



A study shows the effects of addiction to wireless internet use among university students

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Abstract

The current study aims to compare Internet addiction based on gender and specialty, as well as to ascertain the prevalence of Internet addiction among university students. Ninety-six male and female students from the College of Education at University made up the research sample. One of the scholars' tests for Internet addiction was employed. Kimberly Young, an American psychologist and physician, was translated into Arabic in 1996 and the features of psychometrics were extracted. symbolized by the midway segmentation's consistency, constructiveness, obvious honesty, and discriminating strength. Reaching the subsequent conclusions: The current research sample's average level of internet addiction is a favorable finding. There are variations in Internet addiction that are statistically significant among college students based on the gender (male, female) variable. Additionally, for the advantage of men over women that depending on the specialization (scientific versus human), there is a difference in the statistical significance of Internet addiction among college students, with the human specialization having a greater tendency to become addicted to the Internet than the scientific specialization. Numerous recommendations and proposals were made by the research, the most significant of which is the requirement that educational seminars be held for youth to introduce them to the possible consequences of Internet addiction and all of its physical, psychological, social, and academic dimensions.

Keywords: internet addiction, wireless, student

Introduction

With the beginning of the invasion of technology in the entire world in the twenty-first century and the widespread use of modern technologies and devices and the spread of laptops, which paved the way for the Internet to impose itself on the knowledge arena ^[1] and the information gathering arena, as it has proven its enormous and multiple benefits in various areas of life, but at first it was complicated and specific to a certain category capable of acquiring devices. After the technological revolution and the spread of social networking sites, the use of the Internet increased, which turned the world into a small village. After the emergence of smart phones that facilitate the process of browsing the Internet and social networking sites, the Internet has become one of the basic aspects of our daily lives. Just as everything has advantages and disadvantages ^[2], the Internet is also a double-edged sword with many positive aspects that facilitate our search, communication, information gathering, and other processes. On the other hand, there are also negative aspects that we cannot ignore, including its misuse and excessive use among its users.

Recently, the importance of research on the use of the Internet has increased, and various methods for classifying Internet users have been used, and many terms have been used, such as Internet addiction, problematic Internet use, or pathological Internet use. Young (1998) ^[8] raised the issue of Internet addiction and concluded that the term addiction can be applied to Internet use because the symptoms of Internet addiction carry the same characteristics as those of alcohol and tobacco addicts. She created a scale for Internet addiction that was based on the criteria of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual

of mental disorders, IV, and its successor ^[4], the LIKERT, which includes 20 questions on the Likert scale (DSM-IV). Other studies on internet addiction have been based on young's internet addiction scale. As a result, the concept of internet addiction has now been widely used and accepted by most doctors and academics.

Research problem

The research problem came from two main sources: personal observations first and reviewing previous literature second. It was noted that university students have a great tendency to browse the Internet and access different sites, and even if there is a tendency towards some sites more than others, this does not change the equation in terms of the strong desire to deal with the Internet regardless of what their favorite sites are.

We listened to the students' repeated talk about the Internet, its importance, the degree of its use, the degree of its influence, and the strong desire to deal with it because of the pleasure, excitement, and unparalleled benefit it contains. In this regard, students often repeated phrases such as "He sees the world through the Internet" or "The world is in his hands", "I feel great pleasure with the Internet", "It is difficult for me to disconnect from the Internet", "I find my need in the Internet", and many other phrases that are repeated by students and carry the same content that indicates a strong attachment to the Internet that may in some cases amount to addiction to it. With regard to the second source, which is previous literature on the subject, the first source (personal observations) prompted research in previous literature on the subject of Internet addiction, whether in Arab or foreign studies, which enhanced

interest in the subject and increased realistic observations about the increasing tendency towards the Internet among students, and the question about this tendency and its intensity. It is noticeable that Arab and foreign studies confirmed the existence of addiction to the Internet among students, which will be mentioned later. This increased the incentive to research this subject, as the Internet is relatively new in Iraqi society and studies about it Few and of great importance in the lives of students, and this is accompanied by problems worthy of being put under the microscope of research, and perhaps the most important of them is addiction to the information network (Internet).

The importance of the research

Humanity's need for fast and multiple communication has led to access to the Internet, an achievement that humanity has achieved and has turned the world into a small village, as the Canadian philosopher Marshall McLuhan said, so that our current era has been considered the age of the Internet ^[5].

