The relationship between personality traits and social acceptance level and internet addiction

Ghasem Askarizadeh[1], Ali Amiri[2] and Mahsa Karamoozian[3*]

1- Assistant Department of Psychology, Shahid Bahonar University of Kerman, Kerman, Iran
2- B.S Psychplogy, Shahid Bahonar University of Kerman, Kerman, Iran
3- M.A. in Psychology, Shahid Bahonar University of Kerman, Kerman, Iran

Corresponding author: Mahsa Karamoozian

ABSTRACT: Since internet is an important part of people life and its use increases rapidly, its excessive use leads to internet addiction and ultimately leads to disorders and problems in life. The present study aims to assess the relationship between personality traits and social acceptance level and internet addiction. For this purpose, 360 students of Shahid Bahonar University of Kerman were selected using stratified cluster sampling. To collect data, Young's 20-item questionnaire of internet addiction, Eysenck's 48-item questionnaire of personality, and 33-item questionnaire of social acceptance were used. The data were analyzed using Spss 16 software and regression analysis method. Results showed that there is a significant negative relationship between internet addiction and social acceptance level and there is significant positive relationship between personality traits of neurosis and psychosis and internet addiction, while there is no relationship between extroversion and internet addicti).

Keywords: internet addiction, personality, social acceptance.

INTRODUCTION

As one of the new dimensions of today's technology, internet plays an important role in changing the lives of all human beings and it has provided several opportunities in scientific, social, and economic areas so that access to internet is considered as one of the important criteria of them. The Internet is a large and global set, including human, information, and computer and it is one of the most important tools to access to findings and information. Internet arrived Iran in 1992 and since that time the number of internet users is increasing (Fathi Ashtiani and Dastani 2009), so that its penetration rate was 32% among Iranians in 2010. In this regard, Iran has the first rank among middle-east countries (Asadi , 2011). Studies conducted in America showed that Internet use among young people is higher than any other age group (Alavi 2011). Various applications and attractions of internet have caused that a phenomenon known as internet addiction to be emerged in recent years. Based on conducted studies, diagnosed criteria of this disorder are overlapped with diagnostic criteria related to impulse control disorder and pathologic gambling, and impaired drug addiction, and these criteria have been used for internet addiction diagnosis in many studies (Morham, Martin and Schumcher, 2000; Chang and Man Law, 2008; Alavi , 2011). According to the America Psychological Association, internet addiction is a model to use internet, leading to dysfunctions or unpleasant inner states and it lasts one or two months. It has at least 3 symptoms of the following symptoms.
1. Tolerance
2. The withdrawal symptoms
3. Time of using of internet more than one wants to last
4. Reduction in social activities
5. Continuous use of internet even knowing its negative consequences
6. Desire to control behavior
7. Spending much time on internet (Patrick and Joyce 2008)
Psychologists believe that any behavior that one shows is affected by many factors such as environmental, emotional and personality factors. Personality traits means tendencies and durable traits of giving response in a similar ways

to different stimuli and it can be predictor of one's behavior in various situations. There are several theories about personality traits, including Eysenck personality theory that considers the personality in three dimensions of extroversion, neuroticism and psychosis (Schultz and Schultz, 1388). Among other factors that could affect the prevalence of internet addiction is social acceptance, which means the mutual impact in interpersonal interaction (Reber, 1985). Several studies have been conducted on personality traits of people addicted to internet (Shayegh, Hossein Azad, Bahrami 2009). In a study titled as "investigation of internet addiction and its relationship with personality traits", by investigating 361 subjects of Tehran adolescents, they found that there is significant relationship between neuroticism and internet addiction in adolescents. In a study conducted by Vahdani, he showed that there is significant relationship between social adjustment factors such as social skills, empathy, self-awareness, self-control, and Internet addiction (Vahdani 2002, quoted in Hassanpour 2006).

