

DOES FAMILY MATTER? FAMILY INFLUENCES ON COMPULSIVE BUYING IN MEXICO

CAROL GWIN, *Baylor University*
JAMES ROBERTS, *Baylor University*
CARLOS MARTÍNEZ, *ITESM, Monterrey Campus, Mexico*

Compulsive buying has been studied extensively in the United States; however, few studies have been conducted in other countries. This paper describes findings for family influences on compulsive buying in Mexico where the family structure differs from the U.S. by lower divorce rates, larger average households, and male-dominated decision making. We find that addictive/compulsive behaviors by other family members, socio-oriented communication patterns, parental yielding, and perceptions of parental compulsive buying all significantly influence compulsive buying. This paper makes three important contributions: (1) recommendations for improvements to the Valence et al. (1988) scale, (2) findings regarding the differences and similarities in family influences on compulsive buying behavior in Mexico relative to the U.S., and (3) a discussion of the study's implications for consumer policy.

INTRODUCTION

Compulsive buying has been described as "chronic, repetitive purchasing that becomes a primary response to negative events or feelings" (O'Guinn and Faber 1989, p. 155). Many papers have conceptualized and empirically tested key components of compulsive buying (cf. d'Astous and Tremblay 1989; O'Guinn and Faber 1989; d'Astous 1990; Faber and O'Guinn 1992; Rindfleisch, Burroughs, and Denton 1997; Roberts 1998; Roberts and Jones 2001). However, few papers have looked at compulsive buying in other cultures to determine if this is a global phenomenon or unique to the United States.

A few studies have looked at compulsive behavior in the French-speaking culture of Quebec, Canada (cf. Valence et al. 1988; d'Astous 1990). Two papers have looked at specific elements of compulsive buying in Mexico, the country used for this study. Roberts and Martínez (1997) evaluate the level of compulsive buying and potential antecedents among Mexican

young adults. Roberts and Sepulveda (1999) study the perceived impact of money attitudes on compulsive buying in Mexico. Both papers find levels of compulsive buying to be a problem in Mexico with similar relationships as those observed in the United States with regard to money attitudes, credit card use, social status, self-esteem, and perceptions of parental shopping behavior. This paper extends this research by evaluating family influences – divorce, family compulsive/addictive behaviors, family communication patterns, parental yielding, and perceptions of parents' consumer behavior – on compulsive buying in Mexico. Additionally, we assess scale properties for the Valence, d'Astous, and Fortier (1988) compulsive buying scale in Mexico.

CULTURAL DIFFERENCES AND SIMILARITIES: MEXICO AND U.S.

The Mexican culture provides several important differences as compared to the U.S. and Canada in evaluating the impact of family influence variables on compulsive buying. First, the divorce rate is much lower in Mexico at 3.3 percent compared to the 49.5 percent observed in the United States (*Divorce Magazine* 2001). These numbers are consistent with

the rates reported in Mexico of 3.8 percent separated and divorced (INEGI 2000), and those reported by the United Nations of 49 percent for the U.S. (United Nations 1999). The divorce rate is higher in Mexico for urban (4.4 percent) than rural (2.7 percent) areas (INEGI 2000).

Second, the average household size in Mexico at 4.9 (KIIS 2001) is much larger than that of the United States at 2.61 (*U.S. Census* 2000). Mexicans rely more heavily on their extended families to help with child care, emergencies or extra expenses. For example, many young adults live at home until marriage and contribute to household income (Kephart 1994). Although the Mexican middle class makes less than their American counterparts, much less of its money goes to housing and transportation. Family often is responsible for child care, medical care is free or subsidized by the Mexican government and, unlike the U.S., insurance is less common in Mexico.

Third, Mexican households are more likely to follow a traditional, male-oriented structure where "the father is the undisputed family leader" (KIIS 2001) or "chief of the family" (Ember and Ember 2001). Surveys of Hispanic consumers find that they hold strong "traditional" values regarding sex roles (Valencia 1989). In terms of consumer behavior, Imperia, O'Guinn and MacAdams (1985) demonstrate that Mexican Americans make more husband-dominant purchasing decisions and fewer joint decisions than Anglo-Americans. Webster's (1994) findings are consistent in that she shows that the husband's role becomes dominant at evaluation and decision phases, especially for those who speak Spanish or are bilingual. Talpade, Talpade, and Prabhu (1997) find that ethnic identity also plays a role in teenager influence in durable purchase decisions. The stronger the ethnic identification among Hispanics, the less influence the teenagers have on family durable purchases.

Finally, Mexico represents more of a collectivist society than the U.S. (Hofstede 1980). In a collectivist society, members are concerned about the reaction their behavior elicits from in-group members. As a result, "fitting in" or conformity is valued over

independence and may be reflected in family communication patterns. These differences in Mexico suggest that the impact of family on compulsive buying may differ in Mexico versus the United States.

An alternative view is that proximity to the U.S. may breed similarity in compulsive consumption that counteracts family differences in Mexico. Roberts and Martinez (1997) have shown many similarities between the consumer behavior of Mexicans and Americans. Other studies have observed similarities in Hispanics and Mexican Americans to Anglo Americans. Several similar characteristics predispose this culture to compulsive buying: status-consciousness (Hoyer and Deshpande 1981; Segal and Sosa 1983; Triplett 1994); conspicuous consumption (Ember and Ember 2001); present-oriented attitudes and reluctance to delay spending to achieve gratification (Medina et al. 1996; Roberts and Martinez 1997); enjoyment of shopping (Wilkes and Valencia 1986; Medina et al. 1996); materialistic, self-expressive and pleasure seeking tendencies (Segal and Sosa 1983; Valencia 1989). All of these factors could contribute to compulsive buying within Mexico. Since family may influence many of the above characteristics, it could be that, despite differences in family structures, there is an increasingly shared consumer culture between Mexico and the U.S. that encourages potentially negative consumer behavior such as compulsive buying. As stated by Galceran and Berry (1995), "In the 1990s, the Monroe Doctrine has been replaced by Wal-Mart, the Internet, and MTV" (p. 28).

The primary objective of this paper is to discuss how family influence variables impact compulsive buying behavior in Mexico. This paper makes a contribution to the literature in three ways. First, the study evaluates the scale properties of the Valence et al. (1988) scale in another culture. Second, it tests the cross-cultural robustness of family influences on compulsive buying. In Mexico, family may play a different role than it does in the United States. Finally, the paper provides direction for public policy initiatives oriented to reducing compulsive buying in

Mexico with potential application for the growing Hispanic population in the United States.

