Investigating the effect of Internet Addiction on Social Skills and in High School Students' Achievement

By

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Abstract

The present study was done in order to investigate the relationship between internet addiction and social skills& high school students' achievements. The statistical universe of the study included all of the students of district 2 of Kermanshah City who were studying in academic year of 2013-2014. For this study, 320 students were selected, of which 150 students were girls and 170 were boys selected through cluster sampling. For the collection of the related data Internet Addiction Test (IAT), The Inventory of Social Skills (TISS) was used. The average score obtained on both of these was used as the scale of education achievement. The data was analyzed through regression method. The findings showed that Internet addiction could at a significant level predict social skills and educational achievement, that is, the higher the scores for internet addiction, the lower the social skills and educational achievement. Moreover, there was no significant difference between boys and girls with regard to internet addiction. Therefore, the results imply that unlimited use of internet has a devastating negative influence on both social skills and communications and educational achievements. So, some programs are necessary to be performed in order to change this process and control this behavioral model in schools both for the parents and the students.

Keywords: *Internet Addiction, Social Skills, Educational Achievement, Students*

1. Introduction

Today internet is an integrative component. Of the modern life – and its significant role is not deniable – internet has influenced our lives in many aspects, though many of these influences have been positive. It has played an important role in performing duties, access to information, and meeting individuals with each other. Instead of these functions, it has changed into misuse in some individuals and has caused some problems in their lives. One of the consequences of internet misuse is addiction to internet. Addiction to internet is categorized within impulsive disorders. This disorder is known with mental obsessions, uncontrolled behaviors and tendencies in attention to computer or using internet which is the end results in mental disorders or psychological tensions (Weinstein & Lejyeux, 2010). The most common definition for addiction to internet is a kind of addiction which leads to a behavioral affiliation to internet (Sadock & Sadock, 2007). This affiliation or dependence is accompanied with such symptoms as anxiety, depression, misbehavior, obsessive thoughts, seclusion, and interruption in social connections. On the other hand, as social relationships increase in virtual environments, their relationships decrease in real world and the possibility of drop in their academic performance increases (Samson & keen, 2005). In recent years, the studies reported the incidence of addiction to internet to be 0.3% to 22% (Kim et al, 2009).

The results of researches by Chebbi et al (2000) and Yang et al (2007) showed that the individuals who are addicted to internet are exhausted, bored, lonely, depressed, suffer from social anxiety and have more social deprivation and seclusion. The individuals who use internet more, less than other keep friendships, pass less time with their relatives, experience more stressful factors, and feel more loneliness and depression (Sadeqian, 2005). The results of various researches show that addiction to internet is effective on decreasing social skills and seclusion from the society in those addicted to internet (Vizeshfar, 2006; Moody, 2004; cummings et al, 2002; Engelberg & Sjoberg, 2004; Whitty & Mc laughing, 2007, Sadeqian, 2005; Qasem Zadeh et al, 2007).

Social skills are behavioral whose development can help increase individuals; useful and effective performance in the society (Matson, 1983). In most of the children the development of proper social skills takes place through interaction with the parents, sisters, brothers, relatives and peers, and through a relatively steady, quiet and automatic process. Manteqi and colleagues (2008) found in their study that there is a relationship between the individuals' affective vacuum in familial milieu and tendency toward chat rooms, so that, the richness of familial affective milieu, positive and affective relationships between parents and children, having a at home, being understood at home, and the like prevents from affective vacuum in the young and, therefore, seeking affection in virtual environments including chat. The results of the research by Qasem Zadeh and colleagues (2007) revealed that those addicted to internet significantly have more inappropriate behaviors, compared to both usual users and those who don't use internet; moreover, the girls having severed dependence to internet are significantly more disobedient. The interesting point in this research is that compared to boys, addiction to internet in girls has less unpleasant consequences.

According to the survey by USA journal issued in 1997, 86 percent of teachers believed that using internet has caused students to neglect performing their tasks (Chih – Hung, 2006). Hilts (2008) found out that those addicted to internet suffer from its negative affects on their academic performance. Moreover, Lin and Tsai (2002), Usman and colleagues (2014) and jang (2014) have shown the negative relationship between academic performance and addiction to internet, but Shoara (2009) and Farahmand (2008) found in their researches that addiction to internet does not show a significant relationship with individuals' seclusion, decreasing social skills, academic inhibition, and academic achievement.

Taking into account the importance of the subject and its previous record, the aim of this research is to investigate the relationship between addiction to internet and social skills and academic achievement of high school students in Kermanshah.

2. Method

The method of the research, statistical universe, and sample: This research is a correlation one. The statistical universe of this research included all of the high school students in Kermanshah City who were studying in academic year of 2013 – 2014 who were selected through cluster stage sample. 320 students were selected (170 boys and 150 girls). The scale for entering the members of the sample was the previous year. Those who did not have any experience on internet were excluded from the sample. In order to collect data, the inventory of addiction to internet (IAI) and the inventory of social skills (TIIS) were used. The data collected, was analyzed by SPSS–18 statistical soft ware and through regression method.

Instrument

The inventory of addiction to internet (IAI): this includes 20 items. Each item has a five – point scale which is scored from 1 to 5. In the end, the individuals were classified into 2 groups. One group's score is either equal or lower than 49 and the other group's score is higher than 50. This division shows the conditions of the users of internet as normal users and those addicted to it. Qasem Zadeh and colleagues reported the reliability of this questionnaire by Cronbach alpha at 0.88.

