



## Influence of Collective Self-Esteem on Online Shopping Behavior of American Youth

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**Background.** Individual's self-esteem and self-identity is affected by group memberships and affiliations: social groups like families, teams, cliques, schools, cities, and countries (Abrams & Hogg, 1988; Crocker, Luhtanen, Blaine, & Broadnax, 1994). The collective self-esteem (CSE) scale developed by Luhtanen and Crocker (1992) measures individuals' self-esteem with reference to their interactions with social groups and its influence on their self-identity. The CSE scale consists of four sub-scales: membership esteem, private CSE, public CSE, and importance to identity. These sub-scales illustrate the importance individuals give to social groups, membership in social groups, and how this membership improves their social image. The social identity theory, which states that people behave according to group norms (Tajfel, 1978), forms the basis for the present study to examine the influence of CSE on online shopping behavior.

Based on the extant literature, it is evident that consumers' preference to shop through online shopping websites is affected by various functional (e.g., convenience, ease of use, perceived usefulness, efficiency, risk, and security) and hedonic attributes (e.g., enjoyment, experiential dimensions, website atmospherics, and design) (Chen & Barnes, 2007; Cunningham, Gerlach, Harper, & Young, 2005; Fiore, Lee, & Kunz, 2003; Koo & Ju, 2010; Liao & Shi, 2009; Wolfenbarger & Gilly, 2001). Although there has been a surge in online shopping research, there is a limited understanding about the CSE and its influence on online shopping behavior. Therefore, the purpose of the present research is to investigate the influence of CSE on American youth's online shopping behavior.

**Method.** An online survey method was used to collect data. A total of 1,538 usable surveys were gathered from students (age 18-30) enrolled at one large U.S. Midwestern university. The survey included 5-point Likert-type scales with items adapted from existing collective self-esteem (CSE) scale (Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992) with acceptable reliabilities ( $\alpha > .70$ ) and online shopping behavior items. Demographic questions were also included. SPSS 17.0 was used to run descriptive statistics and exploratory factor analysis (EFA); MPlus 6.0 was used to run confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and structural equation modeling (SEM).

**Results.** The sample consisted of mostly female respondents (63%), students between the ages of 18 and 24 years (92%), single students (95%), and undergraduates (79%). Ninety-eight percent of respondents had previously purchased products online. EFA with oblique rotation was run on the online shopping behavior items. Six factors were identified using the eigenvalue  $> 1.0$  criteria. Items loading above .50 on a factor were retained and some items that cross-loaded were deleted. Next, CFA was run on the measurement model consisting of CSE (four-factor) and online shopping behavior (six-factor) to ensure convergent validity. The CFA indicated that all factor loadings were statistically significant ( $p < .001$ ). The measurement model and the subsequent structural equation model had reasonably good model fit ( $\chi^2 = 3202.19$ ,  $df = 620$ ,  $p < .000$ , CFI = .90, RMSEA = .052, SRMR = .053). Based on standardized path coefficients and

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significance levels, membership esteem positively influenced three online shopping behavior factors: reliability, authenticity, and accuracy of websites ( $\beta = 0.19, p = 0.028$ ), difficulty level of shopping websites ( $\beta = 0.29, p = 0.001$ ), and online shopping benefits of discounts and price offers ( $\beta = 0.20, p = 0.039$ ). Public CSE also positively influenced online shopping benefits of discounts and price offers ( $\beta = 0.25, p = 0.004$ ). Other relationships were insignificant.

Conclusions. Findings suggest that two CSE factors (i.e., membership esteem and public CSE) positively influence the American youth's online shopping behavior. Individuals with greater membership esteem perceive shopping websites as reliable, authentic, accurate, and easy to understand. Individuals with greater membership esteem and public CSE take advantage of online shopping benefits like discounts and price offers. The research findings contribute to a better understanding of CSE and its influence on online shopping behavior. Future research can test CSE in the context of individuals' affiliation with specific social groups. The present study can be expanded to general U.S. population as well as by testing the present model across cultures.

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