FAMILY INFLUENCES ON COMPULSIVE BUYING IN MEXICO

This study evaluates the influence of family on compulsive buying in Mexico. The factors relate to family structure (divorce), family experience with other addictive or compulsive behaviors, family communication patterns (socio- or concept-oriented), parental yielding patterns, and perceptions of parental consumption patterns.

The Impact of Divorce

The divorce rate in the U.S. doubled between 1965 and 1977, reaching 49.5 percent in the 21st century (*Divorce Magazine* 2001). This increase in the divorce rate has negatively affected children. American children from divorced homes are twice as likely to be in therapy than children whose parents have not divorced (Zill and Robinson 1995). Children from single parent families with little supervision are susceptible to delinquent behavior and substance abuse (Hamburg 1993). Single parents are less involved in their children's schoolwork, exert less parental influence, and find it difficult to supervise their children. This lack of guidance leads to young adults who do not have the close relationships needed to help them develop autonomy.

Divorce is a stressful event for both parents and children. Burroughs and Rindfleisch (1997) suggest that children of divorce may use material possessions and compulsive buying as a means of coping with the stress associated with divorce. Similar conclusions regarding the influence of family structure on materialism and compulsive buying are proffered in a more recent study by Roberts, Manolis and Tanner (2003). Children from divorced homes view consumption as a way to compensate through the symbolic significance of the act of buying (Elliott 1994). Research has also shown that young adults from divorced families are more likely to display compulsive buying tendencies (Rindfleisch,

Burroughs, and Denton 1997; Roberts and Manolis 2000).

In Mexico, divorce is not as prevalent as in the U.S., with only 3.3 percent of Mexicans divorced. Although the divorce rate is much lower, it is still a major life change and the same effects should be manifested for children from divorced households. It could even be argued that because divorce is so rare in Mexico, the impact of divorce may be more profound. In Mexico, consumers from divorced homes may suffer more from a stigma than their U.S. counterparts where divorce is more common. Thus, we hypothesize that divorce will have a similar effect on compulsive buying in Mexico as that observed in the U.S.

H₁: Consumers from divorced homes will be more likely to be compulsive buyers than those from intact families.

Family Addictive/Compulsive Behaviors

Research suggests that addictive or compulsive behaviors often relate to the existence of these behaviors within the immediate family. Whether transmission occurs via genetics or as a learned behavior is unclear. Elliott (1994) contends that addictions can best be understood as learned adaptive behavior. Valence et al. (1988) find that when family members exhibit some form of dysfunction (alcoholism, anorexia or bulimia, extreme nervousness, and depression), compulsive buying increases. D'Astous et al. (1990) conclude that conflicts, troubles, or disorders within the family unit are linked to compulsive buying tendencies in adolescents.

Seligman (1994) in summarizing the research on the role of genetics on adult personality concludes: "Studies find massive effects of genes on adult personality, and only negligible effects of any particular events" (p. 231). Identical twins reared apart are far more similar as adults than fraternal twins reared together across a broad spectrum of personality types. Additionally, adopted children share more in common as adults with their biological

parents than their adoptive parents (Seligman 1994). Culture should not impact these relationships, and, as a result, these findings should be replicated in Mexico.

H₂: Compulsive buying in young adults will be positively associated with dysfunctional behavior among family members.

Family Communication Patterns

Despite the strong influence of genetics on adult personality and behavior, Seligman (1994, 2002) asserts that there is ample room for non-genetic influences on adult personality given that less than half of the variance can be accounted for by genes.

Intra-family communication about consumption is considered one of the most important factors in a child's acquisition of consumer skills, knowledge, and attitudes (Moore and Moschis 1981). Specific patterns of parent-child communication have a more significant influence in socialization than the frequency or amount of interaction between parents and children. The frequency of family communications about consumption often fails to predict young people's consumer behavior. In contrast, measures of communication patterns have been found to be good predictors of these behaviors (Moschis 1985; Rose, Bush, and Kahle 1998).

Extensive research evidence supports the idea that family communication patterns help guide the individual in coping with situations he/she encounters outside the immediate family context. Further, these influences persist well into adulthood (Moschis 1985). Analysis of family communication patterns as they relate to consumption has consistently found two relatively uncorrelated dimensions of communication structure: socio-orientation and concept-orientation (Moschis and Mitchell 1986).

Socio-oriented communication patterns are designed to produce deference and foster harmonious and pleasant social relationships at home. This type of communication focuses on parent-child relationships regardless of the topic or subject confronted. Moschis (1985) suggests "parents who emphasize the

importance of pleasant social relationships in the family in their communications with their children may implicitly encourage their children to evaluate their actions (including consumption behaviors) on the basis of their perceived effects on others" (p. 906). Consumers who use socio-oriented communication patterns are predicted to be more likely to engage in compulsive buying. By evaluating their actions (and to some extent themselves) based on what they buy, these consumers are more likely to associate buying with positive sensations (however momentary) such as self-esteem and status. These positive feelings lead to the repetitive purchasing to alleviate negative feelings associated with compulsive buying.

Hofstede's (1980) characterization of Mexico as a collectivist society and of the dominant role played by the father in the Mexican household may make family communication patterns more likely to be socio-oriented in Mexico. In a collectivist society, the focus is on the society or group, not on the individual. As a result, children may be more likely to be socialized to make decisions that please the parents and other household members rather than those in the best interests of the individual. As a result, we hypothesize a strong positive relationship between socio-oriented communication patterns and compulsive buying.

H_{3a}: Socio-oriented family communication patterns will be positively associated with compulsive buying.

The second type of communication pattern is concept-oriented. This pattern focuses on positive constraints that help the child develop his/her own views about the world and stresses the relationship of the child to the subject matter or topic at hand (Moschis 1985, p. 894). The child is encouraged to evaluate alternatives on the basis of objective (rather than social) evidence. This early training in communication may lead to the development of more rational or economic motivations for consumption as an adult (Moschis and Moore 1981). This communication pattern is expected to be less prevalent in Mexico due to the father-dominated

family structure. However, among young adults who grew up with this family communication pattern, compulsive buying tendencies are expected to be weaker.

H_{3b}: Concept-oriented family communication patterns will be negatively associated with compulsive buying.

Parental Yielding to a Child's Requests

Indiscriminate yielding to a child's requests for consumer goods can best be labeled as a permissive parenting style (Carlson and Grossbart 1988). Permissive parenting removes as many restraints as possible resulting in substantial freedom for the child. Permissive parents give children adult rights with few responsibilities (Baumrind 1978). While permissive parents recognize that egoistic and compulsive forces control children, they tend to respect, and even glorify, these tendencies as refreshing, natural outcomes of a child's development. Permissive parents view themselves as resources for, not active shapers of, their children (Baumrind 1978). The fear of inhibiting or repressing the child leads the parent to increasingly yield to the child's requests.

