

Internet Addiction as a Determining Factor of Anxiety among Adolescents in Relation to Parental Education

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ABSTRACT

The aim of the present study is to analyse the relationship between internet addiction and anxiety among adolescents ranging from 16-20 years of age from foothills districts of U.P. and U.K. The sample includes 240 adolescents (M= 120, F= 120) selected from 1000 participants from various intermediate colleges. The tools used for measuring these variables include Internet Addiction Test (IAT, Young, 1998) and Eight State Questionnaire (Indian adaptation, Kapoor and Bhargava, 1990). An adequate research paradigm was drawn as per the need of research design. In the compliance of statistical analysis procedure “2×2×2 Ex-post facto” research design was employed, in which three independent variables (Internet Addiction, Parental Education, Gender) and one dependent variable (Anxiety) were examined. The obtained data was analysed through descriptive statistics followed by t-Test and two-way ANOVA. The findings of this study showed that addicted adolescents had more anxiety in comparison to non-addicted adolescents. Further findings revealed that low parental education promotes anxiety in addicted adolescents. No significant difference was observed in relation to Gender. In the context of anxiety, most addicted adolescents reported being tense and uneasy while they were not using the internet; restlessness and nervousness was also reported by addicted adolescents. As far as the non-addicted adolescents were concerned about exposure to anxiety, they were also anxious but very slightly; they could be treated as a low-risk group, usually which did not require any special attention.

Keywords: *Internet Addiction, Parental Education, Anxiety, Adolescents, Gender*

With globalisation, westernisation and leading advancements in the technologies, India . The positive aspects include improvements in the education spheres, equality of gender in various occupational areas, betterment of industrial fields, blooming of the IT firms and many more. On the global levels too, India being a nation of huge population, has proved itself plenty of times as a great competitor and an excellent country. With various other advancements, the nation has witnessed great excel in the internet usages. Due to Internet revolution, the access to internet has become much more cheap, accessible and available even at the places of difficult terrains. According to Internet World Usage Statistics (2019), China being most populated country is ranked first in terms of internet users (around 731.40 million) followed by India (approximately about 462.10 million).

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Received: June 12, 2024; Revision Received: June 20, 2024; Accepted: June 24, 2024

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Today, the internet and its use has become a part of our lives. The civilization cannot imagine life without the internet and its beneficiary availability. On various other possible grounds, the internet has made our lives more functional, easy going and friendly. But, as it's well said that with great powers comes great responsibilities, the same is with the internet and its usage. People today are so much indulged in the use and fondness of the internet that it has turned into an addictive attribute. Internet addiction can properly be defined as a compulsive behaviour of any individual towards activities related to online interactions, that further interferes and creates conflicting instances with the daily normal routine and life being of that individual. Any individual addicted to the internet and its compulsivity, looks out for the internet as more significant than family, friends, colleagues as well as their works. Internet usage is not an issue, rather it's a boon to mankind and its civilization, but when it hinders life in any way or form then it should be seen and considered problematic.

Today the real support provided by actual present individuals around us is not enough and is not all, thus people are searching for support from the virtual attachments. These virtual supports on social grounds are very well provided by the internet and its availability (Yeh, Ko, Wu & Cheng 2008).

Just like any other addiction for e.g., Addiction of drugs, cigarettes, alcohols etc, any individual who gets addicted to internet compulsions make internet a superior demand over all other needs and requirements of life. Internet compulsivity/addiction is an uncontrollable need for internet usages excessively, and when this demand is not properly fulfilled or a person is deprived of it, it could lead to anxiety, aggression as well as depression too (Young, 2004). Li Yjun et.al (2014) studied internet addiction and the results revealed that depending on the internet usage's purpose and location from where it was done. The addicts of the internet were from adolescence (18%) were those surfing from the cafeterias and around (22%) were found indulged in gaming's online. Huang and Leung (2009) in their study state that internet compulsivity and over addiction is associated with lowered academic performance among students. It's found directly influencing their focus towards academic demands and thus making them highly anxious. Studies done by Krishnamurthy & Chetapalli (2015) indicate that the related prevalence and risk factors associated with the internet usages and its addictions. Further they also suggest various ways to control the situations. Individuals, who get anxious with various attachments, get led towards the internet addiction. Further this also increases futuristic anxious tendencies in them (Menif et. al.2016).

