

Effect of Online Shopping Addiction on Mental Illness among Youth

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Abstract – Online shopping addiction is a growing social issue whose prevention, assessment and diagnosis, and treatment are major concern worldwide. It is a process addiction which harms an individual physically and mentally both. This study analysed the relationship of online shopping addiction with mental illness by applying bivartite correlation in SPSS. Based on result it was found to be significant and that there existed positive correlation among the two. Thus, it can be said that online shopping addiction has strong relationship with mental illness, as online shopping addiction increases, mental illness also increases.

Keywords: Online Shopping, Online Shopping Addiction, Mental Illness, Youth

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CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK:

A survey report from HT correspondence states that the average amount an individual spend of his income making online purchase is 60%.The amount is invested in shopping online or making bill payments or reservations etc. A few individuals reported in a survey that was conducted in six metro cities about their belief assuring that the prime reason of using internet is, for online shopping .The use of social media is trending along with increasing online shoppers these days. Online shopping companies are using social media to promote their products in variety of ways.

YOUTH

Youth seems to be more involved in Smart phones and other such gadgets in daily routine as compared to any other physical activity. Cost savvy data plans have pushed the use of internet on smart phones. When 4G data packs are recharged promoting unlimited usage, then there is much to browse on internet including online shopping portals, websites or applications. Youth comprises of people who are young in age and highly Tech savvy. The category includes students, learners, professionals, businessmen, entrepreneurs and those under the Age Range of 16-35 years.

ONLINE SHOPPING

In a Tech savvy era where youth is more social and less personal, each individual finds way to spend

leisure time with full comfort and shop along. **A.T. Kearney (2015)** quoted in his research about the growth of retail e-commerce which was \$695 billion in year 2013 to nearly \$840 billion in year 2014 and is estimated to increase by US\$1506 billions in 2018. The continuum of increase in sales figure indicates the growth of e-commerce industry which carries immense potential for future players in the online market. Some success saga goes back to big names like Amazon, Alibaba, Tenecent, etc ., who are not just the big brands but prove to be a model for “Brick to Cilck”. Thus, online shopping can be said as transactional exchange namely buying and selling goods via internet (**Bidgoli, 2002; Shih, 2004**).

ONLINE SHOPPING ADDICTION

Various Surveys proved –An Average teen spends more than 8 hours per day surfing internet on smart phone. This data justifies the famous proverb of Albert Einstein-“I Fear the day that technology will surpass our human interaction. The world will have a generation of Idiots”. When the intensity of some habit grows beyond an extent it can be said as addiction of things. Addiction implies being negative as it develops lots of odd behaviour in individuals which may or may not be realised by self. Irresistible shopping beyond a control limit or recurring need to buy or habitual excessive buying can create family issues or may reduce stress. Such behaviour can be said as compulsive buying

behaviour and may lead to Debit/Credit card abuse or post-purchase regret (Korur & Kimzan, 2016).

MENTAL ILLNESS

It is a state of mind wherein a person suffers adverse mental health conditions which affects an individual's thought, action and behaviour. Sometimes the term can be interchangeably used as Mental Disorder. Mental illness can cause several problems in a person's life at school, college or work place. In some cases symptoms can be dealt with a permutation of medications and psychotherapy. Some instances of ill mental health include depression, anxiety disorders, isolation, agitation, schizophrenia, eating disorders, procrastination etc. Thus, mental illness can be said as a disease that causes gentle to brutal instability in thoughts and behaviour which results in inability to cope with daily pressures and expectation in Life. There exist more than 200 classified forms of mental illness symptoms that include mood swings, personal habits or social withdrawal.

Ill mental health can be caused due to extreme pressure of some situation or event as whole. At times Mental illness is complimentary with certain physical diseases like diabetes, cancer, heart disease, etc. Some Factors signifying Mental Illness are;

1. Depression

As per the **Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders 1994**, Depression is a state of mind which adversely affects the health of an individual. An individual experiences feeling of sadness, loss of appetite, loss of interest, hopelessness, fatigue, tiredness, changes in sleep pattern & psychomotor activities, thoughts of suicide attempt as well. Individuals those are depressed spend their time shopping online to get away with stress for some time and feel happy and relaxed, such behaviour acts as antidepressant for some time. When people spend time shopping online because of intense feeling of unhappiness, such behaviour is reported to bring antidepressant effect, and maximum patients with such symptoms of depression demonstrate behaviour of uncontrolled buying (Lejoyeux et al., 1996).

