

## Social Shopping Motivations of Impulsive and Compulsive Buying Behaviors

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### ABSTRACT

**Purpose:** The study aimed to examine the causal relationship between social influences and impulsive buying behavior & compulsive buying behavior in context of fashion shopping.

**Methodology/Design:** Questionnaire was administered to 372 young consumers. A structural equation model using AMOS 22 was analyzed utilizing maximum likelihood method.

**Findings:** Informational influences, normative influences, and risk towards fashion, social comparison orientation and social shopping motivations had significant relationship with impulsive buying. Social risk towards fashion did not encourage social shopping motivation and social shopping motivations proved to be significant predictor of impulsive and compulsive buying.

**Originality/Value:** Study is amongst the very first to investigate social influences of impulsive and compulsive buying behavior in a developing economy.

**Implication:** Theoretical and practical implications are discussed along with future recommendations.

**Limitations:** This study was limited to university students of one city of Pakistan and to fashion products..

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### INTRODUCTION

Consumer buying process may be categorized into three specific behaviors. These behaviors are rational, impulsive and compulsive buying behaviors (impulsive disorder) (LaRose, 2001; Kwak et al., 2004). Compulsive buying as an idea has been defined as a buying behavior that is continuous and repetitive and it is stimulated in result of some negative feelings or events (Faber & O' Guinn, 1992). Compulsive purchasing leads

to acquisition of quantities that are either not required or not affordable (Hoyer & MacInnis, 2007). Compulsive buying behavior is generated to counter negative feelings like stress, anxiety or depression but in a long run this counter behavior turns into a detrimental behavior for the consumer and society (Edwards, 1993). Therefore, development of insights into this problematic behavior is essential for the sake of providing guidelines to society and consumer.

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Some consumers are very conscious about their purchasing. They compare it with their society (Attiq & Azam, 2015; Moon, Attiq & Rasool, 2015). They are more likely be pressurized by peer groups, friends and family. In consumer and societal psychology, the phenomenon of pressure adaptation from group is known as social influence (Goldsmith & Clark, 2008). Social influences are considered very important aspect of consumer's purchasing behavior and several marketing scholars have exerted enormous efforts to examine effects of these social influences (Dholakia & Talukdar, 2004). There are several social factors that may motivate a consumer to shop.

According to social learning theory (Bandura, 2001), social and cultural influences have a significant impact on the way in which people buy impulsively or compulsively (Vohs & Faber, 2007). Shopping behavior endorsed by society psychologically gratifies a consumer and make him/her socially acceptable (Black, 2007). These social motives may result in formation of impulsive buying behavior and compulsive buying behavior and are concern of inquiry in this research.

In collectivist cultures, it is argued that people consider shopping as a way to socialize and familiarize with other people (Lee & Kacen, 2008). Impulsive and compulsive buying behavior has been majorly a topic of discussion in individualistic cultures (Attiq & Azam, 2012). Social perspective of compulsive buying behavior is required to be probed in different cultures because there is a huge difference between individualistic and collectivist culture (Kukar-Kinney et al., 2009). After deeply studying the literature on consumer's irregular behaviors i.e. impulsive buying behavior and compulsive buying behavior and their relevance to social factors, this study aimed at achieving the following objectives to bridge identified gap in this area of research. To investigate the

relationship of social influences and irrational behaviors and to investigate the relationship of impulsive buying behavior (not impulsiveness) and compulsive buying behavior.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Compulsive Buying Behavior

Compulsive buying as an idea has been defined in plethora of literature as "a buying behavior that is continuous and repetitive and it is stimulated in result of some negative feelings or events" (Edwards, 1993, p. 70). The concept of compulsive buying has been theorized as a response to the void created in the life of the people. People try to fill the void and lack in the life through buying of material possession and through compulsive buying. This spending through compulsive buying grants the individuals power and control over life (Moon, Attiq & Rasool, 2015 a). Negative feelings in the life of people such as boredom and stress also cause anxiety. People try to address the anxiety through compulsive buying. Through this compulsive buying, people tend to grant meaning to their life (Kukar-Kinney et al., 2009). It can be concluded that compulsive buying is used to alleviate the negative feelings which may afflict people (Faber & O'Guinn, 1992). It can be concluded that people are motivated by a very strong and irresistible urge to engage in compulsive buying (Yurchisin & Johnson, 2004).

