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RESEARCH ARTICLE

INTERNET ADDICTION AMONG STUDENTS OF HEALTH FACULTIES IN JAZAN UNIVERSITY, KSA.

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Abstract

Aim: To determine the extent of internet addiction among students of health faculties in Jazan University and its effects on their academic performance and social relationships. Method: This study reports the results of surveyinvolved 400 students (198 males 202 females) from 4 health faculties in Jazan University to measure the prevalence of internet addiction among the students and its effects on the academic performance and social relationships. It is a cross sectional study in which a standardized self-administered questionnaire was used to classify the internet addiction into 4 levels according to the score of each student. Also some questions were asked about the academic performance and social relationships of the students. Results: Its found that males are more addicted to the internet than females although females stay home more than males and also we found that about 59% of the students have mild addiction to the internet but this could be considered normal because nowadays the access to the internet is much easier and available and makes life easier and things to be done faster and also mild addiction doesn't have negative effects as moderate and severe addiction.

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Introduction: -

The internet nowadays is an essential media for communications, academic research, exchanging information and entertainment. With the advancement of Internet technology, the number of internet users is greatly increasing and it is considered a must in people's social life and education, but some users are considered heavy users for using the internet for a long time every day, which leads to a general weakness in all aspects of their life, academic performance or career and social relationships. Internet addiction leads to inattention to time passage, sometimes accompanied by skipping meal and insomnia. Internet addiction is a common problem, especially among young people and teenagers leading to weakness in the academic performance, achievements and social isolation. Sometimes internet addiction shows some signs, for example when the connection is down some signs of anger, nervousness or depression appears. We chose this topic to be our research title and we chose the students of health faculties in Jazan University for being in an important stage of education and which will determine the future of the student and also the future of health services in Jazan. We noticed that the students have time management problems especially before exams. Some of them said that they always can't finish reading the subject before exam takes place because they have not enough time. We think that they have time but they have bad time

management. We asked about something the students are interested in, some of them answered they spend a long time daily on social websites and others answered that they are interested more in online gaming. So it is all about being connected to the internet for hours and wasting their time.

Aim:-

To determine the extent of internet addiction among students of health faculties in Jazan University and its effects on their academic performance and social relationships.

Objectives:-

- 1- To determine the prevalence of internet addiction among the students of health faculties in Jazan University.
- 2- To compare between males and females in the prevalence of internet addiction.
- 3- To compare the academic performance of the students according to the pattern of internet using.
- 4- To determine the effects of internet addiction on social relationships.

Literature Review:-

Defining Internet Addiction:-

The American Psychiatric Association defined the Internet addiction disorder as the problematic use of the Internet, including the various aspects of its technology, such as electronic mail (e-mail) and the World Wide Web (American Psychiatric Association, 2000).

The Effects of Internet Addiction:-

A study by Robinson and Kestnbaum considers that as more time is spent online, it directly affects the person's other activities and in turn, his/her social life (Robinson, Kestnbaum, 1999).

Scott Hazelhurst, Yestin Johnson and Ian Sanders conducted an investigation of the academic performance and the internet use of 2153 undergraduate students. Data from university proxy logs allowed them to examine usage patterns and they compared the data to the students' academic performance. Their results showed a small but significant (both statistically and educationally) association between heavy internet using and poor academic results (lower marks, higher failure rates) (Scott Hazelhurst, Yestin Johnson and Ian Sanders).

Kubey, R. W., Lavin, M. J. and Barrows, J. R. conducted a study in 2001 on 572 students. The results of this study show that heavier recreational Internet use was shown to be correlated highly with impaired academic performance. Loneliness, staying up late, tiredness, and missing class were also intercorrelated with self-reports of Internet-caused impairment. Self-reported Internet dependency and impaired academic performance were both associated with greater use of all Internet applications, but particularly with much greater use of synchronous communication applications such as chat rooms and MUDs, as opposed to asynchronous applications such as email and Usenet newsgroups (Kubey, R. W., Lavin, M. J. and Barrows, J. R. 2001).

In a study conducted by Sadiq M. Sait, Khalid M. Al-Tawil, Syed Sanaullah and Mohammed Faheemuddin, the highest percentage among all employment types of internet users was for students and it was 32.4% (Sadiq M. Sait, Khalid M. Al-Tawil, Syed Sanaullah and Mohammed Faheemuddin, 2006).

Anderson (1998) collected data from a mixture of colleges in the US and Europe, yielding 1,302 respondents (with an almost equal gender split). On average, his participants used the Internet 100 min a day, and roughly 6% of the participants were considered as high-users (above 400 min a day).

Scherer (1997) studied 531 students at the University of Texas at Austin. Of these, 381 students used the Internet at least once per week and were further investigated. Based on the criteria paralleling chemical dependencies, 49 students (13%) were classified as Internet dependent (71% male, 29% female).

The positive Impact of the Internet:-

There also have been numerous studies that report a positive impact of the Internet on society (Robinson et. al., 2002; Cole, 2000; Cole, 2003). The results from these survey-based studies suggest that the Internet is mostly used to complement existing social activity and doesn't directly replace it. A study of international scholarly networks by Koku et al. shows that though the Internet helps in maintaining contact with different people, most of these are

almost always those who users also meet in real life; hence this only serves to further strengthen social interaction (Koku, Nazer& Wellman, 2001).