2. Isolation

Zavaleta et al. defined social isolation as "inadequate quality and quantity of social relations with other people at individual, group, community and larger social environment levels where human interaction takes place". For people suffering with mental illness, social isolation is a common phenomenon which lays a significant impact on individual's physical wellbeing, emotional contentment and commune participation. According to the Australian National Survey of Mental Health

and Wellbeing; one-third Australians are suffering from psychotic disorders and living alone, in which 39% of these sufferers does not have 'best friend' to share their thoughts and feelings. In a survey report on social isolation the results revealed: 45% of youngsters felt they needed 'good friends' to share their feelings.

3. Agitation

Agitation is a feeling of restlessness usually experienced with unnecessary talks or unplanned motions such as pacing, wringing the hand, tapping the feet. Such symptoms also reflect behaviour of people with mood disorder, as these individuals are more prone to occurrence of agitation.

Unlike depression, agitation is not an illness but can be said as symptom of a mood disorder or any other medical condition. When the intensity of mood disorder increases, it results in increased stress thereby leading to triggered agitation. Although it is difficult to manage & prevent accelerating agitation in one's self but people who make appropriate measures by creating awareness about signs and symptoms of such illness makes a path to cross out Agitation.

4. Boredom

Boredom is a state of mind wherein people lose interest in their surrounding and be no more encouraged to be actively involved in any tasks around. Simply stating, "Physical Presence but mental absence".

Boredom is not insignificant but when chronic, it leads to several serious health consequences and can be stressful too. Boredom can distract people to indulge in addictive habit like gambling, over-eating, alcohol abuse or internet surfing 24*7. According to Science Daily, "Boredom is 'an aversive state of wanting, but being unable, to engage in satisfying activity,' which arises from failures in one of the brain's attention networks.

5. Procrastination

It can be said as delaying the activities to be done or tasks to be performed to an extent leading to its non achievement. According to Survey report of **American Psychological Association**, almost 20% of youth in US are chronic procrastinators.

When such events occur, it results in detrimental effect on youth's mental health. A few reasons for procrastinating can be a fear of not performing appropriately or generating expected results or a self esteem issue at times. It's natural to delay task at times but procrastinators have an higher intensity to do so habitually with plausible 'excuses'. Various Research surveys has proved that procrastination leads to negative mental health

with increased stress (Ferrari, 2010; Ferrari, Johnson 2009)

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Online shopping is one of the most preferred activity that contributes a major stake in being the reasons for Internet use (Li & Zhang, 2002). A person's choice while shopping online or the decision he makes is influenced by mood sometimes or external conditions (Griffiths, M. D). Early studies have mostly focused on traditional shopping only, so online shopping has remained ignored (Akram et al., 2017) but researches in past also implied the concept of addiction to be associated directly with material abuse, yet behaviours such as betting, video games, shopping, compulsive buying and excessive use of Internet purposelessly is considered as behavioural addiction (Black, 1996; Gunuc, 2013).

Shopping is said to be expressing self, defining self or therapeutic treatment to satisfy one's will. However, it turns to be a problem when it grows to be uncontrolled or excessive. Compulsive buying is an unmanageable urge that constantly coerces a person to order something online and believe to have a temporary relief from psychological distress arising from depression (Black, 2007) or low self esteem (Liao, C., To, P. L., Wong, Y. C., Palvia, P., & Kakhki, M. D. (2016). Compulsive buying is an addictive behaviour which depends on mood, addiction or an obsessive compulsive disorder (Black, 2007). People with high level of stress and anxiety along with habit of spending money on everything they like, demonstrate behaviour of compulsive buying (Roberts & Jones, 2001). Compulsive buying, is different from obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD). OCD can also be said as Mood Disorder or addiction due to its similar nature with pathological betting (Lawrence, Ciorciari, & Kyrios, 2014). Some Behavioural issues faced by an addicted individual are; mood alterations, craving, withdrawal, euphoria, quitting, intolerant, self denial, relapse or struggle for self control (A. Ahmed, A.S. Sathish 2015).

Online shopping not just facilitates spending time viewing different category products but also allow consumers to compare shopping experiences without depending on time or place but by providing rich information about products and services (Archer & Yuan, 2000). Youth have different characteristics classified as pragmatist and hedonist that can influence their perceptions about online shopping (Wolfenbarger & Gilly, 2001). Various reasons for people to shop online can also be; Good Quality at lesser price, ease of searching, variety, easy availability, entertainment, promotions, and incentives (Gunuc & Dogan Keskin, 2016; Khatibi, Haque, & Karim, 2006).

