

Life Satisfaction and Compulsive Buying in Brazil: The Mediating Role of Anxiety*

Satisfacción con la vida y compra compulsiva en Brasil: el papel mediador de la ansiedad

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Abstract

This study investigated whether anxiety mediates the relationship between life satisfaction and compulsive buying. A quantitative, non-experimental, cross-sectional study was conducted with a convenience sample of 328 Brazilian adults aged 18 to 56 years ($M = 24.7$, $SD = 6.33$; 51.8% male). Participants completed the Satisfaction with Life Scale ($\alpha = .85$), the State Anxiety subscale of the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory ($\alpha = .91$), and the Richmond Compulsive Buying Scale ($\alpha = .88$). Descriptive and inferential analyses were conducted using IBM SPSS 24.0. Mediation was tested using PROCESS Model 4, with 5,000 bootstrap resamples. The results showed a significant negative relationship between life satisfaction and compulsive buying ($B = -.10$, $p = .038$), a negative association between life satisfaction and anxiety ($B = -.21$, $p < .001$), and a positive association between anxiety and compulsive buying ($B = .50$, $p < .01$). The indirect effect of life satisfaction on compulsive buying through anxiety was significant ($b = -.11$; 95% CI: $-.16, -.05$). These findings indicate that lower life satisfaction increases anxiety, which in turn predicts compulsive buying. Taken together, the results highlight the importance of addressing emotional well-being and anxiety in individuals with low life satisfaction to reduce the risk of compulsive buying behavior.

Keywords

Compulsive buying; anxiety; life satisfaction; motivation; mediation; mental health.

Resumen

Este estudio investigó si la ansiedad media en la relación entre la satisfacción con la vida y la compra compulsiva. Se realizó un estudio cuantitativo, no experimental y transversal, con una muestra por conveniencia de 328 adultos brasileños de 18 a 56 años ($M = 24,7$; $DE = 6,33$; 51,8% hombres). Los participantes completaron la Escala de Satisfacción con la Vida ($\alpha = 0,85$), la subescala de Ansiedad Estado del Inventario de Ansiedad Estado-Rasgo ($\alpha = 0,91$) y la Escala de Compra Compulsiva de Richmond ($\alpha = 0,88$). Se llevaron a cabo análisis descriptivos e inferenciales con IBM SPSS 24.0. La mediación se probó con el Modelo 4 de PROCESS, empleando el bootstrapping con 5000 remuestreos. Los resultados mostraron una relación negativa significativa entre la satisfacción con la vida y la compra compulsiva ($B = -0,10$; $p = 0,038$), una asociación negativa entre la satisfacción con la vida y la ansiedad ($B = -0,21$; $p < 0,001$) y una asociación positiva entre la ansiedad y la compra compulsiva ($B = 0,50$; $p < 0,01$). El efecto indirecto de la satisfacción con la vida sobre la compra compulsiva, a través de la ansiedad, fue significativo ($b = -0,11$; IC95%: $-0,16, -0,05$). Estos hallazgos indican que una menor satisfacción con la vida incrementa la ansiedad, que a su vez predice la compra compulsiva. En conjunto, los resultados subrayan la importancia de abordar el bienestar emocional y la ansiedad en personas con baja satisfacción con la vida, a fin de reducir el riesgo de conductas de compra compulsiva.

Palabras clave

Compra compulsiva; ansiedad; satisfacción con la vida; motivación; mediación; salud mental.

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Introduction

Compulsive buying is a dysfunctional pattern of consumption characterized by an uncontrollable urge to buy goods despite adverse personal and financial consequences (Dang *et al.*, 2025; Grant & Chamberlain, 2024; Ridgway *et al.*, 2008). Large-scale studies and meta-analyses report that approximately 5% to 8% of adults exhibit compulsive buying tendencies (e.g., Barbieri *et al.*, 2025). Given the impact on economic and psychological well-being, it is important to understand the psychological mechanisms underlying compulsive buying. This condition is not only associated with financial difficulties such as debt and over-indebtedness, but also with psychological problems such as anxiety and low life satisfaction (for a review, see Laskowski *et al.*, 2025). However, it is still unclear how anxiety can explain the relationship between life satisfaction and compulsive buying in Brazil.

