

A STUDY OF INTERNET ADDICTION AMONG ADOLESCENTS

*Dr. Prabha Vig

**Deepak Singh Gill

ABSTRACT

The study was undertaken with objectives to study the level of internet addiction among adolescents, to work out gender differences among adolescents on internet addiction and to examine school wise differences (Govt. & Private) at the level of internet addiction. Data was collected on a standardized questionnaire of 'Internet Addiction' developed by Dr. Kimberly S. Young (1998). The reliability for the questionnaire was 0.899. Young's internet addiction test (IAT) was administered to a sample of (n=400) adolescents (boys and girls) both studying in Private and Govt. Senior Secondary Schools of Chandigarh and its adjoining areas. IAT scores demonstrated that 56 (14 %) adolescents were severely addicted by internet i. e. having scores between (80-100). Among the adolescent population 56 (14 %), 40(10%) were boys and 16 (4%) were girls. The study further analyzed that the private school students exhibit higher internet addiction when compared to government school adolescents.

Keywords : Internet Addiction, Gender, Adolescents

Younger generation particularly adolescents, these days are adopting new digital technologies as quickly as they are being introduced. Technologies such as, internet, social networking sites and mobile phones are considered as an integral and essential part of adolescents lives (Consumer Electronics Association, 2008). According to Foehr, (2006) adolescents use technology for many reasons- to communicate with one another as a form of self expression, for entertainment and to look for information. Going by trends, it was observed that usage of internet in recent years has increased significantly particularly by adolescents. Its continuous usage has affected them by its increased dependency on 21st century technologies. The large trends of internet usage were reflected by the research work conducted by IMAMAI (Internet and Mobile Association of India) and IMRB International (Indian Market Research Bureau) in June (2013), who highlighted that the internet usage in India has gone up by more and more internet users using internet on regular basis. In June 2013, India had 190 million internet users, out of this; 130 million belonged to Urban India and

the rest 60 million belonged to Rural India. These findings of internet usage are further confirmed by the Global Management Consulting Firm (2015); who on the basis of research recorded 53% of the respondents in India are connected to internet after every rating hour. The results further emphasized that 26 cities of India cover 65,000 person of 16,500 household out of which 1.6 million were school children. They use internet for 322 minutes a week and about 3.4 million college students use the internet about 433 minutes a week. Currently in India, there are 81 million internet users, a number that will nearly triple around by the year 2015 end to 237 million. The study further stressed the incidence rate of internet addiction among adolescents is 10.6% which by average use the computer for playing games, chatting on the face book and so on. This excessive use of internet appeared to them is a way to fill gaps in the modern life style by addressing their low self esteem, communication problem, loneliness and depression in which the user is trapped in a new form of addiction, called as internet addiction. According to Young et. al. (2000) symptoms of internet addiction are pre-occupation

with the internet, increased anxiety when offline, hiding or lying about the extent of online use and impairment of real life functioning. This led us to conclude that excessive internet usage changes the behaviour of an individual by withdrawing him from normal routine life and making oneself more focused when online. Research studies by [Zuckerman (1979), Leshner (1997), Greenberg et. al. (1999), Lin and Tsai (2002), Sunwoo&Rando (2002), Kaltiala et. al. (2004), Lui et. al. (2011), Cao et. al. (2011), Gasemzadeh et. al. (2008), Siomos et. al. (2008), Liberatore et. al. (2011), Durkee (2012), Ogel (2012), Tsitsika, Tzavela&Mavromati (2012), Muller et. al. (2012), The Hindu (2015) and Karapetsas, Zygouris&Fotis (2015)] conducted in other parts of world but not in India particularly among adolescents. Therefore, adolescents of senior secondary schools ranging from age group 14-17 years represent the sample for the undertaken study because according to Lintonen and Rimpela (2004) adolescence is a period of rapid psychological maturation and susceptibility to internet addiction. They further emphasized they have higher rate of internet penetration worldwide because of their vulnerability to the negative health impact of internet usage. The above research studies have witnessed the causes of internet addiction and its demerits and so on. But the undertaken study was planned to identify the internet addiction of adolescents studying in Senior Secondary Schools of Chandigarh by concentrating on demographic variables- Gender (Boys & Girls) and Type of Schools (Govt. & Private).

