

Investigating the relationship between cyberspace addiction and emotional maturity in 20-30 years old female students

Fariba Ataollah¹, Alireza Jafari^{2*}, Shahram Zarrabian³

¹ Master Student of Educational Psychology, Tehran Medical Sciences, Islamic Azad University, Tehran, Iran. ² Department of Psychology, Islamic Azad University Abhar Branch, Zanjan, Iran. ³ Department of Anatomical Sciences & Cognitive Neuroscience, Faculty of Medicine, Tehran Medical Sciences, Islamic Azad University, Tehran, Iran.

Correspondence: Alireza Jafari, Master Student of Educational Psychology, Tehran Medical Sciences, Islamic Azad University, Tehran, Iran.

ABSTRACT

One of the new technologies in today's society is the cyber social networks. We live in the age of networks. Internet access is a growing phenomenon and more and more people are becoming Internet users. Over the last decades, millions of people have changed their lives by using social networks creatively and connecting to the world wide web. The current research investigates the relationship between cyberspace addiction and emotional maturity in 20-30 years old female students of the medical faculty, psychology department of the Islamic Azad University of Medical Sciences, Tehran Branch. The research method is descriptive-correlational (non-experimental), and the research sample was selected using a purposive sampling method. Cyberspace addiction questionnaire, the Emotional Maturity Scale (EMS) of Singh and Bhargava (1990) were the data collection tools. Descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation coefficient, and multivariate regression analysis test were used to analyze the results. The results showed that there is a significant and positive relationship between cyberspace addiction and components of emotional maturity. The results showed the more emotionally mature students are, the less dependent they are on cyberspace.

Keywords: Cyberspace Addiction, Emotional Maturity, Students.

Introduction

Nowadays, cyberspace addiction has become one of the significant and worldwide issues. The crisis of cyberspace and internet addiction is one of the third millennia's shock and many countries struggle with this crisis. Internet addiction is one of the significant challenges of today's world and involved many families. Family and its emotional atmosphere is directly associated with internet addiction and plays a critical role in human development and growth. Insufficient and unorganized families provide the ground for unhealthy and abnormal growth for the individual^[1].

The American Psychiatric Association defines cyberspace dependence as a pattern of Internet use that causes dysfunction

and internal discomfort over two months, and provides seven criteria for diagnosing it (at least 3 criteria over 3 months) that are 1- tolerance, 2- quitting signs, 3- Internet usage time is longer than one initially intended, 4- constant tendency to control the behavior, 5- spending significant time on the internet-related issues, 6- reduction in social, job, and recreational activities caused by using the internet, 7- Continued use despite being aware of its negative effects (Patrick; Joyce, 2008; quoted by Shayegh, Azad, Bahrami, 2015)^[2].

Although the use of the Internet is a necessity in today's world, this tool, in addition to being used correctly and appropriately, can be used incorrectly and inappropriately, and provide conditions that make it difficult for the user to quit.

Some people may never reach emotional maturity, even though they are physically mature. Puberty is one of the most critical stages of development, and adolescents must complete the biological and social changes they have experienced in their concept and resolve their conflicts and doubts to build an adult personality, and eventually, maturity is obtained^[3]. Puberty has various aspects one of which is emotional maturity. Studies showed that some people never reach emotional maturity even though they are physically mature. Emotions are one of the psychological- biological aspects of maturity and have a vital role

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in the living and survival of the human. Emotions and thrills direct the human activities towards the purpose and force humans to do useful things, and warns him to do things that are harmful to him ^[4].

Emotional maturity refers to the ability to guide and facilitate emotional inclinations to achieve intended goals ^[5]. Rafeedali (2017) expresses that emotional maturity is defined as the individuals' ability to manage the emotions, and also evaluate others' various emotional moods in interpersonal relationships to take proper decisions and actions. The most prominent sign of emotional maturity is the ability to tolerate the tension while being incurious about the stimuli affecting a person and might involve him in negative emotions ^[6].

