

Internet Surfing Addiction factors affecting the Internet use and its consequences

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ABSTRACT:

New research identifies online users who became hooked on chat rooms, interactive games, and even eBay(online shopping) only to see their lives become increasingly unmanageable because of the Internet. Prior research explores the addictive qualities sustaining drug and alcohol abuse, pathological gambling, and even video game addiction; however, given the relative newness of Internet addiction, little is understood about the habit-forming nature of the Internet and its potential for abuse. Problematic Internet addiction or excessive Internet use is characterized by excessive or poorly controlled preoccupations, urges, or behaviors regarding computer use and Internet access that lead to impairment or distress. Currently, there is no recognition of internet addiction within the spectrum of addictive disorders and, therefore, no corresponding diagnosis. As the Internet permeates our lives at home, school, and work, this paper takes a closer look at how the Internet can create marital-, academic-, and job-related opportunities & problems.

Key Words: Internet Surfing, Addiction, Internet use.

INTRODUCTION

Internet addiction is described as an impulse control disorder, which does not involve use of an intoxicating drug and is very similar to pathological gambling. Some Internet users may develop an emotional attachment to on-line friends and activities they create on their computer screens. Internet users may enjoy aspects of the Internet that allow them to meet, socialize, and exchange ideas through the use of chat rooms, social networking websites, or "virtual communities." Other Internet users spend endless hours researching topics of interest Online or "blogging". Blogging is a contraction of the term "Web log", in which an individual will post commentaries and keep regular chronicle of events. It can be viewed as journaling and the entries are primarily textual.

Similar to other addictions, those suffering from Internet addiction use the virtual fantasy world to connect with real people through the Internet, as a substitution for real-life human connection, which they are unable to achieve normally.

LITERATURE REVIEW

FINDINGS:The review of the published research is grouped into three main groups:

- (a) Students' Facebook usage profile
- (b) Students' attitudes toward Facebook, and
- (c) The effects of using Facebook.

Students' Facebook usage profile, the internet enabled various novel applications and forms of communication with the massive membership pool of social networking sites (SNSs) confirming that millions of individuals around the globe are open to such innovations In student's Facebook usage profile, there are five main topics to be covered. These five topics are

- Time spent on Facebook,
- Number of friends on Facebook,
- Information disclosed on Facebook,

- Activities on Facebook, and
- Reason of using Facebook.

Time spent of Facebook Previous research found that students mainly spend between 10 and 60 min on Facebook per day (Christofides, Muise, & Desmarais, 2009). Most of the students (79% of 97 students) reported that they spent between 10 and 60 min on Facebook daily (Ross et al., 2009). About 96% of 364 students logged onto Facebook from less than 10 min to 60 min every day (Stern & Taylor, 2007). Participants reported spending an average of 38.93 min on Facebook each day, with female students appearing to spend significantly more time on the network site than male students (Muise, Christofides & Desmarais, 2009). Golder, Wilkinson and Huberman (2007) found that Facebook use was lowest during college student weekend (mid-Friday to mid-Sunday), presumably when students were away from their computers. This proposed that Facebook use does not represent a leisure time activity but rather an activity that parallels schoolwork and other computer-related activities during the weekdays (Golder, Wilkinson & Huberman, 2007). Younger users were more likely than older ones to use Facebook (Kolek & Saunders, 2008). For instance, 65% of first year and sophomores students have a Facebook account versus 38.46% of juniors and seniors (Pempek, Yermolayeva & Calvert, 2009).

It is suggested that Facebook is being used for learning about others, maintaining social communication, following updates about friends, school or class. Other research on reasons for students used Facebook also found that Facebook is primarily utilized for social interaction, especially to maintain existing relationship. Facebook also used as a channel to meet new people. Studies by Joinson (2011) and Sheldon (2008) found that students use Facebook to pass time (e.g., to occupy my time, to pass time when bored, to distract myself, play games or use applications within Facebook). Students express or present themselves by updating their status profile (Joinson, 2011). Students' attitudes towards Online Social Networking Apparently communicating on Facebook was seen by students as fun and not serious (Lewis & West, 2009). Students perceived OSN was used most importantly for social reasons, although it is sometimes used informally for learning purposes (Madge et. al, 2009). Women have been shown to be characterized by greater privacy concerns than men and are also more likely to use e-mail and other textured types of communication. Students also perceived OSN as place for place to experience the feeling of affiliation and belonging, goal achievement, self-identity, values, and notion accepted behavior.