In a study titled as "the relationship between internet addiction and personality traits of high school students" conducted by Tmanayi Far (2012), they found that there is significant relationship between internet addiction and neuroticism and extroversion at a confidence level of 95%, while no significant relationship was found between conscientiousness and internet addiction. In a study that Hardie and Tee conducted on 93 subjects (49 women and 44 men) in the age range of 18-72 in Australia, they showed that there is a significant positive relationship between neuroticism and internet addiction, and there is a significant negative correlation between extroversion and internet addiction. This result is in line with results of study conducted by Kunimura and Thomas (2000) on 113 students of Lvyvlamary Monte University. In a study titled as "the prevalence of internet addiction among Chinese adolescents and exploring the psychological traits associated with the internet, F. Kaw and L. Su (2006) found that rate of internet use was 88%, while the rate of occurrence of addiction was reported 2.4%, which addicts to internet obtained high scores in the scales of neurosis and psychotism. In a study conducted by Sanders, he showed that teens who use internet highly, their contact with parents is reduced and they were socially withdrawn. It was shown excessive use of internet reduces social support and social contact, leading into loneliness and depression (2002). It was concluded that loneliness, shyness, social withdrawal, and depression are traits of people addicted to the internet, and people addicted to the internet are socially low in terms of social reactions than non-dependent on the internet. Despite studies conducted on internet addiction, limited research has been done in the area of the relationship between personality traits and social acceptance level and internet addiction. The implication of this study is that it can lead into prevention and intervention related to internet addiction, based on personal traits of people. If it is proved that there is a relationship between internet addiction and personality traits, we can encourage people to participate in counseling sessions in order to prevent addiction in people who are prone to it (in terms of social acceptance and personality traits). Not only can we create insight about their personality and mental preparation so that we can inform them about internet addiction phenomenon and its losses, but also we can give some recommendations for them concerning the use of internet. This study aimed to investigate the relationship between personality traits and social acceptance and internet addiction in students of Shahid Bahonar University.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study is descriptive correlational one that examined the relationship between variables. The population of study included all students of Shahid Bahonar University of Kerman in the academic year of 2015 (second semester), while 350 of them were selected as sample of study among 5 departments (4 fields from each department and 15 subjects from each fields) based on Morgan table and using stratified cluster sampling. In this study, a questionnaire of social acceptance developed by Crown and Marlowe was used. The questionnaire includes 33 items responded as true or false. After correcting the questionnaires, received social acceptance is interpreted based on obtained score. This means that the subjects whose score is between 0 and 8, have low social acceptable low, those whose scores are between 9 and 19 , they have moderate social acceptance, and those whose social score is between 20 and 33, their social acceptance is high. Reliability was calculated as 0/57 by using Cronbach's alpha method that indicates the appropriate consistency among items. To measure the personal traits, Eysenck Personality test (short form) was used. The test consists of four scales of neuroticism, psychotic, extroversion-introversion, and lie measuring, in which each scale has 12 items. In this study, reliability for men and women was found as 0/84 and 0/80 scale of neuroticism, 0/88 and 0/84 for extroversion, 0/62 and 0/61 for psychotic, 0/77 and 0/73 for lie measuring scale. In the current study, reliability was calculated 0/47 using Cronbach's alpha that indicates appropriate consistency among items. To measure internet addiction, 20-item questionnaire of Young was used. In this test, each subject should respond to all 20 questions on five-point Likert scale, including never, rarely, sometimes, often or always. The test scores range from 0 to 100 in which the higher score represents greater dependency on the internet. Young instruction was used to evaluate the results in a way that score from 20 to 49 is normal, 50 to 79 represent that user is normal, and the score of 80 to 100 indicates a severe addiction. In a study conducted by Dargahi and

Razavi (2007), reliability was reported as 0/88. In this study, reliability was calculated as /93 using Cronbach's alpha that indicates there is appropriate consistency among items. To analyze data, Pearson correlation and regression analysis were used.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Table 1. descriptive indicators of research variables

variables		mean	SD	n
	Social acceptance	18/27	4/36	360
Personal traits	Neuroticism	6/61	2/72	360
	Extroversion	8/02	2/45	360
	Psychotism	4/30	1/70	360
	internet addiction	39/53	14/38	360

Table 2. Analysis of internet addiction variance by means of personality traits of the social acceptance

model	Sum of squares	Degree of freedom	Mean of squares	F
regression	8249/77	4	2062/44	11/09**
remaining	65997/95	355	185/91	
total	74247/72	359	-	

P<0.01**

Results of Table 2 show that regression is valid at error level of 0/01. Therefore, it can be said that internet addiction can be predicted by social acceptance and personality traits

Table 3 . Coefficients and summary of regression model

Predictor variables	Non-standard coefficients	Standard coefficients	t		R^2_{adj}
constant number	40/63	-	**6/63		
Social acceptance of neuroticism	−0/69	−0/21		−3/79**	0/10
Extroversion	0/68	0/13	*2/31		
psychotism	0/22	0/04	0/70		
constant number	1/20	0/14		2/74**	

*P<0.05   **P<0.01

Based on results of Table 3, among the four variables included in the model, social acceptance (β = -0/21, p<0/01) has significant negative relationship with internet, personality traits or neuroticism (β =0/13, p<0/01) and psychotism (β = 0/14, p<0/01) have significant positive relationship with internet addiction. That is, these variables could predict internet addiction among the students of Shahid Bahonar University of Kerman, while extroversion was not able to predict internet addiction. In addition, based on standard coefficients, it can be concluded that social acceptance is a stronger predictor of internet addiction than personality traits of neuroticism and psychotism. In addition, the value of adjusted coefficient of determination showed that about 10% of internet addiction variance can be predicted in students of Shahid Bahonar University of Kerman.

Discussion and conclusion

Despite its short life, internet is a means that has had important impacts on human life and it has undeniable role in the lives of all people nowadays in a way that lack of its inappropriate use can cause problems and disorders. It finally causes isolation of people from society. The first finding of this study is that there is negative correlation between internet addiction and social acceptance. It means that lower level of social acceptance leads into increased internet addiction, and vice versa. It probably can be justified by this fact that people who have low level of acceptance, they give less importance to being together, and they are firm in their beliefs even if their responses lead to social exclusion and loneliness. The second finding of this study is that there is significant positive relationship between personality trait of neuroticism and internet addiction. This finding is consistent with results of study

conducted by Shayegh (2009), Tamanayi Far (2012), Bing and Toung(2004), Wang, Li and Cheng (2003), Nelo and Anand (2003), Czech and Liong (2004), Hardy and Tee (2007) and Kunimora and Thomas (2000). These group of people usually tend to be headstrong and opinionated, irrational, low self-esteem and prone to feelings of guilt. Due to having these traits and lack of ability to be involved in life's problems in a satisfactory and efficient way, they have less degree of adaptability with others and finally they are addicted to internet. This study also showed that there is a significant positive correlation between personality traits of psychosis and internet addiction. It means that as the personal trait of psychosis increases in one person, he will more likely be addicted to internet. These groups of people are aggressive, antisocial, determined, self-centered and these traits induce them to internet addiction. This finding is consistent with finding of study conducted by Kaw and Sue (2006). Thus, according to the results of the study, planning to prevent and solve this problem by authorities of educational affairs and promoting appropriate use of this technology in society are recommended. Success in solving this problem can help to reduce its negative consequences and proper use of this valuable technology.

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