While indiscriminate yielding to a child's requests does encourage freedom, it does not teach children the skills needed to become a competent consumer. This lack of training for a young consumer is likely to be exhibited in adult consumption tendencies (Scherhorn, Reisch, and Raab 1990). While parental yielding may be less likely in Mexico due to lower income levels and more authoritarian family structures, we hypothesize that the same relationship will hold as observed in the United States: greater parental yielding to a child will result in a greater likelihood of compulsive buying. These effects are expected since, in any culture, where children do not learn how to prioritize the need for purchases, they will not learn that indiscriminate purchasing has negative consequences.

H₄: Yielding to a child's requests for consumer goods will be positively associated with compulsive buying.

Perceptions of Parental Compulsive Buying

Friese and Koenig (1993) find that compulsive buyers identify their parents' buying behavior as a significant factor in their own compulsive buying. D'Astous et al. (1990) and Roberts (1998) observe a positive relationship between consumers' perceptions of their parents' compulsive buying tendencies and their own compulsive buying tendencies. Scherhorn et al. (1990) suggest that families of addictive buyers often use money or gifts to reward behavior. As a result, the compulsive buyer may have learned that this type of reward replaces or compensates for other signs of caring (Faber and O'Guinn 1988). Alternatively, there may be an association because of a genetic link to compulsive buying behavior. In a previous study on compulsive buying behavior among Mexican young adults, Roberts and Martínez (1997) show that perceptions that parents exhibited compulsive buying are associated with greater levels of compulsive buying in young adults. We expect to observe the same effects in our sample.

H₅: Compulsive buying in young adults will be positively associated with perceptions of their parent(s)' compulsive buying.

METHODOLOGY

Four hundred and forty-seven Mexican consumers completed the self-report questionnaire. The final sample consists of 215 males (48 percent) and 232 females (52 percent) between the ages of 12 and 32 (approximately 13 percent were over 21 years of age). Respondents were recruited from executive MBA, college, junior and senior high-level classes at a major university in Northern Mexico. Sample characteristics can be found in Table 1. The nature of the sampling procedure led to a sample that was positively skewed toward higher income and education compared with the general Mexican population.

TABLE 1
Sample Characteristics
(N=447)

Gender	Percent	Age	Percent
Male	48	11-17	35
Female	52	18-21	52
		22-32	13
Income		Education	
Under \$15,000	18	Secondary (7-9)	29
\$15,001 – 25,000	22	High School	4
\$25,001 – 30,000	14	College	67
More than \$30,000	46		

Measure of Compulsive Buying

The 13-item scale developed by Valence, d'Astous, and Fortier (1988) forms the basis for our compulsive buying scale. The scale was modified to more accurately capture the construct in the Mexican culture. Items 10 and 13 of the original scale were both dropped from the present scale. Item 10 deals with direct mail and is not appropriate in Mexico. Item 13 lacks face validity and was thought to be too abstract for Mexican adolescents. Slight modifications were made to items 2, 3, 6, 7, 8, 11, and 12 to clarify their meaning and to use age-appropriate vocabulary. The original scale has been shown to be reliable ($\alpha=0.83$, d'Astous 1990), unidimensional, and valid (Valence et al. 1988). Table 2 contains a listing of scale items as developed by Valence et al. (1988) and as modified for the culture and language in Mexico in our study. The 5-point scale ranges from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree." We find that the modified 11-item scale is reliable ($\alpha = 0.84$) and has two dimensions.

Other Measures

Items for the remaining scales used in the present study can be found in the Appendix. What follows is a brief description of each construct and its relevant psychometric properties.

A single item measures whether the parents of the respondents are divorced: "Are your parents divorced?" Response categories are either "yes" or "no."

Dysfunctional behavior among family members is measured by seven questions that ask respondents whether any immediate family members (mother, father, brothers, or sisters) experience the following symptoms: alcoholism, anorexia, bulimia, extreme nervousness, depression, gambling, or drug problems. A yes response to any symptom is coded as "1," a no response "0." The seven questions are then combined to form the final scale.

Socio-oriented family communication patterns are designed to produce deference and to foster harmonious and pleasant social relationships at home. The 7-item scale used in this study was designed by Moschis and Moore (1981) to measure communications directly relevant to consumer behavior. In this study, the 5-point scale ranges from "very often" to "never." Coefficient alpha for the present study is 0.63.

Concept-oriented family communication patterns focus on positive constraints helping the child to develop his/her own views about the world. The present study uses the 8-item scale designed by Moschis and Moore (1981) to measure communications directly relevant to consumer behavior. Responses to these items are recorded on a

TABLE 2
The Compulsive Buying Scale

Valence et al. (1988) Scale	Modified Scale
1. When I have money, I cannot help but spend part or the whole of it.	1. When I have money, I cannot help but spend part or the whole of it.
2. I am often impulsive in my buying behavior.	2. I often buy something I see in a store without planning, just because I've got to have it.
3. For me, shopping is a way of facing the stress of my daily life and of relaxing.	3. Shopping is a way of relaxing and forgetting my problems.
4. I sometimes feel that something inside pushed me to go shopping.	4. I sometimes feel that something inside pushes me to go shopping.
5. There are times when I have a strong urge to buy (clothing, books, etc.).	5. There are times when I have a strong urge to buy (clothing, books, jewelry, etc.).
6. At times, I have felt somewhat guilty after buying a product, because it seemed unreasonable.	6. At times, I feel guilty after buying something.
7. There are some things I buy that I do not show to anybody for fear of being perceived as irrational in my buying behavior ("a foolish expense").	7. There are some things I buy that I do not show to anybody because I am afraid people will think that I wasted my money.
8. I often have an unexplainable urge, a sudden and spontaneous desire, to go and buy something in a store.	8. I often have a real desire to go shopping and buy something.
9. As soon as I enter a shopping center, I have an irresistible urge to go into a shop to buy something.	9. As soon as I enter a shopping center, I want to go in a store and buy something.
10. I am one of those people who often respond to direct mail offers (e.g., books & records).	
11. I have often bought a product that I did not need, while knowing that I had very little money left.	10. I have often bought things that I don't need even when I knew I had very little money left.
12. I am a spendthrift.	11. I like to spend money.
13. I have sometimes thought "If I had to do it over again, I would ..." and felt sorry for something I have done or said.	

5-point scale that ranges from "very often" to "never." Coefficient alpha for the present study is 0.68.

