

The Relation between Internet Misuse and Psychological Adjustment of Kuwait Undergraduates

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Abstract

The quick and global internet adoption has had an impact on society and given its users several advantages. Even though the internet has significantly improved nearly every industry, some users are becoming obsessed with it, unable to regulate how they use it, endangering their work and personal lives. The current study aimed to find the relationship between internet misuse and psychological adjustment of Kuwait undergraduates. With an estimated 63 percent of Kuwait's population being under the age of 25, young people are Kuwait's largest demographic, as well as the country's largest group of internet users. A sample size of 215 students was selected, and 204 students responded. The current descriptive study gathered data and information from verified official portals, research/survey/journal references on the topic, opinion polls, and review reports. The misuse and impact of the internet on Kuwaiti undergraduate life are found with a high percentage of bad habits and heavy use leading to psychological disorders. Heavy usage and bad habits were found to a greater extent among female undergraduates rather than male undergraduates. However, the impact on mental health was more among male undergraduates. It is recommended that most major changes in Kuwaiti society will likely be brought about by undergraduate internet usage to reduce physical and psychological disorders.

Keywords: Adolescents, Kuwait, psychological effect, internet addiction, undergraduates, misuse.

العلاقة بين إساءة استخدام الإنترنت والتكيف النفسي لدى طلبة وطالبات جامعة الكويت

الملخص

كان لاعتماد الإنترنت السريع والعالمي تأثير على المجتمع ومنح مستخدميه العديد من المزايا. على الرغم من أن الإنترنت قد تحسن بشكل كبير في كل صناعة تقريباً ، إلا أن بعض المستخدمين أصبحوا مهوسين به ، غير قادرين على تنظيم كيفية استخدامهم له ، مما يعرض عملهم وحياتهم الشخصية للخطر. هدفت الدراسة الحالية إلى معرفة العلاقة بين إساءة استخدام الإنترنت والتكيف النفسي لطلبة البكالوريوس في الكويت. مع وجود ما يقدر بنحو ٦٣ في المائة من سكان الكويت دون سن ٢٥ ، فإن الشباب هم أكبر ديموغرافي في الكويت ، فضلاً عن أكبر مجموعة من مستخدمي الإنترنت في البلاد. تم اختيار حجم عينة من ٢١٥ طالباً ، واستجاب ٢٠٤ طالباً. جمعت الدراسة الوصفية الحالية البيانات والمعلومات من البوابات الرسمية المعتمدة ، ومراجع البحث / المسح / المجالات حول الموضوع ، واستطلاعات الرأي ، وتقارير المراجعة. تم العثور على إساءة استخدام الإنترنت وتأثيرها على حياة الطلاب الجامعيين الكويتيين مع نسبة عالية من العادات السيئة والاستخدام المفرط مما يؤدي إلى اضطرابات نفسية. تم العثور على الاستخدام المفرط والعادات السيئة إلى حد كبير بين الطالبات الجامعيات وليس الذكور الجامعيين. ومع ذلك ، كان التأثير على الصحة النفسية أكثر بين الطلاب الجامعيين الذكور. من المستحسن أن تحدث معظم التغييرات الرئيسية في المجتمع الكويتي عن طريق استخدام الإنترنت للطلاب الجامعيين لتقليل الاضطرابات الجسدية والنفسية. الكلمات المفتاحية: المراهقون ، الكويت ، التأثير النفسي ، إدمان الإنترنت ، الطلاب الجامعيين ، سوء الاستخدام.

1. Introduction

More and more individuals are accessing numerous online resources daily as a result of the internet's increasing role in daily life and their discovery of its educational, practical, useful, and entertaining qualities. Multiple internet advantages are increasing addiction for students. The study conducted by Moreno–Guerrero et al. (2020) explained that the effects of the internet in terms of addiction are constant and continuous. Internet addiction has detrimental effects on an individual life due to increasing cyber suicide, cyberbullying, cyber porn, social isolation, cyber racism and internet addiction (Dasteaee et al., 2020). A high level of psychological distress is found among adolescents and young adults due to cyberbullying. As per Gopalan (2019), continuous use of the internet increases social isolation and psychological problems among young adult users. Dasteaee et al. (2020) agreed that a Lack of parental monitoring and checking on students was a direct aspect of increasing misuse and following the prohibited sources of entertainment. Age restrictions are necessary to control the internet service to reduce misuse. It is the ease of accessing internet sources that further increases internet–based socialisation and decreases activity levels. A decreased activity also impacts mental well–being.

