The Relationship Between Psychological Well-Being and Online Shopping Addiction among Students at SMA Negeri 3 Medan

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the relationship between psychological well-being and online shopping addiction among Grade 11 students at SMA Negeri 3 Medan in the 2025/2026 academic year and described the distribution of both variables by gender. A quantitative correlational design was used. The respondents were 205 Grade 11 students, comprising 122 female and 83 male students. Data were collected using Likert-type psychological well-being and online shopping addiction scales that, according to the research manuscript, had undergone validity and reliability testing. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, normality and linearity tests, and Pearson Product Moment correlation with IBM SPSS Statistics 26. Psychological well-being was low for 118 students (57.6%), moderate for 54 (26.3%), and high for 33 (16.1%). Online shopping addiction was low for 58 students (28.3%), moderate for 30 (14.6%), and high for 117 (57.1%). The correlation analysis yielded $r = -.454$ with $p < .001$ ($N = 205$), indicating a statistically significant negative relationship of moderate strength. Thus, higher psychological well-being tended to be associated with lower online shopping addiction. The findings highlight the importance of school counseling services that strengthen not only behavioral control but also self-acceptance, autonomy, environmental mastery, positive relationships, personal growth, and purpose in life.

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Introduction

Digital technology and electronic commerce have transformed how adolescents interact, obtain information, and meet consumption needs. Smartphones allow transactions to be completed quickly and repeatedly with minimal spatial and temporal constraints. Although these developments provide practical benefits, they can also facilitate impulsive consumption. Asrul (2024) showed that digital business development influences consumer behavior, while Erwin Rochmansyah et al. (2023) highlighted online shopping addiction among younger consumers. For high school students, the issue is relevant because adolescents are still developing self-regulation and adaptive decision-making skills.

Online shopping addiction refers to a pattern of online purchasing that is difficult to control and repeated despite potential negative consequences. Rose and Dhandayudham (2014) explained that accessibility, convenience, anonymity, and continuous purchasing stimuli on the Internet may facilitate problematic shopping. In clinical literature, buying-shopping disorder describes persistent preoccupation with purchasing, irresistible buying impulses, loss of control, and psychosocial or financial consequences. In this study, online shopping addiction is treated as a behavioral construct measured by the research scale rather than a clinical diagnosis.

Problematic shopping is not limited to economic consequences. Moran et al. (2015) linked stress, materialism, and external stimuli with online impulse buying. Erzincanlı et al. (2024) also found that anxiety and depression were positively associated with online shopping addiction, whereas financial attitude had a negative effect. These findings indicate that emotional conditions and self-regulation should be considered when explaining excessive online shopping.

Psychological well-being refers to positive psychological functioning rather than merely the absence of mental disorder. Ryff (1989) proposed six dimensions: self-acceptance, positive

relations with others, autonomy, environmental mastery, purpose in life, and personal growth. These dimensions are particularly relevant during adolescence, which involves identity formation, increasing autonomy, expanding social relationships, and the development of life goals.

The relationship between the two constructs can be interpreted through the compensatory Internet use perspective. Kardefelt-Winther (2014) proposed that excessive Internet activity may function as a compensatory strategy when individuals face psychological problems or unpleasant situations. In online shopping, purchasing may provide temporary pleasure or distraction. When repeated and difficult to control, however, shopping may develop into problematic behavior. Rose and Dhandayudham (2014) emphasized that Internet characteristics may facilitate problematic shopping behavior.

Previous studies have also identified psychological and gender-related characteristics of problematic shopping. Ünübol et al. (2022) found relationships between problem shopping and psychological characteristics in a large sample. Pérez de Albéniz-Garrote et al. (2021) reported higher compulsive buying among female adolescents. Etxaburu et al. (2024) found that buying-shopping disorder among adolescents was associated with impulsivity, emotional dependence, and attachment-related factors.

Despite growing research on problem shopping and psychological well-being, an important gap remains in the Indonesian secondary-school context. Direct evidence examining the relationship between psychological well-being and online shopping addiction among high school students, while also describing patterns by gender, remains limited. Previous studies have often focused on general consumers, university students, or adolescents in different cultural settings.

The novelty of this study lies in examining the relationship between psychological well-being and online shopping addiction among high school students within a guidance and counseling context. Psychological well-being is treated as a multidimensional construct, while online shopping addiction is treated as difficult-to-control digital consumption behavior. Gender-based distributions are also provided as contextual information that may help school counselors identify service needs.

This study aims to: (1) describe students' psychological well-being; (2) describe students' online shopping addiction; (3) test the relationship between the two variables; and (4) describe their distributions by gender. The hypothesis is that psychological well-being is negatively and significantly related to online shopping addiction.