The rapid growth of societies has created an environment that cannot do without the use of computers and the Internet, which has provided global access to anyone who wants it, and like any other achievement, some users have begun to spend long periods of time on it, and this can lead to addiction. It is said about individuals who enter this path that they suffer from a term recently diagnosed by researchers as Internet addiction disorder, symbolized by (IAD).

As for the effect of age, despite the general acceptance of the idea of the prevalence of problematic Internet use among young professionals, recent studies have revealed that excessive Internet use is very common across a wide range of ages, situations and status, and it is widespread among teenagers, university students, and employees in various workplaces and even Housewives.

Regarding the relationship between Internet addiction and personality traits, it appears that there are certain personality traits that predispose their owners to Internet addiction, such as low self-esteem, shyness, loneliness, depression, introversion, and low self-esteem. Shotton's study (1999) showed that people with low self-esteem have a greater tendency to Internet addiction, and that shy people use the Internet to overcome their lack of social skills and their lack of ability to communicate with others ^[6]. This may be due to the fact that low self-esteem, weak motivation, fear of rejection, and the need for approval are all associated with the contribution of depression to addictive Internet use ^[7].

In terms of demographic variables, studies have not agreed on the relationship between Internet addiction and sex. A study conducted by Shotton (1999) indicated that those who become addicted to the Internet are mostly young, introverted males with a computer orientation ^[8] found that electronic communication helps depressed people overcome their problems in real social encounters. Through the absence of non-verbal behaviors such as the absence of facial expressions and the absence of eye contact, the electronic environment is safer for depressed people ^[9]. Block *et al* (2008) conducted a study that showed that 86% of the sample showed symptoms

of Internet addiction in addition to showing symptoms of diagnosable mental health disorders ^[10]. In Iraq, the study of the psychosocial effects of Internet addiction is still almost unclear, i.e. a research movement has not yet emerged that addresses the cognitive, emotional and behavioral implications of the individual's relationship with the Internet at a time when the Internet has become an essential and indispensable part for many segments of society in daily life and on both the personal and professional levels. The current research is an attempt to uncover Internet addiction in a way that provides an informational framework of a psychological-demographic nature that contributes to defining some features of the psychological-social role that the Internet plays.

The concept of addiction

The concept of addiction is not easy to define, but the central issue for addiction is that it includes dependence on a substance or activity. Dependence is characterized by a set of characteristics, including: excessive enjoyment, withdrawal, strong desire for what one is addicted to, whether it is a substance such as alcohol and drugs or an activity such as pathological gambling, and finally loss of control. Although dependence is originally associated only with substance abuse, there is a growing recognition of behavioral addictions such as gambling, overeating, sexual addictions, work addiction, shopping addiction, addiction to risky sports such as ice skating in dangerous places and others, excessive television viewing, addiction to video games, excessive use of Computers and Internet addiction ^[11].

Despite the growth, development, and spread of the Internet and its many benefits, there are also some negative reactions that have a return to this process, and perhaps the biggest negative reaction to this is the increased need for the Internet or greater presence on it, which has shown a new term that may not have been addressed before, which is the term addiction. The first appearance of the term Internet addiction and Internet addiction disorder was in 1995 when O'Neill published an article entitled "The Magic of Life Addiction on the Internet" which was published in the New York Times, followed by Evan Goldberg's suggestion in 1995 that Internet addiction is a distinct disorder indeed. Since then, many terms have emerged that confirm the existence of this addiction, including: Internet addiction, pathological use of the Internet, compulsive use of the Internet, Internet dependency, and Internet obsession.

Scholars have differed in defining the word "addiction." Some insist that the word only applies to substances that a person may consume and then cannot do without, and if he does, this causes withdrawal symptoms for that substance that imposes serious problems on him. Therefore, he cannot do without it all at once, but rather needs a program to quit that substance by using alternative substances and gradually withdrawing the original substance, as is the case in most cases of drugs. However, some scholars object to this the narrow concept of the definition, where they see addiction as the inability of a person to do without something, regardless of that thing, as long as he meets the conditions of addiction, which is the need for more of that thing continuously until he satisfies his needs when he is deprived of it.

Stages of internet addiction

Psychologist ^[12] presented a model that identified (3) stages that individuals go through in their exploration of the internet:

- **The enchantment or obsession stage:** Occurs when the individual is a newcomer to the Internet or an existing user creates a new activity, and this stage is characterized by being highly addictive to individuals until reaching the second stage.
- **The disillusionment stage:** In this stage, individuals become uninterested in the activities they used to engage in as they were before, and once the individual reaches this stage, he can easily reach the third stage.
- **Balance stage:** In this stage, the standard use of the Internet is summarized, and access to it is at different times by individuals. These stages can be repeated in their cycle if the individual finds another new exciting activity.

