



The examination of individuals' virtual loneliness states in Internet addiction and virtual environments in terms of inter-personal trust levels



Ertuğrul Usta^a, Özgen Korkmaz^{a,*}, İbrahim Kurt^b

^a *Mevlana University Educational Faculty, Department of Computer Education and Instructional Technology, Turkey*

^b *Mevlana University Educational Faculty, Department of Educational Science, Turkey*

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Available online 22 April 2014

Keywords:

Internet
Loneliness
Confidence
Internet addiction
Virtual loneliness

ABSTRACT

The aim of this study is to put forth what kind of a relationship there is among the loneliness states of the individuals, the Internet addiction and interpersonal trust levels in virtual environments by examining these states felt by the individuals in virtual environments; and to try to define the virtual loneliness concept in this way. This study is a descriptive study. It has been carried out in scanning model. The study group of this study consists of 225 women, 129 men, 354 people. Data were collected using Virtual Environment Loneliness Scale, Virtual Environment Interpersonal Trust Scale and Internet Addiction Scale. The analyses of arithmetic mean, standard deviation, modes, median, frequency, *t*, Anova, LSD, Correlation ve Regression have been carried out on. As a result: Virtual environment loneliness is predicted by loneliness factor, interpersonal trust and Internet addiction factor. The order of importance of predictor variable in terms of factors: virtual distrust, virtual honesty, the loss of control and desire for being online for more. These factors are meaningful predictors of virtual level and regression equality is: virtual loneliness = 48.073–0.156, virtual dishonesty +0.172, virtual honesty +0.113 the loss of control +0.052 desire for being online for more.

© 2014 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

1. Introduction

Despite many benefits of technologies which facilitates the daily life in our opinions especially information and communication technologies, it is possible to mention some negative effects of it (Khasawneh & Al-Awidi, 2008). Especially in the recent years, it is very hard to see how positively or negatively virtual environments, which are defined as social media, affects the individual or community. It is possible to see many studies in the literature related to the fact that computer and Internet technologies prevent people from socialization and it pushes the people to loneliness (Goldberg, 1997; Scherer, 1997; Davis, Flett, & Besser, 2002; Young & Rodgers, 1998). However, it is seen today that the same technologies socialize people; and the online environments that are thought to enable this are called social networking sites. An

important discussion still continues related to whether these virtual environments really socialize people, what their benefits are for the individual and community or what kind of negative aspects they have (Davis, 2001; Mittal, Tessner, & Walker, 2007). One of the topics that has not yet been examined enough in this general discussion is at which level the contribution of virtual socialization is to the real socialization in real life, or whether the virtual socialization has an effect that isolates the individuals actually in the virtual environments. If socialization will be discussed in a virtual environment, it can be said that the individuals should be in an environment in which they do not feel alone and insecure. However, what is the subject is the worry that these virtual worlds, established by the individuals feeling himself/herself safe and not alone in virtual environments, may affect the real life negatively and cause a psychological problem such as Internet addiction (Shapira, Goldsmith, Keck, Khosla, & McElroy, 2000; Kraut et al., 1998; Yang, Choe, Baity, Lee, & Cho, 2005). However, it can be said that in the literature, this positive or negative interaction between virtual and real life has not been sufficiently put forth.

On the other hand, interpersonal trust in virtual environments, Internet addiction and virtual loneliness to explain clearly about these concepts especially, gender, age and time spent on the

* Corresponding author. Address: Mevlana University Educational Faculty, Department of Computer Education and Instructional Technology, Yeni Istanbul Street, 42003 Selcuklu, Konya, Turkey. Tel.: +90 3324444243x1223, mobile: +90 5053192785; fax: +90 3322411111.

E-mail addresses: ozgenkorkmaz@gmail.com, okorkmaz@mevlana.edu.tr (Ö. Korkmaz).

Internet variables are studied. That kind of socio-psychological variables can be differentiate according to gender (Chou, Condron, & Belland, 2005; Yen, Ko, Yen, Chang, & Cheng, 2009; Tao et al., 2010; Kim, LaRose, & Peng, 2009). That is why for explanation virtual loneliness as a new concept, gender might be important factor. In addition it can be encountered some results in literature about time spent on Internet factor correlate with Internet addiction (Sahin & Korkmaz, 2011). At this frame it can be suitable that reviewing virtual loneliness according to time spend factor on Internet. Lastly, it is thought that level of using technology, purpose, frequency and qualification of using Internet factors can be changed according to different age groups. Within this frame, the aim of this study is to put forth what kind of a relationship there is among the loneliness states of the individuals, the Internet addiction and interpersonal trust levels in virtual environments by examining these states felt by the individuals in virtual environments; and to try to define the virtual loneliness concept in this way.

