

# THE IMPACT OF PERSONALITY TRAITS ON COMPULSIVE BUYING BEHAVIOR OF CONSUMERS

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**Abstract:** The contribution addresses a highly researched topic that will always remain relevant. The trend towards online shopping is growing, and personality characteristics are important factors in shopping and consumer behavior. The aim of the contribution is to examine personality traits and their influence on compulsive online shopping. The analysis is conducted using SmartPLS from a sample of 203 Slovak consumers. These findings have important implications for the field of marketing and consumer behavior, where they can be utilized to formulate targeted strategies and interventions aimed at managing and reducing compulsive shopping. The results may also contribute to guiding further research efforts.

**Keywords:** compulsive online shopping, big five, consumer behavior

## 1 Introduction

Online shopping has become the primary mode of purchasing, occupying the majority of the consumer market (Lim & Kim, 2020). With rapid societal and economic development, consumer purchasing behavior has significantly changed, resulting in a sharp decline in planned purchases and a rapid increase in unplanned purchases (Luo et al., 2021). The emergence and reinforcement of a behavioral problem, characterized by a psychological need or urge to shop, have been observed by theorists and researchers (Müller et al., 2021). Consumer behavior can be categorized into planned, unplanned, or impulsive (Rahanatha et al., 2022).

## 2 Literature review

Impulsive buying, as a common behavior in everyday life, refers to unplanned consumer behavior influenced by external stimuli (Rook, 1987). According to Luo et al. (2021), impulsive buying occurs when purchasing behavior is driven by emotional factors. If impulsive buying is associated with emotions, it becomes random, unintentional purchasing (Kollat & Willett, 1967). Burton et al. (2018) suggest that impulsive purchases occur due to a sudden and strong emotional desire, characterized by reactive behavior with low cognitive control. Several authors indicate that impulsive buying is purchasing without intention (Dittmar, Beattie & Friese, 1995).

Sohn and Ko (2021) argue that although all impulsive purchases can be considered unplanned, not all unplanned purchases can be considered impulsive. This suggests that unplanned purchases are not necessarily accompanied by an urgent desire, which generally characterizes impulsive purchases. Impulsive buying leads consumers to purchase goods without hesitation (Kacen & Lee, 2002), resulting from promotion, where the consumer does not decide on purchasing before buying (Applebaum, 1951). People feel an urge to buy a product without considering why they need it and for what purpose. The urge is irresistible, and consumers may sometimes feel a loss of control. They pay less attention to the consequences of their behavior. Decision-making is usually short and spontaneous, as impulsive buying is dominated more by affective than cognitive processes. Consumers purchase unplanned goods (Vohs, Faber, 2007) and forgo optimal choices in the given situation (Baumeister, 2002). This tendency to shop spontaneously and without consideration can be explained by the immediate gratification it provides to the buyer (Pradhan et al., 2018). It is an irresistible force with an inability to assess its consequences. Despite being aware of the negative effects, the desire to satisfy needs is stronger (Meena, 2018).

Such loss of control, which can induce impulsive buying due to conflict between immediate reward and negative consequences, can become pathological or chronic (Pandya & Pandya, 2020). Impulsive buying tendencies can be triggered by a wide range of factors, including internal, external, or situational factors. External influences include factors such as culture, social context, and other marketing stimuli, while internal aspects relate to the processes occurring within the consumer themselves (Sofi, Najar, 2018). Characteristics of impulsive buying include being unpredictable, a sudden behavior usually occurring concurrently with an impulse, having relatively short duration, and consumers intending to make an impulsive purchase but not necessarily doing so based on external influences (Vohs, Faber, 2007).

The tendency for online consumption is increasing among the younger generation, which is more prone to impulsive buying for various reasons (Iyer et al., 2020). Impulsive buying tends to occur at the end of the teenage years or the beginning of the twenties (Black, Shaw, Allen, 2016). Impulsive behavior can be defined as consistent action that repeatedly occurs without leading to the desired reward or genuine pleasure (Shehzadi et al., 2016). Compulsive buying behavior (CBB), also known as shopping addiction, pathological buying, or compulsive buying disorder, is a mental health condition characterized by persistent, excessive, impulsive, and uncontrollable buying of products despite significant psychological, social, occupational, and financial problems (Müller et al., 2015). In one of the first comprehensive phenomenological descriptions of compulsive buying (CB), O'Guinn and Faber (1989) consider buyers compulsive when they are unable to control their impulse to shop, which permeates their lives and sometimes has serious consequences.

