



Research Paper

The Moderating Role of Mindfulness in the Relationship between Credit Card Usage and Compulsive Buying

Mohamed Shemeis¹, TalaatAsad² and Samaa Attia³, *

¹ PhD researcher, Assistant Lecturer at Raya High Institute for Management and Foreign Trade, New Damietta, Egypt

² Professor of Marketing, Faculty of Commerce, Mansoura University, Egypt

³ Professor of Marketing, Head of Business Administration Department and Vice-Dean of Post Graduate Studies and Research, Faculty of Commerce, Suez University, Egypt

Abstract:

The current study aimed to explore the direct effect of Credit Card Usage (CCU) on Compulsive Buying (CB). Additionally, examining Mindfulness (MF) as a moderator in the relationship between CCU and CB. A questionnaire list was used for collecting data from shopping malls' customers in North Delta (Egypt). The study used a sample of 384 by adopting systematic random sampling. 81.7% of these questionnaires were free of lost data. Therefore, 314 questionnaires were valid for statistical analysis by using SPSS V.25 and Smart PLS3 software. The results found that CCU has a direct, positive, and significant effect on CB. Moreover, MF had a moderating effect on the positive relationship between CCU and CB by reducing this positive relationship. Therefore, the current study suggested that Mindfulness is a useful treatment approach for compulsive buyers to reduce their tendency towards CB.

Keywords: Credit Card Usage (CCU); Mindfulness (MF); Compulsive Buying (CB).

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I. INTRODUCTION:

Shopping in the modern world is not used only to fulfill basic needs such as food, water, clothing, etc. This is often done without actual thinking or evaluating or understanding the need for the products or services mentioned. The purchase can be impulsive and compulsive from the individual's point of view because the products or services can be bought even without realizing the need for them. Compulsive buying is categorized as obsessive shopping, uncontrolled desire to buy, and frequent buying episodes that ultimately lead to negative outcomes (Singh & Nayak, 2016).

Many people participate in the purchase of excessive quantities of material goods that lead to a great impact on a person's life and may lead to uncontrollable behaviors. This behavior is referred to as compulsive buying behavior which has become the focus of attention of many researchers. Cases of compulsive buying have increased rapidly in recent years around the world. It has become a central and important issue among various researchers (Iqbal & Aslam, 2016).

The credit card has become a basic feature of the modern era, especially with the open civilization that exists all over the world. Its use has evolved to become one of the most convenient and popular payment methods nowadays. Everyone who uses a credit card must be fully aware and knowledgeable of how to use and manage it properly because misuse of a credit card brings many disadvantages (Limbu, 2017).

It may be easy for an individual to rush toward life without stopping to notice many events around him. Giving the individual more attention to himself at the present moment of his thoughts, feelings, and emotions enables him to improve his psychological well-being which would lead to an effective regulation for emotions, feelings, and the ability to not be swept away towards harmful behaviors. Therefore, mindfulness is very important to help in regulating emotions and making the individual move away from harmful behaviors. The importance of using mindfulness is to help organize emotions and make the individual move away from harmful behaviors to him and his well-being. In addition, mindfulness enhances awareness and practices that will enable the individual to develop his personality traits and his psychological well-being towards better. Furthermore, mindfulness helps consumers to use their credit cards wisely (Cacioppe, 2017). Thus, this paper seeks to explore

the possibility that mindfulness may have a moderating role in the relationship between credit card usage and the attitude towards compulsive buying. Further, if the results prove the possibility of the moderating role of mindfulness in this relationship, mindfulness can be used as a therapeutic approach that reduces the consumer's tendency toward compulsive buying behavior.

Based on the above, the current paper will present the following sections: conceptual background, hypotheses development, methodology, results, discussion, conclusion, and limitations.

II. CONCEPTUAL BACKGROUND

Compulsive buying can be regarded as the inappropriate preoccupation with shopping which is accompanied by irresistible difficulty and is often followed by the purchase of goods that are not used or are not needed. Thus, it may cause financial problems (Li et al., 2014; Roberts et al., 2019).

