

Personality Traits and News Addiction: Mediating Role of Self-Control

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ABSTRACT

Background: It is common observations that due to advanced technologies such as mobile phones, internet, social media usage and augmented terrorism, people are persuaded towards news. Similarly, engrossment of a certain individual in any domain from politics, sports, global issues, arson or terrorism can also promote news addiction.

Objective: To examine the mediating role of self-control by verifying the role of gender in the dynamic interplay between conscientiousness, neuroticism and news addiction in young and old adults from main cities (Lahore, Multan, Bahawalpur, Dera Ghazi Khan, Faisalabad, and Sargodha) only data. Co-relational research design was employed.

Materials & Methods: Conscientiousness, Neuroticism, Self-control and News addiction, were assessed through News Addiction¹, Big Five Inventory², and 10 Item Self-Scoring Self-control Scale³.

Results: The co-relation matrix revealed that news addiction is negatively co-related with conscientiousness and positively co-related with neuroticism. Independent sample *t*-test revealed women are higher on neuroticism and conscientiousness where as men are higher score on news addiction. Conscientiousness and neuroticism was significant predictors of news addiction, however they remain significant predictor of news addiction after self-control was entered in the model as a mediator and controlling the gender as a control variable with dependent variable. Model fit indices for structured equation mediation model analysis through AMOS provided empirical support for proposed mediation model.

Conclusion: Personality traits and self-control have explained the variance in news addiction suggesting self-control a mediator in relationship of personality traits and news addiction. This study makes important contribution to clinical and counseling psychology by signifying the importance of news addiction i.e. mal-adaptive behavior. Their mal-adaptive behavior can be improved by guiding them about to self-control pertinent to their personality trait.

Key words: News Addiction, Self-control, Conscientiousness, Neuroticism, Gender.

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INTRODUCTION

News is the statement of specific information and facts and figures on any substantial event¹. It is conjoint ascertainment to ultramodern applied science technologies such as mobile phones, internet, social media usage and augmented terrorism. People are persuaded towards news. Similarly, engrossment of certain individuals in any domain from politics, sports, global issues, arson or terrorism can also promote news habituation or addiction and intensify inspection towards news. News addiction comes under the term behavioral

addiction and it is one of the foremost form of addiction in which individual habitually performs non-drug related behavior⁴.

Issues of behavioral addiction such as Facebook, gambling and Internet addiction were addressed by many researchers. Researches on addiction based on usage of social media other than news addiction have been published widely. The researches have a wide scope as the researchers have employed quantitative and qualitative methodologies^{5,6}. With limited literature available on news addiction the researchers felt interested to find out whether personality has any role in explaining new addiction and moreover to find out the mediated role of self-control between personality traits (conscientiousness and neuroticism) and news addiction by verifying the role of gender in the dynamic interplay among conscientiousness, neuroticism and

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news addiction. Ishaq and Ghayas, (2015) demonstrated that news addiction have several similar symptoms to substance related and addictive disorders from Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorder 5th (DSM-5) including compulsive behavior, tolerance, withdrawal and functional impairment⁴.

According to Ishaq and Ghayas, (2015) “When somebody interacts with news, this gives him/her satisfying feelings and sensations that he/she is not able to get in other ways. The reinforcement an individual gets from these feelings compels him to repeat their behavior to get these types of feelings and sensations repeatedly. The repetitive numbers of behavior and time increase the previous one leading towards excessive time spend on news, whereby eventually causing a disturbance in every sphere of life⁴.” According to the definition, the individuals who are addicted to news feel themselves much obsessed to check the news in uncontrollable ways. In the sense of one’s control on oneself can be defined as the active role to play by refraining from the instant pleasure of impulse that would hinder with the daily functioning and attainment of goals⁷. Furthermore, self-control is intervening or changing of a predetermined behavior⁸. It can be described as a skill of controlling or inhibiting a desired and persuasive urge in the attainment of goal⁹. Pervious researches show that there is relationship between self-control with different type of behavioral addictions¹⁰. News addiction is also one type of behavioral addiction so it can be assumed that news addiction influenced by one’s self control. Males score high on news addiction as compared to females due to their frequent exposure⁴.

Previous studies designated that personality traits may affect¹¹. Kuss, Griffiths, Karila and Billieux, (2014) identified that increased neuroticism as a risk factor for behavioral addiction¹². Neuroticism is a fundamental personality trait in the study of psychology characterized by anxiety, moodiness, worry, and frustration¹³. Women have been found to be higher on neuroticism as compared to men¹⁴. Individual who scores low on neuroticism are found to be emotionally stable and have more control to react towards stressors. People who have high scores on neuroticism give more time to social media¹⁵.

