

Compulsive Buying and Beliefs about Digital Advertising [†]

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Abstract: In view of concerns about consumers' vulnerability to contemporary marketing tactics, this study aims to examine the extent to which compulsive buying affects beliefs about digital advertising. The results of a survey of 117 consumers suggest that compulsive buying positively affects the enjoyment of digital advertising. Subsequently, enjoyment positively affects the perceived appropriateness and behavioral impact of digital advertising. Overall, the findings indicate that a 'shopaholic' market segment appears to be more positively predisposed and therefore receptive to digital advertising. Thus, socially responsible businesses should take into account compulsive buyers' vulnerability and protect them by adjusting their advertising actions accordingly.

Keywords: compulsive buying; digital advertising; consumer beliefs; structural equation modeling

1. Objectives

Most prior studies have perceived compulsive buying as a consequence of advertising [1]. However, considering that such tendencies or behaviors may be the function of numerous external influences and personal characteristics [2], the present research views compulsive buying as a factor shaping consumer beliefs about digital advertising [3], and aims to examine the significance and magnitude of its impact.

2. Methodology

The study's non-random sample consisted of 117 participants, the majority of whom were female (73%), had attended tertiary education (68%), and were between 18–34 years of age (68%). Compulsive buying was measured with a 6-item scale [4], while beliefs about digital advertising were measured with a slightly modified and shorter version of the 'public opinion towards advertising' scale [5].

3. Results

Exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses established one factor that measured 'Compulsive Buying-CB' ($\alpha = 0.79$) and two factors that measured consumer beliefs about digital advertising ($\alpha = 0.81$ for 'Appropriateness and Behavioral Impact-ABI' and Spearman–Brown = 0.76 for 'Enjoyment'). The structural equation model ($\chi^2 = 20.18$, $p = 0.32$; CFI = 0.99; TLI = 0.99; RMSEA = 0.03; SRMR = 0.05) shows the significant and positive effects of CB on enjoyment and the effects of enjoyment on ABI (Figure 1).



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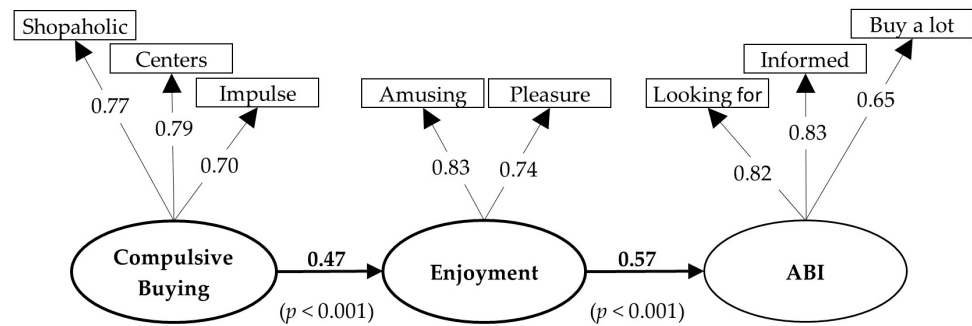


Figure 1. Path diagram.

4. Implications

A ‘shopaholic’ market segment appears more receptive to digital advertising, as its members are more likely to believe that digital ads are entertaining and engaging (i.e., enjoyable). Nevertheless, brands are advised to abstain from solely viewing this market segment as a profit-making opportunity. Because of the effectiveness of contemporary marketing tactics, socially responsible businesses should consider compulsive buyers’ vulnerability and adjust their advertising actions accordingly.

5. Originality Value

Contrary to an existing theory suggesting that compulsive buying may, in part, be the product of marketing and advertising tactics [6], the present study suggests that, when viewed as a consumer characteristic, compulsive buying shapes consumers’ beliefs about digital advertising. To the best of our knowledge, this work represents one of the few research efforts to establish a directional relationship with compulsive buying as the explanatory variable.

6. Contribution

In contrast to past research, which hypothesized that audiences with compulsive buying tendencies would have unfavorable attitudes towards advertising (Aad) [3], the present research indicates that compulsive buying is positively associated with the enjoyment of digital advertising. Furthermore, results agree with more up-to-date research about consumer materialism, which has been found to positively affect Aad [7].

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Informed Consent Statement: Informed consent was obtained from all subjects involved in the study.

Data Availability Statement: The data presented in this study are available upon request from the corresponding author. The data are not publicly available because they were provided by participants solely for the purpose of the present study.

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