

Prevalence of Facebook Addiction among Gender variation of University Students: A Comparative Analysis

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to explore the Facebook addiction phenomena among the university students. It was hypothesized that female students are more likely to be addicted to Facebook than their male counterparts. Survey research design was used for the study. The sample of the study comprised of (N=400) Facebook users, including 230 females and 170 males. Their age range was between 20 to 40 years. Bergen Facebook Addiction Scale (BFAS), a 6 items self-report scale constructed by Andreassen, Torsheim, Brunborg, and Pallesen (2012) was used in the study. Comparative analysis was carried out to investigate the variation of Facebook addiction among males and females students. It was found that the level of Facebook addiction is significantly different among males and females students of the university. The popular social networking site Facebook is most prevalent among the female university students aged 18-24 years.

Key Words: Facebook Addiction, Gender Variation, University Students and Bergen Facebook Addiction Scale (BFAS)

INTRODUCTION

Online social networking has emerged globally as an indispensable part of everyday life (Hampton, Sessions Goulet, Rainie, & Purcell, 2011). One of the global on-line environments, Facebook, is becoming an increasingly natural environment for a growing fraction of the world's population. From few years, Facebook has become

Dr. Muhammad Shakir

Lecturer, Department of Educational Training,
The Islamia University of Bahawalpur
Email: shakir.iub@gmail.com

Dr. Ishrat Siddiq Lodhi

Director Academics, Higher Education Commission (HEC) Pakistan
Email: ishratsiddiqalodhi@gmail.com

Ms. Maryam Zafar

M.Phil Scholar, Department of Applied Psychology
The Islamia University of Bahawalpur

the most famous and fastest developing networking website and unavoidable medium for social interaction. Social Networking sites (OSNs) like Facebook have started by catering to specialized groups but have since expanded their reach substantially, permeating virtually every stratum and demographic group in the developed world (Gunuc & Dogan 2013). Different research studies depicts that currently Facebook facilitates daily interactions of over 800 million users spending more than 40 minutes. This social network and technology provides an interesting area of study, although research is still in its infancy. According to Hampton, Goulet, Rainie, & Purcell, (2011) Facebook has become very popular among users of social networking sites. Firstly, it was used only for the purpose of study; later on Facebook became popular as social media throughout the world. In beginning only university students were the main user of this social media but later on public also become the part of this social media. Now, people from all communities and societies are the part of this media (Mahmood & Farooq, 2014).

National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences suggest that it is necessary to handle with the uncontrollable and sometimes negative presence of technology on people and mostly teenagers (Balci, 2013). A glance at Google trends shows that “Facebook addiction” has been progressing steadily since late 2008, it is now 4 times what it was then (Facebook, 2014). It have estimated that over 0.35 billion people have Facebook Addiction Disorder (FAD); a term coined by American psychologists to explain an individual’s inability to control one’s actions on Facebook due to Facebook addiction (SickFacebook.com, 2010). The psychologist and psychiatry in USA made a survey from 1,605 participants on their social media habits, study found that almost one third 39% of the participants are self-described “Facebook Addiction” while the 61% respondents admit to escape into the world of Facebook and browse what people are saying and doing in the middle of the night and they prefer to see their friends on social media instead of face to face interactions (Alabi, 2013). Similarly, other studies also seemed agreed that Facebook is so risky for turning into addiction when it is unemployed. A part from this there are so many side effects of these type of social media networking sites which portrays the real picture more and more in short time (Kuss & Griffiths, 2011b).

A study by Thompson & Loughed, (2012) found that 81.4% of the participants were agreed that Facebook is the most important element for social interaction among students at university level. It is known that excessive usage of new technology, such as social networking sites (SNSs) may be especially addictive for adolescents. Different research studies reported that in Pakistan more than 23 million users of Facebook with more than 20 million users are having above 18 years old while only 3 million users are below 18 years. In India the female users are over 16 million while the number of male users is 14 million. So, empirically, it can be said that in India

females are found more addict than the males (EBizMBA, 2012). These figure raised the question that what type of people use Facebook as a source of interaction. Is there a gender effect that adds to the subtleties of Facebook and traits of personality? This research study focuses that the prevalence of Facebook that exists between male and female of different age groups. With the increased accessibility of Internet, Social media and Social networking sites has become an important part of our life, especially for the youth. The excessive use of social networking sites like Facebook is creating a life style addiction which is causing psychological and social problems. Facebook Addiction has become a common pattern in our colleges, universities and even at work places.

