



IMPACTS DUE TO INTERNET ADDICTION AMONG MALAYSIAN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to study the impacts due to Internet addiction among Malaysian university students. Research methodology used in this study was by distributing survey questions to 653 university students from five different universities in Malaysia. There were four possible impacts measured in this research study which include Academic Performances, Relationships, Personality and Lifestyle. The finding shows that, Internet addiction cause problems with respondents' academic performances, having bad personality and practicing an unhealthy lifestyle. There were significantly differences in academic performances, personality and lifestyle between "Average user" and "Excessive user". The above matter will be further discussed throughout this paper.

Keywords: Internet usage, Internet activities, Problems affected.

1. INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, Internet is primary resources to help students in completing their assignments, doing research and even as a media to release their stress. Internet helps the students in beneficial aspects, but it also helps to destroy student's life if the students misuse or overuse it. An important research focus of the Internet addiction is the problems caused by the Internet. The beneficial aspects are like helping the students to improve their communication skills, enhanced their relationships with others, assisting students to increased their CGPA and many more that positive matter. It can help students to destroy their life if the students do not have awareness regarding the

disadvantage of the Internet, for example, accessing the porn websites, gambling and for academic cheating. Most university students living away from their parents with fewer classes have extensive to get Internet addiction (Shu and Chieh-Ju, 2007).

Kwiatkowska examined 100 students aged 19 to 24 years old and resulted that due to long term stay online, young people have problems in learning, work and family's duties, online stay above 5 hours a day maybe followed by increased risk of addiction (Kwiatkowska et. al, 2007). Excessive user and addictive user may face some problems due to their Internet usage problem.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Kubey examined 576 students from Rutgers University to study the affect of academic performance impairment due to heavier use of the Internet. The survey consisted 43 multiple choice items on Internet usage, study habits, academic performance and personality measures. This research only interested in term of recreational Internet usage, means, only personal use of the Internet and does not concerned on school-related (Kubey et.al, 2001).

In addition, the result of the study also showed that heavier recreational Internet use was shown to be highly correlated with impaired academic performance. These results show significance that Internet use impaired student's academic performance by kept them up late night and felt tired on the next day and sometimes made them missed class due to Internet use. They assumed that Internet offer a convenient haven for who living away from home for the first time and maybe could not control little elsewhere but able to control it when at the keyboard. Other than that, first year students usually form small groups of their high school friends to keep in touch and chatting until late night. This situation is one of the element that contributes to some new students do not fully adapt the social rough-and-tumble of their new college environment.

There are few research studies done on how Internet use is associated with individual differences in personality. Issues that have been addressed are like; "Does the use of the Internet make people lonely or are lonely people more likely to use the Internet?", "Do those people who are anxious about establishing personal relationships prefer to engage in online friendships over which they feel they have more control?", and "Does Internet would reduce the quality of the Internet user's face-to-face social contacts or reduce their shyness?". Other than that, a few studies have explored the relationship between Internet addiction with personality variables such as sensation seeking, pleasure experience, use-and-gratifications, loneliness and depression.

A study done to examined the loneliness and interpersonal communication between independent Internet user and non-dependent by Kubey et.al (2001) resulted that dependent students felt significantly "more alone than other students". These results strongly suggest that loneliness is a factor associated with heavier Internet usage. Other than academic performances and personality problems, Internet addicts faced problems in their lifestyle. Most of the Internet addicts practice unhealthy lifestyle. A research study which investigated students' Internet use and its impact on their lives found that Internet addicts reported more negative consequences on their daily routines (Chou and Hsiao, 2000). Other study done by (Caldwel et.al, 2010) also stated that students who Internet dependents may be less involved in extracurricular and social activities.

Other problem created due excessive Internet use is a relationship. Does Internet helps enhanced relationship or gives problems in the relationship? Young's (2007) in her article stated that other than caused academic performance impairment but relationship problems are also extremely common to those who are addicted to the Internet. However, some studies resulted that Internet has enhanced the relationships with family and friends since the Internet became a means to communication (IDRC, 2008). Similar findings reported by (Lin and Tsai, 2003) in their study revealed that the Internet slightly negatives influences on their school learning but strong positive influences on their peer relations.