### Impulsive Buying Behavior

"Impulsive buying is an unintentional behavior that involves prompt decision making and propensity of acquiring the product immediately" (Rook & Gardner, 1993). Han et al (1991) introduced the term fashion oriented impulsive buying synonymizing suggestion impulse buying. Impulsive buying behavior and compulsive buying behavior are considered irrational

behaviors (LaRose, 2001). Impulsive buying behavior and compulsive buying behavior are difficult to distinguish all together based on their consequences. Both these behaviors result in excessive, unnecessary and unwanted purchases that, in turn, lead to damaging penalties (Moon, Hassan & Attiq, 2015, 2015a; Xiao & Nicholson, 2013). Products acquired in result of these behaviors are usually same products like electronic apparatus and apparel products. Both of these behaviors are caused by lack of strength of will and lack of self-control, which are categorized as personality disorder (Kwak et al. 2006). Therefore, we assume that impulsive buying would result in compulsive buying behavior.

H<sub>1</sub>: Impulsive buying behavior has a significant influence on compulsive buying behavior.

### **Social Shopping Motivation**

Shopping motivation is defined as the internal force that derives a consumer to shop or buy. Shopping motivations are categorized into two forms of physiological needs of consumer i.e. personal and social (Moon et al., 2017; Tauber, 1972). Personal motive (novelty seeking, self-satisfaction, browsing) and social motives (interaction with people) may be experienced by a consumer during a shopping trip. Satisfaction, amusement and pleasure extracted from buying products while socializing with peer groups, friends and family members is known as social shopping motivation (Arnold & Reynolds, 2003). Shopping can be more than a product acquiring activity for people who suffer isolation, loneliness, boredom or depression (Moon, Hassan & Attiq, 2015a; Ha & Jang, 2013). Shopping is a social activity for disturbed people. When consumers feel low or irritated, they go for shopping and make unplanned and irrational purchases. Doing so relieves them for some time (Ridgway et al. 2008). Therefore, we assume that

social shopping motivation triggers irrational buying behavior.

H<sub>2</sub>: Social Shopping motivation has a significant influence on impulsive buying behavior.

H<sub>3</sub>: Social Shopping motivation has a significant influence on compulsive buying behavior.

### **Susceptibility to Interpersonal Influence**

Consumer susceptibility is known as consumer's vulnerability or defenselessness. Consumer susceptibility to interpersonal influences is known as consumer's vulnerability or defenselessness to his interpersonal influences. Interpersonal influences are composed of two dimensions i.e. informative and normative influences (Cheng, Chuang, Wang & Kug, 2013). Tendency to believe information gathered from others to be precise reality is known as informational influence (Moon, Habib & Attiq, 2015; Goldsmith & Clark, 2008). Susceptibility to normative influence is known as the desire of a consumer to develop consistent beliefs views and specifications of buying decisions with others. These consumers want to be recognized and enhance their image, so they are more likely to become impulsive and compulsive purchasers (Bearden, Netemeyer, & Teel 1989; Halepete, Littrell & Park, 2009). Consumers with high susceptibility to normative influence are more brand conscious than people with low susceptibility. They usually have impulsive or compulsive tendencies (Lysonski & Durvasula, 2013). Literature provides that interpersonal influences are very significant in shaping up buying behaviors of teenagers, specifically, irrational behaviors (Liu & Laird, 2008). Interpersonal influences of a consumer have an immediate and significant impact on consumers buying behavior, as consumers tend to rely on their normative and informative beliefs (Hale, 2003). The acceptance or rejection of a consumer's particular buying behavior by his/her

reference group (i.e. colleagues, friends and family) puts consumer into huge pressure to indulge into a behavior that aligns consumer with reference group. That is why normative beliefs are considered strong interpreter of consumer buying behavior (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2005; Crespo & Bosque, 2010). Therefore, we proposed that interpersonal influences develop shopping motivations and results in irrational purchasing.

