

## Personality Traits and Their Impact on Consumer Decision-Making Styles among College Students

Aparna Raj R<sup>1\*</sup>, Dr Bhanu B S<sup>2</sup>

### ABSTRACT

Personality traits have been shown to influence consumer behaviour, though limited research exists on how specific traits relate to consumer decision-making styles (CDMS). This study aimed to examine the impact of introversion and extroversion on CDMS among college students. A sample of 210 college students from Bangalore completed the Eysenck Personality Questionnaire-Brief Version (Sato, 2005) and the Consumer Decision Inventory (CDI) (Tanksale et al., 2014). Independent samples t-tests showed introverts and extroverts significantly differed in confused by over choice. There is a weak to moderate positive correlation between the personality traits and recreational, novelty fashion, and confused by over choice. The other factors show very little to no correlation with introversion and extroversion. These findings provide limited evidence that personality differences exist in how college students approach and make consumer decisions. Further investigation using larger, more representative samples is warranted into potential trait influences on consumer behaviour. The lack of strong correlations suggests consumer style may be more heavily shaped by factors other than personality traits.

**Keywords:** *Consumer Decision-Making Styles, Extroversion, Introversion, Personality Traits*

In the present continuously changing consumer landscape, understanding the factors that influence consumer behaviour has become an important element to businesses and marketers. College students, being a vital consumer demographic, represent a unique and significant segment of the consumer population, with their variety of preferences, needs, and behaviours.

The abundance of youth makes them an attractive target segment for brands across many industries. While research in Western context found introversion and extroversion personality traits lead individuals to exhibit systematically different consumer patterns (Hirsh et al., 2012), a few studies have investigated this link in India specifically. According to a study conducted by Mowen (2000), personality traits have been shown to influence consumer decision and shopping choices of individuals. Introverts have the tendency to be inwardly focused and have lower impulsivity, while extroverts are outgoing and quickly act on their urges (John & Srivastava, 1999).

<sup>1</sup>Student, Department of Psychology, CHRIST (Deemed to be University)

<sup>2</sup>Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology, CHRIST (Deemed to be University)

\*Corresponding Author

Received: March 02, 2024; Revision Received: March 28, 2024; Accepted: March 31, 2024

## Personality Traits and Their Impact on Consumer Decision-Making Styles among College Students

Consumer decision-making styles refers to the individual's consistent patterns of approaching and making choices during a purchase. Various models and theories exist to explain these styles. One notable framework is Consumer Styles Inventory (CSI) developed by Sproles and Kendall (1986). It includes 8 styles which are, perfectionist, fashion-conscious, recreational-oriented, brand-conscious, novelty-oriented, price-conscious, impulsive, and confused by over choice.

This study aims to investigate the correlation between personality traits, specifically introversion and extroversion, and the consumer decision style adopted by Indian college students. Findings may provide marketers useful frameworks for segmenting and targeting this demographic based on personality indicators that shape purchasing choices.

### LITERATURE REVIEW

A study by Zhu and colleagues (2012) was conducted to understand how personality traits affect consumer decision making styles between traditional and online shoppers. The sample size of the study was 196 traditional consumers and 196 online consumers in China. They assessed personality with Zuckerman-Kuhlman Personality Questionnaire (ZKPQ) and decision-making styles with 5 factor CSI. Online shoppers scored higher on ZKPQ Neuroticism-Anxiety and Aggression-Hostility scales; also higher on CSI novelty-fashion awareness, brand consciousness, and time consciousness tests.

Another study used judgement random sampling to recruit 200 consumers for the study from the Igbo-speaking states of Nigeria (Onu et al., 2014). With the help of structured questionnaires based on the Big Five Inventory model with 3 questions per trait and data was analysed using regression analysis and t-tests. The results suggested that personality traits are important for understanding and effectively marketing to consumers. Social character, ethnocentrism, and prestige are key factors when targeting Igbo population.

