

# Compulsive buying from the perspective of social psychology: A scoping review

Compra compulsiva na perspectiva da psicologia social: Uma revisão de escopo

La compra compulsiva desde la perspectiva de la psicología social:

Una revisión de alcance

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**Abstract:** The present study aimed to review the literature on compulsive buying (CB) in the field of social psychology (SP), using a scoping review methodology. In total, 3426 articles were identified, of which 24 met the inclusion criteria and were analyzed. The results demonstrated that: (1) the most studied population is young university adults; (2) there is no consensus regarding the gender most likely to buy compulsively; (3) the most used scales to assess CC are the Compulsive Buying Scale and the Richmond Compulsive Buying Scale; (4) divergences were identified in the naming of the scales; (5) research to explain CC was divided into constructs from different areas (e.g., money management, influence of advertising, self-esteem, depression, anxiety) and constructs from social psychology; (6) within the SP framework, the most used variable is materialistic values; (7) most research adopted a quantitative and cross-sectional approach. We concluded that the results presented can contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the characteristics of current studies on CB in the field of SP. The findings are expected to assist and encourage the development of new research in the area.

**Keywords:** compulsive buying; shopping addiction; pathological buying; social psychology

**Resumo:** O presente estudo objetivou realizar um levantamento das pesquisas sobre compra compulsiva (CC) na área da psicologia social (PS). Para tanto, realizou-se uma revisão da literatura de acordo com a metodologia scoping review. Encontraram-se 3426 artigos, dos quais 24 atenderam aos critérios de inclusão e foram analisados. Identificou-se que: (1) a população mais estudada é jovens adultos universitários; (2) não há consenso quanto ao gênero mais propenso a comprar compulsivamente; (3) as escalas mais utilizadas para avaliar a CC são a Compulsive Buying Scale e a Richmond Compulsive Buying Scale; (4) foram identificadas divergências na nomeação das escalas; (5) as variáveis estudadas para explicar a CC foram divididas em construtos de diversas áreas (e.g., gestão do dinheiro, influência da publicidade, autoestima, depressão, ansiedade) e construtos da OS; (6) dentro do enquadramento da PS a variável mais utilizada são os valores materialistas; (7) a maioria das pesquisas adotaram uma abordagem quantitativa e transversal. Diante do exposto, conclui-se que os resultados apresentados podem contribuir para o conhecimento das características dos estudos sobre CC no campo da PS. Espera-se que o conjunto de informações apresentados auxiliem e incentivem o desenvolvimento de novas pesquisas na área.

**Palavras-chave:** compra compulsiva; vício em compras; compra patológica; psicologia social

**Resumen:** El presente estudio tuvo como objetivo realizar un relevamiento de investigaciones sobre compras compulsivas (CC) en el área de la psicología social (PS). Para ello se realizó una revisión de la literatura según la metodología de revisión del alcance. Se encontraron 3426 artículos, de los cuales 24 cumplieron los criterios de inclusión y fueron analizados. Se identificó que: (1) la población más estudiada son los adultos jóvenes universitarios; (2) no existe consenso respecto del género con mayor probabilidad de comprar compulsivamente; (3) las escalas más utilizadas para evaluar el CC son la Escala de Compra Compulsiva y la Escala de Compra Compulsiva de Richmond; (4) se identificaron divergencias en la denominación de las escalas; (5) la investigación para explicar el CC se dividió en constructos de diferentes áreas (p. ej., administración del dinero, influencia de la publicidad, autoestima, depresión, ansiedad) y constructos de la psicología social; (6) en el marco del PS, la variable más utilizada son los valores materialistas; (7) la mayoría de las investigaciones adoptaron un enfoque cuantitativo y transversal. En vista de lo anterior, se concluye que los resultados presentados pueden contribuir al conocimiento de las características de los estudios sobre CC en el campo de la PS. Se espera que el conjunto de información presentada ayude y fomente el desarrollo de nuevas investigaciones en el área.

**Palabras clave:** compra compulsiva; adicción a las compras; compra patológica; psicología social

People are embedded in a society that promotes consumerism and emphasizes appearances (Baudrillard, 1998). Purchasing behavior is a fundamental aspect of modern life, primarily serving to address individual needs and not inherently associated with negative consequences (Miller, 2012). However, when buying behavior begins to interfere with an individual's social, professional, or family functioning, it requires closer attention (Ridgway et al., 2008). In this context, compulsive buying emerges as a complex phenomenon, which goes beyond the consumption of necessities, and is influenced by multiple individual, social and cultural factors (Bauman, 2007; Castellanos et al., 2016; Harnish et al., 2019).

Given the impact of compulsive buying on mental health and social relationships, it is essential to investigate how this behavior is understood and studied in the field of social psychology. For this purpose, the present work aims to carry out a survey of research on compulsive buying (CB) in the area of social psychology (SP)

Historically, CB research has two important frameworks. The first was introduced in 1914 when the German psychiatrist Emile Kraepelin elaborated the term *oniomania* ("onio" means, in ancient Greek, "for sale" and "mania" means, "madness") to describe compulsive buying disorder. The second framework was proposed in 1994, when McElroy and collaborators proposed the first diagnostic criterion for CB, which was considered an important framework for understanding this condition (Lejoyeux & Weinstein, 2013).