This question is particularly relevant in that context, as it is a country characterized by high levels of indebtedness, low financial literacy, and a culture strongly influenced by consumption (e.g., Floriano *et al.*, 2024). In Brazil, more than half of consumers struggle to maintain conscious consumption habits, leaving them more vulnerable to debt, stress, and negative emotions (Duarte *et al.*, 2023). Hence, compulsive buying may represent not only an economic challenge but also a psychosocial problem that affects Brazilians' mental health and well-being. In this sense, by situating the problem in this setting, our study seeks to clarify the mediating role of anxiety in the link between life dissatisfaction and compulsive buying among Brazilian adults.

Compulsive Buying and Mental Health Outcomes

Compulsive buying is a tendency to repeatedly worry about buying without control or impulse, with the goal of minimizing feelings and negative states (Dang *et al.*, 2025; Ridgway *et al.*, 2008). Over time, compulsive buying can generate multiple losses in people's lives (for a review, see Estanislau *et al.*, 2025). At the financial level, individuals often accumulate debt and become over-indebted (Japutra *et al.*, 2025). Psychologically, compulsive buying has been linked to low self-esteem, heightened anxiety, and depressive symptoms (for a review, see Thomas *et al.*, 2024).

At the social level, it may elicit feelings of shame and regret, fostering isolation from peers (Wan *et al.*, 2024). Finally, at the family level, compulsive buying has been associated with recurrent conflicts and, in severe cases, marital breakdown (Grant & Chamberlain, 2024).

Compulsive buying is closely related to the psychological and social dimensions of a person's life (Mishra *et al.*, 2023), particularly the way people evaluate their overall life satisfaction. Life satisfaction refers to the subjective evaluation of the quality of one's life as a whole and encompasses both past and present experiences (Diener *et al.*, 1985). It represents a cognitive (evaluative) dimension of psychological well-being and complements its affective components (Vittersø, 2025). Conceptually, life satisfaction can be placed on a continuum ranging from dissatisfaction to satisfaction, with higher values reflecting greater well-being (Connolly & Gärling, 2024). Lower life satisfaction (i.e., dissatisfaction) has been consistently associated with maladaptive coping strategies, including compulsive buying, as individuals may resort to shopping to regulate negative emotions or to compensate for dissatisfaction in other areas of life (e.g., Baniashraf *et al.*, 2025).

Studies have consistently shown a negative association between life satisfaction and compulsive buying. For example, Basit *et al.* (2024) found that students' online shopping addiction was significantly associated with compulsive buying behavior and lower life satisfaction. In the Chilean context, Castellanos-Alvarenga and Del Denegri Coria (2024) reported that young people with higher materialistic values and consumerist attitudes tended to have lower life satisfaction and higher levels of debt, highlighting the economic and psychological risks of compulsive consumption. Similarly, a systematic review by Castellanos-Alvarenga and Zapata-Antón (2023) confirmed that lower life satisfaction is a recurrent predictor of compulsive buying in different cultural contexts. Extending these findings, Tantawi (2024) showed that, during the COVID-19 pandemic, Egyptian consumers with a stronger materialistic orientation and lower life satisfaction were more prone to compulsive buying. Collectively, these findings suggest that dissatisfaction with life is a

strong predictor of compulsive consumption, which increases the negative impact on psychological and economic well-being.

Compulsive buying is often triggered by adverse situations or negative emotions, and such tendencies may even develop in childhood (David *et al.*, 2024; Kaur & Mearns, 2021). When individuals are unable to regulate themselves in purchasing situations, their impulse to buy increases under conditions of stress or tension (e.g., Jain *et al.*, 2023). Consequently, it is plausible that people who suffer from increased anxiety resort to shopping to alleviate this negative condition, i.e., a compensatory mechanism to deal with this emotion (Tarka *et al.*, 2022). In this sense, experiences of anxiety lead to a dissatisfied emotional state and a tendency to perceive situations as more threatening (Abend, 2023).

