

Periodic Research

A Study of Internet Addiction in Young Adults (Jammu Region)

Abstract

In the present era of technology where internet is a necessity, increasing trends of excessive Internet use or Internet addiction have been seen by various mental health professionals. This study focuses on the Internet Addiction among young adults (students) in Jammu region using Internet Addiction Test by Kimberly Young. A group of 100 students (50 males and 50 females) of age group 18-25 was taken as sample. Two groups were made on the basis of their academic stream (Science and Social Science). Each group has 50 students (Males-25 Females-25). Differences were assessed using t-test across gender. Significant difference was found between the addiction levels of males and females of science as well as social science stream.

Keywords: Internet Addiction, Young Adults, Academic Stream And Gender.

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Introduction

A characteristic feature of internet addiction is a child's strong desire to be on the internet which leads to functional impairment in other activities like spending time with friends & family, sleeping and doing schoolwork (American Academy of Pediatrics, 2010). The predominant characteristic of internet addiction according to researchers from the University of Iowa's College of Medicine is its excessive or poorly controlled preoccupations, urges or behaviors regarding the use of computer and access to internet leading to psychological problems.(Shaw & Black, 2008).

Internet addiction includes three subtypes: excessive gaming, sexual preoccupations, and e-mail/text messaging (Block, 2007). There are four basic components of internet addiction 1) *excessive use*, including a loss of sense of time or a neglect of basic drives, 2) *withdrawal*, associated with feelings of anger, tension, and/or depression when there is inaccessibility to computer, 3) *tolerance*, consists of need for better computer equipment, more software, or increase in usage hours, and 4) *negative repercussions*, characterized by indulging in arguments, lying, poor achievement, social isolation, and fatigue (Dell'Osso, 2006; Hollander, 2006).

Kimberly Young, the pioneering researcher in studying internet addiction proposed the idea that problematic computer use (in reference to internet usage) meets criteria for an addiction, and therefore should get a place in the next iteration of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM)*, 4th ed. (Young, 1996) Based on the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fourth Edition (DSM-IV) criteria for pathological gambling Young has outlined 8 signs of internet addiction. The common features include preoccupation with the internet use, increased tolerance and observable withdrawal symptoms, compulsive need to engage in activity or deteriorated sense of control, unsuccessful attempts to stop or cut down the hours of use, and functional impairment in social, academic and occupational aspects (Young, 1998; 2013).

Internet Addiction Disorder (IAD) causes complications in neurological functioning, disturbed psychological wellbeing, and problems in social life which ultimately ruins the life of individuals. (Block, 2008) A number of physical symptoms, including insomnia, tension headaches, dry eyes, and carpal tunnel syndrome can also be caused by internet addiction. (Pies, 2009). For the last few years, the use and access of internet among students had been increasing with a pathetic pace but now have become an important daily activity in India. According to Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI), almost 213 million people use internet in India in which students account maximum and their number are increasing swiftly every hour.(Singh,2015). According to recent surveys,

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anywhere from 0.3% to 8.2% of the population suffers from internet addiction.(Cash,2012) and the males within the age range of 20 to 39 years living in developed countries with consistent and reliable internet access are most affected.

Internet addiction has been identified in China and Korea as a significant public health threat and both countries are supporting education, research and treatment. (Block, 2008).A survey was conducted in Washington in 2014, results of which revealed that 16% of the 1,300 young adults, with age ranging from 18-25 years, spend more than 15 hours per day online. (Young, 2009). A significant decrease in face to face interaction among youth has been seen as a result of pervasive use of internet for education, communication and entertainment purposes (Shekhar, C.2017)

Research Methodology Objective

To assess the level of internet addiction among male and females of social science streams.

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Hypothesis

There would be significant difference in the level of internet addiction among male and females of social science streams.

There would be significant difference in the level of internet addiction among male and females of science streams.