This great dependency on internet usages has led to the parting away of people from their near-dear and loved ones. This has led to isolations from social situations thus has eventually resulted in depressive feelings (Tsai & Lin 2003). Dependency on internet usage could be due to various reasons, one such crucial reason is "parental education". Well educated parents opt for well-established jobs and working conditions; thus, this is today a leading cause of excessive compulsiveness and addiction of adolescents towards the internet. Higher education of parents leads to tremendous need for the internet among their kids (Balci & Ayhan 2007). The level of internet addiction has been found to be extremely high among students whose mother and father are well educated and are well employed (Jackson et. al. 2003). Whang et. al. (2003) well stated that this habit of the internet has caused various declinations in one's social life and work situations and has led to the feeling of anxiety among people.

Internet Addiction as a Determining Factor of Anxiety among Adolescents in Relation to Parental Education

Hypotheses

- H₀1. Internet addiction and parental education will not have a significant impact on anxiety.
- H₀2. Gender will not have a significant impact on anxiety.
- H₀3. Gender × Internet addiction, Gender × Parental Education and Internet Addiction × Parental Education will not have a significant impact on anxiety.
- H₀4. Gender × Internet Addiction × Parental Education will not influence anxiety significantly.

Objectives of the Study

1. To assess the impact of Internet Addiction on Anxiety.
2. To enumerate the effect of Gender in relation to Internet Addiction and Anxiety.
3. To understand the interactional effects among Internet Addiction, Gender, and Parental Education on Anxiety.

METHODOLOGY

Sample

Out of randomly selected 1000 subjects, a final sample of 240 adolescents was drawn on the basis of their willingness. This sample comprised 120 males and 120 females studying in various schools of adjoining districts of Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand within the age range of 16-20 years. To ensure the demographic variability in sample, subjects were taken from different religions, caste, culture and economic status.

Research Design

The present investigation is an ex-post facto design in 2 (Gender) × 2 (Parental Education) × 2 (Internet Addiction) factorial setting. And Anxiety as dependent variable was used. Thus, three independent and one dependent variable were used.

Statistical Analysis

The obtained data was analyzed with the help descriptive statistics, t-Test and two-way ANOVA. The statistical analysis was carried out by using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21.

Measures for Data Collection

1. Internet Addiction Test (IAT) by Kimberly S. Young (1998),
2. 8 ESQ (Indian adaptation) Malay Kapoor (New Delhi) and Mahesh Bhargava (Agra) 1990.

Procedure

The study is based on the responses of a purposive selected sample of 240 adolescents. Adolescents were selected through randomly for the ex-post facto experimental studies adopting the tri-variate factorial design. An appointment was fixed with the respondents and told them about the study. A formal consent was taken from the respondents. At the time of administering the test investigator established a good rapport with the respondents and cleared all their doubts regarding the study. The respondents were made aware about confidentiality of their responses and all test related instructions were given.

RESULTS AND INTERPRETATION

Table 1 Research paradigm on anxiety

	Male		Female		Σ
	High P. E	Low P. E	High P. E	Low P. E	
Addicted	ΣX-620	ΣX-640	ΣX-615	ΣX-665	2540
	M-20.66	M-21.33	M-20.5	M-22.16	
	N-30	N-30	N-30	N-30	
Non-Addicted	ΣX-412	ΣX-434	ΣX-433	ΣX-437	1716
	M-13.73	M-14.46	M-14.43	M-14.56	
	N-30	N-30	N-30	N-30	
Σ	1032	1074	1048	1102	4256

Table 2 ANOVA Summary (Anxiety: Gender × Internet Addiction × Parental Education)

Source of Variance	SS	df	MS	F	P
Gender	8.07	1	8.07	1.27	NS
Internet Addiction	2829.07	1	2829.07	444.12	0.01
Parental Education	38.4	1	38.4	6.03	0.05
Gender × Internet Addiction	0.07	1	0.07	0.01	NS
Gender × Parental Education	0.06	1	0.06	0.09	NS
Internet Addiction × Parental Education	8.07	1	8.07	1.27	NS
Gender × Internet Addiction × Parental Education	9.59	1	9.59	1.51	NS
Error	1477.06	232	6.37		
Total SS	4370.93	239			

NS- Not Significant, $F_{.05}=3.89$, $F_{0.1}=6.76$

Detailed Results:

1. The retained H_{0s} (2, 3, 4) were accepted and show that the main effect of gender and any bivariate and tri-variate interaction is not significant.
2. The H_{01} was rejected and its details are given below
 - A. Addiction is rejected at 0.01 LS.
 - a. Addicted adolescents are more anxious in comparison to non-addicted adolescents.
 - B. Parental education is rejected at 0.05 LS.
 - b. Adolescents with low parental education have more anxiety as compared to adolescents with high parental education.

