

Personality Traits and Internet Addiction correlation among University Putra Malaysia Undergraduate Student

Tang Sui Sum, Hanina H.Hamsan
Department of Social and Development Science,
Faculty of Human Ecology, Universiti Putra Malaysia,
Serdang, Malaysia
susantang0604@gmail.com

Introduction

According to world internet usage and population statistics, the internet users have increased rapid by 566.4% since 2000 ("Internet World Stat. World internet usage statistics news and population stats. ," 2010). Statistics shows that there are 19.8% of adolescent exhibits the symptoms of internet addiction. This indicated that adolescents have a higher tendency to addict to the internet. Internet addiction is defined as psychological dependence on the internet, regardless of the type of activity logged in (Kendell, 1998). The symptom of internet addiction included the feeling of preoccupied with the internet, failed attempts to stop internet use and neglecting sleep to stay online and any others hooked up behaviour to the internet. The unhealthy behaviour of internet addiction could interfere one's life pattern and might impact one's work, family, relationship, school and others form of daily life activities (Young, 1995). Individual with personal trait of introversion is highly related with excessive use of internet. The characteristic of introversion which are shy, deliberate, and quiet and solitude is the direct contribution factor for an individual to spend excessive time on internet activities. On the other hand, it was reported that sensation seekers which are highly related to extraversion were easily addicted to internet (Amichai-Hamburger, 2005).

There are 17,723000 internet users which are total of 61.7% of the population in Malaysia. The expanding population of internet users might as well increase the numbers of possible internet addiction in Malaysia. Adolescent is a vulnerable group to be addicted to internet if compared to others age groups due to their developmental characteristic and psychological of late adolescent to young adulthood would have driven them to explore their identity and intimacy relationship through the internet (J. J. Kandell, 1998). Previous research conducted by Choi (2007) indicated that more than 90% of the students were reluctant in cutting down the internet use. This implied that college student in Taiwan is highly addicted towards internet. Thus, this study is to determine internet addiction level among undergraduate students and to study the relationship of personality and internet addiction among undergraduate students.

Methodology

The design of this study was a quantitative approach. 480 UPM students as respondent were selected by convenience sampling. Personality traits were measured by Big Five Model of Personality Traits which consists 44 items to determine the respondent personally trait (openness to experience, conscientiousness, extroversion, agreeableness or neuroticism). Internet Addiction level was measured by Internet Addiction Test (IAT) which developed by Dr. Kimberly Young which consists of 20 items that measures mild, moderate and severe level of Internet Addiction.

Result and Discussion

The internet addiction scores in current study was in between 20 and 100 with the mean score of 51.04 (s.d. = 14.569). Majority (48.86%) of the respondents scored between 40 and 59 and following by 26.59% of respondents scored in between 60 and 79. The respondents' internet addiction severity is tabulated in Table 1. According to Young, the respondents who achieve score above 60 is considered as high level of internet addiction. Result shows that 29.78% of respondents is highly addicted to internet. This finding disagreed with the assumption that university students are prone to develop dependency on the internet to explore their identity (K. Choi, 2009; Kandell, 1998). Despite free internet service was provided to students in UPM, majority of the students do not trouble by problem of reluctant cutting down internet use. The overall low internet addiction level among UPM students indicated that UPM students were not preoccupied by the internet.

Table 1: Internet addiction scores

Level (score)	N	%	Mean	S.D.	Min.	Max.
<i>Internet addiction</i>			51.04	14.569	20	80
Low (20-39)	94	21.36				
Moderately Low (40-59)	215	48.86				
Moderately High (60-79)	117	26.59				
Very High (80-100)	14	3.19				

Note S. D= Standard deviation, Min.= Minimum, Max.= Maximum

When comparing between internet addiction and personality traits, it was found that one third of extraversion has low addiction level. Only 14.09% of extroverts exhibiting moderate high

internet addiction level. Current study also found that majority individual with personality trait of agreeableness (40%) do not have the problem of internet addiction. Similar pattern was also found for personality traits of conscientiousness, neuroticism and openness. The overall distribution of personality traits and internet addiction severity is tabulated in Table 2.

Pearson correlation test has revealed that the personal trait of agreeableness, conscientiousness and neuroticism have significant correlation with internet addiction level. Agreeableness and conscientiousness are negatively associated with internet addiction level; however, neuroticism is positively associated with internet addiction level. The result of Pearson correlation test is shown in Table 3. Current study does not find significant correlation between extraversion and internet addiction level. In contradictory, previous studies have reported negative association between extraversion and internet addiction level (Landers, 2006; Loytsker, 1997; van der Aa, 2009). However, some other studies have denied the negative correlation conclusion and suggested that personality traits of extraversion tended to become the victim of internet addiction (Amichai-Hamburger, 2005; Huh, 2008; Kathryn, 2010).

