

# **The Relationship between Materialistic Values, Compulsive Buying and Fear of Negative Evaluation**

*A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment for the degree of*

**MASTERS OF ARTS IN  
COUNSELLING PSYCHOLOGY**



**Submitted by:**

**Nandini Bhambri**

**862302040**

**Under the Supervision of**

**Dr Ipshita Chaudhary**

**Assistant Professor**

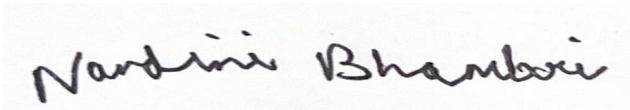
**Thapar School of Liberal Arts and Sciences (TSLAS)**

**Thapar Institute of Engineering and Technology, Patiala**

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## CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the thesis entitled “ **The Relationship between Materialistic Values, Compulsive Buying and Fear of Negative Evaluation**” being submitted in partial fulfilment of requirements for the award of degree of **Masters of Arts in Counselling Psychology**, submitted in **Thapar School of liberal Arts and Sciences (TSLAS), Thapar Institute of Engineering and Technology, Patiala** is bonafied work carried out under the supervision of Dr Ipshita Chaudhary, Assistant Professor, Thapar School of Liberal Arts and Sciences, Thapar Institute of Engineering and Technology, Patiala and that no part of this project has been submitted for the award of any other degree.



**Nandini Bhambri**

**This is to certify that the above statement made by the student concerned is correct and true to the best of the knowledge.**



**Dr Ipshita Chaudhary**

**Assistant Professor**

**TSLAS, Thapar Institute of Engineering and Technology, Patiala**

## DECLARATION

I, Nandini Bhambri (862302040) student of M.A. Psychology (2023-2025), declare that the work being presented in the thesis entitled, “**The Relationship between Materialistic Values, Compulsive Buying and Fear of Negative Evaluation**” in the partial fulfilment of the degree of **Masters of Arts in Psychology, Thapar School of Liberal Arts and Sciences, Thapar Institute of Engineering & Technology, Patiala**, is an original record of my own research work carried out under the guidance and supervision of Dr. Ipshita Chaudhary, Assistant Professor, Thapar School of Liberal Arts and Sciences, Thapar Institute of Engineering & Technology, Patiala. The content in the dissertation has not been submitted to any other university or institute for the award of any other degree.

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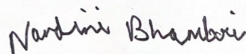
Place: Patiala



**Dr Ipshita Chaudhary**

**Assistant Professor**

**TSLAS, Thapar Institute of Engineering and Technology, Patiala**



**Nandini Bhambri**

**862302040**

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## **ABSTRACT**

This study explores the psychological predictors of compulsive buying behavior (CBB), focusing on materialistic values and fear of negative evaluation (FNE) across two demographic groups—university students and working adults. Drawing from existing theoretical frameworks on emotional regulation, social anxiety, and consumer behavior, two correlational studies were conducted using standardized psychometric instruments: the Materialistic Values Scale (MVS), Brief Fear of Negative Evaluation Scale (BFNE), and the Compulsive Buying Scales (CBS). The Study 1, involving 150 working adults, examined the relationship between self-esteem, FNE, and CBB. Results showed that FNE was a significant predictor of compulsive buying, whereas self-esteem had a weaker predictive value. Study 2, conducted among 105 university students, found that materialistic values—especially the dimension of success—were significant predictors of compulsive buying behavior, while FNE was not a significant predictor in this group. Regression analyses revealed that different psychological constructs drive compulsive buying across age and occupational groups, with FNE more relevant for working individuals and materialistic values more impactful for students. The findings underscore the multifaceted nature of compulsive buying and suggest the need for differentiated intervention strategies. These could include emotional regulation training, value reorientation programs, and social anxiety reduction techniques. The study highlights the relevance of demographic factors in understanding consumer vulnerabilities and calls for context-sensitive mental health and consumer education interventions.

Keywords: Self Esteem, consumer behaviour, materialism

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# CHAPTER-1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1. COMPULSIVE BUYING

Emotional Regulation Deficit Compulsive buying is mostly caused by emotional control deficits since many people turn to shopping as a means of emotional release from stress, anxiety, or despair (Ridgway, et al., 2008). People who find it difficult to control their emotions in a sensible way may resort to outside sources of transient solace; shopping offers a quick but transitory fulfillment. Buying anything can set off a dopamine release, producing a brief sensation of pleasure and a means of escape from uncomfortable feelings. This solace is fleeting, though, and people find themselves in a cycle of constantly shopping to ease emotional pain. Reiterating the very discomfort this maladaptive coping strategy was designed to alleviate, over time it can lead to financial difficulties, guilt, and degraded emotional well-being.

#### 1.1 Factors Affecting Compulsive Buying

##### 1.1.1 Poor self-control-

Another important component of compulsive shopping behavior is low self-control since people who lack impulse control sometimes find it difficult to resist the urge of acquiring pointless goods. Those with poor self-control often act out of instant gratification instead of thinking through long-term effects, which results in regular and excessive expenditure. Environments meant to promote consumption, such online shopping sites, sales campaigns, and easy credit access, can sometimes intensify this impulsiveness. The inability to postpone gratification makes people more prone to compulsive purchase since they give short-term pleasure top priority over financial stability. They might so develop debt, feel regret, and struggle with their money, so strengthening a negative cycle of careless expenditure.

##### 1.1.2 Cultural and Social Pressures-

Consumer behavior is greatly shaped by society and cultural forces, which also usually inspire the need to buy more. Many societies link material goods with success, status, and happiness, therefore fostering an environment where people feel under pressure to fit consumerist values. Social media channels magnify these demands even further by continually presenting designer items, affluent lifestyles, and well chosen success photos,

which makes people feel inferior if they fall short of such criteria. Furthermore, by linking products with emotions of belonging, attractiveness, or self-worth, advertising techniques regularly take advantage of psychological weaknesses. People may thus participate in compulsive shopping not out of need but rather as a form of social affirmation, which results in too high expenditure and financial stress.

## Cognitive Deceptions

Compulsive purchase behavior is greatly influenced by cognitive distortions—that is, illogical thought patterns. People could have false ideas that buying things will improve their social position, self-esteem, or degree of enjoyment. For instance, individuals might think that buying new clothes will quickly increase their confidence or that owning luxury items will make them more appreciated. These erroneous ideas encourage people to develop psychological dependence on buying as a means of self-worth, which drives them to overspend in trying to meet social or emotional demands. But the gratification from these purchases is usually ephemeral, and when the anticipated bliss does not show up, people may feel driven to buy even more to get that transitory gratification. This loop makes it tough for people to break free from the habit and supports obsessive purchase impulses. [Roberts, et al., 2014).

### **1.2 Buying compulsively vs. Buying impulsively**

Although they are both forms of overspending, obsessive buying and impulsive buying have different underlying causes, patterns, and psychological effects. Often employed as a coping strategy for emotional pain like anxiety, despair, or low self-esteem, obsessive shopping is a repeating and uncontrollable impulse to shop. People continue this conduct even if they are aware of the detrimental emotional and financial effects. Using their high psychological urge to shop as a kind of emotional management instead of meeting a real need or desire for a product, obsessive purchasers typically make advance plans for their purchases. Compulsive shopping over time can cause emotional pain, financial problems, and souring of relationships.

