

**Prevalence of Internet Addiction Among Social Sciences Students at Abdul Wali Khan
University Mardan**

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Abstract

The present study is designed with the aim to investigate prevalence of Internet addiction and causative factors of internet addiction among social sciences students. Use of Internet has now become a need of everyday life for majority of people including students. Students being innovative constitute major portion of internet users therefore it is pertinent to study internet usage amongst students. This study was conducted in main campus of Abdul Wali Khan University Mardan. A sample of 200 respondents was selected through convenient sampling. Kimberly Young's internet addiction scale was used for measurement of internet addiction. Major reasons leading to internet overuse were educational and social media usage. Results shows that 35% students were internet addicts and 50 % were possible internet addicts. This is alarming that such percentages of students are addicts and possible internet addicts. It is a fact that Internet addiction definitely affects the psychological, physical and social life of students. It also affects students' academic performance. Based on our investigation, it is recommended that students should compartmentalize their time properly. University management also needs to reconsider full time provision of internet facility to students. Parents should have a check and balance on their children use of internet.

Key Words: Internet Addiction, University Students, Effects. Academic, psychological problems

Introduction

Internet consumption is considered as an important part of today's digitized world for major portion of population. Usage of internet and allied technologies has increased surprisingly throughout the globe. Initially Internet served as a gift for humanity as it enlightened human society by transfer of knowledge, easily availability of information/data required for human well being and development. Along with benefits of internet, increased use of internet

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resulted in certain undesirable things; one of them has been termed as Internet Addiction/disorder. According to Center for Internet Addiction every eighth American is internet addict (Kapahi, 2013).

The Internet was invented in the early 1960s and later on became key tool for communication (Schneider, et al., 2006). From the beginning there is tremendous growth in functions, capacities, access and convenience in use of internet. Multi-functionality of internet encouraged the users for increased use and it became an important part of modern life.

Internet is a mainly used for communication, exchange of information, dissemination of academic knowledge/research, entertainment, and business purposes (Douglas et al., 2006; Byun et al., 2009). Undoubtedly Internet has many positive aspects and advantages however the negative aspects like excessive and problematic use of internet also needs to be researched and explored (Douglas et al., 2006; Frangos and Frangos, 2009). Internet addiction has been termed differently by different sources like pathological internet use, internet overuse, and problematic internet use (Kim, 2008; Morahan-Martin and Schumacher, 2000). Problematic Internet use has negative repercussions like effects on physical health (sleeplessness, headache), psychological health (anxiety and depression), social health (disturbed relations with family and friends) and professional life (Byun et al 2009). Research studies have also ascertained link of internet addiction with students' low GPA, marital life and other areas of social life (Kim, 2008; Young, 1997; Guan, 2009).

Internet Addiction

Internet addiction is defined as a condition in which one is unable to control his/her use of the internet that eventually causes psycho-social, academic and work related problems and difficulties in his/her life (Davis 2001; Young & Rogers, 1998). Internet addiction is that type of addiction that results in a behavioral affiliation to internet (Sadock & Sadock, 2007).

Kimberly Young (1998) initiated research on internet addiction with argument that symptoms and characteristics of internet addiction are similar to those of tobacco/alcohol addiction. She developed a scale for measurement of internet addiction. It consisted of 20 questions on a 5 points Likert scale, and many recent studies have been carried out through this scale. She categorized Internet addiction into 05 types:

- Cyber-sexual addiction (or cyber-porn)
- Cyber-relationship addiction (over-involvement in online relationship)
- Net compulsions (online gambling, online shopping)

- Information overload (compulsive web surfing/searches) and
- Computer addiction (obsessive computer game).

Literature Review

Reasons for Internet Addiction Among University Students

Various studies have been conducted to uncover the reasons that why individuals/ students get addicted to some of the Internet. University students are considered as vulnerable to internet addiction (Nalwa and Anand, 2003; Niemz et al., 2005). Apparent reasons of internet addiction among university students are given below:

1) Availability of free/unstructured time (2) free and uninterrupted supply of Internet(3) less parental monitoring of students' internet use (4) less social contacts in real world (5) Encouragement from faculty to use various online applications for learning (5) Escaping from anxiety and seeking relief in online activities (Young, 2004).