WHAT ARE THE WARNING SIGNS OF INTERNET ADDICTION?

- Preoccupation with the internet. (Thoughts about previous on-line activity or anticipation of the next on-line session.)
- Use of the Internet in increasing amounts of time in order to achieve satisfaction.
- Repeated, unsuccessful efforts to control cut back or stop Internet use.
- Feelings of restlessness, moodiness, depression, or irritability when attempting to cut down use of the Internet.
- On-line longer than originally intended.
- Jeopardized or risked loss of significant relationships, job, educational or career opportunities because of Internet use.
- Lies to family members, therapists, or others to conceal the extent of involvement with the Internet.
- Use of the Internet is a way to escape from problems or to relieve a dysphonic mood. (e.g. Feelings of hopelessness, guilt, anxiety, depression.)

EFFECTS

Internet addiction results in personal, family, academic, financial, and occupational problems that are characteristic of other addictions. Impairments of real life relationships are disrupted as a result of excessive use of the Internet. Individuals suffering from Internet addiction spend more time in solitary seclusion, spend less time with real people in their lives, and are often viewed as socially awkward. Arguments may result due to the volume of time spent on-line. Those suffering from Internet addiction may attempt to conceal the amount of time spent on-line, which results in distrust and the disturbance of quality in once stable relationships.

Some suffering from Internet addiction may create on-line personas or profiles where they are able to alter their identities and pretend to be someone other than himself or herself. Those at highest risk for creation of a secret life are those who suffer from low-self-esteem feelings of inadequacy, and fear of disapproval. Such negative self-concepts lead to clinical problems of depression and anxiety.

Many persons who attempt to quit their Internet use experience withdrawal including: anger, depression, relief, mood swings, anxiety, fear, irritability, sadness, loneliness, boredom, restlessness, procrastination, and upset stomach. Being addicted to the Internet can also cause physical discomfort or medical problems such as: Carpal Tunnel Syndrome, dry eyes, backaches, severe headaches, eating irregularities, (such as skipping meals), failure to attend to personal hygiene, and sleep disturbance.

SYMPTOMS

Emotional Symptoms of Online Addiction

The following symptoms are typical of online addicts:

- Feelings of guilt
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Dishonesty
- Euphoric feelings when in front of the computer
- Unable to keep schedules
- No sense of time
- Isolation
- Defensiveness
- Avoiding doing work
- Agitation

Physical Symptoms of Online Addiction

The following symptoms are characteristic of someone who uses the computer for a very long period of time:

- Backache
- Headaches
- Weight gain or loss

- Disturbances in sleep
- Carpal tunnel syndrome
- Blurred or strained vision

REINFORCEMENT/REWARD

What is so rewarding about Internet and video game use that it could become an addiction? The theory is that digital technology users experience multiple layers of reward when they use various computer applications. The Internet functions on a variable ratio reinforcement schedule (VRRS), as does gambling. Whatever the application (general surfing, pornography, chat rooms, message boards, social networking sites, video games, email, texting, cloud applications and games, etc.), these activities support unpredictable and variable reward structures. The reward experienced is intensified when combined with mood enhancing/stimulating content. Examples of this would be pornography (sexual stimulation), video games (e.g. various social rewards, identification with a hero, immersive graphics), dating sites (romantic fantasy), online poker (financial) and special interest chat rooms or message boards (sense of belonging)

TREATMENT

There is a general consensus that total abstinence from the Internet should not be the goal of the interventions and that instead, an abstinence from problematic applications and a controlled and balanced Internet usage should be achieved. The following paragraphs illustrate the various treatment options for IAD that exist today. Unless studies examining the efficacy of the illustrated treatments are not available, findings on the efficacy of the presented treatments are also provided. Unfortunately, most of the treatment studies were of low methodological quality and used an intra-group design.