Objectives:

1. To study the level of internet addiction among adolescents.
2. To work out gender differences among adolescents on internet addiction.
3. To examine school wise differences (Govt. & Private) among adolescents as the level of internet addiction.

METHODS

Sample

The study sample constituted of adolescents studying in Senior Secondary Schools of Chandigarh and its surrounding areas. Adolescents are the students who are in the age group of 14-18 years and are studying in classes ranging from X to XII. The sample included 210 boys and 210 girls drawn randomly from 7 Govt. and 7 Private Senior Secondary Schools. The final size sample was restricted to 200 boys and 200 girls because of incomplete questionnaire returned by the participants.

Measures

The study used the internet addiction test prepared by Young (1998). 20 questions were used to determine internet addiction of adolescents. The reliability for the test was determined by employing Cronbach's Alpha method which comes out to be 0.899. All the responses on 20 statements were collected under five point Likert's scale which stands (1- Rarely, 2- Occasionally, 3- Frequently, 4- Often and 5- Always).

Procedure

The undertaken research was a comparative study with respect to gender and type of school. So, adolescents were compared with each other on the extent to which background characteristics gender (male & female); type of school (govt. & private) effect internet addiction of adolescents studying in Senior Secondary Schools of Chandigarh. Data was collected from selected sample by applying internet addiction test prepared by Young (1998). For analysis, the response to each question was converted to points ranging from (0-100) & respondents were classified to subgroups based on previous findings of Young (1996, 1998), Chen & Fu (2009) and Beutel (2011). Therefore, higher internet users group ranging from (80-100).

Results and Discussion

Table 1: Percentage Scores of Internet Addicted Adolescents

The Severity of Internet Addiction	N	In Percentage
High Internet Addiction	56	14

Table 2: The Rate of Internet Addiction in Male and Female Adolescents

Gender	Total	Mean	S. D.	df	t	P
Males	200	40.33	13.453	398	2.31	0.01 level
Females	200	39.79	30.461			

Table 3: Difference between internet addiction among Govt. and Private school adolescents

Variables	N	Mean	S.D.	df	t	Level of significance
Govt. School	200	46.22	8.64	398	3.01	0.01 level
Private school	200	58.58	9.88			

Table-1 reveals identified highly internet addicted students. Among the 400 students, 56 students were found to be highly addicted, whose addiction scores ranged from 80 to 100.

Table-2 reveals significant difference between male and female adolescents in their mean scores for internet addiction. The calculated value of 't' further indicates that it is significant at 0.01 level, which means males have higher addiction to internet than female adolescents. In term of adolescents, the undertaken study showed that boys have a strong adherence to internet whereas girls scored low on addiction dimensions of internet. The study further concluded that there was greater use of internet among boys when compared with girls. These findings were supported by Meerkerk, Eijnden, Vermulst & Garretson (2007) who reported that the less conscientious adolescents are more likely to experience problems related to internet addiction, from an explanatory point of view. The researchers further emphasized that adolescents who are less conscientious choose to use internet over other less pleasurable activities likes; doing their homework or soon.

Table -3 indicates significant differences between Govt. and Private school adolescents. The calculated mean of private school adolescents is greater than that of Govt. school adolescents. To analyze it further "t" values were calculated which was found to be significant at 0.01 levels which means there is a significant difference between the scores of internet addiction among Private and Govt. school adolescents. These research findings were also supported by the findings of Griffiths (1998) who found that private school students use more

internet because of; availability of Wi-Fi connections, computer laboratories and easy access to net at school campus. The findings of the study were also supported by Ko et. al. (2010), who believed that characteristic of boys such as; resourcefulness, openness to experience such as; creativity, imagination and innovation to engage in pleasurable activities led them to use more of internet. The study further pointed that adolescents from private schools have higher level of internet addiction when compared with Govt. school students. The findings of the undertaken research are in line with the research work of Bahrainian and Khazaei (2014) who found that overuse of internet is related to awareness and time spent by students to use computer. This diverts one attention towards private schools that have computer classes regularly and students' access computer labs according to their needs.

References

- Bahrainian, A. & Khazaei, A. (2014). Internet addiction among students: the relation of self esteem and depression. *Bulletin of Environment, Pharmacology and Life Sciences*, vol.3 (3), 01-06.
- Beutel, M.E. (2011). Regular and problematic leisure time internet use in the community: Results from a German Population Based survey. *Cyberpsychology, Behavior and Social Networking*, 14, 291-296.
- Cao, H., Sun, Y., Wan, Y., Hao, J., & Tao, F. (2011). Problematic Internet use in Chinese adolescents and its relation to psychosomatic symptoms and life satisfaction. *BMC Public Health*, 11.

