Online escapism in relation to users' e-cart abandonment behaviour.

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Abstract

Escapism is a crucial motivation that persuades users to engage in different online activities. The aim of the current study is to review the existing literature on escapism in relation to users' virtual cart abandonment. The current study reviewed several research papers on escapism in relation to users' e-cart abandonment behaviour. The critical assessment revealed several methodological deficiencies and issues in the existing literature on escapism in relation to users' virtual cart abandonment behaviour. The current study first presents a chronological literature review on the escapism in relation to users' e-cart abandonment behaviour, then its critical assessment, and future research agenda.

Introduction

To escape reality, people involve in different activities such as reading books, watching movies, playing sports and so on. The internet has proven a perfect tool for escaping reality and occupying time. People use the internet to escape reality by reading online, watching online videos, communicating with others, and forming relationships through social networking sites. Several past studies found escapism as an important motivation for using internet. According to Hastall users desire to fight boredom or escape reality are two important factors behind the extensive use of media such as the internet. Various past studies examined the relationship between escapism and user engagement in online activities. Most of these studies assessed the relationship between escapism and users' engaging in online gaming. For instance, investigated the relationship between escapism and outcomes of online gaming. He found that individuals with high level of stress or low self-esteem consider online gaming as a coping strategy. identified that online gamers with high level of actual-ideal self-discrepancy have higher levels of depression and possesses higher levels of escapism tendency. Such online gamers engage in pathological gaming behaviour. Reported the twofold consequences of escapism: to forget the ongoing conflict in lives. In other words, for emotional change online gamers concentrate on the game because they enjoy their in-game character to dissociate, forgetting about the time because gamers spend too much time in playing games and don't realize how much time is going by. Identified after a long day at work, playing computer games can be a way to relax and feel better, have fun, or escape from reality. found that eSports, providing a means of escape from routine life activities as other forms of media and esports [1].

Some past studies investigated the relationship between escapism and users' participation in social networking sites. They found escapism as a crucial predictor of using social networking sites. Similarly, few such as investigated the impact of social escapism on social networking sites' consumers'

perceptions of advertising appearing on such websites. The current study reviews the existing literature escapism in relation to users' e-cart abandonment. The users buy goods online through online shopping carts in the world of e-commerce online shopping cart abbreviated to e-cart. E-commerce retailers use different names for an electronic shopping cart. Gap virtual store entitle 'your bag', e-store of Amazon uses the word 'your shopping cart' Apple virtual store uses the term 'Cart' and Zara e-store uses the word 'Shopping bag'. However, they all are mentioned with the alike virtual cart tools. Electronic carts are virtual spaces that exist on ecommerce shopping sites and are provided with a similar purpose as on-ground shopping carts to assist customers in gathering and store items for imminent purchase. People use e-cart for online shopping from e-web store, e-store, or e-shop. E-cart software is used during online shopping session and online shoppers used this software for placing their shopping items into the virtual cart. Before checkout, this software calculates the total cost for order includes all taxes, handling, and shipping costs [2].

Despite the increasing trend of digital buying, there are various factors for instance escapism that give rise to online shopping cart abandonment. Abandoning the virtual shopping cart is the most serious problem faced by the e-retailer because they lose their sales. Statistically indicates globally 69.57% average rate of cart abandonment. Also, because of the online shopping cart abandonment most of the electronic commerce brands have lose up to $18 billion in revenue each year. This is the biggest challenge for online retailers is how significantly reduces the online shopping cart abandonment rate and thereby boost their sales [3].

found when individuals are unable or unwilling to tackle directly highly distressing problems, they escape themselves from everyday life into the world of internet. Defined e-cart abandonment as users' placement of product items in a virtual cart without buying them during the e-cart engagement session. This review will help e-marketers in designing effective online

business strategies. Specifically, it will guide them how to stop users from abandoning the e-cart [4].

Methodology

To review the literature on escapism in relation to users' online e-cart abandonment 90 articles were accessed from databases such as Emerald, J-STORE, EBSCO. Particularly articles from marketing journals such as "Journal of Consumer Research", "International Journal of Business and Administration Research", "Journal of Business Research", "Journal of Consumer Marketing", "Journal of Product and Brand Management", "Journal of Marketing Management and Logistics", Journal of Anaesthesiology", "Journal of Computer-mediated Communication", "Journal of Communication", "International Journal of Academic Research in Management", were review. However, after initial screening only eight papers were found relevant to the issue being addressed in the current research.