The general lack of treatment studies notwithstanding, there is treatment guidelines reported by clinicians working in the field of IAD. In her book "Internet Addiction: Symptoms, Evaluation, and Treatment", Young offers some treatment strategies which are already known from the cognitive-behavioural approach: (a) practice opposite time of Internet use (discover patient's patterns of Internet use and disrupt these patterns by suggesting new schedules), (b) use external stoppers (real events or activities prompting the patient to log off), (c) set goals (with regard to the amount of time), (d) abstain from a particular application (that the client is unable to control), (e) use reminder cards (cues that remind the patient of the costs of IAD and benefits of breaking it), (f) develop a personal inventory (shows all the activities that the patient used to engage in or can't find the time due to IAD), (g) enter a support group (compensates for a lack of social support), and (h) engage in family therapy (addresses relational problems in the family). Unfortunately, clinical evidence for the efficacy of these strategies is not mentioned.

Non-psychological Approaches

Some authors examine pharmacological interventions for IAD, perhaps due to the fact that clinicians use psychopharmacology to treat IAD despite the lack of treatment studies addressing the efficacy of pharmacological treatments. In particular, selective serotonin-reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs) have been used because of the co-morbid psychiatric symptoms of IAD (e.g. depression and anxiety) for which SSRIs have been found to be effective.

A few authors mentioned that physical exercise could compensate the decrease of the dopamine level due to decreased online usage. In addition, sports exercise prescriptions used in the course of cognitive behavioural group therapy may enhance the effect of the intervention for IAD.

Psychological Approaches

Motivational interviewing (MI) is a client-centred yet directive method for enhancing intrinsic motivation to change by exploring and resolving client ambivalence. It was developed to help individuals give up addictive behaviors and learn new behavioural skills, using techniques such as open-ended questions, reflective listening, affirmation, and summarization to help individuals express their concerns about change. Unfortunately, there are currently no studies addressing the efficacy of MI in treating IAD, but MI seems to be moderately effective in the areas of alcohol, drug addiction, and diet/exercise problems.

RESULT

166 students had participated in the survey. Result is based on the following:

Based on Gender:

males have responded more as compared to Female body, and hence data is thence dependant more on the responses given by Men in the sampling body.

Based on Age: The age- wise breakup of the participants is as follows:

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
15-20 yrs	74	44.6	44.6
20-25 yrs	91	54.8	99.4
25-30 yrs	1	.6	100.0
Total	166	100.0	

Majority of our participants belonged to the age group of 15-25 yrs. which is understood as all of participants were students.

Based on Source of Internet: These users were asked to choose from the following their preferred source for the internet connection:

- Mobile Data
- Wi-Fi
- Both

The breakup of participants based on their mode of internet connectivity is as follows:

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Mobile Data	63	38.0	38.0
Wi-Fi	98	59.0	97.0
Both	5	3	100.0
Total	166	100.0	

Since, VIT students were major participants in our survey, we can find a high number of Wi-Fi users as the college provides free Wi-Fi to student.

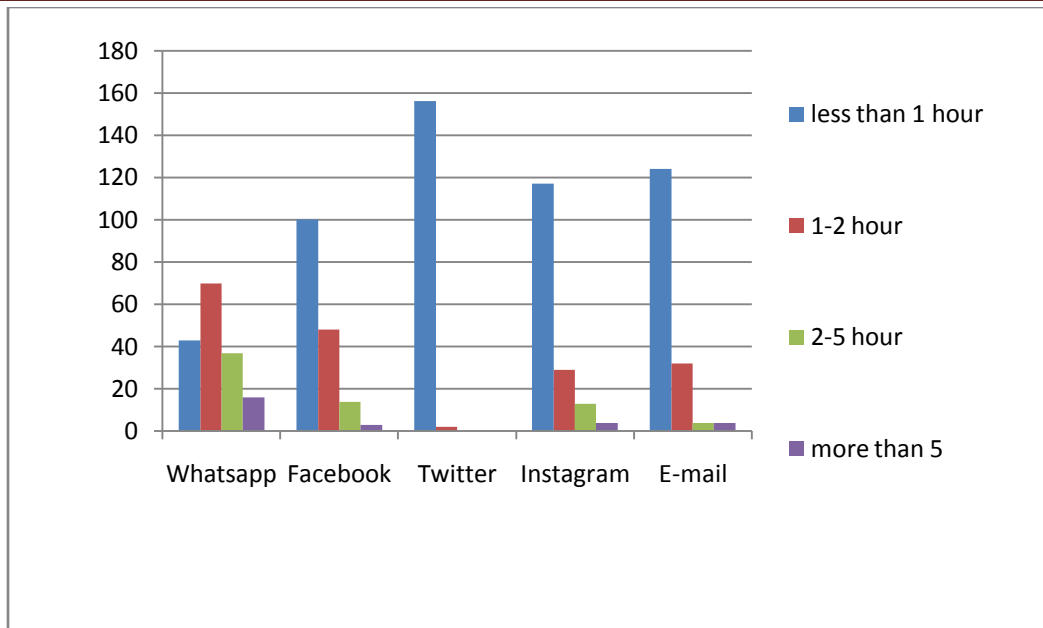
Based on Time Spent on Internet:

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
less than 1 hr	3	1.8	1.8
1-2 hrs	23	13.9	15.7
2-5 hrs	77	46.4	62.0
5-8 hrs	36	21.7	83.7
8+ hrs	27	16.3	100.0
Total	166	100.0	

Most of the people spend about 2-5 hours on the Internet, and hence accounts for major portion of population where people can be found addicted to the Internet.

Based on web applications used by the mass: The following 5 major web applications were used for the survey:

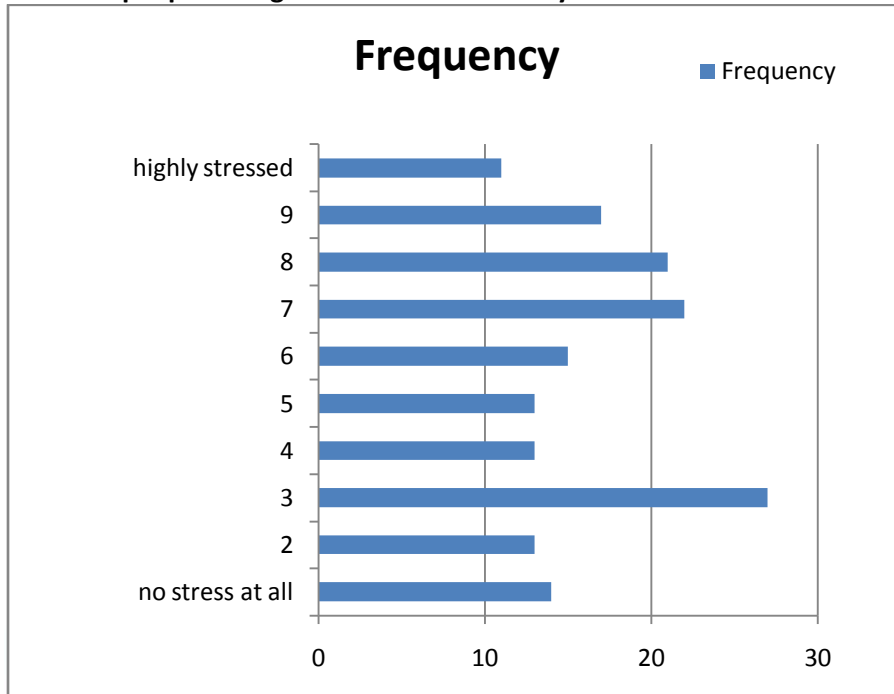
1. Facebook
2. WhatsApp
3. Twitter
4. Instagram
5. Email



Majority of people use Facebook for not more than 2 hours a day and some people although very few don't use it at all, while WhatsApp is used for about 5 hours by majority of people with, maximum of people using it for 1-2 Hours, but is an essential part of daily usage for all of the sampling population considered. Some people also use WhatsApp for over 5 hours and have a noticeable strength among the sample. Considering Twitter, Not many people use it over an hour and some don't even use it, Hence it does not fall in the vigorous usage category. As for Instagram, though most people use it less than an hour a day, some people use it for more than 1 hour and a portion of them over 5 hours, hence some of the people spend a lot of time over it, as compared to others and therefore should be considered as a cause for some for addiction to internet. Email also follows trends as laid by Instagram but is somewhat dilute, for those who spend more hours on email can be accounted for hard work schedules and daily regimes as one reason, and addiction as the other. Therefore majorly, WhatsApp, Instagram, Facebook and Email pose threats of attributing to the internet addiction, probably in the same order as mentioned.