Despite introvert does not prefer social activities, but they can possibly spend their time on reading, listening to songs or watching movies instead of going online. Same applied to extravert; they could easily substitute exciting internet activities with outdoor activities to fulfil their sensation seeking needs. Therefore, it is reasonable that personality trait of extraversion and internet addiction level reflected that university students do not prefer to get along with

Table 2: Crosstabs of personality traits and internet addiction level

Personality traits	Internet Addiction Level							
	20-39		40-59		60-79		80-100	
	Low		Moderately Low		Moderately High		High	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Extraversion								
1.00-1.99	2	0.45	1	0.23	4	0.91	2	0.45
2.00-2.99	21	4.77	46	10.45	20	4.55	4	0.91
3.00-3.99	62	14.09	14	33.86	85	19.32	8	1.82
3.99-5.00	9	2.05	19	4.32	8	1.82	0	0.00
Agreeableness								
1.00-1.99	1	0.23	0	0.00	1	0.23	1	0.23
2.00-2.99	10	2.27	9	2.05	17	3.86	3	0.68
3.00-3.99	53	12.05	17	39.09	82	18.64	7	1.59
3.99-5.00	30	6.82	34	7.73	17	3.86	3	0.68
Conscientiousness								
1.00-1.99	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	1	0.23
2.00-2.99	14	3.18	52	11.82	26	5.91	5	1.14
3.00-3.99	68	15.45	15	34.77	87	19.77	7	1.59
3.99-5.00	12	2.73	10	2.27	4	0.91	1	0.23
Neuroticism								
1.00-1.99	8	1.82	4	0.91	0	0.00	0	0.00
2.00-2.99	36	8.18	97	22.05	44	10.00	3	0.68
3.00-3.99	50	11.36	11	25.23	69	15.68	8	1.82
3.99-5.00	0	0.00	3	0.68	4	0.91	3	0.68
Openness								
1.00-1.99	0	0.00	1	0.23	0	0.00	0	0.00
2.00-2.99	11	2.50	20	4.55	11	2.50	1	0.23
3.00-3.99	72	16.36	18	41.59	98	22.27	11	2.50
3.99-5.00	11	2.50	3	0.68	8	1.82	2	0.45

is not strongly related to internet addiction. The negative correlation between agreeableness their peers or friends and are more likely hook up to the internet. The finding of current study consistent with previous studies which less agreeable students would tend to spend their time on internet or social network (N. van der Aa, 2009; Landers, 2006). A less agreeable individual relied on internet to build up their social network which may increase their likelihood of excessive internet use.

Table 3: Pearson Correlation of Personality Traits and Internet Addiction

Variables	Internet Addiction	
	r	p
Extraversion	-0.035	0.462
Agreeableness	-0.167	0.000
Conscientiousness	-0.204	0.000
Neuroticism	0.212	0.000
Openness to experience	-0.006	0.896

The result also showed that a negative correlation relationship between conscientiousness and internet addiction level. This indicated that a person who is highly organized and obey to rules would not be easily got addicted to internet. Current study is in line with previous studies (Landers, 2006; Kathryn, 2010). The less conscientious students prefer the world of internet which provide them a space that lack of rules and regulations. For them, internet is place more convenient to hang out. Thus, they could easily get addicted to internet. The positive correlation between neuroticism and internet addiction level as found in current study is consistent with previous studies (Huh, 2008; N. van der Aa, 2009). Respondents who scored high in neuroticism would show the characteristics of anxiety, worrying, touchy, moodiness, jealous and self-pitying. The multi-function internet could provide a space for emotional less stable respondents to release their negative emotion with the internet. Therefore, internet could be a place for them to keep their emotion in control.

Conclusion

Current study found that majority of the students were not addicted to the internet whereas only 29.78% of the respondent were highly addicted to the internet. The result of the study showed that agreeableness, conscientiousness and neuroticism significantly influenced internet addiction levels. Current study could provide a simple guideline for consultants to identify which group of students were having higher possibility for over excessive to the internet. victim to internet addiction. Personality traits could not be changed easily; researchers and practitioners could look for substitution for internet activities to slowly remove their addiction from the internet to other activities.

References

- Amichai-Hamburger. (2005). The social net: Human behavior in cyberspace.
- Huh, S. (2008). Perception of and addiction to online games as a function of personality traits. *Journal of Media Psychology, 13*(2).
- Kandell. (1998). Internet addiction on campus: The vulnerability of college students. *Cyberpsychology & Behaviour 1*(1).
- Kathryn, F. S., W. Katherine. (2010). Psychological predictors of young adults': use of social network sites *Cyberpsychology, Behaviour and Social Networking, 13*(2), 173-177.
- K. Choi, H. S., M. Park, J. Han, K. Kim, K. Lee. (2009). Internet overuse and excessive daytime sleepiness in adolescent. *Psychiatry Clinical Neurosciences, 63*(4), 455-462.
- Landers, J. W. L. (2006). An investigation of Big Five and narrow personality traits in relation to internet usage. *Computers in Human Behavior, 22*, 283-293.
- Loytsker, A., J. R. . (1997). Internet addiction and its personality correlate. *Poster presented at the annual meeting of the Eastern Psychological Association, Washington, DC.*
- van der Aa, G. O., C. M. E. Engels et al. (2009). Daily and Compulsive internet use and well-being in adolescence: A diathesis-Stress model based on Big Five Personality traits. *Journal Youth Adolescence, 38*, 765-776.
- Young, K. S. (1996). Psychology of computer use: Addiction use of the internet. A case that break the stereotype. *Psychological Reports, 79*, 899-902.