

Research Paper

Prevalence of Internet Addiction, Shopping Addiction and Bulimia in Depressive Adults

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ABSTRACT

Internet addiction, shopping addiction and bulimia has been found to affect neurological, psychological and social network adversely in many cases. The present study aims at drawing a comparison between depressive and non-depressive adults with respect to internet addiction, shopping addiction and bulimic behavior. 30 adults diagnosed with clinical depression and 30 non-depressive adults were assessed on the Internet Addiction Scale, Bergen's Shopping Addiction Scale and the Eating Disorder Diagnostic Scale to fulfill the aims of the study. The results revealed a significant difference between the study group and the control group with respect to internet addiction. High levels of depression have been seen to correlate with increase in internet addiction and shopping addiction. The findings also indicate individuals diagnosed with clinical depression and having high levels of shopping addiction, have a tendency to overeat as compared to those not diagnosed with depression.

Keywords: *Internet Addiction, Bulimia, Shopping Addiction, Depression*

Excessive or poorly controlled preoccupations, impulses, or behaviors related to computer use and internet access that cause impairment or suffering are referred to as internet addiction. Internet addiction has been linked to dimensionally evaluated depression as well as social isolation markers. Mood, anxiety, impulse control, and drug use problems are all prevalent psychiatric co-morbidities. Activities involved in higher level of internet use usually includes online gaming, scrolling through social media, online shopping and others. Having an occasional buying spree is not the same as having a shopping addiction. Overspending or over shopping can happen to everyone, but shopping addiction is defined by a strong desire to buy or pursue consumer items. People with shopping addiction utilize shopping as a coping method to regulate their emotions, gaining pleasure or comfort as a result of their purchases. Those who are hooked to shopping will frequently spend more than they can afford, experience post-purchase remorse, and then shop even more to make

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Prevalence of Internet Addiction, Shopping Addiction and Bulimia in Depressive Adults

themselves feel better, creating a vicious cycle. Shopping addiction has been associated to depression, anxiety, and other mental disorders, as well as financial hardship, a sense of loss of control, and conflict with friends and family. Shopping and purchasing products compulsively may stem from similar impulsive tendencies, and the exhilaration or numbing impact of binge and purging with bulimia may be mirrored by this behavior. As a result, it's not unusual for other mental diseases or behavioral disorders to coexist with an eating issue. Bulimia is a psychiatric disorder characterized by binge eating followed by purging. In this one loses the control over one's eating and continues to binge until one feels the urge to purge. Depressive symptoms (such as low self-esteem) and depressive disorders are more common in people with bulimia nervosa. Many patients experience mood disturbances concurrently with or following the onset of their eating problem, although some experience mood disturbances prior to the onset of bulimia nervosa.

Young and Rogers conducted a study in 2009 to determine the relationship between depression and internet addiction. Significant levels of depression were linked to pathological Internet use, according to the findings of the study. When a basic psychiatric disease is linked to a subsequent impulse control problem, such as pathological Internet use, this article describes how a therapy plan should emphasize the initial psychiatric condition.

Binge eating, weight concern, and weight change were all much higher among internet addicts than among controls. (Tao, 2013) Depression was discovered to be a partial mediator in the link between Internet addiction and bulimia in all of the participants. The findings back up prior research that found that problematic Internet use was significantly and positively linked to eating disorder behaviors. (Mahmid, Bdier, Chou , 2021).

Shopping addiction has been seen to correlate with anxiety, depression and hoarding behavior (Lawrence, Ciorciari and Kyrios, 2014). Self-efficacy and depressive symptoms were found to partially mediate the connection between life stress and impulsive shopping in a multiple-mediation model. Life stress influenced compulsive shopping in both direct and indirect ways. (Koh, Tang, Gan, Kwon, 2020).

METHODOLOGY

Objectives

1. To assess the level of internet addiction among depressive and non-depressive adults.
2. To assess the level of shopping addiction among depressive and non-depressive adults.
3. To assess the presence of Bulimia in depressive and non-depressive adults.

Hypothesis

1. There is no significant difference between depressive and non-depressive adults with respect to internet addiction.
2. There is no significant difference between depressive and non-depressive adults with respect to shopping addiction.
3. There is no significant difference between depressive and non-depressive adults with respect to presence of Bulimia.