Parental yielding to a child's requests is measured using a revised version of the 5-item scale designed by Carlson and Grossbart (1988). Carlson and Grossbart's scale was originally designed for parents to determine how often they yielded to their child's

request for various consumer items (candy, games/toys, magazines/comics, snack foods, sports equipment). These items, as used in the present study, are revised so that the questions reflect a child's perspective. Responses are recorded on a 5-point scale from "very seldom" to "very often." Coefficient alpha for the present study is 0.78.

Perceptions of parents' compulsive buying are measured using a 2-item scale based on d'Astous et al. (1990). Coefficient alpha for the scale is 0.65.

Control Variables

Control measures used in this analysis include gender of the respondent and family income. Both of these variables have been found in previous research to be associated with compulsive buying. Any variance explained in compulsive buying by these two variables will be removed prior to testing the study's hypotheses.

Method of Analysis

The primary method of analysis was multiple regression, using compulsive buying as the dependent variable and the study's other variables as independent measures. The variables are included in three blocks: (1) age and income, (2) divorce and family history of compulsive/addictive behaviors, and (3) socio-oriented communication, concept-oriented communication, parental yielding, and perceptions of parental compulsive buying.

RESULTS

Dimensionality of the Scale

In this study, our modified version of Valence et al.'s (1988) compulsive buying scale exhibits strong reliability ($\alpha = .84$). However, we did observe a difference in the dimensionality of the scale compared to earlier studies that used the scale (Valence et al. 1988; d'Astous 1990). In their 1988 study, Valence et al. conclude that the compulsive buying scale is unidimensional since one factor explains 78 percent of the variation in the full scale. However, d'Astous (1990) notes that the scale was built around three dimensions: tendency to spend, reactive aspect, and post-purchase guilt.

In our test of this scale, two distinct factors emerge: the tendency to spend and post-purchase guilt. These two factors explain 49 percent of the variance in the scale. A reactive factor does not emerge as a distinct

factor in the analysis. This could be due to the social/hedonistic orientation toward shopping by Mexicans. Shim and Gehrt (1996) find that Hispanics have a social/hedonistic shopping orientation characterized by brand-consciousness, novelty/fashion consciousness, recreational/enjoyment orientation, and brand/store loyalty. These characteristics might lead our sample to not consider the urge or motivation to spend as separate from the tendency or desire to spend.

Table 3 shows the items as described by d'Astous (1990). Further, it shows the items and loadings for our study. The item numbers in the scale match directly with the item wording as provided in Table 2.

Quality of the Model

The model does not appear to violate any of the assumptions for linear regression. All of the models significantly explain variance in compulsive buying ($p \leq 0.05$). The full model explains 22 percent of the variance in compulsive buying which is quite strong for a survey-based model of a complex phenomenon. Table 4 summarizes the coefficients and significance for each of the independent variables for each of the models. (Note: Unless otherwise indicated, all t-statistics and p-values will refer to the full model.)

Control Variables

Family income and gender were entered in the first block of the analysis as control variables. Consistent with prior research, we find that gender is significantly related to compulsive buying ($t=4.234$, $p \leq 0.001$). The positive coefficient indicates that females are more likely to be compulsive buyers. Family income, however, is not significantly related to compulsive buying.

The Impact of Divorce

Seven percent of the sample report that their parents are divorced. This number is consistent with research that shows the divorce rate is much lower in Mexico (3.3 percent) than in the United States (49.5 percent)

TABLE 3
Dimensionality of Compulsive Buying Scale

Valence et al. (1988)		Current Study (Mexico)		
Proposed Dimensions	Item Number	Dimensions	Item Number	Factor Loading
Tendency to Spend	1	Tendency to Spend	1	.660
	2		2	.718
	9		3	.728
	10		4	.718
	11		5	.558
	12		8	.566
			9	.559
		10	.503	
		11	.688	
Reactive Aspect	3	N/A		
	4			
	5			
	8			
Post-purchase Guilt	6	Post-purchase Guilt	6	.747
	7		7	.713
	13			

TABLE 4
Summary of the Models

Variable	R ²	R ² Change (Sig.)	Beta	Standardized Beta	Significance
<i>Model 1</i>	8%				
Gender			4.792	.274	.000
Family Income			.400	.086	.115
<i>Model 2</i>	11%	3% (≤.005)			
Gender			4.467	.256	.000
Family Income			.420	.090	.095
Divorce			1.722	.054	.317
Family Biology			1.287	.159	.003
<i>Model 3</i>	22%	11% (≤.0001)			
Gender			3.830	.219	.000
Family Income			.237	.051	.323
Divorce			.714	.023	.662
Family Biology			1.049	.130	.013
Socio-oriented			.242	.132	.018
Concept-oriented			-.091	-.054	.350
Parental Yielding			.602	.267	.000
Parental Consumption			.517	.125	.017

(*Divorce Magazine* 2001). This sample may have a higher divorce rate than the total population due to higher education and income among the sample population (see Table 1). Higher income and education may be more typical of people in urban areas, and, as discussed earlier, the divorce rate in urban areas of Mexico is higher than in rural areas. Also, these households may be more likely to travel and be exposed to the culture in the U.S., which could lead to greater assimilation of U.S. lifestyles.

Contrary to our hypothesis and findings in U.S. studies, divorce is not significantly related to compulsive buying in the full-model regression which includes gender, income, and family history with compulsive/addictive disorders ($t= 0.437$, $p= 0.66$). However, the zero-order correlation between divorce and compulsive buying is significant ($p= 0.006$). As a result, only partial support for Hypothesis 1 is found.

Family Addictive/Compulsive Behaviors

In the present study, we find that the most common addictive/compulsive behaviors in Mexican families are depression and extreme nervousness, with about 20 percent of the sample citing experience by a family member for each of the symptoms. Nine percent claim a family member shows symptoms of alcoholism, and less than five percent claim family experience with anorexia, bulimia, gambling or drug problems. The mean number of addictive/compulsive behaviors is 0.63. This finding is consistent with the level of 0.60 observed in the United States (Roberts 2003).

Family experience with these addictive/compulsive behaviors is significantly related to compulsive buying behavior in Mexico ($t=2.498$, $p=0.013$). This finding supports Hypothesis 2 and is consistent with findings in the U.S. The positive coefficient indicates that respondents with more addictive/compulsive behaviors in the immediate family are more likely to exhibit compulsive buying behavior.