Based on people rating their obsession over Internet: A large proportion of people have rated themselves as they are quite much obsessed over internet, hence providing the evidence to the claim of internet obsession existing in the society. While around a fifth of the sample are not able to figure out if they are actually obsessed, very few claim themselves to be not obsessed or little obsessed

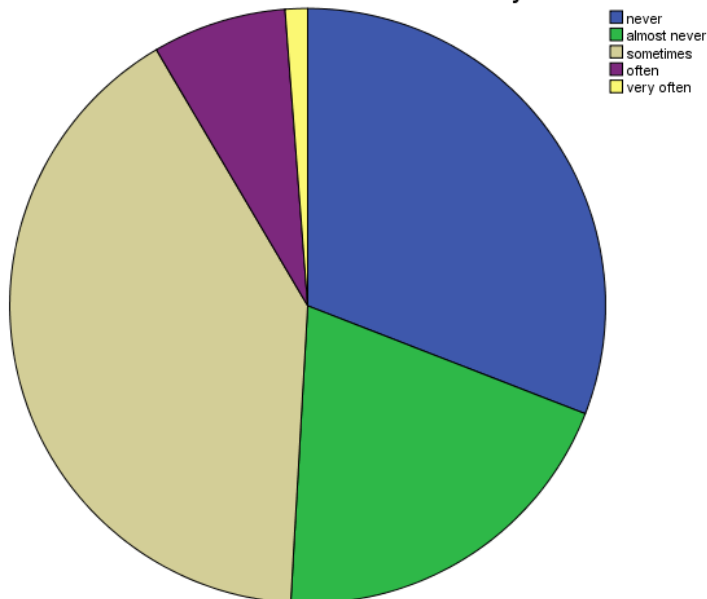
Based on people rating stress on unavailability of Internet:



While Largest number of people claim that they are not really stressed on not getting access to internet, the second largest and third largest people amounts to those who actually to an extent feel stressed on not being on the internet.

Based on people asserting their control over Addiction:

14. You have ever tried hard and failed to control your addiction of internet ?



While a large number of people claim they have been able to claim that they are able to control their addiction or the urge to be on internet efficaciously, there exists a larger number of people who are

sometimes able to control their addiction while fail the other times. Also, a very large number of people admit to use their phone (which may attribute to internet and social networking) longer than intended sometimes or even often. And a larger number of people exist that feel disappointed in themselves for using internet for long time than the people who don't. Hence this data confirms that internet addiction exists among people maybe actively and passively both.

Based on whether people are more comfortable virtually: Although majority of people disagree with the statement, yet there are people who somewhat find in some conditions more comfortable in the virtual atmosphere or internet rather.

Based on whether Internet addiction can be attributed to sleep deprivation: This statement as per responses of people in inconclusive as people have mixed opinion, whether they are deprived because of it or not and hence can't be clearly commented upon. And most of the people consider internet as a pass time and rather maybe something they would prefer using before they sleep. Hence this data is insufficient to answer this claim.

Checking the relationship of gender with other parameters of internet addiction following conclusions can be made is, as the data is male dominant, striking conclusions cannot be made, other than that, both men and women use internet for about 2-5 hours per day, therefore no conclusion cannot be made about which gender group is more active user of internet.

CONCLUSION

Internet surfing interests people but it should be used properly. When not used properly it becomes Internet Addiction. Internet Addiction has hazardous effects. Hence it can be called "a mental illness". Playing online games really makes people happy on free time. People also are able to increase the relationship between friends by use of social network. Indisputably network is a good way to find the information. Then buying something online is very convenient. But doing anything need moderately. Otherwise it will be bad for people. There are few ways to treat Online Addiction. People can play outdoor sports. And also people can spend time to chat with friends in real life.

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