At the same time, contemporary research emphasizes that anxiety is not harmful per se, as moderate levels of anxiety can have protective and motivational functions, such as increasing alertness and promoting precautionary behavior (Gkintoni & Ortiz, 2023). This dual role has already been described in classical theories. For example, Freud (1976) conceptualized anxiety as a signal of danger, while Barlow (2000) emphasized its adaptive value as an emotional response that mobilizes action. More recent perspectives reinforce that state anxiety can be useful in everyday situations, such as crossing a street, by activating attentional and physiological resources that protect the individual (e.g., Pacheco-Unguetti *et al.*, 2025).

Furthermore, anxiety is generally expressed in two forms, namely state anxiety and trait anxiety. State anxiety is a temporary emotional condition triggered by certain situations, characterized by feelings of apprehension, tension, or nervousness, and associated with increased autonomic nervous system activity in response to perceived threats (Spielberger *et al.*, 1970). Trait anxiety, on the other hand, reflects a more stable individual disposition and refers to the tendency to perceive a wide range of situations as threatening and to react with a higher baseline level of anxiety (Saviola *et al.*, 2020).

State anxiety, rather than trait anxiety, is a more theoretically appropriate mediating variable in this model for two primary reasons. First, state anxiety is a

situationally triggered response that is closely linked to the act of purchasing, as it fluctuates in response to contextual cues such as low life satisfaction, financial stress, or emotional discomfort. This proximity makes state anxiety more directly implicated in the impulse to buy as a regulatory response (Barlow, 2000; Spielberger *et al.*, 1970). Second, trait anxiety, as a stable dispositional characteristic, operates more as a background moderator than as a mechanism that explains moment-to-moment behavioral variation. Employing trait anxiety as a mediator would conflate enduring personality characteristics with the dynamic emotional processes that drive compulsive purchasing. Therefore, the present study focuses exclusively on state anxiety as the theoretically relevant mediating variable.

Several recent studies have highlighted that anxiety mediates the relationship between psychosocial factors and compulsive buying behavior. For example, Thomas *et al.* (2024) found that perceived stress (which is closely related to anxiety) significantly predicted symptoms of compulsive buying behavior. Similarly, using a serial mediation model, Jain *et al.* (2024) demonstrated that materialism influences compulsive buying behavior via decreased self-control and increased anxiety. In addition, a recent analysis of clinical samples confirmed that emotion dysregulation and anxiety mediate the effects of negative childhood experiences on compulsive buying symptoms, with anxiety proving to be a particularly strong predictor (David *et al.*, 2024).

There is also evidence of a negative relationship between life satisfaction and the presence of anxiety symptoms. For example, a large-scale cross-sectional study in Nepal showed that higher levels of anxiety were significantly associated with lower life satisfaction in older adults (Yadav *et al.*, 2024). Zhao *et al.* (2024) found that higher emotional intelligence was associated with lower anxiety and greater life satisfaction among college students. Additionally, Alvarado-García *et al.* (2025) showed that a mindfulness intervention in college students was effective in reducing anxiety while increasing life satisfaction.

These studies show a strong relationship between (a) life satisfaction and anxiety and (b) anxiety and compulsive buying behavior. At first glance, it appears that (a) anxious people tend to evaluate their lives negatively and are therefore less satisfied with their lives.

In other words, the greater the dissatisfaction with life, the greater the tendency to feel anxious. Similarly, (b) the more tense or negatively aroused a person feels about their life, the greater their tendency to make compulsive purchases. However, it is still unclear what role anxiety plays in the relationship between (dis)satisfaction with life and a person's motivation to compulsively buy. In this sense, we ask about the role anxiety plays in predicting (dis)satisfaction with life in relation to compulsive buying behavior.

The Present Study

In this study, we sought to answer the research question regarding the role of anxiety in the relationship between (dis)satisfaction with life and compulsive buying behavior. Importantly, we operationalized anxiety as state anxiety (i.e., a transient emotional response to situational demands) rather than trait anxiety, given its greater theoretical relevance as a mediating mechanism linking dispositional

evaluations of life quality to behavioral responses such as compulsive buying (Barlow, 2000; Spielberger *et al.*, 1970). Specifically, we aimed to examine whether anxiety mediates the relationship between life satisfaction and compulsive buying behavior in a sample of Brazilian adults. Based on previous research showing that the more dissatisfied individuals are with their lives, the higher their anxiety level and consequently their propensity to engage in compulsive buying behavior, we hypothesized that the relationship between life satisfaction and compulsive buying behavior would be indirectly affected by anxiety. To test this, we conducted a regression-based mediation analysis with life satisfaction as the predictor, anxiety as the mediator, and compulsive buying behavior as the outcome. We believe that the knowledge gained from clarifying the mediating role of anxiety in the relationship between life satisfaction and compulsive buying is highly relevant for psychology, mental health, public policy, and financial counseling, especially in countries like Brazil that face challenges with debt and a lack of financial education.