H4: Susceptibility to informative influence has a significant influence on social shopping motivation.

H5: Susceptibility to informative influence has a significant influence on impulsive buying behavior.

H6: Susceptibility to informative influence has a significant influence on compulsive buying behavior.

H7: Susceptibility to normative influence has a significant influence on social shopping motivation.

H8: Susceptibility to normative influence has a significant influence on impulsive buying behavior.

H9: Susceptibility to normative influence has a significant influence on compulsive buying behavior.

#### **Social Risk towards Fashion**

An individual's opinion regarding a fashion product or service being disapproved by other people (Society) is known as social risk towards fashion (Attiq & Azam, 2014; Dowling & Staelin, 1994). Having information related to new fashions, styles and prevailing trends motivates an individual to shop. To have latest information about newest trends in fashion is important for a consumer to go for shopping (Jointer, Brown & Kistner, 2014). Social risk towards fashion is the

uncertainty of a consumer that whether fashion products he/she purchases are going to accepted or not (Song, Hwang, Kim & Kwak, 2011). This uncertainty or risk carries anxieties and stresses along with it. We implied that these stresses and anxieties might motivate a consumer to indulge in excessive and repetitive shopping i.e. impulsive and compulsive buying.

H10: Social risk towards fashion has a significant influence on social shopping motivation.

H11: Social risk towards fashion has a significant influence on impulsive buying behavior.

H12: Social risk towards fashion has a significant influence on compulsive buying behavior.

#### **Social Comparison Orientation**

Social comparison orientation is the extent of a person's involvement in the process comparing him/her with others in the society (Dameyasani & Abraham, 2013). It is universally acknowledged that people compare themselves with others but the inclination of this social comparison varies. Some people are more likely to indulge in social comparison and resultantly require more social connections (Moon, Hassan & Attiq, 2015b; Gibbons & Buunk, 1999). This comparison may be undertaken in two ways i.e. downward and upward comparison (Suls & Wheeler, 2002). In upward comparison, people make their comparisons with people who are superior to them and in downward comparison they compare themselves with people who are of low standards. impulsive and compulsive buying.

H10: Social risk towards fashion has a significant influence on social shopping motivation.

H11: Social risk towards fashion has a significant influence on impulsive buying behavior.

H<sub>12</sub>: Social risk towards fashion has a significant influence on compulsive buying behavior.

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urge motivates them to purchase extra, unplanned and unnecessary items. This leads them to demonstrate impulsive and/or compulsive buying behavior.

H<sub>13</sub>: Social comparison orientation has a significant influence on social shopping motivation.

H<sub>14</sub>: Social comparison orientation has a significant influence on impulsive buying behavior.

H<sub>15</sub>: Social comparison orientation has a significant influence on compulsive buying behavior.

**Theoretical Framework**

Social learning theory suggests that environmental factors work as a stimulus to influence behavior (Bandura, 2001). To study the social learning process of an individual from the behavioral perspective, few models were developed. Stimulus response model (Hull, 1951) provides us with understanding of behavior development process. Specific stimuli’s and their respective responses are the core focus of this model. We base our theoretical model on S-R model.