Family Communication Patterns

As a whole, the sample indicates that it is more concept-oriented (mean = 3.22 on a 5-point scale) than socio-oriented (mean = 2.84 on a 5-point scale) ($p \leq .05$). (Note: These means are adjusted to a 5-point scale to allow direct comparison despite the difference in the number of items for the two scales). This tendency is counter to our expectation, given the father-dominated, traditional culture. The mean for the full socio-oriented scale is 19.88, which is consistent with the mean of 19.9 observed in the U.S. (Roberts 2003).

As predicted, socio-oriented family communication patterns are significantly related to compulsive buying behavior in Mexico. As socio-oriented family communication patterns increase, so does compulsive buying behavior ($t=2.386$, $p=0.018$). This finding supports Hypothesis 3_a.

The mean for the full concept-oriented communication scale is 25.75 in Mexico, as compared to the mean of 24.96 observed in the U.S. (Roberts 2003). These means show that concept-oriented family communications patterns are as likely in Mexico as in the United States.

Although the sign for the coefficient of concept-oriented communication is in the predicted direction (negative), it is not significantly associated with compulsive buying behavior in Mexico ($t=-0.937$, $p=0.350$). This finding does not support Hypothesis 3_b.

Parental Yielding to a Child's Requests

A comparison of sample means between the present study (mean = 17.48) and Roberts (2003) study in the U.S. (mean = 16.07) suggests that Mexican consumers perceive that their parents more often yielded to their requests as children than did their counterparts in the U.S. ($p \leq 0.05$).

Based on prior research (Scherhorn 1990; Roberts 2003), we hypothesize that higher incidence of yielding to a child's requests by the parents will lead

to a greater likelihood of compulsive buying behavior in the child. We find that this relationship exists in Mexico ($t=4.951$, $p \leq 0.0001$), providing support for Hypothesis 4.

Perceptions of Parental Compulsive Buying

In general, our sample did not perceive that their parents exhibited compulsive buying behavior (mean = 5.29). This mean is consistent with the level (mean = 5.41) observed in the U.S. (Roberts 2003).

Young people who perceive that their parents exhibited compulsive buying behavior are expected to be more likely to demonstrate compulsive buying behavior themselves. Whether due to genetic or environmental causes, this relationship has been observed in prior research in the United States (Roberts 1998), Canada (d'Astous et al. 1990) and Mexico (Roberts and Martínez 1997). In our study, we observe this relationship between parental compulsive buying behavior and that of young adults in Mexico ($t=2.397$, $p=0.017$). This finding supports Hypothesis 5.

DISCUSSION

This paper makes three important contributions: (1) recommendations for improvements to the Valence et al. (1988) scale, (2) findings regarding the differences and similarities in family influences on compulsive buying behavior in Mexico relative to the U.S., and (3) a discussion of the study's implications for consumer policy.

This study observes similarities and differences in the findings in Mexico relative to research previously conducted in the United States and Canada. One important difference is the relative interpretation of the compulsive buying scale (Valence et al. 1988). In Mexico, we find two dimensions – the tendency to spend and post-purchase guilt. The reactive aspect of compulsive buying described by d'Astous (1990) does not emerge in this sample. As discussed previously, the merging of this factor with tendency to spend may be due to the orientation to shopping observed in Hispanic samples. Shim and Gehrt (1996) find that

Hispanics, in contrast to Native Americans or Anglo-Americans, demonstrate a social/hedonistic orientation to shopping. In this orientation, consumers (1) buy well-known brands, (2) gain excitement from seeking out new things, (3) enjoy the act of shopping, and (4) repetitively choose the same brands and stores. If these tendencies are equally strong in Mexico, it could explain why the reactive dimension focusing on the desire or urge to shop is encompassed in the tendency to shop dimension. In this culture, enjoyment and shopping appear to go hand in hand.

The second dimension that emerges is post-purchase guilt. Post-purchase guilt appears to be a consequence of, rather than a part of, the construct of compulsive buying. As a result, future studies may want to consider dropping the two items associated with post-purchase guilt (items 6 and 7) from this scale to ensure greater validity in the measurement of the compulsive buying construct.

Another key difference in this study compared with earlier studies is that divorce does not emerge as a significant variable in explaining compulsive buying in the full-model regression analysis. However, divorce is a significant predictor for compulsive buying behavior when it is the only variable entered into the model ($t=-2.509$, $p=.006$). One potential explanation for this finding is that the extended family may play an important role in the consumer socialization of children. Additionally, having multiple role models or siblings in the household may increase the supervision and attention that the child receives. These factors may moderate the effect of divorce on compulsive buying. There is some support for the explanation of other family influences mitigating the effect of divorce. As other family variables, most notably the family history with compulsive/addictive behaviors and family communication patterns, are entered into the model, divorce becomes non-significant. Further research is needed to determine the nature of the relationship of these variables to divorce: whether they are antecedents or consequences of divorce.

Perceptions of parental compulsive buying as well as presence of addictive/compulsive disorders in the immediate family are associated with compulsive buying in young adults. Elliott (1994) contends that addictions can best be understood as learned adaptive behavior. The question of whether this correspondence is due to genetics or is a learned behavior is an interesting one. Recent research has investigated the co-morbidity of such problems as alcoholism, gambling, drug use, and eating disorders with compulsive buying (McElroy et al. 1994; Faber et al. 1995; Black et al. 1998; Black 2001).

In contrast to our expectations, concept-oriented communication patterns in the family do not lead to a decreased likelihood of compulsive buying. However, socio-oriented communication patterns do make young adults more prone to compulsive buying. A key question for future research is why socio-oriented communication patterns lead to negative results, but concept-oriented communication patterns do not lead to positive results. These findings may indicate that negative training may lead to longer lasting effects than positive training on how to make decisions. Alternatively, it may be that making purchasing decisions based on what other people think is an underlying problem with compulsive buying. In contrast, learning to make one's own decisions about purchases and discussing parental decisions may or may not be directly associated with compulsive buying since a child may learn to make, or still be exposed to, bad decisions.

Parental yielding to a child's requests has been consistently found to be positively associated with compulsive buying. This factor is the strongest influence on compulsive buying and is even more prevalent in Mexico than the U.S.

The scale used in this study to measure yielding to a child's requests was developed by Carlson and Grossbart (1988) and seems to capture indiscriminate yielding rather than parental yielding to the reasonable requests of competent child consumers. With this interpretation of the Carlson and Grossbart (1988) scale, it is clear that indiscriminate yielding to a child's requests does little to cultivate the self

control needed to be a competent consumer. It is likely that the same indulgence practiced on young consumers will be exhibited after the child grows to adulthood. Saying no to a child's requests may not be easy, but may be a necessary condition in raising a competent adult consumer.

