



Internet addiction's effects on teenage mental health

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Abstract

With thousands of new users joining every day worldwide, there is little doubt that the internet is bringing about a new industrial revolution. It is currently causing a revolution in communication, society, and the economy. The digital industrial revolution is truly nearing its height, and every new revolution always leads to new issues. Many individuals from all around the world have embraced the Internet's special features, which include its easy operation, low cost, anonymity, and 24-hour availability. Furthermore, there are qualities that are viewed as the Internet's advantages on the one hand and its negatives on the other. The virtual world and addiction to the aforementioned vast global network are among the issues brought about by the internet, and they have a highly negative behavioral and psychological effect on Internet users.

Keywords: Knowledge, internet, addiction, technology, education, communication, internet addiction, mental health, psychological issues, adolescents

Introduction

The most valuable resource in human civilization is knowledge. Knowledge growth is an evolutionary phenomena. It gradually expands as a result of human generational contributions. Both human curiosity and the growing usage of information and communication technologies contribute to the development of the knowledge base. Man with awareness, or knowledge, is wealthy and powerful. Without knowledge, wealth is insufficient.

The current situation is the computer era. It is hard to envision companies, schools, universities, etc. now days without computers. The development of network technology has made the globe a global village. Information may be sent in a matter of seconds. It has accelerated technical progress in the modern world. "Change is the law of nature," so the saying goes. In the past, students would seek libraries to conduct in-depth research on the subjects; today, they utilize the internet. This has made it possible to access the enormous repository of knowledge.

The competition to learn has intensified due to the growth of the internet. As a result, the world is now divided into two groups: those who are computer literate and those who are not. Both computer-illiterate and literate people. Individuals who lack computer and information technology skills believe that they can't stay up with society. computers and the Internet in society. At home and at business, computers and the Internet provide several conveniences. For example, the most common internet services are e-mail, e-banking, e-books, and e-tickets. One can use a variety of platforms, such as blogs, wikis, and websites, to share his experiences and ideas with the world. In addition, public job boards such as naukri.com, UPSC portal, monster.com, newest vacancy, sarkari naukri, etc., may be used to find and hire workers (Edwards & Bruce, 2002).

Teenagers' usage of the internet in India has caused significant changes in their lifestyles. It is widely acknowledged that students' ability to think rationally, generate thoughts, solve problems, and comprehend relationships may all be improved by utilizing the internet. For example, by engaging in classroom activities that closely mimic real-world experiences, computer programming enables students to develop all of their talents. This is helpful in circumstances when first-hand experiences are unavailable or inappropriate.

On the other hand, several experts, media representatives, and policy analysts contend that internet use inhibits the development of creativity (Davis, 1989). Students like their alone time. They have stopped taking notes. They support cut-and-paste technology. They don't mention any library resources. This demonstrates that internet use has detrimental effects on children's study habits (Wang *et al.* 2003) ^[15].

Internet dependency

Nowadays, people are becoming addicted to the Internet through activities like online gambling, buying, long-term chats, and seeking for unimportant information. The internet is productive and efficient, and individuals are more at ease with virtual pals than with actual ones. Additionally, the addicted young people feel more appealing, enthusiastic, unrestrained, exhilarated, supported, and desired while they are in online states. On the other hand, offline circumstances cause him or her to feel apprehensive, unhappy, furious, disappointed, and concerned. The obsessive behavior is reinforced by these very pleasurable sensations, which suggests that young people' Internet addiction has a numbing impact (Young, 1999) ^[19].

Pathological gambling is extremely similar to internet addiction, which is an impulse control disease that does not entail the use of intoxicating drugs (B. Young, 2006) ^[21]. According to Widyanto and Griffiths (2006), it is characterized as a behavioral addiction or nonchemical that includes human-machine interaction and can be either passive, like watching movies, or active, like playing computer games. Additionally, inappropriate Internet use that can damage a person's social and functioning abilities is another definition of Internet addiction (Solomon, 2009).