3. METHODOLOGY

The survey questions were designed by the researcher and some questions were adopted from Dr. Kimberly Young's Internet Addiction Test question (Kimberly Young, 1996). Self-reported question was used for this survey. The survey consists of 3 sections. Section A aimed to obtain some profile of the respondent specifically on the personal background, education background and daily/campus activities of the respondent. Section B aimed to get some internet activities and its impact towards the respondent's life. Majority of the questions in Section B requires respondent to choose the answer using 5-point Likert scale like Strongly Disagree-1, Disagree -2, Neither Agree or Disagree -3, Agree-4 and Strongly Agree-5. Towards the end of Section B, there are about four questions require respondent to answer "Yes or No". Finally, Section C is targeted to know the Internet usage of the respondent for one login session for selected online activities together with its rank 1 to 8 where 1 is most used and 8 is least used.

3.1. Participants

The surveys were distributed to different groups of student ranged from first year students to final year students which taking different courses offered in five different universities. There were 653 respondents to this survey including the international students.

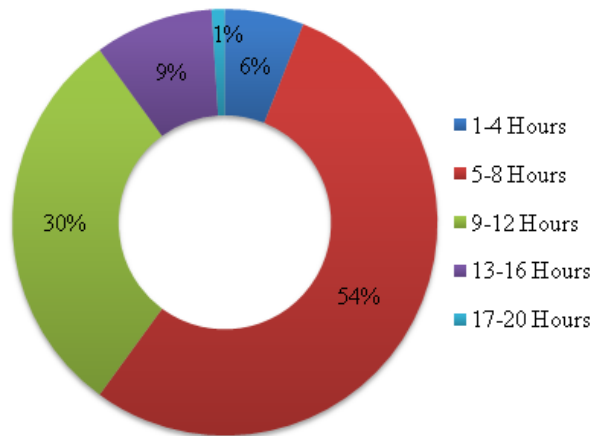
3.2. Procedures

This survey was conducted in self-administrated environment which means without the interviewer's interference. Instructions were given to the participants with an explanation on the objective of every sections included in the survey form. About 15 minutes were allocated to the participants to complete the survey and all participants' privacy and confidential are secured.

4. ANALYSIS AND RESULT

The result has been analyzed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS Version 18). Data were analyzed using statistical procedures such as, frequency, cross-tabulation and t-test. To get respondents' Internet total usage per log-in session, we total up all the usage for all online activities. After that, we group it into range so easier for further analysis. The result was shown in Figure 1.1 below.

Figure-1. Respondents' Internet usage Per Log-in session



Respondents who used the Internet more than 5 hours considered as excessive Internet user (Subramaniam et.al, 2008). Thus, we can conclude that, 93% of the respondents are excessive Internet user and they have a big chance to be addicted Internet user.

Internet usage analysis is to identify whether the respondents were excessive Internet user or normal user. But, in order to identify the addiction level, we use the modified Internet Addiction Test which suitable with the Malaysian life culture. All 20 questions are regarding the impact of the Internet with their life. The total score for all 20 questions is 80 points. The interpretations of the total score and the results of the analysis are as in table 1 below:

Table-1. The interpretations of the total score and the results of the analysis

Total Score	Interpretation	Results
0 – 40 points	The user is an average Internet user. Even though the user overused the Internet at a times but the user have control over their usage.	67.5% of respondents
41 – 60 points	The user is an excessive Internet user and experiencing some problems because of the Internet. Their Internet usage could give a full impact on their life if they do not control it.	30% of the respondents
61 – 80 points	The user having a serious problem with their Internet use. Their Internet usage had cause significant problems in their life. The user should evaluate the effect of the Internet on your life and tackling the problems due to the Internet usage.	2.5% of the respondents

This result discovered that more than half of the respondents were average Internet users. They can control their Internet usage and did not affect their life even though they overused of the Internet at a time. There are 30% of the respondents were categorized as excessive Internet users. Internet has made them to face and experience some problems in their life. These users are high risk to be addicted to the Internet and will give more negative impact on their life if they do not overcome their Internet problem. From the analysis, it found that 2.5%, which 17 of the

respondents scored 61 – 80 points. They reported that Internet cause negative impact on their life. They always overused the Internet and depending on it every time. They have to evaluate their Internet usage and manage their time to get a balance life back.

As mention before, this study is to investigate the relationship between Internet addiction problem with academic performance, personality and lifestyle among university students. There are four hypotheses to be proved and tested. The four hypotheses to be tested are:

- There is no significant difference in terms of academic performances problems between “Average User” and “Excessive User” students
- There is no significant difference in terms of retaining relationship with family and friends between “Average User” and “Excessive User” students
- There is no significant difference in terms of personality between “Average User” and “Excessive User” students
- There is no significant difference in terms of lifestyle between “Average User” and “Excessive User” students

To test these hypotheses, t – tests were performed using SPSS version 18. Before that, we divided the respondents into two groups. For those who scored 0 – 40 points for Internet addiction level test was grouped as “Average User” group and for those who scored more than 40 points for the test was grouped as “Excessive User”.