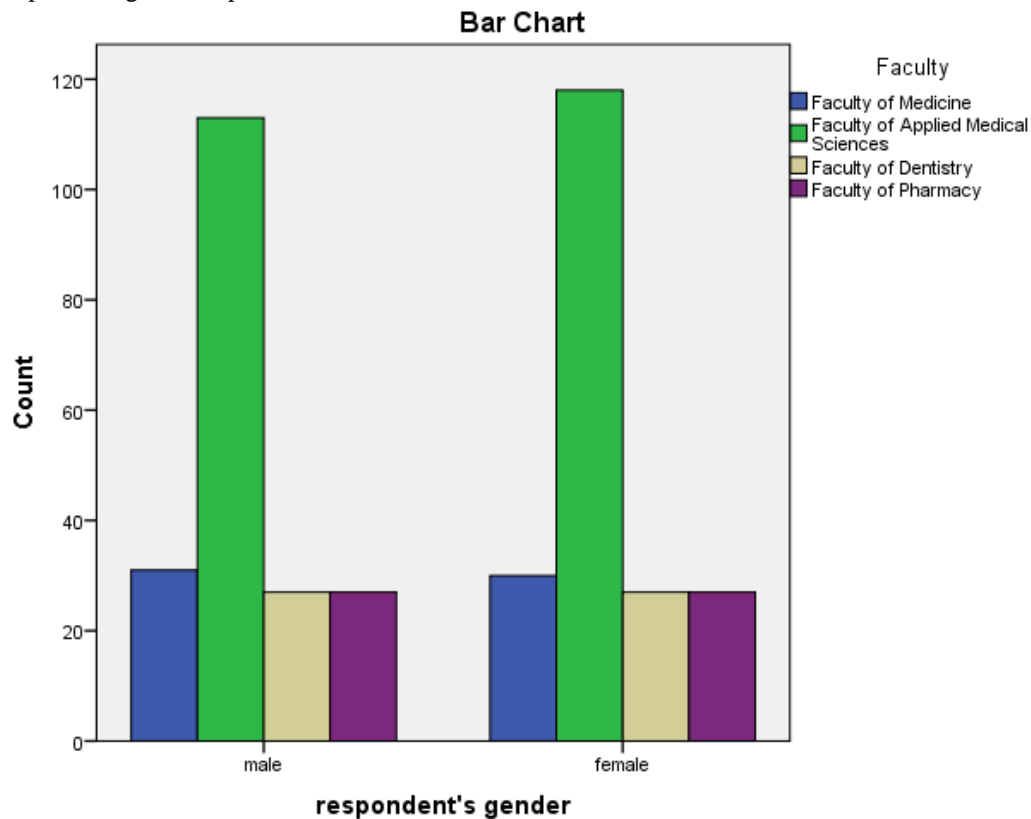
In another study by Nie and Erbring, most of the people who were surveyed, reported no change in their social lives, though excessive Internet users (logging more than 40 hours online per week) reported a decline in socializing, interaction, and other activities (Nie, Erbring, 2000).

Methods:-

The study design used is cross sectional and t we used the stratified random sampling method to determine the sample size for each faculty as the following table:

Count		Faculty				Total
respondent's gender		Faculty of Medicine	Faculty of Applied Medical Sciences	Faculty of Dentistry	Faculty of Pharmacy	
	male	31	113	27	27	198
	female	30	118	27	27	202
Total		61	231	54	54	400

Bar Chart representing the sample distribution:



The data was collected from each faculty using a self-administered questionnaire containing an internet addiction test developed by Dr.Kimberly Young. It is a reliable and valid measure of addictive use of internet consists of 20 items that measure mild, moderate and severe level of internet addiction. To answer each question of the questionnaire the following scale was used:

Answer	Score
Never	0
Rarely	1
Occasionally	2
Frequently	3
Often	4
Always	5

After totaling up the scores for each item the level of internet addiction was determined as follows:

Score	Level of Internet Addiction
Less than 20 points	No internet addiction
From 20 to 49 points	Mild internet addiction
From 50 to 79 points	Moderate internet addiction
From 80 to 100 points	Severe internet addiction

To assess the academic performance of the students we asked them to write down their GPA and also some questions about the performance and productivity were used. To assess the status of social relationships of the students we asked some questions about visiting relatives and meeting friends. After that we entered the data in the SPSS software for the data analysis, making tables and graphs.

Results: -

After determining the level of internet addiction we found that the 58.8% of the students was considered having mild addiction to the internet.

A table showing the level of internet addiction of the students:

Level of internet addiction		Frequency	Percent
	No internet addiction	83	20.8
	Mild internet addiction	235	58.8
	Moderate internet addiction	76	19.0
	Severe internet addiction	6	1.5
	Total	400	100.0

Then we compared between males and females in each level of internet addiction and we found that males are more addicted to the internet.