Even with several advances in the field, it is possible to observe a great variety of terms used to refer to this phenomenon (e.g., compulsive buying, excessive buying, pathological buying, among others). In this article, the terms compulsive buying and pathological buying are used synonymously. In addition, it is important to highlight that there is still a debate in the scientific community on whether CB represents an impulse control disorder, obsessive-compulsive or an addiction (Aboujaoude, 2014; Piquet-Pessôa et al., 2014; Thomas et al., 2023). Currently, the fifth edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5) in the chapter Substance-Related and Addictive Disorders, only cites addiction by shopping and does not formally include it. Furthermore, it is important to highlight that compulsive buying disorder is considered a disorder according to the ICD-11, like other specified impulse control disorders (6C7Y; American Psychiatric Association, 2014).

Therefore, it is important to recognize the severity of this phenomenon, because CB has a prevalence of 5% in the general population and is present in different cultural contexts and can cause suffering and negatively impact people's lives (Black, 2012; Maraz et al., 2016). Therefore, recognizing its significance is relevant to ensure that affected individuals receive adequate support and treatment to deal with the negative consequences that this condition can cause in their daily lives (Koran et al., 2006; Müller et al., 2019). CB is also often associated with other psychological problems such as depression, anxiety and stress (Müller et al., 2011).

Regarding the definition, the one adopted in this article is the one that understands CB as an addiction. Andreassen (2014, p. 198) defined it as: "being excessively preoccupied with shopping, driven by an uncontrollable motivation to buy, and investing so much time and effort in shopping that it harms other important areas of life". Shopping dependence should be treated as a behavioral dependence, whose basic criteria are salience, mood modification, tolerance, abstinence, conflict, relapse and resulting problems (Andreassen et al., 2015). In addition, the compulsive shopper may feel great

psychological distress from having to deal with constant exposure to consumption stimuli (e.g., advertisements), inability to resist impulse buying, and suffering from the losses that compulsive shopping can generate (Méndez et al., 2022; Valence et al., 1988).

The issue of CB in the individual-society relationship has been a concern of professionals in human and social sciences (Donnelly et al., 2015; Mikołajczak-Degrauwe & Brengman, 2014; Sharif et al., 2022; Tarka & Harnish, 2021). The variety of factors present in this CB may be an indication of the importance of studying it from different angles. That said, the study of CB from a psychological perspective, especially in the field of SP, may be considered fundamental, since the valorization of consumerism in society may make psychologically vulnerable people more prone to compulsive buying (Otero-López et al., 2023).

Thus, it is essential to highlight that SP studies examine how people are influenced by the social environment and how their interactions with others affect their behavior (Oliveira et al., 2020). Various social factors, such as peer pressure, the search for positive emotions, social norms, and the desire to belong to certain groups, can trigger CB behaviors (Hu & Liu, 2020; Thomas et al., 2023; Zheng et al., 2020a). As such, shopping can be used as a tool to align self-image to the expectations or standards set by desired social groups, reinforcing the connection between consumption and social identity (Ghiglini & Langtry, 2023).

In light of the above, mapping and identifying the studies that have been developed so far on CB in the area of PS is essential to gain a general overview of what has been researched. For this purpose, a scoping review was conducted considering the importance of this type of study to obtain a quick mapping of a given topic (Pham et al., 2014)

The scoping technique aims to map, synthesize and disseminate, using a rigorous, transparent and replicable method to gather evidence present in the literature on a given topic, having an exploratory and descriptive nature (Peters et al., 2020). Therefore, this paper aims to answer the following question: what are the characteristics of studies on compulsive buying in the area of social psychology?

## Method

The current scoping review followed the methodological guidelines developed by the Joanna Briggs Institute (JBI) (Aromataris & Munn, 2020) and the Checklist Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic reviews and Meta-Analyses extension for Scoping Reviews (PRISMA-ScR) (Tricco et al., 2018). The review was registered in the Open Science Framework with identification (<https://doi.org/10.17605/OSF.IO/VEQXR>) and followed the following steps: (1) elaborate the research question and define the descriptors, (2) identify the relevant studies, (3) select the studies, (4) extract the data, (5) present and discuss the results.

### Search strategy

This review sought to answer the question "what are the characteristics of studies on compulsive buying in the area of social psychology?", based on the acronym PCC (population, concept and context). The population consisted of samples of adolescents and/or adults, the concept was about CB studies, and the context was established as the field of SP.

From this strategy, the terms "Compulsive Buying", Compulsive Buying, Compulsive Shopping, Pathological Buying, Pathological Shopping were defined as descriptors. This strategy was elaborated aiming to contemplate a wide literature on the subject, so that no restriction filters were applied in the databases, in which the searches were performed from the string ("Compulsive Buying" OR "Compulsive Buying" OR "Compulsive Shopping" OR "Pathological Buying" OR "Pathological Shopping").

