

Internet Addiction And Its Relation To Anxiety Among Adolescents – A Review Study

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Abstract

In recent years, internet use has skyrocketed. Around the world, more and more people are using the internet. There were 5.16 billion internet users globally as of January 2023, making up 64.4% of the total population. Overuse of the internet may lead to addiction, although it has both beneficial and harmful impacts on human behaviour. More and more people are developing psychological dependencies on things like gambling, sex, and the internet, which may lead to terrible emotions like shame, guilt, despair, anxiety, rejection, and humiliation. The purpose of this research was to look at teenage internet addiction.

Keywords: *Internet addiction, anxiety, psychological factors, internet overuse*

INTRODUCTION:

The Internet is become indispensable to our everyday life. Thanks to a plethora of applications—from Wikipedia to Facebook—it has not only gone global, but also become an essential tool for contemporary life, whether one is doing research, communicating, purchasing, or just keeping in contact with loved ones. The Internet has become more accessible to people of all income levels due to the proliferation of low-cost cellphones equipped with 3G and 4G networks and the fast development of wireless Internet technologies like Wi-Fi, 3G, and 4G. Around 80% of the world's population will be using the internet in 2020, whether for work or play. It was estimated in 2022 by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) that almost 66% of the global population, or 5.3 billion people, were online.

An alarming new issue known as "Internet addiction" has emerged as a consequence of this, and it is progressively impacting young people and adolescents. While most people think of drug misuse when they hear the word "addiction," many writers are starting to use it to describe Internet-related obsessive-compulsive disorders.

The idea of internet addiction has emerged as a result of some people's excessive and uncontrolled use of the internet, despite the fact that internet usage has improved options for communication, knowledge, and social contact. Actually, internet addiction is more common among younger users, especially teenagers, compared to older users. One of the possible explanations is the proliferation of online educational resources in recent years, which has led many people to turn to the web for their academic needs. According to research, problems with internet usage may lead to a shrinking social circle, feelings of despair and isolation, diminished self-esteem and life satisfaction, an unhealthy preoccupation with seeking out new experiences, and a breakdown in family dynamics. The internet has many positive aspects, but it also has the potential drawback of leading to an addiction. A person's life may take a turn for the worst when they get

addicted to the internet, which is also called problematic internet usage or compulsive internet use (Young, 1996; Griffiths, 1990).

The American Psychiatric Association has proposed the term "Internet Gaming Disorder" as a condition that necessitates additional research, and numerous international studies have focused on excessive Internet use as if it were an addiction. On the other hand, it is clear that the boundary between IU and PIU is being crossed. According to the American Psychiatric Association, this alleged disorder is characterised by "a clinically significant impairment on daily life as a result of continual gaming" in the DSM-V, the fifth version of the mental disorder manual.

INCLUSION CRITERIA

1. Literature which concerns Internet addiction and psychological symptoms like anxiety, depression and so on.
2. The studies conducted from 2007 to 2023
3. Contents released in research journals, book chapters and credible theses

EXCLUSION CRITERIA

1. Articles and books as well as theses, which were not related to the subject, or did not contain relevant keywords, were excluded
2. Studies conducted out of the time interval set were removed.

RESEARCHES ON INTERNET ADDICTION AND AND ITS RELATION TO ANXIETY

A study conducted by Singla D, Desai OP, Basista R, and Khan SA (2023) discovered a strong correlation between internet use and both sleep quality and cognition. The results revealed that 80.23 percent of the individuals had moderate degrees of internet addiction (Deb N. Roy P., 2022). There was a strong positive link between anxiety and stress ($r = 0.83$, $P < 0.05$), depression and anxiety ($r = 0.92$, $P < 0.05$), and depression and stress ($r = 0.86$, $P < 0.05$). These correlations were determined using statistical analysis. Researchers Shan (2021) also discovered that internet addicts had greater levels of state and trait anxiety, lower levels of self- and other-acceptance, and a preference for less positive and negative coping mechanisms than non-addicted individuals. More severe IA was associated with higher levels of three variables, according to logistic regression analysis: levels of state anxiety, self- and other-acceptance, and negative coping methods.

