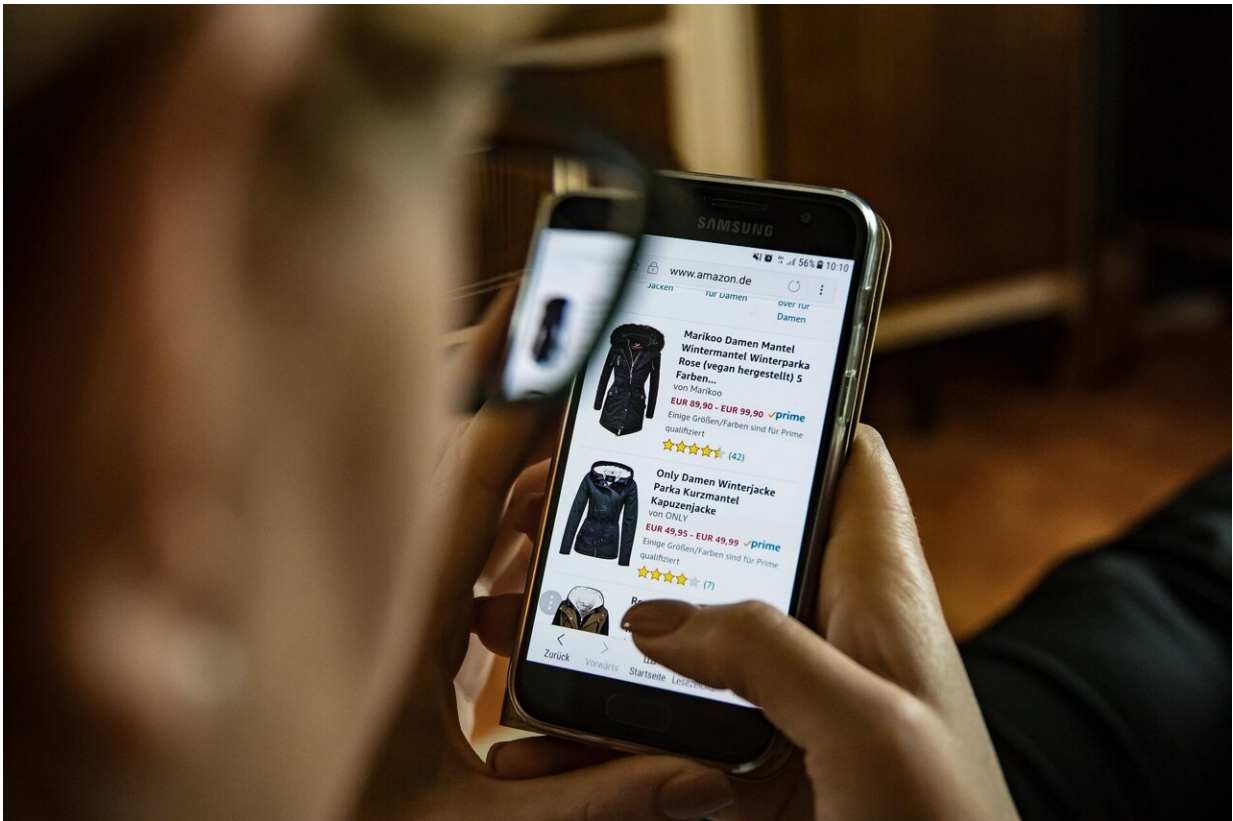


Low self-regulation in smartphone use is connected to online shopping addiction

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A recent article from a joint study by the Department of Social Sciences and Philosophy at the University of Jyväskylä and the Department of Education at the University of Helsinki is among the first peer-reviewed

scientific publications exploring the co-effects of problems with self-regulation and smartphone use on shopping addiction. The research is [published](#) in the *International Journal of Consumer Studies*.

Online shopping with a smartphone is increasingly smooth and offers an easy escape from everyday life. Smartphones enable shopping irrespective of time and place. The development of digital payment methods makes spending less noticeable. These factors are conducive to shopping addiction.

In a survey with a representative sample (N = 1,000) of 18- to 29-year-olds in Finland, it was observed that difficulties in regulating smartphone use increased the tendency for shopping addiction. For example, if a consumer had weak [self-regulation](#) capability coupled with difficulties to ignore mobile phone ads or refrain from checking the phone all the time, it predicted a stronger tendency for shopping addiction.

"This is understandable as a large share of mobile phone messages consists of targeted marketing," states Postdoctoral Researcher Jussi Nyrhinen.

People often become conscious of shopping addiction only when encountering financial problems

Even if shopping addiction is not diagnosed as an actual medical disorder, it has many features similar to other addictions, such as excess, tolerance and relapse as well as withdrawal symptoms and mood modification. At worst, shopping addiction can lead to serious financial and [social problems](#).

The research findings showed that shopping addicts become concerned about their [personal finances](#) only when faced with clear signs of getting

into debt. Poor awareness of financial consequences also contributes to the development of shopping addiction.

Self-regulation is a skill that everybody can develop. Therefore, it would be important to teach self-regulation skills in digital environments at home and school alike.

"Instead of prohibiting the use of smartphones at school, children and adolescents should be taught to use such devices in a constructive way," Nyrhinen emphasizes. "Teaching of financial literacy helps people budget and control their finances. Responsibility for this also rests with the parents of young people."

Responsibility for the problems related to [smartphone use](#) and [online shopping](#) also belongs to the marketing and technology companies. This is challenging because the business logic of many online companies is based on creating committed users. Legislation and new digital tools can provide solutions to limit the problematic use of digital technologies.

More information: Jussi Nyrhinen et al, Young adults' online shopping addiction: The role of self-regulation and smartphone use, *International Journal of Consumer Studies* (2023). [DOI: 10.1111/ijcs.12961](#)

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