It is worth noting that the strategy of not applying initial restriction filters in the databases was adopted considering that most research on CB is conducted in areas such as management, *marketing* and medicine, which use different approaches and methodologies to explore consumer behavior. For example, Santos et al. (2020) conducted a study examining the influence of digital *marketing* on purchasing behavior and proposed a research agenda on the subject. This example illustrates how other areas have produced significant knowledge on the subject. However, this research focuses exclusively on works developed in psychology, especially in SP. To minimize the exclusion of relevant studies within this selection, we opted to initially perform a broad, unrestricted search. Next, we applied manual filters and conducted a thorough review of the articles against the eligibility criteria. Although some losses are

inevitable, this approach aimed to ensure that the selected studies were in line with the research objectives.

### **Eligibility criteria**

The inclusion criteria were previously established, considering empirical studies that dealt exclusively with CB, indexed in psychological databases, and that measured some SP construct related to the topic. In addition, only articles published in English, Portuguese or Spanish were included. It was essential that all the inclusion criteria were fully met for the study to be selected. On the other hand, the exclusion criteria included books and book chapters, reviews, theses, dissertations, scale validation studies, articles that were not published in the field of psychology and those whose full text was not available.

### **Selection of studies**

Initially, the metadata were extracted in RIS format from the articles searched in the following databases and their respective search engines, such as PsycInfo and PsycArticles (PsycNET); SciELO (Web of Science); Pubmed (National Library of Medicine); LILACS and Index Psi through the Virtual Health Library (BVS). Access to all the databases was made from the CAPES Periodicals.

All the metadata were exported to the Rayyan.ia software on 10/11/2022, in which duplicate studies were removed and a blinding process was implemented, in which, initially, each judge evaluated the articles independently, without access to the evaluations of the others, guaranteeing impartiality. After this phase, the blinding was removed and, if differences arose, the judges discussed the differences to reach a consensus. When consensus was not possible, a third judge was consulted to resolve the discrepancies.

In the first stage of evaluation, studies were excluded by reading the titles and abstracts, removing all those that were not within the scope of this review. In the second stage, the studies were read in their entirety to identify those that were fully available and that met the inclusion criteria for study eligibility.