The most prominent sign of emotional maturity is to tolerate the tension. Emotionally mature people are incurious about some stimuli that affect the children and adolescents and make them impatient or sentient, and have an emotional constant capacity for joy and fun and enjoy work and leisure together ^[7]. Emotional maturity results from the realization of understanding that anything or anyone cannot bother or provoke someone or make them mad unless the person allows them to do so. Emotional maturity is current in which an individual's personality constantly tries to obtain emotional health psychologically and personally. Seven components of intimacy, empathy, assertiveness, mental stability, independence, mental balance, and the ability to respect the emotional case are introduced as a complete definition of emotional maturity. Emotional maturity results from the realization of understanding that anything or anyone cannot bother or provoke someone or make them mad unless the person allows them to do so ^[8].

Yellowlees & Marks (2018) stated that excessive use of the internet and cyberspace affected the mental health of students. Furthermore, they reminded that the students who use the internet excessively and pathologically showed more pathological and mental problems in comparison to the students who did not have the same experience ^[9]. Therefore, according to the mentioned studies, the current research attempts to answer this question that whether there is a relationship between cyberspace addiction and emotional maturity among the 20-30 years old students.

Research Theoretical Foundations

Cyberspace Addiction

Today, the role of the Internet as an efficient and effective tool in creating and facilitating communication and a means to quickly access resources is obvious. Human, who has always tried to achieve more facilities and welfare through effort and creativity, today considers himself happy as a citizen of the global village by having access to the Internet. However, the Internet, like many previous man-made products has also been the source of new problems and inconveniences even though it has partially solved his problems and brought him relative prosperity ^[10].

One of the fundamental factors in internet addiction is the presence of wide contexts of information and the variety of topics

that can generate other addictions with obsessive behaviors; for instance, for a person with sexual addictions, the internet can be a dangerous place. Furthermore, other fundamental issues are that the internet has various activities and it seems like some of these aspects are more addictive ^[10].

Consequences of Internet addiction

Consequences of Internet addiction and even excessive work with the Internet that is not addictive, have harmful results and consequences for the individual and society and cause severe physical, financial, family, social, and psychological damage.

Research has reported the prevalence of Internet addiction at around 6%. The interesting point in these studies is that adolescents are more addicted to the internet than their parents. In general, adults are less addicted to the internet than adolescents. Valis (1998) reported that on average, addicted people spend 38.5 hours per week on the internet and non-addicted people spend 4.9 hours per week on the internet. People with internet addiction spend 38.5 hours of their time on non-educational or professional activities and showed that they are not able to reduce it. In a study conducted by Skarer (1997) on the student of a university, it was reported that students spend 11 hours per week on the internet. Indeed, internet addiction is not only among adolescents and students but also, it is common between employees and adults. Some studies showed that currently, in the UK, internet addiction is the first factor to be blamed in the workplace. Yang (1998) believes that there is no cutting point to recognize an addicted person from a non-addicted one, and it is not just the number of hours people use the Internet that can be described as a sign of Internet addiction, but how the Internet has affected a person's marital, family, professional, social and sexual life can be considered the criterion of Internet addiction ^[10].

Emotional Maturity

Emotional maturity means controlling emotions. Indeed, emotional maturity does not mean that we hide our emotions or suppress them. We can reduce it using relaxation methods such as relaxing muscles, yoga, and other alike methods.

In general, our thoughts in association with the environment form our emotions. However, fortunately, by being aware of negative thoughts and improper beliefs we can control our thoughts. Psychologists define mental maturity as the ability of individuals to accept the people as to how they are. If you replace the improper and negative thoughts with positive and compatible thoughts, your ability to control the emotions will be significantly increased, leading to the improvement in your relationships, feeling happiness, loving yourself more, and reaching your goals. According to psychology, emotional maturity occurs when a person gains the ability to control their emotions and feelings. A mature person reaches a proper understanding of themselves and their social relationships emotionally, and has learned the proper way of loving, expressing feelings, and showing the reaction to different behaviors of the people around ^[11].

