

Relationship of Internet Addiction with Loneliness and Depression among High School Students

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Abstract Internet plays an important role in the lives of young people today. The aim of this study was to determine the correlation between loneliness and depression with internet addiction in female students of Torbat-e-Jaam city in Iran. In this descriptive correlational study, 150 students were selected by convenience sampling. Data collection was carried out through "Loneliness scale", "Internet addiction test" and "Bech Depression Laventory". Data was analysed by SPSS/20. Results showed a significant correlation between loneliness and depression with internet addiction ($P < 0/001$). Loneliness and depression are also capable of explaining 0/184% of internet addiction in students. In the assessment of internet addiction, it is necessary to consider the contributing factors of loneliness and depression. And psychologists need to consider these issues in their interventions.

Keywords Internet Addiction, Loneliness, Depression, Students

1. Introduction

While internet is spreading throughout the world and getting more available for much more people, it has caused a new kind of addiction, named internet addiction, which is the growing problem of this century. Like the other kinds of addiction this brings symptoms of depression, irritability, agitation, decrease of social interaction and education (Shaghasemi, 2006). Douglas et al. (2008) define it as a kind of extreme compulsive use that if the person is deprived, he gets too irritable and bad tempered. Practically, this kind of addiction has social, psychological and affective side effects on occupation and life style of the person (Yong & Tung, 2007).

Riding and Gefen (2008) explain one the main reasons of this addiction to attract Social support, friendship and joy, which causes interactional, occupational, family and marriage problems. These days internet is an inseperable part of life for the young people. Kuh and Vesper (2001) show in their study that 80% of the last grade students at high school use internet.

Loneliness is a world wide problem that all the people have experienced to some extent. (Hajjati et al, 2012) Feeling lonely is a kind of awkward experience of being different from others and causes several behavioural

problems such as sadness, anger, depression and withdrawal (Salehi and seyf, 2012). Perlman (2004) explains loneliness as a psychological condition due to qualitative and quantitative Lack of social interactions. A person feels lonely when he doesn't get enough intimacy or excitement in his relationships in any age.

Young and Rodgers (2009) indicated that loneliness is related to decrease of social interactions in the real life due to extreme use of internet. Kraut et al (1998) also indicated that using internet ends in decrease of family and local interactions. Internet is related to withdrawal from real life. Sanders et al (2000) Proved in their study on adolescents that the more internet use the more depression and social withdrawal occurs. Anderson (2001) states that a person chooses and uses internet as a way to escape real problems and feelings of boredom, helplessness, anxiety and depression. According to the important role of internet today it is a necessity to work on it. Especially the adolescents who have grown up with smart phones are much more prone to its side effects. Therefore, this study has worked on the relationship between feeling lonely and depressed with internet addiction in the female students of high schools in Torbat-e-Jaam county, Khorasan Province in Iran.

2. Materials and Methods

This was a descriptive – Coefficient and cross-sectional study. The statistical population was all the female students

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of Torbat-e-Jaam city in Iran who had attended the classes in Spring 2017. 150 students were chosen by convenience sampling.

Participants filled three questionnaires including:

Young Internet Addiction Test: Kimberly Yung developed his 20 item questionnaire based on symptoms of internet addiction diagnosis and the likert scale. The total score was 20-100, 20-30 was moderate dependency, 40-69 extensive dependency and 70-100 was sever dependency. (Young, 1998) Some researchers such as Widyanto and McMurrin (2004) used factor analysis and Correlation coefficient to assess the validity of this test. In the factor Analysis 6 factors including priority, too much use, neglect of occupational responsibilities, lack of control, neglect of social life and anticipation were used. Kim et al (2007) used Cronbach's alpha 0/9 to assess the validity of this test.

Loneliness scale: This 38 questions scale includes three subscales of loneliness due to family relationships, loneliness due to friendly relationships and the affective signs of loneliness. The total score of this scale is 38 to 190. Getting the less score means feeling more lonely. Dehshiri et al (2008) used Cronbach's alpha and intrarater method to assess the reliability of the test. They measured the total Cronbach's alpha 0/91, for the loneliness due to family relationships 0/89, for the friendly relationships 0/88 and for the affective signs 0/79. These numbers indicate the acceptable internal consistency of this scale.