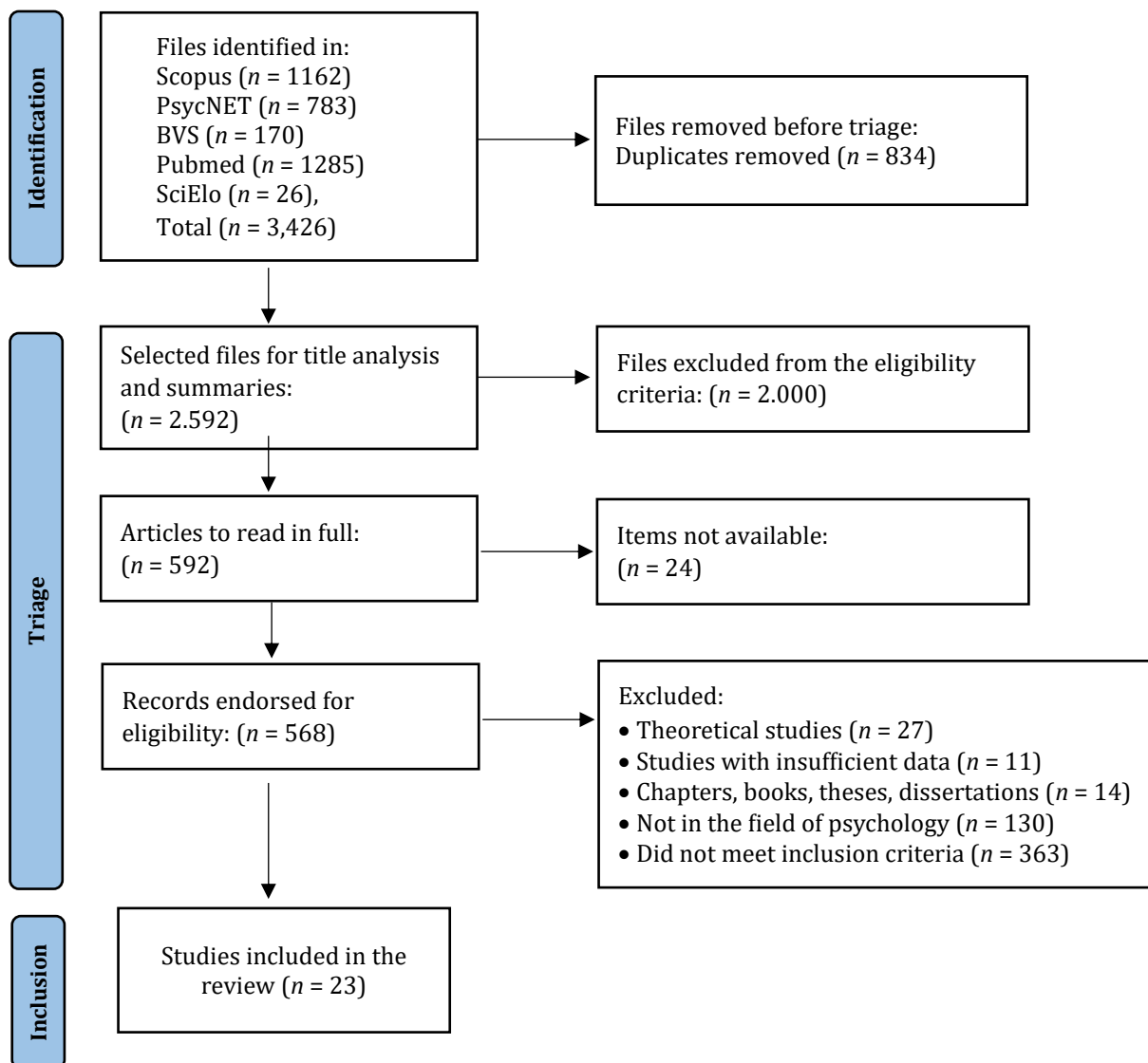
### **Data extraction and synthesis**

For all the studies, data on the publication, the sample, the objective, the measures on CB and the measures to evaluate other variables were extracted. Data on variables, measures, procedures and results will be presented in a qualitative synthesis, using a descriptive approach.

## **Results**

In the initial search of scientific databases, 3426 articles were retrieved from the following databases: Scopus ( $n = 1162$ ), PsycNET ( $n = 783$ ), BVS ( $n = 170$ ), Pubmed ( $n = 1285$ ), SciELO ( $n = 26$ ), of which 834 duplicates were removed. A total of 2592 publications were analyzed by title and abstract, and 2000 studies were eliminated because they did not meet the inclusion criteria. Thus, 592 articles were evaluated in full, while 24 were excluded because they were not available for reading. Of the 568 remaining articles to be reviewed in full for eligibility, 545 were excluded, because these were: theoretical studies ( $n = 27$ ); studies with insufficient data ( $n = 11$ ); chapters, books, theses, dissertations ( $n = 14$ ); they were not from the field of psychology ( $n = 130$ ); they did not meet the inclusion criteria ( $n = 363$ ). In total, 23 articles were included for review (see Figure 1). In addition, a summary of the general characteristics of interest of the included studies is provided in Table 2.

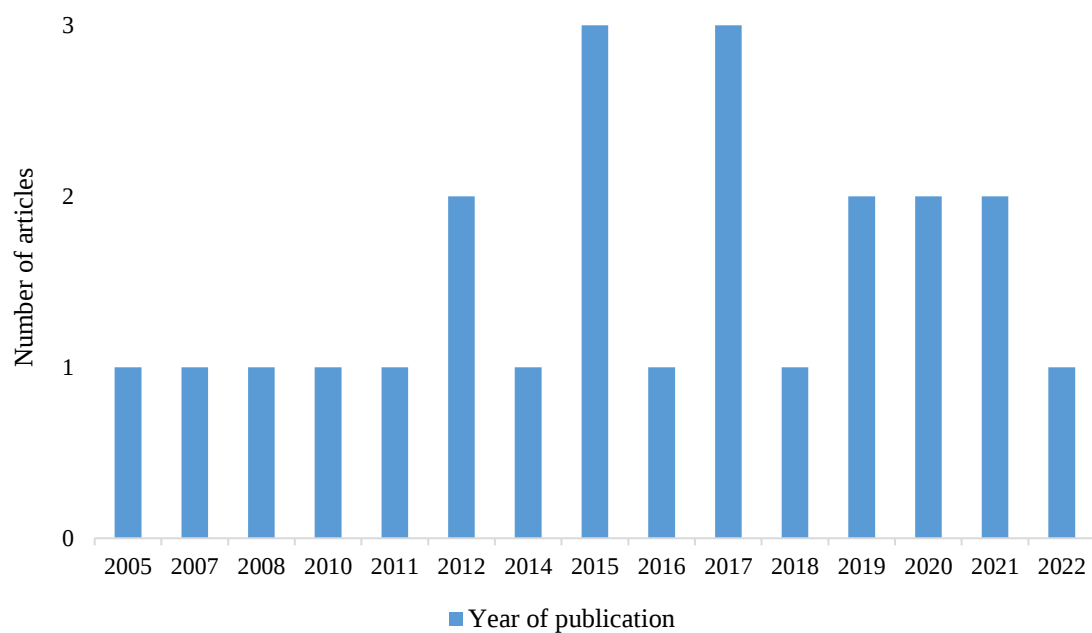
**Figure 1**  
*Study selection flowchart*



The publication dates of the articles included in the review were between 2005 and 2022. The years with the highest number of publications were 2015 (Donnelly et al., 2015; Harnish & Bridges, 2015; Spinella et al., 2015) and 2017 (Harnish et al., 2017; Islam et al., 2017; Sharif & Khanekharab, 2017), as shown in Figure 2.