According to Bornard (1954), mature emotional behavior criteria are as follows: prevention from expressing negative emotions directly, nurturing positive and pioneer emotions, the evolution of tolerance in undesirable situations, increasing the satisfaction with the desirable social responses, increasing the dependency on actions, ability to select among different categories, being free from irrational fear, understanding and acting based on the limits, being aware of ability, others' progress, ability to make mistakes without feeling disgraced, ability to achieve victory, prestige, and serenity, ability to delay in satisfying impulses, enjoying routine life.

An emotionally mature child can have effective compatibility with himself, and other family members, pupils, society, and culture. However, maturity does not mean the capability of a particular action and attitude but the ability to enjoy them utterly. According to Bornard, the most prominent sign of emotional maturity is the ability to tolerate the tensions. Another sign is to be incurious about some kind of stimuli affecting the child or adolescent and making him/her impatient and emotional. Also, an emotionally mature person has a constant capacity of joy and fun and enjoys working and having fun with others, and maintains the balance between them ^[12]. According to him, emotionally mature people have the following characteristics: understanding the attitude and behavior of others, tendency to accept the attitudes and habits of others, the ability to delay their responses.

Research Background

Fathi, Sohrabi, Sa'idian (2013) compared the personality traits and identity styles in internet-addicted and non-addicted students ^[13]. The results showed that there is a difference between the internet-addicted and non-addicted students in terms of personality traits. Therefore, neuroticism was more in internet-addicted students than non-addicted students, and three variables of extroversion, adaptability, and conscientiousness were more in non-addicted students than addicted students, and also, the normative identity and diffuse-avoidant identity have been seen in the addicted group more than the non-addicted group.

Rouhani (2012) studied internet addiction and its relationship with the educational motivation and social development of high school students of Mazandaran Province. The results showed that there is a negative correlation of 0.22 between educational motivation and internet addiction ^[14].

Li, Garland, and Howard (2014) studied the relationship between the emotional atmosphere of the family and internet addiction ^[15]. Their results showed that people with internet addiction have had worse family atmosphere than the non-addicted people and feel that their parents expressed fewer feelings towards them; they also show less perceived satisfaction with the family. Furthermore, they showed that family function and conflicts are related to the internet addiction in the youth and people with internet addiction indicate a significant difference with the control group in micro scales of the family (Behavioral

control, emotional response, problem-solving, relationships, roles, and the total score of family function).

Yellowless and Marks (2018) stated that the excessive use of the internet and cyberspace affects the mental health of students. They also mentioned that students who use the internet excessively and pathologically showed more pathological and mental problems than the students who did not have this experience ^[9].

Research Method

The current study is descriptive-basic research and of correlational.

The statistical population of this research includes all the female students of the psychology department of Islamic Azad University of Medical Science, who were studying in the second semester of 2019.

The research sample was selected among the female students of the medical science faculty, psychology department of Islamic Azad University, Tehran- Medical branch using the available purposive sampling method. Since the research is correlational, the sample size must be determined based on the Pallant formula ($N > 50 + 8x$) and considering the research variables. Therefore, the sample size was calculated based on the Pallant formula as follows: $(8 * x) + 50 < \text{sample number}$. Considering the number of independent variables and their sub-scale is 13 in this research, the sample size must be more than 154.

Research Tools

Internet Addiction Test

Yang Internet Addiction Test (2002) has 20 5-points questions ranging from zero to 100. In IAT, the reader must answer each one of 20 questions based on the 6-points Likert scale including "Never 0", "Rarely 1", "Sometimes 2", "Usually 3", "Often 4", and "always 5". In this questionnaire, score 20-49 indicates the normal user, score 50-79 indicates the in danger user, and score 80-100 indicates the user with internet addiction. Yo et al (2004) reported the reliability of the questionnaire as 0.84, 0.81, 0.90, 0.86 using Cronbach's alpha, respectively. Nastizai and Ghasemzadeh (2007) also reported the reliability of the questionnaire as 0.84, 0.81, 0.90, and 0.86, respectively, using Cronbach's alpha.