The Beck Depression InventoryII: This inventory consists of 21 questions to assess the severity of depression in adults and adolescents >13 years old, in three dimensions of somatic, Cognitive and behavioral- affective symptoms. The severity of depression is measured based on the Likert scale from 0 to 3 and the total score ranges from 0 to 64 (Dabson and Mohammadkhani, 2007). Dozois et al (1998) reported a favorable reliability and factor structure for this inventory. Beck et al (1996) also measured the internet Consistency 0/91 and the intrarator factor 0/94 for this inventory.

Complete explanation of the study was given to the students and their teachers to get the informed consent to participate in the study. Then the students voluntarily filled the questionnaires.

Data analysis was conducted using the statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20. According to the normal distribution of the date and the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, the Pearson correlation coefficient was used to assess the correlation between variables.

3. Results

The participants were 150 female students of high schools of Torbate-Jaam city. The age range of the students was between 13 to 18 and the mean age was 16/15 years and the student deviation was 0/922. The descriptive information of the variables of the study is presented in

table 1.

Table 1. The descriptive indices of variables (internet addiction loneliness and depression.)

Variable	Mean	Standard deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Internet Addiction	31/70	12/09	20	73
Loneliness	22/91	15/64	42	181
Depression	18/10	12/39	2	62

The results of correlation test showed a positive significant relation between internet addiction and loneliness ($r=0/284$, $P<0/001$). The other results of the study showed that there is a positive significant relation between internet addiction and depression. ($r=0/422$, $P<0/001$). By the increase in one variable, the other variable also increases.

Table 2. The correlation between loneliness and depression with internet addiction

	Loneliness	depression
Correlation of addiction To internet	0/284	0/422
Significance	0/001	0/001

The results of the regression testing also showed that the two variables of loneliness and depression anticipate 0/184 percent of internet addiction deviation in the female students of the high schools in Torbat-e-Jaam. The results of the regression testing are presented in table 3.

Table 3. The results of the regression testing

Model	R	R ²	Df	Mean square	F	Significance
Regression	0/429	0/184	2	34/199	16/319	0/001

4. Discussion

The results of this study showed a positive significant relationship between loneliness and internet addiction, which is consistent with the results reported by Bozoglan et al. (2013), Rafat et al (2013) and Zarbakhah Bahri et al (2012) Loneliness Consists of some important components, such as the undesirable feeling of a mate loss, the negative aspects of lost relationships and loss of a relationship with another person (Jong-Gierveld and Kamphuls, 1985). So, Loneliness comes from a deep need of human being to belonging, which might be permanent or temporary (Asher and Poquette, 2003).

Loneliness happens when a gap occurs between the favorable relationship expected and the current relationships of the person (Salehi and Seyf, 2012). Loneliness is an uncomfortable affective experience. Though, it is affected by cognitive factors, that is the person may think that his relationships do not meet his expectations (Dehshiri et al,

2008).

Those who feel too much lonely, have a low self esteem caused by the lack of effective and favorable relationships. They doubt about their abilities. They are sensitive to affective and emotional conditions. And they behave with shame, embarrassment, anxiety and low assertiveness and risk taking (Perlman, 2004). In this condition, they avoid social and interpersonal relationships and so they use internet and cyberspace as an alternative and defense mechanism to fill up the loneliness.

They feel better in internet and so get more attracted to it and gradually become addicted.

Other results of the study showed a positive significant relationship between internet addiction and depression. This is consistent with the reports by Sanders et al (2000), Bhat and Kawa (2015) and Keum et al (2008). Using internet as a tool to escape the problems, to decrease disappointment, anxiety and depression or to find vertical friends to achieve the magic goals which are unachievable in the real life, might be a factor in development of the addiction. Depressed people gradually lose their motivation to communicate with the real life and to do their schedules and responsibilities. This condition gradually becomes awkward, painful and intolerable, so forces the person to find a way to change or to decrease the pressure.

5. Conclusions

Since these people usually suffer from the lack of healthy and sufficient relationships and also lack of motivation to find these in real life, they are attracted to cyberspace as a fascinating alternative. Some features of the cyberspace such as the lack of need to encounter real problems, visual attractions and easy access to several information, causes the depressed people to get used to it and gradually become addicted.

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