Method

Research Design

The study employed a quantitative, non-experimental, cross-sectional design with a correlational approach. This design is appropriate for examining associations between psychological variables at a single point in time (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Participants

This study used a convenience sample of 328 Brazilians. Most participants were male (51.8%) and between 18 and 56 years old ($M = 24.7$; $SD = 6.33$). The inclusion criteria were being 18 years or older, residing in Brazil, and providing informed consent. Exclusion criteria included failure to complete the questionnaire, inconsistent responses, or non-residence in Brazil. Sensitivity analysis conducted with WebPower (Zhang & Yuan, 2018) showed that this sample size has a power of .80 to detect a main effect or interaction with $f^2 = .18$ or higher ($p < .05$).

Instruments

Participants answered a questionnaire composed of sociodemographic questions (e.g., age and gender) and the following measures:

Compulsive-buying. This is a self-report instrument assessing motivation for compulsive buying, developed by Ridgway *et al.* (2008) and adapted to the study context as the Richmond Compulsive Buying Scale (Estanislau & Fonsêca, 2021). In both validation studies, internal consistency reliability for the scale was .81. The measure consists of 6 items (e.g., “Much of my life centers around buying things,” “I consider myself an impulse purchaser”) presented in a unidimensional structure and measured on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). In the present study, the scale showed good internal consistency ($\alpha = .88$).

Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS). This is a self-report instrument developed by Diener *et al.* (1985) and adapted to the Brazilian context by Zanon *et al.* (2014)

to assess people's satisfaction with their lives. Validation studies have shown that the SWLS has a single-factor structure and high internal consistency ($\alpha = .87$; Diener *et al.*, 1985; Zanon *et al.*, 2014). The instrument consists of five items (e.g., "In most ways my life is close to my ideal," "I am satisfied with my life"), measured on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*), with a unifactorial structure. The higher the total sum of items, the greater the degree of satisfaction with participants' lives. In this study, the scale showed good internal consistency ($\alpha = .85$).

Trait-State Anxiety Inventory. This self-report instrument aims to assess participants' level of trait and anxiety state. The measure was developed by Spielberger *et al.* (1970; $\alpha = .95$) and adapted to the Brazilian context by Biaggio and Natalicio (1979; $\alpha = .86$). It consists of 20 items, divided into two factors (character traits and anxiety state), with 10 items per factor. Example items include "I feel calm" and "I am tense." In this study, only the anxiety state dimension was used due to the correlational nature of the research. Participants were asked to describe how anxious they felt at the moment of response on a 4-point Likert scale: 1 = *absolutely not*; 2 = *a little*; 3 = *quite a bit*; 4 = *very much*. The scale had a good internal consistency in this study ($\alpha = .91$).

Procedure

The present study fulfilled all legal requirements for research involving human subjects. The data collection was conducted online and disseminated via social media platforms. All participants were informed that their participation was voluntary and that confidentiality and anonymity would be guaranteed. Before starting the survey, participants provided digital consent by signing the Informed Consent Form (ICF), which described the study's objectives and the ethical guidelines followed. On average, participants took about 15 minutes to complete the questionnaire.

Ethical Statement and Informed Consent

We have complied with American Psychological Association (APA) ethical standards in the treatment

of our participants. All participants provided consent in accordance with the Declaration of Helsinki and APA ethical standards. The research protocol was approved by the local Ethics Committee of the authors' institution (CAAE: 55270322.3.0000.5188). The present study involved minimal risks to participants (Resolution No. 510/2016; Conselho Nacional de Saúde, 2016), which could lead to some fatigue or embarrassment due to the length of the form or the emotive content of the items. To mitigate risks, we provided a contact for participants to turn to for support in the event of any issues arising from participation. In this study, participants were required to be Brazilian citizens, reside in any region of the country, and be of legal age (18 years or older). This study is not part of a broader general project, but an independent research initiative with its own specific objectives. Furthermore, no partial data or reanalysis of the data is currently available.