The test revealed there was statistically significant difference in relation to agreement with academic performance between these two groups ($t = -18.95$, $df = 651$, $p < 0.001$) and null hypothesis are rejected. Excessive user ($M= 2.29$, $SD= 0.58$) reported significantly highly agree of having academic performances problems caused by their Internet usage compared to Average user ($M= 1.37$, $SD= 0.58$). In other words, Excessive user reported that their academic performances were having problems due their Internet usage.

In term of relationship, the t – test revealed there was statistically significant difference in relation to agreement with Internet helps to retain their relationship with family and friends ($t = -7.63$, $df = 651$, $p < 0.001$) and null hypothesis are rejected. Average users ($M= 2.40$, $SD= 0.63$) reported significantly highly agree that Internet helps them to retain relationship with their family and friends compared to Average user ($M= 2.01$, $SD= 0.55$). In other words, Excessive user does not have problems in term of relationship with their family and friends and highly agree that Internet helps them to enhance these relationships. Compared to the Average user, they reported that Internet grew away and cause problems in their relationship. Maybe, this is the reason that helps them in controlling their Internet usage.

Excessive user reported that their personality while online would be different with their personality in the real life. From the t – test statistical analysis result, it shows that there was statistically significant difference in personality ($t = -18.22$, $df = 651$, $p < 0.001$). The p – value is less than 0.05 make us to reject the null hypothesis. Excessive user ($M= 2.48$, $SD= 0.60$) reported significantly highly agree they change their personality to be a negative compared to Average user

($M= 1.52$, $SD= 0.64$). In other words, Excessive user does have problems with their personality when they are not connecting to the Internet. They will turn to moody and depressed person when they are not online and will be ok once they connected to the Internet. Differ with the Excessive user; the Average user does not have the personality change issue. They maintain their personality when they are online or offline.

Finally, t – test analysis for lifestyle, it shows that there was statistically significant difference in lifestyle ($t = -17.601$, $df = 651$, $p < 0.001$). The p – value shows less than 0.05 and resulted concluded that the null hypothesis should be rejected. The result shows that Excessive user ($M= 2.48$, $SD= 0.60$) had reported significantly highly agree they had a non-healthy lifestyle compared to Average user ($M= 1.52$, $SD= 0.64$). Excessive user reported that they practice unhealthy lifestyle. In other words, Excessive user does have problems with their lifestyle when they start connecting to the Internet. They reported that they were neglecting their household chores, losing their sleep, skipping and delaying their prayers while they are online. In other words, Internet made them preoccupied and made them failed to manage their life well.

This concluded that, three (3) problems affected Malaysian university students' lives which are academic performances, personality and lifestyle. In term of relationships, they reported that Internet enhanced their relationships with family and friends. Similar findings reported by (Lin and Tsai, 2003) in their study revealed that the Internet slightly negatives influences on their school learning but strong positive influences on their peer relations.

5. CONCLUSION

We discovered some impacts have been identified due to Internet Addiction. From the statistical analysis test, we found that, Internet addiction cause problems with respondents' academic performances, having bad personality and practicing an unhealthy lifestyle. There were significantly differences in academic performances, personality and lifestyle between "Average user" and "Excessive user". This result concordant with a research study from Singapore regarding the excessive Internet use among Singapore Youth (Subramaniam et. al, 2008) which resulted that it is significantly most the excessive users felt that grade/school work suffers because of the time spent online. "Excessive User" having problem with their academic performances because of their addiction to the Internet and did not focus to their study. Other than that, the Internet addiction effects their personality. They easily got depressed and feeling moody when they are away from Internet. The last negative impact due to Internet Addiction discovered in this study is "Excessive User" group practising an unhealthy lifestyle. They willing to sit in front of the computer for few hours rather than go for outdoor activities such as sports, camping and etc. Apart from that, we discovered one positive impact due to the Internet Addiction which is the Internet helps them to retain and enhance their relationships with their family and friends for "Excessive User" group while the "Average user" reported as different way.

From all these results, we can conclude that Internet itself is not an addictive but the specific application that allows and offer Internet user to gain more entertaining rather than real life make them to stay online longer and overuse it. Before it is too late and become worst, we have to do

something to evade our country from facing the same problem as Korea and China in term of Internet addiction issue. In future study, we will come out with a guideline of proper use of the Internet for students which the purpose is to help the students manage to control their Internet usage and consequently all the problems due to Internet addiction as above could be resolve and helps student to balance in their life and succeed in their study.

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