Impact of Internet Addiction on Adolescence Mental Health

Ishwari Khatwani, Ph.D., Department of Human Development
S. S. Girls' College, Gondia, Maharashtra, INDIA

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Author
Ishwari Khatwani, Ph.D.

shodhsamagam1@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Internet is undoubtedly leading to a new industrial revolution with entrance of thousands of newcomers daily all over the world. Today, it is leading to communicative, social and economic revolution. It is actually at the peak of the digital industrial revolution and each kind of new revolution consequently gives rise to new problem. The unique characteristics of the Internet such as its 24-hour availability, simple working, low cost, anonymity have welcomed many people throughout the world. In addition, these characteristics which, on the one side, are the capabilities of the Internet, and the other side are considered as its disadvantages. One of the problems that internet has led to is that of virtual world, or addiction to the said great global network which has a very harmful behavioural-psychological impact on Internet users.

KEY WORDS

INTRODUCTION

Knowledge is the most precious asset of the human society. The development of knowledge is an evolutionary phenomenon. It grows gradually through the contribution of human generation. The knowledge base develops because of man's curiosity and the increasing use of information and communication technology. The power and wealth go with man who has awareness i.e. knowledge. Wealth without knowledge is incomplete.

The Present scenario is the age of computers. Today it is difficult to imagine school, colleges, offices etc. without computers. The world has become a global village with the advancement of network systems. Transmission of information is possible within

October to December 2023   **www.shodhsamagam.com**
A Double-Blind, Peer-Reviewed, Referred, Quarterly, Multi Disciplinary and Bilingual International Research Journal

Impact Factor
SJIF (2023): 7.906

1494

seconds. It has pushed the modern world towards the technological advancement. It is said that "change is law of nature." Earlier students used to search libraries for doing in depth study of the subjects, nowadays they surf internet. This has opened the door to the vast store house of knowledge.

The rise of internet in this race to absorb the knowledge has become more aggressive. This has resulted in division of the world into two halves; ones who are computer literate and other, computer illiterate. People literate and computer illiterate. People who have no knowledge of computer and information technology feel incapable to keep up with the society. The Internet and computer with the society. The Internet as well as computer are providing a lot of facilities at home and workplace. For instance- e-mails, e-banking, e-books, e-tickets are the most general facilities of internet. One may share his experiences and thoughts with the world through multiple ways like blogs, Wikis, and websites. Besides hunting a job and hiring the employees are also possible through public portals like naukri.com, UPSC portal, monster.com, latest vacancy, sarkari naukri etc. (Edwards & Bruce, 2002).

The use of internet among the adolescents in India has led to wide change in their life styles. It is a very general observation that using the internet can lead to improvement in a student's performance of thinking logically, formation of concepts, problem solving procedure and understanding relationships. For instance- Computer programming allows the students to improve all their skills by participating in the classroom exercises that closely simulate real world experiences which is useful in situations where first-hand experiences are not available or are not appropriate.

On the other side, some of the researchers and media correspondents as well as policy analysts argue that using the internet suppresses one's capacity of brains to develop imagination (Davis, 1989). Students feel happy to be alone. They do not make notes any longer. They believe in cut-paste technology. They make no reference to library materials. This shows that use of internet leads to serious consequences because it may mar the study habits of children (Wang et al. 2003).

Internet Addiction

Now-a-days individuals are getting hooked on the Internet such as internet gambling, online shopping, searching for non- important information or chatting for a very long time. Internet is effective and productive, and people feel comfortable with online friends than the real ones. Additionally, when it is during online states the addicted young adults feel attractive, excited, uninhibited, thrilled, supported, and more desirable. Whereas, offline situations make him and/or her frustrated, worried, angry, anxious, and depressed. These strong positive emotions reinforce the compulsive behaviour refers to that Internet addiction of young adults create a numbing effect (Young, 1999).

Internet addiction, as an impulse control disorder that does not involve the use of an intoxicating drug is very similar to pathological gambling (B. Young, 2006). It is described as a behavioural addiction or non-chemical that involves human-machine interaction, that can be either passive, such as watching movies or active such as playing computer games (Widyanto & Griffiths, 2006). Further, Internet addiction is also defined as a maladaptive use of the Internet that can lead an individual to social and functional impairment (Solomon, 2009).