Also, Singh & Nayak, (2016) defined compulsive buying as a condition that occurs when a buyer loses control of the purchase and buy more unnecessary products than he can buy. Therefore, Khodayari et al., (2012) stated that compulsive buying is accompanied by three basic structures that are closely associated with it:

1. Strong emotional activation resulting from an increase in psychological tension.
2. High cognitive control which is the recognition of the compulsive buyer that purchasing will reduce the stress that he has.
3. The high interaction that seeks to reduce anxiety instead of owning the purchased item.

In the same context, Ahmed et al., (2014) mentioned that there are three main features of compulsive buyers as follows:

1. The purchasing experience cannot be controlled for him.
2. The compulsive buyer cannot control himself and prevent himself from making purchases.
3. The compulsive buyer continues to make purchases without regard to any negative impacts of these operations on his personal and social life.

Boden et al., (2020) defined credit card as a payment tool that enables the consumer to make purchasing transactions without having cash. According to Pradhan et al., (2018), credit card is a payment and cash withdrawal tool issued by a commercial bank to the customer, which is an important tool that enables the individual to obtain goods and services. Therefore, from the definitions of credit card, it seems to be a double-edged weapon that can be useful and can cause damage. Therefore, everyone who uses a credit card should learn how to manage it correctly.

The credit card has some features such as; It is an easy, secure, and reliable payment tool, when using a credit card correctly, it provides flexibility and financial security, its users can use it to accept transactions from all over the world, presented some features for credit card usage like getting shopping discount and the capability of overdraft, refereed to credit card features as it is easy to carry, pocked-size, and lightweight, and it can be used in online transactions like booking hotels and airline tickets (Gan et al., 2016; Lin et al., 2019; Santos et al., 2019).

On the other hand, credit card misuses cause some disadvantages like; Credit card misuse reefers to overspending and irresponsible using of credit card which causes harmful results, when a user misuses the credit cards, he increases his credit card debts. thus, increasing the interest as his future resources are transferred to the current moment support and to pay the interest because of increasing his credit card debts. therefore, the consumer tends to choose to enjoy the current moment and settle debts in the future, Credit card misuse may lead to delinquency which is known as a situation through which credit cardholders can't pay the monthly required payment. Moreover, it leads to an increase in interest rates and possibly bankruptcy, and Misuse of credit card leads the consumer to follow certain harmful behaviors; such as engaging in impulsive purchases, exceeding the credit limit for spending, and not paying attention to product prices (Kim et al., 2018; Zainudin et al., 2019).

Mindfulness is a somewhat modern concept in the administrative field, the interest in it came through the important role it plays in various fields in individual and organizational life. Especially as it has proven that the individual's attentive behavior pushes him to be more patient and focus only on positive behaviors and reducing negative behaviors. When the individual uses mindfulness, he can accurately analyze the situations that he faces which leads to make decisions correctly and generate many positive psychological outcomes like subjective happiness, less negative affect, and lower stress reactivity (Zheng et al., 2020; Abujaradeh et al., 2020).

Zivnuska et al., (2016); Lippincott, (2018) agreed that mindfulness is a degree of sensory awareness and mental flexibility that the individual possesses which enables him to analyze situations and events around him. Thus, he refines his expectations for the future. Moreover, Moscardo, (2017) defined mindfulness as an active state of perception, where attention is focused on the immediate preparation for the development of

routine behaviors which is associated with a feeling of individual control over his behaviors leading to positive emotional outcomes.