**Figure 2**

*Number of articles published per year*



**Table 1**

*Synthesis of articles*

| <b>Authors</b>       | <b>Showcase</b>                                                                                                                                                                                     | <b>Compulsive Purchase Instruments</b>             | <b>Other instruments</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | <b>Objective of the study</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|----------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Dittmar (2005)       | 330 individuals who hired a self-help organization (average= 39.5 years).<br>250 consumers of a multinational corporation (average= 34.2 years).<br>195 adolescents (ages between 16 and 18 years). | Compulsive Buying Scale (D'Astous et al., 1990).   | Material Values Scale (Richins, 2004).                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | To improve the understanding of CB by examining gender, age and endorsement of materialistic values as the main predictors in three studies.                                                                                                   |
| Garcia (2007)        | 341 individuals (average age = 40).                                                                                                                                                                 | Compulsive Buying Behavior (Valence et al., 1988). | Personal Values Questionnaire (Schwartz, 1992).                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | It analyzes the relationship between CB and personal values to test a series of hypotheses derived from two opposing models of dependence, namely, the medical and biopsychosocial models, on the one hand, and the moral model, on the other. |
| Xu (2008)            | 96 students over 18 years old.                                                                                                                                                                      | Compulsive Buying Scale (D'Astous et al., 1990).   | Material Values Scale (Richins & Dawson, 1992); Public self-consciousness scale (Fenigstein et al., 1975).                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | To investigate the CB tendency of young consumers under the perspective of psychological motivation. Specifically, to study the influence of public self-consciousness and materialism on the CB of young consumers.                           |
| Claes et al. (2010)  | 130 women graduated in psychology (average age = 22.3).                                                                                                                                             | Compulsive Buying Scale (Faber & O'Guinn, 1992).   | 11-item Materialistic Values Scale (Richins, 2004; Dittmar, 2005); Behavioral Inhibition System and Behavioral Activation System Scale (Carver & White, 1994); 19-item Effortful Control Scale from the Adult Temperament Questionnaire (Evans & Rothbart, 2007); Brief Self-Control Scale (Tangney et al., 2004); Patient Health Questionnaire (Spitzer et al., 1999). | To explore the relationship between CB and reactive and regulatory temperament while controlling depression and materialism.                                                                                                                   |
| Müller et al. (2011) | 387 participants from the general population (average age = 39.1).                                                                                                                                  | Compulsive Buying Scale (Faber & O'Guinn, 1992).   | Material Values Scale (Richins, 2004); Patient Health Questionnaire (Spitzer et al., 1999); Scale Internet Use Measurement (Muller et al., 2011).                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | To examine the relationship between CB, depression, materialism and excessive use of the Internet.                                                                                                                                             |

|                                         |                                                                  |                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|-----------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Manolis & Roberts (2012)                | 1329 adolescents (average age = 14.7).                           | Compulsive Buying Scale (D'Astous et al., 1990).         | 10-item Youth Materialism Scale (Goldberg et al., 2003); Time affluence Scale (Kasser & Sheldon, 2009); Core Self Evaluations Scale (Judge et al., 2003).                                                                                                                                                        | To investigate whether the negative impact of materialism and CB on well-being is moderated by a person's perceived wealth of time (the time that a person perceives to be available for the many activities of life). |
| Reeves et al. (2012).                   | 171 students over 18 years old.                                  | Compulsive Buying Scale (Faber & O'Guinn, 1992).         | Material Values Scale (Richins & Dawson, 1992); Celebrity worship Scale (Maltby et al., 2002); Boredom Prone-Ness Scale (Farmer & Sundberg, 1986); Elf-Concept Clarity Scale (Campbell et al., 1996a, 1996b); Satisfaction with Life Scale (Diener et al., 1985); Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965). | Test common predictions of the model of absorption dependence of celebrity worship and the theory of the self as a CB.                                                                                                 |
| Mikołajczak-Degrauwe & Brengman (2014). | 582 participants from the general population (average age = 42). | Compulsive Buying Measure (Ridgway et al., 2008).        | Attitude Towards Advertising Measure (Gaski & Etzel, 1986); Scepticism Toward Advertising Measure (Boush et al., 1994); Ad Avoidance Measure (Speck & Elliott's, 1997).                                                                                                                                          | To examine how attitudes towards advertising, cynicism towards advertising and avoidance of advertisements are related to CB.                                                                                          |
| Spinella et al. (2015)                  | 240 adults (average age = 26.6).                                 | Compulsive Buying Scale (Faber & O'Guinn, 1992).         | Material Values Scale (Richins, 2004); Executive Personal Finance Scale (Spinella et al., 2007); Workaholism Scale (Spence & Robbins, 1992); Canadian Problem Gambling Index Scale (Ferris & Wynne, 2001); 39-item Wisdom Scale (Ardelt, 2003).                                                                  | Explore attitudes and behaviors that may be associated with CB tendencies.                                                                                                                                             |
| Harnish & Bridges (2015)                | 155 students (average age = 22.60).                              | Richmond Compulsive Buying Scale (Ridgway et al., 2008). | Material Values Scale (Richins, 2004); Irrational Beliefs Inventory (Koopmans et al., 1994); Narcissistic Personality Inventory-16 (Ames et al. 2006).                                                                                                                                                           | Examine how irrational beliefs, materialism and narcissism relate to and predict CB.                                                                                                                                   |
| Donnelly et al. (2015)                  | 1,077 students (average age = 24.23).                            | Compulsive Buying Scale (Faber & O'Guinn, 1992).         | Material Values Scale (Richins & Dawson, 1992); Money Management Scale (Donnelly et al., 2012); Big Five Mini Marker scale (Saucier, 1994).                                                                                                                                                                      | Test whether money management, purchase motivations to improve mood, identity and expectations of self-transformation mediate the link between material values and CB.                                                 |