One limitation of this study is that the sample has a higher income and is better educated than the population of Mexico as a whole. Future research with sample demographics closer to the total population of Mexico is recommended to see if stronger ethnic identification exists among a broader-based Mexican sample and if this ethnic identification leads to different results. Talpade et al. (1997) find that ethnic identity plays a role in teenager influence on durable purchase decisions among Hispanics. Ethnic identity may also play a role in the level of compulsive buying and the factors that influence it.

IMPLICATIONS FOR CONSUMER POLICY

This study has several implications for public policy, both in Mexico and the United States. A host of factors has led to a melding together of the two at one time distinct cultures. These factors include: Mexico's physical proximity, increased trade with the U.S., immigration, popular culture shared through American television and the Internet, technological advances in communication, transportation and travel, and an emerging middle class in Mexico. For the United States, the Hispanic population continues to grow and become a dominant sub-population. Understanding cultural differences can provide guidance to consumer policy makers as to how ethnic cultures may differ with regard to compulsive buying within the United States as well as Mexico.

First, gender has been shown to be associated with compulsive buying across cultures. Females are more likely to be compulsive buyers than men. In the present study, gender is the second most important variable in influencing compulsive buying behavior. Education programs directed to school-age children of both genders are important tools for teaching fiscal responsibility. The high school financial planning program developed by the National Endowment for

Financial Education (NEFE) is a good example of how such programs can be implemented. With its corporate partners, the NEFE provides all the materials needed to teach money management skills and fundamental financial concepts. In addition to financial planning skills, girls and young women also need to be taught other ways to achieve social acceptance and bolster self-esteem that do not include a focus on their physical appearance or material possessions. Self-esteem is an important antecedent to compulsive buying and research finds that self-esteem often wanes as young girls progress through adolescence.

If the gender-compulsive buying relationship is to be effectively addressed, parents will also need financial counseling. Young girls, like boys, must be taught the value of saving, spending wisely, and earning their money. As suggested by Cohen (1994), parents must encourage and cultivate consumer skills in their children as early as possible. Consumer behavior begins within the family. Parents and consumer educators need to enhance children's financial awareness and understanding. Dunbar (1993) cites an array of age-oriented books and games designed to teach children useful financial skills. For saving money, Cohen (1994) suggests piggy banks for preschool children, savings accounts for school-age children, and checking accounts for adolescents. For spending money, parents and consumer educators are urged to help children distinguish between needs and wants when making purchases.

It is also important to note the sources and uses of children's money. Belk, Rice and Harvey (1984) find that children who earn their money are more likely to save. Doss et al. (1995) demonstrate that the source and amount of money are also important to how it is spent. Children who receive more money from their parents spend more money on both required and discretionary items. Allowances are not necessarily teaching children good money management skills unless the child's discretionary spending is closely managed. Even with required spending, children need management skills. Children (and many parents) must be taught to read labels, assess features of

products, search for information, and calculate opportunity costs of the purchase.

Second, the impact of divorce on compulsive buying behavior leads to several implications for consumer policy and family structure. Education/counseling of parents as well as children involved in a divorce is critical. It is well known that divorce is associated with a decrease in the quantity and quality of contact between children and their parents (both custodial and non-custodial). Children of divorce often experience a decrease in parental attendance, help, and supervision (Amato and Keith 1991). Other family variables such as family history with compulsive/addictive disorders and communication patterns appear to mitigate the effects of divorce in this study. These findings provide avenues for future research into the cause-effect nature of the relationship between divorce and other family influences.

Consumer socialization involves more than the acquisition of knowledge and skills related to one's role as a consumer. It also includes the learning and adoption of motives and values pertaining to consumption activities (Roedder John 1999). Teaching proper consumption motives and values is difficult for often over-burdened single parents, particularly in a culture that encourages children to focus on material goods as a means of achieving personal happiness, success, and self-fulfillment. These materialistic values are established by the time children reach fifth or sixth grade (Roedder John 1999).

In Mexico, there may be a more direct remedy for some of the adverse effects of divorce. The extended family may be able to provide the education and support needed by a child to cope with divorce and maintain a healthy approach to consumption.

Third, compulsive buying in children is clearly associated with family histories of compulsive/addictive behaviors. While it is certainly important to treat these behaviors in adults, it is equally critical to treat them in the child as well. By setting up support programs and education, the

government can help the children of parents with addictive/compulsive behaviors learn to live more healthy lifestyles. This is relevant to the study of compulsive buying given its co-morbidity with eating disorders, drinking alcohol, smoking, and early life sexual experiences among adolescents (Roberts and Tanner 2000). Clearly, there is a family component to compulsive buying. Whether this transmission occurs via genetics or is learned is still under investigation. However, Seligman (1994) cites a corpus of research that suggests genes explain approximately fifty percent of adult personality. What role family plays in the remaining fifty percent is open to further research.

Fourth, the manner in which parents communicate with their children helps shape consumption patterns in children that last well into adulthood (Moschis 1985). A socio-oriented communication pattern leads children to consider the effect of a purchase on others. This continual reference to the opinion of others may make these children more status conscious, and they may perceive consumption as a way to get attention and please others. These factors contribute to compulsive buying as a means to gain approval from others. By teaching children to evaluate purchases based on the merits of the product itself, rather than just the brand name or the effect on others, children can become more competent consumers and take this training into adulthood. The training should focus on the ability to compare attributes of a product, and relate these features to value in the form of price. Also, as mentioned earlier, training in understanding the difference between needs and wants can help consumers learn how to distinguish between required purchases and discretionary purchases.

Finally, parental yielding is an important influencer of compulsive buying. Parents need to be taught the importance of saying no, and receive the training necessary to explain to the child why his/her request was denied. Otherwise, children associate purchasing with rewards and do not recognize the consequences. The role of impulse purchasing in compulsive buying is in need of further research. Research suggests that compulsive buying shares some similarity to impulse control disorders. The ability to delay gratification

would be a definite deterrence to compulsive buying. Educational materials that teach parents how and when to say no are important to help them develop the skills needed to guide their children in good consumer behavior, rather than purchasing things as a means to enjoyment or happiness.

Developing and testing approaches for the above educational materials provide future research opportunities that will positively benefit our understanding and treatment of compulsive buying behavior. Also, further cross-cultural research is needed to identify the pervasiveness of this phenomenon, as well as the particular dynamics behind such behavior in each culture. For example, credit card use in Mexico is in its infancy compared to the U.S. baseline measures of compulsive buying in Mexico should be taken and tracked alongside the growth of credit card use. The integral role of credit cards in compulsive buying suggests that issues relating to credit card use/abuse must be examined carefully.

