

EXAMINATION OF INTERNET AND SHOPPING ONLINE ADDICTION ON KOSOVO STUDENTS DURING THE COVID PERIOD



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Abstract

In order to carry out this research, questionnaires were collected online, where the main focus was students from public and private faculties. The specific focus of the research is the correlation of internet addiction with online shopping. In order to achieve the objectives of the study and the ideal results, participants were selected from different faculties in Kosovo and we were able to collect data from different parts of Kosovo. These questionnaires were collected during the covid-19 period in 2021. Questionnaires were applied to different age groups starting from 18 years old and above. The number of participants in this study is 295. The research analyzes were done with IBM SPSS Statistics, where a non-parametric correlation and Spearman's analysis between Internet addiction and online shopping were aimed in our research, we noticed gender differences in the dependence on online shopping where women have resulted higher in this case, the value is higher of addiction to online student shopping varies significantly in terms of gender. Our results also show a significant change in financial status which means dependence on online shopping leads to financial difficulties. Internet and shopping addiction has resulted in positive correlations; addiction has been high where the main cause may be the pandemic time which has made people more passive. This research aimed to find the dependency of online shopping in the universities of Kosovo, where the research was conducted through two questionnaires that measured Internet addiction and online shopping where the focus was on students.

1. Introduction

The importance of this topic is that the addiction to online and internet shopping is seen to be appearing very recently both in

young people and at advanced ages, as online shopping becomes easier without spending a lot of energy and this has made them more passive and more dependent on the internet.

The development of computers and the establishment of communication networks and private use with the opening of the internet, today it has come to the form of relationship and communication called "internet". Internet are generally interconnected computer networks around the world and the internet the relationship established by passing the communication through the network of networks to which computers are connected tells Erdoğan, I. (2013). Purchasing is defined as the process of browsing or purchasing items on a cash basis. Shopping today is understood as a functional activity, as well as a social or leisure activity with communist characteristics. The element of joy is emerging from the introduction of large market centers that needs a notable activity that had been bought, frozen, and argued. The highly sensitive nature of the purchasing sensation in the sale of service insurance itself to the individual is separated from the active purchasing rewards. People with an impulse-control disorder are less likely to have had insight into their behavior and their ability to resist attenuated behaviors. Such repetitive behavior is often extreme and takes a ritual form. It has been reported to relieve anxiety or tension within the individual but may re-result in inappropriate or disruptive consequences (Rose & Dhandayudham, 2014).

2. Literature Review

At first, addiction was considered only drugs and substance abuse, but now non-substantial or behavioral addiction is increasing every day. These include games, gambling, internet use, and work, online shopping addiction is classified as internet addiction. Compulsive purchases tend to be long-term behaviors, repetitive purchases these behaviors individuals display as a response to stressful outbursts and negative emotions. Addiction to online shopping and compulsive shopping are very similar to each other both internally and externally, the main difference is that addiction to shopping is done online while compulsive shopping can be done in stores (Zhao et al., 2017). Phone addiction affected the increase in online shopping which brought about a new addiction (Bellman et al., 1999). A study done on the impact of online shopping addiction turned out to have a negative impact on people's lives whether routine, social but mostly economic (Rose & Dhandayudham, 2014).

Internet addiction is considered when it is harmful and uncontrolled (Beard, 2005). Compulsive shopping is seen to have a lifetime prevalence involving 5.8% of the United States population. According to clinics in the US compulsive shopping is more prevalent in women which covers 80% of this disorder. Compulsive purchases are chronic or intermittent, this disorder usually appears in adolescence or early 20s (Black, 2007). In a study of 400 students, it was found that individuals saw buying as

