

Relationship between Internet Addiction with Emotional Maturity: A Study on High School Students

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ABSTRACT

The percentage of India's youth population is at increase and at present it has reached around thirty percentages. With the advancement of communication technology and easy access to internet youths are becoming more and more prone to cyber addiction which is hampering their emotional development. Within this backdrop the major objective of the present study is to examine the relationship between internet addiction and emotional maturity of the youth. Academic research on internet addiction and its impact on different psychological aspects of adolescents have shown that there has been adverse impact on their emotional maturity and other behavioural problems. A sample of 237 higher secondary students belonging to different CBSE, non-missionary schools of Bhopal were taken. The standardized scales were used to measure internet addiction and emotional maturity. Descriptive and inferential analysis using single factor between group designs was employed. Research findings revealed that there was a significant relationship between internet addiction and lack of independence. The students who scored high in internet addiction also scored high in lack of independence factor. The other dimensions, emotional regression, emotional instability, personality disintegration and social maladjustment did not have a significant relationship with internet addiction. The study also explored other dimensions revealing that students mostly access internet through mobile phones and are quite active on social networking sites. The study offered insight to the relationship between internet usage and emotional maturity providing valuable information to the parents and teachers for overall development of the child.

Keywords: *Internet Addiction, Emotional Maturity, Lack of Independence, Emotional Regression, Emotional Unstability, Social Maladjustment, Personality Disintegration, High School Students, Social Networking Sites*

Youth are defined as those aged 15 to 29. This age group constitutes 27.5% of India's population. Internet is gradually replacing traditional media. It was found that in 2014 people spent 110 minutes a day online from just 60 minutes in 2010. Television consumption fell by 6% only but the major impact was seen on print media (Richter, 2015). Internet is set to change the media habit of individuals and shall become the most preferred media source (Richter, 2017). A research survey stated that 1 in 4 American adults say that they are online

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constantly (Perrin, 2015). Compared to the survey conducted four years ago, the number of teenagers always online has doubled (Richter, 2018).

Addiction is characterized by inability to consistently abstain, impairment in behavioral control and craving, diminished recognition of significant problems with one's behavior control, interpersonal relationships and a dysfunctional emotional response (Steiker & MacMaster, 2005). Various scholars have described internet addiction as an impulse control disorder and is very similar to pathological gambling. It is also referred to as Compulsive Internet Use (CIU) or Problematic Internet Use (PIU). It was theorized as a disorder in 1995 by Dr. Ivan Goldberg who compared it to pathological gambling. It has not been specified in DSM IV but has been on a rampant growth. It affects up to 8.2% of American and European population (Gregory, 2018). A considerable variance of prevalence rates reported for IAD between 0.3% and 38% can be attributed to the diagnostic criteria and assessment used for diagnosis vary between countries and studies often use selective samples of online surveys. The stereotypical individual who is young, socially awkward, introverted and computer oriented as addicted to internet has changed drastically due to computers and therefore persists among all age groups, social class, ethnic group, level of education, income and gender (Suryanarayana, Himanbindu & Neelima, 2011).

Concept of cyberspace has evolved recently as a psychological space. The experience created by computer is considered as a psychological space that is filled with ample amount of information (Sharma & Thakur, 2017). In psychoanalytical terms, cyberspace may become a type of Transitional Space that is, an extension of individual's intrapsychic world (Suler, 1999; Turkle, 1995). Around 6% of people were convicted for cyber crime (Nationals Crime Records Bureau, 2014). An Australian study found that disinhibition, which is often a predictor of other addictive behaviors was a poor predictor of heavy internet use. Low self esteem and online disinhibition among pathological internet users suggests that they may find the anonymity and a synchronicity of online interactions as liberating, leading to greater disinhibition when they are online (Wikipedia, 2018 *Online Disinhibition Effect*). Both compulsive offline shopping and internet addiction had a strong positive relationship with compulsive online buying (Lee, Park & Lee, 2016). People who use internet for excessive span of time in a day can develop more mental health problems. Individual internet addiction also had significantly higher amounts of depression and anxiety symptoms, problems with planning and time management, greater levels of attentional impulsivity as well as ADHD symptom (Ameringen. 2016).

