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Men Suffer From Compulsive Shopping Too

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Article by Sean Banville

Ideas and Activities by David Robinson

THE ARTICLE

A recent [survey](#) has found that one in 20 American adults buy things they may not even want or never need or use. In today's world of consumerism, where we are constantly bombarded by ads, this is perhaps not surprising. What may raise an eyebrow or two is a further finding in the study that men are just as likely as women to suffer from "compulsive buying". Gone seem to be the days when women dragged their bored and fed-up-looking men around shopping malls. The new research from Stanford University has revealed that men are now just as avid and compulsive shoppers as their female counterparts. Researcher Dr Lorrin Koram said that the numbers of men who indulge in unnecessary shopping sprees has rocketed: "That's the biggest surprise -- men engage in this behavior almost as commonly as women," he said.

This finding runs counter to the conventional and rather stereotyped view that compulsive buying is very much a "woman's disease." Dr. Koram said trends and figures may have been unfairly skewed as male obsessive shoppers used to be more reluctant than women to recognize that they have a problem and then come forward and admit it. He pointed out that: "Generally, in psychiatry, men seek care less often than women...It's not 'manly' to seek help." And help seems to be exactly what the doctor ordered for any compulsive shopper, who is usually not made any happier by his or her relentless buying. Dr Koram warned: "It's always important to encourage people who have these types of disorders to seek treatment." Many find themselves laden with debt and filled with shame and suicidal tendencies as they attempt to hide their addiction.

START

1. DICTATION: The teacher will read to you slowly and clearly the first half of the first paragraph, repeating passages where necessary. Students will write down the speech. The teacher will repeat the passage slowly again.

Self correct your work. Be honest with yourself on the number of errors. Advise the teacher of your total no of errors. 10 are acceptable. Any more is room for improvement!

2. READING: Get students to read the passage aloud. Swap readers every paragraph.

3. VOCABULARY: Students circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

4. COMPULSIVE SHOPPING: Walk around the class and talk to as many students as you can. Find out their opinions on compulsive shopping. What is the difference between compulsive shopping and impulsive shopping? Share your finding with new partners.

The teacher can select some students to find out your results.

5. CHAT: In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words from the article are the most interesting (circle) and which are the most boring (underline).

American / male / addiction / women / survey / consumerism / study / university / shopping malls / stereotypes / psychiatry / doctor / debt /

Have a chat about the topics you liked. For more conversation, change topics and partners frequently.

6. SHOPPING: Fill in the following table on what men and women might compulsively buy. Conduct a survey of your class members to find out. Share your findings with new partner(s)

Men	Women
1	1
2	2
3	3
4	4
5	5
6	6

7. QUICK DEBATE: Students A believe women are more compulsive shoppers than men. Students B believes men are as bad as women for compulsive shopping. Debate this with your partners. Change partners often.

8. ONE MINUTE: Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with compulsive shopping. Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

9. FIVE MINUTES: Choose three of these words. Write a sentence using each word. Try to associate them with compulsive shopping. Discuss with your partner. Spend five minutes on this exercise.

BEFORE/AFTER READING / LISTENING (I)

1. TRUE / FALSE: Look at the article's headline and guess whether these sentences are true (T) or false (F):

- | | |
|---|-------|
| a. We are constantly bombarded with ads | T / F |
| b. Compulsive buying is very much a "woman's disease". | T / F |
| c. The new research is from Harvard University | T / F |
| d. The survey found one in 10 American adults buy things they may not even want | T / F |
| e. Men seek care less often than women. | T / F |
| f. Women drag their bored and fed-up-looking men round shopping malls | T / F |
| g. In psychiatry, men seek care less often than women | T / F |
| h. Compulsive shopping by men is declining | T / F |

2. SYNONYM MATCH: Match the following synonyms from the article:

- | | |
|---------------|------------|
| a. compulsive | foster |
| b. shoppers | restless |
| c. malls | dependence |
| d. commonly | earth |
| e. encourage | arcade |
| f. relentless | usually |
| g. addiction | soared |
| h. bored | obsessive |
| i. world | customers |
| j. rocketed | continuous |

3. PHRASE MATCH: Match the following phrases from the article (sometimes more than one combination is possible):

- | | |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| a. In today's | to seek help |
| b. Many find themselves | and fed-up-looking men |
| c. What may raise | less often than women |
| d. Men engage | an eyebrow or two |
| e. It's not 'manly' | in this behaviour |
| f. Trends and figures | and compulsive shoppers |
| g. They attempt to hide | world of consumerism |
| h. Women dragged their bored | laden with debt |
| i. Men are just as avid | their addiction |
| j. Men seek care | may have been unfairly skewed |

READING GAP FILL:

Put the words in the column on the right into the gaps in the text.