Literature Review

Online escapism and -Ecart Abandonment

Escapism is an important motivation which persuades users to use the internet and e-commerce websites. Several studies found internet is an important platform for escaping reality. Found when individuals are unable or unwilling to tackle directly highly distressing problems, they escape themselves from everyday life into the world of internet. Described individuals escape the aversive conscious state of mind when they fail to meet the quality level of life simply by diverting their attentions away from themselves. Defined escapism as alleviating stress and mundaneness of everyday life. The current study reviews existing literature on escapism in relation with e-cart abandonment. Defined e-cart abandonment as users' placement of product items in a virtual cart without buying them during the e-cart engagement session. Similarly, described that when escapists use e-cart they plan to purchase, however, they fail to maintain the interest to complete the transaction and abandon it [5].

investigated to know the reasons why users place items in their virtual cart with or without purchase intentions. Close and Kinney found that the users who use the virtual cart for fun, entertainment or to escape boredom have likelihood of abandoning the virtual cart. The author identified entertainment or to escape boredom-based motivation resulting in decreased the frequency of e-cart use, rather than increase. Identified the main factors to e-cart abandonment and suggested reason related to cognition and behaviour behind non-buying. They found that users add items in an e-cart even without immediate purchase but adding items in a virtual cart for the purpose of entertainment or boredom release from this activity. The authors found that using the virtual cart for entertainment or escape boredom has a favourable influence on e-cart abandonment and unfavourable influence to the frequency of buying behaviour [6].

Assessed the relationship between entertainment value and users' e-cart engagement. Identified that the users use a virtual shopping cart for the purpose of entertainment value such as for escaping reality, alleviating bored and to have fun. The authors further found that more users use a virtual cart for the purpose of entertainment value, imminent are the chances to abandon the e-cart at the end of the activity. Identified the shopping cart abandonment motivations and behaviour. Wildeboer characterized the hedonic users use virtual cart for entertainment and experience. The author specified the hedonic shopper and functional shopper have different shopping search behaviour. The author found hedonic users engage in browsing of e-commerce websites when they use virtual cart for entertainment or escapist purpose and the chances of the shopping session end rather than engaging in buying process [7].

Studied the factors which lead to abandonment of e-cart and placing the product orders online and test the moderating effect of perceived risk. They discovered the that utilitarian factors, influence online shopping and while hedonic factors such as escapism lead to e-cart abandonment. investigated the reasons behind the non-buyer behaviour of online consumers. found the hedonic attitude is less significantly related to e-cart abandonment over the other factors. The author revealed that the hedonic activities are basically based on two motivators of human action, pleasurable experiences and eliminate pain and due to hedonic motivation consumers, adding items from different online sites, it may or may not have any purchase intention [8].

Investigated the relationship between five major factors and online shopping cart abandonment and test the mediating effect of pre-decisional conflict. found these five factors have a significant relationship with e-cart abandonment and it is mediated with pre-decisional conflict. The author identified that the e-cart abandonment is more likely to occur for entertainment purpose or escape boredom use online shopping cart [9].

They disclosed the psychological mechanism working behind "mobile shopping cart" abandonment. Found that emotional ambivalence affects virtual cart abandonment. Users positive and negative feelings are called emotional ambivalence. To cope with negative feelings users, use e-cart. Once users' negative feelings are reduced, they abandon the e-cart and exit the website. The review of existing studies on the escapism in relation to users' e-cart abandonment behaviour is summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. *Literature review on scapism in relation with e-cart cart abandonment behaviour.*

Authors	Date	Objectives.	Variables	Method	Findings	Limitations	Future Research Directions
Huang,	2018	To know mental process	Attribute conflicts (IV),	Online survey	Emotional ambivalence	Only examined mobile	Other emotional states,