|                                       |                                              |                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Villardefrancos & Otero-López (2016). | 1448 students (average age = 19.51).         | German Compulsive Buying Scale (Müller et al., 2011).    | Material Values Scale (Richins & Dawson, 1992); Spanish version of the Symptom Checklist-90-R (González, 1989); Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965); Satisfaction with Life Scale (Diener et al., 1985); Revised version of the Life Orientation Test (Scheier et al., 1994).           | To estimate the prevalence of CB in a sample of university students in the Spanish region. To determine if there are differences between compulsive and non-compulsive shoppers in relation to sex, materialistic values, symptoms of psychological distress and subjective well-being (considering self-esteem, life satisfaction and optimism). To clarify which of the examined determinants represent risk or protective factors for CB. |
| Harnish et al. (2017)                 | 175 students (average age = 19).             | Richmond Compulsive Buying Scale (Ridgway et al., 2008). | Irrational Beliefs Inventory (Koopmans et al., 1994); Consumer Goods Inventory (United Nations 2008).                                                                                                                                                                                             | To examine the characteristics of CC among college students at an American public university. Specifically, to explore how irrational beliefs impact CB among this population; and to investigate the types and frequency of consumer goods purchased by college students at an American public university.                                                                                                                                  |
| Islam et al. (2017).                  | 219 students (average age = 21.75).          | Compulsive Buying Behavior (Valence et al., 1988).       | Material Values Scale (Richins & Dawson, 1992); Media Celebrity Endorsement Scale (Sheldon et al., 2004); TV Advertisement Effect Scale (Moschis & Moore, 1982); Peer Group Communication Assessment Scale (Mangleburg & Bristol, 1998).                                                          | To examine the mediating role of materialism between contextual factors and CB.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Sharif & Khanekharab (2017).          | 501 students with age (average age = 19.68). | Compulsive Buying Scale (D'Astous et al., 1990).         | Material Values Scale (Richins, 2004); Self-concept Clarity Scale (Campbell et al., 1996); Excessive Usage of Social Networking Sites Scale (Müller et al., 2011).                                                                                                                                | To investigate the mediating role of identity confusion and materialism in the relationship between the excessive use of social networking sites (SNSs) and online CB among young adults.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| Islam et al. (2018).                  | 643 students (ages between 15 and 24 years). | Compulsive Buying Scale (Faber & O'Guinn, 1992).         | Material Values Scale (Richins & Dawson, 1992); TV Advertisement Effect Scale (Moschis & Moore, 1982); Social Comparison with Relatives Scale (Moschis & Moore, 1982); Peer Social Comparison Scale (Moschis et al., 1984); Social Comparison with Media Celebrities Scale (Kasser et al., 2004). | To provide an overview of the factors responsible for materialism and CB among adolescents and young adults.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |

|                        |                                                                              |                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Harnish et al. (2019). | 284 students (average age = 19.49).                                          | Richmond Compulsive Buying Scale (Ridgway et al., 2008).                | Material Values Scale (Richins, 2004); Spendthrift-Tightwad Scale (Rick et al. 2008); Multidimensional Assessment of Social Anxiety Scale (Gros et al. 2012); Multidimensional Perceived Social Support Scale (Zimet et al. 1988); UCLA Loneliness Scale (Russell 1996). | Examine the capacity of materialism, fear of paying, social anxiety, social support and solidarity to anticipate CB.                                                                      |
| Roberts et al. (2019)  | 1289 adolescents (average age = 14.7).                                       | Compulsive Buying Scale (D'Astous et al., 1990).                        | Youth Materialism Scale (Goldberg et al., 2003); Core Self Evaluations Scale (Judge et al., 2003); Family Conflict Resolution Subscale of the larger, Self-Report Family Inventory (Beavers & Hampson, 1990).                                                            | To investigate the mediating roles of materialism and self-esteem in explaining how family conflict leads to CB in adolescents.                                                           |
| Zheng et al. (2020b)   | 799 students (average age = 19.86).                                          | Online Compulsive Buying Scale (Dittmar et al., 2007; Li et al., 2016). | Upward Social Comparison Scale (Bai et al., 2013); Passive Social Network Site Usage Scales (Liu et al., 2017); Depression Anxiety Stress Scales (Gong et al., 2010).                                                                                                    | To examine the mediating roles of upward social comparison and anxiety status in the relationship between passive use of social networking sites and online CB among university students. |
| Japutra & Song (2020)  | 421 participants from the general population (ages between 26 and 40 years). | Compulsive Buying Measure (Ridgway et al., 2008).                       | Mindsets Scale (Park & John, 2012); Deal Proneness Scale (Lichtenstein et al., 1997); Social Comparison Scale (Kukar-Kinney et al., 2016); Hedonic Motives Scale (Overby & Lee, 2006).                                                                                   | Investigate how mentalities (beliefs that individuals have about the nature of human characteristics) are associated with CB behavior (tendency to buy impulsively and obsessively).      |
| Tarka & Harnish (2021) | 804 participants (average age = 20).                                         | Richmond Compulsive Buying Scale, (Ridgway et al., 2008).               | Schwartz Value Scale (Schwartz et al., 2001).                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | To explore CB within Schwartz's model of values, as well as to examine the role that certain values play as predictors of CB.                                                             |
| Uzarska et al. (2021)  | 1156 students (average age = 20.33).                                         | Bergen Shopping Addiction Scale (Andreassen et al. 2015).               | Short Schwartz Values Survey (Lindeman & Verkasalo, 2005)                                                                                                                                                                                                                | To investigate the relationship between the shopping experience and a comprehensive model of motivational principles conceived in Schwartz's theory of values.                            |
| Sharif et al. (2022)   | 1109 users of social networks (average age = 20.57).                         | Compulsive Buying Scale (D'Astous et al., 1990).                        | Material Values Scale (Richins, 2004); Excessive Internet Use Scale (Ssharif & Khanekharab, 2017); Financial Social Comparisons Scale (Norvilitis & Mao, 2013).                                                                                                          | To investigate the mediating role of financial social comparison and materialism in the relationship between excessive use of social networks and online CB among young adults.           |