Data Analysis

We used IBM SPSS (version 24.0) to calculate descriptive and inferential statistics, including correlations between variables (Pearson r), differences between means (t-test for independent samples), and linear regression models.

To run the mediation model, we followed the steps suggested by Baron and Kenny (1986). Specifically, in Step 1, we examined the role of life satisfaction (predictor variable) on compulsive buying (variable of interest); in Step 2, we observed the influence of our predictor variable on the mediating variable (anxiety); and in Step 3, we analyzed the influence of life satisfaction on the motivation for compulsive buying, in the presence of anxiety (mediator variable). To calculate the indirect effect of simple mediation, we used Model 4 of the PROCESS extension for SPSS (Hayes, 2018) and the bootstrapping method with 10,000 resamples to obtain 95% confidence intervals.

The datasets generated and/or analyzed during the current study are available in the Open Science Framework repository at https://osf.io/3btpw/?view_only=of3dda7a0730455581ecdff422f5b55f.

Results

Initially, we verified individual differences in participants' compulsive buying scores. We found that there were no significant differences between the means of compulsive buying of male and female participants [$t(326) = -1.68; p = .093; d = .18$], and among participants from public and private institutions [$t(326) = -.68; p = .496; d = .07$]. In addition, we

observed no relationship between participants' age and motivation for compulsive buying ($r = .05; p = .300$).

We used a hierarchical model composed of three steps (Table 1) to test the mediation hypothesis (e.g., Baron & Kenny, 1986).

Table 1. Estimated Parameters for the Mediation Model (Life Satisfaction - Anxiety - Compulsive Buying)

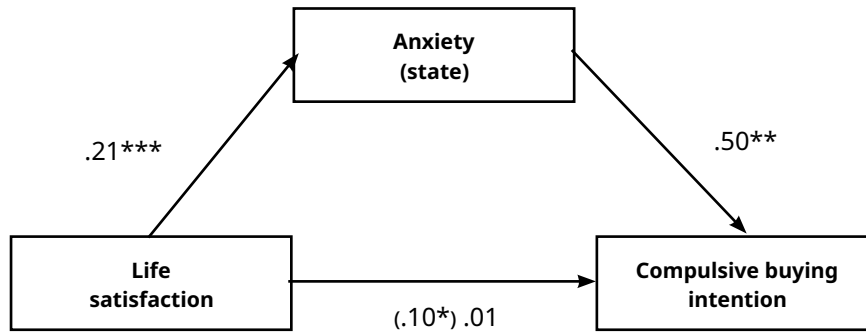
	Variables		
	Step 1 Compulsive buying B	Step 2 Anxiety B	Step 3 Compulsive buying B
Intercept	2.93***	3.14***	1.33**
Life satisfaction	-.10*	-.21***	.01 ^{ns}
Anxiety	—	—	.50**
	$R = .01$	$R = .50$	$R = .05$
	$R^2 \text{ adjusted} = .01$	$R^2 \text{ adjusted} = .25$	$R^2 \text{ adjusted} = .05$
	$F(1,326) = 4.32$	$F(1,326) = 109.44$	$F(2,325) = 9.92$
	$p = .038$	$p < .001$	$p = .001$

Note. ^{ns} = non-significant; * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$.

In Step 1, we observed that life satisfaction negatively and significantly predicts compulsive buying, such that higher life satisfaction is associated with lower compulsive buying motivation. In Step 2, we verified that life satisfaction negatively predicts anxiety, so that the higher the level of life satisfaction, the lower the participants' state of anxiety. Finally, in Step 3, we observed the positive relationship between the state of anxiety and the motivation for compulsive buying, so that the more participants were exposed to anxiety states, the higher their scores for the motivation for compulsive buying.