Men Suffer From Compulsive Shopping Too

A recent _____ has found that one in 20 American adults buy things they may not even want or never need or use. In today's world of _____, where we are constantly bombarded by ads, this is perhaps not _____. What may raise an _____ or two is a further finding in the study that men are just as likely as women to suffer from "compulsive buying". Gone seem to be the days when women dragged their bored and _____-looking men around shopping malls. The new research from Stanford University has _____ that men are now just as avid and compulsive shoppers as their female _____. Researcher Dr Lorrin Koram said that the numbers of men who indulge in unnecessary shopping sprees has rocketed: "That's the biggest surprise -- men engage in this behavior almost as commonly as _____," he said.

This finding runs counter to the conventional and rather stereotyped view that compulsive buying is very much a "woman's disease." Dr. Koram said trends and figures may have been _____ skewed as male obsessive shoppers used to be more reluctant than women to recognize that they have a problem and then come forward and _____ it. He pointed out that: "Generally, in psychiatry, _____ seek care less often than women...It's not 'manly' to seek help." And help seems to be exactly what the doctor ordered for any compulsive shopper, who is usually not made any happier by his or her relentless buying. Dr Koram warned: "It's always important to _____ people who have these types of disorders to seek _____." Many find themselves laden with _____ and filled with shame and suicidal _____ as they attempt to hide their _____.

revealed
Fed-up
women
eyebrow
survey
consumerism
surprising
counterparts

addiction
tendencies
debt
Men
Treatment
Encourage
Admit
unfairly

LISTENING GAP FILL

Listen and fill in the spaces.

Men Suffer From Compulsive Shopping Too

A recent survey has found that one in 20 American adults buy things they _____ want or never need or use. In today's world of consumerism, where we are constantly _____ ads, this is perhaps not surprising. What may raise an _____ two is a further finding in the study that men are just as likely as women to suffer from "_____". Gone seem to be the days when women dragged their bored and fed-up-looking men around shopping malls. The new research from _____ has revealed that men are now _____ avid and compulsive shoppers as their female counterparts. Researcher Dr Lorrin Koram said that the numbers of men who indulge in unnecessary shopping sprees has rocketed: "That's the biggest surprise -- men _____ this behavior almost as commonly as women," he said.

This finding runs _____ the conventional and rather stereotyped view that compulsive buying is very much a "_____." Dr. Koram said trends and figures may have been unfairly skewed as male obsessive shoppers used to be more reluctant than women to recognize that _____ a problem and then come forward and admit it. He pointed out that: "Generally, in _____, men seek care less often than women...It's not '_____' to seek help." And help seems to be exactly what the doctor ordered for any compulsive shopper, who is usually not made any happier by his or her relentless buying. _____ warned: "It's always important to encourage people who have these types of _____ seek treatment." Many find themselves laden with debt and filled with shame and _____ as they attempt to hide their addiction.

BEFORE AFTER READING / LISTENING (II)

1. WORD SEARCH: Look in your dictionaries / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words '**compulsive**' and '**shopping**'.

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS: Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

3. GAP FILL: In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the words from the activity. Were they new, interesting, worth learning...?

5. STUDENT "SHOPPING" SURVEY: In pairs / groups, write down questions about shopping and compulsive shopping.

- Ask other classmates your questions and note down their answers.
- Go back to your original partner / group and compare your findings.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

6. TEST EACH OTHER: Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall exactly how these were used in the text:

- indulge
- eyebrow
- bored
- stanford
- doctor
- manly
- seek
- laden
- shame
- addiction
- problem
- sprees

DISCUSSION

STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

- a. Did the headline make you want to read the article?
- b. Are you a compulsive shopper?
- c. Do you know anyone suffering an addiction of shopping?
- d. Do you think compulsive buying is as prevalent as many mental disorders?
- e. Does compulsive shopping make people feel happier?
- f. Why do people shop so much when most are in debt?
- g. Should credit cards limits be cut?
- h. Are you a cash or card shopper?
- i. Do you spend more than you earn?
- j. Do you buy things you may not even want or never need or use?

STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

- a. Did you like reading this article?
- b. What do you think about what you read?
- c. Do you know any compulsive shoppers?
- d. Is shopping a woman's disease?
- e. Do you shop till you drop?
- f. Are men secret compulsive shoppers?
- g. Does going shopping make you feel happy?
- h. Do you window shop?
- i. Have you ever bought anything compulsively online?
- j. Did you like this discussion?

