



Research Paper

The relationship between lifestyle and stress coping styles with the feeling of loneliness of Twitter users with the mediating role of dependence on social networks

Mahsa Savadkoohi Qudjanki¹, Mohammadreza ZARBAKHSH BAHRI²

1- Master, Department of Psychology, Tonekabon Branch, Islamic Azad University, Tonekabon, Iran

2- Associate Professor, Department of Educational Sciences and Psychology, Faculty Member, Islamic Azad University, Tonekabon Branch, Iran

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Abstract

The present study was conducted with the aim of testing the causal model of the feeling of Twitter users' loneliness based on the lifestyle and stress coping styles with the mediation of social network dependence. The research method was descriptive- correlative. The statistical society was the Twitter users of Teheran city with at least 2 years membership in virtual space. 200 people were selected as a statistical sample based on the purposeful sampling method. Subjects responded to the questionnaires of addiction to social networks by Ahmadi et al. (2015), loneliness by Russell et al. (1980), lifestyle by Miller and Smith (1988), and coping styles by Lazarus and Folkman (1984). The validity of the questionnaires was examined and confirmed based on the content validity using the opinion of experts, the validity based on the opinion of a number of the statistical community, and the structure using the factor analysis method. The reliability of the questionnaire by crunbach α was estimated for lifestyle as 0.88, coping styles with stress as 0.80, feelings of loneliness as 0.79, and dependence on social networks as 0.78, respectively. Data analysis was performed at two levels of descriptive statistics and inferential statistics, including the modeling of structural equations by Lisrel software. The results showed that all the hypotheses of the research had a favorable fit. Lifestyle with an impact factor of 0.52 and stress coping styles with an impact factor of 0.56 are indirectly related to loneliness.

Keywords:

lifestyle,
coping styles with stress,
feeling alone,
dependence on social
networks

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Corresponding Author: Mohammadreza ZARBAKHSH BAHRI	https://dorl.net/dor/20.1001.1.27169820.1401.4.3.4.9	
Email: rzarbaksh@yahoo.com	Creative Commons: CC BY 4.0	

Extended Abstract

Introduction

Today, the Internet and virtual space have become an important part of people's life, work, education, entertainment, and social activities, and have affected people's lifestyles (Mansoorian et al, 2015). Regardless of the many uses of the Internet in today's daily life, this technology has special and unique features that increase its appeal to users. The possibility of remaining anonymous, easy access, variety of content and providing the possibility to get away from the unpleasant realities of life are among these attractions (Mirkazemi et al, 2020) and social networks have strongly taken their place among family members, especially young people, in the last decade (Mesch, 2019). On the other hand, addiction to the Internet and virtual space can cause various types of disorders. Even in severe cases, Internet addicts may be destructive to themselves, their families, and their workplaces (Chebbi et al, 2020).

On the one hand, lifestyle is rooted in the individual and personal identity, and on the other hand, it is related to cultural factors and social contexts such as mass media and virtual space (Forghani & Gholizadeh Gozlo, 2021). Dependence on virtual space can have a significant impact on people's lifestyles and lead people away from collectivism and the tendency to spend time with real people, and lead more people to the direction of not loving themselves as they are and trying to show an image of oneself that is not real, and this causes a person's feeling of loneliness (Masui, 2019).

Based on this, the main question of the current research is whether there is a relationship between lifestyle and stress coping styles with the feeling of loneliness of Twitter users and the mediating role of social network dependence.

Theoretical foundations

The feeling of loneliness is an uncomfortable emotional experience, but it also emphasizes the cognitive element in that the feeling of loneliness is caused by the perception that a person's social connections do not meet some of his expectations (Motamedi et al., 2018).

In the conceptual definition of lifestyle, the British sociologist Giddens (1983) believes that lifestyle can be interpreted as a more or less comprehensive set of functions that a person uses (Mohammadi Mehr et al, 2019).

Experiencing emotions caused by stressful events is usually so uncomfortable for a person that coping with stress will follow (Alzoubi et al, 2019). People try to deal with that style by adopting unique methods. Stress coping styles are behavioral and cognitive efforts that people make in order to adapt more to the environment (Ebrahimi Tazekand, 2018).