Other studies suggest that excessive users try to meets personal needs like: a sense of belongingness, attaining self-actualization, viewing explicit materials and discussion with friends (Cheung & Lee, 2009; Suler, 2000). Seeking fun and amusement through internet are also reported to be motives for increased and problematic Internet usage (Haridakis & Hanson, 2009; Morahan-Martin & Schumacher, 2000). Other studies have documented that internet addict users are of view that they used Internet for a relaxation, excitement and enjoyable place for social exchange (Johnson & Kaye, 2002). Therefore, it can be assumed that internet addicts find more satisfaction and happiness over Internet interaction than normal Internet users.

Impacts of Internet Addiction

There are several impacts of internet addiction such as low academic achievement, health and personal relationships problems. These are discussed below.

Internet Addiction and Academic Performance

Internet is a good educational tool if used for academic purposes. Students can access books and other study materials on internet. Students get advantage of collaborative learning and virtual learning environment. Besides the advantages of Internet use, negative impacts of its use are also highlighted. A number of researches confirmed internet addiction affects student academic and social life. A research study revealed that academic performance can be assessed from the manner that how students uses internet. More specifically it can be stated that whether students utilize internet for academic purposes or non-academic activities. The

excessive use of the internet for social media results in keeping them awake till midnight and hence affect their concentration in classroom; that results in poor academic achievement (Leung & Lee, 2012).

There is consistency in literature regarding negative impacts of internet addiction on academic performance. It can be stated that addiction to the internet decreases students' academic achievements, declines study habits/times declined, increases absenteeism from classes and skipping examination (Yeap et al., 2016). Other studies reported that Internet addicted students face more problems than non-addicted students. It is also confirmed that longer the time spent on internet, lower are the academic achievements/grades (Mishra et al., 2014). Likewise, another study concluded that students who used internet for longer period so obtained the less marks in final examination (Khan et al., 2016). Similarly a Korean researcher came up with conclusion that students who used the internet for academic purposes got good grades than those students who used internet for social and entertainment activities (Kim, 2011). Also similar findings are reported about negative association of internet addiction and low grades in Malaysian students (Azizah, Marina & Marini, 2013). It is evident from literature that internet addiction badly affects academic performance, poor grades and ultimately dropout from college and universities.

Psychological Impacts of Internet Addiction

Majority of young users who spend most of their free time on internet are reported to have psychological and physical health problems. Some of these problems are Repetitive Strain Injury, Problematic Internet use may be associated with subjective distress, psychiatric disorders and functional impairment (Suissa, 2014). Additionally, various studies ascertained link of Internet addiction with anxiety, loneliness, depression, compulsive behavior self-efficacy (Greenfield, 2012; Murali & George, 2007). Other studies reported that Internet addiction was associated with symptoms of ADHD and depressive disorders (Jahanian & Seifury 2013; Mostafaei & Khalili, 2012).

Physical Health Impacts of Internet Addiction

Internet overuse can lead to certain physical health issues. Some of them are sedentary lifestyles, weight gain and a decline in physical activities/ fitness. Excessive internet use reduces physical activities and hence users get over weighted (Vandelanotte et al. 2009). Other symptoms can include carpal tunnel syndrome, migraine headaches, cervical pain, backache and fatigue. Decline in personal hygiene, eating disorder and insomnia is also associated with internet addiction. Computer Vision Syndrome, sore and itching eyes, dry

eyes and declining eyesight are also linked with excessive internet use (Ranasinghe et al., 2011; Zheng et al. 2016).

Internet Addiction and Social Relations

A number of relationship problems are related to Internet addiction e.g. including disrupted relationship with friends and family, social phobia, marriages related problems, Social alienation, shy, fear of rejection, low self-esteem (Jahanian & Seifury, 2013).

Research Methodology

Study setting

The current study was aimed to measure prevalence of internet addiction among university students at Main campus of Abdul Wali Khan University Mardan. The area is selected purposively while looking to the home University, availability and accessibility of the respondents as there is no funding support for the research from any organization which could facilitate the researchers to get data from other Universities of the country.

Study design

The research design was quantitative and descriptive in nature.