a means of raising mood, but then came the downsides such as debt and deteriorating financial side (Clark & Calleja, 2008). According to the DSM-V, repetitive behavioral groups, which some long-term behavioral addictions, with subcategories such as "sex addiction", "exercise addiction" or "purchase addiction" are not included because at this time there is evidence insufficiently reviewed by colleagues to establish the diagnostic criteria and course descriptions needed to identify these behaviors as mental disorders. Behavioral disorder (also called behavioral addiction) is not related to any substance of abuse that shares certain traits with substance-induced addiction. The excessive purchase form of collection disorder, which characterizes most but not all individuals with collection disorder, consists of the excessive collection, purchase, or theft of items that are not needed or for which there is no space available. Approx. 80% -90% of individuals with disorder clusters exhibit excessive absorption. The most common form of shopping is excessive shopping, followed by the purchase of free items (e.g., leaflets, items thrown away by others). The main features of asset accumulation disorder (i.e., difficulty in removing them, excessive amount of clutter) are generally comparable in males and females, but females tend to exhibit more oversupply, especially oversupply, than men (APA, 2013). Kleptomania can be associated with a forced purchase, as well as depression and bipolar disorder (especially major depressive disorder), anxiety disorders, eating disorders (especially bulimia nervosa), personality disorders, and substance use disorders (especially substance use disorders). of alcohol) and other disruptive, impulse, and behavioral control disorders (Nettelbladt, 2019). Previously, the term addiction was used only for addiction to substances, while recently several behaviors have been seen that can lead to addiction such as exercise, sex, gambling, video games, shopping, and internet use (Davenport et al., 2012). Orford, (2001) explained how individuals do not tend to become addicted to substances, but to objects and activities, one of which may be substance use. According to studies women tend to become more addicted to eating and shopping (McElroy et al., 1994), while men are more addicted to drugs, gambling, and sex (Holden, 2001). In another study, it was found that about 80% of compulsive buyers are female rather than male (Black, 2007).

Hirschman (1992) proposed an addictive consumption model that explains compulsive consumption behaviors. This model proposes that people with developmental and similar circumstances exhibit such behaviors. Compulsive shoppers exhibit several personality predispositions that are often associated with compulsive consumption behaviors (Faber et al., 1987). Compulsive buying has been reported by many studies as a way to reduce negative feelings (Christenson et al., 1994). This is related to the potential that this behavior has to become

addictive by being reinforced through pleasure, attention, praise, and thus pushing the individual to repeat the behavior (Salzman 1981; Griffiths & Banyard, 2009). Compulsive buying was first mentioned as a disorder by Kraepelin, (1915) who described people who exhibit this behavior as "buying maniacs". But later this phenomenon has been described more as a reactive impulse (Black, 2007). Otherwise, this addiction is also considered a pathological purchase and is characterized by extreme and poorly adapted buying behaviors that lead to personal, social, and financial problems, although the diagnostic classification of this disorder is still in debate (Faber & O'Guinn, 1992). Also, low self-esteem is present in individuals with compulsive buying behaviors, as a way to get rid of negative feelings about themselves (Jacobs, 1986). Over the past decades, the buying process has changed from using the internet. Online shopping offers many benefits in terms of product search as well as the buying process itself (Rose & Dhandayudham, 2014). There is ample evidence from studies that problematic buying behaviors are now occurring online (Chen, Tam & Han, 2004). There are different types of problems related to internet use such as online sex addiction, social network addiction, online gambling, and gambling, where most are previous addictions that combine with internet use, creating internet addiction (Davenport et al., 2012). The question is whether there is such an addiction as online. Griffiths (2000) suggests that technological addictions should be seen as a subcategory of previous addictions, hence even real internet addictions are not so obvious (Davenport et al., 2012). According to Young (1999), the symptoms that characterize the unhealthy use of the Internet are obsessive thoughts about the Internet, the inability to stop using it, etc. Sun & Wu (2011) linked online shopping to Internet addiction itself, concluding that emotional instability and materialism are positively correlated with Internet addiction, which increases the likelihood of impulsive online shopping. Also, materialism and impulsivity have been associated with technology addiction in young people (Roberts & Pirog, 2013). On the other hand, LaRose and Eastin (2001) found evidence that poor self-regulation influences this behavior. They proposed that lack of control as an element of online shopping may be a stronger determinant of dependence than economic considerations (LaRose & Eastin, 2001). As we know the internet today has an impact and is a very big helper nowadays for someone both in the academic as well as the personal life of someone resulting in people having easier access to search for the latest knowledge in their studies but also easier access to communicate with others via the internet. Seeing the benefits that the internet brings us, they have noticed that its excessive use can or otherwise called as binternet has relatively shown its negative consequences on both mental and physical health, not forgetting here the impact on the financial situation of an individual. Where can we relate it to how much time