Various models have been found for development and maintenance of IAD like Cognitive Behavioral Model of Problematic Internet Use; Anonymity, Convenience and Escape (ACE) Model; Access, Affordability and Anonymity (Triple – A) Engine; Phase model of Grohol and Comprehensive Model of development and maintenance of Internet Addiction by Winkler and Dorsingtakes into account socio cultural factors, biological vulnerabilities, psychological predispositions, to explain excessive engagement in internet activities (Cash, Rae, Steel and Winkler 2012). The Accessibility, Control and Excitement Model was suggested by Young in 1996 which stated that individuals get addicted to internet due to three factors, Accessibility which refers to easy availability and access to the internet. The second factor is loss of Control and elimination of restriction. The last factor is Excitement or the feeling of thrill and rush achieving a goal online (Kiran, 2017). Cooper (1998) suggested a Triple A Engine (Access, Affordability & Anonymity) to rationalize internet addiction. Access refers to readily available internet everywhere. Affordability refers to the accessibility

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of rich content online at affordable prices and Anonymity refers to secrecy of individual's real and perceived identity (Senormanci, et al, 2011).

A descriptive model of Problematic Internet Use provides a four factor model of PIU psychopathology. The first factor comprises of dysfunctional behaviors associated with overuse of internet. The second factor is associated with functional or meaningful use of the internet. The third factor focuses on sexual gratification through internet. The last factor incorporates those people who are mildly averted to internet or disinterested (Pratelli, Browne & Johnson, 1999). Another model poses that Internet overuse is mainly defined by the inner needs and motivations of an individual (push factors). The model states that the perceived attractive features of the medium (pull factors) moderate the relationship between push and severity of negative effects of internet overuse. According to Baron and Kenny (1986) a moderator variable, whether qualitative or quantitative, affects the direction and strength of the relation between an independent or predictor variable and a dependent or criterion variable (Douglas, et al., 2008).

High – Low Addiction Model states that anxiety lead to release of epinephrine and to reduce anxiety and gain pleasant experiences, our body releases chemicals like dopamine and serotonin which provides pleasure and one can get an adrenaline rush which can soothe emotional distress or create a distraction leading to dependency on the behavior and forming a habit. People are repeatedly compelled to seek pleasure by engaging in a particular activity which gives them a 'high'. After being engaged in a particular activity for a long time that is impairing the daily activities, one experiences the feeling of guilt and shame, depicted by spiraling down. As our tolerance increases our body re-calibrates to the higher level, as we feed our "habit of choice" more and more, to take us out of deeper low, becoming progressively worse, as craving, urges and insatiable neediness increases. A person can get attached to the artificial high and low struggle (Gibson, 2018).

Some studies have linked internet addiction with the physical structure of the brain. They assert that there are certain changes in the amount of gray and white matter in the prefrontal cortex which is responsible for remembering details, attention and prioritization. These changes in the structure of the brain can be considered as one of the reason behind internet addiction (Gregory, 2018). Learning theories can also explain addiction through Reward/Reinforcement. Internet functions on a variable ratio reinforcement schedule. The reward experienced is intensified when combined with mood enhancing/stimulating content (Emelyanova, 2015). The quickest response can be elicited through variable ratio reinforcement.

Urie Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Theory states that it is bi-directional and has reciprocal interactions between person and environment which operate and is influenced over time. These interactions are called proximal processes (PP) (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998). PP were defined as primary mechanisms in the development of a person. There are two major types of developmental outcomes, dysfunction and competence. Competence refers to "the demonstrated acquisition and further development of knowledge, skills or ability to conduct and direct one's behavior across situations and developmental domains. Dysfunction refers to manifestation of difficulties on the part of the developing person maintaining control and behavior across situations (Bronfenbrenner & Morris (1998) cited in Damon & Lerner (2006, p.803)). Adolescents interaction with internet can be seen as a proximal process. It would lead to some changes or development. The changes could be related to internet use be either

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beneficial or injurious. Internet use could be characterized as changes which cause dysfunction or competence (cited in Emelynova, 2015).

It is suggested that the new comers are more likely to be engaged in internet addiction. This hypothesis was empirically studied by Roberts, et al (1996) which found that online activity was phasic, where initial phase comprises of being enchanted or overwhelmed by the activity leading to some obsession. It is followed by disillusionment with chatting resulting in a decrease in the usage. The final phase sets equilibrium of internet usage (John M. Grohol "1999).

