

Internet Addiction among Adolescence Belonging to Lower Socio- Economic Status and Higher Socio- Economic Status

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Abstract: Mental health is currently one of the biggest challenges facing every country, with mental health problems affecting at least one in four people at some time in their lives. Advances in technology should lead to betterment of the society in large but many a time it could hamper the mental health if used adversely. One such influence is the internet addiction, which has impact on general health and psychological aspects. The internet is majorly over used by adolescents for different purposes. The present study aimed to understand addiction for internet among Adolescence. The objective was to study the difference in internet addiction between adolescence belonging to lower socio- economic status and higher socio- economic status. It was hypothesized that there will be no significant difference in Internet Addiction between Adolescence of Lower Socio- Economic Status and Higher Socio- Economic Status. The study was conducted on college going adolescents aged between 18-19 years pursuing degree course. A between group design with purposive sampling was considered for the study. Kupuswamy Socio- Economic Scale was used to identify Adolescence belonging to Lower Socio- Economic Status and Higher Socio- Economic Status. 30 adolescents each belonging to lower socio- economic status and higher socio- economic status were administered Internet Addiction scale. The responses were scored appropriately and Results were analyzed by computing Mean, Standard Deviation and t test to study the difference in Internet addiction between Adolescence of Lower Socio- Economic Status and Higher Socio- Economic Status. The Results indicated that on the Internet Addiction Test the higher socio-economic status students had significantly above average scores and lower socio-economic status had average scores. The higher socio-economic status group has significantly more internet addiction when compared to lower socio-economic status group.

Key Words: Adolescence, higher socio- economic status & lower socio- economic status and internet addiction.

1. INTRODUCTION:

Internet addiction is defined as any online-related, compulsive behavior which interferes with normal living and causes severe stress on family, friends, loved ones, and one's work environment. Internet addiction is characterized by excessive or poorly controlled preoccupations, urges or behaviours regarding computer use and internet access that lead to impairment or distress (Shaw and Black, 2008), research among sociologists, psychologists, or psychiatrists has not formally identified addictive use of the Internet as a problematic behavior. This study investigated the existence of Internet addiction and the extent of problems caused by such potential misuse. This study utilized an adapted version of the criteria for pathological gambling defined by the DSM-IV (APA, 1994). On the basis of this criteria, case studies of 396 dependent Internet users (Dependents) and a control group of 100 non-dependent Internet users (Non-Dependents) were classified (Kimberly S. Young 1996). 150 college students in technical and vocational colleges were administered General Health Questionnaire and Internet Addiction Test. They found that the students who use Internet pathologically and excessively, showed greater and Physiological and psychological problems than students who did not have such experience (Ramezan Jahanian and Zeinab Seifury, 2013). It is seen that many young adults resort to the virtual world to get rid of their problems in their real life, including family problems, unemployment, high age of marriage, economic problems, lack of space for entertainment, loneliness, and restricting rules and regulations of the real world (Maysam Musai and Mohammad Darkesh, 2014), where it can have a effect on the Individual's productivity and hinder the economy. Hence the present study aimed at understanding influence of economic status on internet addiction and its economical perspective.'

2. Methodology:

The objective was to study the difference in Internet Addiction between Adolescents belonging to Lower Socio-Economic Status and Higher Socio- Economic Status. The sample considered for the study was 30 Adolescents each belonging to Lower Socio- Economic Status and from Higher Socio- Economic Status who were selected based on Kuppuswamy socio-economic status scale. These individuals were administered Internet Addiction scale. The inclusion criteria were female students pursuing their degree course aged between 18 and 20 years, studying in English medium and exclusion criteria was individuals with major psychological issues were not considered in the study. The Research Design used was a between group design with purposive sampling. The responses were scored appropriately and results were analyzed using appropriate statistical measure.

2.1. Description of tools:

Kuppuswamy Socio- Economic Status Scale: Revised: (Kuppuswamy, 2014):

The scale consists of 21 Items which could be self administered. The reliability of the scale on test-retest method was 0.93. The content validity was tested of proposed socio economic status scale by opinion of subject experts (Kusum Lata Gaur, 2013).

Internet Addiction Test (IAT) (Kimberly Young, 2014):

Internet Addiction Test consists of 20 self administrable questions. The concurrent validity was assessed by comparing the BDI-II scores with the Internet Addiction Test scores and the correlation between the two variables was 0.82. Internet Addiction Test produced highly consistent internal reliability of .90 (Halley, Ivone and Mark, 2014).

2.2. Analysis of the results:

The responses were scored appropriately. The results were analyzed by computing Mean, standard deviation and t test. Statistics t test was used to study the difference in mean scores of internet addiction between Adolescents of Lower Socio- Economic Status and Higher Socio- Economic Status.

