Measurement of Internet Anxiety: From Surveys in Japan

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Abstract

Internet anxiety is characterized as an anxious emotion preventing people from using Internet, and as a result receiving its benefits. Since this psychological concept was provided by Presno (1988), a number of studies have been conducted on measurement of it and exploration of related factors. In particular, some recent works revealed its relationships with demographic characteristics such as gender, behaviors such as Internet use, and other psychological factors.

However, the existing studies have two problems. The first problem is sampling bias in the sense that participants were limited to students or adults with specific occupations. The second problem is research bias in technological aspects in Internet anxiety and factors that influence it. The measurement of Internet anxiety in the existing studies focused on anxiety toward literacy of technological operations and physical characteristics of computer networks from educational perspectives. Moreover, except for gender, considered factors influential to Internet anxiety were the ones related to computer technologies such as computer anxiety, frequency of Internet use, and perception of computational resources. In industrial countries including Japan, Internet has recently been reported as a source of crimes and bullying in children. Under this situation, Internet anxiety and factors affecting it should be investigated focusing on social aspects such as communication functions, and based on a wider range of sampling from not only students but also general adults.

For this investigation, some surveys were conducted in Japan. The measurement in this survey was based on an existing study including both technological and social aspects of Internet anxiety (Nakayama, 2006). The results suggested several differences on Internet anxiety and its relationships with general self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977), Internet use, and negative experiences on the Internet, between university students and general adults. The presentation reports these results and discusses about their implications.