The Cognitive-Behavioral Model of Problematic Internet Use focuses on the maladaptive cognition responsible for PIU. Distal Contributory causes can be explained by Diatheses-Stress framework. Abnormal behavior is the result of a predisposed vulnerability (diatheses) and life event (stress). Certain studies have indicated some psychopathology and abnormal behavior in the overuse of internet like depression, anxiety and substance abuse (Kraut, et al. 1998). There are underlying pathology to cause symptoms. Any stimulus associated with primary conditioned stimuli is susceptible to secondary reinforcement. The tactile sensation of typing on a keyboard can result in a conditioned response. Cognitions are sufficient causes of PIU. Maladaptive cognitions can be broken down into two main subtypes: thoughts about the self and the thoughts about the world. Thoughts about self are ruminative cognition. It includes responses such as why one is over using internet. This model also distinguishes between specific PIU and generalized PIU. Specific PIU refers to pathological use of internet for a specific purpose, like gambling. Whereas, generalized PIU refers to pathological use of internet for generic purposes (Davis, R.A. 2001).

W. Richard Ott investigated why normally successful students had been dismissed at Alfred University and found that 43% of the students failed school due to extensive patterns of late night logins to the university computer system (Brady, 1996). Counselors at University of Texas Austin found that 14% of the students met the criteria for Internet Addiction (Scherer, 1997). Further results reflected a significant interactive influence of locale, gender and frequency of internet access on emotional maturity of adolescent internet users (Anita Deswal). Males are more emotionally unstable than females (Dangwal, Srivastav). 93% teens go online daily. The most popular activity for the age group (78%) is online games. Communicating by email is not as popular with teens, only 73% of teens use email and equal number of teens uses social networking sites. 67% send Instant messages, 62% gets news online, 57% of teens watch videos, 48% buy products and 31% look for health information. Only 14% of teenagers worked on their own blogs in 2009 (Pew Internet Project, 2001). A vast majority of teens in the United States, 87% of those aged 12 to 17, now use the internet in a greater variety of ways than they did in 2000. There are approximately 11 million (51%) teens that go online daily, compared to about 7 million (42%) in 2000 (Pew Internet and American Life Project, 2005). Internet access remains at a very low level and is insufficiently used for school purposes and boys make up majority of systematic users, mainly for entertainment purposes (Aslanidou and Menexes, 2008). People spent one to three hours per day on the internet. The main reasons for internet usage were listening to music and for fun (Chan and Fang (2007). Early adolescents were most prone to talk with strangers on the internet. The new motives of entertainment, meeting new people, and social compensation increased adolescents' online communication with strangers (Peter, Valkenburg and Schouten, 2006) (cited in Anita and Ashok, 2013). There is a correlation between some personality dimensions such as extroversion, excitability, and empiricism and internet addiction in the

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way that personality dimensions of excitability and empiricism are good predictors of internet addiction (Azizi et al). There is a relationship between neuroticism and internet addiction (Saini,et al 2017).

Skinner (2001) defined emotional maturity as the degree to which the person has realized his potentials for richness of living and has developed his capacity to enjoy things, to relate himself to others, to love and to laugh, his capacity for whole heartedness. If the emotional development of the individual is relatively complete, his adaptability is high, his regressive tendencies are low and his vulnerability is minimal (Seoul, 1951). Emotional maturity is not static but a continuous process of clarification and evaluation, an attempt to integrate feelings, thinking and behavior (Singaravelu, 2008). Emotional maturity can be called as a process of impulse control through agency of 'self' or 'ego' (Smitson, 1974). L.J. Saul gave some characteristics of maturity: capacity to live independently; capacity for responsibility and productivity; freedom from inferiority feelings, egotism, competitiveness; socialization and domestication; sexual integration, absence of aggressiveness; a firm sense of reality; flexibility and adaptability (Cliner, 1981).

According to J.D. Carter (1974) there are five dimensions: accepting oneself and others; developing one's interests and abilities and coping with the task of living; living in the present but having long term goals; having values; having a realistic view of oneself and others (Kaur, 2015). In 1963. Allport also summarized maturity as: extension of the sense of self; warm relating to self to others; emotional security; realistic perception, skills and assignments; self objectification; a unifying philosophy of life. Emotional Maturity consists of social interactions, emotional balance and self confidence. Emotion is one of the dimensions of personal experience that arise from a complex interplay among physiological, cognitive, and situational variables (Singaraelu, 2008). A person can be called emotionally mature if he is able to display his emotions in appropriate degree with reasonable control (Manohar and Doss, 2007). According to Bernard (1954) following are the criteria of mature emotional behavior: inhibition of direct expression of negative emotions; cultivation of positive, up building emotions; development of higher tolerance for disagreeable circumstances, increasing satisfaction from socially approved responses; increasing dependence of actions; ability to make a choice and not broad about other choices; freedom from unrealistic fear; understanding and action in accordance with limitations, awareness of the ability and achievement of others; ability to err without feelings disgraced; ability to carry victory and prestige with grace; ability to delay the gratification of impulses; enjoyment of daily living. An Emotionally mature person is one whose emotional life is well under control (Chamberlain, 1960). Kevin Fitz Maurice (2010) accounted levels of emotional maturity in his book 'The Secret of Maturity' as follows: Emotional Honesty, Basic Emotional Responsibility, Emotional Openness, Emotional Assertiveness, Emotional Understanding and Emotional Detachment. Bohl (2008) described certain ways to embody emotional maturity like Ability to face reality, Ability to relate well with others and willingness to be honest with ourselves.