Method

The study used a quantitative correlational design to examine the direction and strength of the relationship between psychological well-being and online shopping addiction without manipulating either variable. The respondents were 205 Grade 11 students at SMA Negeri 3 Medan, comprising 122 female and 83 male students. The source manuscript states that proportionate stratified random sampling was used, but it does not report the basis of stratification, the number of students in each stratum, or the randomization procedure. These details are therefore not reconstructed.

The instruments consisted of Likert-type psychological well-being and online shopping addiction scales. The manuscript states that both instruments underwent validity and reliability testing, but does not report the final item counts, validity coefficients, response format, or reliability coefficients. These details should be supplied from the original instrument-testing documentation before final submission.

Data were analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics 26 through descriptive statistics, normality and linearity tests, and Pearson Product Moment correlation. The significance level was set at .05. The correlation coefficient determined the direction and strength of association, while the p value determined statistical significance.

Interpretation was limited to statistical association and was not used to infer causality. Gender analysis was descriptive because inferential gender differences were not tested.

Result and Discussion

Result

A total of 205 students participated, comprising 122 females (59.5%) and 83 males (40.5%). Psychological well-being was predominantly low: 118 students were low, 54 moderate, and 33 high.

Table 1. Psychological well-being distribution

Category	Score interval	Frequency	Percentage
Low/Rendah	X < 51	118	57.6%
Moderate/Sedang	51 < X ≤ 67	54	26.3%
High/Tinggi	X > 67	33	16.1%
Total	—	205	100%

Online shopping addiction comprised 58 students in the low category, 30 moderate, and 117 high. The percentages in the original manuscript were inconsistent with the frequencies. In this revision, percentages were recalculated from N = 205 as 28.3%, 14.6%, and 57.1%. This is an arithmetic correction based on the reported frequencies, not new data.

Table 2. Online shopping addiction distribution

Category	Score interval	Frequency	Percentage
Low/Rendah	X < 53	58	28.3%
Moderate/Sedang	53 < X ≤ 71	30	14.6%
High/Tinggi	X > 71	117	57.1%
Total	—	205	100%

For psychological well-being, the low category included 70 females (57%) and 44 males (53%), while the high category included 19 females (16%) and 18 males (22%). For online shopping addiction, the high category included 53 females (43%) and 18 males (22%).

Pearson Product Moment correlation yielded r = -.454 with N = 205 and p < .001. Thus, there was a statistically significant negative relationship of moderate strength. The negative direction indicates that higher psychological well-being tended to accompany lower online shopping addiction.

Table 3. Psychological well-being by gender

Category	Female/Perempuan	Male/Laki-laki
Low/Rendah	70 (57%)	44 (53%)
Moderate/Sedang	33 (27%)	21 (25%)
High/Tinggi	19 (16%)	18 (22%)
Total	122 (100%)	83 (100%)

Table 4. Online shopping addiction by gender

Category	Female/Perempuan	Male/Laki-laki
Low/Rendah	33 (27%)	31 (37%)
Moderate/Sedang	36 (30%)	34 (41%)
High/Tinggi	53 (43%)	18 (22%)
Total	122 (100%)	83 (100%)

Table 5. Pearson Product Moment correlation

Variables	r	p	N	Interpretation
Psychological well-being × online shopping addiction	-.454	< .001	205	Negative, significant, moderate relationship

Discussion

Relationship Between Psychological Well-Being and Online Shopping Addiction

The hypothesis test produced a Pearson correlation of r = -.454 with p < .001 and N = 205. Thus, psychological well-being was negatively and significantly associated with online shopping addiction, with a moderate relationship. Students with higher psychological well-being tended to show lower online shopping addiction, whereas students with lower psychological well-being tended to show higher online shopping addiction. The original manuscript also reports r = -.454 and a significance value of 0.000.

This relationship can be interpreted through Ryff's (1989) six dimensions of psychological well-being. Self-acceptance may help individuals accept themselves without excessive reliance on external compensation. Autonomy concerns the ability to make choices based on personal judgment rather than external pressure. Environmental mastery supports management of life demands. Positive relationships provide social resources, while personal growth and purpose in life provide direction and meaning. When these psychological resources are stronger, students may have more adaptive coping alternatives when experiencing stress or discomfort, making online shopping less likely to become a primary coping strategy.

The finding is consistent with the Compensatory Internet Use perspective proposed by Kardefelt-Winther (2014), in which Internet activity can function as compensation for psychological problems or unpleasant situations. Online shopping has characteristics that may support this process because it provides rapid access to stimuli capable of producing pleasure or distraction. Moran et al. (2015) linked stress, materialism, and external stimuli with online impulse buying. Thus, when psychological well-being is low, shopping may function as short-term coping even though it can produce longer-term financial, social, and emotional consequences.