The extensive usage of the internet has an impact on all educational institutions, as well as businesses and other organisations, in Kuwait, which was the first Arab nation to offer public access to the internet in 1994 (Dasteaee et al., 2020). Kuwaiti schools, colleges, and universities now use the internet as a teaching tool, allowing students to communicate and conduct research as part of their education. Since the internet was made available in the classrooms of almost all Kuwaiti educational institutions and information literacy courses were made available to first–year students, both male and female students now

have an equal opportunity to learn how to master the use of this technology in a professional manner. However, because of the ease of access and widespread usage of the internet, both male and female students may develop addictions to this technology. The internet has had a negative effect on Kuwait University students' psychological behaviour. Students completely rely on the internet, and as a result, they abuse it by playing online games and visiting unlawful websites, both of which have a negative effect on their physical and mental health.

1.1 Internet Service at Kuwait University

Despite providing its students with unrestricted and free access to the internet, Kuwait University has very little internet use in its classrooms for academic purposes (Wheeler, 1998). There aren't any classes available that educate students on how to utilize the internet, with the exception of a few departments, especially in the sciences and engineering. Students use the internet primarily on their own and out of curiosity. In one way or another, students most frequently utilize WWW, Email, and Internet Relay Chat (IRC). Understanding English, which is the language used most often online, presents a significant challenge for Arab students and may limit their capacity to filter material for academic purposes.

A new means of communication and integration into the "global village" may have been made available to many university students in Kuwait through the internet. Their lives might change gradually as a result of the internet. As they are currently going through a significant turning point, it is crucial to develop strategies for utilizing new technology to enhance consumers' lives without erasing their cultural identity.

Numerous students' lives have been altered by the internet. They may now stay informed about news, read daily newspapers posted

online, follow discussion threads in newsgroups, send emails, join chat rooms, listen to radio broadcasts, and explore the internet in a variety of ways. For those Kuwaiti students, the internet helped them feel a feeling of belonging and community, which demonstrates how swiftly the internet is spreading beyond national borders.

1.2 Effect

There are two potential causes of internet addiction, according to Dasteaee et al., (2020), shyness or the fear of social encounters; nevertheless, the internet provides people with options to satisfy their social and emotional requirements. The second justification is the locus of control, which is defined as a collection of beliefs about one's actions and how those actions relate to how one is rewarded or penalised. Other significant factors, such as loneliness, anxiety, sadness, and self-consciousness, were also listed as potential causes of this kind of addiction.

According to Davis et al., (2002)"people may surf the internet more frequently when they are stressed out at work or are simply depressed." They also discussed how compulsivity, depression, and loneliness could lead to internet addiction. Although Davis et al. (2002) concurred that shyness and sadness had a detrimental impact, they also identified procrastination and rejection sensitivity as two additional factors contributing to internet addiction. Internet addiction not only causes psychological issues but also leads to an increase in the chances of physical disorders among male and female students. This is due to increased sedentary behaviour like prolonged sitting time while surfing and reduced physical activity. The most common issue highlighted in the physical disorder is obesity which ultimately increases the body weight of internet users and causes further complications.

Numerous research suggests that there are certain indicators or symptoms of internet addiction. One may exhibit these signs if they

have an internet addiction. Otherwise, they won't be able to comprehend the serious issue they are dealing with. Generally speaking, most addicts find it very challenging to realize that what they have labelled as just a habit is truly an addiction. Internet addiction symptoms include the following, according to the Illinois Institute for Addiction Recovery:

- "Preoccupation with the internet.
- Use the internet for an increasing amount of time in order to achieve satisfaction.
- Feeling of restlessness, moodiness, depression or irritability when attempting to cut down the use of the internet.
- Staying online longer than originally intended.
- Jeopardised or risked loss of significant relationships, jobs, educational or career opportunities because of internet use.
- Use of the internet as a way to escape from problems or to relieve a dysphoric mood (e.g., feelings hopelessness, guilt, anxiety, depression)".

1.3 Internet Addiction

IAD is a general term that refers to many different behavioural and impulse-control issues (Soule, Shell, and Kleen, 2003). They consist of:

1.3.1 Adult chat room or online porn addiction is referred to as cybersex

According to McCormick's estimation, from 2000, there were over two million internet users who were also addicted to online sex. Schneider (2000) observed that addicts frequently start to prefer their online relationships to them in-person partners. She remarked that the evolution of cybersex addiction was quick, and the study's findings corroborated those of earlier investigations into the subject. Conlin (2000) discovered that sexually explicit websites were the ones that were most frequently used in the office.