Baron et al., (2018); Altizer, (2017); Burrows, (2017) agreed that there is critical importance of mindfulness that can be mentioned as follows:

- 1) Contributing in increasing attention focus: which helps the individual to retrieve his previous thoughts and behaviors. With the increase in the internal observation power individual can exercises not to make previous thoughts and behaviors dominate the reactions in different situations. Thus, it can be understood that ideas are results of previous experiences, as they may be suitable for past events, but they are not necessarily appropriate for current events.
- 2) Raising the creative capabilities: This is because the creative abilities hide within the individual's mind which are prevented from going out and emancipation due to the negative thoughts surrounding him. Therefore, mindfulness works to curb those negative thoughts and liberate the individual's creative abilities. Moreover, what helps mindfulness in this is its ability to make the individual focus only on the moment in which he lives without allowing previous fears to cripple his ideas and creativity.
- 3) An effective way to reduce stress: The harm that accompanies a feeling of stress is not only limited to the person's performance. Stress can also cause serious harm to the person himself like depression and insomnia. Therefore, the importance of mindfulness is highlighted by the fact that it helps to alleviate feelings of stress and transfer the individual to a state of calm and mental clarity.
- 4) Automatic behavior modification: This is done by researching traditional methods of behavior in a new way. Moreover, modify and improve these methods for more desired results.
- 5) Enhancing the individual's ability to manage the surrounding environment by enhancing qualitative responses to face stress.
- 6) Contributing in improving self-regulation of thoughts, emotions, and behaviors. in addition, to increase self-compassion.
- 7) Helping to make decisions properly without being impulsive.

According to (Andrews et al., 2014), Despite the increased interest of mindfulness in various sciences, it has not been intensely focused on administrative sciences. Also, levels of mindfulness differ in different people and situations. Besides, because all people can be alert and aware, training based on mindfulness can lead to positive results. For example, previous studies have shown that individuals who have high levels of mindfulness are less emotional, tired, and stressed than individuals who have low levels of Mindfulness.

Fischer et al., (2017) agreed with Rosenberg, (2004) regarding the relationship between mindfulness and continuous consumption on four possible mechanisms for mindfulness to reduce continuous consumption. As mindfulness works to reduce the gap between the individual's attitude and behavior. Besides, caring for non-material values to promote well-being and behavior commensurate with society. The results concluded that the potential mechanisms that mindfulness can work to reduce continuous consumption are as follows:

- 1) Disrupting routine consumption actions.
- 2) Promote more congruence regarding the behavior gap.
- 3) Going to enhance unmaterialistic values and develop them within the consumer.
- 4) Improving consumer welfare by enhancing the behavior that society supports.

Also, Fischer et al., (2017) added that mindfulness shifts consumption from a fictional impulsive emotional state to a conscious choice emanating from within the consumer. In addition, Dhandra& Park, (2018), and Shenoy et al., (2014) indicated that mindfulness guides the consumer towards determining purchasing options. Thus, improving decision-making in general. It also allows him to address the new traits he has acquired through mindfulness practices that will lead to more focused options.

Based on the above theoretical discussions, we have developed a conceptual framework that has direct and indirect relationships, depicted in Figure1. The literature support for the proposed hypotheses are presented in the subsequent sections.

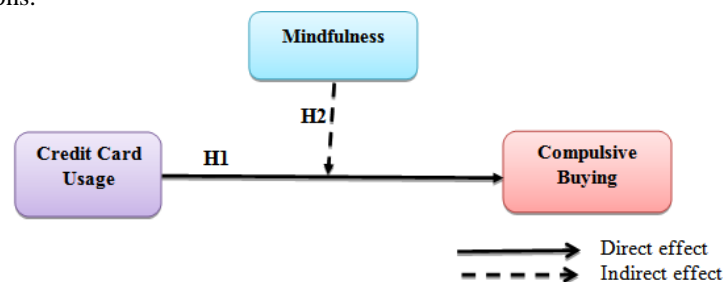


Figure 1. Research framework

III. HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

Credit Card Usage and Compulsive Buying

Some previous studies tended to examine the relationship between credit card usage and compulsive buying. Park & Burnes, (2005) found that credit card usage has a positive effect on compulsive buying. Also, Norum, (2008); Phau& Woo, (2008) indicated a positive effect of credit card usage on compulsive buying behavior.