individuals spend online shopping online creating addiction and where they are most likely to experience depression is inevitable (Sharma et al., 2018). Individuals who uncontrollably repeatedly shop online can be variously described as pathological buyers or dependent on it. It has emerged as problematic where individuals addicted to online shopping make expenses out of their control. But for some, it may please you to shop online with the thought that by buying online on various sites it is easier to meet its needs (Trotzke, Starcke, Müller, et al., 2015). In a study done in India, they have shown that they prefer to spend hours while shopping online but the prevalence which was measured for excessive behavior for online shopping was generally 4% where the biggest problem is online shopping behavior was greater in females. But this prevalence can vary depending on different countries and cultures where we can also take the example of a study which was done in the US where the prevalence among respondents was 5.8% while in Germany it was 7.6% (Manchiraju et al., 2017). The internet has made it easier for consumers to buy often and quickly at any time possible the things they need which is consisting of uncontrolled purchases by consumers are seen as quite a worrying problem. Where this impulsiveness to buy things online is resulting in a sense of guilt them as uncontrolled buying of things online has a negative impact on both their financial situation and also their emotional and social ones on these individuals (Kukar-Kinney et al., 2009). In one study, buying shopping disorder was more associated with depression and anxiety disorders in individuals, regardless of gender, schooling, or even partnership status. A type of gambling disorder that uncontrollably persists and acts as a gamble can also be compared to online shopping disorders as an easier way to access the online marketplace. Individuals with shopping disorders have noticed that online shopping online has had an impact on their availability and anonymity by using the internet as it provides instant access to many different stores at the same time (Trotzke et al., 2015).

According to a two-model study, there are several variables such as stress, depression, ease of use, and utility that predict hedonic purchasing. Also, these variables: stress, ease of use, and utility along with hedonic purchasing predict depression. So, according to the first model from stress to hedonic purchases, and according to the second model from stress to depression (Doğan & Günüc, 2017). Addictive behavior can bring positive benefits to the well-being of the individual in the short term or negative benefits in the longer term such as feelings of guilt, anxiety, or depression. According to one study, a strong association has been found in women between loneliness, rejection sensitivity, and purchase addiction, as opposed to relationship stability, self-efficacy, and relationship satisfaction. So, according to this research, there is a reciprocal relationship between well-being and addiction to purchasing, which behavior is quite prevalent and harmful

(Cassidy & Adair, 2021). According to a study, hedonic purchases, escape, and reduction of negative mood have a significant effect on addiction (Kirezli & Arslan, 2019). Also, the reasons/causes of purchase addiction are the avoidance of negativity and escape, which are negative psychological conditions in relation to people addicted to purchases, who seek satisfaction in shopping. These consumers are driven by an uncontrollable need for purchases and as a result, they have to face negative psychological, social, and financial consequences (Kirezli & Arslan, 2019). As more and more college students tend to become addicted to online shopping, one study with them found that 62.8% of them were addicted to online shopping. In excessive consumption, impaired function, truncation reaction, and satisfaction with online shopping, women have higher scores than men. Also, there are differences in these dimensions depending on which year the students belong to, those of the first year have the most obvious excess consumption, while those of the second year have a functional impairment (Zhang et al., 2019).

3. Methodology

3.1. Purpose of the Research

The research aims to make the connection between internet addiction and online shopping, where we are expected to see how much the variables correlate with each other and how much students depend on the internet and online shopping. Hypotheses are expected to be validated which will be analyzed through quantitative analysis.

3.2. Hypothesis

Hypothesis 1: There is a link between internet addiction and online shopping addiction.

Hypothesis 2: Men are more addicted to the internet while women are more addicted to online shopping.

Hypothesis 3: The average middle-income individuals are more dependent on online shopping.

3.3. Participants

The specific focus of the research is on Internet addiction and online shopping among students. To complete the study and results, participants from three cities in Kosovo, Prizren, Prishtina, and Peja, were selected. Participants completed the questionnaire online through Google Forms and where out of 300 participants 295 completely answered the questions (N = 295, 96 males, 197 females, and two others). In this survey, a total of 295 respondents answered, gender distribution 197 (66.8) women, 96 (32.5%) men and 2 others (0.7%). In terms of age, all were

students, i.e. 18 years or older. Therefore, age was not asked in the questionnaire as the focus was on students. The sample of this research was mainly students.