The concept of Internet addiction can be viewed from different aspects such as according to Davis, Flett and Besser (2002) it is explained as the inability of individuals to control their use of the Internet, which can then cause social, psychological, school, and/or work difficulties. Kandell (1998) argued that increasing tolerance to the effect of being online increasing number of investment of sources or Internet related activities, unpleasant feelings when off-line, and denial of the problematic behaviours are main reasons for dependence on the Internet.

American Psychiatric Association defined Internet addiction as a pattern of Internet using which results in functional disorders and unpleasant internal feeling during a two-month period and provided seven criteria

October to December 2023   **www.shodhsamagam.com**
A Double-Blind, Peer-Reviewed, Referred, Quarterly, Multi Disciplinary and Bilingual International Research Journal

Impact Factor
SJIF (2023): 7.906

1495

for its analysis (At least three criteria for two months):

➢   Tolerance.

➢   Continuous use of using Internet despite being aware of its disadvantages.

➢   Withdrawal symptoms.

➢   A significant amount of time is spent in activities related to internet use.

➢   The Internet is mostly accessed often, or for a very long periods than was intended. Continuous incline for controlling the behaviour.

➢   Important recreational, occupational, or social activities are given up or reduced because of Internet use.

Young's (2001) approach of the five phases of Internet addiction process lead the users such as:

➢   Discovery,

➢   Hopelessness,

➢   Experimentation,

➢   Compulsion and

➢   Escalation.

There are numerous impacts of Internet addiction. These negative impacts include, the impact on interpersonal relationship which are recurrent difficulties in relating to others (Loke, 2005). The interpersonal aspect is important for the users of the Internet. According to Li and Chung (2006) those who use the Internet for long time for social function purposes might be having some problems such as the compulsive use of Internet, withdrawal from social activities, decrease the tolerance, facing time management, interpersonal and health problems.

Physical Problem

Heavy Internet users, meaning, that users who were much less likely to engage in the following health promoting behaviours than the rest of them; take nutritional supplements, attempt to eat a healthier diet, trying to increase physical activity levels, were observed to have hypersomnia (>10 h of sleep/day), be significantly more likely to be overweight Body Mass Index (BMI >25), and have adverse effects on their regular studies. The adverse effect would be; migraine or headache, less sleep, and backaches because of prolong hours of Internet usage (Shuhail & Bergees, 2006). Sleep patterns are disrupted due to late night logins which result in excessive fatigue, impairing academic or decreasing occupational performance, and may decrease the immune system, leaving the addict prone to disease.

Psychological Problem

Internet addiction also appears to frequently co-occur with psychological disorders such as; other compulsive behaviours and depression and decreases self-esteem (Young, 1998). Ferraro et al. (2007) argued that if a person spends lot of time on Internet, he feels the coercive need to be connected again with Internet. Some other psychological problems include inability to control emotions and way of thinking due to long hour use of the Internet. Addicts tend to increase the net serving time and eliminate the set schedule Moreover, the impact of Internet addiction does not only limit to affect an individual only but also might affect their work performance.

A person is vulnerable to addiction when that person feels a lack of satisfaction in one's life, an absence of intimacy or strong connections to other people, a lack of self-confidence of compelling interests, or a loss of hope. In a similar manner, individuals who are dissatisfied or by a particular area or multiple areas of their lives have an increased likelihood of developing Internal addiction because they don't understand another way of coping. Many patients use the Internet to reduce pain, avoid the real problem, and keep things in status quo. However, once off-line, they realize that nothing has changed.

October to December 2023   **www.shodhsamagam.com**
A Double-Blind, Peer-Reviewed, Referred, Quarterly, Multi Disciplinary and Bilingual International Research Journal

Impact Factor
SJIF (2023): 7.906

1496

Putting aside the negative impacts, Internet however has brought some positive impacts to the user. The Internet provides users with information, connecting worldwide, promoting research, work with other people from overseas Country effectively. Those positive aspects are informative, convenient, resourcefulness and fun, but for the addicts, these benefits become detriments. Internet addiction or Internet abuse of the young adults can lead to extreme and serious problems for the individuals, particularly from the young generation who are at the time of growing their physical and mental health.