## Discussion

The aim of this literature review was to carry out a survey of research on CB in the area of PS. In reviewing the literature, it was found that studies on CB are generally focused on adolescents, young adults and adults, with emphasis on young university adults. This is due to the ease of access to this public, since university students are often considered more accessible to participate in research due to their concentration in an institutionalized environment, which facilitates recruitment by researchers (Cruces et al., 2015).

In addition, the young adult life phase is marked by intense changes in the social, emotional and professional spheres. During this period, they tend to experiment with new products and brands, have greater access to credit and seek social acceptance, often associated with the attainment of *status* (Harnish et al., 2019). These factors may be deeply related to CB, since the search for social belonging and recognition may drive excessive consumption (Islam et al., 2017). These dynamics may explain the concentration of studies in samples of university students, since this group is in a phase particularly susceptible to these impulses. Thus, the focus on young adults may be justified by the relevance of this age group in understanding the factors that influence CB.

In addition, it was observed that there is a discussion regarding the gender that presents a greater propensity to CB. For example, the studies by Dittmar (2005) and Müller et al., (2011) did not find significant differences between genders, concluding that both men and women can be compulsive shoppers. In contrast, research by Harnish et al. (2017) and Villardefrancos and Otero-López (2016) indicated that women have a higher tendency to shop compulsively. Therefore, it can be presumed that it is necessary to examine in more detail the influence of gender on CB, in order to understand not only how it is perceived among the different genders, but also how it explains this behavior.

Regarding the instruments used to measure CB, the use of seven different measures was observed, among which the most applied were: *Compulsive Buying Scale* (D'Astous et al., 1990), *Compulsive Buying Scale* (Faber & O'Guinn, 1992), *Richmond Compulsive Buying Scale* (Ridgway et al., 2008). However, it is worth noting that the different instruments developed to measure CB focus on different aspects/dimensions, thus, there are scales with \ items focusing on impulse control (D'Astous et al., 1990), or obsessive-compulsive (Faber & O'Guinn, 1992) or for both (impulse control and obsessive-compulsive; Ridgway et al., 2008) or for behavioral behaviors (Andreassen, 2014).

However, it is important to mention that some of the aforementioned measurement tools, which are highly adopted in the literature, have been criticized for being outdated. One example is the scale elaborated by Faber and O'Guinn (1992) that includes items such as "Wrote a check when I knew I didn't have enough money in the bank to cover it", which is less relevant in modern society where checks are rarely used (Andreassen et al., 2015).

In addition, regarding the nomenclature of the scales, it was observed that there are instruments elaborated by different authors, but with the same name (e.g., *Compulsive Buying Scale*, elaborated by Faber and O'Guinn (1992); *Compulsive Buying Scale*, elaborated by D'Astous et al. (1990). Thus, in different studies, the same measure developed by the same author appears under different names. For example, the scale developed by Ridgway et al. (2008), which is called *Richmond Compulsive Buying Scale* in the study by Harnish and Bridges (2015) and is called *Compulsive Buying Measure* in the research by Mikołajczak-Degrauwe and Brengman (2014). These divergences highlight the need to establish standardized nomenclatures that allow the identification and differentiation of the measures, avoiding possible confusion, and allowing better comparison of the results.

In relation to the variables that have been studied with the CB, it is possible to divide them into two categories: a) variables from different areas, composed of constructs related to *marketing*, economics and psychology (e.g., money management, advertising influence, self-esteem, depression, anxiety and subjective well-being) and b) SP constructs, composed of variables that measure some SP construct related to CB (e.g., materialistic values, beliefs, attitudes, social comparison). Within the SP framework, it is possible to observe that the topic most addressed in studies is materialistic values (e.g., Manolis & Roberts, 2012; Müller et al., 2011; Uzarska et al., 2021).

Of the 23 studies included and analyzed in the review, 16 addressed values, a possible explanation for this is the fact that values are guiding criteria and guide human actions (Gouveia, 2016). An individual that increasingly prioritizes materialistic values, also tends to see money, material goods

and consumption as an indicator of success and happiness, thus, people oriented by materialistic values tend to have a higher propensity for CB (Dittmar, 2005; Sharif et al., 2022).