The finding is also supported by Erzincanli et al. (2024), who found positive effects of anxiety and depression on online shopping addiction and a negative effect of financial attitude. These findings demonstrate that online shopping behavior is connected to psychological and behavioral-regulation factors. More broadly, the meta-analysis by Li et al. (2021) found a negative relationship between restraint and Internet addiction and a positive relationship between impulsivity and Internet addiction. Although Internet addiction is not identical to online shopping addiction, the evidence supports the importance of impulse control as a psychological resource for reducing problematic digital behavior.

The negative association is also consistent with research connecting problematic shopping to psychological characteristics. Etxaburu et al. (2024) linked buying-shopping disorder in adolescents to impulsivity, emotional dependence, and attachment. Kellett and Bolton (2009), through a cognitive-behavioral model, explained that compulsive buying can be maintained by cognitive and behavioral patterns that provide short-term reinforcement. Müller et al. (2023) also showed that intervention research on compulsive buying-shopping disorder increasingly addresses behavioral and psychological processes. The present finding therefore supports understanding online shopping addiction within a broader framework of psychological well-being and self-regulation rather than consumption alone.

However, r = -.454 does not mean that psychological well-being is the only factor determining online shopping addiction. Correlation indicates association, not causation. The squared correlation is approximately 0.206, meaning that psychological well-being is statistically associated with about 20.6% of the variance in online shopping addiction scores in this sample, while the remaining variance is related to other factors not measured here. Potential factors include self-control, impulsivity, stress, anxiety, depression, materialism, financial attitude, social influence, and patterns of digital-media use. Future research should therefore test more comprehensive models.

For school counseling, the findings provide empirical support for strengthening psychological well-being as part of preventive strategies for problematic online shopping. Counselors can integrate classroom guidance on digital literacy, financial literacy, emotion regulation, self-control, and consumption decision-making. For students with high online shopping addiction scores and low psychological well-being, individual or group counseling can explore behavioral triggers, the psychological function of shopping, adaptive coping alternatives, and the six dimensions of psychological well-being. Such an approach aims not only to reduce shopping behavior but also to strengthen the psychological resources underlying healthier digital behavior.

Online Shopping Addiction by Gender

The gender pattern was more pronounced for online shopping addiction. Among female students, 53 of 122 (43%) were in the high category, whereas 18 of 83 males (22%) were high. Conversely, the low category was more common among males (37%) than females (27%). Thus, in this sample, the high online shopping addiction category was descriptively more prevalent among female students.

This pattern is consistent with Unubol et al. (2022) and Perez de Albeniz-Garrote et al. (2021), who reported psychological and gender-related patterns in problematic or compulsive shopping, including higher compulsive buying among female adolescents. Shopping behavior may be connected to emotional, social, and symbolic-consumption functions. However, these explanations should not be interpreted as evidence that females are inherently more vulnerable to online shopping addiction. Other research shows that gender effects are not consistent across all digital behaviors. Li et al. (2021), for example, found gender moderation for some relationships between self-control and Internet addiction but not uniformly across indicators. Recent research on online buying behavior has likewise shown that gender differences are not necessarily significant

across all forms of digital purchasing. Therefore, the present gender pattern should be interpreted as sample-specific descriptive evidence rather than a population-level generalization.

The difference in proportions can nevertheless guide more detailed counseling assessment. Relevant factors include mood modification through shopping, peer pressure, exposure to digital promotions, materialism, impulsivity, self-control, and psychological distress. This approach is consistent with Griffiths' (2005) biopsychosocial view, in which addictive behavior emerges from interacting psychological and contextual factors rather than gender alone.

The main implication is not to create gender-exclusive programs but to ensure that assessment and intervention consider each student's psychological experience and digital-use pattern. Individual or group counseling may help high-scoring students identify shopping triggers, develop self-regulation strategies, and build more adaptive coping alternatives.

Psychological Well-Being by Gender

The gender-based descriptive analysis showed that 70 of 122 female students (57%) were in the low psychological well-being category, compared with 44 of 83 male students (53%). In the high category, 19 females (16%) and 18 males (22%) were classified as high. Descriptively, the low category was somewhat more common among females, whereas the high category was somewhat more common among males. However, these patterns should not be interpreted as statistically significant gender differences because no inferential gender comparison was conducted.

The finding requires careful interpretation. Psychological well-being is multidimensional, and differences in category proportions do not automatically mean that one gender has poorer overall psychological functioning. Ryff (1989) emphasized that the six dimensions of psychological well-being may develop differently across individuals. Future analyses should therefore examine self-acceptance, autonomy, environmental mastery, positive relations, personal growth, and purpose in life separately rather than relying only on total scores.