With the growing popularity of the Internet, there is an increased demand in treatment specifically designed to care for the Internet addicted patient. There is also a need for the professional community to understand and respond to the threat of this rapid expansion.

Mental Health

Mental health is very much fundamental to physical health and quality of life, and thus it is an important component for improving overall health and well-being of an individual. It is a state of well-being in which an individual realizes his or her own capabilities, can cope with normal challenges and stresses of life, can work fruitfully and productively and is capable to make a contribution to his society. It involves a humanistic approach towards self and even others. Mental health is an index or an indicator which shows the extent to which a person has been able to meet his environmental demands: social, emotional or physical. Mental health may include an individual's ability to enjoy life and strike a balance between life activities and efforts to achieve psychological balance.

Individuals that are mentally healthy are reality oriented, and know their possibilities and limitations, respond to challenges efficiently, value themselves, pursue work that suits their abilities, establish and maintain close relationships, and feel a sense of fulfilment.

Mental health is a vital determinant of one's healthy personality and balanced behaviour. Acquisition of such nourishing personality is indispensable for an individual to know oneself and also helps to prosper the society. In order to achieve such whole some personality, change has to be made, which in turn requires modification. If one does not attain synchronization with one's environment it leads to various problems. These problems may influence the mental health of the individual.

Good mental health and well-being are also associated with improved outcomes for individuals including physical health, social connectedness, educational achievement, criminality, maintaining a home, employment status and productivity.

According to Hilgard (1957) "A mentally healthy person is an adjusted person." This statement means that he is not widely distressed by the conflicts he faces. He attacks his problems in a realistic manner, he accepts the inevitable; he understands and accepts his own short-comings.

Mental health is considered as an attainment of positive values and attitudes. A mentally healthy person has enjoyable experiences, happy, zestful and creative personality. He has the potentialities for effective functioning in day-to-day life. He has his own philosophy and value of life. He is enthusiastic and reasonable. His future orientation is very realistic according to his own capacities and resources. He can handle his frustration and anxiety. A mentally healthy person generally possesses good character and morality.

Mental health is also explained as "a state of a person's well-being in which the individual realizes his own abilities, works productively, copes with the normal stresses of life, and makes a contribution to the community" (WHO, 2001).

Connection between Internet Addiction & Mental Health

Adolescent addiction to the Internet is becoming a serious problem. Extensive Internet use may create a heightened level of psychological arousal, resulting in little sleep, failure to eat for long periods and limited

October to December 2023   www.shodhsamagam.com
A Double-Blind, Peer-Reviewed, Referred, Quarterly, Multi Disciplinary and Bilingual International Research Journal

Impact Factor
SJIF (2023): 7.906

1497

physical activity (Young 1998)., Possibly resulting in the user experiencing physical and mental health problems such as depression, loneliness, low self-esteem and anxiety. Mental health is important at every stage of life from childhood and adolescence through adulthood. As mental health includes our emotional, psychological, and social well-being and also affects how we think, feel and act, the heavy internet users are seen as suffering from emotional, psychological and social dysfunction. It also helps decide how can stress be handled, relate to others, and make decisions. Adolescents that are addicted to the Internet are a little more likely to develop mental health problems than the other adolescents, who can be classified as normal Internet users. Feeling down, feeling sad, having a loss of interest in day-to-day activities are some of the symptoms. The heavy internet usage, like pulling away from people and usual activities, feeling of helpless, feeling unusually confused, angry, upset, worried, scared, experiencing severe mood swings that cause problem in relationship, having persistent thoughts and memories you cannot get out of your head. Jahanian and Seifury (2013) found out that there is a significant and inverse relationship between internet addiction and students mental health. Thus, heavy internet users are not able to realise their potential to the full, cope with the stresses of life, work productively and make meaningful contributions to the community.

CONCLUSION

Adolescents are more vulnerable to internet addiction. Through this review papers, internet has become one of the most important information tools and it creates incredible impact on physical and mental health of adolescents. Internet addiction creates innumerable disturbances in academic performance, social relationship and emotional wellbeing. Adolescents with higher levels of internet addiction had higher levels of stress, anxiety, depression and loneliness when compared to non-internet addicts.

