



## **Religious Influences on Unrestrained Consumption**

Jaskaran Singh

Doctoral Student, Punjabi University, Patiala. Email- jaskaransinghpbi@gmail.com

Gurbir Singh

Doctoral Student, IIM Indore, India. Email- f15gurbirs@iimdr.ac.in

Satinder Kumar

Assistant Professor, Punjabi University, Patiala.

Himanshu Shekhar Srivastava

Doctoral Student, IIM Indore, India. Email- f15himanshus@iimdr.ac.in

### **Introduction and Research Gap**

Despite recurrent calls by religions to shun temptations, consumer behaviours like compulsive buying and impulsive buying are apparent in both developing and developed markets (Horváth & Adıgüzel, 2018; Yu & Bastin, 2010). Although religion seems to be against the indulgence in urges, desires and earthly possessions, research suggests that religion and brands may serve as a substitute for each other (Shachar et. al, 2011). The present situation may suggest that consumers today are balancing their religious beliefs with the consumption-oriented lifestyle. This presents before us a conundrum which is yet to be resolved. There is a possibility that motivations to follow one's religion might be the key to understand this paradoxical situation. Although there are some studies which have specifically looked at consumers behaviors which are explicitly against religion like luxury consumption (Arli et. al 2016; Veer & Shankar, 2011), there is lack of research on certain subtle behaviors like impulsive and compulsive behaviors which are seemingly against religious teachings as well. The present study bridges this gap in the extant literature and analyses the influence of extrinsic and intrinsic form of religiosity on the two unrestrained consumption constructs i.e. impulsive and compulsive buying.

### **Methodology**

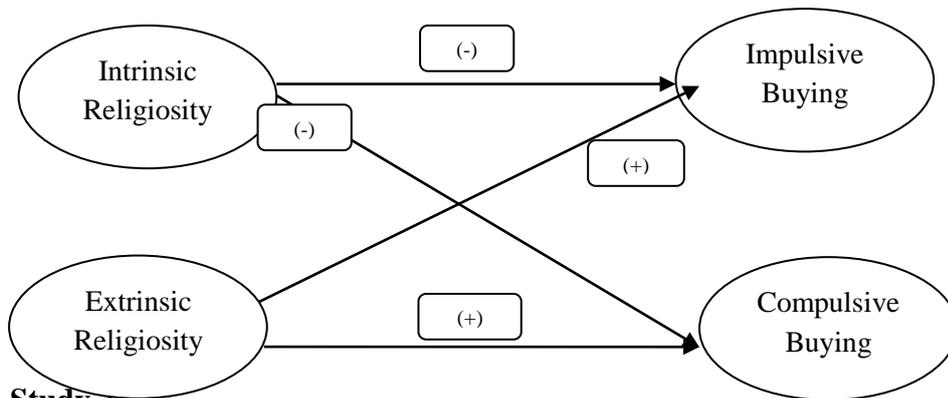
The paper includes two studies. We collected data from university students. Established scales were used to measure all the constructs. We used structural equation modelling to analyse the data.

### **Study 1**

In study-1 we hypothesize that intrinsic religiosity is negatively related with impulsive and compulsive buying whereas extrinsic religiosity is positively related with impulsive and compulsive buying. Exhibit-1 depicts the framework. To analyse the hypothesized relationships, we used the PLS-SEM approach and found that as expected the intrinsic

religiosity is negatively related with impulsive and compulsive buying whereas extrinsic religiosity has a positive relation with impulsive and compulsive buying.