The excessive usage of Facebook is a crucial problem worldwide especially among adolescents and there is a dire need to address this issue. Unfortunately, no proper attention has been given to this serious issue in Pakistan. Prior literature is evident that Big-Five model of personality have a considerable relationship with Internet especially with the use of Facebook. But up till now, no research has been done specifically with the six- dimensional HEXACO, model of personality (Michael & Kibom, 2007) and Facebook addiction among university students not only in Pakistan but all over the world. The advantage of this current study is that it comprehensively examines the six HEXACO – Personality dimensions in relation to Facebook addiction and tries to fill the gaps in a wide array of previous Big-five personality based studies with Internet and Facebook. This current study is being conducted with an objective of assessing the impact of HEXACO Personality traits and Perceived social support on Facebook addiction among university students.

In Pakistan no previous research has studied the association on above said variables. Hence, a profound study is needed to unfold the impact of personality traits and perceived social support on Facebook addiction among university students in Pakistan. Therefore this research probes that if the relationship exists between specific personality traits and Facebook that contribute to the vulnerability of Facebook addiction phenomena among university students. Moreover, this study examined the mediating role of perceived social support between the relationship of personality traits and Facebook addiction. The correlation of personality traits, perceived social support and Facebook addiction is an important issue in our society. Therefore by exploring the predictors of Facebook addiction, the present research was designed to overcome the limitations of previous research and shed further light on the phenomena of Facebook addiction with respect to HEXACO –Personality traits and mediating role of Perceived social support. This study will prove helpful for university students in order to determine the potential negative hazards of excessive Facebook usage. It will alarm those students who neglect their health and studies because the use of Facebook can become habitual or excessive and got addiction.

Hypotheses

Following hypothesis have been made for the study:

1. It is anticipated that Female students are more likely to be addicted to Facebook than their male counterparts.

METHODOLOGY

The nature of this research was descriptive and survey method was used to gather information from the participants. The population of the study was all the students of The Islamia University of Bahawalpur which were selected from the different academic divisions of the university. Total (n = 400) participants were selected as sample of the study by using non probability sampling technique. University students (n = 222) out of (n=400) characterized as Facebook Addicts who meet the specific criteria of Bergen Facebook Addiction Scale were further involved in this research. Only Facebook addict university students were screen out who were age between 20 to 40 years and were enrolled in an academic session of various disciplines and programs of the Islamia University of Bahawalpur. Students having non-addict and non- enrolled in university were not included in sample who have any kind of physical and psychological disability.

The sample was collected from the four campuses of the Islamia University of Bahawalpur i.e. Khawaja Fareed Campus, Abbasia Campus, Baghdad ul Jadeed Campus and Rangers campus. Before collecting data researchers had made a survey of all faculties for their accessibility and visit all the faculties alphabetically i.e. Faculty of Arts, Faculty of Education, Faculty of Islamic Learning, Faculty of Management Sciences and Faculty of Pharmacy were selected for the sample recruitment of both male and female university students. In determining sample size for a probability sample we use the confidence level, confidence interval and population size (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). The researcher used the 95 percent confidence level, 5 percent confidence interval with 20,000 current known population of The Islamia University of Bahawalpur. The minimum required sample was 377. The selected sample for this current study comprised of (n=400) students from the university.