The idea of Internet addiction may be regarded from a variety of angles. For example, Davis, Flett, and Besser (2002) ^[2] define it as the incapacity of people to regulate their Internet usage, which can lead to social, psychological, academic, and/or professional challenges. According to Kandell (1998), the primary causes of Internet dependency include a growing tolerance for the negative effects of being online, an increase in the amount of money spent on sources or activities linked to the Internet, unpleasant emotions when offline, and a refusal to engage in hazardous behaviors.

The American Psychiatric Association established seven criteria for analyzing Internet addiction (at least three criteria for two months) and characterized it as a pattern of Internet use that causes functional difficulties and negative interior feelings over a two-month period:

- Tolerance.
- Persistent usage of the Internet in spite of knowledge of its limitations.
- Signs of withdrawal.
- A considerable amount of time is devoted to internet-related activities.
- Most people use the Internet often or for longer than expected lengths of time. constant inclination to regulate the behavior.
- Important social, professional, or recreational activities are diminished or abandoned as a result of Internet use.
- Users go through the following five stages of the Internet addiction process, according to Young (2001) ^[20]:
 - Discovery,
 - Hopelessness,
 - Experimentation,
 - Compulsion,
 - Escalation.

The effects of Internet addiction are numerous. Among these detrimental effects are those on interpersonal relationships, such as persistent challenges in interacting to others (Loke, 2005) ^[11]. For Internet users, the interpersonal component is crucial. Long-term Internet users for social functions may have a number of issues, including obsessive Internet usage, social disengagement, lowered tolerance, time management issues, interpersonal issues, and health issues, according to Li and Chung (2006).

Physical problem

Heavy Internet users were found to have hypersomnia (>10 hours of sleep per day), be significantly more likely to be overweight (BMI >25), and have negative effects on their regular studies. They were also significantly less likely than the rest of the population to take nutritional supplements, try to eat a healthier diet, or try to increase their physical activity levels. Long periods of Internet use can have negative effects, such as headaches or migraines, reduced sleep, and backaches (Shuhail & Bergees, 2006). Late-night logins cause sleep cycles to be disturbed, which leads to excessive weariness, poor academic or professional performance, and weakened immunity, making the addict more susceptible to illness.

Psychological problem

Additionally, it seems that internet addiction usually co-occurs with psychiatric illnesses including depression, other compulsive behaviors, and low self-esteem (Young, 1998) ^[18]. A person who spends a lot of time on the Internet may feel compelled to reconnect, according to Ferraro *et al.* (2007). Other psychological issues include the inability to regulate one's emotions and thought patterns as a result of prolonged Internet use. Addicts often raise their net serving time and stop following the prescribed timetable. Furthermore, the effects of Internet addiction may extend beyond an individual and may even have an influence on their productivity at work.

A person is at risk for addiction if they have a lack of fulfillment in their life, a lack of closeness or solid relationships with others, a lack of confidence in their own interests, or a loss of hope. Similar to this, people who are unhappy in one or more aspects of their lives are more likely to acquire internal addiction because they are unable to comprehend alternative coping mechanisms. Many patients utilize the Internet to escape the actual issue, lessen their suffering, and maintain the status quo. They discover that nothing has changed after they are off-line, though.

Notwithstanding the drawbacks, the Internet has also benefited users in certain ways. Information, global connections, research promotion, and productive collaboration with individuals from different countries are all made possible by the Internet. These favorable aspects—convenience, enjoyment, resourcefulness, and information—become disadvantages for addicts. Young adults who abuse or get addicted to the Internet may have severe and life-altering issues, especially those in the younger generation who are still developing their physical and mental well-being.

The need for treatment programs created especially to care for patients who are addicted to the Internet has grown as a result of its increasing popularity. The professional community must also recognize the danger posed by this quick growth and take appropriate action.