DISCUSSION

The findings of the present study reveal some important facts regarding the relationship between internet addiction, parental education, and its effects on anxiety. Addicted adolescents are more anxious in comparison to non-addicted adolescents. Adolescents with low parental education have more anxiety as compared to adolescents with high parental education. Gender has no significant role in the determination of anxiety among adolescents. Some of the studies relate to the fact that if a person is having low psychological well-being and loneliness, a person may also suffer from anxiety in some amount at some point in their life. The same is the case with addicted adolescents also. They are not different from the general population or the laypeople. Keles et al. (2020) found that internet addiction was significantly correlated with anxiety.

Internet Addiction as a Determining Factor of Anxiety among Adolescents in Relation to Parental Education

As the level of internet addiction has increased, a hike was also observed in the level of anxiety. Chin et al. (2018) also reaffirm this phenomenon in their study. They conducted a study to assess “associations between aggression, anxiety, depression, and internet addiction.” The results indicated that adolescents with internet addiction seem to have more anxiety dispositions than do normal adolescents. It was also observed in many studies that addicted people feel anxiety due to their time spent online because they spent a lot of time online and consequently, have less time for their essential tasks. So, the mismanagement of the time is also a reason to feel anxiety in adolescents sometimes. Azher (2014) examined the relationship between internet addiction and anxiety among students. A sample of 300 students was recruited equally from six different departments of Sargodha University. The results of this study revealed that a significant correlation exists between internet addiction and the level of anxiety among college students.

Goel et. al. (2013) studied the prevalence of internet addiction and psychopathology related to internet addiction. The mean age of adolescents was 16.82 years and 987 adolescents were selected for the sample. Results indicated that those adolescents with excessive use of the internet had a high score on the anxiety scale. Akin & Iskender (2011) explored the relationship between internet addiction and depression, anxiety, and stress. The sample was 300 university students was drawn for the study. The results revealed that there is a significant correlation between internet addiction and anxiety. Odaci & Kalkan (2010) also reported a significant positive correlation between problematic internet use and anxiety. This study also revealed an important fact that as adolescents go online, their anxiety level decreases, as they become offline their anxiety level increases automatically. Peter & Valkenburg (2006) reported that adolescents who were socially anxious and lonely have powerfully controllability of internet communication and perceive it as broader, deeper, and more reciprocal than older people, non-socially anxious, and non-lonely adolescent respondents.

CONCLUSION

This study examined the effects of internet addiction, gender, and parental education on anxiety of adolescents. On the basis of the obtained results, it can be concluded that internet addiction increases anxiety in adolescents. Gender is not found to be determining factor of anxiety. Moreover, low parental education is found to be an anxiety-promoting factor in adolescents.

Limitations of the Study:

1. The study was conducted with a sample size of 240 adolescents.
2. The study was limited to the geographical location of U. P. and U.K.
3. The age range was exclusive to 16 to 20 years old adolescents.
4. The study was conducted only on intermediate college adolescents.

Implication of the Study:

This study has wide implications in the field of social and clinical psychology, as clinicians and society can know the effect of internet addiction on anxiety. They can get insight into how this addiction is making adolescents anxious and deteriorating their performance in various spheres of life. Thus, on the basis of the current research findings, people will get to understand the negative effects of internet addiction and use it in a healthy manner. Also, the study will provide idea for further research in this emerging area.

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Acknowledgment

The author(s) appreciates all those who participated in the study and helped to facilitate the research process.

Internet Addiction as a Determining Factor of Anxiety among Adolescents in Relation to Parental Education

Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

How to cite this article: Gaur, A. (2024). Internet Addiction as a Determining Factor of Anxiety among Adolescents in Relation to Parental Education. *International Journal of Indian Psychology*, 12(2), 3822-3828. DIP:18.01.339.20241202, DOI:10.25215/1202.339