Consequences of internet addiction

The Internet is in fact nothing but a network of information and knowledge, like the telephone network or the water network ^[14]. They are just communication channels. Praise and blame are not directed to this network as much as they are directed to what it contains of materials or contents, as they are directed to the way in which it is dealt with, employed, used, or the goals that seek to achieve through it. The Internet is like a large and gigantic city that has many advantages as well as many risks, but the negatives and bad things announce themselves and attract attention, even if they are less than the advantages and positives.

Excessive use of the Internet may lead to addiction, which may result in various negative effects and damages, including the individual's social, psychological, professional, academic and health life, and this is what most research and studies in this field have concluded. A recent survey conducted in the United States of America showed that 6% of Internet users are addicted to it for about 450 hours per week, which may cause, according to specialists, poor academic performance for young people and productivity for employees, in addition to psychological and social problems (anxiety, anger, introversion, believing lies, family problems, etc ^[15]).

Research methodology

In order to achieve the study objectives, the researcher used the descriptive analytical method through which he attempts to describe the phenomenon that is the subject of the study, analyze its data, the relationship between its components and the opinions that are put forward about it, the processes that it includes and the effects that it causes. Al-Hamdani (2006: 100) defines the descriptive analytical method as “the method that seeks to describe contemporary or current phenomena or events. It is one of the forms of analysis and organized interpretation to describe a phenomenon or problem, and provides data on certain characteristics in reality, and requires knowledge of the participants in the study, the phenomena that we study and the times that we use to collect data.”

Research sample: The study community consists of (27) paragraphs. A sample consisting of (96) male and female www.synstojournals.com/multi

students was chosen randomly from the College of Education and from both specializations. The sample covered the initial morning study only.

The rate was thus measured on pathological gambling, in addition to the above, previous literature that dealt with the subject theoretically and in the field was used, especially foreign literature that included a scale for Internet addiction, such as studies by: Griffiths (1998), Kaplan (2002), Chang & Man (2007), Widyanto & McMurrin (2004), and other previous studies mentioned above.

- **Determining the weights of the factors:** This step was integrated with the next step, which is proposing the items, by presenting these factors represented in the items to a group of arbitrators specialized in psychological counseling, psychology, and psychological measurement. Some items were modified and some items were proposed, and this will be explained in the arbitrators' validity later.
- **Item proposal:** In this step, the items were formulated in a way that takes into account the rules of item formulation, which are ^[16]: clarity and accuracy, that the sentence should be short, that the item should contain only one idea, avoiding formulating items in a way that suggests the respondent to choose a specific answer, and avoiding formulating negation in the items. As for the answer method, it was a multiple-choice method from among five answers: (always, often, sometimes, rarely, never), as it gives greater freedom in answering.
- **Exploratory study:** A survey study was conducted on the scale in its initial form by applying it to (20) male and female students, who were randomly selected from the Department of History and Physics, where the number of males in the sample was (10) students and (10) females. The aim of this survey study was to reach the following: ensuring the clarity of the items, determining the time period needed to apply the scale, and identifying difficulties during application. The exploratory study resulted in: Clarity of the items for the respondents, with regard to the duration of application, which ranged between (15-20) minutes, and here the maximum limit of (20) minutes was taken in order to leave the respondent a chance to answer carefully. With regard to the difficulties of application, there were no difficulties and the process was smooth. At this point, the scale became ready for application.

Statistical methods

In order to process the data of this research, the researcher used the following statistical methods available in the statistical package Spss:

- T-test for two equal independent samples to test the significance of the differences between the upper and lower groups for the test when calculating the discrimination coefficient of the paragraphs.
- T-test for one sample to compare the sample averages and the sub-averages.
- Pearson's correlation coefficient.

Result

Measuring Internet addiction among university students. The average degree of Internet addiction among university students was (71.32) degrees with a standard deviation of (26.2) degrees. By comparing this average with the sub-average of the

scale, which is (72) degrees, and using the t-test for one sample (Al-Bayati and Athanasius, 1977: 256), it was found that the calculated t-value is (0.400), which is less than the tabular t-value of (1.97) with a degree of freedom (200) and a significance level of (0.05). Table (1) shows this.