METHODOLOGY

Sample

A total of 237 high school students were randomly selected from various non missionary, private CBSE schools of Bhopal. There were 75 females and 144 males. Single factor between group design was utilized wherein the subjects were categorized into 3 distinct groups of high, moderate and low internet usage.

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Measures

A survey instrument was used in this study which comprised of three sections. In the first section, demographical and personal information of the participants were obtained. The second section comprised of a standardized internet addiction scale constructed by Young. The third section included a standardized scale of emotional maturity developed by Singh and Bhargava. Two open ended questions were also added regarding the advantages and disadvantages of internet usage. A brief description of the measures is given below:

Demographical Assessment: The survey instrument consisted of some preliminary questions regarding age, gender, school and stream of the students. Some questions regarding the degree of internet usage were also added.

Internet Addiction Scale: The scale developed by Young (1996) was used in this study after modifying some items to suit the sample. This scale consisted of 20 questions. The range of score is 0 to 100, where high score is indicative of high internet usage and low score is indicative of low internet usage.

Emotional Maturity Scale: The scale was developed by Singh and Bhargava (1999). The complete scale consists of 48 items. The test retest reliability of the scale was $r = 0.75$. A brief description of subscales of Emotional Maturity Scale is as follows:

1. *Emotional Unstability:* It represents lack of capacity to dispose off problems, irritability, needs, help for one's day to day work, vulnerability and temper tantrums. It is an independent factor of emotional immaturity. This factor comprises of 10 questions with a scoring range of 1 to 50.
2. *Emotional Regression:* It represents various characteristics such as inferiority, restlessness, aggressiveness and self – centeredness. This factor is measured by 10 items with range of 1 to 50.
3. *Social Maldjustment:* The major characteristics are lack of social adaptability, secluded, boastful and liar. This factor is measured by 10 items with a range of 1 to 50.
4. *Personality Disintegration:* It includes all symptoms of disintegration of personality such as reaction, phobia formation, rationalization, pessimism, immorality, etc. Person suffers from inferiority complex and therefore acts aggressively with others. This factor is measured by 10 items with a range of 1 to 50.
5. *Lack of Independence:* Such a person shows parasitic dependence on others, is egoistic and lacks objective interests. Others consider this person as unreliable. This factor is measured by 8 items with a scoring range of 1 to 40.

Assessment of Benefits and Disadvantages of Internet Usage: To gain some qualitative insight, the survey instrument also comprised of two open ended questions asking to describe the benefits and demerits of using internet.

Procedure

An appointment was fixed with the principals of various schools. The principals were explained the objective of the study and the rationale behind the sample selection. A formal consent was taken from the principals of all the schools. The investigator visited the organizations on the prescribed dates. Teachers were requested to help the investigator for group administration. The investigator introduced herself and established a good rapport with the respondents and the purpose of the study was articulated. The respondents were made aware about the confidentiality of their responses. It was instructed to the respondents

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that there was no right or wrong answer to any of the question. Instructions were provided for various sections separately and a general instruction was provided in the first section. Doubts were clarified by the investigator. On an average the respondents took nearly half an hour to complete the questionnaire. The respondents and the concerned authorities were thanked for their cooperation.