Author	Year	Objective	Variables	Method	Findings	Limitations	Future
Korfiatis, Chang		underlying mobile shopping cart abandonment	Interpersonal conflicts (IV), Self-efficacy (IV), Emotional ambivalence (Mediating Variable), Abandonment (DV), Used cognition-affect-behavior (CAB) model		leads e-cart abandonment	shopping behavior. Considered a specific shopping episode	i.e. fear, frustration, confusion. Personality characeristics, e.g. risk-taking propensity. Consider various types of motivation
Erdil	2018	To examine the relationship between five major factors with online shopping cart abandonment	Research Purpose (IV), Entertainment Purpose (IV), Perceived Cost (IV), Perceived Risk (IV), Transaction Inconvenience (IV), Pre-decisional Conflict (Mediating Variable), And Shopping Cart Abandonment (DV).	Convenience sampling	IVs have a significant relationship with e-cart abandonment, and it is mediated by pre-decision conflict	Self-reported survey data. Small sample.	larger sample size. Real click-stream data
Arumugam,	2017	To identify the primary factors and to measure the	Information Architecture, Hedonic	Convenience sampling			
Parasuraman		reasons behind the non-buyer behavior of online users.	Cynical Attitude (IVs), e-cart abandonment,				
Kritika, Rajini			Hedonic factor, utilitarian factors, perceived risk, e-cart abandonment	Online survey	Hedonic factors such as escapism lead to e-cart abandonment.	Self-reported online survey	Click-stream modelling, experiments, and depth interviews
Wildeboer	2014	To Identify the shopping cart abandonment motivations and behavior that occur before the checkout stage.	Shopping motivation, Shopping search behaviour (IVs), e-cart abandonment (DV)	online survey	When Shopping cart used for entertainment purpose or escape boredom the chances of shopping session end without purchasing and leads to abandoning the online shopping cart	Self-reported survey data. Sample was limited on 21-30 age distribution	Click-stream modelling, experiments, and depth interviews. More age distribution of the study sample
Close, Kinney, Benusa	2012	To investigate the motivations behind virtual cart, use and abandonment	Proposed conceptual framework of virtual cart use and abandonment.	Conceptual study	Shoping cart use for entertainment or alleviating boredom or escape from reality positively affect the online shopping cart abandonment	Not empirically verified model	To test Model
Kinney,	2010	To Identify the main factors behind e-cart abandonment	Entertainment values, Concern about total costs,	Online survey.	Using e-cart for entertainment or escape boredom is	Self-reported survey data	Test model in multiple contexts.

Close			Privacy and security concern (IVs)		positively related to e-cart abandonment		Click-stream Model experimental testing.
			e-cart abandonment,				In depth interviews
			Decision to buy from offline (DVs).				
Close, Kinney	2010	To Investigate users' motivations to use e-cart with or without buying intention	Current purchase intention (IV),	Online survey	Entertainment or escape boredom decreases the frequency of e-cart use or putting items in their cart without purchase intention leads to abandoning e-cart.	Sample from U.S. only Self-reported data	Use large sample size from different countries,
			Price promotions (IV),				Click-stream modelling, experiments, & in-depth interviews.
			Entertainment purpose (IV),				
			Organization intent (IV),				
			Research and information search (IV),				
			Frequency of e-cart use (MV), Frequency of online buying (DV)				

Critical Assessment

The aim of the current study was to review the existing literature on escapism in relation to users' e-cart abandonment behaviour. After reviewing several research papers on escapism and users' virtual cart activity only eight articles were found pertinent to the issue discussed in the current study. This section of the text presents the critical assessment of those ten research papers [10].

Most of the previous studies linked escapism to user e-cart abandonment in a vague manner. For instance, treated escapism as a part of the emotional ambivalence. Both escapism and emotional ambivalence are theoretically two separate concepts. Escapism is defined as alleviating stress caused by social issues and problems. To the contrary, view emotional ambivalence as the collection of both favourable and unfavourable emotional state towards an object. This ambiguity in conceptualization makes it hard to comprehend the relationship between escapism and users' e-cart abandonment phenomenon [11]. Similarly, assessed the influence of escapism in relation to e-card abandonment. However, Erdil examined escapism along with other factors such as fun, enjoy seeking and escapism, relieving boredom, and experience feelings of joy in a single variable labelled as entertainment. Such unidimensional variables do not present a clear picture of the phenomenon under investigation. it cannot be decided whether users who use e-cart abandon it because of escapism motivation, relieving boredom, or experience feelings of joy. They did not use proper conceptualization and to explain the relationship between escapism and users' virtual shopping cart abandonment. Therefore, the proper 'construct building' of escapism in relation to users' e-cart abandonment is an important issue which researchers need to address. Researchers need to properly define the escapism construct by treating it as a separate reality without mixing it with other factors. It would enable researchers to establish a clear relationship between escapism and users' e-cart abandonment.

Conceptualized escapism in a single variable labelled as entertainment along with other variables and linked it to users' e-cart abandonment. Mixed up escapism with factors such as out of boredom, experience enjoyment seeking, pleasure seeking and arousal in a single variable named as entertainment. Combining many themes in a single variable makes it difficult to deduce that which one of them has a relationship with users' e-cart abandonment. Assessed the impact of escapism on e-cart abandonment [12]. However, these studies combined escapism with other factors in a single variable labelled as hedonic motivation. Combined escapism with other factors such as entertainment seeking, fantasy and enjoyment in a single variable labelled as hedonic attitude. Combined escapism with other factors such as entertainment experience, educational experience, esthetic in a single variable named as hedonic shopping motivation [13].