However, shopping can become harmful and destructive behavior for life when it becomes extreme and unmanageable, which can lead to "compulsive buying" (CB). According to Ridgway et al. (2008), CB has two components, namely obsessive-compulsive disorder and impulsive control disorder (OCD & ICD).

### 2.1 Personality Traits

Consumer characteristics related to impulsive buying have been the subject of many studies (Chavosh et al., 2011; Liao & Chuang, 2004). Spontaneous, strong urges to buy are associated with many factors, which can be divided into two categories: external situational factors and internal personality characteristics (Haq & Abbasi, 2016). Studies conducted by Miao et al. (2020) and Thompson and Prendergast (2015) demonstrate that several factors, including personality, trigger consumers' impulsive purchases.

The word "personality" derives from the Latin word "persona," meaning "to speak through." This Latin phrase refers to theatrical masks used by artists in ancient Greece and Rome. Although external appearance is significant for personality traits, it does not constitute the entire personality. Gangai & Agrawal (2016) define personality traits as relatively enduring characteristics of individuals that exhibit consistency throughout life and across different environments. Understanding the construct of personality is important to comprehend the relationship between personality and impulsive buying tendency. Interestingly, the approach to personality traits is gaining popularity through quantitative measurement (Solomon et al., 2012), with the most influential approach being the Big Five Inventory of personality traits (Feldman, 2018).

In the past, the five dimensions of personality, i.e., the Big Five personality traits, were examined in relation to their association with impulsive buying behavior (Badgaiyan & Verma, 2014).

The discovery of the five-factor model allowed researchers to focus on fundamental characteristic personality traits - extraversion, neuroticism, agreeableness, conscientiousness, and openness to experience (Feldman, 2018). Similarly, according to Saran et al. (2016), personal traits such as extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, emotional stability, and openness influence unplanned purchases and impulsive buying behavior of individuals. Consumer behavior can also be predicted based on individual differences. Among the more stable individual differences over the lifespan are not only consumer attitudes, which are less stable, but also the aforementioned personality traits. Identifying personality components involved in purchasing behavior is a useful way to better understand the regularity or even eccentricity of purchases (Fenton-O'Creevy, Furnham, 2020).

Personality traits have a significant relationship with impulsive buying, as confirmed by the study by Gangai and Agarwal (2016). Some researchers (Doost et al., 2013) argue that almost all aspects of personality should be categorized using the concept of the Big Five and even suggest that the dimensions included in the Big Five model have a genetic basis (Esfahani Nasr et al., 2012). Several studies from different countries have shown that impulsive buying and personality traits influence the diversity of consumer purchasing behavior (Lippold et al., 2020; Shahjehan, 2012; Shehzadi et al., 2016). Agreeableness, neuroticism, and openness to experience are three personality characteristics associated with compulsive buying, with a mediating role in impulsive buying behavior (Shehzadi et al., 2016).

#### **BFI**

Understanding one's personality and what sets us apart from others can lead to better life decisions (Bergmann, 2017). Over the years, several tools have been developed to identify personality traits. These tools include the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) (Myers, McCaulley, 1985) or EPQ (Eysenck & Eysenck, 1975). In 1985, Costa and McCrae proposed that individual differences in personality characteristics generally reflect five broad dimensions of traits: neuroticism (N), extraversion (E), openness to experience (O), agreeableness (A), and conscientiousness (C). The Big Five personality model is probably the most widely used framework for explaining individual differences in populations and is based on five largely independent traits (McCrae, John, 1992). Subsequently, the revised NEO Personality Inventory (NEO PI-R) (Costa & McCrae, 1988) or The Big Five Inventory (Goldberg, 1993) was developed. John et al. (1991) created a new, concise measure that distinguishes BFI from other personality assessments, comprising 44 prototype items formed into short phrases. The model is widely used in studying human traits that influence purchasing behavior (Ayob, Wahid, Omar, 2022).