Participants and sampling

The respondents (i.e. students) were both male and female internet users. A samples size of 200 students was selected through convenient sampling method.

Tools of data collection

For socio demographic information and causes of internet use, structured questionnaire was used. Internet addiction scale of Dr. Kimberly Young was used with a slide modification to find out the addiction level of students. The Internet Addiction Test is the first validated and reliable measure of addictive use of the Internet. It is a 20-item questionnaire that measures mild, moderate, and severe levels of Internet Addiction. There were 20 questions with 6 options for each. The scoring for each option was done as follows: F=Not Applicable=0; A = Rarely = 1; B = Occasionally = 2; C=Frequently=3; D = Often = 4; E = Always = 5.

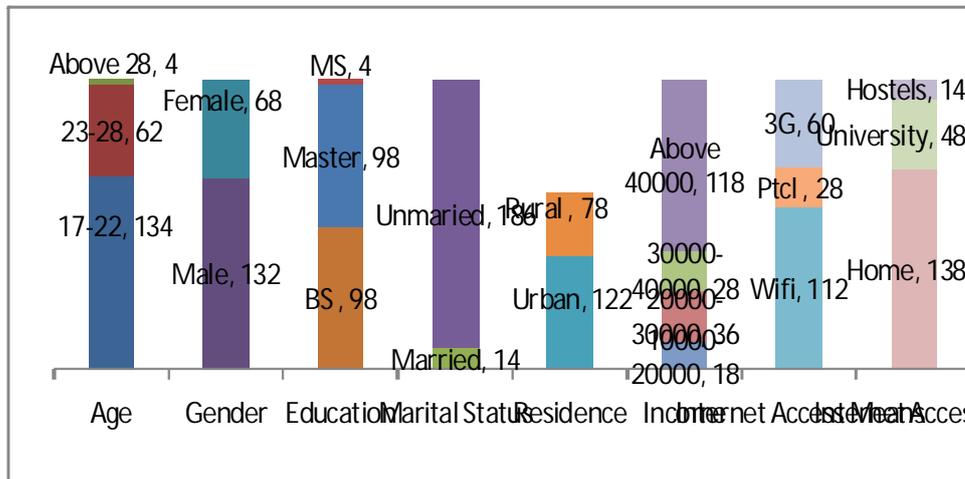
Data analysis

The collected data was analyzed through software SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Science) by calculating simple frequencies and percentages.

Results and Discussion

This section includes tables, its analysis and explanation.

Table no. 1 Socio-Demographic Information of respondents



The above figure shows that 67% respondents belonged to 17-22 age category, 31% belonged to 23-28 age category, while 2% belonged to Above 28 age category, 64% respondents are male while 36% are female, 49% respondents are in BS program, 49% were in Master program while 2% were in MS program, 93% respondents were unmarried, 7% were married, 61% respondents were from urban while 39% were from rural area, 9% respondents parents monthly income were 10000-20000, 18% parents monthly income were 21000-30000, 14% parents monthly income were 31000-40000 while 59% parents monthly were above 40000, 56% respondents accessed internet through Wi-Fi, 14% access through PTCL and 30% access through 3G, The above table shows that 69% respondents use internet at home; 24% use it at university and 7% use it at hostel.

Table No. 2 Reasons for Internet Usage

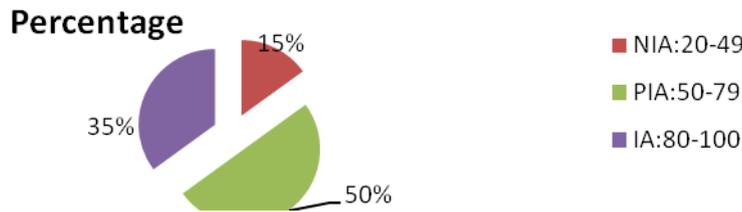
Question	Yes	No
Use of internet for educational purpose	96.0	4.0
Use of internet for social media	83.0	17.0
Use of internet for video calling	52.0	48.0
Use of internet for watching movies	53.0	47.0
Use of internet for online games	24.0	76.0
Use of internet for searching scholarships	52.0	48.0
Use of internet for news	70.0	28.0