Hence, researchers had decided to take twenty respondents additionally to minimize the biasness of respondents. Facebook addicts (n=222) out of total 400 students from IUB who meet the criteria of Bergen Facebook Addiction scale were selected by differentiated in to female Facebook addicts (n=130) and male Facebook addicts (n=92) students. **Bergen Facebook Addiction Scale (BFAS)**. The Bergen Facebook Addiction Scale (BFAS) was used to assess Facebook addiction constructed by (Andreassen, Torsheim, Brunborg, & Pallesen 2012). This Bergen Scale was

consisted of 6 item and respondents were asked to give their opinion on 5-point Likert scale (1 = very rarely, 5 = very often) on the frequency with which they had engaged in addictive Facebook behaviors during the last year. The 6-items of this scale reflecting the six core addiction elements namely mood modification, withdrawal, conflict, relapse and salience (Griffiths, 2005) which is one for each of the six core features of Facebook addiction. Andreassen and his colleagues suggest that scoring "often" or "very often" on at least four of the six items may suggest the respondent is addicted to Facebook. Reliability of the scale Cronbach alpha was .83. (Andreassen et al., 2012). The reliability coefficient for the Bergen Facebook Addiction Scale was found 0.80 for the present study. Meanwhile, Cronbach alpha value shows that scale have sufficient reliability and appropriate for the target population.

The translation of the scale was comprised of following steps and was carried out with the help of professionals who were bilingual. The tool was translated into Urdu language with author's permission through forward- translation and backward – translation method. Three bilingual experts translated the English scale in to Urdu. Then those three Urdu translations were look over by a panel which was also bilingual and they critically studied the three Urdu translations, to finalize the most appropriate Urdu version of BFAS. The Urdu version of the BFAS was again translated in to English by other three bilingual experts, who have not seen the original English version of the scale. This translation is necessary to compare the backward translation with the original English scale in order to check the inconsistency that might have occurred during the translation process. The three English translations were also revised by another bilingual expert to finalize the most suitable items in the backward translation. The final backward translation and the final Urdu version were sent to the original author of the scale.

This phase is the pilot study, where psychometric properties were established for Bergen Facebook Addiction Scale, The Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support and The HEXACO Personality Inventory-R. Scoring and statistical analysis of the scales were carried out in a standard method. Descriptive statistics and reliability coefficient were computed by using SPSS V-21. Alpha Reliability of the BFAS was established at 0.80 during pilot study. Cronbach, s Alpha for MSPSS & HEXACO Personality Inventory-R was calculated, which were 0.75 & 0.79 respectively. The data has been collected from the target and desired sample of N= 222 Facebook addicts participants. Facebook addict university students were further categorized as female Facebook addicts (n=130) and male (n=92) Facebook addicts. The data was collected by purposive convenient sampling. In the present study cross sectional, correlational survey study method was used. University students were briefed about the purpose of the study and informed consent was obtained from the

university students. The collected data was analyzed by using SPSS version 21. Descriptive statistics i.e. mean, t- test and S.D were computed. Bivariate Correlation analysis was used to examine relationship between the study variables. Regression analysis was used to predict level of significance among all variables. The mediation effect was computed by using the Barron and Kenny (1986) four step approaches for testing mediation. Testing for mediation involves establishing four conditions:

1. The IV is significantly related to the DV (path c).
2. The IV is significantly related to the MV (path a).
3. The MV is significantly related to the DV (path b).
4. The effect of the IV on the DV (path c) shrinks upon the addition of the mediator to the model.

RESULTS

Table 1. *Group wise differences of male and female population sample for Personality Traits, Perceived Social Support and Facebook Addiction*

