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Poster Presentation Research

Internet Addiction: A Clinically Valid Construct and its Correlates

Ali Khazaee*, Usha Barahmand

Department of Psychology, Faculty of Education & Psychology, University of Mohaghegh Ardabili, Ardabil, Iran.

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Abstract

Although the internet has become one of the most important information resources for university students, excessive internet use can be defined as uncontrolled and harmful use of the internet, in other words, Internet Addiction. Internet addiction (IA) can be described as a maladaptive preoccupation with internet use impairing social, occupational and other areas of a person's functioning. Recent reviews have suggested a relationship between IA and psychological symptoms or disorders. Yet, IA is a less researched entity in psychiatry, especially in Iran. The intent of this study was to find the association of IA with socio-educational characteristics, internet use patterns, character and temperament dimensions and psychological variables, namely depression, anxiety and stress. 1246 undergraduate students participated in this study. Young's internet addiction test, Cloninger's temperament and character inventory and depression anxiety and stress scale were utilized to assess IA, personality traits and the psychological variables respectively. Data were analyzed using logistic regression analysis to determine the predictors of IA. Findings indicated that 14.6% of the students had IA. Time spent online, usage of social networking mobile applications, novelty seeking, anxiety and stress emerged as significant predictors of IA. Age, gender, self-rated academic achievement and perceived socioeconomic status did not predict IA. IA appears to be a relevant clinical construct with a significant prevalence rate. Findings imply that a host of other factors may be associated with IA. To get a clear picture of the construct, further research into its correlates is necessary.

Keywords: Internet Addiction, University Students, Social Impairment, Psychological Disorders.

Corresponding Author: Ali Khazaee

Email: *Ali.khazaee87@yahoo.com*

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