Study Of Relationship Between Using Internet And Mental Health Of Internet Users in Zahedan, Iran

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ABSTRACT

Internet is a harmless tool by itself, however limitless and improper use of it may lead to the risk of addiction to internet. The present article aims to examine the relationship between Using Internet and Mental Health of Internet Users. Population consisted of internet users in coffee nets of Zahedan city of Iran. 120 persons (60 men and 60 women) were selected by accessible sampling method as the sample of study. The users were divided in two groups of normal and addicted users, using Internet Addiction Test (IAT) of Young. General health of these two groups was compared using General Health Questionnaire (GHQ-28). The results of research were analyzed using Pearson's correlation coefficient, independent t-test, and x2. The results of Pearson correlation showed that there was a significant correlation between Using Internet and mental health.

1. Introduction

One of apparent manifestations of facing world is the use of modern technology. As a newly established dimension of modern technology of the contemporary world, internet plays a vital role in the change and evolution of lives of the people of society. By internet into the life, internet has become a necessary tool rapidly, so that removing it from life is not imaginable (Asloyn, 2001). The main changes, this technology has caused, has been summarized by "Marshal McLuhan" as the term of "universal village" that is, people, all around the globe, can communicate as easily as the live in a village (Farshbaf et al., 2009). On other hand, despite of all advantages and opportunities, this technology has provided for researchers, if not utilized properly it results in new social harms such as addiction to internet, conflagrations of cultural identification, cultural distortion, and etc. Though internet application development and remarkable increase in the numbers of users all around the world may apply a bright future for development of social relations, and different industries and affairs as well, extreme interest of some users has brought forth a major problem, called addiction to internet or "on-line addiction" holms defines the addiction to internet as "using internet more than 19 hours in a week". Young (1998) believe addict is as a person who use internet at least 38 hours in a week or 8 hours in a day. Experts of pathology have provided the most restricted definition, as if a person use internet 20. 3 hours in a week or 8 hours in a day. He/she will be regarded as an normal user and if this period of use reaches 5-8 hours or more, then he or she should be examined pathologically (lim an et al., 2004). Orzak (1999) considers the addiction to internet as a disorder which the people who regard the screen more attractive than real life, suffer. In his opinion, everyone who has a computer is exposed to addiction. However, shameless, depressed, alone, and bored people or those recovering from other Addiction are more vulnerable. Technological addiction can be defined practically as non-chemical or behavioral that involves human interaction with apparatus. This type of addiction may be passive(e.g.TV) or active (e.g. video games) and usually has inductive aspects that may increase inclination are those who look for a safe shelter to escape reality and seek to fill the gap of identity, so that they can become released from the real ground that may be one of internet addicts' internal-behavioral motives. The people called internet addicts look for a family which is a place full of emotions and feelings or/and worldly subjects. By keeping themselves unknown, they want to get a new identity through which they feel happy. According to Goldberg, Addiction to internet can followed by rejection and avoidance (Fotoorechi, 2006). Internet addicts sustain more harm financially, physically and culturally. Addiction to internet results in destruction of healthy relations and emotions and eventually, soul and spirit. When a person in family is addicted to internet, he/she firstly loses the opportunity of communication with other family members. This fact causes a defective circle. As a result, the person get far away from family members (Shayegh et al., 2008). In a research on examining the relation of medical signs with internet addiction among students of Esfahan universities, Alavi et al (2010) concluded that there is a positive and significant relationship between medical signs (such as depression, anxiety, self-supposed disease, obsession, inter-personal sensitiveness, aggression, paranoia addiction) with gender control affects on nine-fold medical
signs. In a research on examining the amount of internet use and its' social-psychological consequences among the students of Islamic Azad university, Nademi and rezvani (2005) has found that 77% of students are at the risk of internet addiction, 14% of them showed that dependency on internet had affected their performance to a great extent and a percent were not affected by internet. Their research also showed that males’ dependency on internet is more than females’, significantly. In another research, conducted by dargahi and razavi (2007), in a research titled “addiction to internet and effective factors in residents of second region of western Tehran” concluded that 30 percent of users were addicted to internet and all of them showed some degrees of social-psychological behaviors such as self-unfamiliarity, inability and weakness in doing works, abnormal social behaviors, solitariness, centrality and emotional behavior. Also, adolescents have much more tendency to internet than other age-group. This research additionally showed that singles and high school students are follow the same rule. In a research on amount of addiction to internet among caffé net users of Lar city concluded that it was significant. In another research carried out by sung min et al. (2003) on psychological characteristics of individuals who use internet to a great extent , the following results were obtained: among samples, 3.5% were identified as addicts to internet (IA), while 18.4% can be categorized as addicts, criterion of addiction to internet showed that it has a strong relationship with social behavioral disorders. IA group denied it more than PA group and non-addicts. In stressful times on work or when being depressed, IA group has more tendency to access to internet. also, IA Group showed higher levels of solitariness, depression and anxiety than other groups. in case of dangers, members of (IA) group were more vulnerable than others.