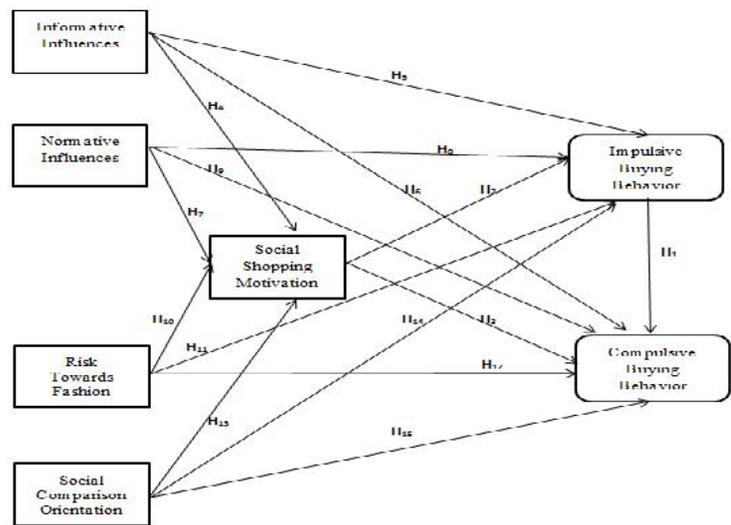


Figure 1: Theoretical Framework

## METHODOLOGY

Sample of this study was 372 young consumer of Islamabad. Reason behind selecting young consumers as population for this study is to understand young consumer's consumption patterns at present and forecast how they are likely to shape up in future. Convenient sampling technique was used in this study for collection of data. Pakistan is not an advance country as far as research is concerned. To the best of our knowledge, there are no consumer data bases available in the country at the moment. So it was impossible for us to go for probability sampling method.

Data was collected through survey self-administered questionnaire adopted from literature on five point Likert scale (1=strongly disagree, 5= strongly agree). Questionnaires were circulated among young consumers in universities, shopping malls, bazaars and homes in Islamabad, Pakistan during the months of June and July 2016. Questionnaire constituted 43 items in total (including demographic information). Consumers were asked to express their opinions relating to fashion products.

### Measures

Compulsive buying behavior (CBB) was measured on 13 item scale developed by Edwards (1993). We measured impulsive buying behavior (IBB) with 12 items (Han et al, 1991). 3 items of social shopping motivation (SM) by Arnold & Reynolds, (2003), 3 items of susceptibility to informative influences (SII) (Bearden et al. 1989), 3 items of susceptibility to informative influences (SNI) (Bearden et al.1989), 3 items of social risk towards fashion (SRF) (Halepete et al.,2009) and 6 items of social comparison orientation (SCO) (Gibbons & Buunk, 1999).

## DATA ANALYSIS

Two-step procedure was used to conduct structural equation modelling (SEM) in AMOS 22. We conducted confirmatory factor analysis for reliability and validity and for hypothesis testing, we used structural model analysis.

### Sample Demographics

Sample of 372 young consumers consisted of 187 (50.3 %) male respondents and 191 (51.3%) consumers fit in to age group of 18 to 22. Out of 372 respondents, 166 (44.6%) had bachelors education while income profile of the sample indicated that 89 (23%) respondents had the income ranging from rupees 1 to 10000, 148 (39.8%) were earning rupees 10000 to 20000, 94 (25.3) were earning rupees 20000 to 30000 and 41 (11%) were earning more than rupees 30000.

### Descriptive Statistics

To analyze the assumption of normality we utilized two most recommended measures of normality i.e. skewness and kurtosis. Skewness is a measure of symmetry of a distribution and kurtosis measure "peakedness" of distribution.

In social sciences, for data to be normally distributed, Skewness and kurtosis must fall within the range from -2 to +2 (Cameron, 2004). In the following table, all measurement scales are described in terms of their respective ranges of Mean, Standard Deviation, Skewness & kurtosis.