Emotional Maturity Scale

Emotional Maturity Scale (EMS) has been developed by Dr. Yashviring and Dr. Bhargava (1990). The questionnaire consists of 48 questions, the first 10 questions of which measure emotional instability, the second 10 questions measure emotional returns, the third 10 questions measure social incompatibility, the fourth 10 questions measure personality breakdown, and the last 8 questions measure lack of independence. This scale is a 5-point personal scale. The questions of this scale require information for each one of the 5-points questions that are as follows: very much, much, uncertain, probably, and never. The

questions are expressed in such a way that if the positive answer is very much, for example, 5 points is allocated to that. 4 is allocated to much, 3 is allocated to uncertain, 2 is allocated to probability, and 1 is allocated to never. Therefore, the more the score is higher, the more the lack of emotional maturity and vice versa. The reliability of this scale is determined using the test-retest and internal consistency method.

The validity of the questionnaire against external criteria, i.e. the Adjustment Inventory for college students, was determined by Sinha and Singh, which was obtained as 0.64. It is possible to implement this questionnaire individually or in groups.

Implementation Method

In the current study, the data collection method is the field and library method. First, the theoretical foundations and research backgrounds were collected using various websites, books, etc. In the next stage, to implement the project and collect the data, 154 female students of the psychology department of Islamic Azad University, Medical Branch of Tehran were selected. Simultaneously, they answered Yang Internet Addiction Test (2002), and the Emotional Maturity Scale (EMS) developed by Singh and Bhargava (1990).

Data Analysis Method

Information analysis was carried out based on the research purposes using SPSS (22) software and at two levels of descriptive and inferential as follows. A descriptive method (central index, dispersion index) was used to investigate the research results. Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was also used to study the normality of the data distribution, and the Pearson correlation coefficient and multivariate regression analysis were used to analyze the research questions.

Findings

Descriptive statistics

Table 1. frequency distribution of demographic information of the statistical sample

| Variable | Floors | Frequency | Frequency percentage |
|----------------|---------|-----------|----------------------|
| Age | 25-20 | 84 | 56 |
| | 25-30 | 66 | 44 |
| | Total | 150 | 100 |
| Marital status | Single | 89 | 59.3 |
| | Married | 61 | 40.7 |
| | Total | 150 | 100 |

Description of research variables

Table 2. Indicators of center orientation and dispersion of subscales of research variables

| Variable (emotional maturity) | Average | Standard deviation | Variance | Minimum | Maximum |
|-------------------------------|---------|--------------------|----------|---------|---------|
| Emotional instability | 8.66 | 3.97 | 15.83 | 2 | 15 |
| Emotional returns | 10.78 | 3.20 | 10.26 | 4 | 2 |

| | | | | | |
|----------------------------------|---------|--------------------|----------|---------|---------|
| Social incompatibility | 19.44 | 5.51 | 30.41 | 3. | 21 |
| Personality breakdown | 19.40 | 4.38 | 19.21 | 11 | 34 |
| Lack of personality | 11.43 | 2.24 | 5.01 | 12 | 30 |
| Emotional maturity (total score) | 43.05 | 15.20 | 231.09 | 12 | 63 |
| Variable | Average | Standard deviation | Variance | Minimum | Maximum |
| Cyberspace addiction | 50.46 | 15.66 | 245.42 | 29 | 78 |

Table 2 shows the indicators of central tendency and dispersion of the emotional maturity scale. As can be seen in the table, the studied group obtained an average of 43.05 in the emotional maturity scale, and the total average score in the identity styles in the studied group is 130.72. information orientation (38.95) has the highest average in this scale and diffuse-avoidance orientation has the lowest average of (23.23) on this scale. Graph 2-4- also indicates that. The studied group obtained an average of 50.46 in the Internet addiction test.

Data Inferential Analysis

First, Kolmogorov-Smirnov tests were calculated to check the normality of the frequency distribution of each case and are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Results of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test to evaluate the normality of research variables

| Research Variables | Kolmogorov-Smirnov test | P significance |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|----------------|
| Emotional instability | 1.23 | 0.099 |
| Cyberspace addiction | 1.16 | 0.13 |

As can be seen in Table 3, due to the non-significance of the value of F and also the level of significance above 0.05, the data of the present variables are normal. Therefore, appropriate parametric tests can be used to analyze the data.