1.1. Theoretical frame

1.1.1. Internet addiction

Internet addiction is qualified as one of the most important negations caused by the technology (Chou et al., 2005). Some behaviors and life styles are accepted as problems or illness reasons such as Internet addiction behavior. The worries related to the probable health risks about Internet and new information technologies increase day by day (Jiang & Leung, 2012). These worries cause the wonder to increase about the topics like what Internet addiction exactly is and how it developed. There is not any definition on the Internet addiction yet (Chou et al., 2005), and Internet addiction can be taken as a concept that expresses the uncontrolled and harmful usage of Internet (Sahin & Korkmaz, 2011) and in general, it states the problematic behaviors of the individuals such as spending more time than planned, feeling nervous and disturbed if it is not available and giving up social relations. Research is still continuing about the questions whether Internet addiction is an illness of what kind of an illness it is in the literature (Jiang & Leung, 2012). Arisoy (2009) and Jiang and Leung (2012), in Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM IV), state that Internet addiction has not been seen as illness yet. However, Ozturk, Odabasioglu, Eraslan, Genc, and Kalyoncu (2007) put forth that the closest illness to Internet addiction is pathological gambling. In a study conducted by Greenfield (1999), similarly, the impairment closest to Internet addiction which does not include the abuse of any material is “pathological gambling” which is under the headline of impulse control disorder in DSM IV. In recent years, there are coincidences related to the acceptance of Internet addiction as a mental illness (Jiang & Leung, 2012). When the mental, social, economical, cultural and educational losses caused by the Internet addiction are taken into consideration, it is an obligation that this condition should be identified and there should be more detailed studies related to this addiction type (Sahin & Korkmaz, 2011; Turel & Serenko, 2010; Xu, Turel, & Yuan, 2012).

1.1.2. Interpersonal trust in virtual environments

The different aspect of virtual environments which are a new communication channel in interpersonal communication from the traditional formal communication is the type of the interaction revealed (Moore, 1989). There is interaction also in formal communication. However, the type in the virtual environment can be defined as a dynamic simulation which has a similar appearance not only by depending on technology, but also in real life (Gunawardena & Mclsaac, 2004; Reeves, Malone, & O'Driscoll, 2008). The individual who is stuck between the real reality and virtual reality is both the receiver and the producer of a message

in virtual environments. In this respect, the individual has the opportunity both to make himself/herself visible and put forth as the actual real and hide and stay always hidden (Kir, 2008). The invisible, anonymous and informal environment caused by the virtual environment has given to the individuals the idea of setting new identities and entering new environments with these identities. This condition may cause the situations that are unreal or the reverse of the real one that exists. For example, it is known that the individual who is away from all external pressures in face to face communication escapes from the reality due to their wish to use their own world in being in the virtual environment and in identification setting process and personal security or preferences reasons (Altun, 2008). In this regard, the individual gives himself/herself the identity just they dreamed about and form his/her virtual personality as it is in his/her dreams (Maczewski, 2002; Yee, Bailenson, Urbanek, Chang, & Merget, 2007). According to this, the identification choice of the individuals as they want in virtual environments brings the problem of trust in this communication process (Usta, 2012). There is no doubt that the healthy communication is possible when the receiver and source are ready. However, the condition of receiver's not trusting the source is evaluated as a kind of noise in communication process (Ergin, 1998). Of course in terms of getting benefit from the Internet sources more actively, it can be said that it is important to put forward how much the individuals trust in the Internet sources.

1.1.3. Virtual loneliness

It is possible to say that the concept virtual loneliness is a concept that so new yet in literature and has never been discussed before. For this reason, the concept of virtual loneliness can be defined in parallel with the concept of loneliness. Loneliness is generally defined as a subjective psychological state which is not nice and occurs as a result of the inconsistency between the existing social relations of an individual and the desired social relations of an individual (Peplau & Perlman, 1982). Loneliness is expressed as an undesired experience which is referred together with the concepts like sadness, fear and worry in general (Russell, Peplau, & Cutrona, 1980). It is emphasized that loneliness generally occurs in very young adults and adolescents rather than the olds (Jones & Carver, 1991; Ostrov & Offer, 1980). While the individual may not feel loneliness when s/he is all alone, s/he may perceive himself/herself in the crowds as alone (Qualter & Munn, 2002). Weiss (1973) defines loneliness as a feeling that occurs as a result of lacking properties like closeness, sincerity and feeling sharing in social relations or the insufficiency of the relations individual has; and sees loneliness as a problem which is related to the interpersonal relations' quality rather than quantity. Based on this, it is possible to define virtual loneliness as the inconsistency between the existing social relations of the individual and the desired social relations in the virtual environments. It is possible to see many studies in literature related to the statement that there is a relationship between loneliness and Internet addiction (Coget, Yamauchi, & Suman, 2002; Stepanikova, Nie, & He, 2010; Amichai-Hamburger, Wainapel & Fox, 2002). In these studies, it is generally emphasized that the individuals with Internet addiction have problems with their social relations and they face with the loneliness state within the process. According to this, it can be thought that the loneliness state in real life can be removed with virtual environments. The concept of loneliness is generally a negative psychological state. However, it may not be true to say an accurate statement about whether virtual loneliness is a positive or negative state. Within this frame, the effects of the loneliness or the wish of staying alone felt in virtual environments on the individual can be worth examining.

متن کامل مقاله

دریافت فوری ←

ISIArticles

مرجع مقالات تخصصی ایران

- ✓ امکان دانلود نسخه تمام متن مقالات انگلیسی
- ✓ امکان دانلود نسخه ترجمه شده مقالات
- ✓ پذیرش سفارش ترجمه تخصصی
- ✓ امکان جستجو در آرشیو جامعی از صدها موضوع و هزاران مقاله
- ✓ امکان دانلود رایگان ۲ صفحه اول هر مقاله
- ✓ امکان پرداخت اینترنتی با کلیه کارت های عضو شتاب
- ✓ دانلود فوری مقاله پس از پرداخت آنلاین
- ✓ پشتیبانی کامل خرید با بهره مندی از سیستم هوشمند رهگیری سفارشات