### Structural Equation Modeling

#### Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Confirmatory factor analysis was conducted for confirming the measurement model with seven latent variables (Compulsive buying behavior (CBB), impulsive buying behavior (IBB), social shopping motivations (SM), susceptibility to informative influences (SII), susceptibility to normative influences (SNI), social risk towards

**Table 1. Descriptive Statistics (N=372)**

Code	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
CBB	4.25-4.32	0.67-0.76	-0.73-1.10	0.32-2.39
IBB	3.62-4.29	0.65-1.08	-0.55-0.75	-0.13-1.34
SM	3.24-3.34	1.15-1.21	-0.03-0.45	-0.58-0.87
SII	3.44-3.56	1.08-1.23	-0.55-0.61	-0.13-0.73
SNI	3.38-3.72	1.09-1.13	-0.46-0.81	-0.06-0.48
SRF	3.60-3.76	1.04-1.08	-0.54-0.73	-0.37-0.05
SCO	3.36-3.69	0.97-1.15	-0.40-0.59	-0.16-0.56

**Notes:** CBB=Compulsive Buying Behavior, IBB=Impulsive Buying Behavior, SM=Social Shopping Motivations, SII=Susceptibility To Informative Influences, SNI=Susceptibility To Normative Influences, SRF=Social Risk Towards Fashion, SCO=Social Comparison Orientation

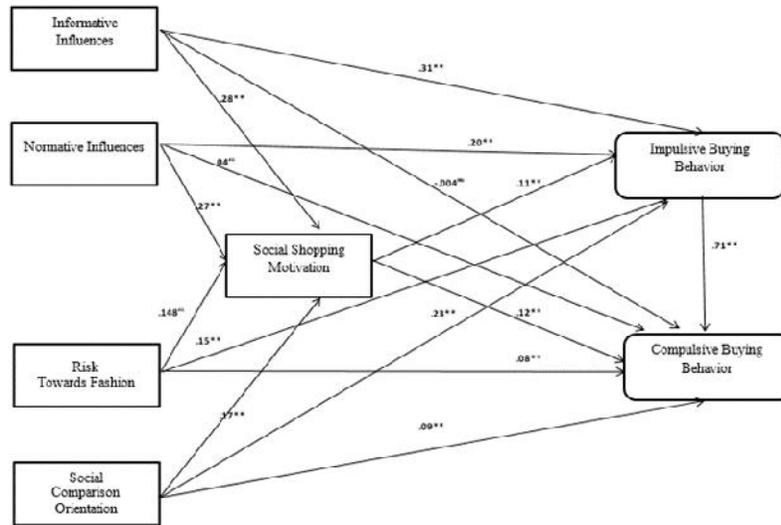
fashion (SRF) and (SCI) social comparison information) and 43 observed variables.

A series of confirmatory factor analysis and detailed Fit CMIN/DF=1.52) for initial measurement model and to improve the fitness of measurement testing of measurement model was (Kline, 2011). Statistic indicated a non-optimal fit that is; (RMSEA0.04, AGFI=0.80, GFI=0.80, CFI=0.93 and model, models was re-specified by identifying and eliminating items with factor loadings < 0.7 and square multiple correlation (SMC) < 0.2. The values of five recommended fit statistics for the re-specified measurement model were RMSEA = 0.03; AGFI = 0.90; GFI = 0.90;

CFI = 0.95; CMIN/DF = 1.45. Table 2 indicates inter item reliability (> 0.7), convergent (CR > AVE 0.5) and discriminant validity (AVE 0.5) for the measurement model.

**Structural Model**

Structural model was composed of the mean score of seven latent variables i.e. (SM, SII, SNI, SRF, SCO, IBB and CBB). We specified four (SII, SNI, SRF and SCO) out of seven latent variables as exogenous latent variables and three latent variables i.e. SM, IBB and CBB were specified as endogenous latent variables. Model fit indices for final structural model were estimated as RMSEA = 0.01, AGFI = 0.98, GFI = 0.99, CFI = 0.99 and CMIN/DF = 1.00. Fit



**Figure 2: Structural Model**

statistics for structural model indicated a best fit so we moved to testing of hypothesis.