REFERENCES

- Amato, Paul R. and Bruce Keith (1991), "Parental Divorce and the Well-Being of Children: A Meta-Analysis," *Psychological Bulletin*, 110, 26-46.
- Baumrind, Diana (1978), "Parental Disciplinary Patterns and Social Competence in Children," *Youth and Society*, 93 (March), 239-276.
- Belk, Russell W., Clifford Rice, and Randall Harvey (1984), "Adolescents' Reporting Saving, Giving, and Spending as a Function of Sources of Income," *Advances in Consumer Research*, 7, 42-46.
- Carlson, Les and Sanford Grossbart (1988), "Parental Style and Consumer Socialization of Children," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 15, 77-94.
- _____, Ann Walsh, Russell N. Laczniak, and Sanford Grossbart (1994), "Family Communication Patterns and Marketplace Motivations, Attitudes, and Behaviors of Children and Mothers," *The Journal of Consumer Affairs*, 28(1), 25-53.

- Cohen, Stewart (1994), "Consumer Socialization: Children's Saving and Spending," *Childhood Education*, 70 (Summer), 244-246.
- d'Astous, Alain (1990), "An Inquiry into the Compulsive Side of 'Normal' Consumers," *Journal of Consumer Policy*, 13, 15-31.
- _____, Julie Maltais, and Caroline Roberge (1990), "Compulsive Buying Tendencies of Adolescent Consumers," *Advances in Consumer Research*, 17, 306-312.
- _____, and S. Tremblay (1989), "The Compulsive Side of 'Normal' Consumers: An Empirical Study," in *Marketing Thought and Practice in the 1990's*, Vol. 1, eds. G. J. Avlonitis, N. K. Papvasilion, and A. G. Kouremenos, Athens: The Athens School of Economics and Business Science, 657-669.
- Divorce Magazine* (2001), "World Divorce Statistics."
- Doss, Vonda S., Julia Marlowe, and Deborah D. Godwin (1995), "Middle-School Children's Sources and Uses of Money," *The Journal of Consumer Affairs*, 29, 1, 219-241.
- Dunbar, A. (1993), "Beyond the Tooth Fairy: Money Basics for Kids," *Business Weekly*, February, 76-77.
- Elliott, Richard (1994), "Addictive Consumption: Function and Fragmentation in Postmodernity," *Journal of Consumer Policy*, 17, 159-179.
- Ember, Melvin and Carol R. Ember (2001), *Countries and Their Cultures (Volume 3)*, USA: MacMillan Reference, 1447-1464.
- Faber, Ronald J., Gary A. Christenson, Martina De Zwaan, and James Mitchell (1995), "Two Forms of Compulsive Consumption: Comorbidity of Compulsive Buying and Binge Eating," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 22 (December), 296-304.
- _____, and Thomas C. O'Guinn (1988), "Expanding the View of Consumer Socialization: A Nonutilitarian Mass-mediated Perspective," in *Research in Consumer Behavior*, Vol. 3, eds. Elizabeth C. Hirschman and Jagdish N. Sheth, Greenwich, CT: JAI, 49-77.
- _____, and Thomas C. O'Guinn (1992), "A Clinical Screener for Compulsive Buying," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 19 (December), 459-469.
- Friese, Susanne and Hal Koenig (1993), "Shopping for Trouble," *Advancing the Consumer Interest*, 5:1, 24-32.
- Hamburg, David (1993), "The New Family: Investing in Human Capital," *Current*, 354 (July-August), 4-12.
- Hofstede, G. (1980), *Culture's Consequences*, Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- Hoyer, Wayne D. and Rohit Deshpande (1981), "Cross-Cultural Influences on Buyer Behavior: The Impact of Hispanic Ethnicity," in *American Marketing Association Proceedings*.
- Imperia, Giovanna, Thomas C. O'Guinn, and Elizabeth A. MacAdams (1985), "Family Decision Making Role Perceptions Among Mexican-American and Anglo Wives: A Cross Cultural Comparison," *Advances in Consumer Research*, 12, 71-74.
- INEGI (2000), "Mujeres y Hombres en Mexico, 1997," Instituto Nacional de Estadística Geografía e Informática, 4th edition.
- Kephart, Paula (1994), "Middle Class on \$10,000 a Year: Mexico's Robust Middle Class Has Less Money than Its U.S. Counterpart, but It Goes Farther," *American Demographics*, 16:9, 15-18.
- KIIS (2001), "About Mexico," Kentucky Institute for International Studies.
- McElroy, Susan L., Paul E. Keck, Jr., Harrison G. Pope, Jr., Jacqueline M.R. Smith, and Stephen M. Strakowski (1994), "Compulsive Buying: A Report of 20 Cases," *Journal of Clinical Psychiatry*, 55:6 (June), 242-248.
- Medina, J. F., J. Saegert and A. Gresham (1996), "Comparison of Mexican-American and Anglo-American Attitudes Toward Money," *The Journal of Consumer Affairs*, 30 (1), 124-145.
- Moore, Roy L. and George P. Moschis (1981), "The Effects of Family Communication and Mass Media Use on Adolescent Consumer Learning," *Journal of Communication*, 31 (Fall), 42-51.
- Moschis, George P. (1985), "The Role of Family Communication in Consumer Socialization of Children and Adolescents," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 11 (March), 898-913.