Additionally, Lo & Harvey, (2011) showed that Taiwanese and British compulsive buyers misuse credit card usage and they are exposed to overspend. Further, Palan et al., (2011) showed a positive correlation between credit card misuse and compulsive buying. Besides, Veludo-de-Oliveira et al., (2014) found that the misuse of credit cards significantly increases compulsive buying.

On the other hand, Khare, (2013) and Pradhan et al., (2018) found that there is not a significant effect on credit card usage on compulsive buying. Therefore, the authors agree with the previous studies that confirmed the significant relationship between CCU and CB. Thus, the following hypothesis can be formulated:
H1: Credit Card Usage (CCU) has a positive significant effect on Compulsive Buying (CB).

The moderating role of Mindfulness

Ndubisi, (2014) suggested future research to expand in understanding the role of mindfulness in consumer's purchasing behavior especially exploring the role of mindfulness in the consumer's attitude towards compulsive buying behavior which is considered by the current study to be a very good suggestion. Armstrong, (2012) stated that despite the lack of research that used mindfulness in consumption. This study revealed that mindfulness is negatively related to compulsive consumption and positively related to improving well-being. As it leads to a change in the self-regulation of compulsive buyers' emotions. Therefore, mindfulness is beneficial for individual, social, and environmental well-being. Moreover, the results added that the use of mindfulness is a distinct way of thinking and managing to meet the needs of the individual's well-being by transforming virtual perspectives on consumption through psychological motivations. Accordingly, the study presented a set of results according to which mindfulness leads to improve well-being and reduces dependence on overconsumption behavior to meet emotional or symbolic needs.

Spinella et al., (2013) mentioned that mindfulness has a negative effect on the attitude towards compulsive buying behavior, drugs, and alcohol addiction. Thus, this result supported the use of mindfulness as a treatment for drugs, alcohol, and compulsive buying behavior because of its benefit in treating these addictive problems. Also, Benson & Eisenach, (2013) indicated the possibility of using mindfulness in treating compulsive buying disorder through a treatment program targeting compulsive buyers. The results concluded that mindfulness is negatively related to compulsive buying and contributes to its treatment. This means that mindfulness is an effective treatment method for compulsive buying to treat consumers who are affected by compulsive buying disorder and help them to stop excessive consumption.

Armstrong& Jackson, (2015) found a negative correlation between mindfulness and the attitude towards compulsive buying behavior. Alemis& Yap, (2013) indicated that mindfulness is a perfect resolve for consumers to be able to manage their financial situations. Thus, mindfulness helps consumers to use their credit cards wisely. Also, Celsi et al., (2017) found that Mindfulness helps consumers to be able to manage their debt. Therefore, when consumers use their credit cards, they can control their impulsivity to buy more products. Thus, the following hypothesis can be formulated:

H2: Mindfulness (MF) moderates the relationship between Credit Card Usage (CCU) and Compulsive Buying (CB).

IV. METHODOLOGY

Survey measures

A survey using questionnaires was adopted to collect data for research hypotheses testing. For measuring the research variables, the questionnaire included measures for every variable. The scale of Roberts & Jones, (2001) was adopted to measure credit card usage (CCU) which included 3 items. As for measuring mindfulness (MF), (Brown & Ryan, 2003; Langer, 2004) scales were used including 6 items. Finally, (Faber & O'Guinn, 1988; Ridgway, 2008) scales were adopted to measure compulsive buying (CB) including 7 items. Five-point Likert scale was used for measuring all variables' items ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

Sampling technique

This research is considered a small part of a large study, which relied on the customers of shopping malls in North Delta in Egypt represented in Mansoura and Damietta. A systematic random sample approach was selected. Whereas the most famous shopping malls in North Delta numbering 8 were chosen divided equally between Mansoura and Damietta. 384 questionnaires were distributed to shopping malls' customers to

collect data. 314 questionnaires were valid for statistical analysis and free of lost data were retrieved with a response rate of 81.7%.