Some researchers such as classified escapism into three categories. Those categories are: sociological escapism, social-psychological escapism, and individual-psychological escapism. Social escapism is an individual's wanting to make social problem more tolerable by engaging him or herself in activities like online shopping. Social-psychological escapism is an individual's inclination to compensate the lack of social interactions. Individual-psychological escapism relates to an individual's personality characteristics. Till date, no study attempted to relate these types of escapism to users' virtual shopping cart abandonment. This is another important area of escapism, which needs to be assessed in relation to users' e-cart abandonment. In addition, none of the studies conducted on escapism in relation to users' e-cart abandonment endeavoured to investigate the impact of different escapism dimensions on users' e-cart abandonment behaviour. Proposed two dimensions of escapism, one is self-expansion and second is self-suppression. Self-expansion is a temporary escape from self to experience the positive outcomes derived from

promotion focused activity engagement. Self-suppression engagement is a temporary removal of negative thoughts and emotions. Intention to suppress emotions is self-suppression and getting immersed in an activity for positive experience is self-expansion. Both these dimensions may have a different influence on users to abandon e-cart after using it. According to identifying multidimensionality of constructs helps to understand differing effects of various aspects of a construct on the dependent variable. Underlying dimensions of a construct produce different perceptions and behaviours. Thus, it is an important issue which researchers need to explore [14].

Some previous studies used convenience sampling (a type of non-probability sampling) for data collection. The data collected by using convenience sampling cannot be generalized to the entire population. Therefore, future studies should examine this issue by probability sampling the data collect by using probability sampling can be generalized to the entire population [15].

Few studies conducted an online survey for data collection to examine the relationship between escapisms and users' online shopping cart abandonment. However, the respondent selected in these studies was not clear. In other words, they did not clearly mention which sampling procedure they applied. Paper-based self-administered surveys should focus in future as well. In addition, most of the previous studies used self-reported data instead actual users behavioural data. The self-reported data indicate user's subjective opinion, not the facts. Suggested the future studies should conduct click-stream modelling experiment and depth interviews to identify the real situation.

Previous studies did not elucidate the psychological mechanism which shows all the cognitive processes which moves users to use an e-cart to escape reality. Furthermore, no study attempted to explain the nature of motive or drive behind escapism, which leads to the abandonment of the virtual cart at the end of the activity. In addition, earlier studies did not present any mechanism which indicates how firms can stop users from abandoning the virtual cart.

Future Research Agenda

Escapism is a powerful motivating force which drives users to the internet and e-commerce websites. The current study reviewed the existing literature on escapism in relation to users' e-cart abandonment. Till date, scare research has been conducted on escapism in relation to users' e-cart abandonment. The critical assessment of the existing literature revealed several issues which need to be addressed. First, previous studies blended escapism with other factors in a

single variable which created conceptual ambiguity in the definition of the escapism. This ambiguity in conceptualization makes it hard to comprehend the relationship between escapism and users' e-cart abandonment phenomenon. Therefore, future studies should properly conceptualize escapism in a separate variable so that its influence on users' e-cart abandonment can be properly detected. Second, in past studies there is no consensus on the theoretical model used to

rationalize the relationship between escapism and users' e-cart abandonment behaviour. This represents the lack of common conceptual framework. Therefore, future research should use established theories and build an integrative model to explain the relationship between escapism and users' e-cart abandonment behaviour. This will help researchers to make correct sense of the empirical data. Third, some researchers such as classified escapism into three categories. Those categories are: sociological escapism, social-psychological escapism, and individual-psychological escapism. Till date, no study attempted to relate these types of escapism to users' virtual shopping cart abandonment. Future studies should take up this issue. proposed two dimensions of escapism i.e. self-expansion and second is self-suppression. So far, no study attempted to relate them to users' e-cart abandonment. Researchers should address this issue in future. Furthermore, most of the past studies applied convenience sampling of selecting respondents. The findings of such studies are not free of limitations. Therefore, future studies should investigate the relationship between escapism and users' e-cart abandonment by using probability sampling procedure.

Conclusion

The objective of the current study was to review existing literature on escapism in relation to users' e-cart abandonment behaviour. The critical assessment of the literature on escapism in relation to users' e-cart abandonment revealed several theoretical and methodological deficiencies which researchers will need to address in the future studies.

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