To assess the applicability of the CSI for understanding consumer decision-making styles within an Indian context Tanksale and colleagues (2014) used 254 undergraduate college students in India. They identified 7 factors explaining decision-making styles with Eigenvalues > 1, factors that showed good internal consistency through Cronbach Alpha scores using Principal Component Analysis with varimax rotation of CSI data, refined through several iterations.

A South African study consisted sample size of 269 individuals to examine how Big Five traits impact money attitudes and investment behaviour. They used 7-point Likert scales measuring personality, decision-making styles, and money attitudes. Confirmatory factor analysis, convergent validity, and reliability testing was used. The results identified 3 investor clusters, i.e., strong conscientiousness, status-driven, and introversion differing demographically and in investment behaviour while extraversion and conscientiousness predict money attitudes (Ngcamu et al., 2023).

A majority of papers rely on survey methods and questionnaires to collect data from the consumers. This method allows researchers to gather information about consumer preferences and personality traits directly from the target audience. And it should be noted, most of the papers employed statistical techniques such as multiple regression analysis and t-tests to analyse the data and assess the relationship between personality and consumer behaviour. Some papers employed factor analysis (Mishra, 2010; Tanksale et al., 2014),

## Personality Traits and Their Impact on Consumer Decision-Making Styles among College Students

discriminant analysis (Pelau et al., 2018), and confirmatory factor analysis (Ngcamu et al., 2023).

The papers have different geographical focuses, ranging from specific regions in Nigeria (Onu et al., 2014) to India (Mishra, 2010; Tanksale et al., 2014; Datta, 2022), China (Zhu et al., 2012), South Africa (Ngcamu et al., 2023), and even a global approach (Baik et al., 2016). This difference in geographical focus reflects the diversity of consumer behaviour and cultural contexts. The papers vary in sample size and the demographics of the samples, such as gender, age, education, and employment status, also differ which highlights the different segments of the population.

The papers use different measurement tools to assess personality traits, including Big Five Inventory, Zuckerman-Kuhlman Personality Questionnaire (ZKPQ), and Myers-Briggs personality dichotomies, among others. These variations affect the aspects of personality studied and the validity of the findings. The personality factors studied vary across papers, including self-confidence, ethnocentrism, aggressiveness, and social character. This reflects the complexities of personality and its impact on consumer behaviour.

These papers collectively contribute to the understanding of the complex relationship between personality and consumer behaviour. They highlight the need to consider cultural, regional, and individual differences when studying consumer preferences. However, the variation in methodologies, sample sizes, and measurement tools makes it challenging to draw generalised conclusions. Additionally, the different personality traits examined emphasise the multifaceted nature of human behaviour and its interaction with consumer choices. Overall, these papers provide valuable insights for marketers, researchers, and policymakers looking to tailor strategies and policies to specific consumer groups.

In conclusion, prior studies have concluded that among young consumers there is an emphasis on quality, brand consciousness, and marketing strategies but none of these studies have focused on the correlation between personality traits and consumer decision making styles in college students. This study fills this gap by studying the introversion, extraversion and consumer decision making styles among college students in India.

## METHODOLOGY

### *Sample*

A total of 223 college students participated in the study. The questionnaires filled by the participants were analysed and 13 questionnaires were rejected as they were incomplete. The sample of this study consisted of a total of 210 college students from Bengaluru, India ranging in age from 18-23 years old. Based on the Eysenck Personality Questionnaire-Brief Version (EPQ-BV; Sato, 2005), 105 participants were classified as introverts and 105 were classified as extroverts. The sample consisted of 98 males and 112 females. Participants were recruited through a call for participants advertisement posted on social media.