- _____ and Linda G. Mitchell (1986), "Television Advertising and Interpersonal Influences on Teenagers' Participation in Family Consumer Decisions," *Advances in Consumer Research*, 13, 181-186.
- _____ and Roy L. Moore (1981), "The Role of Family Communication in Consumer Learning," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 4 (Autumn), 42-51.
- O'Guinn, Thomas C. and Ronald J. Faber (1989), "Compulsive Buying: A Phenomenological Exploration," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 16 (September), 147-157.
- Rindfleisch, Aric, James E. Burroughs, and Frank Denton (1997), "Family Structure, Materialism, and Compulsive Consumption," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 23 (March), 312-325.
- Roberts, James A. (1998), "Compulsive Buying Among College Students: An Investigation of Its Antecedents, Consequences, and Implications for Public Policy," *The Journal of Consumer Affairs*, 32:2, 295-319.
- _____ (2003), "An Exploratory Investigation of the Antecedents and Incidence of Compulsive Buying in the Baby Bust Generation," Working Paper.
- _____ and Chris Manolis (2000), "Baby Boomers and Busters: An Exploratory Investigation of Attitudes Toward Marketing, Advertising, and Consumerism," *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, 17 (6,7), 481-499.
- _____ and Eli Jones (2001), "Money Attitudes, Credit Card Use, and Compulsive Buying Among American College Students," *The Journal of Consumer Affairs*, 35:2, 213-240.
- _____ and Carlos Ruy Martínez (1997), "The Emerging Consumer Culture in Mexico: An Exploratory Investigation of Compulsive Buying in Mexican Young Adults," *Journal of International Consumer Marketing*, 10, 7-31.
- _____ and Cesar J. Sepulveda M. (1999), "Money Attitudes and Compulsive Buying: An Exploratory Investigation of the Emerging Consumer Culture in Mexico," *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, 11:4, 53-74.
- _____ Chris Manolis, and John F. Tanner, Jr. (2003), "Family Structure, Materialism, and Compulsive Buying: A Reinquiry and Extension," *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 31 (3), 300-311.
- Roedder John, Deborah (1999), "Consumer Socialization of Children: A Retrospective Look at Twenty-Five Years of Research," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 26 (December), 183-213.
- Saegert, Joel, Robert J. Hoover, and Marye Tharp Hilger (1985), "Characteristics of Mexican American Consumers," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 12 (June), 104-109.
- Scherhorn, Gerhard, Lucia A. Reisch, and Gerhard Raab (1990), "Addictive Buying in West Germany: An Empirical Study," *Journal of Consumer Policy*, 13, 355-387.
- Segal, Madhav N. and Lionel Sosa (1983), "Marketing to the Hispanic Community," *California Management Review*, XXVI:1 (Fall), 120-134.
- Seligman, Martin E.P. (1994), *What You Can Change and What You Can't: The Complete Guide to Successful Self-improvement*, New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf (Borzoï Book).
- _____ (2002), *Authentic Happiness: Using the New Positive Psychology to Realize Your Potential for Lasting Fulfillment*, New York, NY: Free Press.
- Shim, Soyeon and Kenneth C. Gehrt (1996), "Hispanic and Native American Adolescents: An Exploratory Study of Their Approach to Shopping," *Journal of Retailing*, 72:3, 307-324.
- Talpade, Salil, Medha Talpade, and Suresh Prabhu (1997), "The Effects of Hispanic Ethnic Identification on Teenager Influence in Purchase Decisions: An Exploratory Study," *Business Quest*.
- Triplett, Tim (1994), "Middle-Class Mexicans Share Traits with the U.S. Counterparts," *Marketing News*, 28:21 (October), 8.
- United Nations (1999), "Human Development Report."
- U.S. Census (2000), "Profile of General Demographic Characteristics: 2000."

- Valence, Gilles, Alain d'Astous, and Louis Fortier (1988), "Compulsive Buying: Concept and Measurement," *Journal of Consumer Policy*, 11, 419-433.
- Valencia, Humberto (1989), "Hispanic Values and Subcultural Research," *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 17, (1), 23-28.
- Watanabe, Mark (1981), "Hispanic Marketing: A Profile Grows to New Heights," *Advertising Age*, (April 6).
- Weaver, Barry and Nancy Barbour (1992), "Mediation of Children's Televiewing," *The Journal of Contemporary Human Services*, (April), 236-242.
- Webster, Cynthia (1994), "Effects of Hispanic Ethnic Identification on Marital Roles in the Purchase Decision Process," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 21 (September), 319-331.
- Wilkes, Robert E. and Humberto Valencia (1986), "Shopping-Related Characteristics of Mexican-Americans and Blacks," *Psychology and Marketing*, 3, 247-259.
- Wolfinger, Nicholas H. (1999), "Trends in the Intergenerational Transmission of Divorce," *Demography*, 36:3, 415-420.
- Zill, Nicholas and John Robinson (1995), "The Generation X Difference," *American Demographics*, 17:4, 24-33.

APPENDIX

Scale Items for Other Measures

Family History of Compulsive/Addictive Disorders

Scale: 1 = Yes; 0 = No

Does any of your immediate family (mother, father, brothers or sisters) experience any of the symptoms below?

1. Alcoholism
2. Anorexia
3. Bulimia
4. Extreme nervousness
5. Depression
6. Gambling problem
7. Drug problem

Concept-Oriented Communication Patterns

Scale: 1 = Never; 2 = Seldom; 3 = Sometimes; 4 = Often; 5 = Very often

The following statements ask about your interactions with your parents. Please read each statement below and indicate how often each situation occurred when you were growing up.

1. My parent(s) said I should make my own decisions on things that affect me.
2. My parent(s) emphasized that every member of the family should have some say in family decisions.
3. My parent(s) admitted that children know more about some things than adults do.
4. My parent(s) said that getting my ideas across is important even if others don't like them.
5. My parent(s) asked me what I thought about things they bought for themselves.
6. My parent(s) told me why they bought some things for themselves.
7. My parent(s) told me I should decide about things I should or shouldn't buy.
8. My parent(s) told me what they did with their money.

Socio-Oriented Communication Patterns

Scale: 1 = Never; 2 = Seldom; 3 = Sometimes; 4 = Often; 5 = Very often

The following statements ask about your interactions with your parents. Please read each statement below and indicate how often each situation occurred when you were growing up.

1. My parent(s) said the best way to stay out of trouble is to stay away from it.
2. My parent(s) said their ideas are correct and I shouldn't question them.
3. My parent(s) answered my arguments with saying something like "You'll know better when you grow up."
4. My parent(s) said I should give in when I argue rather than risk making people angry.
5. My parent(s) told me what things I should or shouldn't buy.
6. My parent(s) wanted to know what I did with my money.
7. My parent(s) complained when they did not like something I bought for myself.

Parental Yielding

Scale: 1 = Seldom; 2 = Very seldom; 3 = Sometimes; 4 = Often; 5 = Very often

Please read each statement below and indicate how often each situation occurred when you were growing up.

1. When I was growing up, if I asked my parents for candy, they would buy it for me.

Does Family Matter?

Gwin, Roberts and Martínez

2. When I was growing up, if I asked my parents for a game or toy, they would buy it for me.
3. When I was growing up, if I asked my parents for a magazine/comic book, they would buy it for me.
4. When I was growing up, if I asked my parents for a snack food, they would buy it for me.
5. When I was growing up, if I asked my parents for sports equipment, they would buy it for me.

Perceptions of Parental Buying Behavior

Scale: 1 = Strongly disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Neutral; 4 = Agree; 5 = Strongly agree

For each of the following statements, please circle the number which corresponds to the extent to which you agree or disagree with each statement.

1. There are products that my father (or my mother) seems unable to stop buying (shoes, tools, clothing).
2. My father (or my mother) often buys things that he (she) doesn't need.