RESULTS

The descriptive and inferential analysis was utilized. Some questions were open-ended and were subjected to qualitative analysis. The students belonged to the age group between 15 to 18. About 61 percent of the respondents were males and the rest were females. PCM students made up around 29%, PCB students made nearly 13% and Commerce students contributed almost 52% to the data collected. 83.1% of the students have accessibility of computer or laptop at home which is a large amount of population. The students had accessibility to computer and laptop at home but there is almost half the amount of students having wifi connection at home. It can be deciphered that the students falling in the category which has accessibility to both computer and wifi have more chances to over-utilize the internet. The accessibility of both computer and internet increases the chances of over usage. The study revealed a drastic increase in the usage of internet via mobile phones which can be the rationale behind increase in internet usage even without having wifi connection at home. A staggering 92.4% of students have accessibility to internet through mobile phones. It can be further justified as mobiles are portable and easy to carry along making it easier to stay connected to internet. Only 6.3% of students do not access internet via mobile phones which is a very small percentage of the population.

Around 38% of students sometimes use internet and 30% often use internet which is a considerably high percentage in the population. The students get around 2 to 3 hours for leisure activities in a typical day. Out of which mostly students spend at least an hour. Around 13% use internet for more than 3 hours in a day. 37% students are active and only 12% stated that they are very passive. 21% of students are active on two sites and 5% are active on five sites. There are also some students who are not at all active on social networking sites which does not signify non usage of internet but indicate that these students use internet for purposes other than using social networking sites. Most of the students posts updates on a monthly basis. Approximately, 34% students sometimes remain connected to their friends through social networking sites and a tenth of the population of students is very much connected with their friends online.

The result also indicates that around 34% of the students fall in the high internet usage category. 24% of the students are emotionally unstable, whereas 25% are stable and 23% fall in the moderate stability category. 23% of the students are emotionally regressive, 22% are socially maladjusted and lack social skills whereas 24% of the students have a good sense of social skills. 22% of the students display disintegration in their personality depicting that they make use of various defense mechanisms to deal with their daily lives. 18% of the students indicate high level of dependence indicating that they are not confident in themselves and seek acceptance from others and are dependent on external stimulation.

Analysis of Variance: Anova results depicting Mean Difference on Internet Usage on the components of Emotional Maturity is indicated in Table – 1. The results presented in the table shows that internet addiction has a significant relationship with lack of independence. The result also indicated that the students who have a higher level of internet addiction

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showed high degree of lack of independence. Lack of Independence had F Value of 9.342 and Internet Addiction had F Value of 25.612.

Table – 1: Mean, Standard Deviation and F Value of Internet Usage Scale and Emotional Maturity Scale

	N	MEAN	STD. DEVIATION	F
Internet Usage Scale				
LOW	68	33.37	14.765	25.612 **
MODERATE	31	29.23	17.215	
HIGH	124	34.17	15.914	
Emotional Unstability				
LOW	68	25.31	7.257	0.759
MODERATE	31	23.29	7.682	
HIGH	120	24.54	7.057	
Emotional Regression				
LOW	68	24.88	7.778	0.998
MODERATE	30	25.00	6.215	
HIGH	120	23.88	6.058	
Social Maladjustment				
LOW	68	24.26	7.214	1.462
MODERATE	31	24.58	7.145	
HIGH	120	22.78	6.081	
Personality Disintegration				
LOW	67	22.69	7.972	0.104
MODERATE	31	22.71	7.091	
HIGH	120	22.76	10.750	
Lack of Independence				
LOW	67	18.91	6.452	9.342 **
MODERATE	30	18.57	6.257	
HIGH	120	18.48	6.015	

** p > 0.01

DISCUSSION

The objective of the study was to examine the relationship between Internet Addiction and various categories of Emotional Maturity among youth. The major result revealed that internet addiction was found to be significantly correlated with Lack of Independence. The result also indicated that the students who have a higher level of internet addiction showed lack of independence.

The result could be explained under the limelight of a study conducted by Festl, Scharrow and Quandt which revealed that cyberbullying is strongly related to the use of social networking sites. The result could also be explained using a theory which suggests that socio

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cultural, biological and cognitive factors all play an important role in excessive usage of internet (Winkler and Dorsing). The lack of esteem could also be a reason for internet addiction as revealed by a study which found a significant correlation between depression, self esteem and internet addiction; and depression and self esteem were able to predict variance in internet addiction to a certain extent (Baharianian, et al.). Present result could also be influenced by the lowering down of different tariff rates. Department of Telecom (2018) revealed that mobile internet rates plunged by 93% while data usage per user surged by over 25 times in three years to 2017. Average data usage per subscriber grew 25 times from 62 MB per month in 2014 to 1.6 GB per month in 2017. The present result confirms the survey which indicates that by December 2016 the mobile internet users had increased to 371 million out of the total 462 million people who use internet, leaving only 91 million who access internet through other devices (Internet and Mobile Association of India, 2016).