Mental health

Since mental health is essential to both physical health and quality of life, it plays a significant role in enhancing an individual's general health and well-being. It is a condition of well-being when a person recognizes his or her own potential, is able to handle everyday stressors and obstacles, works effectively and efficiently, and can contribute to society. It entails a humanistic perspective on oneself and even other people. The degree to which an individual has been able to satisfy his environmental demands—whether they be social, emotional, or physical—is indicated by his mental health. Enjoying life and finding a balance between life's activities and attempts to attain psychological equilibrium are two aspects of mental health.

In addition to being reality-oriented and aware of their potential and limits, mentally healthy people also respect themselves, choose careers that align with their skills, build and preserve strong relationships, and experience a feeling of fulfillment.

A person's balanced behavior and healthy personality are significantly influenced by their mental health. Developing such a nurturing personality is essential for self-awareness and for the advancement of society. Change must be undertaken, which calls for alteration, in order to attain such a total personality. Numerous issues arise if one is unable to achieve synchronicity with their surroundings. The person's mental health may be impacted by these issues.

Improved outcomes for people, such as physical health, social connectivity, educational attainment, crime, house maintenance, work status, and productivity, are also linked to mental health and well-being.

Hilgard (1957)^[5] asserted that "an adjusted person is a mentally healthy person." This comment indicates that he is not particularly troubled by the disputes he encounters. He tackles his issues realistically, acknowledges and accepts his own shortcomings, and accepts the inevitable.

Achieving healthy ideals and attitudes is regarded as a sign of mental wellness. A person in good mental health enjoys life and has a cheerful, energetic, and imaginative attitude. He has the capacity to carry out daily tasks with effectiveness. He views life and philosophy differently. He is sensible and passionate. Considering his own abilities and resources, he has a pretty realistic outlook for the future. He is able to manage his anxiety and irritation. A person with good mental health typically has morals and good character.

"A state of a person's well-being in which the individual realizes his own abilities, works productively, copes with the normal stresses of life, and makes a contribution to the community" is another way to define mental health (WHO, 2001).

Relationship between mental health and internet addiction

Internet addiction in adolescents is becoming a significant issue. A high degree of psychological arousal brought on by prolonged Internet use may lead to poor sleep, prolonged periods of not eating, and minimal physical exercise (Young 1998)^[18], potentially causing the user to suffer from emotional and physical health issues such as anxiety, loneliness, sadness, and low self-esteem. At every stage of life, from infancy and adolescence to maturity, mental health is crucial. Heavy internet users are said to suffer from emotional, psychological, and social dysfunction as mental health encompasses our emotional, psychological, and social well-being and influences our thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. It also aids with decision-making, interpersonal relationships, and stress management. Compared to other teenagers who may be categorized as regular Internet users, Internet-dependent adolescents are somewhat more likely to experience mental health issues. Among the symptoms include depression, sadness, and a loss of interest in daily tasks. The symptoms of excessive internet use include withdrawing from others and routine activities, feeling powerless, feeling atypically confused, angry, disturbed, frightened, or afraid, going through extreme mood fluctuations that cause interpersonal issues, and having recurring memories and ideas that you can't shake. Jahanian and Seifury (2013)^[6] discovered a strong negative correlation between students' mental health and internet addiction. As a result, those who use the internet excessively are unable to fully realize their potential, manage life's stressors, work efficiently, and contribute significantly to society.

Conclusion

Teenagers are particularly susceptible to internet addiction. According to these review articles, the internet has grown to be one of the most significant information sources and has a profound effect on teenagers' physical and emotional well-being. Addiction to the internet causes many disruptions in social interactions, mental health, and academic achievement. Comparing adolescents with greater levels of internet addiction to those without, the former showed higher levels of stress, anxiety, sadness, and loneliness.

In addition to the aforementioned strategies, knowledge and factual information about the negative effects of excessive internet use must be provided to teenagers who suffer from internet addiction in order to promote and preventative measures. When new information is presented to adolescents via audiovisual medium, they are more receptive and attentive. The provision of family therapy might be one way to help teenagers who are addicted to the internet.

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