

# The effect of gender, unemployment, and educational level in internet addiction

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**Introduction:** Anecdotal reports indicated that some on-line users were becoming addicted to the Internet in much the same way, as others became addicted to drugs or alcohol, which resulted in academic, social, and occupational impairment. **Objective:** However, research among sociologists, psychologists, and psychiatrists has not formally identified addictive use of the Internet as a problematic behaviour. This study investigated the existence of Internet addiction among Internet users in the Jordanian Internet cafes. **Method:** This study utilised a simple ratio method to investigate the existence of Internet addiction in the population. A questionnaire, which consisted of 20 statements, was developed to measure Internet addiction amongst the selected sample. There were 300 males and 300 females. **Results:** A statistical analysis suggests significant differences between the two groups related to sex. In addition to this there were significant differences related to the following factors: employment, educational level. Psychological and social implications of pathological Internet use and future directions for research are discussed. **Conclusion:** This study highlights Internet addiction phenomenon in Jordan. This particular field should be given further investigation and study to know about the extent of its existence in Jordan and to try to find a solution for this increasing problem all over the world.

## Introduction

A large debate has been taking place about Internet addiction. Does it exist? Can we really consider it a type of addiction? But aside from this debate there is a very clear truth in front of our eyes, humans are losing their morale. Is it technology that did this? Is it the nature of humans themselves and their irrational use of technology? This research is just a trial to put a little milestone on the road of knowledge in this particular field.

## Internet addiction definition

Notions of technological addictions (Griffiths, 1996) and computer addiction (Shotton, 1991) have previously been studied in England. However, when Young (1996) first introduced the concept of Internet addiction in a pioneer study, it sparked a controversial debate by both clinicians and academicians. Part of this controversy revolved around the contention that only physical substances ingested into the body could be termed "addictive." While

many believed that the term addiction should only be applied to cases involving the ingestion of a drug (e.g., Rachlin, 1990; Walker, 1989). Defining addiction has moved beyond this to include a number of behaviours, which do not involve an intoxicant, such as compulsive gambling (Griffiths, 1990), video game playing (Keepers, 1990), overeating (Lesuire & Bloome, 1993), exercise (Morgan, 1979), love relationships (Peele & Brody, 1975), and television-viewing (Winn, 1983). Therefore, linking the term "addiction" solely to drugs creates an artificial distinction that strips the usage of the term for a similar condition when drugs are not involved (Alexander & Scheweighofer, 1988).

**Study importance**

The importance of this study is that it covers the ignored field of Internet addiction studies in the Jordanian environment.

**Study goal**

This study aims to investigate the following question: Is there a relationship between gender, unemployment and educational level and Internet addiction?

**Subjects**

The study subjects were both male and female Internet users in cafes in Amman and Zarqa.

**Samples**

The participants had been chosen randomly. The sample size was 600 respondent distributed into two equal sets: 300 males and 300 females. The following table shows the distribution of the sample:

**Procedure**

The cafes in Amman and zarqa were identified and the number was 743 according to the files of the ministry of commerce and industry. A sample from these cafes

Total	Female 300						Male 300						Gender
	Uni.		Col.		Sec.		Uni.		Col.		Sec.		Education
600	79		112		109		88		127		85		
600	Un	Emp	Un	Emp	Un	Emp	Un	Emp	Un	Emp	Un	Emp	Job
	51	28	72	40	32	77	23	65	78	49	57	28	

Sec. = Secondary; Col. = College; Uni. = University; Emp. = employed; Un. = Unemployed.

was selected randomly with a number of 150. There were 75 cafes in Amman and

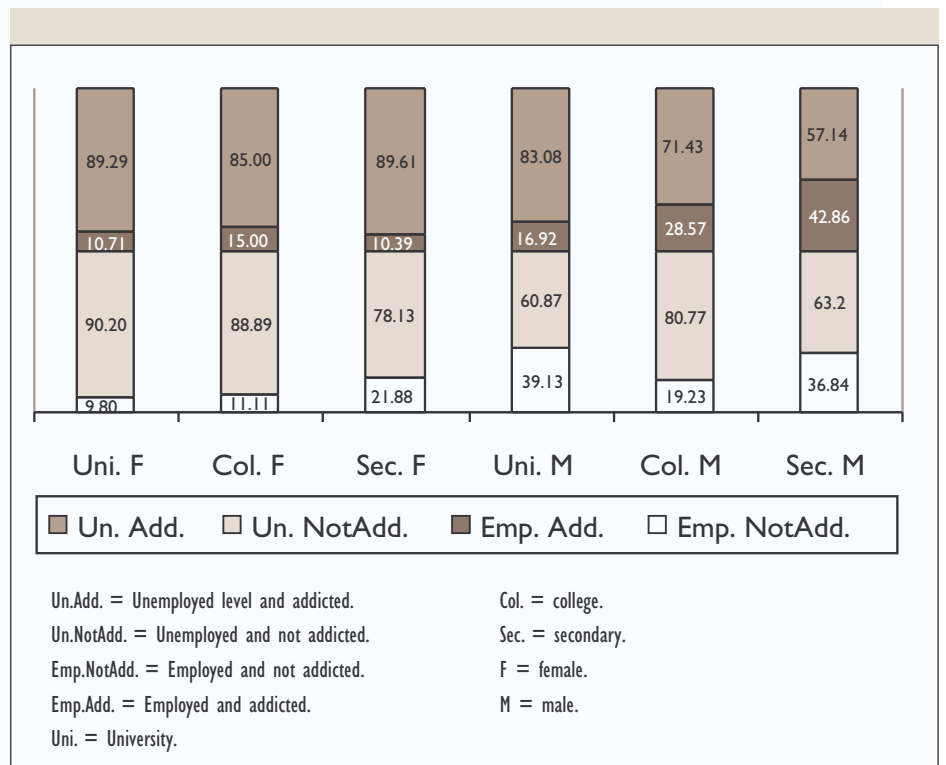
Thursday and Friday for a period of three weeks. There were 1000 questionnaires, which had been distributed among Internet cafes. There had been 762 questionnaires that had a response from the cafes, 162 were discarded as follows: 101 males and 61 females.

**The result shows that unemployment has had a negative effect and it can make the percentage of addiction higher**

**Results**

As illustrated in the following chart the addiction ratio was (20%) high in the sample, this high percentage can be explained by the study population because it is known that Internet cafes have customers that have a special characteristics or background.

75 cafes in zarqa. The questionnaire was distributed in cafes on the busiest days



Addiction ratio in respect to: educational level, gender and employment.

Another point, which needs to be noticed, is that the percentage of addiction was higher in males than females. This ratio can be a result of males' life style; they can go out more often and spend longer hours in cafes compared to females.

The result shows that unemployment has had a negative effect and it can make the percentage of addiction higher. This outcome is a reasonable one because unemployment gives a person additional free hours with no work to do and these hours could easily be used on the Internet.

The result also shows that the lower the educational level is the higher the Internet addiction becomes. Unemployed females tend to be more addicted to the Internet than unemployed males.

The result shows that unemployed

males in secondary level demonstrated the highest addiction level among males and females whether they are employed or not. And it also shows that unemployment has a greater effect on the lower educational level.

### Recommendations

Further investigations are needed in this particular subject because of the absence of the Arabic and Jordanian studies about this field. Technology accomplishments may have harmful side effects that must be studied and illustrated. Also the use of online questionnaires can be a great mean to make the study more comprehensive and easy. This potential use must be taken into consideration.

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