3. Results and discussion:

Table 1 shows that total the sample consisted of 30 students from lower socio-economic status and 30 students from higher socio-economic status. All the students considered belonged to age between 18 to 20 years and were pursuing their degree course.

Table 2 shows the mean, standard and t ration for 2 groups on Internet addiction. The mean internet addiction score for lower socio economic status and higher socio economic status were 35.76 and 83.40 respectively and the ‘t’ value being 17.70 which is significant at 0.01 level indicating that there was significant difference between lower socio-economic status and higher socio-economic status on internet addiction. The higher socio-economic status group has significantly more internet addiction when compared to lower socio-economic status group, hence indicating that higher status is a risk factor for internet addiction.

Table 1 Showing Demographic details of the sample:

Female Adolescents	Lower socio-economic Status	Higher socio-economic status
Number of students	30	30
Age	18-20	
Education	Pursuing degree	

Table 2 Showing Mean, Standard Deviation and t ratio on internet addiction for two groups:

Internet addiction		
Lower Socio- Economic Status	Mean	35.76
	Standard Deviation	13.61
Higher Socio-Economic Status	Mean	83.40
	Standard Deviation	5.64
	‘t’ ratio	17.70**
**significant at 0.01 level		

Not many Studies were available in this reference. A survey method has been conducted on 385 respondents aging from 18 to 29 residing at the city of Tehran. To collect data, Young's Internet Addiction Questionnaire (1998) and the researcher-made questionnaire on social capital have been used. The findings show that there is a significant relation between internet addiction and social capital. According to the results, any increase in internet addiction can reduce social capital among the users. That is, the increase in internet addiction can reduce social capital and decrease in social capital can intensify internet addiction (Maysam Musai and Mohammad Darkesh, 2014). In the present study the adolescents of higher socio-economic status had significantly more internet addiction compared to lower socio-economic status and indirectly showing that there is waste of social capital of the country.

Many studies have concluded the effects of Internet addiction on the individual. An Iranian research found that excessive Internet users feel less responsibility toward the society and their environment, and suffer more from social isolation. They usually feel unsuccessful in their education and work, and they have less social support and low self-esteem, found that Internet addicts had various co-morbid psychiatric disorders. It means that Internet addiction brings with it various dimensions of psychiatric symptoms, which suggests that the addiction could have a negative effect on the mental health status of youth (Seyyed Salman Alvi, Mohammad Reza Maracy, Fereshte Jannatifard and Mehdi Eslami, 2011). According to the present study higher socio economic status adolescents being high on internet addiction have risk of social isolation and prone to psychiatric symptoms. The study by Dong and others reported that higher scores for depression, anxiety, hostility, interpersonal sensitivity, and psychoticism were consequences of Internet Addiction Disorder (Hilarie Cash, Cosette Rae, Ann Steel and Alexander Winkler, 2012). These above mentioned studies indicate that Internet addiction has an effect on the mental health of an individual and there is a need for intervention in general for all adolescents and specific to adolescents belonging to higher social economic status as it can also have impact on social capital.

4. Conclusions:

On the Internet Addiction test the higher socio-economic status students had significantly above average scores and Lower socio-economic status had average scores. There was a significant difference in Internet addiction between adolescents belonging to higher socio-economic status and lower socio-economic status. The higher socio-economic status group has significantly more internet addiction when compared to lower socio-economic status group, hence indicating that higher status is a risk factor for internet addiction. Studies have concluded that there is a need for intervention programmes to prevent the effects of internet addiction on the mental health and social capital.

5. Implications:

Among university settings it would be prudent to recognize that students can become addicted to internet. Thus, college counseling centers should invest energy in the development of seminars designed to increase awareness among faculty, staff, administrators, and students on the ramifications of internet abuse on campus. To pursue such effective recovery programs, continued research is essential to better understand the underlying motivations of Internet addiction. Psychological interventions may also help the person identify thoughts and feelings that trigger their use of the Internet. Interpersonal interventions may include such approaches as social skills training or coaching in communication skills. 12 Step recovery programs as quoted by Young (1997) can address the maladaptive cognitions and provide an opportunity to build real life relationships that will release their social inhibitions and need for Internet companionship (Young and John Suler, 1997). By the above mentioned interventions the effect of the internet addiction on the adolescent's personal life, academic life, mental health and economic waste to the country can be prevented.

6. Suggestions:

The research can be conducted on diverse population with different variables and their respective controls to supplement the results of the present study.

The higher status is a risk factor for internet addiction hence there is a need for intervention programmes to prevent the effects of internet addiction on the mental health and social capital. Colleges can plan for the intervention plans to reduce the effect of internet addiction on the mental health and social capital. At the individual front references can be made to gadget de-addiction centers which are being launched in many cities of India.

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