The present finding could be associated with the limited number of hours students get free from attending school and coaching, leaving less time to access internet. The study also revealed that the students are aware of the negative effects of using internet like loss of concentration and poor academic performance but still use internet. The students also suggested that they use internet for knowledge gaining purposes and around 10% described that there was no negative impact of internet at all. The study further showed that on an average students are active on atleast four social networking sites and claimed to use internet for educational purposes more than entertainment which contradicts the study performed by Chan and Fang (2007). The result of the present study also contradicts with another study conducted by Aslanidou and Menexes (2008) which found that internet access remains at a very low level and is insufficiently used for school purposes and boys make up majority of systematic users, mainly for entertainment purposes.

It can also be predicted that internet would soon take over the era of television and become the most preferred source for entertainment. There has also been a drastic increase in the number of advertisements on the internet due to large number of viewership. According to Motorola survey, 40% of viewers have watched TV on smartphones and tablets at home. According to Nielsen, Americans between the ages of 18 and 49 are watching TV 45-60 minutes less per week than they did a year ago. Online viewership is comparatively cheaper and viewers can watch the shows without having to wait for the show to air. Internet is overtaking traditional TV media quickly (Melton, 2013)

Adolescents have two tasks that are to stand out and develop their own identity and to fit in and receive affiliation from peers. The need to establish equilibrium between the two tasks is a significant aspect of adolescent's life. (Brown, 2008). This unusual pressure from peers forces children to get engaged and involved in the newest technology. The adolescents are very vulnerable at this stage facing identity crisis (Erikson's Psychosocial stages, 1959). The phenomenon of curiosity pushes children to try to uncover more and more aspects of anything new and internet is never ending, thus feeding the curiosity of children thoroughly. Cyber space turns into a Transitional space wherein, people express their hidden desires and anonymity decreases disinhibition. Defense mechanisms like displacement or projection are often displayed on the internet. Genetic predisposition of having addictive behavior could also be one of the factors leading to rise in internet addiction (Sharma and Thakur *Cyber-Psychology*, 2016).

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Social factors have also contributed to increase in internet addiction. *Urie Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Theory* states that it is bi-directional and has reciprocal interactions between person and environment which operate and is influenced over time. The changes or development in the individual could lead to competence (gaining knowledge) or dysfunction (psychological problems) (Emelyanova, 2015).

The *Triple A Engine model* suggested by *Cooper (1998)* can be used to decipher the present result of the study. The accessibility, affordability and anonymity acts like a cocoon to engulf adolescents into the universe of internet. At this age, adolescents are curious and many of them try to explore internet for pornographic material which is strengthened due to the above mentioned model. *Young's ACE model (1996)* also justifies the rationale behind overuse of internet. The idea of easy access and excitement to explore coupled with no restrictions lead to internet addiction. *Grohol's model* provides an insight regarding initial overuse of internet followed by forming a balance.

The present study can be discussed under the light of behaviorist perspective as well wherein, reinforcement plays a significant role. Students receive reward and positive reinforcement in terms of being connected to everyone through internet or get popularity. Sometimes, to eliminate negative reinforcement, like backlash from fellow students, children feel pressurized to stay connected on several social networking sites. Observational learning can also play an important role in over using internet. Watching the models spend a lot of time on internet, makes youth spend more time on internet.

It was also visible from the present study that even after so much advancements, there are still some students who do not use internet that often and some that do not use social networking sites at all. Internet could be a very positive step towards education, organization and participation in a meaningful society (Chomsky, N. 2002).

The present study has various implications. Internet should never be seen as negative. Its usage depends on subjective perception of individuals. It is a great source of communication and most of all knowledge which can further the cause of the students at this age making them well equipped and at par with other students of the world. The accessibility of internet can be curbed or supervised by the parents. Apart from that, the parents could change their parenting style and adopt a democratic and authoritative style depending on the situation. The youth at this stage should be made aware about internet and all the consequences attached to it. Students must also know how overuse of internet can hamper their academic performance. The study could further be revised in the following ways. Firstly, the study was conducted in Bhopal only and the sampling could be made more random. Secondly, various other factors related to internet usage such as benefits of using internet can also be taken into account. A comparative study could also be done with various cities or other age group in future. The major issue regarding the present study was found to be the lack of other standardized questionnaires relevant to the sample completely. There are hardly any instruments for comparing results and therefore internet addiction is not completely accepted by medical science as a mental disorder.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors clearly declared this paper to bear no conflict of interests

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