The sample comprised a total of 60 adults consisting of 30 adults from the depressive (study group) and 30 adults from non-depressive (control group) category. The age range was selected to be from 25 to 40 years. Screening of depression was done by using Beck Depression Inventory. Other measures used are given below:

Prevalence of Internet Addiction, Shopping Addiction and Bulimia in Depressive Adults

1. Internet Addiction Test (IAT)- The first verified measure of Internet and technology addiction was the Internet Addiction Test. The IAT is a self- assessment tool for teenagers and adults. The development of a standardised technique for detecting internet addiction symptoms in clinical and research settings is a critical first step. The Internet Addiction Test is the most often used tool among the available options (IAT). The IAT exhibits strong internal consistency ($= 0.90-0.93$) and good test-retest reliability ($r = 0.85$) scores (7– 12), according to a preliminary investigation of its validity.
2. The Eating Disorder Diagnostic Scale (EDDS)- The Eating Disorder Diagnostic Scale (EDDS; Stice, Telch, & Rizvi, 2000) is a 22-item self-report questionnaire used to assess symptomatology of anorexia nervosa, bulimia nervosa, and binge-eating disorder using DSM-IV diagnostic criteria. A combination of Likert ratings, dichotomous scores, behavioural frequency scores, and open-ended questions about weight and height make up the measure. *This is a diagnostic scale hence no mean and S.D. could be obtained from the scale.
3. The Bergen Shopping Addiction Scale (BSAS) – This scale consists of 28 item that measures the level of addiction for shopping, in an individual. Higher scores in the scale indicates higher level of shopping addiction.
4. Beck Depression Inventory- The Beck Depression Assessment (BDI) is a self- report rating inventory with 21 items that assesses depression-related attitudes and symptoms (Beck, et al., 1961). The BDI's internal consistency ranges from .73 to .92, with a mean of .86. Beck, Steer, and Garbin (Beck, Steer, & Garbin, 1988). The 13-item abbreviated form has been found to have similar reliabilities (Groth-Marnat, 1990). With alpha coefficients of .86 and .81 for psychiatric and non-psychiatric populations, the BDI has a high level of internal consistency (Beck et al., 1988).

RESULTS

Table 1- For Internet Addiction

	N	Mean	Standard Deviation (S.D)	t value
Depressive adults	30	46.1333	9.97145	14.632
Non- depressive Adults	30	17.1667	4.25954	14.632

Table 2 – For Shopping Addiction

	N	Mean	Standard Deviation (S.D)	t value
Depressive adults	30	60.1333	22.12462	9.846
Non- depressive Adults	30	18.5667	6.71942	9.846

Table 3- For presence of bulimia

	N	No. of adults having bulimia
Depressive adults	30	21
Non-depressive adults	30	09

DISCUSSION

An overall analysis of IAT, BSAS and EDDS reveals a significant difference between the two groups of adults. The huge difference between the two groups with respect to internet addiction suggests that depressive individuals are more prone to excessive internet use. They have a tendency to always feel pre-occupied with internet and feel the inability to resist themselves from using the internet. Few of the various activities that they get engaged in, while online, are newsfeed scrolling in social media, online gaming, checking e-mails,

Prevalence of Internet Addiction, Shopping Addiction and Bulimia in Depressive Adults

watching a great deal of videos and web series, and online shopping. As indicated by the standard deviation, the difference between the two groups with respect to shopping addiction is quite prominent. Individuals with depression were reported to be shopping addicts as compared to those without depression. They tend to get engaged in shopping behaviour in order to forget personal problems. They feel an increasing inclination to buy things even if it had caused them serious economic problems. Some of them have also reported of having difficulty in falling and staying in sleep because of their shopping related worries. Like the way individuals with depression have a difficulty to resist themselves from excessive internet use and shopping, similarly they are also reported of having an inability to resist themselves from eating. 70% of the individuals with depression are also diagnosed with Bulimia as assessed by The Eating Disorder Diagnostic Scale.

On the contrary, only 30% of the adults who are otherwise not diagnosed with depression, had Bulimia. Individuals diagnosed with depression experiences a loss of control over their amount of intake of food and have a constant fear of gaining weight. They feel disgusted and guilty about overeating but in no means can control themselves from eating until they are uncomfortably full. Comparing all the three parameters, it could be seen that prevalence of shopping addiction is the most in depressive adults compared to non-depressive adults. Thus, people with depression not only suffers from the adversities of low mood and anhedonia, but also are prone to other impulse control issues like internet addiction, shopping addiction and Bulimia.

CONCLUSION

It can be concluded by stating that there is a significant difference between the two groups which clearly reveals the prevalence of internet addiction, shopping addiction and Bulimia in depressive adults as compared to those not diagnosed with depression. They are reported of facing difficulty in controlling their impulses which in turn is causing them severe impairments as stated in the study.

Limitations

Larger sample could have been used in order to generalize the results and make the study more fruitful.

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Prevalence of Internet Addiction, Shopping Addiction and Bulimia in Depressive Adults

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Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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