Variable	Male	Female	<i>t</i>	95%CI	
	(<i>n</i> = 92)	(<i>n</i> = 130)		<i>LL</i>	<i>UL</i>
	<i>M(SD)</i>	<i>M(SD)</i>			
Facebook Addiction	25.95(2.45)	26.03(2.01)	-.284	-.676	.506
Honesty-Humility	21.17(11.33)	23.91(11.61)	-1.79	-5.819	.352
Emotionality	39.90(10.23)	39.33(9.05)	.445	-1.885	3.147
Extraversion	41.05(9.27)	39.33(9.74)	1.690	-.352	4.584
Agreeableness	21.12(11.09)	23.66(11.11)	-1.681	-5.523	.439
Conscientiousness	20.85(11.04)	23.38(10.74)	-1.708	-5.447	.389
Openness to Experience	40.90(9.34)	38.63(9.18)	1.804	-.211	4.753
Perceived Social Support	72.76(9.08)	72.65(8.97)	.093	-2.305	2.535
Family Support	24.59(3.44)	24.77(3.08)	-.414	-1.050	.686
Friend Support	24.55(3.58)	24.32(3.94)	.448	-.787	1.250
Sig. Other Support	23.62(3.99)	23.55(3.93)	.122	-.996	1.128

The results revealed that Facebook addiction is elevated in female's students. Personality traits Honesty-humility, Agreeableness and Conscientiousness are also higher in female students whereas Emotionality, Extraversion and Openness to Experience are higher in male's university students. Overall level of Perceived Social Support is greater in males as compared to female university students.

CI = Confidence Interval, *LL*= Lower Limit, *UL* = Upper Limit

DISCUSSION

There is a probability that the occurrence of Facebook addiction differs and is not stable according to gender usage pattern. To explore this difference, it was suggested in the hypothesis that there is difference between males and females Facebook addiction. Gender dissimilarities in early researches of the Internet were also proven (Amichai-Hamburger & Ben-Artzi, 2003). Demographic characteristics effect people's social media use in cyber psychology. Among other demographic variables, gender has been found to be a substantial factor effecting usage pattern of social networking sites (Lenhart, 2009).

Results illustrates the difference of mean scores of Females Facebook Addicts is ($M = 26.03$, $SD = 2.01$) and Male Facebook Addicts is ($M = 25.95$, $SD = 2.45$). These findings are supported by previous research as Hargittai (2008) concentrated on demographic variables and determined that females are more expected to use Facebook. Hampton, (2011) explored that when looking at Facebook precisely, there have been researches that found gender variances in Facebook use. In a relevant case, Sandvig (2009) explored that the usage of Facebook was increased predominantly among female students in Malaysian universities, and was the most popular social site among the female university students aged 18-24 years. Female students used Facebook more for entertainment, and for sustaining existing relationships. In another study, Sharifah, (2011) surveyed 380 female students in selected universities from Malaysia and found that there is a high relationship between motives of Facebook use (passing time, entertainment, and communication) and Facebook addiction. The study concluded that the female university students were considered to be Facebook addicts. Other researchers have contradicted findings as suggested by Raacke & Bonds-Raacke (2008) claimed that there was no gender variance for Facebook use. Additionally, Baek (2011) found similar results for using Facebook of males and females population. Fox and Warber (2013) also found that there were no dissimilarities in motivations between men and women Facebook addiction.

CONCLUSION

The current study revealed that female university students are more Facebook addicted as compared to male students. Facebook addiction is a serious and noteworthy, issue among younger university students. The Educationalists and researchers must address this emerging issue and take proper precautions and awareness to avoid the negative hazards of Facebook. The girls having age differences exist in the broader Facebook Addiction population. To investigate the age range among Facebook Addicts one of the hypothesis was tested. Age appears to be a potentially important predictor to include in this study. Because Facebook users' ages range varies widely. This study further explored that younger girls tend to use

more computer mediated communication like Facebook than younger boys. The results of current study supports this hypothesis that Facebook addiction is largely affected the younger university female students as mean score of younger female students range (17-25) is ($M = 26.07$, $SD = 2.199$) and mean score of younger boys range (26-40) is ($M = 25.36$, $SD = 2.128$). The results of this study are verified by some other relevant researches. Facebook addiction is a common problem among young girls under the age 22.

This research has great implication in order to highlight university students use of Facebook is an alarming issue of concern for higher education experts. Most importantly, these findings can encourage other scholars to further study the problems that could be the result of university student's excessive use of the Facebook. Educators and researchers could use this information to identify issues related to Female users of Facebook and define future research directions concerning the demographic variation of Facebook.

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