3.4. Instruments I

The questionnaire measuring online shopping addiction “Bergen Shopping Addiction Scale” was developed in 1996 by Cecilie Andreassen at the University of Bergen, Norway. Of the four pooled item sets reflecting the seven addiction criteria, the highest loading item was retained. In the final scale, the factor structure of the BSAS on the Bergen Shopping Addiction Scale (BSAS) was good (RMSEA = 0.064, CFI = 0.983, TLI = 0.973) and the alpha coefficient was 0.87. The questionnaire contains 28 questions and 7 sub-dimensions where each contains 4 questions (salience, mood modification, conflict, tolerance, withdrawal, relapse, and problems). In the first questionnaire for online shopping the answers are given in 5 scales where the Likert scale is used, starting from 1 (strongly disagree), 2 (strongly disagree), 3 (neutral), 4 (strongly agree), and 5 (strongly agree). It is build in the form of Likert’s scale.

3.5. Instruments II

This study aims to verify the dimensions of internet addiction in the Albanian “Internet Addiction Scale for Adolescents” which was adopted by Basha, Telaku & Mustafa (2021) to determine internet addiction. The Cronbach Alpha internal stability coefficient was found to be .828. It has been shown that the factor loading values of the scale items vary between .56 and .72. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin coefficient (KMO) was 0.86 and the Bartlett χ^2 Test of Sphericity value was 605.873 (p less than 000). In confirmatory factor analysis, the one-dimensional structure of the scale fits well [$\chi^2 = 63.166$, $df = 26$, $\chi^2 / df = 2.42$ RMSEA = .077, RMR = .069, S-RMR = .049, GFI = .95, AGFI = .91, CFI = .94, NNFI = .90, IFI = .94]. Contains 9 questions in total and the answers are given 1. Once, 2. Rarely, 3. Sometimes, 4. Often, 5. Always. It is build in the form of Likert’s scale.

3.6. Data Collection and Analysis

In order to carry out this research, questionnaires were collected online, where the main focus was students from public and private faculties. The specific focus of the research is the correlation of internet addiction with online shopping. In order to achieve the objectives of the study and the ideal results, participants were selected from different faculties in Kosovo and we were able to collect data from different parts of Kosovo. These questionnaires were collected during the covid-19 period in 2021. Questionnaires were applied to different age groups starting from 18 years old and above.

The number of participants in this study is 295. The research analyzes were done with IBM SPSS Statistics, where a non-parametric correlation and Spearman's analysis between Internet addiction and online shopping were aimed. Relations screening models are studies that aim to determine the change between two or more variables (Karasar, 2004). Otherwise, SPSS is a software program that is used for interactive or joint statistical analysis. The SPSS program analyzes scientific data related to the social sciences. This study is quantitative since we applied the

questionnaire, this type of research has to do with the study of social behavior through computationally based techniques.

4. Results

The results of this study were made through the software program SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) which is designed for statistical analysis for the social sciences.

Table 1. Gender differences in online shopping addiction, Saliency sub-dimension

Saliency Sub-Dimension of Addiction to Online Shopping	N	Mean Rank	Sum Of Ranks	U	P
Male	102	136,38	13911,00	8658,000	,042
Female	198	157,77	31239,00		

The results of the Saliency sub-dimension of dependence on online student purchases vary significantly in terms of gender, $U = 8658.00$, $p < .05$. The results of the Saliency sub-dimension of female online shopping addiction are higher than those of men.

The reason for this may be that women spend more time taking care of their appearance compared to men.

Table 2. Gender differences depending on online shopping, Mood modification sub-dimension

Mood Modification Sub-Dimension of Addiction to Online Shopping	N	Mean Rank	Sum Of Ranks	U	P
Male	102	136,68	13941.00	8688.000	,047
Female	198	157,62	31209.00		

The results of the Mood modification sub-dimension of dependence on online student purchases differ significantly in terms of gender, $U = 8688.00$, $p < .05$. The results of the Mood modification sub-dimension of female online shopping addiction

are higher than those of men. The reason for this may be that women spend more time taking care of their appearance compared to men.

Table 3. Dependence on online shopping and perception of monthly income, sub-dimension Saliency

Saliency	N	Mean Rank	Sd	X²	P	Significant Difference
Low	45	127,20	2	8,233	,016	High > Average, High > Low
Average	222	150,25				
High	33	183,95				

The results of the sub-dimension of dependence on online shopping of students, Saliency (questions that measure the perspective of people towards online shopping) show a

significant change in terms of financial status, $r, x^2 (sd = 2, n = 300) = 8,233, p < .05$.