### Hypothesis Testing

In structural model analysis, the value of standardized regression ( $H_1: = 0.71, p < 0.01$ ) indicated a significant and positive relationship between IBB and CBB. Significant and positive relationships were found between SM & IBB ( $H_2: = 0.11, p < 0.01$ ), SM & CBB ( $H_3: = 0.12, p < 0.01$ ), SII & SM ( $H_4: = 0.28, p < 0.01$ ), SII & IBB ( $H_5: = 0.31, p < 0.01$ ), SNI & SM ( $H_7: = 0.27, p < 0.01$ ), SNI & IBB ( $H_8: = 0.20, p < 0.01$ ), SRF & IBB ( $H_{11}: = 0.15, p < 0.01$ ), SRF & CBB ( $H_{12}: = 0.08, p < 0.01$ ), SCO & SM ( $H_{13}: = 0.17, p < 0.01$ ), SCO & IBB ( $H_{14}: = 0.23, p < 0.01$ ) and SCO & CBB ( $H_{15}: = 0.09, p < 0.01$ ). Structural model analysis indicated an insignificant relationship between SII & CBB, SNI & CBB and SRF & CBB. Hence we rejected hypothesis  $H_6, H_9$  and  $H_{10}$ .

### DISCUSSION

This study was conducted to identify the relationship of social influences i.e. susceptibility to interpersonal influences, social shopping motivation, social comparison orientation and social risk towards fashion with consumer irregular buying behaviors i.e. impulsive and compulsive buying behavior. This study explored the relationship between impulsive buying behavior and compulsive buying behavior. Data was collected from 372 consumers of different backgrounds in Pakistan. Demographic profile of sample consumers of this study exhibited the dominance of young educated consumers. Edwards (1993) developed a continuum for measuring the level of compulsive buying of consumers. She suggested that consumers having mean score on compulsive buying scale ranging from 0.00 to 0.99 were non compulsive consumers. Consumers having mean score ranging from 1.00 to 1.99 were recreational

purchasers, from 2.00 to 2.99 were borderline compulsive buyers, from 3.00 to 3.99 were compulsive buyers and from 4.00 to 4.99 were addictive buyers. Results of this study indicated that first two levels of compulsive buying i.e. non compulsive buyers and recreational buyers were not found in respondents. Respondents of this study were high on compulsive buying level. This was a very unique finding and to the best of our knowledge we have no study conducted on general consumers who had higher compulsive buying levels.

Findings of this research suggested that social shopping motivations had a significant and positive impact on impulsive and compulsive buying behavior. Results implied that the consumers who shop to socialize exhibited impulsive and compulsive buying behavior. When consumers are feeling low, disturbed or irritated go for shopping and make unplanned and irrational purchases (Ridgway et al., 2008).

Susceptibility to interpersonal influences caused significant variations in formation of social shopping motivations and impulsive buying behavior of a person whereas it did not relate to compulsive buying behavior. Consumers who took information from others (friends family peer groups) to be precised reality and tend to conform to the expectations of their peer groups family members and friends expectations put themselves into constant pressure and stress (Hale, 2003) and resultantly feel motivated to shop (Hale, 2003). To alienate this stress and pressure generated from interpersonal influences, consumer exhibited impulsive buying behavior. Results of the study were consistent with the previous studies (e.g. Fishbein & Ajzen, 2005; Crespo & Bosque, 2010). Consumers who were not confident of their shopping of fashion products or style did not feel motivated to shop, according to the results of our study. However, when they went for shopping they exhibit impulsive and compulsive shopping. Social risk towards fashion

**Table 2. Reliability, Validity and Correlation Analysis (N=372)**

	Mean	SD	CR	AVE	SM	SII	SNI	SRF	SCO	IBB	CBB	
<b>SM</b>	3.2	0.98	0.79	0.80	0.66	1						
<b>SII</b>	3.51	0.95	0.76	0.80	0.66	.53**	1					
<b>SNI</b>	3.54	0.91	0.75	0.80	0.66	.52**	.59**	1				
<b>SRF</b>	3.63	0.92	0.80	0.80	0.66	.35**	.41**	.56**	1			
<b>SCO</b>	3.54	0.75	0.77	0.90	0.50	.46**	.52**	.54**	.59**	1		
<b>IBB</b>	4.25	0.47	0.89	0.90	0.56	.50**	.66**	.64**	.55**	.60**	1	
<b>CBB</b>	4.28	0.50	0.92	0.93	0.50	.57**	.62**	.64**	.58**	.63**	.73**	1

