Men Suffer From Compulsive Shopping Too

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Contents

The Article  2
Start  3
Before / After reading / Listening (1)  5
Reading Gap Fill  6
Listening Gap Fill  7
Before / After Reading / Listening (2)  8
Discussion  9
Speaking  10
Homework  11
Answers  12

Article by Sean Banville
Ideas and Activities by David Robinson
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)

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</table>
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  
   b. shoppers  
   c. malls  
   d. commonly  
   e. encourage  
   f. relentless  
   g. addiction  
   h. bored  
   i. world  
   j. rocketed  

   foster  
   restless  
   dependence  
   earth  
   arcade  
   usually  
   soared  
   obsessive  
   customers  
   continuous

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

   a. In today's world  
   b. Many find themselves  
   c. What may raise  
   d. Men engage  
   e. It's not ‘manly’  
   f. Trends and figures  
   g. They attempt to hide  
   h. Women dragged their bored  
   i. Men are just as avid  
   j. Men seek care  

   to seek help  
   and fed-up-looking men  
   less often than women  
   an eyebrow or two  
   in this behaviour  
   and compulsive shoppers  
   world of consumerism  
   laden with debt  
   their addiction  
   may have been unfairly skewed

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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.
Men Suffer From Compulsive Shopping Too (October 11, 2006)

ANSWERS

TRUE / FALSE:


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:

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