#### **Neuroticism**

It is generally acknowledged that neuroticism is the tendency to experience negative emotions such as anxiety, fear, sadness, anger, irritability, loneliness, dissatisfaction, and vulnerability, and that this factor is a response to various types of stress, illnesses, and their causes (Brandes, Tackett, 2019). Neurotic individuals tend to be abnormally sensitive and emotionally unstable (Shehzadi et al., 2016). Neuroticism was sometimes considered a positive personality trait (Hong, Dyakov, Zheng, 2020), but Nie et al. (2008) found that neuroticism is negatively associated with social adaptive behavior, while other dimensions play significantly positive roles. Neuroticism concerns individual differences in the tendency to experience and express negative emotions that are intense, enduring, relatively stable, but also susceptible to change (Shackman et al., 2016). It is conceptualized as a fundamental personality dimension that leads to individual differences from emotional stability to highly negative affect (Eysenck et al., 1985; Tackett & Lahey, 2017). Personality traits such as neuroticism exhibit continuity and changes throughout adolescence and adulthood, with the most significant changes occurring in young adulthood (Wrzus et al., 2021).

Neuroticism and the use of coping strategies such as avoiding problems are risk factors in relation to impulsive buying (Otero-

López, Santiago, Castro, 2021). Neuroticism is one of the empirically validated personality traits with a considerable amount of research supporting its heritability, childhood precursors, lifelong temporal stability, and universal presence (Widiger, 2009).

#### **Extraversion**

Some authors such as Gross and Proffitt (2013) or Gross and Medina-DeVilliers (2020) suggest that the basic social line is a function of personality traits related to social interaction, such as extraversion. Extraversion reflects our general tendency to seek out other people and communicate with them (Stephan et al., 2014). High levels of extraversion in individuals are manifested by sociability, an active life, and an approach to the social and material world, often experiencing positive emotions (Costa and McCrae, 2008). Extraverted personality concerns the individual's need for stimulation and interest in new stimuli. Impulsive buying is also characterized by a high or excessive interest in products and their stimulation. From this, we can infer that there is a positive relationship between extraverted personality and impulsive buying behavior (Wahyudi & Kurniawan, 2019). Badgaiyan and Verma (2014) pointed out that extraversion has a significant positive relationship with impulsive buying. These individuals tend to take risks, seek excitement, and uncertainty.

#### **Openness**

Openness is characterized by a person's tendency to seek new experiences and be willing to explore ideas, values, emotions, and sensations that differ from their previous experience or established preferences (McCrae, Costa, 1983). Individuals with high openness tend to be more adaptable, allowing them to navigate uncertain and complex situations more easily (Knaps, 2015). People who are open to experiences exhibit mental flexibility, cognitive curiosity, diverse interests, and a readiness to analyze the complex determinants of their decisions and the emotions of others (Costa, McCrae, 1988). The higher the level of openness to experience, agreeableness, and extraversion, the higher the level of shopping tendencies (Sofi, Najar, 2018). Some studies have been contradictory (Badgaiyan & Verma, 2014), and personality traits such as emotional stability, openness to experience, and agreeableness did not show a significant impact on impulsive buying behavior.

#### **Agreeableness**

Agreeableness is an interpersonal trait possessed by consumers. Consumers with high scores in this criterion have good protagonist interpersonal qualities, have a desire to always maintain positive relationships, are considerate, compassionate, polite, and cooperative. While consumers with low agreeableness exhibit opposite behavior. People with high agreeableness are more willing to suppress their impulsive nature when shopping because they can consider the consequences after making an impulsive purchase (Zuckerman, Kuhlman, 2000).

#### **Conscientiousness**

Individuals who possess this personality trait will often be more cautious when making decisions or choices. They have high self-control and can be trusted. Positive qualities include reliability, competence, industriousness, and goal-orientedness (McCrae, Costa, 1990). Conscientious consumers tend to plan ahead for product purchases, choose the appropriate product based on evaluation, and organize their shopping (Hendrawan, Nugroho, 2018). This trait is largely indifferent, not focusing too much on their life and goals to be achieved and is more energetic in interacting with others (John et al., 2008).

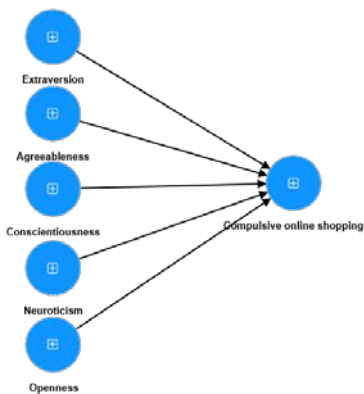
### **3 Methodology**

The research sample consisted of 203 respondents, comprising 95 males and 108 females. The age of the respondents ranged from 18 to 64 years, with an average age of 33 years. The educational background of the respondents included 116 with secondary education and 87 with tertiary education. Data collection was conducted in February through an online questionnaire.