In certain instances, these sites experienced activity levels of 70% during business hours. Conlin predicted that one out of every five white-collar male workers visited pornographic websites while at work. In spite of the extremely strict censorship, filtering, and blocking software that is implemented by governments, Internet Service Providers (ISP), and, to some extent, parents, pornographic materials are still accessible through groups, weblogs, some dating websites, and the majority of peer-to-peer downloading sites, such as Rapidshare, Megashares, and other services in the Arab world.

1.3.2 Online friendships created in chat rooms might lead to a dependency on cyber-relationships.

Anecdotal examples are used by authors to demonstrate how chat and Email may be addicting. According to one self-described addict, "Every time I'm not hooked on, I feel empty, alone, and I just want to be there bouncing from site to site, chatting, and sending Emails. Probably a dozen or more times a day, I check my Email (Walker, 1998). Chat rooms attract some elderly addicts and women, who spend hours conversing there (Bower, 2000).

1.3.3 Compulsive Day trading, auction shopping, or gambling on the internet

The use of the internet for gambling may pose a more serious issue than traditional forms of gambling. Due to a lack of restrictions and the solitary nature of the activity, internet gambling may be more dangerous than other types of gambling. According to Mitka (2001), populations in high school and college may be more at risk due to the dangers of internet gambling. In addition, the rapid development of the internet may increase the availability of online gambling options and the associated physical and emotional problems. Addiction to drugs or alcohol, depression, and unsafe sexual activity are some of these issues.

1.3.4 Compulsive Web or database browsing: an information overload phenomenon

Due to its heterogeneous, unsorted, unfiltered information, the potential to produce more information at a faster rate, and other factors, some observers, such as White and Dorman (2000), believe that the internet is the main contributor to information overload. With the internet's growing library of more than one billion pages, information overload has nearly become a byword for it, and consumers are finding it more and more challenging to quickly access precisely relevant content.

1.3.5 Compulsive game playing or programming is a form of computer addiction

Younger users and men are drawn to games and pornographic websites, according to Bower (2000), who cites clinical psychologist Orzack from Harvard Medical School. They can play online games for up to 80 hours every week.

1.4 Objectives

The main objective of the current study was to find out "The Impact of Internet Misuse on the Psychological Adjustment of Kuwait Undergraduates (Male & Female)".

1.5 Significance of Study

The study has introduced internet abuse results and their impact on university students. This is a way to trigger the students about the positive use of the internet. The study can also assist the students in finding how the internet can increase mental health issues among students silently. Moreover, the university management can have the idea of creating such seminars where awareness about internet misuse and psychological stress can be developed. The study can assist parents in controlling the information regarding parental control and its requirement on the internet and observing their children reduce internet

misuse. The university management can also set control on the internet as free availability of the internet is provided to the students in universities.

2. Literature Review

In a study by Scherer (1997), the researcher considered that most college students have easy access to the internet at home and through their schools; they have frequently been the focus of earlier research studies on internet use. It further explains both the appropriate and inappropriate ways that college students utilise the internet. According to Young (1998), the researcher feels that "internet use can definitely affect academic, social, economic, and vocational life, similar to other addictions like pathological gambling, eating disorder, and alcoholism. Pratarelli, Browne, and Johnson (1999) have given an explanation of a factor analytic technique for measuring internet addiction. The study conducted by Ferris (2001) narrated that the term "internet Addiction" has been adopted during the past ten years by a growing body of peer-reviewed literature, and its acceptance as a real condition has increased. The study conducted by Wang (2001) summarised the findings of a questionnaire survey on internet usage among 217 students at a remote institution in Australia. The findings suggested that internet dependence can have multiple facets. Another study by Suler (2004), it is emphasized the detrimental impacts of internet addiction, noting that "people may lose their jobs, drop out of school, or get a divorce from their spouse because they can't help spending all of their time in virtual worlds." Those folks suffer from pathological addiction. However, the study conducted by Engel Berg and Sjoberg (2004) has examined the effects, stating that "the internet would isolate people from true social connections and ultimately result in diminished social participation" They also argue about the possibility that using the internet could isolate users' real-world emotional and social

skills, which could be a mediating factor. The study's conclusion was that excessive internet use causes social isolation. Furthermore, the study conducted by Young (2004) explored that "marital, academic, and employment-related problems can also be caused by the internet as it permeates our lives at home, school, and work."