Investigating Research Hypotheses

Research Hypothesis: there is a relationship between the cyberspace addiction and emotional maturity components of 20-30 years old students.

Table 4. Summary of the results of the correlation matrix between cyberspace addiction and emotional maturity components

| Variables | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
|------------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|-------|---|
| Cyberspace addiction | - | | | | | |
| Emotional instability | 0.09 | - | | | | |
| Emotional returns | 0.11 | **0.52 | - | | | |
| Social incompatibility | **0.33 | **0.51 | *0.18 | - | | |
| Personality breakdown | **0.25 | **0.70 | **0.21 | **0.56 | - | |
| Lack of independence | **0.27 | 0.02 | **0.35 | **0.28 | *0.17 | - |

**p<0.01 P<0.05*

According to Table 4, the relationship between cyberspace addiction and emotional maturity components was investigated using the Pearson correlation coefficient. Component of

cyberspace addiction has a positive significant correlation with social incompatibility ($r=0.33$, $n=150$, $p<0.01$). there is a positive significant correlation between cyberspace addiction and personality breakdown ($r=0.25$, $n=150$, $p<0.01$). there is a positive significant correlation between cyberspace addiction and lack of independence ($r=0.27$, $n=150$, $p<0.01$). However, there is no significant relationship between the components of emotional instability and emotional returns and cyberspace addiction. Therefore, with the increase of components of emotional maturity that have a negative aspect, cyberspace addiction increases in students. Students who are more dependent on cyberspace also have less emotional maturity.

Conclusion

The current research aims to investigate the relationship between cyberspace addiction and the emotional maturity of 20-30 years old female students of the psychology department of Islamic Azad University, Medical Branch of Tehran. The results showed that there is a relationship between cyberspace addiction and the components of the emotional maturity of 20-30 years old students.

Correlation coefficients calculated between the emotional maturity components and cyberspace addiction are significant at the level of 0.01 and 0.05. In general, it can be concluded that there is a significant relationship between the components of maturity (social incompatibility, personality breakdown, and lack of independence) and cyberspace addiction. The more these components increase, the greater the tendency of students to become dependent on cyberspace. In other words, there was a direct and significant relationship between emotional immaturity and the tendency to cyberspace in students. The weaker a person's emotional maturity, the more dependent he or she becomes on cyberspace, and conversely, the more complete he or she becomes, the less dependent he or she becomes on cyberspace and the less addicted he or she becomes to Internet addiction.

According to the research literature, the experimental evidence with which, findings of this reach can be investigated, have not been obtained; however, this research is in line with the findings of Khajavi, Heydari, Khajavi (2016).

Explaining the findings of this study, it can be said that emotional maturity occurs when a person acquires the ability to control his emotions and feelings. The adult has reached a correct understanding of himself and his social relations emotionally and has learned the correct way to love, express feelings, and react to various behaviors of those around him ^[1]. People with emotional maturity can develop a positive mental attitude ^[6]. These people think before the operation and have control over their behavior. They are self-reliant and responsible for their own lives and actions; communicate with others, understand them, and work with them effectively and efficiently. Also, emotional maturity is an effective predictor of a person's level of success in life ^[7]. Less mature students also have less ability to adapt

emotionally and socially to the environment and face more psychological problems. There is a lack of elements of mental and emotional maturity, especially in controlling motivation, preventing aggression, and future orientation. It seems that the youth who cannot manage their emotions and feelings and did not reach an understanding of their feelings and their reasons, experience more concerns and fears. The youth with less emotional maturity will not be able to control their emotions and might respond to the stressful situations only through expressing emotions; because these people do not have a replacement to respond to the stress. People with emotional maturity are self-regulate and can manage their emotions better. These people can tolerate tension and stress while being incurious about them. Therefore, the possibility of manifesting incompatible behaviors in reacting to stressful situations will be reduced, and this fact plays a significant role in improving their adaptability, and such a tendency and excessive use of cyberspace are not seen in these people.

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