AFTER DISCUSSION: Join another partner / group and tell them what you talked about.

- a. What was the most interesting thing you heard?
- b. Was there a question you didn't like?
- c. Was there something you totally disagreed with?
- d. What did you like talking about?
- e. Which was the most difficult question?

SPEAKING:

SHOPPING: With your partner(s), discuss the following statistics:

Answer the following questions:

- 1 Do you agree with them?
- 2 Is there a trend?

Think of two questions to ask your partner about them

The researchers found that:

- ♣ 5.8% of people are Compulsive buyers
- ♣ 6% of women are Compulsive buyers
- ♣ 5.5% of men are Compulsive buyers
- ♣ A higher percentage of younger people are Compulsive buyers than older people
- ♣ A higher percentage of people who earn less than \$50,000 per year are compulsive buyers
- ♣ Male compulsive buyers tend to buy CDs, books, tools, gadgets, computer stuff and cameras.
- ♣ Female compulsive buyers tend to buy clothes, make-up, articles for the home and jewelry.
- ♣ Male compulsive shoppers are more likely to become addicted to auctions than female compulsive shoppers
- ♣ Compulsive buying does not make the sufferer feel any happier
- ♣ Many sufferers experience serious debt, remorse and shame
- ♣ It is not uncommon for the sufferer to hide his/her addiction from family and friends
- ♣ Compulsive buying is as prevalent as many other mental disorders

HOMEWORK

1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION: Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.

2. INTERNET: Search the Internet and find information about compulsive shoppers. Talk about what you discover with your partner(s) in the next lesson.

3. NEWS REPORT: Write a newspaper report on why people compulsively shop. Interview (imagine) several shoppers in town. Ask them if they are compulsive shoppers? (Minimum 100 words) Read your report to your classmates in the next lesson. Which report was best and why?

4. LETTER: Write a letter to a chairman of a big supermarket chain you visit. Tell him what you think of his company bombarding you with junk mail and continual advertisements. Ask him three questions. Show your letter to your classmates in the next lesson. Your classmates will write a reply.

ANSWERS

TRUE / FALSE:

a. T b. T c. F d. F e. T f. F g. T h. F

SYNONYM MATCH:

a. compulsive	obsessive
b. shoppers	customers
c. malls	arcade
d. commonly	usually
e. encourage	foster
f. relentless	continuous
g. addiction	dependence
h. bored	restless
i. world	earth
j. rocketed	soared

PHRASE MATCH:

a. In today's	world of consumerism
b. Many find themselves	laden with debt
c. What may raise	an eyebrow or two
d. Men engage	in this behaviour
e. It's not 'manly'	to seek help
f. Trends and figures	may have been unfairly skewed
g. They attempt to hide	their addiction
h. Women dragged their bored	and fed-up-looking men
i. Men are just as avid	and compulsive shoppers
j. Men seek care	less often than women

GAP FILL:

Men Suffer From Compulsive Shopping Too

A recent **survey** has found that one in 20 American adults buy things they may not even want or never need or use. In today's world of **consumerism**, where we are constantly bombarded by ads, this is perhaps not **surprising**. What may raise an **eyebrow** or two is a further finding in the study that men are just as likely as women to suffer from "compulsive buying". Gone seem to be the days when women dragged their bored and **fed-up**-looking men around shopping malls. The new research from Stanford University has **revealed** that men are now just as avid and compulsive shoppers as their female **counterparts**. Researcher Dr Lorrin Koram said that the numbers of men who indulge in unnecessary shopping sprees has rocketed: "That's the biggest surprise -- men engage in this behavior almost as commonly as **women**," he said.

This finding runs counter to the conventional and rather stereotyped view that compulsive buying is very much a "woman's disease." Dr. Koram said trends and figures may have been **unfairly** skewed as male obsessive shoppers used to be more reluctant than women to recognize that they have a problem and then come forward and **admit** it. He pointed out that: "Generally, in psychiatry, **men** seek care less often than women...It's not 'manly' to seek help." And help seems to be exactly what the doctor ordered for any compulsive shopper, who is usually not made any happier by his or her relentless buying. Dr Koram warned: "It's always important to **encourage** people who have these types of disorders to seek **treatment**." Many find themselves laden with **debt** and filled with shame and suicidal **tendencies** as they attempt to hide their **addiction**.