On the other hand, impulsive buying—usually motivated by outside events like sales campaigns, appealing packaging, or sudden needs—is a spontaneous, unplanned decision to acquire an item. Though their behavior is not motivated by ongoing psychological discomfort, impulse purchasers do not always have a strong emotional commitment to purchasing. Rather, frequently without thinking through the long-term effects, they make snap judgments based on instant enjoyment. Although occasionally remorse or overspending results from impulsive

buying, it does not usually lead to a chronic, compulsive tendency. The two differ mostly in their frequency and psychological motivation: although impulsive buying is a transient, momentary response to outside stimuli, compulsive buying is a long-term behavioral pattern associated to emotional control problems. While both can lead to financial problems, compulsive buying is more serious and need for therapy to deal with the psychological roots. Developing good plans to control spending patterns and advance financial and emotional well-being depends on an awareness of this difference. ( Shemeis, et al., 2021).

## **2. Fear of Negative Evaluation (FNE)**

Fear of Negative Evaluation (FNE) refers to the anxiety experienced when one believes they are being judged negatively by others. (Watson & Friend, 1969).

### **2.1 Factors affecting FNE**

#### **Elements Driving Negative Evaluation (FNE)**

Fear of Negative Evaluation (FNE) results from several psychological and environmental factors that mold a person's view of social assessment. Low self-confidence is one major factor; people who have poor self-assurance often worry about others evaluating or criticizing them. People who lack confidence in their looks or ability are more receptive to outside opinions, which increases anxiety in social events. This anxiety might show itself as extreme self-consciousness, trouble communicating ideas, and avoidance of situations where one could feel under close inspection. Perfectionism is another key influence since it motivates people to keep a perfect image in order to evade criticism. Perfectionists worry too much about making mistakes that could damage their reputation and set too high expectations for themselves. Because they continually seek affirmation and approval from others, this higher self-expectation makes them more susceptible to FNE. Anxiety, tension, and avoidance of circumstances whereby one can fail or fall short of perfection might result from a fear of being judged as inadequate. Furthermore very important for the development of FNE are early events. People who had rigorous parenting, bullying, or social rejection in childhood are more likely to grow to have a great dread of being evaluated. Strict or too critical parents could create a notion among their children that self-worth depends on fulfilling high standards, which causes intense fear about social acceptance. Likewise, experiences of bullying or rejection might cause people to become extremely sensitive to the judgments of others, therefore supporting their dread of unfavorable

appraisal and increasing their vulnerability to social anxiety in adulthood. (Watson & Friend, 1969).

FNE can have extreme effects on social functioning and emotional well-being. One main result is more social anxiety and avoidance behavior, in which people retreat from social events to reduce their chance of criticism. Fear of judgment could cause one to avoid public speaking, social events, or even small conversations, therefore restricting both personal and professional development. This avoidance can aggravate anxiety over time, so it becomes much more difficult to participate boldly in social situations. Higher sensitivity to compulsive shopping is also connected to FNE since people try to get acceptance by means of material objects. Those with FNE can think that possessing luxury goods, modern clothes, or high-status things will help them fit better in society. Shopping turns into a means of control for social anxiety since tangible objects are seen as a barrier against negative evaluation. When the expected acceptance does not materialize, this conduct might, however, lead to emotional turmoil and financial difficulty. Emotional pain and self-criticism are another important side effects of FNE since those who have a great fear of judgment are prone to too critical thoughts and self-evaluation. They could criticize themselves mercilessly for little errors, go back over social events in their heads, and believe others perceive them adversely. This loop of self-doubt can cause increased anxiety, despair, and low self-esteem, therefore aggravating their dread of social rejection (**Leary, 1983**).

### **3. Materialistic**

### **Values**

Though it is frequently discussed in psychological settings as "a value system that prioritizes material goods and acquisitions over social and emotional well-being," the WHO does not have a direct definition of materialism. Materialistic value refers to the emphasis placed on possessions as a means of happiness, status, or self-worth (Kasser, & Ryan, 1993).

#### **3.1 Factors Affecting Materialistic Values**

Different social, psychological, and financial variables that support the worth of objects help to form materialistic values. Consumer culture, in which commercials and social media continually propagate the belief that happiness, success, and social standing are connected to financial gain, is among the most important elements. Marketing techniques inspire want and

urgency, which helps people to assume that social acceptance depends on acquiring the newest things. Social media highlights well chosen lifestyles, which fuels materialism by allowing people to compare their belongings with those of peers or influencers, so fostering a lot of buying.

Furthermore very important in promoting materialistic attitudes is personal insecurity. Low self-esteem people may look to material goods for outside affirmation since they think that acquiring luxury goods or popular things will increase their value. Material items start to be a means of hiding fears and presenting a desired or successful image. But this short dependence on material validation is usually followed by a cycle of constant consumption in an effort to keep self-esteem (Kasser, & Ryan, 1993).

Materialistic tendencies are greatly influenced by the economic environment since financial stability or instability changes one's interaction with tangible objects. In countries where success is connected with riches, people from financially stable households may grow materialistic as a mirror of their position. On the other hand, those from financially precarious homes could see belongings as a sign of success and security, which would drive more attention on getting things. Economic difficulties can also drive materialism by causing a sense of deprivation that drives people to seek solace in buying objects even if it causes financial burden.(Belk, 1985).

#### **4. Relationship between CB, FNE and Materialistic Value**

Compulsive buying is a complex behavior influenced by a variety of psychological and social factors. Research indicates a notable connection between compulsive buying, fear of negative evaluation, and materialistic values (Dittmar, 2005).

##### **4.1 Fear of Negative Evaluation and Compulsive Buying**

Fear of negative evaluation, which involves anxiety about being judged negatively by others, plays a significant role in compulsive buying. Studies have shown that individuals with higher self-esteem are less likely to exhibit both fear of negative evaluation and compulsive buying tendencies. In contrast, heightened anxiety and fear of negative evaluation can contribute to impulsive buying tendencies, which in turn increase compulsive buying. It's been suggested that compulsive buying may be a coping mechanism for individuals seeking to alleviate anxiety related to social judgment. (Kyrios, et al., 2004).

#### r4.2 Materialistic Values and Compulsive Buying

Materialistic values, which emphasize the importance of acquiring possessions and wealth, are also linked to compulsive buying. Materialism has been identified as a predictor of compulsive buying behavior. The desire for material goods can drive individuals to engage in excessive purchasing as a means to achieve perceived social status or a sense of self-worth. (Dittmar, 2005).

#### 5 Rationale of the Study

Previous research on compulsive buying usually looks at materialism and fear of negative evaluation separately, sometimes even combined. Examining how these factors interact helps to create a more complete picture of what motivates compulsive purchasing. Most research originate from Western settings. Research in Indian or non-Western populations is scant empirical. The current study can culturally confirm these links and support consumer research and cross-cultural psychology. Often linked to compulsive shopping are mental hardship, financial pressure, and compromised functioning. Knowing the psychological elements such FNE helps mental health experts create focused treatments. Consumer education initiatives can include value reorientation techniques if materialistic ideals are shown to have a major impact on compulsive purchasing. This is particularly true for young people since it helps to stop hasty financial actions.

## Chapter 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

2

COMPULSIVE

SHOPPING

According to Lejoyeux et al., (2010), a defining trait of obsessive shoppers is their emphasis on the purchasing procedure above the obtained products. Usually, the bought things are unneeded and could be concealed or thrown away. A screening research projected that as many as 5% of adult Americans suffer from this drive. Among the negative effects of compulsive shopping include financial and legal issues, psychological suffering (including sadness and guilt), and relationship strife. The most often linked comorbidities are eating disorders and sadness.

