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Relationship between Compulsive Buying and Depressive Symptoms among Males and Females

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Abstract

This study examined the relationship between compulsive buying and depressive symptoms among males and females. Two hundred eighty-eight males and 456 females visiting shopping centers in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, volunteered to take part in this study. Two inventories were administered to participants: a compulsive buying inventory developed for this study and the Beck Depression Inventory. We found a significant positive relationship between compulsive buying disorder and depression symptoms. There were also significant sex differences in compulsive buying, with female respondents demonstrating higher scores. Compulsive buying behavior explained 42.8% of the variance in depressive symptoms.

Keywords: compulsive buying; depression symptoms; sex.

Introduction

Maraz, van-Brink, and Demetrovics (2015) defined compulsive buying as "an uncontrolled behavior in shopping that results in cumulative financial and social difficulties." Similarly, Williams and Grisham (2012) defined it as a wrong form of extreme buying," while other authors defined it as "individuals' lack of ability to resist impulsiveness toward buying things that are not needed" (Basquin & Lejoyeux, 2012; Black, 2007).

Researchers have proposed several different patterns of compulsive buying. The basic pattern pertains to compulsive buying of items related to everyday basic needs.. The emotional buying pattern, by contrast, refers to compulsive buying based on the joy individuals derive from the act. The social buying pattern refers to buying motivated by an individual's to socialize. Finally, the self-buying pattern, which is often an unconscious motivation, is a means of strengthening the self and creating a self-concept or identity (Jung & Yi, 2014). Regardless of the pattern, compulsive buyers appear to be characterized by distorted mental perceptions of the themselves and their environment, psychological and social maladjustment, deformations in self-image and identity, social concerns, anxiety and tension regarding life activities, and insecure attachment patterns such as anxious or avoidant attachment (Black, 2007).

Compulsive behavior is often considered an addiction, with the rationale being that compulsive buyers cannot control their emotions, and thus, in an attempt to reduce their negative mood, indulge in compulsive buying (Miller, 2007). Furthermore, researchers have shown that they often lack basic emotional needs, especially the love and acceptance of others, and they find it difficult to establish a relationship with others; often, they feel lonely and isolated (Roberts, Manolis, & Pullig, 2014). Compulsive buyers also often exhibit low self-esteem and report high levels of impulsivity, feelings of frustration, and chaotic and disorganized behavior (Rao, 2013). Several studies have shown that compulsive buyers with of

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