Variables

Independent Variables

Stream – Science/Social Science

Gender – Male/Female

Dependent Variable

Internet Addiction

Sample

The study was undertaken to assess the level of internet addiction among young adults of science and social science streams. A purposive sample of 100 was taken which included 50 males (25 from science stream and 25 from social science stream) and 50 females (25 from science stream and 25 from social science stream). Data was collected from Jammu region. The respondents were between 18 to 25 years of age

Tool

Internet Addiction Test (IAT) – by Kimberly Young. The Internet Addiction Test (IAT) developed by Kimberly Young is a 20-item 5-point Likert scale. The scores range from 0-100. The psychometric property of the IAT was established by a six factor model consisting of Salience, Excess use, Neglecting work, Anticipation, Lack of self-control and Neglecting social life (Widyanto,2004) The reliability for the six subscales was found to be, Cronbach’s alpha = 0.54 to 0.82 and validity of all six factors significantly correlated with each other. The IAT showed a very good internal consistency in a study conducted in India (Yadav,2013) with Cronbach’s alpha = 0.93

Procedure

The main aim of the study was to assess the level of internet addiction among young males and females of science and social science streams. 50

Periodic Research

males and 50 females were selected for the study by using purposive sampling. In small manageable groups rapport was established and was informed regarding the purpose and usefulness of study. Then instructions were given about the response pattern and were asked to mark their responses which were later assigned scores according to the manual.

Result and Discussion

The present study was conducted to assess the level of internet addiction with regard to gender differences among young adults.

After data collection and scoring, the data was put to statistical analysis in order to test the formulated hypotheses of the study.

Mean and Independent t-test Comparison for Males and Females of Social Science Stream

Variable	N	Mean	t-value	p-value
Male	25	44.62	2.5198	.01519
Female	25	38.36		

The results were found to be significant at <.05 i.e there was significant difference in the levels of internet addiction between males and females of social science stream. Hence our hypothesis with regard to gender differences in science stream is accepted.

Mean and independent t-test comparison for males and females of science stream

Variable	N	Mean	t-value	p-value
Male	25	49.64	-4.6516	.00002
Female	25	36.84		

The results were found to be significant at <.05 i.e. there was significant difference in levels of internet addiction between males and females of science stream. Subsequently our hypothesis with regard to gender differences in social science stream is accepted.

The results of our present study indicated that it can be said that there are significant gender differences in the levels of internet addiction. The review of related literature provided a number of studies which collaborated with the results of the current study. According to the Canadian Journal of Psychiatry (2016) Boys spent significantly more time on the Internet than did girls. A greater proportion of the girls made intense use of social networks, whereas a greater proportion of the boys made intense use of massively multiplayer online role-playing games and adult sites (Mangali, 2016). Young and more frequently male, unmarried, and unemployed, adults have internet addiction. (Kim et.al, 2017). Morahan-Martin and Schumacker (2000) have put forth that pathological internet use is more prevalent among men than among women (Moharan et.al,2009). Moreover Cömert and Ögel (2009), revealed that the risk for developing an Internet addiction is higher in male than in female students.(Comert & Ogel,2009). There were also many studies whose results/findings were antagonistic to the results of our present study. Several of the antagonistic studies were like:- According to surveys of Statistisches Bundesamt (official statistics office;2013), the use of internet on

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mobile phones or smart phones increased 20% from 2011, up to 50% in 2012, with no observed gender differences.(Montag & Reuter,2015). Inconsistent findings have been observed on how internet use differentiates between genders (Chou et.al, 2005). Young (1998) stated that the number of women displaying pathological internet use is higher than men.

There were also some studies that focused on the predictors of internet addiction. The results of a few are like this:- Chak & Leung (2004) revealed that higher the tendency of one being addicted to the Internet, the shyer the person is, the less faith the person has, the firmer belief the person holds in the irresistible power of others, and the higher trust the person places on chance in determining his or her own course of life.(Chak & Leung,2004). Whang (2004) group of Korean internet users reported the highest degree of loneliness, depressed mood, and compulsivity as compared to the other groups and were more vulnerable to interpersonal dangers than others, showing an unusually close feeling for strangers.(Whang et.al,2004).

Conclusion

The results of present study indicated that there are significant differences in the levels of internet addiction among males and females of science stream as well as social science streams.

Limitations

We are uncertain about the honesty with which participants have given the responses

The sample size was restricted to 100 participants.

Sample was collected from Jammu region only.

Suggestions for Future Research

Participants from both division Jammu as well as Kashmir should be involved. Size of the sample should be increased.

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Periodic Research

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