Shemeis et al. (2021) found that Neuroticism greatly promotes Compulsive Buying; Extraversion and Conscientiousness both show notable adverse impacts. Agreeableness and Openness to Experience had no notable impact on Compulsive Buying. The findings indicated some mediation in the associations between Neuroticism, Extraversion, Conscientiousness, and Compulsive Buying with respect to the mediating function of Consumer Negative Emotions. On the other hand, Consumer Negative Emotions completely mediated the link between Openness to Experience and Compulsive Buying. The link between Agreeableness and Compulsive Buying showed no mediation influence, though.

Revealed by Harnish & Bridges (2014), both irrational beliefs and materialism were notably linked to compulsive purchasing and acted as forecasters of this activity. Moreover, only those with great degrees of narcissism showed the link between illogical ideas and compulsive purchasing. Examining the subscales of the **\*\*Irrational Beliefs Inventory\*\*** revealed **\*\*Problem Avoidance\*\*** and **\*\*Rigidity\*\*** as the only ones forecasting compulsive purchase. Compared to normal consumers, those who indulge in compulsive shopping are more likely to show compulsivity as a personality trait, have poorer self-esteem, and show a greater inclination toward fantasy,

According to Thomas et al. (1989). For these people, the main drive is the psychological pleasure and satisfaction obtained from the buying activity itself, rather than the ownership or usage of the acquired goods. But, obsessive shopping can have major repercussions including

major debt, increased anxiety and anger, a sense of loss of control, and family strife. Based on the theory of obsessive-compulsive spectrum disorders,

Ridgway et al. (2008) offers an enlarged conceptualization and a fresh tool for measuring consumers' inclination toward compulsive purchasing. Defined as a constant preoccupation with shopping, compulsive buying shows itself in repeated purchase actions and compromised impulse control. This approach combines aspects of both impulse-control and obsessive-compulsive diseases. The study creates a tool with a strong theoretical basis, good psychometric qualities, and wide applicability across general consumer populations by evaluating income-dependent results of compulsive buying apart from the main scale.

Often connected to emotional dysregulation, compulsive shopping is when people use shopping to deal with bad feelings such worry, sadness, or boredom. The act of buying can offer a fleeting feeling of relief or exhilaration, therefore supporting the compulsive habit. Trying to control emotions by purchasing can cause more emotional and financial problems.

Kemp and colleagues, (2021) Online shopping sites' accessibility and anonymity can intensify compulsive buying inclinations. Easy buying and less social signals in online transactions can lead to impulsive and uncontrolled purchases. Studies have shown that those with prior compulsive buying habits are especially susceptible to the appeal of internet shopping.

Müller and colleagues, (2015) A major predictor of compulsive shopping is impulsivity, defined as a propensity to act without deliberate thought. Driven by instant enjoyment rather than long-term considerations, those strong in impulsivity are more inclined to participate in unplanned and excessive buying. Environmental cues like sales promotions and advertising might exacerbate this impulsive behaviour.

Yurchisin and colleagues, (2010). Hedonic consumption, which stresses the experiential and emotional sides of purchase, can lead to obsessive shopping. For those who are prone to impulsivity and emotional dysregulation, the quest of pleasure and excitement through buying can turn into an addictive cycle. Hedonic goods' instant pleasure might support obsessive buying habits.

Arnold and Reynolds, (2003) Poor money management abilities and lack of financial knowledge might fuel obsessive purchasing habits. People who find it difficult to regulate their money may be more prone to hasty and uncontrolled buying, which could cause debt and

financial insecurity. Easy access to online payment systems and credit availability can help to aggravate these problems even further.

Roberts and Jones, (2001) Cultural elements including society values and conventions might shape obsessive purchase behavior. Cultures that emphasize materialism and material goods may show more obsessive buying. The focus on status and social recognition via material possessions might fuel too much buying.

Schroeder & Dugal, (1995). For people under stress, unpleasant feelings, or life challenges, compulsive buying can act as a maladaptive coping tool. Though it has long-term detrimental effects, shopping offers a momentary distraction or feeling of control that supports the activity.

O'Guinn, T. C., and Faber, R. J. (1989). Often, compulsive shopping runs parallel with other mental health issues including depression, anxiety disorders, and eating disorders. These underlying mental health problems underline the need of addressing mental well-being in treatment since they might aggravate or support compulsive buying habits.

McElroy et al. (1994) Studies indicate a possible hereditary tendency for compulsive shopping problem. Although more study is required to determine particular genes engaged, studies with twins have pointed to a hereditary aspect of the illness.

Jimenez-Murcia and colleagues, (2008) Neuroimaging research has uncovered variations in brain activity and neurotransmitter function in people with compulsive buying disorder. These neurological elements could help explain the impulsivity, reward-seeking behavior, and poor decision-making connected with the disease.

Potenza, 2006 Mitchell et al. claim Various treatment techniques have been applied to treat compulsive buying disorder, including cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT), psychotherapy, and medication,

according to Mitchell et al. (2008). Cognitive-behavioral therapy seeks to assist people find triggers, change negative thoughts and actions, and create better coping mechanisms.

## 2.1 Groups Effectuated

1. Younger People and Greater Susceptibility Fueled by Social Comparison and Materialistic Goals: Younger people are usually at a phase of identity development where social approval and external validation are of top priority. social media channels frequently show selected pictures of success and financial affluence, hence promoting social comparison and a feeling

of inadequacy should one not "keep up." Driven by materialistic goals, this might cause a closer connection between the fear of being adversely seen (not having the "right" belongings) and the will to have more. Valkenburg and colleagues (2017).

2 People with more fear of negative evaluation and the use of shopping as a coping tool: The acquisition of material possessions could be viewed by persons with a great fear of judgment as a means to "fit in," seek approval, or cover emotions of inadequacy. A purchase provides instant pleasure that can momentarily relieve social concerns and so support the behavior over term. Though it may be more noticeable in those already inclined to social anxiety, this is a psychological mechanism that crosses demographic boundaries. Alden and colleagues (2006).

3 People with Strong Materialistic Values and the Quest for External Validation Via Possessions: People with strong materialistic values may be more motivated to buy products to indicate their status or feel a sense of accomplishment in societies where material riches is often clearly displayed or linked with social standing, This might lead to a loop of requiring more to sustain or improve their perceived social status. Richins, M. L. & Dawson, S. 1992

4. Socioeconomic Elements and the Impact of Resource Access on Compulsive Purchasing The ease with which people might engage in compulsive buying can be affected by the availability of credit and the cultural acceptability of debt. Understanding the interaction between financial availability and psychological inclinations is absolutely vital in a location like Patiala, where consumption is expanding. Financial constraints may affect how the behavior is expressed, but they may not always cancel the underlying psychological drivers. Webley & Lea, 1993.

5. People with Lower Self-Esteem and the Use of Material Goods for Compensatory Reasons: where social standing and appearance can matter, people with lower self-esteem may feel more compelled to buy material goods to show an image of success or belonging. This can be a compensating technique whereby items are used to cover emotions of inadequacy or to seek social praise they do not feel they naturally possess. When self-esteem is weak, the need to "keep up" or seem successful can be especially intense. O'Cass, A., & Lim, K. 2002.