In addition to the approaches above, adolescents who suffer from internet addiction must be given promotive and preventive actions through knowledge and factual information provisions regarding the consequences of excessive internet usage. Adolescents are more attentive and responsive if new information is delivered through audiovisual media. The effort in taking care of adolescents who suffer from internet addiction could be in the form of providing family therapy.

REFERENCES

1. Aggarwal Piyush, Gupta Anviti . (2023). Psychological Impact of Internet Addiction on Mental Health and Sleep Quality of ADOLES Student. *Journal for ReAttach Therapy and Developmental Diversities*, *6*(9s), 111–117.

2. Davis, R.A.; Flett, G.L.; Besser, A. (2002). Validation of a new scale for measuring problematic Internet use: Implications for pre- employment screening. *Cyber Psychology & Behaviour,* 5:331-345.

3. Devis (1989). Technology Acceptance Model and its impact of the perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use on attitude towards use, and hence the behavioral intentions and actual usage.

4. Edwards and Bruce, (2002). Sources of information and other opportunities available via internet.

5. Hilgard, E.R. (1957) Introduction to Psychology, New York: Harcourt Brace & Co. (2001).

6. Jahanian R, Seifury. Z. (2013). The impact of internet addiction on students' mental health in technical and vocational college in Alborz province. Middle *East journal of Scientific Research*, 14(11) 1533-1538.

7. Jean, H.K.; Lau, C.H.; Cheuk, K. K.; Kan, P.; Hui, H.L.C.; Griffiths, S.M. (2010). Brief report: Predictors of heavy Internet use and associations with health-promoting and health risk behaviorus among Hong Kong university students. *Journal of Adolescence*, 33(1): 215-220.

October to December 2023   www.shodhsamagam.com
A Double-Blind, Peer-Reviewed, Referred, Quarterly, Multi Disciplinary and Bilingual International Research Journal

Impact Factor
SJIF (2023): 7.906

1498

8. Kim, J.U. (2008). The Effect of a R/T Group Counselling Program on the Internet Addiction Level and Self-Esteem of Internet Addiction University Students. *International Journal of Reality Therapy*, 27(2): 4-12.

9. Levy, S. (1996) Breathing is also addictive new sweet. 128,52-53. December 30/ January 6.

10. Li, S.M.; Chung, R.M. (2006). Internet function and Internet addictive behaviour. *Computer in Human Behaviour*, 22: 1067-1071.

11. Loke, K. (2005). Interpersonal Problems and Interpersonal Expectations in Everyday Life. *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology*, 24(7):915-931.

12. Pastore, M. (2000). Demographics of the net getting older. Retrieved May 12, 2010, from http:// cyberatlas.internet.com/big_picture/ demographics/article/0,5901_448131, 00.html

13. Suhhail, K.; Bergees, Z. (2006). Effects of Excessive Internet Use on Undergraduate Students in Pakistan. *Cyber Psychology & Behaviour*, 9(3): 297-307.

14. Temple and Gavillet, (1990). information technology and their benefits, effectiveness box of computer training.

15. Wang, et. al., (2003). TAM as consumer skills, compute anxiety, and perceived self-efficacy.

16. WHO (2001). Mental Health: New Understanding, New Hope. Geneva: WHO

17. Young, K.S. (1996 August): Internet Addiction the emergence of a new clinical disorder paper presented at the 104th annual meeting of the American psychological Associations, Toronto, Canada.

18. Young, K.S. (1998). Internet addiction: The emergence of a new clinical disorder. *Cyber Psychology & Behaviour*, 1:237-244.

19. Young, K.S. (1999). Internet Addiction: symptoms, evaluation and treatment, Innovation in clinical practice: a source book pp 19-31.

20. Young, K.S. (2001). Tangled in the web: Understanding Cybersex from Fantasy to Addiction. Bloomington, Indiana Authorhouse.

21. Young, B. (2006). A study on the effect of Internet use and social capital on the academic performance. *Journal of Development and Society*, 35(1): 107-123.

22. Young, K.S. (2008). Internet Sex Addiction: Risk Factors, Stages of Development, and Treatment. *American Behavioural Scientist*, 52:221-237.

****

October to December 2023   www.shodhsamagam.com
A Double-Blind, Peer-Reviewed, Referred, Quarterly, Multi Disciplinary and Bilingual International Research Journal

**Impact Factor
SJIF (2023): 7.906**

1499