

A study on internet addiction disorder



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Internet has become a popular topic for study among psychologists and researchers. Since internet has insinuated itself in our personal lives so various areas of functioning and adjustment are dominated by its use. We have noted earlier that frequent users of internet are college students whose lives are wrapped around internet often in an unhealthy way. Various studies had attempted to unravel the mysterious transformation of healthy, pragmatic internet utilization to the extent of its abuse. Few of these studies are listed below.

The study that led to the recognition of the “ internet addiction disorder” was initiated by Kimberley Young. This study was published in CyberPsychology and Behavior journal under the name of “ INTERNET ADDICTION: THE EMERGENCE OF A NEW CLINICAL DISORDER”. This study investigated the existence of Internet addiction and the extent of problems caused by such potential misuse. This attempted to assess personality traits associated with incidence of PIU by utilizing the Sixteen Personality Factor Inventory (16PF). The survey administered the Young’s (1996a) eight-item questionnaire to classify subjects as addicted (Dependents) or non-addicted Internet users (Non-Dependents). Results showed that dependents ranked high in terms of self reliance, abstract thinking, emotional sensitivity and reactivity, vigilance, low self-disclosure, and non-conformist characteristics. Further analysis show Dependents to have a strong preference for solitary activities, and tend to restrict their social outlets. In general, these results suggest that specific personality traits may predispose an individual to develop PIU. The results of the study are limiting due to its small sample size of 259 Dependents compared to the estimated 56 million current Internet users (IntelliQuest,

1997) and expedient group of self-selected Internet users coupled with the questionable accuracy of on-line responses. Finally, these results do not clearly indicate whether these personality traits preceded the development of such Internet abuse or if it was a consequence (Kimberly S. Young and Robert C. Rodgers).

Another advanced research done by Kimberly S. Young and Robert C. Rodgers in 1998 on “ The Relationship Between Depression and Internet Addiction” in which total of 312 online surveys (World Wide Web) were collected with 259 valid profiles from addicted users, which supported significant levels of depression (measured through Beck Depression Inventory) to be associated with pathological Internet use. Predominantly, the interactive capabilities of the Internet such as chat rooms or on-line games were seen to be the most addictive. This type of behavioral impulse control failure, which does not involve an intoxicant, was seen as most akin to pathological gambling. Therefore, a formal term used is pathological Internet use (PIU) to refer to cases of addictive Internet use. Addicts in this study used the Internet an average of 38 hr per week for nonacademic or non-employment purposes, which caused detrimental effects such as poor grade performance among students, discord among couples, and reduced work performance among employees. This is compared to non-addicts who used the Internet an average of 8 hr per week with no significant consequences reported. These results should be interpreted with caution, however, as self-selected sample biases exist in this study coupled with the questionable accuracy of on-line responses. Also they do not clearly indicate

whether depression preceded the development of such Internet abuse or if it was a consequence.

Riittakerttu Kaltiala-Heino, Tomi Lintonen and Arje Rimpela of Finland explored through their study “ POTENTIALLY PROBLEMATIC USE OF THE INTERNET IN A POPULATION OF 12-18 YEAR-OLD ADOLESCENTS”. The aim of this study is to assess harmful use of the Internet in a representative sample of 12-18 year-old Finns (N=7292) in a postal survey in 2001 in Finland. Criteria were adopted from the criteria of pathological gambling, fulfilling four of the seven criteria operationalised as Internet addiction. The data were collected as a part of a nation-wide monitoring system of adolescent health and health behaviors, the Adolescent Health and Lifestyle Survey (AHLIS). Self-administered questionnaires (Internet Addiction Test by Center for On-Line Addiction, 2001) were mailed to respondents. Eighty five percent (total number of respondents was 7229) used the Internet. Among daily users 4.6% of boys and 4.7% of girls fulfilled the four criteria. The “ addicts” spent more hours (mean=2.7) on the Internet daily than the “ non-addicts” (mean=1.3). There are few limitations – do the subjects classified in the study as addicted to the Internet actually present with compulsion, and if so, what is the compulsion about. A second reservation is that our questionnaire is not able to distinguish whether, if the addiction is to the Internet per se or to the contents studied there.

Another study which is exploratory in nature done by Katherine Chak from the University of Hong Kong (May, 2003), this was to examine the potential influence of personality variables such as shyness and locus of control on the pattern of internet usage. The short version of the Internet Addiction Test by <https://assignbuster.com/a-study-on-internet-addiction-disorder/>

Young, revised Cheek and Buss Shyness Scale, and The Internality, Powerful Others, and Chance Scales were used. Data from 722 internet users were gathered using convenience sampling with a combination of online and offline methods. Results indicated that the higher the level of shyness, the higher the likelihood one will be addicted to the Internet. Subjects who expect to have control over their own life (self-efficacy), the less likely they will be addicted to the Internet. Subjects who expect powerful others to have control over their life; the more likely they will be addicted to the Internet. The study was criticized on grounds of convenience sampling and lack of consideration of context for online activity. This exploratory study is nevertheless able to point out few of the many factors related to internet abuse and addiction.