**Notes:** \*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed), SD= Standard Deviation, = Cronbach's Alpha, CR=Composite Reliability, AVE= Average Variance Extracted, CBB=Compulsive Buying Behavior, IBB=Impulsive Buying Behavior, SM=Social Shopping Motivations, SII=Susceptibility To Informative Influences, SNI=Susceptibility To Normative Influences, SRF=Social Risk Towards Fashion, SCO=Social Comparison Orientation

is the uncertainty of a consumer that whether fashion products he/she purchases are going to accepted or not. This uncertainty or risk carries anxieties and stresses along with it. These stresses and anxieties motivate a consumer to indulge in excessive and repetitive shopping that are symptoms of impulsive and compulsive buying behaviors (Halepete et al., 2009).

Consumers who socially compare themselves with others were found to be motivated for shopping in this study. Consumers undertaking upward social comparison suffer from low esteem; low self-efficacy, stress and pressure to be recognized and resultantly indulge in shopping. This tendency of consumers to socially compare themselves with others generates an urge to shop so that they might satisfy themselves by meeting social standards. This urge motivates them to go for shopping (Xiao & Nicholson, 2013).

Similar findings were yielded by Ogden and Venkat (2001) in a study conducted in Japan. Findings also signaled that when consumers go to shop they exhibited impulsive and compulsive behavior as they tend to purchase extra, unplanned and unnecessary items. Social comparison orientation is a cause of significant variations in consumer behavior i.e. impulsive and compulsive buying behavior (Schneider & Schupp, 2014).

Major contributions of this research included development of a theoretical model of impulsive and compulsive buying behavior based on social influences of consumers. This study employed and verified the impact of impulsive buying behavior (not impulsiveness) stimulated by social factors, on compulsive buying behavior. Results of this study provided us with a greater and enhanced understanding of social perspective of impulsive and compulsive buying behavior. Social learning theory argued that social influences of individual may result or generate psychological responses.

This study provided evidence for social learning theory as social influences proved to be efficient predictors of impulsive and compulsive buying behavior. On the basis of social influences employed in this study, retailers and marketers may categorize consumer into different social segments. Marketers may develop their campaigns that emphasize on social factors. Results imply that consumers having high regards for their social influences are more likely to behave impulsively and compulsively. Policy makers may devise strategies to counter these behavioral provoking initiatives and campaigns for the welfare of the consumer and society. In this research, social factors that make consumers vulnerable to this sort of behaviors were highlighted. Consumers may use the results of this study to evaluate themselves and devise counter mechanism.

This research explored the structural relationship between social influences and compulsive buying behavior of Pakistani consumers. Social influences included social shopping motivation, susceptibility to interpersonal influences, social risk towards fashion and social comparison orientation. Findings of this study suggested that compulsive buying behavior is generated due to social shopping motivation and impulsive buying behavior. Social shopping motivations and other social influences strongly predicted impulsive buying behavior. Social influences play vital role in formation of compulsive buying behavior of young Pakistani consumers.

Sample size of this study was limited. A larger representative sample size would be more effective to generalize the results of the study. Sample of the study was composed of young consumers. Other categories of consumers should be analyzed for generalizability of results. To further generalize the result, the model used in this study may be replicated. A longitudinal study may be conducted as this was a cross sectional study. We assessed impulsive and compulsive behavior of consumers in fashion related products. These behaviors may be judged in other product categories like groceries, electronics, online purchasing and eatables.

To further enrich the purposed model, other variables may also be included to assess impulsive and compulsive buying behavior. Differences in impulsive and compulsive buying behavior on the bases of gender, age, income etc may also be the focus of further investigation.

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