Conscientiousness is another personality trait of being thorough, cautious, or vigilant. It is also related to one’s control. Women score slightly higher than men on facets of conscientiousness, such as order, dutifulness and self-control¹⁴. People who score low on conscientiousness tend to be laid back and fewer goal

oriented¹⁷. They have less control to accelerate the task they are performing¹⁴. Pervious literature also provides evidence that there is negative relationship between addictive propensities and conscientiousness¹⁸.

It is expected that neuroticisms and conscientiousness are related to news addiction because both of these addictions are based on same type of construct which is behavioral addiction. From all pervious discussion, it can be assumed that individuals who are conscientiousness and have high level of are likely to get addicted to use of social media, neuroticism is likely to be related with self-control.

Objectives:

- To find out the relationship between conscientiousness, self-control and news addiction.
- To find out the mediating role of self-control in relationship of conscientiousness and neuroticism with news addiction.

Hypotheses:

- There is likely to be negative co-relation exists between conscientiousness, self-control and news addiction.
- Neuroticism is likely to be positively co-related with news addiction.
- Self-control is likely to mediate the relationship of conscientiousness and neuroticism with news addiction.

MATERIAL & METHODS

Research Design: Co-relational research design was employed to conduct the present study.

Sample: The purposive sample of the present (N=300) comprised young and old adults from almost all main cities of Punjab i.e. Lahore, Multan, Bahawalpur, Dera Ghazi Khan, Faisalabad, and Sargodha. Overall study took six months to complete it. The sample comprised almost equal number of male and female participants. Age range from 18 to 60 years (M= 39.07, SD= 2.51).

Procedure: The study was conducted at the Institute of Applied Psychology, University of Punjab, Lahore, Pakistan. In order to collect the data, peoples were individually contacted and then they were briefed about the objectives of the study. Before participation, their written informed consent was taken. They were ensured that their privacy and confidentially will be maintained. Personal information as taken through self-constructed literature based demographic sheets. Afterwards, scales were given to take responses. They were appreciated for their participants after taking response. In the end,

research participants were thanked for their valuable co-operation. All participants were treated in accordance with the APA code of ethics. The age of participants of the study was no more than 60 and less than 18. It was assured that participants have no any physical and psychological disabilities.

Measures

Following developed scale with strong psychometrics properties were used to assess the construct of the study:

- **News-addiction Scale (NAS).** News addiction Scale was constructed by Ishaq and Ghayas,(2015)⁴.it espou uses 5 point likert (strongly disagree = 1, disagree = 2, neutral = 3, agree = 4,strongly agree = 5).It consist 19 items.The scale minimum & maximum possible score were 19 & 95 respectively. Internal reliability for this scale was reported between 0.85-0.89⁴.
- **10 Item Self-Scoring Self-control Scale.**Self Scoring Self-control Scale was constructed by Tangney, Baumeister and Boona, (2004). it espoues 5 point likert (strongly disagree = 1, disagree = 2, neutral = 3, agree = 4, strongly agree = 5). Score ranging from 10 to 50. Internal reliability for this scale was reported 0.77³.
- **Big Five Inventory English version scale.** Big Five Inventory English version scale was developed by John and Srivastava, (1999)². It contains 44 it emsand is 5 point likert scale with score range from 1 to220. It provides a score for each of the Big Five personality traits (Conscientiousness, Agreeableness,Neuroticism ,Extroversion and Openness). For current study BFI subscale of Conscientiousness measure through these items (8*, 13, 18*, 23*, 28, 33, 38, 43*)Neuroticism measured through these items (4, 9*, 14, 19, 24*, 29,34*, 39). Internal reliability for all subscales were ranging from 0.75 to 85².

All procedures followed were in accordance with the ethical standards of the responsible committee on human experimentation (institutional and national) and with the Helsinki Declaration of 1975, as revised in 2008. Informed consent was obtained from all patients for being included in the study.