2. Materials and methods
2.1. Research hypotheses
H0: there is a relationship between using internet and mental health of users.
H1. There is a significant relationship between using internet and physical health.
H2. There is a significant relationship between internet usage and social dysfunction.
H3. There is a significant relationship between using internet and gender.
H4. there is a significant relationship between using internet and age
H5. There is a significant relationship between using internet and depression.
H6. There is a significant difference between females and males’ mental health.
H7. there is a significant difference between mental health of normal and addicted users

2.2. Method
Method of research is descriptive-correlative. Population of research involved all internet users in coffee nets of Zahedan city and sampling method was random. 120 persons (60 male, 60 female) were selected. Data were collected using two questionnaires.

A. Internet Addiction Test (IAT)
This questionnaire was developed by Kimberly Young in 1998, consists of 20 items using a five-point Likert scale. The items of test were determined based on DSM-IV criteria to calculate internet gambling and alcohol dependency. Achieved numbers of each person classifies them into three categories: normal user of internet, users that has faced problem because of excessive use of internet, and addicted user who is dependent on internet and needs treatment. On each question, the subjects should choose 1 of the 5 options regarding an adaptability criterion. After receiving the final score, the situation of each user was recognized. according to the score of 20-39 for normal user, 40-69 for moderate users, and 70-100 for seriously addicted users of internet.In the present research, based on IAT (Internet Addiction Test), the subjects acquired a score ≤ 39, were placed in the normal group of users; those who had a score higher than 39 were placed in the group of addicts. The reliability of questionnaire of internet addiction was as 0.81, using Cronbach’s Alpha.

B. General Health Questionnaire (GHQ-28)
It was developed by Goldberg (1972) and according to Henderson et. al(1990), is the most known method in psychology and psychiatry and has had a considerable effect on advancement of researches. The questionnaire is in the form of GHQ-12, GHQ-28, GHQ-30, and GHQ-60. For increasing the variance, based on factors analysis on the main from, 28- question form was made by Goldberg and Hillier and consisted of 4 subscales (somatic symptoms, anxiety and insomnia, social dysfunction, and Depression) the way of questionnaire scoring is based on likert scale, in which. Each of four subscales is rated as 0, 1, 2, 3 scores. So, the range of each person is 0 to 84. from question 1 to 7 it is related to somatic symptoms, the second four questions examine anxiety and insomnia, questions to 21 is about social dysfunction, and questions from 22 to 28 examine depression. In each criterion, if individual acquire score more than 6, and totally more than 22, she/he is expected to have a disorder sign. The reliability of general health of questionnaire was 0.78, using Cronbach’s Alpha coefficient.