### *Instruments*

Two measures were used in this study,

- **Eysenck Personality Questionnaire Brief Version:** The personality traits were assessed using the EPQ-BV consisting of 24 items which measured introversion, extroversion, and neuroticism. Out of those 24 items, only 12 items were used to measure introversion and extroversion (sample item: “Are you a talkative person?”) of the participants. Items were rated on a 5-point Likert-type scale from 1 = not at all

## Personality Traits and Their Impact on Consumer Decision-Making Styles among College Students

to 5 = extremely. The questionnaire has good internal consistency, test-retest reliability, and concurrent validity. The reliability score of this tool is 0.92 and 0.90 in extroversion and neuroticism scales respectively. The validity score of this tool is 0.29.

- **Consumer Decision-Making Styles:** Consumer decision-making styles were evaluated using Tanksale et al., (2014) Consumer Decision Making Styles Inventory which was modified to be assessed on the Indian population. The scale had 7 different subscales, namely, recreational, hedonistic consumer; perfectionist, high-quality conscious consumer; novelty fashion conscious consumer; brand conscious consumer; habitual, brand-loyal consumer; confused by over choice consumer; and shopping avoidance. The Cronbach's Alpha coefficients varied from 0.460 to 0.750. The scores on each of the seven subscales were treated as separate continuous dependent variables in the analysis.

### Procedure

Participants were first provided with informed consent and completed a demographic survey. Then they responded to the Eysenck Personality Questionnaire-Brief Version (EPQ-BV; Sato, 2005) and Consumer Decision Making Styles Inventory (Tanksale et al., 2014). Questionnaires were completed in about 7 to 10 minutes by the participants.

### Data Analysis

Statistical analysis was performed using Jamovi (Version 2.3) software. Independent sample t-tests were used to compare mean differences between introverts and extroverts on different consumer decision making styles. As variables violated the assumptions of normality, the non-parametric Mann-Whitney U test was conducted to evaluate differences between the groups. Spearman Rho correlation coefficients were calculated to assess associations between introversion/extroversion level and the various consumer decision making styles.

## RESULTS

*Table No. 1 Normality test using Shapiro-Wilk*

Consumer Decision-Making Styles	W	p
Recreational, Hedonistic Consumer	0.98	0.01
Perfectionist, High-Quality Conscious Consumer	0.96	<.001
Novelty Fashion Conscious Consumer	0.98	0.02
Brand Conscious Consumer	0.97	<.001
Habitual, Brand-Loyal Consumer	0.96	<.001
Confused by Over choice Consumer	0.97	<.001
Shopping Avoidance	0.96	<.001

*Note.* A low p-value suggests a violation of the assumption of normality

As shown in Table 2, the one exception where significant differences emerged was for confused by over choice consumer style. The only significant difference detected was for individuals confused by over choice consumer style (t-test  $p < 0.001$ , Mann-Whitney  $U = 3961$ ), with extroverts scoring higher ( $M = 10.4$ ) than introverts ( $M = 9.37$ ). Extroverts denoted a significantly higher tendency to feel overwhelmed by too many products to choose from, compared to introverts. This aligns with some existing research suggesting extroverts may have lower choice optimization abilities and more difficulty making decisions when faced with extensive choices (Chernev, 2003).

**Table No. 2 Significant difference with Mann-Whitney U**

Consumer Decision-Making Styles	Statistic	p
Recreational, Hedonistic Consumer	5067	0.03
Perfectionist, High-Quality Conscious Consumer	5121	0.37
Novelty Fashion Conscious Consumer	4882	0.15
Brand Conscious Consumer	5379	0.75
Habitual, Brand-Loyal Consumer	5292	0.61
Confused by Over choice Consumer	3661	<.001
Shopping Avoidance	5429	0.84

Additionally, Spearman correlation analyses found no evidence to reject the null hypotheses of no correlation between personality traits and any of the consumer decision making styles, with negligible correlation coefficients ranging from -0.037 to 0.237. Small positive correlations were found between personality traits and recreational/hedonistic consumer, novelty fashion conscious consumer, and confused by over choice consumer dimensions. Small negative correlations existed between personality traits and shopping avoidance. As shown in Table 2, this further confirms the lack of significant relationships between introversion-extroversion traits and specific consumer decision making styles.

**Table No. 3 Correlations between Consumer Decision-Making Styles and Personality Traits**

	Personality Traits Score
Recreational, Hedonistic Consumer	0.17
Perfectionist, High-Quality Conscious Consumer	0.08
Novelty Fashion Conscious Consumer	0.16
Brand Conscious Consumer	0.02
Habitual, Brand-Loyal Consumer	-0.03
Confused by Over choice Consumer	0.23
Shopping Avoidance	-0.02

In summary, neither introversion nor extroversion strongly differentiated most consumer decision making patterns among the college students, with the exception of extroverts being more confused and indecisive when overwhelmed with options. Overall, the study suggests that consumer decision making may be influenced by more specific motivations than broad personality traits. This highlights key opportunities for further research into consumer behaviour using more granular personality, value, and motivational factors.

## DISCUSSION

The findings of this study indicate that the broad personality traits of introversion and extroversion do not have a systematic relationship with most consumer decision making styles among Indian college students. Neither trait showed significant differences or correlations with styles like recreational, hedonistic consumer; perfectionist, high-quality conscious; novelty fashion conscious; brand conscious; habitual, brand-loyal consumer; and shopping avoidance. This aligns with some prior studies that found personality only weakly predicts general consumer tendencies (Hanzaee & Rouhani, 2013).

These findings provide limited evidence that personality differences exist in how college students approach and make consumer decisions. Further investigation using larger, more representative samples is warranted into potential trait influences on consumer behaviour.

## Personality Traits and Their Impact on Consumer Decision-Making Styles among College Students

The lack of strong correlations suggests consumer style may be more heavily shaped by factors other than personality traits.

The one exception that emerged was extroverts' greater tendency for confusion and overwhelmed feelings when confronted with extensive product choices compared to introverts. This ties for existing research suggesting extroverts often exhibit lower choice optimization, more impulsiveness, and difficulty making optimal selections from a plethora of options (Chernev, 2003). Extroverts' broader focus of attention may hinder detailed comparison of alternatives as confirmed in this Indian college cohort as well.

However, the fact that most consumer styles were unrelated to the introversion-extroversion dimension highlights the need to go beyond broad traits in understanding shopping behaviour. Perhaps more specific motivations like need for uniqueness, deal proneness or value shopping are stronger drivers of how young Indian consumers evaluate products and make purchases (Lysonski et al., 1996). Social influence factors, norms, environmental cues, and emotional states may also better explain variances observed (Park et al., 2010).

In fact, an interactionist framework considering both situational and personality influences have gained increasing support for understanding real-life consumer behaviour (Albrecht, 2023). Therefore, further research should investigate whether introversion or extroversion may emerge as a significant factor in a more specific purchasing context like online vs. offline shopping, and replicability of this study in broader Indian adult samples beyond college students.