The objective was to evaluate the influence of personality traits using the BFI (Big Five Inventory) through 44 items structured with simple sentences and rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) on impulsive shopping, which was measured by COSS (Compulsive Online Shopping Scale). Manchiraju et al. (International Journal of Mental Health and Addiction, 1–15, 2016) published the Compulsive Online Shopping Scale (COSS) in the International Journal of Mental Health and Addiction (IJMHA). Manchiraju and colleagues adapted items from the seven-item Bergen Shopping Addiction Scale (BSAS) and its original set of 28 items to develop their measure of compulsive online shopping, adding the term "online" to each item (Griffiths et al., 2016).

**4 Results**

Given the objectives of the contribution and the topic under consideration, we assumed that all five personality traits are related to compulsive online shopping. The proposed model of relationships focused on assessing all relationships and was verified through Path analysis by assessing Path coefficients, their significance, and model fit indicators. Path analysis is a statistical method used to examine the relationships between variables in complex models. This method allows for the identification of direct and indirect relationships between variables and provides a structured framework for testing theoretical models.



Graph 1 Path analysis - tested model  
(Source: own calculation in SmartPLS 4)

The proposed conceptual model illustrates the influence of five personality traits on compulsive behavior. Several studies have hypothesized relationships between personality and compulsive behavior, but the results are inconclusive.



Graph 2 Path analysis – result model  
(Source: own calculation in SmartPLS 4)

The presence of relationships between extraversion, agreeableness, and openness to compulsive behavior suggests

that certain personality traits may predispose individuals to such behavior. For example, extraverted individuals may be more inclined to seek stimulation and excitement through excessive consumption, while agreeable individuals may be more sensitive to social influences and pressures related to consumption habits. Identifying these specific personality traits associated with compulsive behavior provides valuable insights for understanding consumer behavior and designing interventions or strategies aimed at mitigating compulsive tendencies. However, further research is needed to explore additional factors and their interactions in shaping compulsive behavior among consumers. The suitability and reliability of the model were assessed using commonly employed coefficients, as depicted in Table 1.

Table 1. Fit indexes

Factor	SRMR	AVE	Cronbach	R-square
Extraversion		0.66	0.898	
Agreeableness		0.59	0.712	
Openness	0.07	0.62	0.976	0,48
Compulsive online shopping		0.69	0.819	

Fit indices are statistical indicators used to assess how well a proposed model fits empirical data. These indices provide information on how well the model aligns with observed data and whether its assumptions are met. Here are some of the most commonly used fit indices. Based on the values, the model with three influences of personality traits on compulsive shopping was confirmed. Model suitability is confirmed by SRMR < (0,08), AVE > (0,5), r-square 0,48 explaining 48% variance, VIF < (5), NFI > (0,9). In parentheses are critical values for assessing suitability.

Table 2. Displays individual statistically significant direct relationships.

	Path coeff.	T statistics	p value	Result
Extraversion → Compulsive online shopping	0,431	7.159	0,000	(+) posit.
Agreeableness → Compulsive online shopping	-0,486	7.859	0,000	(-) negat.
Openness → Compulsive online shopping	0,387	3.206	0,001	(+) posit.

The discussion about the influence of personality traits, such as extraversion and openness, on compulsive behavior is important for understanding the relationships between various factors and consumer tendencies.

Our results concerning our sample of Slovak consumers indicate that positive path coefficients are observed for extraversion and openness, suggesting that extraverted and open consumers tend to exhibit higher levels of compulsive behavior. Extraversion may be associated with a greater inclination towards seeking new experiences and stimulation, which may include excessive shopping in an attempt to satisfy this need. Similarly, open individuals may be receptive to new experiences and more impulsive when purchasing new and interesting products. Conversely, agreeable individuals may have a tendency towards lower levels of compulsive behavior. This result can be interpreted in relation to agreeableness, which may be associated with higher levels of empathy and consideration for the needs of others. These individuals may be less prone to impulsive shopping and may be more motivated by personal relationships and social bonds rather than material possessions.

Overall, this finding underscores the importance of personality factors in understanding consumer tendencies and compulsive behavior. Further research can further explore these relationships and contribute to a better understanding of how personality traits influence consumer behavior.

Finally, we assessed the differences in compulsive shopping between men and women using t-tests. TABLE 3 shows the results.