3. Results and discussion
3.1. Testing main hypothesis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>variable</th>
<th>mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Correlation Coefficient</th>
<th>Sig</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Using Internet</td>
<td>47.43</td>
<td>18.266</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>0.18</td>
<td>0.047</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental health</td>
<td>23.13</td>
<td>14.880</td>
<td>120</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Pearson correlation test results of H0
According to table 1, the results of Pearson correlation showed that there is significant correlation between Using Internet and mental health (r = 0.18; p-value= 0.047)

3.2. Testing H1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Correlation Coefficient</th>
<th>Sig</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Using Internet</td>
<td>47.43</td>
<td>18.266</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>0.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical health</td>
<td>23.5</td>
<td>27.4</td>
<td>120</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The results of table 2 showed that there is not any significant correlation between Using Internet and physical health (r = 0.12; p-value = 0.16).

**Second hypothesis**: there is a significant relation between addiction to internet and anxiety.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Correlation Coefficient</th>
<th>Sig</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Using Internet</td>
<td>28.47</td>
<td>19.18</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td>0.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anxiety</td>
<td>77.6</td>
<td>65.4</td>
<td>120</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Using Pearson correlation test, the results indicate that there is no significant correlation between Using Internet and Anxiety (r= 0.16 = 0.08).

3.3. Testing H2

Based on table 4, results showed that there is not a significant correlation between Using Internet and social dysfunction ( r = 0.14; p-value = 0.11).

3.4. Testing H5

Based on Pearson correlation test, results indicate that there is a significant positive correlation between addiction to internet and Depression (r = 0.17; p-value = 0.05).

3.5. Testing H6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>users</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>Sig</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>female</td>
<td>25.18</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>15.995</td>
<td>15.995</td>
<td>1.98</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>male</td>
<td>21.07</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>13.494</td>
<td>13.494</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The results of Table 6 indicates that there is not any significant different between using internet and females and males’ mental health.

3.7. Testing H7
The results of Table 7 showed that there is significant different between normal and addicted users on mental health scores ($t=(118)1.98 ; p-value= 0.05$). Addicted user obtained higher mean score on mental health in comparison to normal user.

4. Discussion
Addiction leads to love and ruin among human beings. Addiction to internet is not an exception. Present research examines general situation of internet addiction and its consequences, emphasizing on mental health of internet users. In this research, based on Young's questionnaire, users whose final score of situation was under 39, were considered as normal users, And those with a score higher than 39 were as addict. Accordingly, 32.5% of users are normal and 67.5% of them were addicted to internet. Findings of research show that based on Pearson’s test of correlation, there is a significant relationship between mental health and Using Internet (main hypothesis). In first hypothesis, using Pearson's test, results showed that there was no significant correlation between Using Internet and physical health. This result is not consistent with the findings of Dargahi et al (2007) which showed some degrees of weakness in doing works. In second hypothesis, results showed that there was no significant correlation between Using Internet and anxiety. In second hypothesis, results show that there is no significant correlation between Using Internet and social dysfunction. This result is not consistent with the findings of the research conducted by Nademi et al (2005) and Dargahi et al (2007). In fifth hypothesis, based on results showed that there was a significant correlation between Using Internet and depression. This result is consistent with Alavi and colleagues (2010) research findings.In fifth hypothesis, based on $x^2$ test, it was found out that there was no significant relationship between age and Using Internet, however, in Vizeshfar (2005) study, the relationship was significant. Using $x^2$, in sixth hypothesis, it was determined that there was no significant relationship between gender and Using Internet. This result is not consistent with the findings of Alavi et al (2010) and Vizeshfar (2010). In one of hypothesis, by using T test, it was found out that there was a significant difference between normal and addicted users. The result are consistent with the findings of Alavi et al (2010), Nademi et al (2005), Dargahi et al. (2007), Shayegh et al.(2007) and leo sang (2003).

5. Conclusion
Finally it should be said that, perhaps extreme dependency on internet may not risky always, but when person loses his/her relationship with reality and live in imaginative world more than being in reality and become content and happy in virtual life, and reject to return back to actual world, then, addiction to internet must be regarded seriously, and the addicted one must be cured as other addictions.

Reference: