

Internet Addiction among Urban Youths in Melaka

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Abstract: The development of internet-based technologies that facilitate borderless and flexible connection has resulted in widespread and heavy usage of internet. The widespread and increased use of internet has also been closely related to modernization and urbanization of the society. However, there is an increasingly concerns with the use of internet among youths who are considered the catalyst for the growth of a particular nation. It is claimed that youths are becoming addicted to internet, resulting in an increased social problems that may disrupt the development of a nation. This study reports a survey research study that investigates the internet addiction among urban youths in Melaka. It is hypothesized that there are significant relationships between internet addiction and three independent variables, namely the age, types of settlement and types of personality. A set of questionnaire was designed and distributed to a sample of 100 respondents. Data were analyzed statistically using SPSS Version18. It was found that Internet addiction has significant relationship with the age and types of personality while it does not have significant relationship with the type of settlement. The findings also showed that youth between 20-24 years have the tendency to be categorised as high internet addiction. As such, attention should be given to this group of youths in order to minimise the negative impact of internet addiction.

Key words: Internet addiction, personality, age, settlements, urban youths

INTRODUCTION

The quality of social life and the urbanization process is a reflection of human civilization in the development of a country. Both have close ties to determine the level of socio-economic development of local communities although there exists difficulties to align them together. This is because the process of urbanization is largely attributable to the number of population that is often faced with problems and issues of the quality of social life in a city. For a rapid development of a city, the demand for a new paradigm shift among residents, who eventually become the defining point of the quality of the social life of the community is the utmost important. This is because a community cannot run away from facing myriads of dilemmas which eventually contribute to social ills.

Much of the moral or moral panic crisis exists in the society today relate to issues of disclosure and social problems among youths. Referring to this phenomena as a state of moral distress and episodes, it has the potential to threaten the values and interests of a community. Social distress that is often associated with youth culture

is frequently considered as a deviant. The involvement of youths in social problems in cities is also an issue which has been a concern of all parties and it is considered as all time concerns as it affects the well being of a society as well as the growth of a prosperous nation. In fact, the quality of development and well-being of young people depends on the quality of the environment in which they grew up.

The macro changes especially in the urban that occur as a result of modernization and globalization have changed the environment and lifestyles of especially the young people. There has been a perception that modernization and globalization can expose young people to risk factors (risk factors) that lead to social problems. Further, the increased challenges in life, requiring parents to focus on raising family's income due to economic pressure have some impacts in the process of self-development among young people.

One of the most prevalent changes in the daily life of the youths is the use of internet, in which it has become an everyday consumption. According to the statistics released by the National Information Technology Council

(NICT), the use of the internet in Malaysia in 2010 reached to 16.9 mln. people. Shahrizan highlighted that among the most popular social network is Facebook with records about 6.2 mln. visitors. It is undeniable that the internet has greatly contributed to the modernization of a country, especially in the cities. With facilities in cities such as the broadband network, technology can help the development of human capital in terms of openness of knowledge, communication and collaboration.

Within this context, it is important for the government to pay attention to the youth of the country to achieve the quality social welfare state. This is because they are the potential substitute for the leadership and direction of the country in the future. Furthermore, based on the statistics of the population, the percentage of youth in Malaysia compared to the number of population in 2010 was 42.5%, nearly half of the total the population. The percentage values indicate that the youths are an important population group in Malaysia.

Although, many consider the internet considered as a catalyst of modernisation, there is an increasing concern that the internet has negative impacts to the life style of the society, especially the youths. It is argued that the youths are increasingly addicted to the internet leading to social problems that result in a disruption to a positive growth of urbanization and modernization.

Reports related to the abuse of the internet that led to social problems in the city have been cited. Cases of death due to excessive use of the internet in the online video game have been reported in both overseas and domestic. A 12 years old student from Melaka died due to too much time playing online games in a cyber cafe: almost every day from 7.00 a.m. to 6.30 p.m. A similar incident occurred in Penang, where a Chinese aged 23 years died after excessively playing online video at the cybercafe. Further, in China, a 21 years old youth died after playing online video for 40 h without stopping.

Internet addiction can lead to students dropping out of school, disruption to the relationship with the community and the family, delinquency and death (Zhan and Chan, 2012). In Korea, especially internet addiction of online video game has been equated to the status of social problems such as alcoholism, gambling and drugs. Video game addiction has become a global phenomenon and should be rectified as soon as possible.

This study reports a study that investigated the relationship between internet addiction and the age, types of settlement and types of personality of urban youths. For this purpose, three hypothesis have been tested.

Literature review: Studies related to internet addiction has been carried out in countries that have such

widespread use of the internet such as in the United States, Korea, China and Europe. A review on the studies related to internet addiction has been conducted by Sidek *et al.* (2016) and they emphasised that factors contributing to internet addiction can be categorized into four categories, namely the psychological factor, socio-economic factor, demographic factor and internet usage patterns.

Griffiths (2005) attempted to distinguish between internet addiction and hardcore internet users. According to him, the excessive use of the internet for health gave rise to life, but someone addicted to the internet do not have a normal life. Next, he proposed six aspects of the treatment to measure the level of internet addiction, six of these aspects is the activity dominant (salience), mood changes (mood modification), the level of tolerance (tolerance), symptoms isolate themselves (symptoms of withdrawal), conflict (conflict) and behavior recurring (relapse). Based on six criteria, Lemmens *et al.* (2009) has developed 21 items for measuring consumer addiction to video games. However, an instrument developed by Griffiths (2005, 2010) have only focused on the measurement of the individual's own addiction without taking into account the individual's living environment and the effects of addiction.

Studies related to internet addiction were reported thus far have been using university students (Sidek *et al.*, 2016) as their sample focusing on psychological factors. Wan and Chou studied a sample of Taiwanese students about student motivation toward the online video game addiction. Shahn using a sample of university students in Turkey to investigate the relationship between internet addiction and depression levels of students. Internet addiction is a problem among students in Korea has long been identified and the Korean government has established various programs to address the problem. Among the programs that have been carried out are Jump Up Internet Rescue School, the camping-shaped recovery program for school students. The program aimed to help students who are addicted to the internet to build social relationships and have a positive spirit and learn to control emotions while improving the quality of life of the students involved. The researchers also suggested that the focus should be on raising the quality of students' life environment and fostering communication between parents and students. Additionally, they suggested that the Korean government should create policies to control the internet use among young children (Koo *et al.*, 2011).

The study of the internet addiction in Malaysia is still very limited. Most of the studies related to internet addiction have focused on adolescent (Sidek *et al.*, 2016). Kapahi *et al.* (2013) conducted a study to explore the level

of internet addiction among adolescents Malaysia. They reported that adolescents aged between 18-25 years are at high risk of internet addiction. They are mostly university students or college. This finding is based on a survey of 203 respondents and do not represent the entire youth in Malaysia. Michea conducted a study of the effects of youth cyber cafe in Penang and they found that the rate of internet addiction among adolescents is high and they are willing to do anything to spend time in cyber cafes. In this case, a study of youth representing the entire community should be conducted to determine the phenomenon of internet addiction among the youths as social problems in the city that need to be dealt with immediately.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study investigates the relationship of internet addiction with age, types of settlement and types of personality of urban youths. As shown in Fig. 1, the independent variables are the age, types of settlement and types of personality while the dependent variable is the internet addiction.

The internet addiction is measured based on an instrument designed by Young (1998). Based on the 20 items that describe the behaviour of internet users, young identified three categories of internet addiction which low, medium and high. Table 1 shows the three categories of internet addiction.

Youth in this study is defined as individual from the age of 15-35 years old. In this case, there are four categories of urban youth which are defined as: between 16-20 years, between 21-24 years, between 25-30 years and between 31-35 years. With respect to settlements,

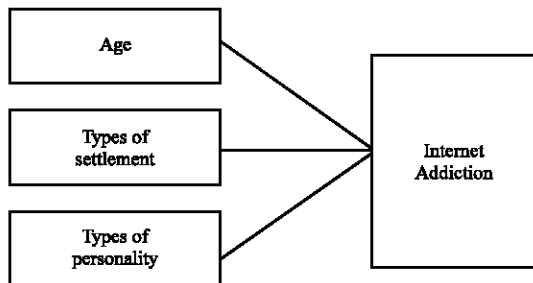


Fig. 1: The framework of the research

Table 1: The three categories of internet addiction

| Level of internet addiction | Total points |
|-----------------------------|--------------|
| High | 56-80 |
| Medium | 28-55 |
| Low | 0-27 |

there are five types of urban settlements identified in this study which are based on Five Factor Model (FFM) modified by an instrument psychometric Big-5 (Lussier and Achua, 2013). The five dimensions of personality are openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness and neuroticism. This study focuses on testing three hypothesis which are:

- There is a significant relationship between the age of the urban youths and the level of internet addiction
- There is a significant relationship between the types of settlements of the urban youths and the level of internet addiction
- There is a significant relationship between the personality of urban youths and the level of internet addiction

The study was conducted with a sample of 100 respondents at an urban district in Melaka. According to Ayop (2013) the sample size for the pilot study need not be large but adequate to meet the goal of an effective preliminary discussions related to the test.

The questionnaire was designed with three main sections: the first section deals with the background information. The second section addresses the levels and patterns of using the internet. In this study, respondents were expected to rate themselves, from level 1-5 based on 20 behavioural activities related to the use of Internet. Finally, using a likert scale from 1-5, respondents were requested to identify their personality.

