within addiction scholarship. The dissertation provides for a fresh perspective of the development of compulsive behaviors and the distinctive role of desire.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW, RESEARCH QUESTIONS, AND HYPOTHESES

IMPULSIVE CONSUMPTION

An extensive amount of research has been conducted in the attempt to understand and evaluate impulsive behaviors in individuals. Freud (1911, 1920) associated impulsive actions with the internal opposition of pleasure and reality, while more modern day psychologists assess impulsiveness as related to spontaneous actions (Eysenck et al. 1985) and a need for stimulation (Gerbing, Ahadi, and Patton 1987; Weun, Jones, and Beatty 1998). While there remain several minute differences between academic interpretations, a general understanding of impulsive behavior remains the same. As defined by Goldenson (1984, 37), an impulse is “a strong, sometimes *irresistible* urge: a *sudden* inclination to act without deliberation” (emphasis added by the author).

For the purposes of this paper, it is necessary to point out several key attributes in the aforementioned definition. First, an impulsive act is defined around the context of a single occurrence at a specific point in time; a notion that will be carried throughout this paper. Second, an impulse occurs suddenly, without any planning or foresight. Finally, such behavior is defined as irresistible. The effects of this final attribute will be discussed at length further in the paper through an analysis of both desire and self-control. The Compulsive Consumption Development Model argues that, through incremental increases and decreases of desire and self-control, respectively, the consumer is enraptured by their impulses and, thus, progresses towards more destructive behaviors.

Within the marketing literature, a substantial amount of regard has been given to research surrounding impulsive buying behaviors (Bellenger et al. 1978; Kacen and Lee 2002; Piron 1991; Weinberg and Gottwald 1982; Weun et al. 1998). Rook and Hoch (1985) revived scholarship on impulsiveness by identifying five main criteria that determine the differences between a consumer with an impulsive trait and one without, illustrated as (1) sudden and spontaneous desire to act, (2) psychological disequilibrium, (3) psychological conflict and struggle, (4) cognitive evaluation, and (5) a lack of regard for the consequences. Two years later, Rook (1987, 191) stated impulsive buying occurs “when a consumer experiences a sudden, often powerful and persistent urge to buy something immediately... [one that is] hedonically complex...and prone to occur with diminished regard for its consequences.” As is seen, this definition mimics that of Goldenson’s described previously, with two important alterations. One important addition is the recognition that such behavior is hedonically complex, meaning the consumer derives a sense of internal pleasure from the behavior. Most often, impulsive behaviors are driven by an excited positive mood. In fact, a study by Faber and Christenson (1996) finds that 80% of their sample stated they were most likely to be in a positive mood following an impulsive purchase. In the model discussed in Figures 2.1 and 2.2, such pleasure is one of the primary components within the conceptualization of a two-factored desire construct - one of the main drivers of the transition between impulsive and compulsive consumption. The second meaningful addition to Rook’s (1987) definition is the acknowledgment that the action is object focused (...to buy *something*). The consumer behaves impulsively to derive pleasure from the consumption of a given object, as opposed to a planned purchase with pure utility purposes.

According to Stern (1962), impulse buying can be divided into four distinct categories: (1) pure, (2) reminder, (3) suggestion, and (4) planned. Pure impulse buying and planned impulse buying can be seen as opposites. While pure impulse buying is defined as “the novelty or escape purchase which breaks a normal buying pattern” (59), planned impulse buying occurs when the consumer intends to make purchases based on coupons or in-store specials. Reminder and suggestion impulse purchasing, on the other hand, are quite similar. Reminder impulse buying is triggered by the sight of a product in need or by an advertisement, whereas suggestion impulse buying transpires when “a shopper sees a product for the first time and visualizes a need for it” (59).