Table 3. Gender differences in compulsive online shopping

		Mean	SD.	t-test	p-value
Compulsive online shopping	male	1.561	1.052	1.096	0.025
	female	1.863	0.772		

Based on Table 3, we conclude that, according to our sample of consumers, women exhibit a higher tendency toward compulsive behavior. One possible explanation for this finding may be related to societal norms and expectations regarding gender and consumer behavior. Women may feel greater pressure or expectations to conform to certain standards of appearance, fashion, or lifestyle, which could contribute to increased compulsive shopping behaviors. Additionally, women may more frequently use shopping as a mechanism for coping with stress or emotional discomfort, leading to higher levels of compulsive behavior.

Furthermore, it is important to consider the influence of marketing and advertising strategies targeted specifically at women. Advertising often promotes consumerism and materialism, which may affect women differently than men and contribute to higher levels of compulsive shopping.

However, it is important to interpret these findings cautiously and consider potential limitations of the study, such as sample representativeness and the measurement of compulsive behavior. Further research is needed to examine the underlying mechanisms that influence gender differences in compulsive shopping and to determine if similar patterns exist in different populations and cultural contexts.

## 5 Discussion

When it comes to impulsive shopping, correlations were found in the research indicating that the higher the conscientiousness, reflecting a sense of responsibility and planning, the lower the tendency for individuals to engage in impulsive buying (Aquino, Lin 2023). Similarly, neuroticism and openness show similar correlations. Neuroticism and openness were confirmed in our study, as well as in previous research (Olsen et al. 2016; Miao et al. 2019, Fenton-O'Creevy, Furnham 2020). For compulsive buying, correlations are similar with the same personality factors correlating with impulsive shopping (Aquino, Lin 2023).

In the study by Badgaiyan and Verma (2014), personality traits such as emotional stability, openness to experience, and agreeableness did not show a significant impact on impulsive buying behavior, whereas extraversion exhibited a relationship, similar to ours and several other studies (Shahjehan et al., 2012; Bratko et al., 2013). This confirms the assertion that extraverted individuals have a greater tendency to take risks and seek uncertainty (Chen, 2011). Therefore, individuals with pronounced social and active nature are more prone to impulsive shopping (Badgaiyan and Verma, 2014).

Research conducted by Rohmah and Rahayu (2023) shows that personality traits tend to be associated with impulsive buying behavior, conscientiousness, and neuroticism, which was also confirmed by us, while openness to experience, extraversion, and agreeableness, on the contrary, have no significant relationship, which is in contrast to our results. In the study by Otero-López et al. (2024), the traits of neuroticism, conscientiousness, and openness to experience were confirmed to predict compulsive buying at statistically significant levels. The results of Hendrawan and Nugroho (2018) showed that extraversion and agreeableness partially influenced impulsive buying behavior, while conscientiousness, emotional stability, and openness to experience did not affect impulsive buying behavior.

Erlangga et al. (2022) studied the influences of internal variables neuroticism, conscientiousness, pleasure, and materialism on impulsive buying and found that all have a significant impact. We also agree with the research by Aquino, Lins (2023) regarding openness, which is positively associated with impulsive buying, but the results regarding conscientiousness are contradictory, while we found conscientiousness positively associated, they confirmed a negative association. The conclusions of the study by Rohmah and Rahayu (2023) indicate that extraversion, conscientiousness, neuroticism, and openness to experience have an impact on impulsive buying behavior, while agreeableness does not have an impact on impulsive buying behavior. The group of impulsive buyers achieves statistically significantly higher scores in neuroticism (Andreassen et al., 2015; Otero-López, Villardefrancos, 2013) and lower in conscientiousness and agreeableness (Otero-López, Villardefrancos, 2013; Wang, Yang, 2008). The results showed that neuroticism and the use of coping strategies such as avoidance of problems and pious desires are risk factors that increase the propensity for compulsive shopping and problem-solving. Cognitive restructuring and social support, as well as conscientiousness, are protective factors that reduce the likelihood of a consumer becoming a compulsive shopper (Otero-López, Santiago, Castro, 2021).

The research results are thus inconclusive. Considering the outcomes of our study and our sample of Slovak respondents, we indicate that extraversion, agreeableness, and openness are personality traits that influence the tendency towards compulsive shopping.

## Literature:

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**Primary Paper Section: A****Secondary Paper Section: AE**