RESULTS

The obtained data were subjected to statistically analysis through SPSS version 20 and AMOS 21. Before evaluating the relationship among variables, the psychometric unassailability of the instruments for measuring current study constructs was examined. For this purpose, descriptive statistics and internal consistency levels for all scales were determined. The

low to moderate values of standard deviations of various scales provided a clue that scale were good approximation of their corresponding parameters. Although skewness values of all the scales were relatively high, P-P plots and histograms of all the variables did not reveal substantial departure from symmetry. Thus, choice of parametric tests such as correlation was justified. Cronbach’s alpha coefficients were computed as indices of internal consistency for measurement of various variables of the present study. Independent sample t-test revealed that women scored higher on neuroticism and conscientiousness where as men scored higher score on news addiction. Co-relation and mediation analysis were undertaken for testing the proposed hypothesis

Table 1 Psychometric Properties and Zero Order Correlation among Variables of the Present Study (N=300)

| Variable | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | M | SD | A |
|----------------------|---|------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-----|
| 1. News addiction | - | - | .48* | -.44* | 37.46 | 5.57 | .77 |
| 2. Conscientiousness | - | .46* | -.54* | .45* | 39.35 | 5-15 | .83 |
| 3. Neuroticism | - | - | - | -.47* | 22.49 | 21.46 | .81 |
| 4. Self-Control | - | - | - | - | 55.03 | 3.98 | .79 |

Note: *p < .001.

Table 1 shows the Pearson co-relation among study variables. The findings indicated that news addiction was negatively co-related with conscientiousness self-control and positively co-related with neuroticism. The reliability analysis showed that the reliability coefficient of all scales were up to the mark I.e., all of them were greater than the benchmark of 0.70.

Figure 1 shows the mediating role of Conscientiousness, Neuroticism, between Self-control, and News addiction by Controlling Gender

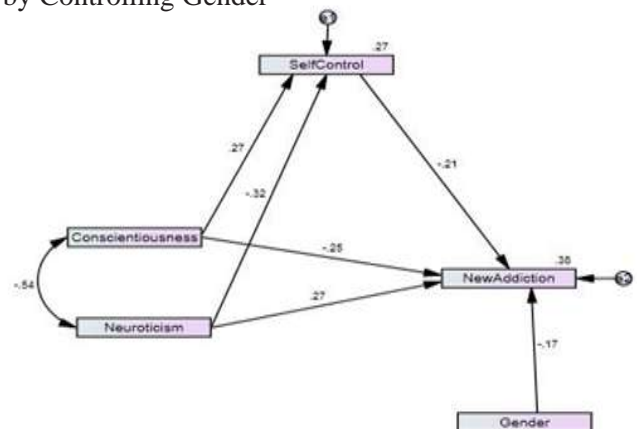


Table 2 Fit Indices for Conscientiousness, Neuroticism, Self-control, News addiction and Gender (N =300)

| Model fit | X^2 | Df | GFI | CFI | RMSEA |
|-----------|-------|----|-----|-----|-------|
| | .024 | 1 | 1 | 1 | .000 |

The table 2 shows the model fit indices. The model fit indices showed a good fit model to the data with chi square .024 (df= 1) <.01, CFI =1, GFI = 1 and RMSEA = .000.

Table 3 Direct and Indirect Effect of Conscientiousness, Neuroticism, News addiction Through Self-control by Controlling Gender (N=300)

| Outcome | Variables | Direct effects B | Indirect effects B |
|----------------|-------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|
| Self-Control | Conscientiousness | .27*** | |
| News Addiction | Neuroticism | -.32*** | -.06*** |
| | Conscientiousness | -.25*** | |
| | Neuroticism | .27*** | |
| | Self-Control | -.21*** | |
| | Gender | .04*** | |

. ***p < .001.

Sobel's Z = 3.53; p < .001.

Table 3 summarizes the findings of moderated mediation analysis conducted through AMOSE 21 for testing the proposed model of new addiction. Results revealed mediating effect of self-control on news addiction. The indirect effect of conscientiousness and neuroticism on news addiction through self-control were significant as Sobel's Z was significant (Sobel's Z = 3.44, p < .001). Conscientiousness and neuroticism was significant predictors of news addiction, however they remain significant predictor of news addiction after self-control was entered in the model as a mediator and controlled for gender as a control variable with dependent variable. This provided evidence that self-control mediated the relationship between self-Conscientiousness, neuroticism and news addiction by controlling gender as a control variable.

DISCUSSION

The current study is among the pioneering work to investigate the relationship among conscientiousness, neuroticism self-control and news addiction. The first and second hypothesis i.e. co-relational hypothesis

were supported by the findings that news addiction has positive relationship with neuroticism and negative relationship with conscientiousness, and self-control (See Table 1). Literature showed that there is relationship between personality traits and behavioral addiction¹¹. As, Kuss, Griffiths, Karila and Billieux, (2014) identified that increased neuroticism as a risk factor for behavioral addiction².