6. The Impact of Society Expectations and Gender Roles on Compulsive Buying where gender roles and expectations are usually clearly defined, it is interesting to think about how these may interact with the psychological factors of compulsive purchasing. Given the cultural background of Patiala, where gender roles and expectations are generally clearly established, it is interesting to think how these could interact with the psychological factors of compulsive

purchasing. Do certain cultural pressures on some genders to meet material standards or to use shopping as a social or emotional outlet? Knowing these subtleties will help to provide a more complete view of the group impacts. Faber and Christenson, 1996.

## 2.2 What causes it to happen?

The Interaction of Social Comparison, Identity Development, and Materialistic Influences: Why Younger People Are More Vulnerable Young people, especially teenagers and young adults, typically negotiate a vital stage of identity development where social acceptance and peer group membership are top priority. Increased sensitivity to social standards and a sharper awareness of how one is seen by others mark this developmental stage. Often promoting materialistic ideas and stressing the need of external indicators of success and social status, social media and marketing's widespread effect. Constant exposure to curated internet information and advertising can drive social comparison processes, in which people judge themselves against their peers and idealized online identities. During this time, the dread of negative assessment, which originates from a need to fit in and escape social exclusion, becomes more pronounced. Therefore, the purchase of material items could be seen as a way to gain social approval, improve self-esteem (at least momentarily), and indicate belonging within peer groups. This increases the connection between the anxiety of not possessing the "correct" belongings and the urge to participate in purchase activities, hence possibly causing compulsive shopping. Twenge, J. M., & Campbell, W. K. (2018). People with more fear of negative evaluation shop as a coping tool for two reasons: 2. Why People with Greater Fear of Negative Evaluation Use Shopping as a Coping Tool: People with increased anxiety of unfavorable judgment are extremely worried about being judged or condemned by others. For some, shopping becomes a main strategy; this underlying worry might cause the use of maladaptive coping strategies. Buying can temporarily divert attention from social concerns by allowing one to manage their immediate surroundings. Moreover, buying material items could be seen as a means to improve one's social image and lower the probability of unfavorable judgment. A purchase might provide instant pleasure that helps to temporarily offset emotions of inadequacy or social interaction-related anxiety. Rapee and Heimberg, 1997 3. The Pursuit of External Validation: Why Strong Materialistic Values Drive Compulsive Buying People with strong materialistic ideals may feel driven to buy things in societies where materialism is common and where conspicuous displays of money are usually linked with social standing in order to preserve or improve their perceived status. The idea that "more things = more

happiness" can cause an endless cycle of consumption in which every purchase is viewed as a move toward reaching a wanted degree of self-worth and social recognition. Belk (1985) 4. The Manifestation of Compulsive Buying Affected by Socioeconomic Factors: The capacity and the particular forms in which compulsive buying shows are much shaped by socioeconomic variables. People with more discretionary money and easier access to credit have more financial ability to make regular or bigger purchases motivated by their psychological desires. On the other hand, people with less financial means could feel the same psychological motivations (fear and materialism) but might be limited in their capacity to act on these urges. On the other hand, this could result in various kinds of compulsive behavior, like excessive browsing or the prioritization of cheaper but still unneeded things. T.B. Veblen (1899). 5. Why Lower Self-Esteem Might Cause Compensatory Compulsive Buying: People with low self-esteem usually battle sensations of inadequacy and a lack of self-value. To make up for these internal emotions, they can look for outside affirmation. Acquiring material goods can give a fleeting increase to self-esteem; they might be seen as indicators of success, status, or desirability. In this way, compulsive shopping is a maladaptive coping mechanism to fill an emotional vacuum and to seek belonging or acceptance they may not feel they have naturally. Baumeister and colleagues (2003). 6. The Effect of Gender Roles and Society Expectations on Compulsive Buying: Societal expectations and conventional gender roles can generate particular pressures and standards about spending that could affect the probability and expression of compulsive buying among several groups. For instance, in some cultures, women may feel more societal pressure to keep a particular look via clothing and cosmetic items, which could result higher rates of compulsive purchasing in these areas. Likewise, while the exact expression of compulsive shopping may vary, societal expectations about supporting a family could affect men's buying habits. Venkatesh, A. (1995).

## 2.3 NEGATIVE EVALUATION AND BUYING BEHAVIOUR

According to Roberts et al. (2014), FNE and SI completely mediate CSE's effect on compulsive purchasing. It emphasizes even more that those with high CSE only buy compulsively under circumstances of increased worry. Although high CSE always increases FNE and SI, these mediators only cause compulsive purchase at high anxiety levels.

Upward social comparison on SNSs was shown by Bin Gao et al. (2023) to positively forecast online compulsive purchasing; envy was a partial mediator in this link. Gratitude was shown to affect the relationship between upward social comparison and envy, therefore qualifying envy as a moderated mediator. In upward social comparisons, particularly, pupils with more thankfulness felt less jealousy than those with less. Compulsive purchase is one of the types of compulsive behavior linked to the fear of negative evaluation (FNE). Believing that material goods could improve their social standing or stop harsh judgments from others, those with high FNE may use buying as a way to relieve social anxiety. Driven by social anxiety, this obsessive shopping can significantly impact people and their social contacts.

Özdemir & Erol, (2023). According to social comparison theory, people judge themselves by contrasting their belongings and way of life with those of others. In a society driven by consumption, this could result in increased materialistic values and a want to buy products as a way to reach perceived social standing. Researches show that people who often compare themselves to others are more prone to materialistic inclinations and therefore to compulsive purchasing.

Dittmar & Bond, R. (2007). Compulsive shopping has been linked to insecure attachment patterns. People with an anxious attachment type can buy to fill an emotional gap. People with avoidant attachment type could buy to feel self-sufficiency. Shopping might give momentary stability and sense of security.

Rose, P. & Dhandayudham, A. (2014) Compulsive shopping habits are linked to perfectionism, defined as striving for flawlessness and establishing unreasonably high standards. People who are high in perfectionism could purchase to relieve tension connected to their perceived deficiencies, hoping to reach an idealized picture by obtaining material goods.

Sirois and Pychyl, (2013) Social anxiety, characterized by fear of social situations and negative judgment from others, can lead to obsessive purchasing behavior. People with social anxiety can purchase to cope, thinking that buying particular items would improve their social acceptance or lower their sense of inadequacy.

D. W. Black (2007) Television, films, and internet platforms among other media have a strong impact on the promotion of materialistic ideals and the shaping of consumer demands.

Constant exposure to images of luxury and idealized lifestyles can generate unreasonable expectations and drive the quest of material goods. Richins, 1995

## 2.4 MATERIALISTIC VALUES AND PURCHASES

Strong links to compulsive shopping habits can be found in materialistic beliefs, defined by the conviction that acquisition brings enjoyment and success. Driven by a need to attain status and fulfillment through consumption, people who give material goods first priority are more likely to participate in uncontrolled and excessive buying. Richins, & Dawson, (1992).

Advertising significantly shapes consumer values and fosters materialistic wants. Constant exposure to idealized pictures and messaging linking happiness and success to material goods can help to foster obsessive shopping habits. Often aimed upon emotional weaknesses, advertising creates a feeling of need that can be satisfied by buying. Sirgy (1998).