In addition, we verified the mediator's suppressive effect on the association between life satisfaction and compulsive buying so that, in the presence of anxiety, the effect of life satisfaction on the motivation for compulsive buying became non-significant, thus denoting the existence of the mediating effect.

We conducted a mediation analysis using PROCESS (Model 4; Hayes, 2018). The results showed a significant indirect effect ($b = -.11; 95\% CI = -.16, -.05$), confirming the mediation hypothesis (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Mediation Effect of Anxiety on the Relationship between Life Satisfaction and Compulsive Buying Intention

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

The result presented in Figure 1 demonstrates that the effect of life satisfaction on the motivation for compulsive buying was mediated by the anxiety state of the participants. Additionally, we tested an alternative model in which dissatisfaction with life (the inverse of the satisfaction with life measure scores) was entered as a predictor. As expected, by

reversing the scores of satisfaction with life (dissatisfaction with life), we found that the greater the dissatisfaction with life, the greater the anxiety state of the participants and, consequently, the greater the motivation for compulsive buying, maintaining the significant effect of the mediation model (indirect effect = .11; 95 % CI = .05; .16).

Discussion

In this study, we sought to analyze how compulsive buying is related to psychological variables such as anxiety and life (dis)satisfaction. Our main objective was to test a mediation model to examine whether anxiety explains the relationship between life satisfaction and compulsive buying in Brazilian adults. The results confirmed the hypothesized mediation, as higher life satisfaction was associated with lower anxiety, which in turn was related to lower levels of compulsive buying. Conversely, lower life satisfaction was associated with higher anxiety and consequently higher levels of compulsive buying motivation.

It is worth noting that the mediating role identified in this study pertains specifically to state anxiety rather than trait anxiety. This distinction carries significant conceptual implications. The findings suggest that the situational experience of anxiety, which may be triggered by a deficient evaluation of one's life, serves as the proximal affective mechanism linking life dissatisfaction to compulsive buying behavior. Future research should explicitly compare the differential roles of state and trait anxiety within this model.

Moreover, life satisfaction alone did not significantly predict compulsive buying. The relationship, therefore, depended on the presence of anxiety, which acted as a mediator. This result is corroborated by more recent studies. For example, Erzincanlı *et al.* (2024) showed that anxiety and depression significantly predicted compulsive online shopping, highlighting the central role of emotional distress in this behavior. Similarly, Dixit *et al.* (2024) showed that compulsive buying is positively associated with psychological distress and anxiety, and negatively associated with life satisfaction, confirming the patterns observed in our study.

Moreover, our results are consistent with those of Duan (2025), who reported that compulsive buying may be associated with several mediating pathways, including failures of self-control and impulsive tendencies, while Japutra *et al.* (2025) identified contemporary affective drivers such as fear of missing out and brand passion. In this sense, our findings update and extend these investigations by highlighting a variable of great importance in the development of psychological well-being in this relationship: (dis)satisfaction with

life. We clearly demonstrated empirically that there is a strong relationship between (dis)satisfaction with life and an anxiety state that predicts participants' motivation for compulsive buying.

In the Brazilian context, recent studies have also highlighted the psychosocial and economic significance of compulsive and impulsive consumption. For instance, Barreto *et al.* (2024) analyzed Brazilian consumer behavior during the COVID-19 pandemic and found that social media use was associated with higher levels of impulsive and panic buying. Similarly, Cunha *et al.* (2024) showed that human values play an important role in predicting impulse buying behavior, highlighting the importance of psychosocial factors in consumer decisions. In addition, Ponchio *et al.* (2023) demonstrated that perceived financial well-being is an antecedent of psychological well-being in Brazilian consumers, a finding that is indirectly related to the dynamics between life satisfaction and maladaptive consumption. Although these studies do not directly test anxiety as a mediator between life satisfaction and compulsive buying, they provide important evidence for the increasing recognition of these phenomena in Brazil and emphasize the need for integrative models such as the one proposed in the present study.

