

Why Indian women are getting addictive to shopping: A study to introspect!

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Abstract

India is a developing country but still there are strata of women from middle and high class income group who do addictive shopping. The basic reason for this is changing shopping environment in India and also the role of women. The women as customer is aware about the market trends, brands and ready to explore. This paper is an attempt to understand the factors that push Indian women into addictive shopping. The paper will explore all possible reason for how and why they are getting addictive to shopping.

Keywords: addictive, women, reasons, shopping

Introduction

With the ever changing environment of India like economic affluence, access to credit cards, mall culture, increment in income, raise in education, change in people's lifestyle, number of novel issues are generating which need a serious study and addictive shopping behaviour is one of that issues. The new millennium emerged with revolutionary advances in women behaviour, which led to the dynamic growth in their shopping pattern.

Addictive shopping is an extreme form of consumer behaviour. Feeling of great expectation and excitement prior to and during the shopping experience are replaced by guilt and shame afterwards. Addictive consumers buy for motives unrelated to the actual possession of product and most purchases remain unused.

Background for Study

Indian women traditionally used to confine themselves to households activities. Today women are no longer just a gatekeeper of the family. They have got more empowerment and economic freedom. They are aware and educated. Today women are managing home and office too. They are important decision maker in the family. This is why their shopping habits have changed.

Not only women empowerment but also change in market environment help in inspiring women to shop. India is expected to become the world's fastest growing e-commerce market and by each day there is rapid increase in the number of internet users.

These day internet is frequently used for online shopping. According to (Monuwe *et al.* 2004) ^[1] online shopping refers to the shopping behaviour of consumer in an online store or a website used for online purchase. Online shopping facilitate all day night shopping, having no dependency on store and its timing, saving travel cost and time, easy search and purchase, easy return, easy payment and unlimited choices. Online shopping in India worth approximately 2 billion dollars. From the total online shopping in India (2 billion dollars), the Indian women purchased worth 0.51 billion dollars i.e. 26%.

Another important influence is mall culture. Under one roof women get variety of brand and products. The Indian women

while shopping focus on value, convenience, variety and a better shopping experience. An increase in spending power has resulted in consumers increasingly using supermarkets / malls for their personal shopping.

The philosophy attached to credit card – Buy Now Pay Later is advancing people to shop more. Credit card market in India is estimated at 14-20 million according to a recent survey conducted by global management consultant McKinsey.

Indian women are exposed to changing market condition and that's why they are having change in shopping habits.

Literature Review

According to Wikipedia- "Shopping is the examining of goods or services from retailers with the intent to purchase at that time." Hence Shopping is an activity of selection and/or purchase. In other words "Shopping is considered a recreational and diversion activity in which one visits a variety of stores with a premeditated intent to purchase a product."

The rationale for shopping is making physical visits to a shopping site. It is considered as a household task as well as a form of recreation, relaxation and entertainment. (Dholakia 1999) ^[2].

Shoppers could be "ordinary" or "excessive shoppers". This excessiveness is known as addiction. (Helga Dittmar, 2000) ^[3] A shopping addiction is not a disease of intellect; it's a disease of emotion (Robert Pagliarini, 2012) ^[4].

A shopping addiction, also known as compulsive shopping or compulsive buying disorder (Stanford University, 2006) ^[5] Shopping addiction is perhaps the most socially reinforced of the behavioural addictions. It usually begins in the late teens and early adulthood. (Elizabeth Hartney, 2011) ^[6] Popular discourses on shopaholics treat the condition with humour. But the reality of being addicted to shopping is far from comical. Within the group of compulsive buyers studied, individuals were facing crippling debt, severe depression and anxiety, and had lost or were losing key relationships (Alison Armstrong 2011) ^[7] three features drawn from previous research are used to characterize impulse purchases. When buying on impulse, the consumer makes an 1) Unintended 2) Unreflective, and 3) Immediate purchase (Jones, 2003) ^[8]. Shopping addiction often co-occurs with other addictions like - Purchasing large

quantities of items that are not needed, Fantasies surrounding purchasing the item, using the shopping spree as a way to escape reality. (www.therapistunlimited.com), it basically has to do with impulsiveness and lack of control over one's impulses. (Donald Black, 2004) ^[9].