Data collected was analysed using SPSS tool Version 18. Statistical analysis such as table, mean, standard deviation and inferential statistics procedures like one sample t-test and Pearson correlation were conducted.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study presents the findings and discussion of this study based on the three hypothesis:

- H₁: there is no significant relationship between age and level of internet addiction among urban youths

Table 2: The relationship between the age youth with the urban youths and the level of internet addiction

| Years | Low (%) | Medium (%) | High (%) |
|-------|---------|------------|----------|
| 16-20 | 33.3 | 66.7 | 0.0 |
| 20-24 | 27.8 | 66.7 | 5.6 |
| 25-29 | 33.3 | 66.7 | 0.0 |
| 30-34 | 00.0 | 00.0 | 0.0 |

$\chi^2 = 1.093$; dk = 6; k = 0.982

Table 3: Relationship between types of settlement and level of addiction among urban youths

| Types of settlement | Low (%) | Medium (%) | High (%) | Total |
|---------------------|---------|------------|----------|-------|
| Business Centre | 40.0 | 20.0 | 40.0 | 5 |
| Industrial area | 2.0 | 1.0 | 2.0 | 8 |
| Agricultural area | 25.0 | 50.0 | 25.0 | 6 |
| High cost housing | 2.0 | 4.0 | 2.0 | 6 |
| Medium cost housing | 33.3 | 33.3 | 33.3 | 47 |
| Low cost housing | 17.0 | 66.0 | 17.0 | 18 |
| Rural | 8.0 | 31.0 | 8.0 | 19 |
| Traditional village | 11.1 | 77.7 | 11.1 | 6 |
| Total | 2.0 | 14.0 | 2.0 | 115 |
| | 21.0 | 58.0 | 21.0 | |
| | 4.0 | 11.0 | 4.0 | |
| | 33.3 | 33.3 | 33.3 | |
| | 2.0 | 2.0 | 2.0 | |
| | 20.8 | 58.5 | 20.8 | |
| | 24.0 | 67.0 | 24.0 | |

$\chi^2 = 13.662$; dk = 14; k = 0.75

The findings related to hypothesis 1 is shown in Table 2. Based on Table 2, an equal percentage (33.3%) of low average and internet addiction youth within age 16-24 while none was identified as high internet addicts. 27.8% was classified as low internet addicts and 66.7% as medium internet addicts among youths aged between 20-24 years. Further, this is the only group that is identified as high internet addicts (5.6%). For age group between 25-26 years, 33.3% were identified as low internet addiction and 66.7% were identified as medium internet addiction. Regardless of the level of percentages, youths between 16-20 and 25-29 years have similar level of internet addictions: low and medium.

The findings show that youth between 20-24 years have the tendency to be categorised as high internet addiction. Based on the statistics, the age of urban youths has non-significant relationship with internet addiction with the level of internet addiction $\chi^2 (6, N = 100) = 1.093, k > 0.05$. This is consistent with the study of Kapahi *et al.* (2013) that found that adolescents aged between 18-25 years are at high risk of internet addiction:

- H_2 : there is no significant relationship between the types of settlement and the level of internet addiction among urban youths

The findings for hypothesis two is presented in Table 3. As shown in Table 3 the relationship of internet addiction is measured based on eight types of settlement. As shown in Table 3, regardless of the different types of settlement, 58.5% of the youths (the largest among the group) were identified as medium level of internet

Table 4: Correlation between types of personality and addiction to internet

| Types of personality | χ^2 -values |
|----------------------|------------------|
| Openness | 0.224 |
| Conscientiousness | 0.313 |
| Extraversion | 0.210 |
| Agreeableness | 0.242 |
| Neuroticism | 0.224 |

p<0.05

addiction. Equal percentage (20.8%) of the youths were identified as the low and the high level of internet addiction. Youths living the low cost housing were found to have the highest percentage for moderate internet addiction, types of settlement placement. The statistical test of significant relationship found that internet addiction $\chi^2 (14, N = 100) = 13.662, k > 0.05$, implying a non-significant relationship. This indicates that the hypothesis is rejected, implying there is no relationship between the level of internet addiction and the types of settlement among urban youths:

- H_3 : there is a significant relationship between the types of personality and the level of internet addiction among urban youths

The findings for hypothesis 3 is presented in Table 4. As shown in Table 4, the five dimensions of personality are openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness and neuroticism. As shown in Table 4, based on Pearson correlation test, all the five dimensions of personality show a significant relationship to the level of internet addiction among the youths. This implies that personality factors affect the level of internet addiction among youths.

CONCLUSION

The study was conducted to investigate the relationship between the internet addiction and the age, types of settlement and types of personality. It is found that youths between the age of 20-24 years. The findings show that youth between 20-24 years have the tendency to be categorised as high internet addiction. As such, attention should be given to this group of youths in order to minimise the negative impact of internet addiction. The study also found that there are significant relationship between the types of personality and internet addiction. In this case, further research needs to be carried out to investigate the ways in which personality traits can influence internet addiction among youths.

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