According to research by Nithya. R. and George J. (2021), there is a strong link between Internet addiction and social anxiety as well as loneliness. Internet addiction was also significantly predicted by social anxiety and loneliness. This kind of problematic internet usage is more common among those who are socially nervous or who live alone, according to the research.

According to Rodriguez-García's (2020) comprehensive review, nomophobia negatively impacts several aspects of health, including self-confidence, academic success, personality, anxiety, and stress. The emotional and mental well-being of every family member was shown to be adversely correlated with Internet addiction, according to Mustafa (2020). Social issues and a child's developmental phases are two additional factors that could affect the family's ability to communicate. The correlation between Internet addiction and stress at home was also shown to be favourable.

Researchers Lebni JY, Toghroli R, Abbas J et al. (2020) found a negative correlation between internet addiction and mental health and depression. According to Gatej's (2019) research, there is a strong relationship between aggressiveness, anxiety, and the amount of time spent gaming as indicators of potential addiction to online gambling. Aggression, anxiety, and the success or failure of online gaming were shown to be significantly correlated adversely.

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According to Kumar (2018), a strong and positive correlation was found between anxiety and excessive use of the Internet. Anxiety levels were shown to be greater among Internet addicts, which may be explained in part by the fact that this research also discovered a component connected with Internet addiction and anxiety: self-confidence. Researchers Weinstein et al. (2015) looked at how social anxiety and Internet addiction are related. The Liebowitz Social Anxiety Scale was used for measuring social anxiety, whereas the Young online Addiction Test (IAT) was used for measuring online addiction. Additional research is necessary to elucidate the link between social anxiety and Internet addiction, but the study's findings corroborated prior evidence for their co-occurrence.

Internet addicts are more likely to experience anxiety than the general population, according to research by Huang (2014) and Koc (2011). For his 2007 study, Caplan recruited 343 people to examine the link between social anxiety, loneliness, and internet addiction. This research looked at the correlation between social anxiety and problematic Internet usage, specifically how much it explains outcomes that were previously thought to be due to loneliness. The findings provided credence to the theory that social anxiety is the confounding variable and that there is no real association between loneliness and a desire for online social engagement.

FINDINGS:

According to the majority of studies, there is a strong correlation between Internet addiction and anxiety, and these two disorders often occur together. Anxiety, despair, and feelings of isolation are some of the mental health issues linked to excessive internet use, according to the available evidence. Anxiety and depression were more common among heavy users compared to light and moderate users. So, it's safe to assume that heavy Internet users also tend to suffer from anxiety and depression. There is little doubt that several factors influence the correlation between Internet use, anxiety, and depression.

An increase in impulsivity has also been linked to heavy Internet users. There was a notable disparity in the impact of heavy and light Internet users on interpersonal connections. People who spend a lot of time online tend to be more sensitive to criticism, more reserved, and worse at handling wounded feelings; they also report feeling less supported socially and finding it simpler to make new friends online. Many people find that seeking social assistance online makes their real-life interpersonal difficulties worse, along with psychological issues like anxiety.

People who are hooked to the internet tend to avoid doing things that make them joyful, which means they aren't engaging in the kinds of things that might boost their confidence and sense of competence. In the end, this will cause people to spend more time in the online realm, where they have more agency. People are engrossed in these online space qualities, which distract them from the necessity of real conversation. As a result of withdrawing from social activities that bring people joy, individuals have increased risk of anxiety, depression, social exclusion, and suicide thoughts and attempts.

The results are corroborated by Kumar (2018), who found a positive and statistically significant correlation between anxiety and Internet addiction. Researchers also discovered that self-confidence was a factor in the relationship between Internet addiction and anxiety. This discovery may help to explain why people who are addicted to the Internet tend to have greater levels of anxiety and despair.

People who are addicted to the Internet also tend to have emotional disorders, which would explain these results. Problems with mood regulation and emotional transparency are symptoms of Internet addiction, as mentioned before. Addicts may seek solace in cyberspace to compensate for the emotional deficiencies that lead to ailments like anxiety and sadness. This is because there is a dearth of resources for helping them control their emotions. A person may seek solace in social isolation when this cycle reaches a crucial degree of worry. Withdrawal from social situations is a common symptom of escape anxiety.

CONCLUSION:

According to the research, students' academic performance suffers when they suffer from anxiety, depression, and other negative mental health issues brought on by excessive internet use.

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