Social media channels greatly promote consumerism and shape purchasing behavior. Constant exposure to manicured lifestyles and material goods might stoke materialistic cravings and lead to compulsive shopping. Targeted advertising and social media influencers can generate a feeling of urgency and desire, which can result in hasty purchases. Y. C., & C. J. Lin (2021).

Consumer culture's widespread impact, with its focus on material prosperity and consumerism, promotes materialistic values in people. This cultural background drives people toward too consumerism by shaping their views on the need of belongings for pleasure and success.

T. Kasser (2002) Many people use their material belongings to express themselves and show their preferred image to others, so turning them into symbols of identity. In a materialistic society, the need to acquire and exhibit certain commodities to project a particular identity can fuel obsessive shopping behavior.

R. W. Belk (1988). Research has looked at gender variations in materialistic ideals; some research indicate that while women may emphasize appearance-related things, men tend to show materialism by the purchase of status-oriented products. Gendered displays of materialism can affect compulsive purchasing behavior.

Moore and Moschis (1981). Age and Materialism: "Materialistic values can differ across age groups; younger people are usually more affected by consumer culture and value material possessions more. This can lead to more compulsive buying among younger populations.

Moschis & Churchill (1978). People's materialistic values can be greatly shaped by family dynamics and parenting approaches. Children who grow up in settings that stress material wealth or use belongings as rewards or replacements for love may develop more materialistic inclinations.

Goldberg et al., (1985). various societies have various materialistic ideals and their effects on consumer behavior. The significance given to material things and the expression of compulsive buying inclinations can be shaped by cultural norms, economic circumstances, and social structures.

Ger & Belk (1990). The growth of ethical consumerism, which stresses buying goods that are socially responsible or environmentally beneficial, creates a difficult interaction with materialism. While some people may practice ethical consumption to reflect their beliefs, others may do it as a kind of conspicuous consumption or to atone for guilt linked with materialistic pursuits.

Shaw & Carrington (2015). Responding to the ethical consumer: The role of best practice. Routledge Compulsive buying behavior often results in financial problems and debt accumulation. The inability to control spending can cause major financial strain, which can lead to stress, anxiety, and relationship problems.

Drentea, P., & Mandal, B. (2003). Studies show a persistent negative link between materialism and subjective well-being. People who give material goods great importance tend to report poorer degrees of happiness, life satisfaction, and psychological health.

Dittmar, et al H., (2014). Advertising is essential in influencing consumer wants and encouraging compulsive buying habits. Constant exposure to idealized images and persuasive messaging can generate a sense of need and push people to make hasty purchases.

Story, et al., (2008). Social media channels can fuel compulsive shopping and intensify the fear of missing out (FOMO). The ongoing exposure to others' apparently perfect lives and belongings can cause anxiety and a need to keep up, which can lead to hasty purchases meant to relieve these emotions. Przybylski, et al. (2013).

## 2.5 Research Gap

### 2.5.1 Difference in working and students

Though research on compulsory buying has attracted notice, particularly in connection to psychological factors and personal differences, much is still unknown about the interaction of materialistic value and fear of negative evaluation as separate but possibly interacting drivers of this behavior, particularly among different demographic groups including working people and students. Most studies today either examine the whole spectrum of personality traits and psychological vulnerabilities in compulsive buying or tackle these factors independently. Research is needed that especially examines how the wish for material items (materialistic value) and the dread of unfavorable appraisal (fear of negative evaluation) differentially promote compulsory purchase tendencies.

### 2.5.2 Gender difference in working

Although studies on compulsory buying have drawn attention, especially in relation to psychological variables and personal differences, there is a clear lack of knowledge on the interaction of materialistic value and fear of negative assessment as separate but possibly interacting predictors of this behavior, especially among various demographic groups including working people and students. Most current research either looks at the more general range of personality traits and psychological vulnerabilities in compulsive buying or analyzes these factors separately. Research is required that particularly looks at how the desire for material goods (materialistic value) and the fear of unfavorable evaluation (fear of negative evaluation) differentially support obligatory buying inclinations. Moreover, the current studies could not adequately address how these interactions could change between students and working professionals, who may face different degrees of financial limitations, social pressures, and exposure to consumer culture. Gender Differences in Employment The present body of study on gender differences in compulsive buying presents a complex and even contradictory picture. While some research reveal no significant variations or varied results depending on the specific environment and method, others find women may be more likely to participate in compulsive buying than men. Although earlier studies have looked at the link between materialistic ideals, fear of unfavorable assessment, and compulsive shopping habits, there is still a great deal of knowledge lacking on the complex interaction of these elements across gender within a worker

population. Some research show greater prevalence in women while others show more equal distribution; others show different results on gender differences in compulsive buying. Moreover, the particular processes by which materialistic ideals and fear of negative assessment differently affect compulsive purchasing in male vs female workers stay under-explored. Especially important are studies looking at how workplace dynamics and various gender social pressures in professional environments could affect these linkages. Thus, this study intends to investigate the different effects of materialistic values and fear of negative evaluation on compulsive buying inclinations, explicitly taking gender into account as a moderating factor in an employee setting, so adding a more complete knowledge of this complicated phenomenon. The present study thus aims to close this gap by looking at how materialistic beliefs, fear of unfavorable appraisal, and compulsive purchase behavior interact among male and female employees. This study will help to clarify how gender-specific elements drive obsessive shopping behavior in the office.

## Chapter 3

### METHODOLOGY

This chapter outlines the research methodology employed to understand the relationship between materialistic values, fear of negative evaluation, and compulsive buying behavior among students.

#### STUDY 1

##### Methodology

##### Participants-

A total of 150 individuals consented to participating in the research project. The sample comprised both men and women across a variety of ages. 89 of the participants were female while 51 were male, ensuring inclusion of diverse gender perspectives. Most volunteers ranged in age from their forties to fifties, signifying a midlife demographic. All participants voluntarily took part in the research, with their consent obtained before the study began. The participants were selected from various professional and social networks. This age group was specifically targeted to understand compulsive buying behaviors and their psychological underpinnings in a mature demographic.

##### Hypothesis-

**H<sub>1</sub>: Self-esteem and fear of negative evaluation significantly affect compulsive buying behavior**

##### Sampling

The study utilized a snowball sampling method, which is a non-probability sampling technique. This method involves identifying a few initial participants who meet the study's criteria and then asking them to refer others who might also qualify. This approach is particularly effective for reaching specific populations that may be challenging to access through conventional sampling methods. Snowball sampling was chosen for its practicality in gathering participants quickly and efficiently, especially during a period when schools and workplaces were experiencing disruptions due to the Diwali festival. While this method has limitations, such as the potential for sampling bias, it was deemed appropriate given the study's exploratory nature.

## Research Design

The research employed a server-based approach, wherein participants completed the study tools via an online survey platform. This design ensured accessibility and convenience, allowing participants to respond at their own pace and from any location. Server-based research is particularly beneficial for collecting data from a geographically dispersed sample, reducing logistical constraints and administrative costs. The design also enabled the automated collection and storage of data, ensuring accuracy and minimizing manual errors. Given the festive season and associated holidays, an online approach was optimal for maintaining participation while respecting the participants' schedules.

