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Internet Addiction among College Students in Bangalore

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KEYWORDS

Internet Addiction, Gender Difference, Difference in Education Level, Internet Addiction Test.

A B S T R A C T

Internet has become an inevitable part of modern life. It has both positive and negative impact in our life. The history of the Internet begins with the development of electronic computers in the 1950s. The Internet developed from the ARPANET, which was funded by the US government to support projects within the government and at universities and research laboratories in the US – but grew over time to include most of the world's large universities and the research arms of many technology companies. The Internet has made life a lot easier by making information more accessible to all and creating connections with different people around the world. However, it has also led many people to spend too much time in front of the computer, so much so that it becomes the center of their lives. This can lead to an Internet or computer addiction. The aim of this research to understand the frequency of internet addiction among college students.

Introduction

The concept of data communication – transmitting data between two different places through an electromagnetic medium such as radio or an electric wire – predates the introduction of the first computers. Such communication systems were typically limited to point to point communication between two end devices. Telegraph systems and telex machines can be considered early precursors of this kind of communication. The Telegraph in the late 19th century was the first fully digital communication system (Ben Segal, 1995).

Fundamental theoretical work in data transmission and information theory was developed by Claude Shannon, Harry Nyquist, and Ralph Hartley in the early 20th century.

Early computers had a central processing unit and remote terminals. As the technology evolved, new systems were devised to allow communication over longer distances (for terminals) or with higher speed (for interconnection of local devices) that were necessary for the mainframe

computer model. These technologies made it possible to exchange data (such as files) between remote computers. However, the point-to-point communication model was limited, as it did not allow for direct communication between any two arbitrary systems; a physical link was necessary. The technology was also considered unsafe for strategic and military use because there were no alternative paths for the communication in case of an enemy attack (Byun, 2009).

Internet addiction or problematic internet use refers to excessive computer use which interferes with daily life. A conceptual model of PIU has been developed based on primary data collected from addiction researchers, psychologists, and health providers as well as older adolescents themselves. That study identified seven concepts, or clusters, that make up PIU using a concept mapping approach. These seven clusters are: psychosocial risk factors; physical impairment; emotional impairment; social and functional impairment; risky Internet use; impulsive Internet use; and Internet use dependence. The last three constructs have not been previously identified (Caplan and High, 2006). Risky Internet use are behaviors that increase risks of adverse consequences. It is not just the amount of time spent on the Internet that puts an adolescent at risk; how the time is spent is also an important consideration. The impulsive use construct describes an inability to maintain balance or control of internet use in relation to everyday life. Finally, the dependent use construct reflects the more severe symptoms that are typically associated with addictions, such as withdrawal symptoms. Thus, internet addiction may represent a severe form of PIU (Trochim and Kane, 2005).

Other research also stresses the fact that the Internet addiction disorder is not a unidimensional but a multidimensional construct. Various facets of Internet use must be differentiated because of their differential predictors, mechanisms and consequences. Online activities which, if done in person, would normally be considered troublesome, such as compulsive gambling, or shopping, are sometimes called net compulsions (Weng Chuan, 2013).

Specific sub types of internet addiction

Young (1999), a founding member of The Centre for On-Line Addiction, claims Internet addiction is a broad term that covers a wide variety of behaviors and impulse control problems.

1. Cybersexual addiction: compulsive use of adult websites for cybersex and cyberporn.

2. Cyber-relationship addiction: Over-involvement in online relationships.

3. Net compulsions: Obsessive online gambling, shopping or day-trading.

4. Information overload: Compulsive web surfing or database searches.

5. Computer addiction: Obsessive computer game playing.

Causes of internet addiction

Kimberly S. Young says that prior research links internet addiction disorder with existing mental health issues, most commonly depression. Young states that the disorder has significant effects socially, psychologically and occupationally.

According to a Korean study into the disorder, pathological use of the internet results in negative life consequences such as

job loss, marriage breakdown, financial debt, and academic failure. 70% of internet users in Korea are reported to play online games, 18% of which are diagnosed as game addicts. The authors of the article conducted a study using Kimberly Young's questionnaire. The study showed that the majority of those who met the requirements of internet addiction disorder suffered from interpersonal difficulties and stress and that those addicted to online games specifically responded that they hoped to avoid reality.

Young states that 52% of the respondents to her own study said that they were following recovery programs for other addictions. These included alcoholism, chemical dependency, compulsive gambling, or chronic overeating. These participants could see the same excessive behaviour, the need for a crutch to help them relax, in their use of the internet, that they had exhibited in prior addictions. Though they believed that Internet addiction was not as serious as alcoholism, they still felt disheartened that a new addiction had substituted for the old one. Young also discusses the findings of Maressa Hecht-Orzack of McLean Hospital who set up a service for computer and Internet addiction in the spring of 1996. Orzack noted that primarily depression and bi-polar disorder in its depressive swing were co-morbid features of pathological Internet use, along with this Orzack indicated that referrals received were from various clinics throughout the hospital rather than direct self-referrals for Internet addiction.

Determining the cause of excessive Internet use as it relates to negative outcomes may require a consideration of moderating factors. For example, excessive use accompanied by the cognitive factor of high preoccupation with the Internet (excessive thinking about the Internet) has been found to be related to greater amounts of negative outcomes.

Internet addiction disorder has also been found to correlate positively with damaged self-esteem, which underlying mechanism parallels that of clinical conditions such as bulimia nervosa. This occurrence of compulsions may be attributed to an automatic defense mechanism in which the individual avoids anxiety.