Table 1

Sample	Mean	Standard division	Hypothetical average	Calculated	Tabular	Significance
160	71.32	26.2	72	0.400	1.97	No. sign

This result shown in Table No. (1) indicates that the level of Internet addiction is at an average level, and this is a positive result, and it differs from the results of many foreign studies that indicated the presence of Internet addiction among university students, i.e. they are the youth segment that consumes the Internet to a greater degree. Identifying the significance of differences in Internet addiction among university students according to the variable:

- Gender (males, females)
 - Specialization (scientific, humanities)
- To achieve this goal, a two-way analysis of variance was used for two independent variables for the sample of (96) male and female students distributed according to the variable of gender (males, females) and specialization (scientific, humanities), and Table (2) shows the results of the analysis.

Table 2: Comparison in Internet addiction among university students according to the variables of gender (male, female) and specialization (scientific, humanities)

Source of variance	Sum of squares	Degree of freedom	Mean squares	Calculated value	Significance
Gender A	456.020	1	456.020	0.966	No. sign
Specialization B	35218.580	1	35218.580	74.584	Sign
Gender and Specialization Interaction B×A	832.320	1	832.320	1.763	No. sign
Error	92551.400	197	472.201		
the total	129058.32	200			

Referring to Table No. (2), we find that there is a statistically significant difference in Internet addiction among university students according to the specialization variable (scientific, humanities) only, i.e. the calculated F-value reached (74.584), which is greater than the tabular F-value with two degrees of freedom (197.1) and a significance level of (0.01), which is (3.84). To identify the differences in Internet addiction according to the specialization variable (scientific, humanities), and by referring to the average values, we find that the average scores of individuals with scientific specialization reached (57.45) degrees, while the average of those with humanities specialization reached (83.99) degrees, which means that there is a statistically significant difference between the average scores of students in Internet addiction, which is in favor of those with humanities specialization. In other words, those with humanities specialization are more inclined to Internet addiction compared to those with scientific specialization. Perhaps the reason for this is due to the nature of studying in the humanities specialization, which allows students to have free time that may push them to spend long periods of time on the Internet. Preparing them for addiction to it.

Discussion of the results

In general, the general indicators that were reached from the results of the current research can be summarized as follows:

- The level of addiction to the Internet is at an average level among university students in the current research, and this is a positive indicator of psychological and mental health

indicators, especially in light of the positive associations of addiction to the Internet with anxiety, depression, loneliness, introversion, shyness, and the appreciation of low mechanisms and the differentiation of low mechanisms ^[17].

- There is no statistically significant difference in Internet addiction among university students according to the gender variable (males, females), as it did not appear whether males were more addicted ^[18] than females or vice versa. This result differed from the results of many international studies that showed the superiority of males over Females in Internet addiction such as Shotton's study (1999), and Anderson's study (2000).
- There is a statistically significant difference in Internet addiction among university students according to the variable of specialization ^[19] (scientific, humanities) and in favor of those with humanities specialization, i.e. those with humanities specializations are more addicted to the Internet than those with scientific specializations ^[20].

Conclusions

After presenting, analyzing and discussing the results of the current study, the following results were reached:

- There is a statistically significant relationship between the degree of Internet addiction and specialization.
- The degree of Internet addiction is average among the study sample.
- There are statistically significant differences in the degree of Internet addiction attributed to the gender variable

among the study sample in favor of males.

- There are statistically significant differences in Internet addiction attributed to the specialization variable (scientific, humanities) among the study sample in favor of the humanities specialization.

Recommendations

Based on the results of the current research, the researcher recommends that the authorities concerned with student affairs in universities and university and public media should hold educational seminars and documentaries that explain the various risks of Internet addiction on the dimensions of physical and psychological health of individuals, especially among students of humanities studies, and according to what appeared from the results of the current research, intensify media awareness about the problem of Internet addiction and its consequences and about the institutions and associations that deal with such problems.

Suggestions

In light of the study conducted by the researcher, she believes that it is possible to conduct the following research and programs:

- Addressing the variable of Internet addiction and applying it to other samples in society, for example, a sample of graduates or school students.
- Addressing Internet addiction with the variable of academic specialization to discover the differences between specializations.
- Addressing Internet addiction and its relationship to other variables such as psychological compatibility, anxiety, etc.
- A guidance program that contributes to reducing the rate of Internet addiction among a sample of university students.

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