A Taiwan study (Shih-Ming Li, Teng-Ming Chung, 2004) confirmed the relation between internet function and Internet addictive behavior. Seventy-six college students were asked to complete the Internet use function questionnaire (social function, informational function, leisure function and the virtual emotional function) and the Chinese Internet Addiction Scale (compulsive use, withdrawal, tolerance, time management problem and interpersonal and health problems). The study revealed that the social function and the informational function were highly correlated with the indexes of the Internet dependence (compulsive use, withdrawal, tolerance and the problems in the interpersonal relationship and health) and the Internet abuse (the problems in the interpersonal relationship and health) respectively. They found the social function played the core role in the Internet addictive behavior and expressed the need for the diagnosis system

to be further designed to class the subjects under the dependence group or abuse group and to confirm the different functions of these two groups.

Another exploratory study by Kimberly J. Mitchell, Chiara Sabina, David Finkelhor, and Melissa Wells, aimed to develop and test an easily administered instrument, the Index of Problematic Online Experiences (I-POE). The goal of the I-POE assesses problematic Internet use across several domains and activities. Data was collected from 563 college students from a Northern New England university using an online survey methodology. Results indicated the I-POE has adequate construct validity and is highly correlated with a variety of relevant constructs: depression, anger, irritability, tension-reduction behavior, sexual concerns, and dysfunctional sexual behavior as measured by the Trauma Symptom Inventory; as well as amount of Internet use and permissive attitudes toward engaging in a variety of sexual activities. Early flagging of online experiences could mitigate the negative effects associated with problematic use. There were few limitations recognized. First, the use of a convenience sample limits the generalizability of the findings. Second, there was a low response rate among this population of college students

Leo Sang-Min Whang, Sujin Lee and Geunyoung Chang studied the 'Internet Over-Users' Psychological Profiles. Internet users in Korea were investigated in terms of internet over-use and related psychological profiles by the level of internet use by using modified Young's Internet Addiction Scale and 13, 588 users (7, 878 males, 5, 710 females) participated in this Korean study. Among the sample, 3. 5% had been diagnosed as internet

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addicts (IA), while 18.4% of them were classified as possible internet addicts (PA). The Internet Addiction Scale showed a strong relationship with dysfunctional social behaviors. More IA tried to escape from reality than PA and Non-addicts (NA). When they got stressed out by work or were just depressed, IA showed a high tendency to access the internet. The IA group also reported the highest degree of loneliness, depressed mood, and compulsivity compared to the other groups. The IA group seemed to be more vulnerable to interpersonal dangers than others, showing an unusually close feeling for strangers. Further study is needed to investigate the direct relationship between psychological well-being and internet dependency. Further study is needed to investigate the direct relationship between psychological well-being and Internet dependency. One limitation of the present study was the representation of the population. Therefore, caution should be taken in generalizing.

Individual Differences in Internet Usage Motives are explored by Tel Amiel (2002). In this study the relationship between the psychobiological model of personality types (psychoticism, extraversion, and neuroticism) devised by Eysenck & Eysenck (1985) and Internet use and usage motives was examined. A sample of 210 undergraduate students was asked to report on their motives for using the Internet and how often they engaged in a variety of Internet and web-based activities. The findings demonstrate distinctive patterns of Internet use and usage motives for those of different personality types.

Specifically, those scoring high in neuroticism reported using the Internet to feel a sense of “ belonging” and to be informed. Extraverts rejected the communal aspects of the

Internet, and made more instrumental and goal-oriented use of Internet services. Finally, those scoring high in psychoticism demonstrated an interest in more deviant, defiant, and sophisticated Internet applications. The exploratory nature of this study limits the ability to make large-scale generalizations. Also this study relied on self-reported measures of usage and “ perceptions” of usage motives, which might not reflect actual behavior and usage patterns.

Another study by Scott E. Caplan (2005) attempted to integrate research on social skill and self-presentation into the cognitive-behavioral theory of generalized problematic Internet use given by Davis. The model proposed and tested here predicted that individuals who lack self presentational skills are especially likely to prefer online social interaction over face-to-face communication. Further, the model predicted that preference for online social interaction leads to compulsive Internet use that result in negative outcomes. Participants in this study were 251 undergraduate students (18 to 32 years old) completed Social Skill Inventory; measures of preference for online social interaction, compulsive Internet use (Generalized Problematic Internet Use Scale by Caplan, 2002). The analysis supported the hypotheses. The current study employed a cross-sectional rather than longitudinal design so it is impossible to determine causality with the current data. Further that the study is restricted to a student sample and one cognitive and one

behavioral predictor of negative outcomes. Future studies may benefit from identifying multiple cognitive and behavioral predictors.