Search for information on search engines allow customers to behave rational and develop

knowledge about brands and multi products available online, so that they can evaluate them and make choices (Brand, M., Laier, C., & Young, K. S. 2014). The online market customers consider it a hassle if they face any issues in log-in or in grabbing account or product information. In such case it must be easy to reach the online retailers by phone (Oracle, 2011). Online retailers shall design their website to make it a user-friendly platform and vigorously manage the social media marketing to conduit traffic to their online website.

Online shoppers are more concerned about price, quality, durability and other product-related aspects are the main which affect their buying decision in developed countries but the considerations could differ in developing countries (Ahmed, 2012). Ernst & Young (2000), Gunuc & Dogan Keskin (2016) in a study, reported that Internet users prefer online shopping due to availability of wide range of products in online market, competitive prices, and convenience of choice, delivery and return process. Thus some time, compulsive shoppers purchase products that they don't need or can't afford but just buy to execute some sense of activity (Mc Elroy, Satlin, Pope, Keck & Hudson 1991, McElroy, Keck, Pope & Hudson, 1994; Lejoyeux, Mathieu, Embouazza, Huet & Lequen, 2007; Ridgway, Kukar-Kinney, & Monroe, 2008). Usually, these people have a feeling of guilt about surrendering to their urges and often suffer financial harm (O'Guinn & Faber, 1989; Christenson, Faber, de Zwaan & Raymond, 1994; Roberts & Tanner, 2000; Roberts & Jones, 2001).

OBJECTIVE

To examine the relationship between mental illness and online shopping addiction

HYPOTHESIS

Ho: There is no significant relationship between mental illness and online shopping addiction.

Ha: There is a statistically significant relationship between mental illness and online shopping addiction.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

For this study, the researcher adopted a simple random sampling method and the data was collected from various individuals of Indore region in form of both manual & Google forms both. Total sample size was of 300 individuals from different demographic segments. The study is based on primary data. A well-structured scale of online shopping addiction by Hiayan Zhao, Wei Tian and Tao Xin (2017) was taken into consideration. Rating of all factors on scale follows Likert

Measurement criteria with five responses ranging from 1 -5 where one stands for strongly disagree and 5 stands for strongly agree. It consisted of 18 questions which was divided into six subscales namely Saliency, Tolerance, Mood Modification, withdrawal Relapse and conflict. A bivariate correlation was applied in SPSS 20 version for data analysis. The secondary sources, which were used for data collection, were existing literature relevant to the study, journals, magazines, books and various web sites.

FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

Correlations

		VAR00001	VAR00002
Mental Illness	Pearson Correlation	1	.780
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.003
	N	200	200
Online Shopping addiction	Pearson Correlation	.780	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.003	
	N	200	200

The above table shows significant strong positive correlation between the variables mental illness and online shopping addiction. The bivariate correlation coefficient (r) indicates that there is good strength and direction of linear relationships between variables. The bivariate correlation coefficient in this study was found to be **.780** which was statistically significant with value (p- value) 0.000 which is less than 0.05. Thus, the null hypothesis of the study gets rejected and the alternate hypothesis gets accepted. The value of r in the study is very close to 1. Thus, we can conclude that there is a strong relationship between mental illness and online shopping addiction. This indicates that increase or decrease in mental illness will significantly relate to increase or decrease in online shopping addiction.

DISCUSSION:

Online shopping addiction is distressing like any other addiction. It is an emotional roller coaster and has been cited as a psychiatric disorder in recent years. Online shopping addiction leads to mental illness causing various behavioural problems, financial problems, emotional pains and disorders which makes life of an individual more worse and controversial. It leads to persistent sadness, fatigue, irritability, feeling of hopelessness, feeling of restlessness, difficulty in sleeping and even rises thoughts of death and suicide (Elizabeth Hartney, Director of the Centre for Health Leadership and Research at Royal Roads University, Canada, 2019). Shopping addiction is dangerous and destroys lives and relationships of people. One can restore their

normal and healthy survival by taking various measures like carrying cash and getting rid of credit cards which leads to compulsive buying. An individual can seek help from financial counsellors and can also undergo various therapeutic treatments which reduce association. Finding an alternative ways like leisure trips, playing mind games, tracking every penny spend etc. can be the factors which breaks the cycle.

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