2.1 Hypothesis

To categorize the effects of internet misuse on students' psychological distress, an analytical study on The Impact of Internet Misuse on the Psychological Adjustment of Kuwait Undergraduates was conducted. The study investigates the current internet impact, how it affects the pupils, and threats that may harm both them and other people worldwide. The hypothesis of the study conducted was:

H1: There is a statistically significant relationship between the misuse of the Internet and psychological adjustment among Kuwait undergraduates

H0: There is no statistically significant relation between the misuse of the Internet and psychological adjustment among Kuwait undergraduates

3. Research Methodology

This research paper conducted on The Impact of internet misuse on the psychological adjustment of Kuwait Undergraduates was based on a survey of the literature as well as fact studies that have been made widely available worldwide. In order to conduct our analysis based on the background study, the researcher first gathered pertinent data that either supported or refuted the elements listed in the research's introduction section.

3.1 Research Methods

Data was collected from students through a direct survey as the quantitative method was selected to narrate the study results. It is a primary data collection tool applied to collect data from the university of

Kuwait, that is, the general population. Sampling introduces a subpart of the population that is accessed from the whole population to collect responses. Simple random sampling was applied to collect data from students, and they were provided with the research tool, which was a questionnaire.

The study population was the entire university of Kuwait students (undergraduates). The current research has incorporated factual observations from the following study areas:

- Student internet abuse at Kuwait University
- The psychological impact of the internet on students
- What percentage of Kuwait University students are addicted to the internet?
- Definitions of Internet abuse among students, both male and female

3.2 Research Tool

The survey questionnaire was selected for the current study. The questionnaire was based on three parts. The first part indicated the demographics of the student, including age, session, year, and gender. The second part included questions regarding internet usage and timing, and the third part was about the psychometric check. There were 215 students that took part in the study overall, but 11 responses were dropped for being uncompleted. There were 204 students that ultimately took part in the study. In the preceding paper, the total number of students was 204, including 73 males, as they were 36% of that total, while 131 girls were 64%. The mean age of students distinguished from the survey was ± 19.5 among males and ± 20 among females. Brief Adjustment Scale-6 (BASE-6) was applied to assess the psychological adjustment evaluation (Peterson, 2015). The sample was split into internet users for 6 hours and more than 10 hours, taking self-reported measures. BASE-6 is also a self-reported measure of general

psychological adjustment, including the perception of emotional distress with three items anger, depression and anxiety. The related inferences were self-esteem, occupational functioning and personal relationships. The sample items were included as per Peterson (2015), indicating five Likert scales. The main question in the psychological adjustment was, "To what extent do you feel unhappy, discouraged and depressed in a week?" On the Likert scale, the higher score indicated a low level of psychological adjustment.

3.3 Data Analysis

The current study was based on descriptive analysis. Primary and secondary data were accessed where primary data was implemented in the analysis, and secondary data was collected for managing literature and study background. In order to gather data and information, verified official portals, research, survey, journal references on the topic, opinion polls, and review reports formally issued by affiliated agencies/institutions, functioning bodies, and research organisations are employed. The secondary information was obtained from these sources. Utilising the credentials and methodology described in those information sources, the reliability of this data is verified, and it is thoroughly checked to ensure that it does not contain any contradictory or misleading facts that could jeopardise social, political, economic, or other platforms.

4. Findings

The means the age of males was $+19.5$, and for females, it was $+20$. The study has indicated a ($p < 0.01$) and a significant relationship among variables. The study accepted the hypothesis of a statistically significant relation between the misuse of the Internet and psychological adjustment among Kuwait undergraduates. Internet addiction was found to be negatively linked with psychological and physiological disorders.

Table 1: Results of Student male and female undergraduates

Internet Misuse	Male Students Number %	Female Students Number %	Total
Physical Disorder	04 05.5%	03 02.3%	07 03.4%
Psychological Disorder	16 22.0%	23 17.5%	39 19.0%
Psycho-Physical Disorder	08 11.0%	09 07.0%	17 08.3%
Bad Habit	27 37.0%	54 41.2%	81 39.7%
Heavy use	18 24.5%	42 32.0%	60 29.4%
Total	73 100%	131 100%	204 100%