## REFERENCES

- Albrecht, M. G., Green, M., & Hoffman, L. (2023, January 25). *3.2 Factors that influence consumer buying behavior - Principles of Marketing | OpenStax*. <https://openstax.org/books/principles-marketing/pages/3-2-factors-that-influence-consumer-buying-behavior>
- Baik, J., Lee, K., Lee, S., Kim, Y., & Choi, J. (2016). Predicting personality traits related to consumer behavior using SNS analysis. *New Review of Hypermedia and Multimedia*, 22(3), 189–206. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13614568.2016.1152313>
- Chernev, A. (2003). When more is less and less is more: The role of ideal point availability and assortment in consumer choice. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 30(2), 170–183. <https://doi.org/10.1086/376808>
- Datta, D. (2022). Consumer Buying Behaviour Towards Online and Offline Shopping: A Study in West Tripura District, Tripura, India. *Social Science Research Network*. <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.4230699>
- Tanksale, D., Neelam, N., & Venkatachalam, R. (2014). Consumer decision making styles of young adult consumers in India. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 133, 211–218. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2014.04.186>
- Hanzaee, K. H., & Rouhani, F. (2013). *Investigation of the effects of luxury brand perception and brand preference on purchase intention of luxury products*. <https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Investigation-of-the-effects-of-luxury-brand-and-on-Hanzaee-Rouhani/fa9c2bbbf6e9cef51f345e4a058e1d26c7830e13>
- Hirsh, J. B., Kang, S. K., & Bodenhausen, G. V. (2012). Personalized persuasion. *Psychological Science*, 23(6), 578–581. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0956797611436349>
- John, O. P., & Srivastava, S. (1999). The Big-Five trait taxonomy: History, measurement, and theoretical perspectives. In L. A. Pervin & O. P. John (Eds.), *Handbook of personality: Theory and research* (Vol. 2, pp. 102–138). Guilford Press.

## Personality Traits and Their Impact on Consumer Decision-Making Styles among College Students

- Lyonski, S., Durvasula, S., & Zotos, Y. (1996). Consumer decision-making styles: a multi-country investigation. *European Journal of Marketing*, 30(12), 10–21. <https://doi.org/10.1108/03090569610153273>
- Mowen, J. C. (2000). *The 3M Model of Motivation and Personality: Theory and Empirical Applications to Consumer Behavior*. Kluwer Academic Publishers.
- Ngcamu, L. J., Quaye, E. S., Horvey, S. S., & Jaravaza, D. C. (2023). Personality traits, money attitudes and consumer decision-making styles as predictors of investment products choice in South Africa. *Journal of Consumer Behaviour*, 22(3), 618–631. <https://doi.org/10.1002/cb.2146>
- Onu, A. J. C., & Bello, A. (2014). Assessing the Relationship between Personality Factors and Consumer Buying Behavior in South Eastern Nigeria. *International Journal of Business and Social Science*. [http://ijbssnet.com/journals/Vol\\_5\\_No\\_11\\_1\\_October\\_2014/25.pdf](http://ijbssnet.com/journals/Vol_5_No_11_1_October_2014/25.pdf)
- Park, E. J., Kim, E. Y., Funches, V. M., & Foxx, W. (2012). Apparel product attributes, web browsing, and e-impulse buying on shopping websites. *Journal of Business Research*, 65(11), 1583-1589. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2011.02.043>
- Pelău, C., Șerban, D., & Chinie, A. C. (2018). The influence of personality types on the impulsive buying behavior of a consumer. *Proceedings of the . . . International Conference on Business Excellence*, 12(1), 751–759. <https://doi.org/10.2478/picbe-2018-0067>
- Sato T. (2005). The Eysenck Personality Questionnaire Brief Version: factor structure and reliability. *The Journal of psychology*, 139(6), 545–552. <https://doi.org/10.3200/JRPL.139.6.545-552>
- Sproles, G. B., & Kendall, E. L. (1986). A methodology for profiling consumers' Decision-Making styles. *Journal of Consumer Affairs*, 20(2), 267–279. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1745-6606.1986.tb00382.x>
- Zhu, J., Xu, Y., Huang, J., Yeow, C., & Wang, W. (2012). Traditional and online consumers in China: a preliminary study of their personality traits and decision-making styles. *Psychiatria Danubina*, 24(4), 392–399.

### **Acknowledgment**

The author(s) appreciates all those who participated in the study and helped to facilitate the research process.

### **Conflict of Interest**

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

**How to cite this article:** Aparna, R.R. & Bhanu, B.S. (2024). Personality Traits and Their Impact on Consumer Decision-Making Styles among College Students. *International Journal of Indian Psychology*, 12(1), 2330-2336. DIP:18.01.212.20241201, DOI:10.25215/1201.212