Table 4. Dependence on online shopping and perception of monthly income, sub-dimension Mood modification

Mood Modification	N	Mean Rank	Sd	X ²	P	Significant Difference
Low	45	124,11	2	10,578	,005	High> Average, High> Low
Average	222	150,20				
High	33	183,50				

The results of the sub-dimension of addiction to student online shopping, Mood Modification (questions that measure mood

modification) show a significant change in terms of financial status, $r, x^2 (sd = 2, n = 300) = 10,578, p < .05$.

Table 5. Nonparametric correlations – Spearman’s analysis

	Salience	Mood Modification	Conflict	Tolerance	Relapse	Withdrawal	Problems	Internet
Salience	1	.549**	.464**	.662**	.536**	.485**	.404**	.219**
MoodMod...		1	.483**	.673**	.513**	.507**	.463**	.310**
Conflict			1	.622**	.624**	.469**	.560**	.305**
Tolerance				1	.720**	.623**	.609**	.350**
Relapse					1	.544**	.637**	.251**
Withdrawal						1	.534**	.463**
Problems							1	.299**
Internet								1

In the 5th table is found a positive and significant correlation between online shopping and internet dependence and sub-dimensions which are with values max ($r = .673^{**}$) and min ($r = .219^{**}$) table above. According to the table above ($r = .673^{**}$), this shows that the correlation between the variables is higher significant. According to the sub-dimensions it is seen that the dependence on online and internet shopping exists and stays.

5. Conclusions

The purpose of this research was to make the relationship between Internet addiction and online shopping, where we are expected to see how correlated the variables are and how much students are dependent on the Internet and online shopping. Thus analyzing gender and economic differences.

As a result of the data obtained from this research, it is noticed that the female gender in the results of the sub-dimension

Saliency (questions that measure the perspective of people towards online shopping) $p < .042$, is a value higher than $p < .05$. of addiction to online student shopping vary significantly in terms of gender. Where it is seen that the results of the Saliency sub-dimension of addiction to online shopping of women are higher than those of men. According to the results achieved it is worth noting that the above hypothesis stated that women are more dependent on online shopping in our case stands. This result achieved in the gender difference where it was observed that women are more dependent on online shopping is supported by many other types of research. In countries like India, the USA, and Germany this gender difference was also found with different percentages (Manchiraju, 2017; McElroy, 1994; Black, 2007; Zhang, 2019). The reason for this may be that women spend more time taking care of their appearance compared to men.

A significant change was observed in students' online shopping addiction sub-dimension results and Saliency financial status. This change in financial status is also highlighted by other research that has also been done on young students, where this dependence has had a negative impact on the financial lives of students (Kukar-Kinney 2009; LaRose, 2001; Wu, 2011; Roberts, 2013; Clark, 2008; Rose, 2014). In the addiction link, results in a positive and significant link were found between online shopping and internet addiction and sub-dimensions. Where in this case even the first hypothesis posed to addictions stands and it is clear that they have a positive correlation. Internet addiction among young people can come as a result that the Internet being used as a source of any information or questions we have in mind; the Internet also facilitates communication with any country in the world. These results were also supported by other research (Sharma et al., 2018). Phone addiction affected the increase in online shopping which brought about a new addiction (Bellman et al., 1999). Thus, the positive results about the dependence on online shopping among students, mainly during in the period of the pandemic, when this research was conducted, the increase in online shopping should be visible. This can come as a result of hygiene, closure from the virus, and quick purchase.

Other research supports online shopping addiction with ease of searching, lower prices, a variety of goods, time savings, ease of use, entertainment, promotions, and impulsive behavior on the part of shoppers. Also, the reasons/causes of purchase addiction are the avoidance of negativity and escape, which are negative psychological states of people addicted to purchases, who seek satisfaction in shopping, these consumers are driven by an uncontrollable need for purchases and how results they have to face negative psychological, social and financial consequences. Individuals addicted to shopping have been found to shop online has had an impact on their availability and anonymity by using

the internet as it provides instant access to many different stores at the same time (Gunuc; Kirezli; Trotzke). Recently, especially with the COVID-19 pandemic, studies on internet addiction and the transition of schools and universities to online education have inevitably led to an increase in children's and adolescents' interest in internet addiction, online communication and online games and online games (Basha & Topal, 2020; Basha, 2021).

Research on Internet addiction and online shopping was conducted in the state of Kosovo for the first time we hope to pave the way for further research on these addictions which are worth analyzing from time to time, especially in these periods when we are facing the pandemic, and are increasing these wire addictions making people more passive and changing everyone's routines.

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