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Entitled

*THE ASSOCIATION BETWEEN PROBLEMATIC INTERNET USE, DEPRESSIVE SYMPTOMS, SELF-ESTEEM, AND PERSONALITY TRAITS*

by

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Abstract

A number of international studies have investigated the association between problematic internet use (PIU), personality traits and psychopathology, however, despite their widespread prevalence, such investigations in the Middle East region remain rare. Therefore, this study examined the relationship between PIU and depression, self-esteem, and personality traits in a sample of 350 university students, aged between 17 and 33 years, who were resident in United Arab Emirates (UAE). Participants completed several assessments of socio-demographic variables, a validated measure of PIU, depression, self-esteem, and a measure of their personality traits. A total of 75.1% of the sample were determined to engage in behaviors reflective of PIU. The results of a series of bivariate correlations and a hierarchical linear regression confirmed that PIU was indeed predicted by duration of time spent online, elevated scores on depression, and by clusters A and C of the personality assessment. This study's results largely concur with those of preliminary investigations of PIU in the UAE in relation to the association between PIU and psychopathology. Moreover, this study makes a novel contribution to the literature by being the first study in this region of the world to explore the relationship between PIU and personality traits. The significant findings of this study in relation to personality lends support to the theorized reasons motivating the development of PIU; that individuals with particular personality traits are especially prone to develop addictive tendencies to the internet as the online medium enables the satisfaction of particular social needs in the virtual realm that would otherwise go unmet or avoided in real-world interactions with others.

**Keywords:** Problematic internet use, Depression, Self-esteem, Personality traits, Psychopathology, Middle East.