A 2009 study suggested that brain structural changes were present in those classified by the researchers as Internet addicted, similar to those classified as chemically addicted.

A current study on the effects of online internet gaming reveals how excessive internet addiction could significantly impair a student's brain. For this study, the researchers selected seventeen subjects with online gaming addiction and another seventeen naive internet users who rarely used the internet. Using a magnetic resonance imaging scanner, they performed a scan to "acquire 3-dimensional T1-weighted images" of the subject's brain. The results of the scan revealed that online gaming addiction "impairs gray and white matter integrity in the orbitofrontal cortex of the prefrontal regions of the brain".[58] According to Keath Low, psychotherapist, the orbitofrontal cortex "has a major impact on our ability to perform such tasks as planning, prioritizing, paying attention to and remembering details, and controlling our mention". As a result, these online gaming addicts are incapable of prioritizing their life or setting a goal and accomplishing it because of the impairment of their orbitofrontal cortex.

An online study of over 17,000 people, done by David Greenfield in conjunction with ABCNews.com, was presented at the 1999 American Psychological Association

meetings in Boston, MA found approximately 5.9% met the criteria for an Internet Addiction diagnosis. Several factors including dissociation (time distortion, disinhibition, ease-of-access, and content variables) contributed to compulsive Internet use; results of the study were published in CyberPsychology and Behavior and later included in Greenfield's 1999 book Virtual Addiction.

Objectives

To know the percentage of internet addiction among female college students.

To know the percentage of internet addiction among male college students.

Hypotheses

There is no significance difference between male and female college students on internet addiction.

Literature Review

Many studies have been conducted by different researchers in various parts of the world regarding the different aspects of internet addiction. Some of the significant studies included in the literature review. Pawlikowski, 2013 conducted a comparative study on internet addiction among obese adolescents which concluded that significant association between internet addiction and obesity and Adolescents with obesity were significantly more likely to have Internet addiction. Ferraro *et al.*, 2007 examined the prevalence of Internet addiction among college students in China and explored the correlations between internet addiction and psychosocial factors, result showed 15.2 percent were classified as having Internet addiction. Furthermore, students who reported poorer parent-child relationships, higher levels of depression, and lower levels of psychosocial competence were more likely to report behaviors indicative of Internet addiction. Another study conducted by Wu AM on the relationship between internet addiction and depression found positive association between internet addiction and depression was partially mediated by the protective psychosocial factors (mainly self-esteem) across sexes also found high internet addiction prevalence contributes to increased risk of prevalent depression through its direct effect, mediation (reduced level of protective factors) and moderation (reduced magnitude of protective effects) effects. Internet addiction and its effect on psychological health conducted by in university students conducted by Younes *et al.,* identified students with potential IA is important because this addiction often coexists with other psychological problems and suggested interventions should include not only internet addiction management but also associated psychosocial stressors such as insomnia, anxiety, depression, stress, and self-esteem. A cross-sectional study conducted by Nath *et al.,* on the effects of internet addiction among medical students in northeastern India concluded that the ill effects of Internet addiction include withdrawal from real-life relationships, deterioration in academic activities, and a depressed and nervous mood (Zhou, 2009).

Methodology

Participants

One hundred twenty students served as participants for the present study. Participants were selected from different private and government colleges situated in Bangalore, India. Participants consist of both male and female degree students. Participants were from age 18 to 22 years old.

Tool

The Internet Addiction Test developed by Kimberly Young (1998) was used to assess internet addiction of the participants. The IAT is 20 items, 6 point Likert scale with scores ranges from 0-5 for each item. It measures internet addiction in mild, moderate and severe level. Total score ranges from 20 to 100. The higher the score, the greater the level of addiction.

Procedure

The data were collected individually from the participants by distributing the Internet Addiction test. Each subject was contacted in the colleges where they are studying. Prior to interviewing the participants, the investigator introduced himself and explained the purpose investigation. The subject was interviewed and assured that his/her responses would be kept strictly confidential and would be used for research purpose only.

Results and Discussion

According to Fig. 1, there is significant difference between male and female participants on internet addiction. Here the hypothesis has been rejected. Female participants show greater score as compared to male participants on Internet Addiction Test. The higher the score, the greater the level of addiction. It means female are more addicted to internet than males.

According to the Fig. 2, 66.7% of male participants are in category B that means they have occasional problems in life because of the internet use and 5% participants having significant problems in their life due to internet use.

Table.1 shows Mean, SD and t value of male and female participants on IAT

	Mean	S.D	T	Sig
Male (60)	58.63	15.37	-1.91	0.05
Female (60)	63.91	14.90		

Table.2 shows the frequency and percentage of male participants on different categories of internet addiction. Category A means average internet user, Category B means occasional problems because of internet and Category C means significant problems in life because of internet use

Category	Frequency	Percentage
A (score 20-49)	17	28.3%
B (score 50-79)	40	66.7%
C (score 80-100)	3	5%

Table.3 shows the frequency and percentage of female participants on different categories of internet addiction

Category	Frequency	Percentage
A (score 20-49)	11	18.3%
B (score 50-79)	39	65%
C (score 80-100)	10	16.7%

According to the Table 3, 65% of female participants are in category B that means they have occasional problems in life because of the internet use and 16.7% participants having significant problems in their life due to internet use.

Conclusion

Internet addiction is a serious problem among college students which severely affects their personal life and academic life. It is the high time to do a comprehensive awareness programme among college students by the concerned authorities.

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