Use of internet for online shopping	29.0	71.0
Use of internet for adult sites	28.0	72.0

Explanation

The above table demonstrates that 96% respondents use internet for educational purpose, 83% use it for social media, 52% use it for video calling, 53% use internet for watching movies, 24% use internet for online games, 52% use internet for searching scholarships, 70% use internet for news and 29% use internet for online shopping ; while 4% did not use internet for educational purpose, 17% do not use for social media, 48% do not use for video calling, 46% do not use for watching movies . 76% respondents do not use internet for online games, 48% do not use internet for searching scholarships, 28% do not use internet for news. 71% respondents do not use internet for online shopping while 29% use internet for online shopping, 72% of respondents did not use internet for adult sites while 28% used internet for adult sites.

Table no 3. Internet Addiction Score



Explanation

Internet addiction is measured through Kimberly young internet addiction scale. It first validated and reliable measure of addictive use of the Internet. It has been used by many previous researchers (e.g. Jahanian, Seifury, 2013; Khan et al., 2016; Samaha & Hawi, 2016) The IAT is a 20-item questionnaire that measures mild, moderate, and severe levels of Internet Addiction. Responses are calculated to get final score.

Assessment

- 20 - 49 points: they are average on-line users. They may surf the Web a bit too long at times, but they have control over their usage. They were called non internet addicts (NIA).
- 50 -79 points: They are experiencing occasional or frequent problems because of the Internet. They should consider their full impact on your life. They were called possible internet addicts (PIA).
- 80 - 100 points: Their Internet usage is causing significant problems in their life. They should evaluate the impact of the Internet on your life and address the problems directly caused by your Internet usage. They were called internet addicts (IA).

The above table shows that 15% respondents were non internet addicts (NIA) whose score was between 20-49. The results show that 50% of the respondents were possible internet addicts (PIA) whose score was between 50 -79. This percentage of possible addicted students is also alarming because sooner or later they may become addicts. Possible internet addiction is also dangerous as they are also at the verge of addiction. This proportion also needs special care and intervention in order to avoid addiction.

It is matter of grave concern that 35% were internet addicts (IA) whose score was between 80-100. Instructors may observe that less number of students are available for early morning

classes and get late regularly due to late night internet activities. It has also come to the attention of some school administrators that some students get poor grades or are placed on academic probation because they spend too much time on the Internet rather than on their studies.

Research studies have confirmed various negative effects of internet addictions. Internet addiction affects physical health, mental and emotional health (Liang et al., 2016). Internet addicts also come across problems in social activities too (Hur, 2012). High level of addiction towards the internet indicates high scores in terms of neuroticism and psychoticism (Cao & Su, 2007). It is confirmed that there is significant association between internet addiction and academic performance of students (Khan et al., 2016; Samaha & Hawi, 2016).

Conclusion and Recommendations

As we know that internet use has become vital part of everyday life and the use of internet is common. This internet use may lead to internet addiction. From this study it is concluded that majority of the respondents were male. Most of them were from BS and master program. Majority of the respondents belong to urban area. Most of the respondents access internet through Wi-Fi. Most of the respondents access internet at home. Majority of the respondents use internet for educational purposes and social media. In this study we found out that 35% respondents were non internet addicts (NIA), whose score was between 20-49, they can use internet a bit long time but have control over usage of internet, 50% of the respondents were possible internet addicts (PIA), whose score was between 50-79, they are experiencing occasional or frequent problems because of the Internet while 35% were internet addicts (IA) whose score was between 80-100, Internet usage is causing significant problems in their life. The ratio of internet addiction is quite high among students and has negative effects on their psychosocial health and academics. Early prevention from internet addiction should be taken into consideration and students should consciously be aware of the negative effects of spending unnecessary time on the internet. The uninterrupted provision of net facility on campus, especially Wi-Fi, needs to be reconsidered. Students need to be fully aware of the internet addiction's negative effects on their emotion and academic performance. The university can also increase the students' awareness towards the negative effects of internet addiction through holding campaign, flyers, and seminars, which might lead to early prevention of internet addiction problems. Parents need to keep an eye on children internet use and behavioral change in order to avoid negative repercussions of internet addiction.

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