The Relationship between Personality Variables and Web Surfing

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ABSTRACT

Objective: The present study has been carried out to determine the relation of psychological factors of high school students and web surfing in Shiraz. Among five districts of Shiraz’s high school students 296 students were randomly selected.

Method: Data was collected using Big Five Neo questionnaire. Results: The results of the study showed that there was a positive and significant relationship between introversion, conscientiousness, agreeableness, and web surfing and there was no relationship between openness and extroversion to web surfing.

INTRODUCTION

Despite the spread benefits of the Internet, law makers and educational authorities have warned of its negative effects especially excessive use of Internet, relevant physical and psychological problems, and disastrous consequences on many people. [2], these studies which have adapted qualitative and quantitative methods to detect internet addicts, sometimes have used terms as internet dependents, technology addicts, problematic Internet users, or pathologic internet users.

Web surfing is a broad term for a wide variety of behaviors and problems related to obsession and incitement control. Like all kinds of other addictions, web surfing is a kind of psychosocial disorder with characteristics such as action (the need to increase the time required to obtain utility equal to the time of initial use), isolation symptoms (especially anxiety, impatience), affective disorders (depression, bitterness, moodiness) and disruption of social relations (decrease or absence of social relationships in terms of quantitative or qualitative) [5]. Basically the main problem is that why some people are severely dependent on the Internet and this dependency turns into addiction. What factors make a person vulnerable to this disorder?

It seems that one of the factors that can be involved in Web surfing is personality traits. Personality traits are stable features that donot change from a situation to another situation. They are stable and durable trends of responding in the same way to different stimuli and can predict person behaviour in different situations [7]. These traits may make a person vulnerable to some disorders. The theory of five-factor personality, today, is one of the most comprehensive theories in personality study arena which is consist of five major personality factors including neuroticism, extroversion, conscientiousness, openness and agreeableness. Theoretically there is a great overlap between neuroticism and Web surfing, while there is contrast between theoretical constructs of extroversion and conscientiousness on the one hand and Web surfing on the other hand.

In relation to persons who play computer games, Griffiths and Dancaster found persons with personality experience type A who show more severe psychological reactions against computer games incitements. Some of personality traits may be predictors of internet use. For example, it can be said that persons who are highly open using a curious method and their tendency to adventuresome, internet activity as a opportunity for searching novelty may be attractive for them.

Highly agreeable people are often considered as very good and easy companions. Sometimes, assuming the hostile nature of internet, may make it so attractive for these people and facilitates internet friendship for them.

Also highly extroverted people tend to be more social and are attracted to provoke the environment. This tendency may affect the extroverted to use internet for searching new and exciting things. In the same study, there was found a negative relationship between extroversion and traditional social internet activities (for

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example, meeting in chat rooms and participating in discussion groups). Eventually, it has been proved that neurotic persons have shown lower levels of internet use.

Golberg regards web surfing disorder as a kind of behavioural disorder which is used as encounter mechanism and has been derived from dependency on materials criteria DSM-IV.

The key reason in internet and its related subjects is the enforcement which is received by the person. The first time a person experiences internet enforced by its responses and causes the activity to continue then he/she became conditional in doing that activity to obtain the same responses. This conditionality may extend to its related sides such as computer sound, the sense of keyboard touch and so on. These secondary reinforcers also act as a sign for web surfing growth and its accompanying factors.

In cognitive theory “web surfing disorder” is resulted from incorrect cognition and or incorrect cognitive process and its treatment is based on the correction of incorrect cognitions process.

From behavioural-cognitive point of view symptoms of web surfing disorder include obsessional thoughts about internet, weak stimulus control, disability in stopping internet use and above all is the belief that internet is the only friend of any person. Moreover, when there is no connection to the internet, thinking about internet, predicting the next dialing and spending a lot on internet and its relevant issues are also other symptoms of this disorder. The other major problem is the separation of person from his/her friends in favor of their internet friends and eventually a sense of guilt about using internet and lying to friends about spent time and keeping it as a secret are of other symptoms of this disorder. Awarning of unacceptability of their work socially, these people are not able to stop it because spontaneously leads to lower self-evaluation and then more symptoms.

In case of causality of web surfing from behavioural-cognitive approach point of view, the belief is that disorder is caused by person’s cognitive problems and his/her behaviours which either conserve disagreeable response or increase its severity. According to Davis although predominant symptoms are affective and behavioural disorders, cognitive symptoms are indeed highly effective and may create affective and behavioural symptoms and not vice versa. Therefore, despite previous researches that put emphasis on behavioural components and negative consequences in everyday life these factors which also exist in depression is a kind of repetitive stylistic behavior, a sense of self awareness, low self-evaluation, depression, low self-esteem and social anxiety.

The main purpose of this research is responding to this question: what is the role of five factor personality of NEO in explaining web surfing among adolescents?

**Research Question:**
What is the role of each of students’ personality components in explaining their web surfing?

**Research Hypotheses:**
1. There is a significant negative relationship between extroversion and web surfing.
2. There is a significant relationship between Introversion and web surfing.
3. There is a significant relationship between conscientiousness and web surfing.
4. There is a significant relationship between openness and web surfing.
5. There is a significant relationship between agreeableness and web surfing.

