

Impact of Internet Addiction on the Social Skills and Emotional Skills of Young Adults

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ABSTRACT

The increase in the advancement of technology has spread to children and young adults of this generation. With increase in the usage of screen devices and the internet, the newer generation has been affected physically, cognitively, emotionally and socially. This research aimed to measure the level of internet addiction and to study its impact on social skills and emotional skills among 100 participants aged from 18-25. These young adults were randomly selected with 47 females and 53 males and were given an online survey with the standardized scales of Internet Addiction Test and the Social Skills Inventory – Brief Form. SPSS was used to perform correlation and regression. It was found that there was a negative relationship between internet addiction and emotional expressivity and a negative relationship between internet addiction and social sensitivity. Internet addiction also acts as a good predictor variable for emotional expressivity and social sensitivity.

INTRODUCTION

Internet is rapidly growing and is slowly being accessible to all, including the remote places. Like any other element, it has drastically impacted our physical and mental health. Some studies show that internet has proven to be the quite helpful in improving social connectedness and communication. When compared to a normal population, one would observe that it is the adolescents and young adults that have been impacted by excessive use of internet, leading to internet addiction. Accessing internet requires use of devices such as our phones, computers, tablets, etc. which involves shifting our attention from our environment onto our screens [1]. This usage has an impact on our social skills and emotional skills. Social skills are the ability to communicate with others, both verbally and non-verbally while emotional skills are the ability to identify and manage one's emotions as well as the emotions of other people [2]. Humans are social beings and being deprived of contact with other humans leads to various problems such as being anti-social and developments of various disorders. In the next 4-5 years, children will also have access to internet and are as likely to develop internet addiction. The need for belongingness and the ability to make friends begins right from childhood. If children are deprived of learning and being a part of the social dynamics, it might result in extremely poor social and emotional skills [3]. Being a relatively new term, internet addiction has been quite prevalent in this generation and will continue to grow in the upcoming generations.

The researcher studied the impact of internet addiction on the social skills and emotional skills of young adults. Social skills were divided into social expressivity, social sensitivity and social control while emotional skills were divided into emotional expressivity, emotional sensitivity and emotional control.

METHODOLOGY

Sample

Sample size was 100 and was collected from Delhi NCR, India. The age range was between 18-25 years with 47 females and 53 males.

Tools

1. Internet Addiction Test (Young, 1998) – 20 items: Measures the severity of internet addiction.
2. Social skills Inventory – Brief form (Mind Garden) – 30 items: Measures 6 variables: Social expressivity, social

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sensitivity, social control, emotional expressivity, emotional sensitivity and emotional control.

Procedure

Data was collected via internet survey forms and SPSS was used to perform correlation and regression.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

After performing correlation among the variables, it was found that there is a negative relationship between Internet Addiction and Emotional Expressivity with a correlation coefficient of -0.468 and Internet Addiction and Social Sensitivity with a correlation coefficient of -0.0355. The correlation among the other variables indicated an insignificant relationship. On using regression analysis, it was found that when internet addiction was the predictor variable/independent variable for emotional expressivity the adjusted R^2 was 0.12 with significance level at 0.014. When internet addiction was the predictor variable/independent variable for social sensitivity the adjusted R^2 was 0.117 with significance level < 0.01 [4].

Hence with increase in levels of internet addiction, it impacts and lowers the levels of emotional expressivity and social sensitivity.

Need for the Study

There have been only a few studies that examine the impact of internet addiction on the social skills and internet being a vastly growing entity, if not regulated with proper measures, might lead to severe internet addiction leading to weight loss or gain, feelings of anxiety or depression due to online behaviour, lack of proper sleep, feelings of loneliness etc.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The researcher had a sample of only 100 participants which were from a particular area and hence cannot be used to generalise. The researcher could have also included open ended questions, so as to find out more about the reasons for excessive internet use.

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