## Tool Used

Three standardized tools were utilized to measure the variables of interest:

1. Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES)  
This scale, developed by Morris Rosenberg, is widely recognized for assessing global self-esteem. It consists of 10 items rated on a 4-point Likert scale, ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree." Higher scores indicate greater self-esteem.
2. Leary's Brief Fear of Negative Evaluation Scale (BFNE)  
This 12-item scale, developed by Mark R. Leary, measures an individual's apprehension about being negatively evaluated by others. Items are scored on a Likert scale from 1 (not at all characteristic of me) to 5 (extremely characteristic of me).
3. Ridgway, Kukar-Kinney, and Monroe's Compulsive Buying Scale (CBS)  
This scale assesses compulsive buying behavior through a series of questions that evaluate tendencies such as impulse purchases, post-purchase guilt, and financial strain.

## Procedure

The study was conducted entirely online, leveraging digital platforms to distribute the survey to participants. This approach was chosen primarily due to the logistical challenges posed by the Diwali festival holidays, during which many schools and institutions were closed. Participants received an email or message containing a link to the survey, which included detailed instructions, informed consent, and the three scales. They were given ample time to complete the survey, ensuring flexibility. The online format not only facilitated participation but also streamlined data collection, allowing for a larger and more

diverse sample. To ensure data integrity, responses were monitored for completeness and consistency before analysis.

## **STUDY 2**

### **Sample**

The study covered a sample of 105 participants from various universities in [Patiala, Punjab]. The sample was purposively selected to include two distinct groups: 105 students from university levels, Mean 23 years, SD is 1.41. The groups comprised male (50) and female (55) participants to ensure gender diversity.

The inclusion of students allowed for a comparative analysis of compulsive buying behavior across different cultures and educational contexts.

### **Hypothesis**

H<sub>1</sub>: Materialistic values will significantly predict compulsive buying behaviour

H<sub>2</sub>: FNE will be a stronger predictor of compulsive buying behaviour.

### **Design**

The study adopted a correlational research design to examine the relationships between the independent variables—materialistic values and fear of negative evaluation—and the dependent variable, compulsive buying behavior. The correlational approach was chosen to assess the strength and direction of associations between these variables without manipulating them, suitable for exploring naturally occurring behaviors and attitudes.

### **Variables in the Study**

- Independent Variables:
  - Materialistic Values: This variable refers to the extent to which individuals prioritize the acquisition of material possessions as a measure of success, happiness, and life centrality.
  - Brief Fear of Negative Evaluation: This variable captures the anxiety or apprehension individuals experience regarding the possibility of being

negatively judged by others. It is posited to contribute to compulsive buying as a coping mechanism for social insecurities.

- **Dependent Variable: Compulsive Buying Behavior:** This variable represents the chronic, uncontrollable tendency to purchase goods beyond one's needs or financial capacity, often leading to psychological and financial distress.

## Tools to Be Used

The study employed three validated psychometric scales to measure the variables of interest. Each tool was selected for its reliability, validity, and relevance to the constructs under investigation.

### 1. Materialistic Values Scale (MVS):

- Developed by Richins and Dawson (1992). The MVS is a widely used instrument designed to assess materialistic attitudes across three dimensions: acquisition centrality (the importance of possessions in one's life), acquisition as a pursuit of happiness, and possession-defined success.
- The scale consists of 18 items, rated on a 5-point Likert. Higher scores indicate greater materialistic tendencies. Internal Reliability of the scale ranges from 0.80 to 0.88. The MVS exhibits good construct validity.

### 2. Brief Fear of Negative Evaluation Scale (BFNE):

- Developed by Leary (1983). The BFNE is a 12-item scale that measures anxiety associated with perceived negative evaluation by others. Items are rated on a 5-point Likert scale, with higher scores indicating greater fear of negative evaluation.
- The scale includes both positively and reverse-worded items to minimize response bias. The BFNE demonstrate high internal consistency with Cronbach's alpha values around 0.90. The BFNE has a strong construct validity.

### 3. Compulsive Buying Scale (CBS):

- Developed by Faber and O'Guinn (1992). The CBS is a 7-item scale designed to identify compulsive buying behavior by assessing behavioral and financial

indicators, such as the inability to control purchasing urges and feelings of guilt post-purchase.

- Items are rated on a 5-point Likert scale, with higher scores indicating a stronger tendency toward compulsive buying. The scale is unidimensional, reliable (Cronbach's alpha  $\approx$  0.85), and valid for distinguishing compulsive buyers from non-compulsive consumers.

## **Procedure**

The present study aimed to examine the relationship between compulsive buying behavior and two psychological constructs—materialistic value and fear of negative evaluation—among university students. A quantitative, cross-sectional research design was employed, and data were collected using the survey method. After obtaining ethical clearance from the institutional ethics committee, participants were approached through both online and offline means. University students were informed about the purpose of the study, their voluntary participation, and confidentiality of their responses. Informed consent was obtained from each participant prior to data collection. The entire questionnaire took approximately 15–20 minutes to complete. To ensure data quality, participants were asked to respond sincerely and avoid patterned answering.

## CHAPTER-4

### RESULTS

#### Study 1

##### Descriptive Statistics

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	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
<b>CBS</b>	<b>29.8933</b>	<b>8.08690</b>	<b>150</b>
<b>SE</b>	<b>24.6333</b>	<b>3.58299</b>	<b>150</b>
<b>BFNE</b>	<b>33.4667</b>	<b>6.08074</b>	<b>150</b>

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The descriptive statistics summarize the data collected from 150 participants, focusing on the three primary variables: Compulsive Buying Scale (CBS), Self-Esteem (SE), and Brief Fear of Negative Evaluation (BFNE).

- **Compulsive Buying Scale (CBS):** The mean score for CBS is 29.89 (SD = 8.09), indicating a moderate level of compulsive buying behavior among participants. The standard deviation reflects variability in compulsive buying tendencies across individuals. This suggests that while many participants display tendencies toward compulsive buying, the degree varies significantly within the sample.
- **Self-Esteem (SE):** The mean score for the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale is 24.63 (SD = 3.58). The relatively low standard deviation implies that self-esteem levels among participants are more consistent compared to compulsive buying. This finding aligns with existing literature that connects self-esteem levels to consumer behavior, where lower self-esteem is often associated with higher compulsive buying tendencies.
- **Brief Fear of Negative Evaluation (BFNE):** The BFNE scale's mean score is 33.47 (SD = 6.08), indicating a moderately high level of fear of negative evaluation among participants. This suggests that participants experience noticeable apprehension about being judged by others. Given the established relationship between fear of negative evaluation and materialistic or compensatory buying, this result further supports the hypothesis of the study.

## Correlation Table

	<b>CBS</b>	<b>SE</b>	<b>BFNE</b>
<b>CBS</b>	-	<b>.213</b>	<b>.488</b>
<b>SE</b>	-	-	<b>.293</b>
<b>BFNE</b>	-	-	-

Correlation Analysis The table presents the results of a Pearson correlation analysis conducted among the three variables: Compulsive Buying Scale (CBS), Self-Esteem (SE), and Brief Fear of Negative Evaluation (BFNE).

### 1. CBS and SE:

- Correlation Coefficient (r): 0.213
- Significance (p): 0.004 (p < 0.05)  
There is a positive and statistically significant correlation between compulsive buying and self-esteem. This indicates that as self-esteem increases, compulsive buying tendencies slightly increase. While this finding might seem counterintuitive, it may suggest that individuals with varying levels of self-esteem engage in compulsive buying for different reasons, such as emotional regulation or enhancing their self-image.