The causes of impulsive purchasing are also thoroughly explored throughout the extant literature. Beatty and Ferrell (1998) developed a comprehensive model that evaluates impulse buying through situational (time and money availability) and individual difference (shopping enjoyment and impulse buying tendency) variables. Their most prominent contribution is their discussion of positive and negative affect, in which positive moods greatly increased the likelihood of impulsive behaviors. This finding is contrary to the affect discussions within the subsequent compulsive consumption literature review. Hausman (2000) later supported these findings, illustrating that impulse buying is motivated by the need to satisfy hedonic needs for fun and novelty, which is in line with Rook’s (1987) definition.

Youn and Faber (2000, 180) explore the relationship between impulse buying and personality traits, finding that a lack of self-control, stress reaction, and absorption (defined as “a tendency to become immersed in self-involving experiences triggered by engaging external and internal stimuli”) increases a consumer’s likelihood to act in

impulsive ways. Further, the authors sought to examine cues that trigger impulsive behaviors. Among these triggers were the availability of money (in line with Beatty and Ferrell (1998)), as well as lower priced or discounted items. Couched within these triggers is a discussion of emotion, as the authors' findings suggest that both positive and negative emotional states encourage impulsive behaviors. While this finding is somewhat contradictory to prior definitions, it is an important extension to theory, as impulsive behaviors can be generated by a general heightened emotional state, rather than just one of joy or excitement.

Rook and Fisher (1995) delve deeper into the discussion on impulsive buying by recognizing the differences between consumers with an impulsive trait and those who simply make impulse purchases. This difference is an important distinction to recognize within the scope of this manuscript; there is a distinction between a solitary act of impulsiveness and a consumer who possesses a trait that generates impulsive behavior within them. As such, the transition from impulsive consumption to compulsive consumption is not a universal phenomenon. Although a consumer may act impulsively (such as an unplanned purchase of a Snickers bar while standing in a check-out line), we do not argue that they will eventually become a compulsive consumer. Rather, the frequency of impulsion, combined with the driving nature of desire and the moderation of self-control, play a significant role in a consumer's transition to compulsive behavior.

It is clear from the review of literature that impulsive consumption is sudden, hedonically driven, and product focused. This behavior is largely triggered by both external and internal stimuli, which result in an intense desire to purchase a product once cognitive awareness has been generated. Resulting emotional affect (either positive or

relief from a prior negative mood state) is then immediately experienced by the consumer, suggesting a subsequent increased desired state for similar behavior schemes. The following section entails a literature review of compulsive consumption, in an attempt to discriminate between the two constructs (see Table 2.1).

Table 2.1
Distinction Between Impulsive and Compulsive Consumption

	Impulsive Consumption	Compulsive Consumption
Definition	“a strong, sometimes irresistible urge: a sudden inclination to act without deliberation” (Goldenson 1984, 37)	“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, 148)
Central Focus	Physical Object	Consumption Experience
Drivers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time availability • Money availability • Positive mood states • Shopping enjoyment • Low prices/discounted items • Spontaneity • Physical proximity • Immediate gratification 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Negative emotion states • Need for escape • Fantasy orientation • Low self-esteem
Outcomes	<u>Negative</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post-purchase financial problems • Product disappointment • Guilt • Feeling out of control <u>Positive</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social approval • Positive Affect • Hedonic satisfaction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intensified negative emotions • Severe debt • Disrupted personal relationships • Excessive product attainment • Social Disapproval

COMPULSIVE CONSUMPTION

Compared to impulsive consumption, compulsive purchasing is a relatively young topic within the marketing literature (Faber and O’Guinn 1992; Hirschman 1992; Rindfleish, Burroughs, and Denton 1997; Schlosser et al. 1994; and for an excellent review of compulsive consumption, see Faber and O’Guinn 2008). Faber, O’Guinn, and Krych (1987) spearheaded the movement introducing compulsive buying as “a type of consumer behavior which is inappropriate, typically excessive, and clearly disruptive to the lives of individuals” (132). Two years later, O’Guinn and Faber (1989) developed a more concise definition of the phenomenon stating that compulsive consumption is 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” (148) (emphasis added by the author). Comparable to impulsive consumption, compulsive behaviors are irresistible urges that a consumer feels they *must* do even against their will (Scherhorn 1990).