A table of comparison between males and females in each level of internet addiction:

		level of internet addiction of respondent				Total
		No internet addiction	Mild internet addiction	Moderate internet addiction	Severe internet addiction	
respondent's gender	male	18	137	40	3	198
	female	65	98	36	3	202
Total		83	235	76	6	400

After that we compared between the mean of the GPAs according to gender and according to level of internet addiction. According to gender we found that the females' mean GPA is slightly more than that of males.

According to Gender:					
Gender	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
male	3.322711	166	.6109202	1.3000	4.7000
female	3.444765	170	.7602890	.8500	5.0000
Total	3.384464	336	.6922205	.8500	5.0000

According to the level of internet addiction:

INT-AD	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
No	3.390147	68	.7481729	2.0000	4.8700
Mild	3.432513	195	.6263232	1.3000	5.0000
Moderate	3.228088	68	.8106129	.8500	4.7000
Severe	3.560000	5	.3938908	3.2200	3.9900
Total	3.384464	336	.6922205	.8500	5.0000

Asking about the GPA Showed no significance may be because of high missing data and also the students were not equally distributed among the levels of addiction. However, we asked some questions about the grades and productivity of the students and the following are some examples:

		How often do respondent's grades suffer negatively because of the amount of time he/she spends online?						Total
		Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently	Often	Always	
No internet addiction		66	11	4	0	2	0	83
Mild internet addiction		92	54	63	15	7	4	235
Moderate internet addiction		9	12	23	5	15	12	76
Severe internet addiction		0	2	0	0	0	4	6
Total		167	79	90	20	24	20	400

Level		How often does respondent's academic performance or productivity suffer negatively because of the amount of time he/she spends online?						Total
		Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently	Often	Always	
No internet addiction		69	9	3	0	2	0	83
Mild internet addiction		105	63	43	14	8	2	235
Moderate internet addiction		5	21	23	4	13	10	76
Severe internet addiction		0	0	0	0	2	4	6
Total		179	93	69	18	25	16	400

In the previous two tables we can see that 4 of 6 students (66.7%) who are considered having severe internet addiction said that their grades, academic performance and productivity are always affected negatively because of the heavy use of the internet and the remaining 2 students answered (often).

Social Relationships:

		How often does respondent choose to spend more time online over visiting his/her relatives?						Total
		Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently	Often	Always	
No internet addiction		73	8	2	0	0	0	83
Mild internet addiction		86	82	47	11	5	4	235
Moderate internet addiction		5	18	21	12	7	13	76
Severe internet addiction		0	0	1	0	1	4	6
Total		164	108	71	23	13	21	400

In the previous table we can see that 4 from 6 students (66.7%) who are considered having severe internet addiction said that they always choose to stay home using the internet over visiting their relatives and also we can see that those who are considered having no internet addiction didn't choose the answers (frequently, often and always).

		How often does respondent choose to spend more time online over going out with others?						Total
		Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently	Often	Always	
f	No internet addiction	69	8	6	0	0	0	83
	Mild internet addiction	73	51	82	18	5	6	235
	Moderate internet addiction	9	14	19	13	11	10	76
	Severe internet addiction	0	0	0	2	1	3	6
Total		151	73	107	33	17	19	400

In the previous table we can see that 3 of 6 students (50%) who are considered having severe internet addiction said that they always choose to spend more time using the internet over going out with others while no one from those who are considered having no internet addiction choose this answer although they are 83 students.

Discussion:-

The previous results reveal that 83 students (20.8%) are considered having no internet addiction and at this level we noticed excellent social relationships. 235 students (58.8%) are considered having mild internet addiction but could be considered as average users because they do not experience problems because of the internet. 76 students (19%) are considered having moderate internet addiction and experience occasional or frequent problems because of the internet and about 13% of them experience some sort of social isolation. Only 6 students (1.5%) are considered having severe internet addiction and experience significant problems because of the heavy use of the internet in which 4 students (66.7%) are socially isolated because of the internet and have problems in their academic performance and productivity more than the other levels.

In the comparison between males and females in each level we found that males are addicted to the internet more than females although males in Saudi Arabia can do much more activities than females do. These results resemble the results of Scherer study mentioned before. When we compared the mean of the GPAs between males and females we found that the mean of the GPAs of the females is slightly higher but we couldn't confirm the effect of the internet addiction on the academic performance using only the GPA because of missing data or may be some students were not telling the truth although we did not ask them about names or any other personal information. However, we can confirm that students with severe addiction are more affected in their grades using the questions mentioned before and matching the results with Kubey, R. W., Lavin, M. J. and Barrows, J. R. study mentioned before.

Conclusion and Recommendations:

In general, internet addiction is an extremely broad topic with little guidance and definitions. Signs of internet addiction mentioned in the literature were clear and can be noticed easily and we can confirm internet addiction using these signs but confirming the effects of internet addiction is a little bit harder especially its effects on the academic performance. Controlled use of the internet can help both the academic performance and social relationships. However, the use of samples and data collection methods that minimize sampling bias is recommended. Also researchers should work to develop a standardized definition for internet addiction. Using more specific methods to measure the effects of internet addiction on the academic performance is recommended.

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