### 2. CBS and BFNE:

- Correlation Coefficient (r): 0.488
- Significance (p): <0.001 (p < 0.01)  
There is a moderate positive and statistically significant correlation between compulsive buying and fear of negative evaluation. This implies that individuals with higher apprehension about being judged are more likely to engage in compulsive buying, potentially as a coping mechanism to improve their social standing or reduce social anxiety.

### 3. SE and BFNE:

- Correlation Coefficient (r): 0.293

- Significance (p): <0.001 (p < 0.01)  
A weak-to-moderate positive and statistically significant correlation is observed between self-esteem and fear of negative evaluation. This finding may suggest that individuals with slightly higher self-esteem might still harbor concerns about negative judgment, but their levels of self-esteem buffer against severe social anxiety.

## REGRESSION

Model	B	Std. Error	Beta	Sig.	Adjusted R2
(Constant)	18.03	4.51	-	3.99	
SE	.48	.18	.21	2.65	.04
Constant	4.88	4.55	.158	1.07	
SE	.17	.16	.07	1.02	.24
BFNE	.61	.10	.46	6.20	

a. Dependent Variable: compulsive buying.

b. Predictors: (Constant), self-esteem , fear of negative evaluation

The model summary table presents the results of a multiple regression analysis conducted to examine the predictive relationships between self-esteem (SE), fear of negative evaluation (BFNE), and compulsive buying behavior (CBS).

- $R = 0.213$ : The simple correlation between SE and CBS is 0.213, indicating a weak positive relationship.
- $R^2 = 0.046$ : Only 4.6% of the variance in compulsive buying is explained by self-esteem alone, suggesting that self-esteem is not a strong standalone predictor of compulsive buying behavior.
- Adjusted  $R^2 = 0.039$ : After accounting for adjustments, the explained variance remains minimal.
- $F(1, 148) = 7.059, p = 0.009$ : The F-statistic indicates that the model is statistically significant, meaning that self-esteem has a significant but weak predictive relationship with compulsive buying.
- $R = 0.494$ : When BFNE is added as a predictor, the correlation increases substantially to 0.494, suggesting a moderate positive relationship between the combined predictors and compulsive buying.

- $R^2 = 0.244$ : Together, SE and BFNE explain 24.4% of the variance in compulsive buying. This indicates that BFNE substantially contributes to the predictive power of the model.
- Adjusted  $R^2 = 0.234$ : The adjusted  $R^2$  indicates a slight reduction in explained variance after adjustments for the number of predictors, but the model remains robust.
- $R^2$  Change = 0.198, F Change = 38.547,  $p < 0.001$ : The addition of BFNE leads to a significant improvement in the model, accounting for an additional 19.8% of the variance in compulsive buying.

The table presents the results of a hierarchical regression analysis conducted to examine the relationship between the independent variable(s) and the dependent variable.

The results show that including BFNE significantly improves the explanatory power of the regression model. The significant positive  $\beta$  value and  $t$  for BFNE highlight its strong contribution to predicting the dependent variable. The low VIF values across both models suggest that multicollinearity is not an issue in this analysis.

## Study 2

### Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	N
Success	21.50	3.893	105
Centrality	27.28	4.131	105
Happiness	19.86	3.673	105
Compulsive Buying	32.01	6.891	105
Brief Fear of Negative Evaluation	35.57	5.318	105

The present study investigated the phenomenon of compulsive buying behavior and its association with various psychological variables like Materialistic value, Brief fear of negative evaluation (independent variables). Materialistic value scale have 3 sub-scales and in this

descriptive statistic table these subscales are computed, Success, Centrality, Happiness, using a sample of 105 participants. The table summarizes the means and standard deviations of these variables:

The mean score for Compulsive Buying is 32.01, with a standard deviation of 6.89, indicating a moderately high level of compulsive buying tendencies among the sample. This variability suggests individual differences in participants' buying behavior, which could be influenced by their psychological traits and self-perceptions.

Participants reported a relatively high mean score on the BFNE scale (35.57), showing that a significant number of individuals in the sample tend to experience fear or anxiety about being negatively evaluated by others. This aligns with the theoretical understanding that people with heightened self-consciousness and social sensitivity may turn to buying as a form of emotional regulation or self-enhancement.

The variable Success had a mean of 21.50, and Centrality had mean of 27.28, reflecting how participants perceived material success and the importance of possessions in their lives. Happiness, with a mean of 19.86, may represent an underlying emotional state that could also relate to compulsive buying as individuals might seek fulfillment through material acquisition when their internal sense of contentment is low.

**Correlation table for Compulsive Buying Behavior, Fear of Negative Evaluation, and Materialistic Values**

Variable	Success	Centrality	Happiness	Compulsive Buying Behavior	Fear of Negative Evaluation
Success	—				
Centrality	.208*	—			
Happiness	.228*	.318**	—		
Compulsive Buying Behavior	.298**	.260**	.276**	—	
Fear of Negative Evaluation	.096	.103	.035	.136	—

Note. \* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ .

A correlation was measured to examine the relationships between Compulsive Buying Behavior, Fear of Negative Evaluation, and Materialistic Values (Success, Centrality, and Happiness).

The results from the correlation analysis throw light on the interconnected nature of materialistic values, emotional well-being, and compulsive buying tendencies in the sample.

1. Compulsive Buying and Materialistic Values- Compulsive Buying Behavior was found to be positively and significantly correlated with all three materialism subdimensions:

- Success ( $r = .298, p < .01$ )
- Centrality ( $r = .260, p < .01$ )
- Happiness ( $r = .276, p < .01$ )

These findings suggest that individuals who associate material possessions with personal success, consider them central to their lives, or view them as sources of happiness are more likely to engage in compulsive buying.

2. Interrelation Among Materialistic Dimensions- Success and Centrality showed a modest yet significant correlation ( $r = .208, p < .05$ ), while Happiness was significantly correlated with both:

- Success ( $r = .228, p < .05$ )
- Centrality ( $r = .318, p < .01$ )

This reflects how the components of materialism are conceptually and practically interrelated. When possessions are seen as symbols of achievement (success), they also tend to become more central to one's identity and are perceived as potential sources of happiness.

3. Fear of Negative Evaluation- Contrary to expectations, Fear of Negative Evaluation (FNE) did not show any significant correlation with compulsive buying ( $r = .136, ns$ ) or with the materialism dimensions.

However, it suggests that in this sample, social anxiety or concern about others' opinions may not directly influence compulsive shopping behavior or materialistic beliefs. It is possible that individuals who fear judgment do not necessarily act on these fears through buying behavior, or they might employ other coping mechanisms like avoidance or perfectionism.

Alternatively, compulsive buying may be driven more by internal emotional needs or identity-based motivations rather than interpersonal concerns.

### REGRESSION : Model Summary

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Model	B	Std. Error	Beta	Sig.	Adjusted R2
(Constant)	9.760	5.283		.068	
success	.399	.168	.225	.019	.156
centrality	.263	.163	.158	.109	
happiness	.327	.184	.175	.078	

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a. Dependent Variable: compulsive buying.

b. Predictors: (Constant), happiness, success, centrality.

To examine the predictors of compulsive buying behavior, a multiple linear regression analysis was conducted using happiness, success, and centrality as independent variables. The regression model was found to be statistically significant,  $F(3,101)=6.236$ ,  $F(3, 101) = 6.236$ ,  $p=.001$ ,  $p = .001$ , indicating that the combination of predictors reliably explained variance in the dependent variable, compulsive buying.