It is integral to the discussion of this paper to address certain aspects of the definition by O’Guinn and Faber (1989), in comparison to the definition of impulsive consumption. First, a compulsive behavior is defined around an action, rather than centered on a consumption object as discussed within the impulsive consumption literature. Second, this action must be involuntarily repeated over time, rather than a solitary instance. Finally, compulsive behaviors are defined as harmful to the individual. While it may be argued that an impulsive action can be harmful to a consumer (e.g., if they do not have the money to support an impulsive purchase), compulsive consumption behaviors push the consumer into an addicted and uncontrollable state. Rather than

focusing on a product itself, a consumer in a compulsive state craves the feeling derived from the consumption activity and thus ultimately remains unsatisfied once the consumption object is obtained.

The power of one's emotions plays a significant role in compulsive purchasing behaviors. Unfortunately, such emotional states are primarily negative (e.g., anxiety, depression, and anger) and compulsive behavior is motivated by the desire to alter or escape from such feelings, although such diversion is short-lived (Faber and Christenson 1996). While some compulsive behaviors are developed as an attempt to prolong positive moods, Faber and Christenson (1996) discovered that most compulsive consumers are shown to "experience negative emotions more frequently and more deeply" (813). From this perspective, Faber and Vohs (2004) explained compulsive behavior as a reaction illustrated by escape theory. Consumers engage in compulsive behaviors to escape the painful realities of life and focus narrowly on immediate and pleasurable tasks. Such mood repair (the ability to relieve emotional torment through compulsive behaviors) is a common coping mechanism used among compulsive consumers (Elliot 1994). Although mood repair may be seen as acceptable behavior in limited quantities, compulsive consumers become dependent on the activity to relieve negative emotions, and thus develop an unhealthy and uncontrollable coping mechanism for normal emotional states.

Similar to impulsive consumption, compulsive buying has been linked to the presence of certain personality traits. O'Guinn and Faber (1989) evaluated a consumer's propensity to fantasize and found that compulsive buyers fantasized more than normal consumers. These fantasies are surmised to be used in an attempt to escape negative

feelings, “more easily dissociate negative consequences from antecedent behavior,” and find relief from the painful realities of life (Jacobs 1986, 153). Self-esteem and anxiety, which are more prominently developed through socialization in childhood, are also common traits discussed in the compulsive consumption literature (Elliot 1994; Faber, O’Guinn, and Krych 1987; O’Guinn and Faber 1989; Scherhorn 1990). A consumer’s struggle with self-esteem is further exacerbated by their inability to control their compulsive behaviors, generating a downward spiral. Scherhorn (1990) describes this lack of self-control as an experience that “grows to dominate the person’s life by gradually destroying the person’s ability to derive satisfaction from other involvements” (41). The consumer’s arousal system is thus compromised and reacts in unstable ways. As a result, the compulsive consumer relies on excitement and pleasure seeking motives that intensify as the consumption behavior persists over time (DeSarbo and Edwards 1996). With each consumption activity that leaves the consumer ultimately unsatisfied, the consumer seeks bigger and “better” means to reach their desired state of arousal.

One of the most unique aspects to compulsive consumption is the role the consumption object plays for the consumer. In fact, the consumption object often plays a relatively minimal role. Typically, compulsive consumers rarely use the products they purchase, often leaving the goods in the original packaging or locking the object in the trunk of a car or in a closet to hide the shame and/or guilt derived from the behavior (O’Guinn and Faber 1989). Instead, it is the “addictive experience” that is desired, as these consumers use the acquisition of the product as an excuse to temporarily escape their troubles and a way to cope with unhappiness (Scherhorn 1990, 40). Accordingly, compulsive consumption is a behavior that is triggered by internal stimuli and driven by

the fulfillment of experiential satisfaction (DeSarbo and Edwards 1996). Sadly, compulsive consumers rarely experience lasting satisfaction as, once the experience is over, they return to their original state of emptiness and need to escape.