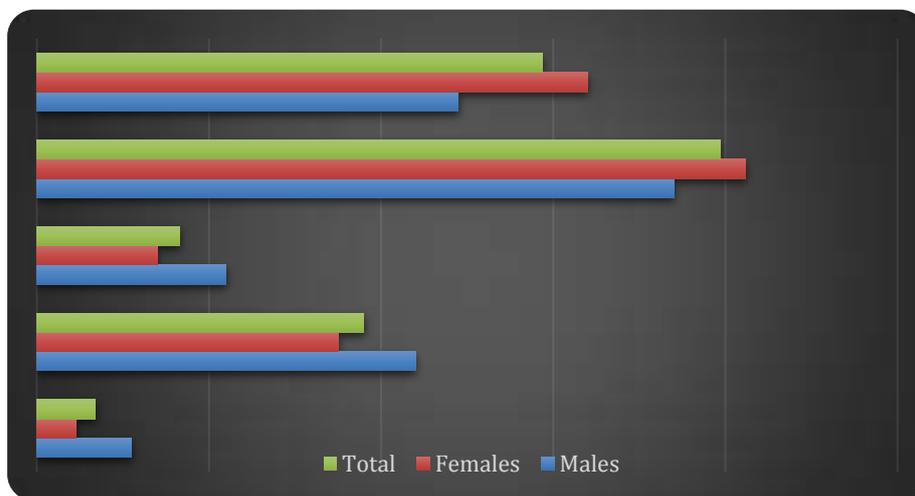


Figure 1: Descriptive observations

5. Discussion

Increasing usage of the internet for educational purposes is a major facility in reducing the stress of books and journal reading. The possibility of usage is also increasing due to the explosive growth of the

internet. However, the increasing usage and extent of social media are making it challenging for students. Internet usage is converted into misuse of the internet due to its availability and reach within universities. The need for the internet is imposed due to the digital libraries, but the results are leading to physical and psychological disorders in male and female students to different extents. The study findings are based on the data collected from Kuwait university. It was declared about the facts of male and female students. The students with physical disorders were four males and three females as they were addicted to the internet. However, when it comes to a psychological disorder, it can be found here that 16% of men and 17.5% of women were facing psychological disorders. Almost 42% of girls had a bad habit of internet usage as compared to the male students, 37%. The heavy usage of the internet was also alarming among female students as compared to male students. The overall results were indicating female undergraduates were highly addicted to the internet as compared to males, and internet misuse problems were also big among female graduates. The bad habits on the internet are the main reason for increasing psychological disorders as a high ratio is found for the bad habit on the internet, resulting in high psychological disorders among female undergraduates.

6. Conclusion

The misuse of the internet has negative psychological impacts on Kuwaiti undergraduates. The results show the need to focus on developing and implementing therapies that address the mental health needs of women in order to minimise the psychological discomfort, stress, anxiety, and depression that disproportionately affect them in comparison to men. For these targeted therapies, it is essential to prioritize behaviors like raised anxiety and aggressive behavior, verbal and physical abuse, inactivity, lack of sleep and rest, and unfavorable health symptoms that have been shown to predict mental health issues

in the general population. There are already many mental health problems in Kuwait. Kuwait must now more than ever implement mental health interventions that target specific needs and address health inequities by promoting healthier stress coping mechanisms, enhancing healthy behaviors and social support, establishing systems for family counselling, and providing approachable and acceptable facilities that support healthy lifestyles for the most vulnerable people. If these interventions are successful, it may be feasible to alleviate the current burden that internet overuse has placed on those affected, prevent mental health disorders from getting worse, and aid efforts to prevent future occurrences.

6.1 Limitations

This study was conducted on male and female Kuwait University students in the academic year 2021–2022. Small sample size was selected from the huge population. The study was only limited to university students as internet addiction is also increasing among college students. The study is based on a few facts about internet usage as various issues like cybersex and cyberbullying are going to leave a negative impact on the student learning process. Religious boundaries are also of great interest while studying the internet and its misuse.

6.2 Future Study Considerations

The future study is considered to be applied to all universities and colleges in Kuwait to assess the impact of internet misuse and psychological disturbance. The future study will be based on huge sample size, and regression analysis will be applied. The main variables will be similar to the addition of dependent variables.

6.3 Recommendations

The Kuwait university can follow a few recommendations:

- I. The IP address of the students should be related to the university ID, as they can be provided with a login that they can use. This will help to assess the traffic coming from a particular ID, and student counselling can be applied.
- II. The university policy should be devised for the students using the internet with banned websites that can increase student addiction or bad habits.
- III. The university needs to apply religious boundaries in the search, and students should be fined or punished while searching for such data that is prohibited in religion.
- IV. Awareness can be started from the parents as they can assess whether their kids are facing psychological issues due to internet misuse, and they can consult psychologists to reduce internet usage.

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