The descriptive pattern can also be connected to the literature on digital behavior and self-regulation. Li et al. (2021) found that gender can moderate some relationships between self-control and Internet addiction, although the moderation is not uniform across indicators. Because the present study did not test gender differences or moderation inferentially, it cannot establish a gender mechanism. Nevertheless, gender-based descriptive information may help counselors avoid a one-size-fits-all approach and consider individual psychological needs.

The practical implication is that gender should be used as contextual information rather than as a basis for labeling. Counseling programs can be universal for all students and followed by responsive services for students identified through individual assessment.

Students' Online Shopping Addiction

Online shopping addiction was the most prominent descriptive finding. Of the 205 students, 58 (28.3%) were in the low category, 30 (14.6%) in the moderate category, and 117 (57.1%) in the high category. These percentages were recalculated from the frequencies reported in the source manuscript because the original percentages were inconsistent with N = 205. The high category therefore included more than half of the respondents. However, a high score on a research scale should not be equated with a clinical diagnosis of buying-shopping disorder. In this study, online shopping addiction should be understood as a difficult-to-control online shopping tendency measured by the research instrument.

The finding is relevant to Griffiths' (2005) components model of addiction, which includes salience, mood modification, tolerance, withdrawal, conflict, and relapse. In online shopping, purchasing may become cognitively dominant, be used to alter mood, increase in intensity, and eventually interfere with other areas of life. Roberts and Pirog (2013) linked materialism and impulsiveness with technological addictions, while Rose and Dhandayudham (2014) explained that Internet characteristics such as accessibility, convenience, anonymity, and continuous purchasing stimuli may facilitate problematic online shopping.

The result should also be considered alongside Erzincanlı et al. (2024). Their study showed positive effects of anxiety and depression on online shopping addiction and a negative effect of financial attitude. Thus, problematic online shopping cannot be explained solely as a consumption or financial-literacy issue. Psychological conditions and self-regulation are also relevant. A meta-

analysis by Li et al. (2021) found a negative association between self-control and Internet addiction in general, highlighting the importance of self-regulation in problematic digital behavior. This suggests that counseling interventions should not merely prohibit online shopping but should also strengthen self-control, emotion regulation, digital literacy, and financial literacy.

For high school students, the high category warrants further assessment. Students with high scores should be assessed for shopping frequency, psychological function of shopping, impulse control, financial consequences, family conflict, and interference with academic activities. Such assessment is preferable to immediately labeling students as "addicted."

Students' Psychological Well-Being

The findings show that students' psychological well-being tended to be low. Of the 205 students, 118 (57.6%) were classified as low, 54 (26.3%) as moderate, and only 33 (16.1%) as high. Thus, more than half of the respondents had not reached an optimal level of psychological functioning according to the study categorization. This finding should be interpreted within adolescent development, a period characterized by academic demands, identity formation, changing social relationships, and the development of future goals. Prihartini et al. (2023) identified psychological well-being in adolescents as a construct associated with multiple developmental and environmental factors. In Ryff's (1989) framework, psychological well-being is not simply happiness; it includes self-acceptance, positive relations with others, autonomy, environmental mastery, purpose in life, and personal growth. The predominance of the low category may therefore indicate that some students experience difficulty in one or more of these dimensions.

This finding can also be understood through the developmental perspectives of Rogers and Erikson used in the original manuscript. Rogers (1961) emphasized openness to experience, authenticity, and continued growth toward optimal functioning. Erikson (1968), meanwhile, positioned adolescence within the identity versus role confusion stage. During this stage, developing identity, social acceptance, and a sense of direction are central developmental tasks. Low psychological well-being should therefore not be viewed merely as a temporary emotional condition but also as an indication that some students may need support in developing self-acceptance, autonomy, positive relationships, environmental mastery, personal growth, and life purpose.

For school counseling, these findings indicate the need for preventive and promotive services that strengthen psychological well-being rather than focusing only on problems after they become severe. Classroom guidance can help students identify personal strengths, develop life goals, manage environmental demands, and build healthy social relationships. Psychological well-being can therefore serve as an important indicator in school counseling needs assessment.

Conlusion

This study found a statistically significant negative relationship between psychological well-being and online shopping addiction among 205 Grade 11 students at SMA Negeri 3 Medan ($r = -.454$, $p < .001$). Students with higher psychological well-being tended to show lower online shopping addiction. Psychological well-being was low for 118 students (57.6%), moderate for 54 (26.3%), and high for 33 (16.1%). Online shopping addiction was low for 58 students (28.3%), moderate for 30 (14.6%), and high for 117 (57.1%), based on recalculation from the reported frequencies. Descriptively, the high online shopping addiction category was more common among female than male students. The findings support counseling services that strengthen psychological well-being, self-regulation, digital literacy, and healthy consumption decision-making. However, the association cannot be interpreted causally because the study used a cross-sectional correlational design.

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