DESIRE

A similar theme between impulsivity and compulsivity is the presence of desire. Within impulsive purchasing behaviors, we see consumers desiring objects that they feel will bring them pleasure. Compulsive consumers, on the other hand, desire the shopping experience itself, leaving the meaning of the object behind. As such, one significant difference between the general population and the 5.8% of consumers engaged in compulsive buying behaviors (Koran et al. 2006, 1807) is their propensity to readily seek out pleasure enhancing activities (Whiteside and Lynam 2001). Yet, what is minimally understood in the extant literature is how consumers learn that such behaviors will generate hedonic qualities. As such, we conceptualize herein that the affective state experienced after an impulsive action is the catalyst that begins the addiction process. The understanding and development of consumer shopping desire is the ultimate foundation of the Compulsive Consumption Development Model.

Desire is a necessary and fundamental component within the development of compulsive behaviors, as “desire is a powerful phenomenon that stimulates consumption choices” (Chen 2009). Ultimately, it is desire that is the driving force of consumption behavior. Within this model, it is seen that desire motivates both impulsive behaviors (object-focused desire) and compulsive behavior (experience-focused desires). Belk et al. (2003) describe desire as a “hot, passionate emotion” that is “born between

consumption fantasies and social situational contexts” (327). Further, Belk et al. (2003) find that consumers describe their desires as “intense, profound, and powerfully motivating... unintentional, unplanned, illogical, and may be accompanied by mistakes and irrationality” (333). Additionally, participants likened their desires to fantasies, which mirror the discussions of O’Guinn and Faber (1989). This description of desire describes both the antecedents and the consequences of compulsive consumption, as consumers are drawn towards an irresistible action that is harmful to their overall well-being.

Consumers experience such feelings during both impulsive and compulsive consumption, yet it is important to again note that the focus of desire differs between both behaviors. From an impulsive consumption perspective, the consumer desires the object itself and obtaining the product provides pleasure (Belk et al. 2003). This situation can be characterized by the typical point-of-purchase scenario – while not intending to purchase a Snickers bar, the consumer spots the candy bar, suddenly feels a need for the product, and subsequently enjoys the delicious combination of caramel, peanuts, and nougat. Desire experienced within a compulsive context, however, is more intensely driven and experiential in nature. Experience desire is satisfied by exposure to the retail environment itself, as the consumer enjoys the more intangible elements of shopping such as browsing and social interaction with fellow shoppers and sales people.

Hoch and Loewenstein (1991) identify three reference-point shifts that increase an individual’s desire to consume: (a) close physical proximity, (b) increased temporal proximity, and (c) social comparison. These three aspects are important to recognize when assessing a consumer’s motivation to act impulsively. As defined in the literature

review, impulses are spontaneous and unplanned and are generated when certain consumption objects are brought into a consumer's cognitive frame either by marketing cues or physical presence. Without such physical or temporal proximity, the consumer would be unaware of the consumption object and thus fail to develop a desire to purchase. Similarly, consumers gain knowledge of pleasurable affect through social cues. Social comparison pushes a consumer to believe they will benefit from consuming in a similar way to their peers, resulting in a more intense desire for a given product.

Chen (2009) investigates the possible multifaceted nature of the desire construct within the context of contemporary art collectors and exhibit visitors. As such, the author explores a dichotomy of desire - one for object possession and one for object access. A qualitative analysis finds differences in the meaning of desire as expressed through differing channels of product attainment. In garnering the possession, individuals expressed desire in terms of long-term, intimate relationships used to develop strong, self-identification (929). Desire for access, however, is characterized as wanting a distant relationship with the object, heightened by sharing and enjoyment in community. While both characterizations of desire remain product focused, relevant insight is drawn from respondents' comments on the manifestation of addictive tendencies resultant from acting on initial desires. Such expressions were seen for both individuals who are possession- or access-focused, illustrating the fundamental role desire plays in the development of compulsive behaviors.

From an complementary perspective, Foddy and Savulescu (2007) characterize desires involved in impulsive and compulsive behaviors in three distinct ways such that they (a) are especially strong, (b) occur in a particular context "that triggers the