

## Review of Literature

### *What is Compulsive Buying?*

Compulsive buying is a “chronic, repetitive purchasing that becomes a primary response to negative events or feelings” according to O’Guinn and Faber (1998, p. 402). This means whenever the individuals are unhappy or in a bad situation, they tend to go on a shopping binge. The individuals have uncontrollable urges to purchase (Yuchisun & Johnson, 2004). It is hard for them to stop spending money even if they cannot afford to. Compulsive buyers overspend their money to fill internal emptiness and to make themselves feel more complete (Krueger, 1988). In other words, shopping makes the individuals feel better and it temporarily fulfills what they are missing.

### *Who are Usually Compulsive Shoppers and Why?*

The children of parents who spend money to buy things for them as a substitute for comfort and emotional nurturance usually become compulsive shoppers. Parents feel bad about not doing something for their child, so they feel better when they buy something for the child to make them happy. Setting this example, when the child grows up they will fall into this habit of buying things for their children to make up for neglect and so on (Krueger, 1988). Roberts agrees with Kruger that addictive compulsive behaviors may be influenced by other family members (Roberts, 1998). For example, when you remember your mother bought you a toy and it made you happy, you want to do the same for your children thinking it will make them happy when something is wrong. In contrast, Yuchisun and Johnson (2004) believe that people who have a deficiency of the neurochemical serotonin, have high levels of materialism, and buy things to make one feel better suffer from compulsive buying. Biology may play a factor in compulsive buying behavior which is different than Krueger and Roberts’ idea. The majority of compulsive

buyers are females, usually starting when they are adolescents. They have an attitude about buying things now and paying for them later (Yuchisun & Johnson, 2004). The consequences do not come to their mind when they go out and spend. The female believes that spending money will help improve her self image right away. Compulsive consumption is caused by an uncontrollable drive to engage in spending or experience a feeling (O'Guinn & Faber, 1989). Compulsive buyers may feel something they can never feel unless they spend. It may make them feel like they have a high status of living for instance. Compulsive buyers suffer from low self esteem and the individuals want to please others (Krueger, 1988; O'Guinn & Faber, 1992; Yuchisun & Johnson, 2004). Perhaps buying a massive amount of clothes makes the individual feel beautiful or noticed by others.

#### *Consequences of Compulsive Buying*

*Financial Consequences.* Compulsive buying causes economic and psychological consequences (O'Guinn & Faber, 1992; Yuchisun & Johnson, 2004). Compulsive buyers get into debt or possibly even bankruptcy and then they feel bad for how much they spend.

*Psychological Consequences.* Psychologically, the individual will have low self esteem they will fantasize more often, experience depression, and have higher levels of anxiety reactions and obsessions (O'Guinn & Faber, 1992). When compulsive buyers can fantasize, it temporarily lets them feel better about themselves and about social acceptance (Roberts, 1998). They can be away from the real world and it satisfies the thought of getting rid of that emptiness that is missing. The person with an addictive consumption behavior believes that purchasing more will relate to social status (Yuchisun & Johnson, 2004). The more you spend, the higher your class is. Being able to spend a massive amount of money and feeling luxurious will make the individual happy. The consequences do not cross their mind though. When a person spends too much, their

relationships with people begin to change. Relationships with their family and friends fall apart because of their massive spending habits (Yuchisun & Johnson, 2004). On another perspective, compulsive shopping causes problems for consumer policy because it takes a lot of environmental resources (Roberts, 1998). Americans take up approximately six percent of the world's population, but consume about one-third of its natural resources, therefore destroying a big portion just because we want more (Roberts, 1998). Pretty soon, our natural resources may run low. Compulsive buyers experience bankruptcies, debt, frustration, and loss of control (O'Guinn & Faber, 1992; Roberts & Eli, 2001). This will make the individuals feel guilty about their spending habits and loss of control.

#### *Human Ecological Theory and Social Exchange Theory*

Human Ecological Theory is used to direct this research because it takes into account the interrelatedness of individuals and their environments. Compulsive shoppers are influenced by their parents, other relatives, friends, and colleagues (microsystems) as well as the mass media and social norms of the society (macrosystem). These influential people and structures interact to create a unique environment for the individual (Faberson, 2002; Gunder, 1999; Kleinhauser, 2001).

Social Exchange Theory is a useful theory for this study when used within the Human Ecological Framework because individuals make purchasing decisions within their micro- and macrosystems. Social Exchange Theory focuses on the tradeoffs people make when deciding between choices; benefits and costs are weighed and decisions are made. In other words, what will I have to forgo in order to make this purchase?

*Notice how she contrasts studies and how she combines several studies in a sentence/paragraph. She also provides a theoretical framework.*