People who have high scores on neuroticism are more behaviorally addicted as compared to those who have low scores on neuroticism^{15,16}. So, it is constant that neuroticism and news addiction have negative correlation. Peoples who have high scores on neuroticism make him news addicted as compared to those who have low score. Because, the people who have low on neuroticism have more control on self are emotionally stable^{15,16}. As, Our result on conscientiousness showed that, as scores on conscientiousness increase people have less chance to be addicted of news. Pervious literature finding highlighted that there is a negative relationship between addictive propensities and conscientiousness¹⁸. Our verdicts also elucidated that conscientiousness, neuroticism have direct and indirect relationship with news addiction through self-control. These findings corroborate the third hypothesis of the present study. Self-control plays on active role refraining from the instant pleasure of impulse that would hinder with the daily functioning and attainment goals⁷. It can be described as that it is skill of controlling or inhibiting a desired⁹. Current study findings demonstrated that self-control acts as a mediating variable between conscientiousness, neuroticism and news addiction by controlling the effect of gender with news addiction. As discussed above, conscientiousness is a personality trait that implies a desire to task well. People with conscientiousness are prearranged, systematic and well-organized as opposed to those who have low control on self¹³. Men who scores low on conscientiousness tend to be laid back, less goal oriented and less driven by success as compared to women: they also are more likely to engage in disruptive acts¹⁷. Pervious researches stand consistent with the notion that addictive inclinations and conscientiousness both are negatively related¹⁸.

The males are more vulnerable towards addictive tendencies due to their broad exposure of the external world¹. Men with conscientiousness traits have less control on self that inclined them towards news. Neuroticism is a personality trait which is characterized by anxiety and frustration¹³. Male who have high scores on neuroticism have low self-control and easily inclined towards behavioral type of addiction, like give more

time on social media^{15,16}. The social media and news addiction are based on same type of construct which is behavioral addiction. Due to this reason it can be expected that peoples with neurotic and conscientiousness personality traits are likely to depend upon their level of control on self and are likely to get inclined toward news addiction. As researchers have mentioned above that this is pioneering work on self-control as mediating variable between conscientiousness, neuroticism and news addiction. So, researchers are powerless to give direct support from literature to current study findings from pervious literature.

To overcome the deficiency of literature, authors tried to verify it by Model Fit Indices; Because Model Fit Indices decide how well a prior model fits the sample data¹⁹. The current study model indices are checked through chi-square, CFI, GFI, and RMSEA. These indices show that model is absolute a good fit. The degree of freedom value ($df = 1$, $\chi^2 / df = .024$, $\chi^2 / df = .024$) of current study shows that it is good fit because according to Kline, (2004) a model demonstrate reasonable fit if the statistics adjusted by its degree of freedom does not exceed 3 ($\chi^2 / df < 3$)²⁰. The RMSEA is the next acceptable statistic and one of the most informative fit indices²¹ which directs us how fit the model; with unknown but optimally selected constraint guesstimates would fit the population covariance matrix. (22) Our model fitness was also verified by next most appropriate model fit indices, because value of RMSEA (RMSEA=.000) comes under the cut-off-points (below .07). (23) The value of Goodness of Fit statistics (GFI) (GFI=1) and CFI (CFI=1) make more credible to proposed model; because both value is higher than the recommended cut-off point of GFI (GFI > 0.95) and CFI (CFI > 0.95). (24, 25)

CONCLUSION

In general, hypotheses of the present study were supported. Personality traits and self-control have explained the variance in news addiction, which suggested that self-control is a mediator in relationship of personality traits and news addiction. This opens new avenues of research for the implication of psychology of self in cognitive, social, and counseling psychology in terms emerging type of behavioral addiction i.e. news addiction.

Limitations: This study makes important contribution to clinical and counseling psychology by signifying the importance of news addiction i.e. mal-adaptive behavior. Their mal-adaptive behavior can be improved by guiding them about to self-control pertinent to their personality

trait. Despite its scientific rigor, the present study involves certain limitations. Firstly, while assessing personality traits, self-control and news addiction, it was not possible to control all factors which may influence one's consciousness or characteristic, therefore, the inferences of the current study are theoretically grounded. Moreover, relationship found in the present study may have been inflated owing to mono-operation and mono-method bias because data were collected through self-report measures²⁵.

Conflict of Interest: The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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