- $R = .395$ , indicating a moderate positive correlation between the predictors and compulsive buying.
- $R^2 = .156$ , which implies that 15.6% of the variance in compulsive buying can be explained by the linear combination of happiness, success, and centrality.
- The Adjusted  $R^2 = .131$  confirms that the model's explanatory power remains stable even after adjusting for the number of predictors.

- The standard error of the estimate was 6.423, indicating the average deviation of observed values from the predicted values.

A multiple linear regression analysis was conducted to examine the influence of success, centrality, and happiness on compulsive buying behavior. The regression model was found to be statistically significant for one predictor.

As presented in Table 3, the overall regression equation revealed that success was a significant predictor of compulsive buying,  $B = 0.399$ ,  $t(n) = 2.376$ ,  $p = .019$ . This indicates that an increase in the success-related dimension is associated with a higher level of compulsive buying behavior.

The variables centrality ( $B = 0.263$ ,  $p = .109$ ) and happiness ( $B = 0.327$ ,  $p = .078$ ) did not significantly predict compulsive buying at the conventional alpha level of .05, though happiness approached significance and may warrant further exploration in future studies.

## **Chapter 5**

### **DISCUSSION**

#### **STUDY 1**

The present study aimed to investigate the hypothesis that self-esteem and fear of negative evaluation (FNE) significantly affect compulsive buying behavior. The findings support this hypothesis, aligning with existing literature that underscores the psychological underpinnings of compulsive buying.

H1: Accepted . Self-esteem plays a pivotal role in consumer behavior, particularly in the context of compulsive buying. Individuals with low self-esteem may engage in compulsive purchasing as a means to enhance their self-image or cope with negative emotions. Biolcati (2017) found that contingent self-esteem is a strong predictor of compulsive buying for both genders, with fear of negative evaluation mediating this relationship, especially among women. This suggests that individuals with unstable self-worth are more susceptible to compulsive buying tendencies.

Contrary to the traditional view, some studies have observed a positive association between high self-esteem and compulsive buying. For instance, Jain et al. (2024) reported that individuals with higher self-esteem might still engage in compulsive buying due to hedonic motivations, indicating that the relationship between self-esteem and compulsive buying is complex and may be influenced by additional factors.

Fear of negative evaluation, characterized by apprehension about others' judgments, has been identified as a significant predictor of compulsive buying behavior. Individuals with high FNE may resort to compulsive buying to gain social approval or alleviate social anxiety. Biolcati (2017) highlighted that FNE mediates the relationship between contingent self-esteem and compulsive buying, particularly among women, emphasizing the role of social evaluative concerns in driving compulsive purchasing behaviors.

The interplay between self-esteem and FNE provides a comprehensive understanding of the psychological factors contributing to compulsive buying. Low self-esteem may heighten sensitivity to negative evaluations, leading individuals to engage in compulsive buying as a coping mechanism. Conversely, even individuals with high self-esteem may exhibit compulsive buying behaviors driven by hedonic desires or societal pressures. These insights

underscore the multifaceted nature of compulsive buying and the necessity for interventions that address both self-perception and social evaluative concerns.

## STUDY 2

This study aimed to explore the predictive roles of materialistic values and fear of negative evaluation (FNE) on compulsive buying behavior among university students. The findings provide empirical support for both hypotheses, aligning with existing literature.

H1: Accepted The results indicate that materialistic values significantly predict compulsive buying behavior. This aligns with previous research demonstrating that individuals with higher materialistic orientations are more prone to compulsive purchasing. According to Hashim, (2023) conducted among university students in Klang Valley, found materialism to be the strongest predictor of compulsive buying behavior . Similarly, research has shown that materialism exerts both direct and indirect effects on compulsive buying, mediated through factors like self-control and anxiety . These findings suggest that individuals who place a high importance on material possessions may engage in compulsive buying as a means to achieve personal satisfaction or social status. The pursuit of material goods could serve as a coping mechanism to deal with underlying psychological needs or societal pressures. (Jain et al., 2024)

H2: Accepted. The study also found that FNE significantly predicts compulsive buying behavior. This is consistent with research indicating that individuals with higher levels of FNE may use shopping as a strategy to manage social anxiety or to seek approval from others. According to Biolcati (2017), FNE plays a mediating role between contingent self-esteem and compulsive buying, particularly among women. These results imply that individuals who are highly concerned about others' evaluations may resort to compulsive buying to enhance their self-image or to conform to perceived social expectations. The act of purchasing may provide temporary relief from social apprehensions but could lead to long-term negative consequences.

Combining these findings, it's evident that both materialistic values and FNE contribute to compulsive buying behavior. The interplay between the desire for material possessions and the fear of social judgment creates a psychological environment where compulsive buying becomes a maladaptive coping strategy. Interventions aimed at reducing materialistic tendencies and addressing social anxieties could be effective in mitigating compulsive buying behaviors among university students.

## **CHAPTER 6**

### **CONCLUSION, IMPLICATIONS, LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH**

#### **6.1 CONCLUSION**

The present study aimed to explore the relationship between emotional regulation, online materialistic behavior, and compulsive buying among young adult males. The findings from the data analysis reveals significant associations between the variables, particularly highlighting that difficulties in emotional regulation predict compulsive buying behavior. Furthermore, a strong link was found between materialistic values and compulsive buying tendencies, reinforcing the theoretical framework that materialism acts as a psychological motivator behind such behaviors. Regression analysis revealed that both emotional dysregulation and materialistic attitudes together significantly predict compulsive buying tendencies. This suggests that young men who struggle with emotional control and possess higher materialistic inclinations are more prone to indulge in compulsive buying as a coping strategy or a means of identity reinforcement.

#### **6.2 Implications of the Study**

The study contributes to the growing body of literature on consumer psychology and emotional regulation. It supports previous models suggesting that poor emotional regulation may lead to maladaptive consumer behaviors such as compulsive buying. It also validates the materialism-compulsive buying link, specifically in a male demographic which is relatively under-researched. Mental health professionals can use these insights to design targeted interventions that focus on improving emotional regulation skills in young adults. Marketers and policymakers may consider ethical marketing strategies that reduce the exploitative targeting of vulnerable populations. Educational programs can be developed in schools and colleges to raise awareness about the psychological underpinnings of consumer behavior and the potential risks of materialism. The study highlights the growing influence of online materialistic culture on purchasing behavior, especially in the digital era. It calls for community-based awareness and resilience programs to mitigate the psychological and financial consequences of compulsive buying.

### **6.3 Limitations of the Study**

Despite meaningful insights, the study has certain limitations. The study focused solely on male young adults, which limits the generalizability of the findings to other genders or age groups. As the research employed a cross-sectional design, causality cannot be inferred. The use of self-reported questionnaires may introduce social desirability or response biases. The participants were selected from a limited geographic region, possibly limiting the diversity of socio-cultural contexts.

### **6.4 Future Research**

Future studies can expand the sample to include females and non-binary individuals to compare gender differences. A longitudinal design may offer a deeper understanding of how emotional regulation and materialism influence compulsive buying over time. Incorporating qualitative methods such as interviews or focus groups could provide richer insights into the lived experiences of compulsive buyers. Exploring additional mediating or moderating variables, such as self-esteem, social comparison, or digital exposure, may enhance the model's explanatory power. Future research can also consider cross-cultural comparisons to examine the influence of culture on materialism and consumer behavior.

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