Victims of shopping addiction typically "feels an increasing sense of tension or arousal before committing the act, and then experiences pleasure, gratification or relief at the time of committing the act" . However, to be a shopping addict, a person must be aware that they are purchasing goods they do not need; their shopping habit impairs their job, creates family problems, and even leads to financial problems. (American Psychological Association) The development of compulsive buying is analyzed in changes in the consumer culture. It is expected that these changes towards postmodern consumer culture have influenced the development of compulsive buying. (Ger & Belk, 1996) ^[10] A recent study confirmed that compulsive buying is on increase. (Neunar, Raab & Reisch, 2005) ^[11].

The addictive shopping is an extraordinary experience, fast and emotional rather than rational (Weinberg and Gottwald, 1982) ^[12]. With easier access to malls, availability of products shopping addiction is on increase (Hirschman, 1992) ^[13] enhancement in women literacy and awareness also add to shopping addiction (Mu. Subrahmanian, 2011) ^[14]. Shopping fantasy; intense feelings towards purchasing is another factor (O'Guinn and Faber, 1989) ^[15]. Celebrities and the media do have an influence on how women feel about certain fashions which is one of the cause for shopping addiction. (Bastos, 2008) ^[16].

Now-a-days women are more style conscious; they use all the informative tools such as television and internet. Here they get plenty of information about how to look and feel better through their wardrobe. The use of the Internet in society has increased dramatically in recent years. There is excessive amounts of time and money spent on online shopping, often buying things which are neither wanted nor used. This adds to the reason for addictive shopping. (www.wrongdiagnosis.com)

Use of more of credit cards is also the cause for addictive shopping. Financial institutions provide credit facility to customers for shopping which also lead to addictive shopping (Bragg, 2009) ^[17]. Sudden wealth is also one of the backgrounds for addictive shopping (Robert Pagliarini, 2012) ^[18].

The family structure also has a bearing upon a higher degree of compulsiveness in purchasing: young people from broken families mono parental homes present higher levels of compulsiveness than those who come from unbroken families (Elliott, 1994; Ridfleisch, Burroughs and Denton, 1997; Roberts, 1998; Scherhorn, 1990) ^[19-22].

Reasons for Addictive Shopping

- There is continuous change in India's environment, these growing changes bring social and economic variations on different aspects of our daily life and hence contribute to addictive shopping behaviour of women.
- Online shopping could be highlighted for one of the main reason for shopping addiction. These days internet is easily accessible. Consumers are gadget friendly. Laptops, cell phone, tablets are always in hands. People are always active on social media and e commerce site.
- Now women are independent and educated. They are more

aware and informed. As they work and they do have money. When one has money then it is easy to spend. Women are having increase in purchasing power.

- The other reasons could be increase in family income, availability of variety of goods, discounts and offers on sales, multiple shopping channels etc. Indian women also get influenced by others be it their friends, relatives, peer groups, neighbours; or even they compare themselves with different celebrities. All these reason tend towards addictive shopping.
- Women consider shopping as mood booster. Shopping has all power to make women smile. It has a feel good factor. These days shopping is treated as therapy which can turn sorrow into happiness and pain into gain.
- Addictive shoppers live in a virtual world of their own; they forget what they are, what is their income level etc. They just become who they would like to be. This virtual identity is again a reason for addictive shopping.
- Most of the women shop for no particular reason. They shop for the enjoyment and excitement that buying provide. Women get immense pleasure in shopping. They can spend hours just wandering in malls or checking clothes online.
- When something is missing in life, you tried to compensate it with something else. Women shop to avoid loneliness and boredom. When they are not able to stand negative feelings, pain, loneliness, boredom, depression, fear, anger they go for shopping and this is how they boost up their mood.
- Availability of easy credit and idea of "Buy Now and Spend Later" attract women to shop more. The availability of easy credit make women buy whatever they tempt for.
- Promotional strategies like discount, cash back, gift voucher, and buy one get one free and several other promotional tools attract women towards shopping.
- Shopping addictive Women get influence with celebrities. They wants to look like them. These days consumer follow their favourite star online, be it Facebook, twitter, Instagram, everyone can get a look what their favorited stars are doing. All these trends make women shop more.

Conclusion

From the study it can be concluded that addictive shoppers live in their own world. Women as addictive shopper finds pleasure in shopping and love to shop regularly. This paper has identify different reasons for women addictive shopping on the basis of secondary data. Their shopping habit greatly influenced by economic affluence, access to credit cards, mall culture, increment in income, raise in education, change in lifestyle, offers and discount etc. Indian women due to change in their shopping habit are becoming addictive to shopping.

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