Sample characteristics

The respondents' demographic profiles summary can be shown in table 1 through the results of the descriptive analysis using SPSS V25 software. This table shows the frequencies and percentages of shopping malls' customers. There are 314 respondents, 77.7% were females, and 22.3% were males. The age category less than 30 years was represented by 43.6%, while 29% of the sample respondents were ranged from 30 to less than 40 years. The age category 40 to less than 50 years represented by 19.4% of respondents. 8% was the percentage that represents the age category more than 50 years. 56.1% of the sample respondents were from Mansoura. While the percentage of sample respondents who live in Damietta was 43.9%. As for the educational level, the category bachelor's degree scored 64.6% of the sample respondents. 25.2% was the percentage which the category post-graduate scored. Finally, the category not graduated from university got 10.2% of the sample respondents.

Table 1. Respondent demographics profile Summary.

Demographic variables	Description	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	70	22.3%
	Female	244	77.7%
Age	Less than 30 years	137	43.6%
	30 to less than 40 years	91	29%
	40 to less than 50 years	61	19.4%
	More than 50 years	25	8%
Place of Resident	Mansoura	176	56.1%
	Damietta	138	43.9%
Education Level	Not Graduated from university	32	10.2%
	Bachelor's degree	203	64.6%
	Post-graduate	79	25.2%

V. RESULTS

For testing the research hypotheses, Smart PLS3 software was used. As for the descriptive analysis SPSS V25 software was used.

Descriptive analysis

Table 2 summarizes the results of the descriptive analysis

Table 2. Summary of Descriptive analysis

Variables*	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis	Cronbach's Alpha
CCU	3.03	0.950	0.190	-0.838	0.776
MF	3.53	0.715	-0.961	1.215	0.822
CB	3.12	0.728	0.157	-0.261	0.764

*CCU= Credit Card Usage, MF= Mindfulness, CB= Compulsive Buying

Table 2 shows that the values of Cronbach's Alpha for all variables reached above 0.70. This result means that the internal consistency for all variables is accepted as mentioned by (Ketchen & Bergh, 2006). Besides, the values of Skewness and Kurtosis for all variables ranged between ± 1.5 . According to (Kline, 2011), this result means that all variables fulfill the requirements of the normal distribution of data.

Convergent Validity

The results of convergent validity for all variables can be indicated in the following table 3

Table 3. convergent validity

Variables*	Mean	SD	CR	AVE
CCU	3.03	0.950	0.871	0.692
MF	3.53	0.715	0.858	0.616
CB	3.12	0.728	0.833	0.521

*CCU= Credit Card Usage, MF= Mindfulness, CB= Compulsive Buying

The results find that all variables' CR values were higher than 0.70. Further, all variables' AVE values were higher than 0.50. Therefore, according to (Ketchen & Bergh, 2006; Fornell and Larcker, 1981) these values were accepted. Thus, all variables' convergent validity was acceptable.

VI. DISCUSSION

The main objective of the current research is to examine the direct effect of credit card usage on the consumer's attitude towards compulsive buying behavior. Also, exploring the moderating effect of mindfulness in the relationship between credit card usage and compulsive buying. Smart PLS3 was used to evaluate the relationship between the study variables. In the light of the conceptual background, the current study proposed 2 hypotheses. According to the results, all hypotheses were supported. The results relevant to previous studies follows:

As for H1, it was supported. This result is in an agreement with some previous studies such as (Park & Burnes, 2005; Norum, 2008; Phau& Woo, 2008; Palan et al., 2011; Veludo-de-Oliveira et al., 2014). On the other hand, the current study result is in contrast with the results extracted from (Khare, 2013; Pradhan et al., 2018) which indicated that there is not any significant relationship between credit card usage and compulsive buying.