Regarding the objectives of the selected studies, the focus of the research was mainly to (a) Investigate the relationship of CB with psychological and social variables (e.g., Claes et al., 2010; García, 2007; Islam et al., 2018; Japutra & Song, 2020; Mikołajczak-Degrauwe & Brengman, 2014; Müller et al., 2011; Villardefrancos & Otero-López, 2016); (b) Verify the mediating role of psychological and social variables leading to CB (e.g., Donnelly et al., 2015; Islam et al., 2017; Roberts et al., 2019; Sharif & Khanekharab 2017; Sharif et al., 2022; Zheng et al., 2020b); (c) Explore CB within Schwartz's value model (Tarka & Harnish, 2021; Uzarska et al., 2021) and (d) Examine psychological and social variables that predict CB (Dittmar, 2005; Harnish & Bridges, 2015; Harnish et al., 2019; Reeves et al., 2012). Research with this type of focus provides important information on the relationships between variables and their impact on CB.

Furthermore, it is relevant to note that the analyzed articles were mainly devoted to studies with a quantitative and cross-sectional approach, suggesting the need to develop more diversified studies to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of this phenomenon. Qualitative and longitudinal methods can be used as a tool to assist in understanding the subjective and contextual aspects present in CB. Qualitative studies make it possible to explore the motivations, experiences and perceptions of compulsive shoppers and longitudinal studies allow us to examine changes and continuities in CB behavior (Dokumaci et al., 2021; Smith et al., 2018)

In this regard, recent literature on CB includes relevant qualitative studies that, although not published in specific psychology journals, offer significant contributions to the understanding of this phenomenon. An example is the study by Leal and Baldanza (2020), which analyzed how hypermedia processes mediated by mobile devices can influence, positively or negatively, CB behavior. This finding shows how studies in PS can go beyond the limits of the area itself, gaining recognition in journals of other disciplines and demonstrating its interdisciplinary relevance.

Regarding the results of the studies and conclusions, we can conclude that individuals that are more likely to engage in CB are self-focused, prioritize materialistic values (Harnish, et al., 2019; Sharif et al., 2022; Xu, 2008), are oriented towards power and accomplishment, seeking higher social *status* and acceptance (Harnish et al., 2019), as well as frequently exhibit low self-esteem and difficulties in managing their finances (Roberts et al., 2019; Uzarska et al., 2021).

Furthermore, individuals with these characteristics tend to compare themselves with others, experience states of anxiety (Zheng et al., 2020b) and make excessive use of social networks (Sharif & Khanekharab, 2017). CB behavior, in these cases, frequently emerges as a mechanism to alleviate negative emotional states and regulate emotions (Donnelly et al., 2015). In general, these data provide directions for understanding the CB phenomenon, allowing the identification of risk factors that contribute to its development.

Recent studies, such as that of Bashar et al. (2023), suggest that cultural factors play a crucial role in shaping various aspects of consumer behavior, including impulse and compulsive buying behaviors. In this context, culture can profoundly influence the motivations, values and norms that guide purchasing decisions, thus significantly shaping consumer behavior. For example, in societies that value materialism and social *status*, people may be more likely to adopt CB behaviors in order to meet social expectations or demonstrate success (Shammout et al., 2022).

In addition, digital *marketing* has a substantial impact on consumer behavior. Social media tools, personalized ads and other digital strategies can significantly influence purchase decisions, often stimulating impulsive or compulsive purchases (Campelo & Vicente, 2023; Santos et al., 2023). Such evidence reinforces the importance of SP in the analysis of this behavior by exploring how interpersonal, cultural and technological dynamics can influence individuals' choices. These findings may also offer subsidies for reflections on public policies and practical interventions, with the aim of mitigating the negative impacts of this behavior.

Another relevant factor to be discussed is the growth of e-commerce, which led many consumers to migrate from shopping in physical stores to online shopping (Smith et al., 2022). The increase in the use of the Internet for shopping can be attributed both to the ease of access and to the pandemic period, which forced people to adapt to new life dynamics (Jones & Clark, 2021). In this context, the study by Müller et al. (2022) showed that CB behavior on digital platforms shares similar characteristics to compulsive behavior in physical places and can also generate significant prejudices for the lives of both

individuals. This parallel between the two contexts highlights the importance of a more attentive look at the negative impacts that digital commerce can generate in the lives of consumers.

In addition, regarding the limitations of this research, it is important to highlight that the search for references was restricted to journals in the area of psychology, which may have excluded relevant studies published in other areas, such as psychiatry. In addition, the *backward snowballing* analysis (analysis of references) was not performed, which may have limited the identification of other significant studies on the subject. It is also important to consider the limitations of the method used in the literature review. Although this method is transparent, rigorous and replicable, it does not aim to evaluate the quality of the evidence produced by the studies analyzed.

## Conclusion

Given the above, the objective of this study was achieved by the reviewing the literature on CB in the area of SP and identifying the characteristics of the studies on CB in this field. The information highlighted in this study is intended to serve as a foundation for researchers interested in this topic, aiding in the construction of knowledge about CB and encouraging the development of new research in psychology.

We suggest that future studies conduct a systematic review to evaluate the methodological quality of CB studies, as well as the validation of a more updated instrument that measures CB, also considering overbuying behavior as a value in terms of basic dependency criteria in the Brazilian context.

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