The scale of Matson's social skills (1983): This scale has been designed to measure the children's or young adults' social skills aging from 4 – 18 years. This scale has 56 items and measures appropriate social skills, unsocial skills, aggression, seeking superiority, and relationship with peers. The subject (taste) answers each of the items according to 5 – points Linkert scale range from 1 (perfect disagreement) to 5 (perfect agreement). The range of the scores of this scale varies from 0 to 224. Yousefi and Xeir (2002) have reported the reliability of this questionnaire by Cronbach alpha and dissection as equal at 0.86. The concurrent validity of this questionnaire by Biabangard's test for social skills is reported at 0.83. In this research, the average of the scores of the students (obtained through the

comparison of the average of the first semester with that of the previous academic year) was used as the concrete index of academic achievement.

3. Findings

In the table 1, the mean and standard deviation of the addiction to internet, social skills, and academic achievement has been provided.

Table 1: the mean and standard deviation of the variables under examination

Variables	N	M	SD
addiction to internet	320	24.40	8.50
social skills	320	155.64	30.15
academic achievement	320	320	2.40

The results obtained from the correlation between addiction to internet and social skills and academic achievement showed that addiction to internet has a significant negative relationship with the variables of social skills and academic achievement (P= 0.001).

Table 2: Pearson correlation coefficient of social skills and academic achievement with addiction to internet

variables	r	sig
Social skills	-0.35	-0.001
Academic achievement	-0.78	-0.001

The regression method was used to investigate the level of predicting the relationship of social skills and academic achievement with addiction to internet. The results showed that addiction to internet as the predictor variable can be a good predictor for academic achievement and social skills as the criterion variable. (P= 0.001).

Table 3: the results of regression analysis of predicting addiction to internet with the variables of social skills and academic achievement

Criterion variables	Predictor variable	R	R^2	B	Beta	t	sig
Social skills	Addiction to internet	0.36	0.13	-2.60	-0.36	-6.86	0.001
Academic achievement		0.78	0.60	-0.22	-0.78	-22.11	0.001

The results of comparing addiction to internet in boys and girls showed there is not a significant difference in addiction to internet between boys and girls.

Table 4: comparing addiction to internet in boys and girls

gender	N	M	F	t	Sig
Girls	150	23.84	0.13	-1.02	0.30
Boys	170	24.82			

4. Discussion and conclusion

The results of data analysis show that the variable of addiction to internet does not have a significant relationship with social skills and academic achievement of the students. In addition, the findings showed that addiction to internet is a good predictor for the students' social skills and academic achievement. In

other words, social skills are predictable by excessive use of internet, that is, when the level of addiction to internet increases, the level of social skills decreases and the student becomes isolated. Moreover, the results revealed that by increasing the level of addiction to internet, the students' academic achievement decreases and their academic performance reduce, that is to say, they are involved with school drop – out. These results are in line with the findings of Vizeshfar (2006); Cummings et al (2002); Engelbarg & Sjoberg (2004); Chebi et al (2009); Sadeqian (2005); Qasem Zadeh and colleagues (2007); Chi – Hung (2006); Hilts (2008); Lin & Tsai (2002), Usman et al (2014); Jiang (2014); Manteqi et al (2008) and are not in line with the findings of Shoara (2009) and Farahmand (2008).

Lin and Tsai (2002) in their research on high school students in Taiwan concluded that internet has had negative effect on daily affairs, academic achievement and less connection between parents and students. Hilts (2008) Found that the individuals who are addicted to internet suffer from its unpleasant influences on their own instructional performance. As it was mentioned previously in definition of addiction to internet, it is that manner of using internet which can lead to psychological, social, educational, or vocational problems in one's life. As it was said in this research, addiction to internet can reduce studying lessons which, in turn, leads to school drop – out. Jaing (2014) and Usman et al (2014) resulted that addiction to internet significantly reduces the young's academic achievement.

To explain these findings, it can be said that social skills is a base on which interpersonal relationships are constructed. The students who learn social skills exactly, practice them, and make use of their abilities, will absolutely be able to enter peer or friends groups, have a positive interaction in their relationships with their peers and show a range of acceptable behaviors. Therefore, the students who look for friends and communication with other through virtual networks face difficulties in developing their skills in real world.

The more one individuals spends more time on computer games, chats, finding friends in virtual networks and using immoral sites, the more he/she loses his/her focus and time which results in declining both academic achievement and learning.

Another result of this research is that there is not a significant difference in addiction to internet between girls and boys, that is, the level of addiction to internet is equal in both genders. Various studies on this subject have reported contradictory results. Some of these studies reveal significant differences between two genders, while others have reported equal results for addiction to internet in both genders which is either in line with the findings of the present research (Chang & Law, 2008) or is not (QasemZadeh et al, 2007; Ko et al, 2010).

Therefore, in order to reduce the devastating and negative effects of addiction to internet, it is necessary to change the pattern of using internet and computer, consider designing instructional and counseling programs for modifying this pattern of using internet, helpful and optimal use for internet, instructing both self – control and self – monitoring in using both computer and internet, providing suitable strategies for informing parents on monitoring their children as to the time and manner of using internet, and replacing it with real world activities to cover the children's free time.

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