As for H2, it was supported. Theis results supported the current study suggestion which is indicated that mindfulness can moderate the relationship between credit card usage and compulsive buying by dampens this positive relationship.

VII. CONCLUSION

The proposed framework for the current study estimates the relationship between credit card, mindfulness, and compulsive buying, directly and indirectly. Credit card usage as independent variable, compulsive buying as a dependent variable, and mindfulness as a moderator variable. This proposed framework was established through the researcher's observation of the involvement of a large number of consumers in the attitude towards compulsive buying behavior in shopping malls supported by a pilot study and in the light of previous studies as well.

Some previous studies found a significant relationship between credit card usage and compulsive buying behavior. The current study is considered the first of its kind aimed to examine mindfulness as a moderator variable in the relationship between credit card usage and the attitude towards compulsive buying. In the light of the study results, consumers who are affected by compulsive buying behavior should use their credit cards wisely and manage their financial position. Also, consumers should use mindfulness practices to reduce their tendency towards compulsive buying, as the results found that mindfulness dampens the positive relationship between credit card usage and compulsive buying.

VIII. IMPLICATIONS

8.1. Theoretical Implications

The current study contributes to the body of knowledge of the existing literature on credit card usage, mindfulness, and compulsive buying. It is considered as the first study which examined mindfulness as a moderator variable in the relationship between credit card usage and compulsive buying. Therefore, the current study has some theoretical implications, which can be summarized in the following points:

1. The current study contributes to a deeper understanding of the relationship between credit card usage and compulsive buying which represented the financial ability of the consumer to engage in compulsive buying behavior.
2. Using mindfulness as a moderator variable in the relationship between credit card usage and the attitude towards compulsive buying.
3. The results enriched the current literature on compulsive buying, especially in Egypt, which many researchers have not mentioned. Also, the results of the current study confirmed that compulsive buying is a problem that many consumers suffer from.

8.2. Practical Implications

The current study was constructed based on a lake of studies, which concentrated on the relationship between credit card usage and compulsive buying behavior for the Egyptian consumers in North Delta. Furthermore, exploring the moderating effect of mindfulness in this relationship. Therefore, the researcher tended to examine these relationships empirically in the light of the literature review. The results of the current study provide some practical implications for consumers as follows:

1. Providing a full understanding of the effect of credit card usage on consumer's tendency towards compulsive buying behavior. Credit card is one of the most important factors that affect the tendency towards compulsive buying behavior. Thus, consumers should be aware of their use of credit cards.
2. The results founded that consumers tend to compulsive buying behavior. Therefore, consumers should be careful so as not to increase their level of impulsivity towards compulsive buying.
3. The results provide a treatment method that helps compulsive buyers to reduce their attitude towards compulsive buying represented in mindfulness. The current study has shown that mindfulness plays the role of a

moderator variable in the relationship between credit card usage and compulsive buying. Also, mindfulness reduces the positive relationship between credit card usage and compulsive buying.

IX. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS

The current study aimed to provide a model that demonstrates the effect of credit card usage on the consumer's attitude towards compulsive buying behavior by using mindfulness as a moderator variable. Despite the theoretical contributions made by the current study in light of the hypothesis results test, there are some limitations characterize the current study, which could lead researchers to suggestions for future research ideas, which can be explained in the following points:

1. The current study aimed to examine the effect of credit card usage on consumer attitude towards compulsive buying behavior, but it did not use consumers' money attitude, which has a central role in diagnosing consumer financial trends through which it is possible to predict the consumer's attitude towards compulsive buying behavior or not. Therefore, the researcher recommends for future research to explore the effect of money attitude on the attitude towards compulsive buying.

2. The current study used only credit card usage as an effective factor in consumers' tendency towards compulsive buying behavior. Therefore, the researcher recommends examining the influence of other factors that may affect the consumer's attitude towards compulsive buying, such as the big five personality traits, unplanned purchases, materialism, and elements of the promotional mix.

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