**Research Methodology:**
The statistical population of the present research consists of 42353 high school students in Shiraz in 2014. 296 students were selected based on Morgan table using stratified random sampling among 14 schools of 2 districts in Shiraz and of each school one class and of each class a few students.

Research instruments: short form of personality questionnaire NEO and Yung Web Internet addiction questionnaire

**Research Findings:**
Multiple regression and Pearson correlation were used to examine research hypotheses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introversion</td>
<td>296</td>
<td>46.68</td>
<td>16.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extroversion</td>
<td>296</td>
<td>62.79</td>
<td>10.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Openness</td>
<td>296</td>
<td>59.76</td>
<td>10.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agreeableness</td>
<td>296</td>
<td>62.94</td>
<td>11.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conscientiousness</td>
<td>296</td>
<td>66.98</td>
<td>14.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Web surfing</td>
<td>296</td>
<td>27.81</td>
<td>19.66</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To explain web surfing according to carried out multiple regression test and based on data in table 4, it is considered that agreeableness factor at first step and conscientiousness factor at second step totally explain the rate of web surfing as $R^2=0.055$ and based on data in table 3 $F=11.174$ and $P<0.001$ which indicate one sideness
of the relationship between variables. Also according to data in table 5 standard coefficients show that maximum Beta coefficient belongs to agreeableness factor which has a negative relationship with web surfing ($\beta = -0.160$ at $P < 0.001$) and then conscientiousness factor which has negative relationship ($\beta = -0.129$ at $P < 0.002$).

Table 2: Step by Step Variance Analysis of Multiple Regressions to Predict Criterion Variable.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Sum Squares</th>
<th>Degree of freedom</th>
<th>Mean Squares</th>
<th>F Test</th>
<th>significance Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Regression</td>
<td>6009.01</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6009.97</td>
<td>16.15</td>
<td>0.0001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remainder</td>
<td>1391.30</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>372.05</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sum</td>
<td>148136.3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6009.97</td>
<td>0.0001</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Regression</td>
<td>8205.78</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4103.89</td>
<td>11.17</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remainder</td>
<td>139928.5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>367.26</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sum</td>
<td>148136.3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6009.97</td>
<td>0.0001</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4: The Results of Step by Step Regression Analysis to Predict Criterion Variable (Web surfing) based on Predictor Variable (Personality Traits).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>b</th>
<th>Standard Beta</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agreeableness</td>
<td>-0.267</td>
<td>-0.160</td>
<td>-3.053</td>
<td>0.002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conscientious</td>
<td>-0.179</td>
<td>-0.129</td>
<td>-0.446</td>
<td>0.655</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Discussion and conclusion:

The first result of the current study showed that there are negative relationship between extroversion and web surfing. Although this relation was not statistically significant, it showed a negative correlation. Thus, it seems that introversion is more correlated with web surfing. This result of current study is in accordance with Nithya and Julius that its explanation may be related to extroverts’ characteristics. Extroverts have friendly, warm, philanthropic, perk, active, excite-seeking behaviors. These characteristics show why the relation between introversion and web surfing is negative. It seems that introverts, due to not being interested in collective life and preferring loneliness, is more apt to web surfing than extroverts. Furthermore, spending a lot of time in internet requires avoiding human relations that fits characteristics of extroverts.

The second result of current showed that there is a negative and significant relation between extroversion and web surfing; i.e. when extroversion of a person increases, web surfing is more probable for him/her.

The third result of current study revealed that there is not a significant relation between openness and web surfing. It seems that persons with openness have tendency to external and real world rather than virtual world, so they do not tend to web surfing.

The fourth result of current study revealed that there is a negative and significant relation between conscientiousness and web surfing, i.e. increased conscientiousness in person decreases the probability of person’s web surfing. This result of current study is not consistent with previous studies [9].Conscientiousness includes restraining stimuli of society which facilitates behaviors focused on person’s purposes and duties. This dimension emphasizes will and reliability and includes punctuality, responsibility and programming, industriousness and tendency to progress and assiduity. These features help people to know life’s challenges a chance for learning and to repel them instead of escaping and avoiding problems. Obviously, people who have features such as punctuality, responsibility and programming, industriousness and tendency to progress and assiduity could not surf internet for long hours without purpose and waste their time that justifies negative relation conscientiousness and web surfing.

This study showed that there is a negative and significant relation between personality variables, agreeableness, conscientiousness and web surfing. This finding of current study is not consistent with previous studies [9]. The fifth finding of current study showed that there are a negative and significant relation between agreeableness and web surfing; i.e. increased person’s agreeableness decreases tendency to web surfing. This finding is not consistent with [8]. Blitheness, compassion, simplicity and politeness are characteristics of agreeableness. It is correlated with Alfred Adler’s social interst concept and agreeableness. He considers social interest concept a talent for cooperation with others for achieving personal and social aims. As long internet use is not consistent with these characteristics, it is natural that it has negative relation with internet addiction.

REFERENCES