A Hong Kong study by Law Pui Man Sally on “ Prediction of Internet Addiction for Undergraduates”(2006). The focus of current study is to identify any predictors of Internet addiction, intending to explain the addictive behavior of Internet users. 410 data samples were collected through questionnaires from undergraduates of eight local universities. Using Young’s Internet Addiction Test (IAT), 18% of the respondents were identified as excessive Internet users, showing the prevalence of Internet addiction among undergraduates in Hong Kong. Data collected were analyzed using Chi-square, correlation and multiple regression. Results of statistical analyses show that academic performance is the most important predictor of Internet addiction, followed by perceived behavioral control, gender, and attitude toward using the Internet. Apart from this, the study of predictors for the excessive IAT group has also been performed and the result shows that there may be some behavioral differences that discriminates the excessive users from the others. Thus, more focus should be put on exploring the behavioral differences of the excessive group so that solutions can be found to help those excessive Internet users.

A quantitative study in Italy (2009) has investigated the effect of quality of Interpersonal Relationships on Problematic Internet Use in 98 adolescents ages 14 to 19. The following instruments were administered to the participants: the Internet Addiction Test (IAT), the Test of Interpersonal Relationships (TRI); and the Children’s Coping Strategies Checklist (CCSC).

Parents of the participants were administered the Child Behavior Checklist (CBCL). The results seem to indicate that adolescents with poor interpersonal relationships and a predisposition for engaging in avoidance coping are at a greater risk of developing PIU. The greatest limit of the research resides in its cross-sectional approach and the small size of the sample. (Luca Milani, Ph. D., Dania Osualdella, M. A., and Paola Di Blasio, Ph. D.)this research seems to point out the possibility of the importance of healthy interpersonal relationships to prevent any kind of problematic internet use.

Another area of research relates internet abuse to the different aspects of self-concept. In this area, a research by Pelling and White (2009) examined the extension of the model of the theory of planned behavior (TPB) to predict high-level social networking websites (SNWs) use intentions and behavior (according to the TPB, behavior is determined by one's intentions to perform the behavior. Intention is influenced by attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control). Additional analyses examined the impact of self-identity and belongingness on young people's addictive tendencies toward SNWs. Measures of the standard TPB constructs (attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control), the additional predictor variables (self-identity and belongingness), demographic variables (age, gender, and past behavior), and addictive tendencies were conducted on a sample of young people ages 17 to 24 years. One week later, they reported their engagement in high-level SNW use during the previous week. It reported that attitude and subjective norm emerged as significant predictors of intention to engage in high-level SNW. Self-identity, but not belongingness, significantly contributed to the prediction of intention and behavior. Self-

identity and belongingness were significant predictors of addictive tendencies. While need for belongingness may not influence the amount of SNW use, it might influence the psychological intensity of use and feelings that the user has toward the use of the Web sites. Strengths of the study include its sound theory base, prospective design, and a sample most likely to exhibit high levels of SNW use. Limitations include that the participants were all university students and predominantly female and the low response rate to the follow-up questionnaire. (Emma L. Pelling and Katherine M. White, 2009).

Lawrence T. Lam and Zi-Wen Peng studied the “ Effect of Pathological Use of the Internet on Adolescent Mental Health (2010). The study was done to examine the effect of pathological use of the Internet on the mental health, including anxiety and depression, on adolescents (aged 13-18 yrs) in China. It is hypothesized that pathological use of the Internet is detrimental to adolescents’ mental health. Pathological use of the Internet was assessed using the Pathological Use of the Internet Test. Depression and anxiety was assessed by the Zung Depression and Anxiety Scales. After adjusting for potential confounding factors, the relative risk of depression for those who used the Internet pathologically was about 11% , 2 times that of those who did not exhibit the targeted pathological internet use behaviors. No significant relationship between pathological use of the Internet and anxiety at follow-up was observed. Results suggested that young people who are initially free of mental health problems but use the Internet pathologically could develop depression as a consequence. There are few limitations. First, information on outcome is obtained via a self-reported questionnaire.

Second, not all potential confounding factors were measured and adjusted for in the analysis. Factors such as genetic variations and history of familial depression were not assessed in this study.

A recent research published in TOI of 3rd Jan, 2011 led by the University of Maryland of London supervised by Dr. Roman Gerodimos where volunteers asked to stay away from email, SMSs, facebook and Twitter for 24 hrs after which they began to develop symptoms typically seen in drug addicts and smokers trying to quit. Some of the participants' recorded experiences were like "breaking a hard drug habit" while others said it felt like going on a diet. Not only psychological symptoms were but physical symptoms were also observed. The condition was named as Information deprivation Disorder.

Internet problem is new to India. It is still considered as a mere manifestation of conduct disorders or other adolescent adjustment problems, so the research on internet abuse in India is highly impoverished. However, nowadays the "internet abuse" is capturing people's attention. Recently a survey has been conducted across Indian states by ASSOCHAM (Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India) reported that internet addiction is on the rise in metros, with Mumbai on the top followed by Delhi. Among 16-18 year old 56% spent more than 5 hours online where boys reported excessive browsing; girls were more attracted to social networking and chatting. Also was reported that children of working parents found to be more addicted and to see internet as their friend (published in TOI, 2010).

The picture of internet usage patterns of internet usage in India is not so perfect if better than worst. Even though this epidemic is in nascent stage, it

would be wise to learn from its impact in other countries so to control or restrict its adverse affects.