When people spend a lot of time on the Internet and virtual social networks, the motivation to interact with others is reduced (Aytac, 2018), they have less ability to maintain real friendships, spend less time talking with family, and the feeling of loneliness and isolation is spreading in them day by day (Farhadinia et al, 2015).

Hong et al, (2021) conducted a study entitled "The influence of self-identity on social support, loneliness and Internet addiction among Chinese students". The results showed that the amount of social support and individual identity of students plays an important role in reducing their loneliness and internet addiction.

AlSumait et al, (2021) conducted a research titled "The role of addiction to virtual networks in psychological well-being and feeling of loneliness". The statistical community is users of the Instagram network. The results showed that addiction to the Internet and virtual networks reduces people's mental well-being levels and doubles the feeling of loneliness and stress in them.



Research Methodology

The research method is descriptive-correlative in nature and practical in terms of purpose. The statistical population of the research was made up of Twitter users of Tehran, who have been members of this virtual network for at least 2 years (in 1400). The number of 200 people was selected as the sample size and by the purposeful sampling method. The questionnaire of Khaja Ahmadi et al. (2015) was used to collect data related to the variable of addiction to mobile based social networks, and the questionnaire of Russell et al. (1996) was used for the variable of feeling lonely, the questionnaire of Miller and Smith for the variable of lifestyle, and the questionnaire of Lazarus and Folkman (1980) for variable of coping with stress.

Research Findings

In order to investigate the hypothesis of the research, the modeling of structural equations, the method of structural equation modeling with the help of spss software was used to test the hypotheses from inferential statistics. Then, Lisrel statistical software was used to measure the effects of independent and mediator variables with the dependent variable, and the results showed that the direct effect of lifestyle with dependence on social networks is (-0.67). Based on this, there is a negative and significant relationship between lifestyle and dependence on social networks. The results showed that the direct effect of lifestyle with feeling of loneliness is (-0.71). Accordingly, there is a negative and significant relationship between lifestyle and feeling of loneliness. The results showed that the direct effect of stress coping style with dependence on social networks is (-0.37). Accordingly, there is a negative and significant relationship between stress coping style and dependence on social networks. The results showed that the direct effect of stress coping style is with loneliness (-0.41). Based on this, there is a negative and significant relationship between the style of dealing with stress and the feeling of loneliness. The results showed that the direct effect of dependence on social networks is with the feeling of loneliness (-0.78). Based on this, there is a positive and significant relationship between dependence on social networks and feelings of loneliness. The results showed that the direct effect of lifestyle-dependence on social networks-feeling lonely (0.52) and the direct effect of stress coping style-dependence on social networks-feeling lonely (0.55). Based on this, there is a significant relationship between the lifestyle and stress coping styles with the feeling of loneliness of Twitter users with the mediating role of dependence on social networks.

Conclusion and Discussion

The present study was conducted with the aim of investigating the relationship between lifestyle and stress coping styles with the feeling of loneliness of Twitter users with the mediating role of social network dependence. The results of this research are consistent with the results of Xu (2017), Anari & Taklvi (2017), Guo et al (2020), Zoghi et al, (2020), Hong et al, (2021) and Arabi et al, (2021); research has shown that there are communication, emotional, functional and health-related problems in people who are dependent on social networks (Hong et al., 2014). The appearance of these networks is collective, but it may also make people lonely. Today, cultural changes have made people want to establish wide connections with the world around them, while being alone. Social networks provide this demand. With the various services they provide to their users, these networks have a greater impact on their lives and society as well as social behaviors; they have different political, economic, social, cultural and communication functions and according to communication experts, they reduce face-to-face relationships more than before. According to the results of the research, correct cultural policies are suggested to guide users towards the correct use of the Internet and benefit from its positive aspects in educational and learning environments.



From the findings of the present research, it can be concluded that considering the widespread use of smart phones and teenagers' membership in mobile-based social networks, it is necessary to make teenagers aware of the effective and appropriate uses of smart phones by controlling the antecedents of addiction to its use.