- Consumer electronic association (2008).Market research report.Trends in CE reuse, recycle & removal.
- Durkee, T. (2012).Prevalence of pathological Internet use among adolescents in Europe: Demographic and Social Factors, *Addiction* 107(12), pp. 2210–22.
- Foehr (2006). Media Multitasking Among American Youth: Prevalence, Predictors and Pairings. The Henry J. Kaiser family foundation headquarters 2400 sand hill road, CA.
- Ghasemzadeh, L., Shahraray&Moradi, A. (2008). Investigating the prevalence of internet addiction among Tehran high school students and its relationship to loneliness and self esteem, *Education and Training Quarterly*, 1(1389), 68-141.
- Griffiths, M.D. (2000). Does Internet and Computer “Addiction” Exist? Some Case Study Evidence.
- Internet and Mobile association of India (2013). I-Cube Study available from: <http://www.iamai.in/reports1.aspx>.
- Ko, C.-H., Hsiao, S., Liu, G.-C., Yen, J.-Y., Yang, M.-J., & Yen, C.-F. (2010). The characteristics of decision making, potential to take risks, and personality of college students with Internet addiction. *Psychiatry Research*, 175(1-2), 121-125.
- Leshner, A. (1997). Addiction is a Brain Disease and It Matters, *Science* 278(5335), 45-47.
- Liberatore, K. A., Rosario, K., Colon-De Marti, L. N., & Martinez, K. G. (2011).Prevalence of Internet addiction in Latino adolescents with psychiatric diagnosis.*Cyberpsychology, Behavior and Social Networking*, 14(6), 399-402.
- Lin, S. S. J., and Tsai, C. C. (2002).Sensation seeking and internet dependence of Taiwanese high school adolescents.Comput.Human Behav. 18(4): 411–426
- Lintonen, T. &Rimpela, A. (2004).Internet addiction?Potentially problematic use of the internet in a population of 12-18 years old adolescents.*Addiction Research& Theory*, 12,89-96.
- Liu, T. C., Desai, R. A., Krishnan-Sarin, S., Cavallo, D. A., & Potenza, M. N. (2011). Problematic Internet use and health in adolescents: Data from a high school survey in Connecticut. *Journal of Clinical Psychiatry*, 72(6), 836-845
- Meerkerk, G. J., Van den Eijnden, R. J. J. M., Vermulst, A. A., &Garretsen, H. F. L. (2007). The relationship between personality, psychosocial wellbeing and compulsive Internet use: The Internet as cyber Prozac? *Owned by the Internet - Explorative research into the causes and consequences of compulsive Internet use* (pp. 86-101). Rotterdam: Erasmus University Rotterdam.
- Ogel, K. (2012). Internet Addiction to Understand the Psychology of the Internet and Deal with Addiction. Istanbul Turkey: Turkiye Is Bank Culture Publishings.
- Pui, M.S. (2006). Prediction of internet addiction for undergraduates in Hong Kong. Unpublished Bachelors of Business Administration (honours) Thesis, Kowloon, Hong Kong: Hong Kong Baptist University.
- Siomos, K.E., Dafouli, E.D., Braimiotis, D.A., Mouzas, O.D., Angelopoulos, N.V.(2008). Internet addiction among Greek adolescent students.*Cyberpsychology and Behavior*, 11 (6) 653–657.
- Smahel, D., Brown, B.B., Blinka, L. (2012). Associations between online friendship and Internet addiction among adolescents and emerging adults.*Developmental Psychology*, 48 (2) 381–388.
- The Hindu: India's National Newspaper (2015). Net Addiction May Weaken Immune System. pp 20, dated 11 August, Vol. 5, No. 190, Published by Northern Edition at Mohali.
- Young, K., Pistner, M., O'Mara, J. & Buchanan, J. (2000). Cyber-Disorders: The Mental Health Concern for the New Millennium. *Cyber Psychology & Behavior*, 3(5), 475-479.
- Zuckerman, M. (1979). Sensation Seeking Behavior: Beyond the Optimal Level of Arousal, Erlbaum, Hillsdale, NJ