A closer look at the explained variance underlines the limitations of our model. For instance, the low effect size (i.e., R^2 value) at step 1 suggests that life satisfaction alone explains only a small portion of the variability in compulsive buying. This suggests that other psychological and contextual factors (e.g., materialism, stress, or social comparison) should be included in future models to better capture the complexity of compulsive consumption (e.g., Challet-Bouju *et al.*, 2020; Jain *et al.*, 2023). This observation is consistent with the idea that compulsive buying is a multidetermined phenomenon influenced by structural, cultural, and social factors that go beyond individual well-being (for a review, see Estanislau *et al.*, 2025).

From a practical perspective, our findings have potential implications for both marketers and therapists. For marketers and consumers, recognizing the role that anxiety plays in compulsive buying behavior may inform the design of educational campaigns to promote financial literacy and conscious consumption. For mental health professionals, anxiety reduction interventions (e.g., mindfulness-based stress reduction, cognitive

behavioral therapy, or emotion regulation training) may help consumers cope with the negative feelings associated with compulsive buying motivation. As researchers suggest, reducing emotional distress could serve as a protective factor against maladaptive consumer behavior (e.g., Dixit *et al.*, 2024; Erzincanlı *et al.*, 2024)

Although we acknowledge the theoretical and practical implications of this study, we must address some methodological limitations identified during the research. The first limitation concerns the sample used in the study. We relied on a convenience sample for our analyses rather than a more representative sample that would reflect the population. This prevents generalization to the wider population, especially as socio-demographic variables such as socio-economic status, occupation, or region of residence were not collected. Therefore, references to “Brazilian consumers” or “consumption habits” should be interpreted with caution.

The second limitation stems from the study's correlational and cross-sectional design. Even if we observed a mediation model consistent with the statistical postulates of this analysis (e.g., Baron & Kenny, 1986), we cannot establish a cause-and-effect relationship between the variables used in this study. The effects identified should therefore be interpreted as conditional associations rather than causal pathways. Thirdly, the lack of subgroup or invariance tests allows only limited conclusions to be drawn about how these associations might differ between different demographic or social groups. Finally, our model did not test for alternative explanations, such as bidirectional associations between anxiety and life satisfaction, which could be explored in future longitudinal or experimental studies.

Additionally, sociodemographic variables such as income, education, and age were not included as covariates in the mediation model. Given their known associations with life satisfaction and compulsive buying in the Brazilian context (Duarte *et al.*, 2023; Ponchio *et al.*, 2023), their exclusion represents a limitation that future studies should address by formally incorporating relevant sociodemographic controls.

The variation in measurement across the three instruments used in this study should also be acknowledged. While RCBS uses a 5-point Likert scale, the SWLS uses a 7-point scale, and the STAI-State subscale uses a 4-point frequency scale. These differences do not

affect the validity of the mediation model because all analyses used standardized coefficients (β), which put all variables on the same scale. Using instruments with the same response formats in future studies would make it easier to compare results.

Indeed, these limitations are essential in recommending new studies based on the analysis of the variables in this study. We firstly suggest an experimental design to observe the effect of the satisfaction (vs. dissatisfaction) manipulation with life on the motivation for compulsive buying and its relationship with participants' anxiety state. Using this study, the hypothesis can be tested that (dis)satisfaction with life not only predicts compulsive buying, but may also cause this motivation, as it may be associated with anxiety symptoms. Moreover, the

role of psychosocial variables in this relationship can be investigated. More specifically, one can examine the effects of positive constructs (e.g., pride, psychological well-being, and composure) on a person's motivation to compulsively buy. Knowing that intergroup differences moderate the relationship between identification with the group and motivation for compulsive buying (Lins & Fernandes, 2020), future work can address the analysis of these variables in Brazilian samples so that intergroup relationships are based on differences based on, for example, economic class, schooling, skin color, and sexual orientation. In other words, we propose to examine the influence of objective living conditions, which underpin intergroup relations, on the relationship between compulsive buying and the psychological well-being of the population.

Conclusions

This study showed that anxiety mediates the relationship between life satisfaction and compulsive buying: higher satisfaction was associated with lower anxiety and consequently lower compulsive buying. These findings underscore the importance of considering emotional factors when examining unhealthy consumption habits.

However, because the study was correlational and not representative, the results should be interpreted carefully. Future research using longitudinal or experimental methods could clarify the causal direction and strengthen the applicability of these findings for interventions in clinical, educational, and consumer policy contexts.

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