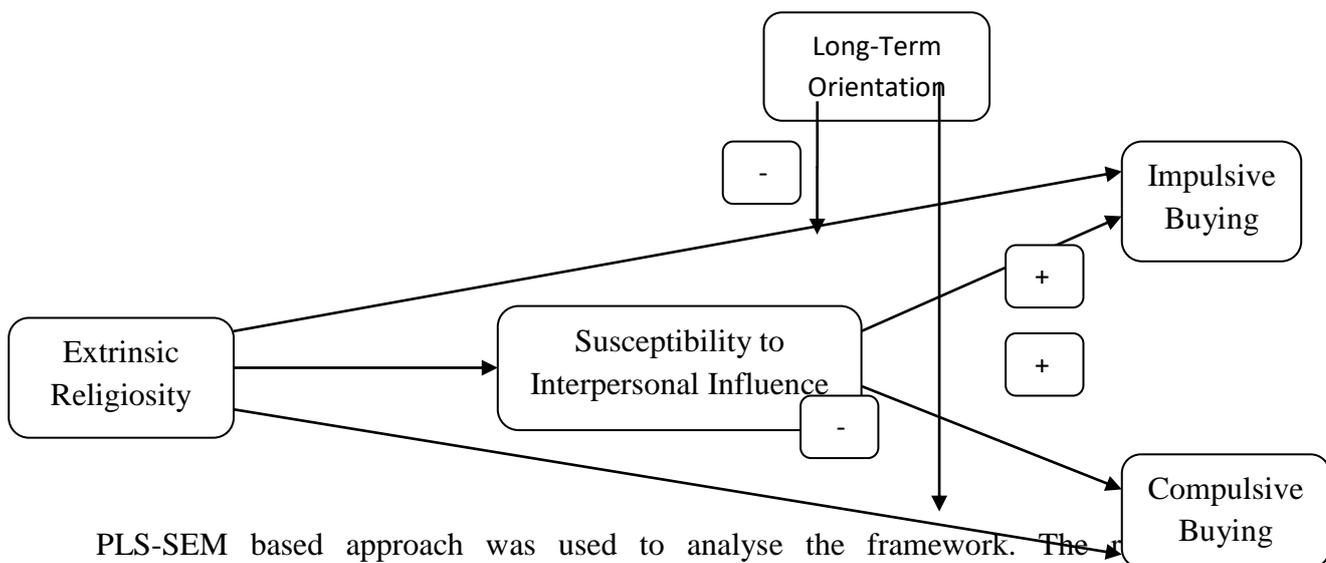
Exhibit-1



**Study 2**

While the existing research has examined the differential impact of religiosity dimensions on consumer behaviours, there are very few studies which further explain the reason for such differentiation. Thus, in the study-2 we take a step forward and attempt to explore the mechanism through which extrinsic religiosity leads to the increased indulgence in impulsive and compulsive buying. On the basis of the existing literature we hypothesized the positive relationship between extrinsic religiosity and impulsive and compulsive buying is mediated by the consumer susceptibility to interpersonal influence (normative dimension). We further hypothesized that this relationship is negatively moderated by long-term orientation such that the higher long-term orientation suppresses the effect of extrinsic religiosity on impulsive and compulsive buying. Exhibit-2 depicts the framework proposed:

Exhibit-2



PLS-SEM based approach was used to analyse the framework. The measurement model were found to be within the threshold as per the literature. The structural

model revealed that as hypothesized the relationship between extrinsic religiosity and impulsive and compulsive buying is partially mediated by the susceptibility to interpersonal influence (normative dimension). However, the results pertaining to long-term orientation were found to be in the opposite direction than what was hypothesized. The results suggest that LTO strengthens the relationship between extrinsic religiosity and unrestrained consumption. The plausible explanation for this could be the overlap between hoarding behavior and compulsive buying (Frost et. al, 2002). The reason that LTO strengthened the relationship between extrinsic religiosity and impulsive and compulsive buying could be attributed to the hoarding tendencies of those high in unrestrained consumption who purchase just because they might need them (Frost et al., 2002). Another plausible reason could be the presence of low self-control among long-term oriented individuals.

### **Discussion and Contribution**

The study provides important insights regarding the role of religion in unrestrained consumption behaviours. The study contributes to existing literature in three significant ways. Our first contribution is the rare investigation of religious variables in impulsive buying and compulsive buying frameworks. Second main contribution pertains to the investigation of differential impact of religiosity on unrestrained consumption constructs. Third important contribution is that we have also examined the underlying mechanism of the relationship.

From the managerial perspective, the present research has several important implications. Although the predominant paradigm is that religion is against the accumulation of materialistic wealth and a consumption-oriented lifestyle, the present research indicates that it is not essentially the case. The marketers can target extrinsically religious customers for materialistic buying through social influence in the form of brand communities. Considering religiosity as a segmenting variable may prove to be valuable for the marketers.

### **References**

- Arli, D., Cherrier, H., & Tjiptono, F. (2016). God blesses those who wear Prada: Exploring the impact of religiousness on attitudes toward luxury among the youth of Indonesia. *Marketing Intelligence and Planning*, 34(1), 61–79. <https://doi.org/10.1108/MIP-12-2014-0232>
- Frost, R. O., Kim, H., Morris, C., Bloss, C., Murray-close, M., & Steketee, G. (1998). Hoarding, compulsive buying and reasons for saving Randy. *Behaviour Research and Therapy*, 36, 657–664.
- Horváth, C., & Adıgüzel, F. (2018). Shopping enjoyment to the extreme: Hedonic shopping motivations and compulsive buying in developed and emerging markets. *Journal of Business Research*, 86, 300–310. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2017.07.013>
- Shachar, R., Erdem, T., Fitzsimons, G. J., & Cutright, K. M. (2011). Brands: The opiate of the non-religious masses? *Marketing Science*, 30(1), 92–110. <https://doi.org/10.1287/mksc.1100.0591>
- Veer, E., & Shankar, A. (2011). Forgive me, father, for I did not give full justification for my sins: How religious consumers justify the acquisition of material wealth. *Journal of*



*Marketing Management*, 27(5–6), 547–560.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/0267257X.2010.517707>

Yu, C., & Bastin, M. (2010). Hedonic shopping value and impulse buying behavior in transitional economies: A symbiosis in the Mainland China marketplace. *Journal of Brand Management*, 18(2), 105–114. <https://doi.org/10.1057/bm.2010.32>